



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 17 May 2018**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Presiding Officers .....	593
Absence of the Speaker.....	593
Documents .....	593
Auditor-General .....	593
Reports .....	593
Visitors.....	593
Visitors.....	593
Bills .....	593
Electoral Funding Bill 2018.....	593
First Reading.....	593
Second Reading Speech.....	593
Visitors.....	598
Visitors.....	598
Bills .....	598
Electricity Supply Amendment (Fair Price for Solar and Other Renewable Sources of Electricity) Bill 2018.....	598
First Reading.....	598
Second Reading Speech.....	598
Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 .....	600
Second Reading Debate .....	600
Motions .....	609
Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month.....	609
School Cleaners Job Security.....	616
S. Antonio Da Padova Association .....	622
Visitors.....	622
Visitors.....	622
Announcements.....	623
Member for Gosford .....	623
Death of Tom Fauvette .....	623
Members .....	623
Representation of Ministers Absent During Questions .....	623
Question Time.....	623
Government Contract and Project Management.....	623
Aboriginal Employment.....	624
Government Contract and Project Management.....	625
State Economy .....	626
Government Contract and Project Management.....	627
Small Business Red Tape Reduction .....	628
Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest Water Supply .....	629
Social Housing.....	630

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Orange Electorate Domestic Violence Crisis Centre.....	631
Public Transport Infrastructure Accessibility .....	632
Petitions.....	633
Petitions Received.....	633
Responses to Petitions.....	634
Condolences.....	634
Death of the Hon. Grant Anthony McBride, A Former Minister of the Crown and Member for the Entrance.....	634
Petitions.....	645
Newcastle Transport Network .....	645
Discussion .....	645
Committees .....	648
Legislation Review Committee.....	648
Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 54/56 .....	648
Matter of Public Importance .....	649
Food Allergy Week.....	649
Community Recognition Statements .....	651
Sutherland Shire Relay for Life .....	651
Fairfield-Liverpool Cricket Association .....	651
St George Lions Club Charity Golf Day.....	652
Freemasonry Lodge Enterprise No 400 .....	652
Manning Valley Dairy Farmers .....	652
Canley Vale Public School Student Representative Council Ceremony .....	652
North Shore Electorate Scholarship Award Winner Angela Little.....	652
Toukley Tennis Club Player Sylvia Turner Ninetieth Birthday .....	653
Kirrawee Child Care Centre.....	653
Belmont Baseball Club Award Winner Mitchell Ellison .....	653
West Pymble Novelist Jacqueline Harvey .....	653
Blue Mountains Commuter and Transport Users Association Paul Trevaskis Ninetieth Birthday ...	653
Parramatta District Cricket Club.....	654
International Nurses Day .....	654
Deafblind Association (NSW) .....	654
Ken Done Exhibition .....	654
Paddington Pub Four in Hand Heritage Listing.....	655
CSIRO Chief Scientist Jennifer Stauber .....	655
Red Point Artists Exhibition .....	655
Community Outreach Ministries Good News Day .....	655
Shell Cove Public School Goodbye Summer Fete .....	656
Myall Lakes Electorate Rugby League Players Holli Wheeler and Jonty Hemmingway .....	656
Saroj Care Fiji Incorporated Annual Dinner.....	656
Beauty Point Public School .....	656
Barnardos Mother of Year Noelene Lever.....	656

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Michael Bonnici .....	656
Swansea Electorate Basketball Award Recipient Nikolas Brill .....	657
Bullying Awareness Competition Winner Emily Falconi .....	657
Nords Wharf Public School .....	657
Marine Rescue Hawkesbury .....	657
Homebush Tamil Seniors .....	658
Asquith Boys High School Leukaemia Foundation World's Greatest Shave .....	658
Vision Australia Caringbah .....	658
Private Members' Statements .....	658
Fairfield Electorate Multicultural Events .....	658
Ettalong Channel Dredging .....	659
Pacific Highway Upgrade .....	660
Lismore Electorate Infrastructure .....	661
United States Embassy Jerusalem .....	661
Ryde Electorate Overdevelopment .....	662
National Disability Insurance Scheme .....	663
Tribute to Bill Galvin, OAM .....	664
Bus Service Xo3 Cancellation .....	665
Macular Disease Foundation Public Awareness Campaign .....	666
Manning Base Hospital Redevelopment .....	667
Tuggerah Lakes .....	667
Transport Infrastructure and Innovation .....	668
Cabbage Tree Road Sand Quarry .....	669
Barton Highway Upgrade .....	670
Davidson Electorate Urban Green Space .....	671
Ku-Ring-Gai Electorate Development Approvals .....	671
Shellharbour Nurses and Midwives Association .....	672
Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre Seventieth Anniversary .....	673
Scone Cup Carnival Fashions on the Field .....	674
Lake Macquarie Anzac Day Commemorations .....	675
Youth Recreation Facilities .....	676
Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church .....	677
Defence Vehicle HMAS Wagga .....	677

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 17 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.

*Documents*

## AUDITOR-GENERAL

### Reports

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce the receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General, entitled "Regional assistance programs", dated 17 May 2018, received this day and authorised to be printed.

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I welcome to the Parliament His Excellency Mr Baeksoon Lee, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea, who is accompanied by Councillor Jinhae Kim and Councillor Gyu-Bong Lee from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, guests of the member for Lismore and the Deputy Speaker. I have had the pleasant opportunity of meeting with them. I trust they enjoy their stay in Sydney.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

*Bills*

## ELECTORAL FUNDING BILL 2018

### First Reading

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts, read a first time and printed.**

### Second Reading Speech

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (10:15):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

New South Wales already has the toughest political donation laws in Australia. Under the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, that will continue to be the case. The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 repeals and replaces the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. It implements a range of reforms that have been recommended by an independent panel of experts and by this Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. The bill introduces the strongest and most transparent political donation laws that the State has seen. Together with the Electoral Act 2017, the bill delivers on the Government's commitment to review and reform the State's electoral and electoral funding laws and increase the integrity, transparency and accountability of political donations in New South Wales.

In May 2014, the Government announced the appointment of an independent panel of experts, chaired by Dr Kerry Schott, to consider and report on options for the long-term reform of the State's electoral funding laws. The expert panel was asked to consider the best way to remove any corrosive influence of donations in New South Wales. As the House is well aware, the panel delivered its final report in December 2014. While the panel supported the key pillars of the current electoral funding regime, it made 50 recommendations to strengthen the existing framework. The panel's central finding was that the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 had become complex and difficult to administer due to a series of ad hoc amendments. The panel's first

recommendation was that the current Act be comprehensively reviewed so that it is simpler and easier to understand and has clear policy objectives.

In March 2015, the Government accepted 49 of the panel's 50 final recommendations in principle, subject to a further review by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. In June 2016, the committee finalised its inquiry into the panel's final report. The committee endorsed 44 of the panel's 50 recommendations in principle. The committee shared the panel's view that the current Act should be comprehensively reviewed and rewritten to ensure that it achieves its objectives. The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 is the culmination of the work of the expert panel and joint standing committee. The bill implements the vast majority of the recommendations for reform that have been made by the expert panel and the committee for a stronger and more transparent electoral funding scheme.

The bill before the House today benefits from the input of the NSW Electoral Commission and the many organisations and individuals who made submissions to the expert panel and to the joint standing committee. I thank them for their contributions, which have been crucial in the development of these landmark reforms. The bill does not substantially change the foundations of the current New South Wales electoral funding regime, which is the toughest in the country. Rather, the bill introduces targeted reforms to increase the integrity, transparency and accountability of political donations in New South Wales.

I turn now to the specific provisions of the bill. As I have mentioned, the bill repeals the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 and replaces it with a new, modernised Act. The bill preserves the key pillars of the current regime, namely, disclosure, caps on donations, limits on expenditure and public funding. In substance, there is much that this bill carries over from the current Act. In outlining the bill, I will highlight those aspects of the bill that introduce key reforms.

Part 1 of the bill contains preliminary machinery provisions and the objects of the Act. Part 2 of the bill contains definitions to outline key concepts. Clauses 5, 6 and 7 provide definitions of "political donation", "reportable political donation" and "electoral expenditure". Clause 4 contains a list of other defined terms used throughout the bill, including a new definition for "associated entity", being a corporation or other entity that operates solely for the benefit of one or more registered parties or elected members.

Part 3 of the bill is concerned with political donations and electoral expenditure. It does not substantially change the existing requirements in relation to disclosure of political donations and electoral expenditure, caps on political donations for State and local government elections, caps on electoral expenditure for State election campaigns, obligations in relation to the management of donations and expenditure, and prohibitions of certain donations. However, the bill introduces a number of important reforms to strengthen the existing framework.

I will first outline some of the key reforms to the disclosure requirements, caps and bans applicable to political donations. First, "reportable political donations", meaning a donation of \$1,000 or more, made in the six-month period before a State general election will be publicly disclosed shortly after they are made. This is provided for in clause 15 (1) (a), which requires that the donations be disclosed within 14 days after being received or made. Reportable political donations made or received outside the six-month pre-election period will be disclosed within four weeks after the end of the quarter in which the donation was received or made.

Currently, political donations are required to be disclosed only once a year. That means that there can be a delay between when a donation is made and when that donation is disclosed to the public. The expert panel and the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters strongly supported more timely disclosure of political donations in the interests of increased transparency. The bill implements these recommendations and will ensure that New South Wales voters are given access to the sources and amounts of reportable political donations before an election. The bill also implements the expert panel's recommendation that political parties be required to disclose the terms and conditions of reportable loans, other than loans from financial institutions. This is provided for in clause 19 (6). The expert panel considered this very important to ensure that all loans are legitimate and that they are not being used to circumvent the caps on political donations.

The bill maintains the current caps on direct political donations, which are provided for in clause 23 (1). Donations to registered parties and groups are capped at \$6,100, and donations to elected members, candidates, third party campaigners and associated entities are capped at \$2,700. The bill increases the caps on indirect campaign contributions so that they are consistent with the caps that apply to other political donations, as recommended by the expert panel and joint standing committee. This is provided for in clause 47 (3) (c) and (d).

The bill also clarifies how a party-endorsed candidate's own contributions to a party's campaign are to be treated. Clause 26 (3) provides that an endorsed candidate for a Legislative Assembly election may contribute an amount up to the party's expenditure cap for a particular electoral district, as specified in clause 29 (12) (a), and

that this is to be disregarded for the purposes of the caps on donations. Similarly, clauses 26 (5) and (6) permit contributions of up to \$50,000 by Legislative Council candidates to his or her party or group.

The bill implements the expert panel's recommendation that small, anonymous donations be exempt from the provisions which aggregate multiple political donations from the same donor. The expert panel found that, as a practical issue, aggregation of small anonymous donations is onerous and has little benefit. An exemption from the aggregation provisions is provided by clause 57, which applies to single political donations of \$50 or less made by a person at a fundraising venture or function.

I note that the expert panel also recommended that parties be required to identify where a political donation has been solicited by or made for the direct benefit of an endorsed candidate. This recommendation raises a number of practical issues and potential difficulties, such as how a donation should be treated if made at a function featuring a number of candidates. The Government intends to refer this issue and how the disclosure requirement might operate in practice to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for further consideration as part of its review of the 2019 State election.

Division 5 in part 3 deals with requirements for the management of political donations and electoral expenditure by parties and other electoral participants. Divisions 6 and 7 in part 3 preserve existing prohibitions on certain political donations, including donations from property developers, and tobacco, liquor and gaming businesses. However, clause 53 (1) strengthens and clarifies the current definition of a prohibited "property developer". These amendments have been developed following issues raised by the NSW Electoral Commission. Individuals who are carrying on the business of property development will be prohibited donors, as applies to corporations. This is consistent with the position of the NSW Electoral Commission, which has advised that the definition should be extended to include individuals as well as corporations that carry on a property development business.

The requirement for the property developer to be "regularly" involved in making planning applications will be replaced with clear and specific criteria, namely, if they have had three or more relevant planning applications determined within the last seven years. This is to address difficulties with determining whether a particular business "regularly" involves the making of relevant planning applications, which is part of the definition in the current Act. In addition, the Government is closing a loophole in the existing provisions, as introduced by the former Labor Government, to ensure that a property developer is prohibited from donating before a relevant planning application is lodged.

Clause 58 provides for the recovery of unlawful political donations by the NSW Electoral Commission. It includes a new provision in clause 58 (3) which provides that if a person makes a political donation and becomes a property developer within 12 months, they must pay double the amount of the donation to the State. This is to address the risk of actual or perceived corruption or undue influence from the making of political donations by persons who intend to make relevant planning applications but who are not captured by the definition of "property developer" at the time of making a donation. There is no change to the purpose of the provisions, which is to reduce the risk of undue or corrupt influence in the area relating to planning decisions. This is consistent with the approach adopted by the High Court in its decision in McCloy.

The bill introduces changes to the existing scheme of party and official agents for the disclosure and management of political donations. The changes are designed to address the concerns of the expert panel and Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters about ensuring that candidates and elected members are responsible for compliance with the regime. The expert panel's view was that the current scheme of party and official agents should be abolished and that candidates and elected members should be directly responsible for compliance with the Act. However, the joint standing committee considered that it could be helpful to have one contact point within a party for compliance issues while agreeing that candidates and members should ultimately be responsible for compliance.

The bill implements the committee's recommendation by removing the official agent role for elected members and candidates. Clause 14 identifies the person who is responsible for making disclosures of political donations and expenditure. For party-endorsed members and candidates, the party agent will generally be responsible for disclosures. The party agent will be required to be a senior office holder of the party. In the case of elected members and candidates who are not endorsed by a party, the member or candidate will be responsible for his or her own disclosures. This revised scheme has been designed to balance the practical needs for one contact point within a party for compliance and the need for candidates and elected members to take more responsibility for compliance issues, as recommended by the joint standing committee.

I turn now to expenditure. The bill also requires enhanced disclosures to be made. Political parties will be required to identify electoral expenditure incurred substantially for the purposes of the election in a particular electoral district. This will improve transparency and ensure that compliance with the relevant caps on



electorate-based expenditure can be monitored. The expert panel recommended that "associated entities" of political parties should have the same disclosure obligations as political parties. This is implemented by clause 12 (1). In addition, the bill makes clear that things done by a body that is controlled by a political party are deemed to be have been done by the political party. Political donations received or electoral expenditure incurred by associated entities controlled by a political party will be required to be disclosed by the party.

The bill also implements the expert panel and joint standing committee's recommendations that the electoral expenditure of a political party and its associated entities be aggregated for the purposes of the party's expenditure cap in order to remove opportunities to avoid the caps. Division 4 in part 3 of the bill generally preserves the existing caps on electoral expenditure for State election campaigns. It also implements the expert panel's recommendation to reduce the amount of the current cap on electoral expenditure by third party campaigners to \$500,000.

Currently, third party campaigners who register before the start of the six-month capped expenditure period are subject to an expenditure cap of more than \$1.2 million. The expert panel and joint standing committee both examined the amount of the cap in detail. The expert panel considered that third party campaigners should have sufficient scope to run campaigns to influence voting at an election—just not to the same extent as parties or candidates. The proposed caps will allow third party campaigners to reasonably present their case while ensuring that the caps are in proportion to those of parties and candidates who directly contest elections.

Clause 35 implements the expert panel and joint standing committee's recommendation that third party campaigners be prohibited from acting in concert with others to incur electoral expenditure that exceeds the expenditure cap. Third party campaigners should not be permitted to engage in conduct to circumvent spending caps. The anti-avoidance offence in clause 35 is important to maintain a fair and balanced electoral contest and to ensure the integrity of the expenditure caps.

The bill removes a provision in the current Act that required certain expenditure caps for associated parties to be aggregated, and which had the inequitable result that associated parties' expenditure caps were aggregated even when they endorsed different candidates in the same electoral district. The bill also introduces caps on electoral expenditure for local government election campaigns as currently apply for State election campaigns. The Government foreshadowed these reforms when it extended the caps on political donations to local government campaigns in 2016. These caps are lower than those applicable to State elections, reflecting the lower number of voters, smaller geographic areas and traditionally much lower spending levels in local government elections.

Under the current Act, the expenditure caps apply to "electoral communications expenditure", defined as "electoral expenditure" of certain specified kinds. The bill implements the expert panel's recommendation that all electoral expenditure incurred for the purpose of influencing the voting at an election be caught by the caps, and simply applies the expenditure caps to "electoral expenditure". The expert panel considered that this would avoid some of the complexities in the current Act and would allow parties to choose which activities best suit their campaigns free from financial incentives to engage in particular types of campaign activities.

I now move to part 4 of the bill relating to the public funding of State election campaigns, and outline the key changes to the current model. First, the bill implements the joint standing committee's recommendation that the "dollar per vote" model of campaign funding that applied for the 2015 State election be continued for future elections. This model was considered a fairer way of distributing public funding as entitlements are directly related to electoral results and, by extension, public support. It requires candidates and parties to make more responsible expenditure decisions based on an assessment of their prospects at the election, and is also the model used in other Australian jurisdictions.

Under this model, parties that meet the eligibility criteria for receiving funding are entitled to claim \$4 for each first preference vote in the Legislative Assembly and \$3 per first preference vote in the Legislative Council. Parties that reach the 4 per cent threshold in the Legislative Council but endorse fewer than 10 candidates in the Legislative Assembly are reimbursed \$4.50 for each Legislative Council vote. Independent candidates that receive at least 4 per cent of the primary vote are reimbursed \$4 or \$4.50 for each first preference vote, depending on whether they ran in the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council. The dollar per vote amounts specified in the bill will be adjusted for inflation for the 2019 State election and for future elections, in accordance with clause 4 in schedule 1. Funding is capped at the amount of actual campaign expenditure in the nine-month period from 1 July before the election.

The bill also implements a number of other funding reforms in accordance with the recommendations of the expert panel and the joint standing committee. Advance payments to parties from the Election Campaigns Fund will be increased from 30 per cent to 50 per cent of a party's entitlement at the previous election. Further, the current requirement for double-auditing of disclosures of political donations and electoral expenditure and

claims for payment of public funding has been removed, with the NSW Electoral Commission continuing to be responsible for the auditing of the disclosures and claims. Importantly, parties and candidates will not be entitled to election campaign funding—other than advance payments—administration funding or new party funding while there is any failure to lodge a disclosure of political donations or electoral expenditure, or failure to provide annual financial statements.

Part 5 of the bill provides for public funding for certain parties and independent members for administrative expenditure and policy development expenditure, as provided for under the current Act. As to policy development expenditure, the bill renames the Policy Development Fund the "New Parties Fund" to better reflect its aims. Consistent with the expert panel's recommendation, clause 85 provides that electoral expenditure incurred during a capped State expenditure period is reimbursable from the New Parties Fund.

Division 2 of part 5 contains provisions dealing with public funding for certain parties and members for administrative expenditure. The division largely reflects existing provisions under the current administration funding regime. However, the bill implements a recommendation of the joint standing committee in its report on the administration of the 2015 State election—that the caps on administration funding be increased by specified amounts. The committee considered that the increased caps should be in place in recognition of the increased administrative burden placed on registered political parties. The bill implements the increases recommended by the committee, expressed as quarterly rather than annual amounts, and makes other changes to provide for entitlements to be calculated on a quarterly basis.

Part 6 of the bill contains provisions relating to the obligations of registered political parties and senior office holders. Part 6 implements a number of recommendations made by the expert panel and supported by the joint standing committee. For example, political parties will be required to provide the NSW Electoral Commission with a list of their senior office holders and a summary of the roles and responsibilities of those office holders. A party will not be eligible for any public funding under parts 4 or 5 unless that list has been provided. Division 3 in part 6 codifies common law duties that already apply to senior office holders. Senior office holders will also be required to report conduct they believe to be a breach of election funding laws to the NSW Electoral Commission, and it will be an offence to fail to do so without reasonable excuse. Parties will continue to be required to provide annual audited financial statements to the NSW Electoral Commission.

Part 7 sets out the processes and procedures for the registration of candidates, associated entities, third party campaigners, party agents and official agents. This part substantially replicates the relevant provisions in the current Act. Part 8 of the bill contains provisions dealing with certain financial matters, including to appropriate money from the Consolidated Fund for the payment of amounts from the Election Campaign Fund, the Administration Fund and the New Parties Fund. Part 9 of the bill contains provisions dealing with investigations and confers enforcement powers on the NSW Electoral Commission and its inspectors. These reflect existing investigative powers provided under the current Act, including powers to inspect and to require the provision of documents and information.

Clause 139 incorporates offences for obstructing an inspector in the exercise of his or her functions, and for failing to comply with a request of an inspector made under the provision. Part 10 of the bill contains provisions dealing with criminal and other proceedings. Division 1 in part 10 consolidates and streamlines existing offences under the current Act. These include offences relating to disclosures of political donations and electoral expenditure, assisting others to lodge claims or disclosures, caps on donations and expenditure and providing false or misleading information to the NSW Electoral Commission.

The bill retains the offence for schemes to circumvent electoral funding laws, doubled penalties for certain offences and an extended 10-year limitation period for commencing proceedings introduced by the Government in 2014 in response to the expert panel's interim report. In accordance with the expert panel's recommendation, the bill retains existing strict liability offences for failing to lodge a disclosure and failing to keep records, and introduces a new offence of lodging an incomplete declaration without reasonable excuse. Division 2 in part 10 contains provisions relating to proceedings generally.

Under clause 149, the maximum monetary penalty that the Local Court may impose for offences has been increased from \$4,400 under the current Act to \$22,000. Clause 151 allows civil and criminal proceedings to be brought against political parties that are unincorporated associations in their own name, as if the party is a corporation. Part 11 of the bill contains miscellaneous machinery provisions. Clause 153 confers the function on the NSW Electoral Commission of undertaking educational and informational programs to educate and inform elected members and candidates of their obligations under the Act, as recommended by the expert panel and Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

Clause 154 enables the NSW Electoral Commission to determine and issue guidelines for, or with respect to, any matters dealt with under the bill. Clause 157 permits the Electoral Commission to enter into compliance

agreements with any person affected by the proposed Act for the purpose of ensuring compliance. Finally, schedule 1 to the bill contains provisions dealing with the annual adjustment for inflation of certain monetary amounts under the proposed Act. Schedule 2 contains savings, transitional and other provisions consequential on the enactment of the proposed Act. Schedule 3 makes consequential amendments to other legislation specified in the schedule. It also makes a number of law revision amendments to the Electoral Act 2017, and amendments to the Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011 in response to the statutory review of that Act published in June 2017.

The bill preserves the foundations of the current New South Wales electoral funding regime—the strictest in Australia—while introducing important reforms to increase transparency, to reduce the risk of corruption and undue influence, and promote compliance with electoral funding laws. The bill implements reforms that have been recommended by an independent panel of experts and by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. They are the product of the rigorous inquiries and extensive consultation by both the expert panel and the committee. The changes will further the regime's objects of transparency, fairness and the prevention of corruption or undue influence in the New South Wales elections. I commend the bill to the House. God save the Queen.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Visitors*

### VISITORS

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I welcome to the Parliament the year 11 students who are attending the Young Women's Leadership Program, conducted by the Parliamentary Education Unit. I again compliment the Parliamentary Education Unit on the great job they do. This morning we had a second reading of the Electoral Funding Bill 2018 by the Special Minister of State and member for Lane Cove.

*Bills*

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AMENDMENT (FAIR PRICE FOR SOLAR AND OTHER RENEWABLE SOURCES OF ELECTRICITY) BILL 2018

#### First Reading

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Tamara Smith, read a first time and printed.**

#### Second Reading Speech

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (10:45):** I move:

That this bill be now a read a second time.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I join you in welcoming the young women leaders who are in the gallery. I also commend and congratulate the Parliamentary Education Unit of the Parliament on facilitating a very important part of what Parliament does. I introduced the Electricity Supply Amendment (Fair Price for Solar and Other Renewable Sources of Electricity) Bill 2018 on behalf of The Greens. I appreciate the opportunity to introduce this bill, which is most commonly known as the Fair Price for Solar Bill. The bill seeks to recognise the multitude of benefits that thousands of New South Wales solar residents and businesses—and there are more than one million across Australia—bring to the energy sector, to communities and to the planet, by harnessing the clean energy of the sun and moving us away from the pollution of the fossil fuel industry and reducing carbon emissions on a warming planet.

The bill seeks to fairly reward the thousands of solar households and businesses across New South Wales that are doing the heavy lifting for us within a global clean energy revolution. Even renters can enjoy being part of the solar garden movement and take part in the clean energy revolution. On our warming planet, the health risks to humans and other species as the direct result of excess carbon dioxide in our planet's atmosphere is no longer in dispute. Sadly, as Bill McKibben recently pointed out to many of us in Parliament, whilst environmentalists and other concerned global citizens focused on winning the battle around climate science, which was never in real dispute, members of Parliament risked losing the real war on breaking the political power of the fossil fuel industry, about reducing our carbon emissions, and about altering the trajectory of harm for humans and other species that we are on.

The Greens are not only committed to reducing carbon emissions but we have the courage to stare down the fossil fuel industry and their parliamentary buddies every day of the week as they seek to pursue profit from coal even though the rest of the developed world is decades into the clean energy future. We are establishing practical measures to assist New South Wales households to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. This bill will introduce a fair solar minimum rate payable to support New South Wales households who choose to invest in solar photovoltaic systems and who support the creation of a prosperous low carbon society. This bill amends the

Electricity Supply Act 1995 to provide for a minimum price for electricity produced by complying small-scale renewable energy generators such as rooftop solar panels. A complying generator means a generator that is a solar photovoltaic generator or a wind turbine, or a renewable energy generator of a class prescribed by the regulations, that has a generating capacity of no more than 10 kilowatts, and which is installed and connected in a manner that complies with any safety, technical or metering requirements that are prescribed by the regulations or market operation rules.

Feed-in tariffs apply to power generated by customers and supplied to the electricity network. The bill provides for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to determine the minimum rate payable by a retailer to New South Wales households with small-scale renewable energy generators who supply electricity to the distribution system. Under this legislation, IPART, in establishing the minimum rate paid for solar, will be required to take into account a much wider range of factors than is currently the case, resulting in a fairer price for solar. Under this legislation each financial year IPART will determine the minimum rate payable by a retailer to a customer for electricity produced by the customer's complying generator and supplied to the distribution system.

IPART's determination of the minimum rate will take into account the price of electricity in the wholesale market; any distribution and transmission losses avoided in New South Wales by the supply of electricity by complying generators; any avoided fees and ancillary charges; the avoided distribution system investment costs; the avoided social cost of carbon; the avoided human health costs attributable to a reduction in air pollution from coal and gas fired electricity plants, and any other matter that is relevant in IPART's opinion.

Paying a fair price for solar not only supports the solar industry but also makes solar more affordable for residents and businesses as they play their part in reducing carbon emissions on a warming planet. It also encourages energy efficiency by rewarding those who are able to supply excess power to the energy grid. Renters do not have to miss out. In my electorate organisations such as Enova Energy, which is an incredible renewable energy, community-based retailer, have introduced the solar garden concept to the North Coast whereby renters can have a solar panel or two on a rooftop garden somewhere nearby and benefit by reducing their energy bills and helping to save the planet. This amendment bill will promote the installation and use by residents of New South Wales of small solar energy generation facilities and will encourage investment in renewable energy electricity generation.

It also ensures New South Wales that, for the electricity households supply to the grid from their solar energy systems, they are offered a fair and reasonable amount that is credited against charges payable by the households. The scheme will apply to new and existing small-scale solar energy systems that are installed in households that are compliant and are connected to the electricity grid. Customers will be protected through this bill by the stipulation that a retailer must not pay a customer an amount less than the minimum rate set by IPART in respect of the electricity produced by the customer's complying generator and supplied to the distribution system. The maximum penalty for a retailer paying below the minimum rate is 1,000 penalty units.

Under this legislation retailers must keep and maintain records with respect to each customer and the amount of electricity produced by the customer's compliant generator and the amount paid by the retailer for that electricity. Retailers must also keep these records for five years with the maximum penalty of 40 penalty units for failure to do so. Solar panel owners in New South Wales currently receive around 6¢ per kilowatt hour for the electricity they generate that goes back into the grid. Some retailers, such as Enova Energy, to their credit, offer up to 11¢ per kilowatt hour. However, even that rate is low compared to the average 29¢ per kilowatt hour that energy retailers then sell this same electricity to the neighbours of a solar household. Sometimes this involves the electricity travelling only a few metres on nearby poles and wires, and is nowhere near the real cost. That is because until now energy retailers and State regulators have had a very narrow view of what solar and other renewable energy is worth, and their rates have been determined mainly based on the average wholesale price of electricity.

Research carried out by Solar Citizens, the Total Environment Centre, Tasmanian Renewable Energy Alliance and the Alternative Technology Association suggests that solar power fed back into the electricity grid is actually worth between 11¢ and 18¢ per kilowatt hour once all of the environmental, health and network benefits are taken into account. According to Solar Citizens estimates, each kilowatt hour of solar power that displaces coal-fired electricity avoids carbon pollution worth between 2.4¢ and 3.1¢ per kilowatt hour, using current carbon pricing estimates. Carbon pricing that met the global objective of keeping global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius would translate to a much higher value.

However, considering that our Federal Parliament has been held hostage for nearly a decade over the issue of carbon pollution because of the trillions of dollars still in the ground in the form of fossil fuels, it is unlikely that we will see any time soon in Australian politics the recognition of a price on carbon through this mechanism. Nevertheless, I promise that The Greens will keep trying. The other heavy lifting that solar and

renewables do is in topping up the grid when wholesale energy prices are higher than average—such as during the hottest, sunniest times of the day when demand for air conditioning is at its highest. In addition to the avoided cost of purchasing wholesale electricity, solar energy can play a role in pushing down the wholesale price of electricity for all consumers. All consumers could benefit from moving to a modern electricity system that is cleaner and more robust. Prices will be reduced across the board because there will be less need for expensive networks, and renewable energy has minimal to no fuel costs. Sharing distribution cost savings with other consumers is a way of reducing prices.

Retailers currently pass on the charges for the use of the transmission network to consumers irrespective of whether the energy is sourced via the transmission networks or sourced locally from solar photovoltaic systems. Customers can end up paying for a service that is not provided and that they did not avail themselves of; in other words, the use of the transmission network for the proportion of their energy that comes from distributed generation. Transmission charges should apply only to the electricity actually carried on the transmission network. This is an obvious saving. These savings should be shared with solar owners. Decentralised power generation can place less strain on the distribution network and thereby reduce costs in at least two ways.

First, exported energy from solar panels is typically used close to the point of export and therefore makes significantly less use of the poles and wires network. Secondly, a significant proportion of the cost of the distribution network is attributed to the transformers that convert higher voltages down to 230 volts. Guess what? Solar inverters have that capability built-in and already export power at 230 volts. The value of solar panels in reducing costs for network operators is highly dependent on time and location as well as the capacity and asset lifecycle of local distribution infrastructure. More and more frequently the grid is in real trouble because of infrastructure, not renewables. Using local solar avoids using the high voltage and sub-transmission parts of the distribution network, which account for over 50 per cent of costs.

It is time that the New South Wales Government helped reward rooftop solar producers for that investment. The more investment in solar and other small-scale renewable energy systems there is, the more jobs that will be produced in the renewable energy sector, particularly in regional areas. Research by Ernst & Young for the Climate Council has shown that generating 50 per cent of our electricity from renewables by 2030 would lead to more than 28,000 new jobs and more than 50 per cent more employment than if we continue business as usual. That does not even take into account the environmental and global impacts.

Beyond the direct jobs in solar installation, we need to continue building Australia's capacity in emerging technologies, such as battery storage, smart grids and demand management. Last year when I was in Europe at the World Renewable Energy Congress I found it quite startling to be able to look into the eyes of people who were 25 years ahead of us in the renewable boom. With this bill, New South Wales can make up the ground it has lost to other States and Territories in Australia and to the rest of the developed world when it comes to renewable energy initiatives. It is part of the strategic approach adopted by The Greens to provide affordable, sustainable energy for New South Wales into the future. This bill will set fair minimum feed-in rates for rooftop solar. The price paid to rooftop solar owners should be linked to the wholesale market and to the added benefits that solar and renewable energy bring. The environmental and health benefits of rooftop solar and other renewable sources should be recognised via minimum pricing or other mechanisms such as a carbon price on polluting generation.

Solar is produced at peak times during hot days; therefore, it is inherently more valuable. Rules for network charges should be updated to reflect that rooftop solar makes much less use of network infrastructure. Solar should not be charged transmission costs. The retail market must be opened up so that rooftop solar owners can sell or share their electricity on the grid with the appropriate reflective cost of the grid applying. Fair minimum solar feed-in tariffs empower New South Wales households to take action on climate change and on energy affordability. It democratises energy and it is the way of the future. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (CONTRACTS OF CARRIAGE) BILL 2018**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 8 February 2018.**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations)**  
**(11:01):** Our Government stands for the working men and women of New South Wales. Since coming to Government, we have worked to improve living standards and create new and better opportunities for the people of our great State. Almost half a million new jobs have been created in New South Wales since we came to office in 2011. For almost three years, New South Wales has had the lowest unemployment rate of any State. We have made New South Wales a State of the fair go, where opportunity abounds and hard work is rewarded. There is

always more to do, and we will fight for a more prosperous and fair New South Wales. As the Government, this means doing what is within our remit and our power to make New South Wales a better place for all.

I commend the member for Campbelltown for introducing this bill. He has the best of intentions. However, I do not commend him for taking numerous points of order during question time—many of which cause disruption and are rightly ruled out of order. The advice I have is that the bill introduced by the member for Campbelltown is flawed. The bill seeks to create State legislation that is in clear conflict with Commonwealth legislation that already covers the field. As a consequence, I am advised that this bill would be dead on arrival. Even if it were enacted by this Parliament, it would be void. It would have no effect and, as a consequence, the Government cannot support the bill introduced by the member for Campbelltown.

I will provide some important context to explain why. In 2006 the Commonwealth Government passed the Independent Contractors Act. After a transitional phase, the Act came into full effect in 2011. The purpose of the Commonwealth Act was to create a consistent national framework for the regulation of independent contracts for services. It was a step taken by the Commonwealth Government with clear and intentional consequences for a number of State laws around the nation. The Commonwealth would override certain State laws that had previously been responsible for the regulation of independent contracts for services. In New South Wales the principal effect of the Commonwealth legislation on our State laws was to change the way the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act 1996 operated with respect to independent contractors.

In particular, the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act contained provisions that deemed certain specific types of contractors to be employees, including bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers. The effect of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act was to override the deeming provisions in the New South Wales legislation. As a result, under the Commonwealth Act any contractors who had previously been deemed employees under the New South Wales legislation—including bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers—would be considered contractors at law. They would no longer be governed by the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act. Instead, those contractors would be governed by the Commonwealth legislation. The explanatory memorandum to that legislation shows, importantly, that this was not an oversight. In fact, the explanatory memorandum specifically used one of the categories of "deemed employees" in New South Wales—bread delivery owner-drivers—to demonstrate how the Commonwealth legislation would operate. I quote the example from the explanatory memorandum in full. It states:

Michael is a common law independent contractor who is engaged on a services contract by Hot Crossed Bakery Pty Ltd to deliver bread rolls to a series of shops. Under the relevant workplace relations legislation in the jurisdiction in which Michael works, bread vendors are deemed to be employees. This means that Hot Crossed Bakery must offer Michael pay and conditions in line with the relevant State workplace relations legislation despite the fact that, at common law, there would be no legal requirement to do so.

However, because Michael's rights and entitlements (and Hot Crossed Bakery's obligations and liabilities) are affected by the deeming provisions in the relevant State workplace relations legislation for workplace relations matters, proposed paragraph 7(1)(a) would apply. This would mean that the provisions of the State law have no effect in relation to the services contract between Michael and Hot Crossed Bakery. Under the proposed provisions, Michael and Hot Crossed Bakery could choose whether he is engaged as an employee or an independent contractor, depending on what best suits their needs

This extract leaves little room for doubt as to the intention of the Commonwealth Government in passing the Independent Contractors Act. It enacted the legislation to cover the field previously covered by the State legislation. In doing so, it specifically sought to bring certain contractors—including bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers—out of the New South Wales industrial relations system and into the Commonwealth regulatory framework. Despite this clear legislative intent on behalf of the Commonwealth, the bill before the House purports to bring those very contractors back into the New South Wales industrial relations system. This is beyond the power of this Parliament.

As the House is aware, where Commonwealth laws cover the field, State laws can have no effect. Whatever this House thinks of the Commonwealth Government's decision to place bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth laws, legislation passed in this House cannot unilaterally reverse that decision. While the intent to override the New South Wales deeming legislation was clear, the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act at the same time expressly preserved the operation of chapter 6 of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act. This is the chapter that the bill introduced by the member for Campbelltown seeks to amend.

Chapter 6 provides a quasi-industrial framework for the regulation of the remuneration and conditions of certain owner-drivers who are not employees. It gives the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission jurisdiction to make contract determinations or contract agreements with particular sectors in the transport industry, if such assistance is sought by those contractors. However, chapter 6 expressly does not apply to bread, milk or cream delivery owner-drivers, as this House is aware. They are expressly excluded from the operation of chapter 6. But they are not alone. The chapter similarly does not apply to contracts for the carriage of mail by or on behalf of Australia Post or to contracts for the carriage of livestock. It does not apply to contracts for the

transportation of primary produce—other than timber—from or to land used for primary production, and it does not apply to contracts for the delivery of meals by couriers to homes or other premises for consumption.

I offer these as examples, but there are other exclusions. The effect of these exclusions on chapter 6 is significant. They considerably limit its scope. The point is that when the Commonwealth Government's 2006 legislative reforms expressly preserved the operation of chapter 6, these exclusions were a fundamental part of what the Commonwealth preserved. The exclusions establish the extent to which the Commonwealth legislation permits the continued regulation of certain contracts for services by the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission. Removing the exclusion of bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers, as the bill before the House seeks to do, would significantly change the scope of chapter 6. In doing so, the amendment would purport to fundamentally change the effect of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act.

I am advised—and it is the Government's view—that expanding the categories of contracts covered by chapter 6 as proposed in the bill would be futile. After the enactment of the Independent Contractors Act, any such change will be inconsistent with the overall intention of the Commonwealth legislation to cover the field. I am advised that it is likely to be found to be constitutionally invalid and have no effect. Like those opposite, the Government has received representations seeking amendments to the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act to extend the application of chapter 6 to bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers. As well as acknowledging the concerns that have been raised, the Government has also carefully considered any possible repeal of section 309 (4) of the Industrial Relations Act and its interaction with section 7 of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act.

The advice we have received is that the New South Wales Parliament cannot unilaterally make such a change. Any attempt to do so would be void. The enactment of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act means that such a change could only be made in conjunction with new Commonwealth regulations. The Government is also of the view that legislative change should not be piecemeal. This bill attempts to amend the regulatory framework for one class of independent contractor but ignores a range of others. It offers no guidance as to how that framework could be improved as a whole. This is a recipe for regulatory chaos. The Government remains committed to regulatory reform that lifts the fortunes of our growing economy—reform that improves the lives of the people who live, work and operate productive businesses in New South Wales.

We will continue to consider the merits of any proposed changes to the way the terms and conditions for certain independent contractors are regulated in New South Wales and, where necessary, the New South Wales Government will work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure that any changes in this space are valid and effective. But we will not go about it in a piecemeal fashion, as this bill seeks to do. We will consider any reform in the context of our broader plan to improve the regulatory framework in New South Wales as we continue our work to make this State the best place to live, work, run a business and raise a family.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (11:12):** I speak in support of the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 introduced by my colleague the member for Campbelltown. I take this opportunity to thank him and the shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, the Hon. Adam Searle, MLC, for their advocacy on behalf of contract drivers delivering bread, milk and cream to access an arbitration system that can make contract determinations that reflect common industry standards and provides an independent dispute resolution process.

I note the Treasurer's reasons for not supporting what I regard as a very good bill to ensure that contract drivers delivering bread, milk and cream have access to the industrial relations system, stating that it would be void. I have received advice that this is not the case. If the argument is that it would be void, then essentially it would be void for every other contract driver who is currently accessing the New South Wales industrial relations system. As we know, that is not the case. I make the point that if the Treasurer and the Government believe it would be void, the only way to test it on behalf of families and drivers is to put it to the Parliament and take the next step. Obviously the Treasurer's advice and mine differ and, in fairness to those drivers, the matter can be resolved only by the legal arbitration system.

Former Prime Minister and great Labor hero E. G. Whitlam always said the overarching principle of contemporary relevance is the main driver in public policy. Section 309 (4) (d) of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 is neither contemporary nor relevant in 2018. This section differentiates contracted drivers purely based on three essential household items and does not give them any avenue of recourse during contractual disputes. The market conditions between delivery drivers and producers of bread, milk and cream have changed substantially yet our laws have not changed to reflect modern times. There is no consistency in contractual determinations within the bread, milk and cream or other comparative sectors with similar, or indeed identical, operating structures.

Essential household items like bread, milk and cream are now produced by mass production operations run by major national and multinational corporations. The concentration in production leads to a greater concentration in oligopolistic market power that then influences market behaviour and pricing between buyers and sellers. Often the negotiated contractual terms come at the detriment of the party with the weaker bargaining position. A corporation like George Weston Foods—which is a subsidiary of British giant Associated British Foods—owns Tip Top and other bread brands in the Australian market. It is a major player in the bread industry, with substantial market powers. The latest annual report for Associated British Foods shows its group revenue at more than £15 billion. That is more than \$A26 billion at the current foreign exchange rate. The power imbalance between a multibillion-dollar multinational and a sole operator contract driver is as clear as day. This might be free trade but it certainly is not fair trade.

It is inconceivable for a sole contract driver with no or very limited bargaining power to negotiate contracts that reflect their business condition or industry standards when pitted against multinational corporations with all the market power. We all know how the negotiation scenario unfolds, with mum-and-dad small businesses versus listed billion-dollar corporate behemoths. It is just WorkChoices in action. We were all promised that WorkChoices was dead, buried and cremated; it must have been a non-core promise. As the ABC 7.30 report showed, one driver was only getting 14.9¢ per unit while another was getting 17¢. Both drivers stated that their contract terms were not viable for them to operate as a sole trader business that fairly rewarded them for their fixed costs, which continue to increase over time with compounding inflation, let alone take into account their own labour costs.

Further, there was nowhere for contracted drivers to go to resolve their contractual disputes. Sole contract drivers are delivering bread in the very early hours of the morning when most of us are asleep. They are working 100 days in a row and receiving \$1,000 less than they were seven years ago, despite their operating costs going up during that time. It is not fair that they are unable to access an independent arbitration system that could rectify this scenario. The consequences of this market structure and imbalance in negotiating power are more than financial; they are also personal. The emotional and psychological stress cannot be underestimated, nor can the potential public safety issues around vehicular roadworthiness. We can all prolong the debate about the historical reasons for the existence of section 309 (4) (d)—an anomaly dating back to the 1950s. However, the historical reasons behind the section do not excuse its contemporaneous existence.

Leading employment and industrial relations expert Ms Alex Grayson made this point about sole contract drivers delivering bread, milk and cream, stating that they are "sitting in a regulatory black hole". These drivers are trapped in a workplace system from the 1950s that has not changed with the times; provides no access to an independent arbitration system that takes into account changing market conditions and industry conditions; does not recognise the negotiating power imbalance; and offers no avenue for a more independent determination on the contractual terms and conditions between drivers and producers. Determinations for contracted drivers should be based not on the products they deliver but on the services they provide in comparison to other drivers who offer the same service and who have legislative access to an independent arbitration system.

All our laws are a reflection of our communal values. The existence of section 309 (4) (d) in chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 does not reflect the embedded Australian value of the fair go, which treats contracted drivers on a more consistent basis and according to industry norms. Omitting one sentence containing a mere 14 words can make a significant difference to the lives of sole contract drivers and their families. The passing of this bill would further reinforce the "fair go" ethos of our industrial relations system, and allow bread, milk and cream deliverers to access the same determinations under the Transport Industry – General Carriers Contract Determination 2017. Schedules A, B and C, for example, outline the vehicular type, costs, time and labour rates that are applicable to a sole contract driver's cost structure. These cost structures should also be applicable to the drivers we are trying to advocate for. These facts are contemporaneous with current industry operating structures and relevant to industry norms experienced by other contractor drivers providing similar or identical services.

One of the worst things you can do in public life is to hold on to an idea whose time has passed or try to stop an idea whose time has arrived. Section 309 (4) (d) was relevant for the 1950s, and its existence in 2018 has certainly expired. The New South Wales Parliament should not delay the passing of a bill whose time has arrived because the drivers and their families cannot afford to wait any longer, given this anomaly goes back to the 1950s. Providing access to an independent arbitration system: first, produces more consistency in contractual determinations; secondly, greatly reduces the power imbalance during negotiations; and, thirdly, gives small business sole contract drivers who deliver bread, milk or cream an avenue for contractual dispute resolution that is currently unavailable to them. Let us reform the New South Wales industrial relations system so that it is reflective of modern times and reinforces our ethos of a fair go. Let us pass this bill and produce public policy that meets the principles of contemporary relevance. I commend the bill introduced by my colleague the member for Campbelltown to the House.



**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:21):** I echo the comments made by the Treasurer this morning in saying that this Government stands for the working men and women of New South Wales. This Liberal-Nationals Government has worked hard at building a future for the people of our great State and my beautiful electorate of Terrigal. The regulation of the commercial relationship between those who enter into a contract for services falls under the responsibility of the Commonwealth through the Independent Contractors Act 2006, as the Treasurer clearly outlined earlier. When the Commonwealth introduced this legislation it included carve-outs for New South Wales and Victoria to allow them to continue to regulate some contracts for services. In the case of New South Wales, this meant holding on to chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996, and allowing the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission to set some basic terms and conditions for owner-drivers contracting with principal contractors. This was despite the rest of the nation, except for some in Victoria, moving under the new Independent Contractors Act 2006.

Chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 establishes a quasi-industrial framework that applies to contracts of carriage—that is, drivers engaged in transporting goods and who have their own vehicle—and to contracts of bailment, which is taxidivers. Owner-drivers under chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 are usually bound to contracting arrangements by exclusive engagement to one principal contractor. Importantly, chapter 6 does not apply to enterprises that engage people to drive as employees. The nature of contractual relations regulated by this chapter, although similar in some respects, is not the same—and is not intended to be treated in the same way—as employment relationships. Chapter 6 and the associated contract determinations currently cover owner-drivers within several sectors, including waste collection and recycling, concrete haulage, car-carrying services, furniture removal, and general freight. These relationships are commercial relationships and the contracts covered under chapter 6 are not covered by the Independent Contractors Act 2006, only by way of exception.

It was the Commonwealth's clear intention to cover the field when it introduced the Independent Contractors Act in 2006. As the House has heard, the Government's view is that expanding the categories of contracts covered by chapter 6, as per the private member's bill before us, would be inconsistent with the overall intention of the Commonwealth's Independent Contractors Act 2006. The Treasurer made that very clear in his speech. This means that the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 would be found to be constitutionally invalid and have no effect. The Treasurer also made that very clear in his speech. I appreciate that the member for Campbelltown has brought forward this bill with the intention of helping some contractors in New South Wales, but on this basis it cannot be supported. This does not mean that the Government is abdicating its responsibility for workers and small businesses in New South Wales—quite the contrary. This Liberal-Nationals Government has been doing everything it can to help small business in New South Wales.

In my electorate of Terrigal there are hundreds of small and local businesses—many of them family run—and the Government is backing them to be as successful as possible, to employ locals and to have a positive effect on the community. Indeed, the New South Wales Government understands the importance of small business and its contribution to local communities, as well as to the statewide economy. Small businesses keep communities strong and support local schools and charities. The people behind small businesses are brave and willing to take risks. They work hard, investing their livelihoods in making sure these businesses work—often at great risk to themselves. We know that more than 85 per cent of employment on the Central Coast is in small businesses. As we have heard many times, the New South Wales economy is now an absolute powerhouse.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** We are number one.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** As the member for Parramatta says, we are number one: We have the strongest economy in the nation, and we are particularly proud of that. It has taken a lot of hard work. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the nation as well. We have made the tough decisions, and I thank the member for Parramatta for his interjection and his feedback. Obviously, we cannot rely solely on strong sectors such as infrastructure and the housing market—which of course the member for Parramatta is very well aware of in his electorate.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** Great community.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** It is a great community, as is my community of Terrigal on the Central Coast. The member for Parramatta is very lucky. The Government is aware that we have to diversify and innovate to maintain economic growth—as you do in the Tweed, Mr Temporary Speaker. This is where small business can fill the void and contribute significantly to expanding the economy. To demonstrate this commitment, the Liberal-Nationals Government has established the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner to help small businesses across our State. This office offers support at every stage of the business cycle, from start-up to succession planning and every step in between, including straightening out complex matters that could leave small business operators feeling isolated. Since being elected in 2011—for the past seven years—the Government has

demonstrated a significant commitment to supporting small business investment, growth and innovation in metropolitan and regional areas, including the Central Coast.

Since the beginning of our second term in 2015—when I was lucky enough to be elected and joined this place—we have built on these foundations and have seen New South Wales emerge as the most confident State in the country when it comes to starting and growing a business. We have delivered key initiatives and investments such as the Business Connect program, Easy to do Business program and payroll tax relief incentives to help alleviate the pressures and barriers to growth facing small businesses across our State. With more than 730,000 small businesses in New South Wales, this Liberal-Nationals Government recognises the critical role of small business to the State's economy. We remain absolutely committed to making New South Wales the easiest place to start a business and to maintain a business. As I said earlier, I appreciate that the member for Campbelltown has brought forward this bill with the intention of helping some contractors in New South Wales. But, unfortunately, as we have heard from the Treasurer, it will have no effect and on that basis cannot be supported by this side of the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (11:29):** What a fascinating discussion of a whole range of small business issues by the member for Terrigal. Unfortunately, the advice that he based his contribution on with respect to the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 and its effect is incorrect. I will come to that later. It is incredibly disappointing that the Government has seen fit to maintain an inconsistency in the treatment of transport workers across New South Wales. I am very pleased to make a contribution on the debate and commend my colleague the member for Campbelltown for his diligence in introducing the bill. I am the son of a truck driver and I am always conscious of the needs of workers in the transport industry. Although my dad spent his days carting coal, iron ore and other materials rather than bread, milk or cream, I am very mindful of what a tough job truck driving is and the inherent dangers that transport industry drivers face on a daily basis. There are no second chances when you are behind the wheel of any vehicle, but more so when you are behind the wheel of a large tonnage heavy vehicle.

Currently, drivers delivering bread, milk or cream for sale are not included in protections under the Industrial Relations Act 1996. Let us focus on that. Whatever historical accident has led to this, these drivers are not included in industrial protections, despite working every day. The object of the bill is to amend the current Act to provide basic industrial rights and protections to workers involved in the delivery of bread, milk and cream. Not too much to ask, but clearly it is a bridge too far for the Government. Once again, the group that claims it is the party of the workers each day in question time cannot be bothered to support a bill that will support the rights of workers. What a shock.

As a consequence, any such contract involving these workers will be subject to the provisions of chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act, including enabling the Industrial Relations Commission to make determinations with respect to the remuneration of the carrier and any conditions under the contract, and to exercise dispute resolution powers in relation to the contract. The amendment introduced by the member for Campbelltown will delete section 309 (4) (d) from the Act and finally provide basic industrial rights and protections to all workers involved in the delivery of milk, cream and bread for sale—not a big amendment. The bill makes no other amendments to the existing Industrial Relations Act.

The bill is relatively brief. It is a small amendment that packs a big punch for the rights of a group of workers that has been denied protection under the law for too long. This State prides itself as being a liberal, parliamentary democracy in which the rule of law applies equally to all. None of us is above the criminal, civil and industrial laws decided in this place. It is therefore appropriate that workers involved in the delivery of milk, cream and bread for sale should be provided with precisely the same set of protections as apply to delivery drivers carrying meat, vegetables and other goods. It is not a big or foreign concept. It is a simple no-brainer.

For decades the Transport Workers Union [TWU] has fought a long, hard and uncompromising campaign on behalf of truck drivers around the country to ensure that drivers work in safety and, because they share our roads, to make sure that other motorists are safe too. Truck drivers should not be forced to work long hours behind the wheel, physically and mentally fatigued, forced to cut corners because of the pressure of employers to make that next delivery on time. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that delivery drivers work in a safe environment, especially when they share our road networks.

This is the reason the TWU fought so hard to introduce chain of responsibility legislation in New South Wales when Carl Scully was the former Minister for Roads and Transport. Similarly, the Gillard Government introduced the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal, which was tragically abolished by the Turnbull Government. I refer to the advice received from Mark Gibian of HB Higgins Chambers—a barrister with 16 years experience in industrial law—regarding the Federal Independent Contractors Act 2006:

By operation of s 7(2)(b)(i) of the IC Act 2006, no inconsistency arises between the IC Act and Chapter 6 of the IR Act as amended from time to time. For these reasons, I do not believe that the proposed amendment to Chapter 6 of the IR Act contained in the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 gives rise to an inconsistency with the IC Act for the purposes of s 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

Contrary to the Government's claim and the Government's fig leaf for hiding behind not changing and not making simple amendments to industrial law, the advice is that the bill will not create the problem the Government claims it will. This is a sensible amendment. It is a bill that members opposite should decide to cross the floor on to support the transport workers in their communities. It is an historical anomaly that drivers carrying milk, cream or bread for sale have been excluded from the Industrial Relations Act. In my examination of the issues surrounding this amendment I have not found out why this exemption was provided originally. By the same token, I cannot provide and have yet to see a cogent argument as to why the exemption should be maintained.

As the member for Campbelltown has highlighted, nurses, firefighters and police are all protected under current industrial laws. For some reason, which no-one really knows, drivers delivering milk, cream and bread for sale have been excluded for too long from these protections. This Chamber has an opportunity to correct that historical anomaly when this bill is voted on, whether it be today or at a later time. It is incumbent upon all who support drivers, transport workers and road safety to vote in favour of the bill. Every driver and every worker should have recourse to industrial law as it applies to them. The bill seeks to amend the law to do that. I strongly support the bill and commend it to the House.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (11:35):** I oppose the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018. I commend the member for Campbelltown for his good intentions and bringing the bill to the House. However, the advice received by the Government shows that the bill seeks to create State legislation that is in clear conflict with Commonwealth legislation that covers this field. Even if the legislation were enacted by this Parliament, it would be void. It is the Government's view that expanding the categories of contracts covered by chapter 6 as proposed in the bill would be constitutionally invalid and have no effect. That is the reason the Government does not support the bill.

In 2006 the Commonwealth Government passed the Independent Contractors Act. After a transitional phase, that Act came into full effect in 2011. The purpose of the Commonwealth Act was to create a consistent national framework for the regulation of independent contractors for service. This point was covered by the Treasurer in his comments, but it is important to reiterate some of those comments to fully explain why the Government does not support the bill. I am sure that Opposition members are listening intently to the clear rationale as to why the Government does not support the bill.

In New South Wales the principal effect of the Commonwealth legislation on State laws was to change the way the Industrial Relations Act 1996 operated for independent contractors. The Industrial Relations Act contained provisions that deemed certain specific types of contractor to be employees, including bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers. The effect of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act was to override the deeming provisions, changing those previously deemed employees in the New South Wales legislation to contractors under the Independent Contractors Act, including bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers. The Government's advice on chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act provides a quasi-industrial framework for the regulation of the remuneration and conditions of certain owner-drivers who are not employees.

It gives the NSW Industrial Relations Commission jurisdiction to make contract determinations or contract agreements for particular sectors in the transport industry, if such assistance is sought by those contractors. However, as members are aware, chapter 6 expressly does not apply to bread, milk or cream delivery owner-drivers. They are expressly excluded from the provisions of chapter 6, but they are not alone. The Government remains committed to regulatory reform that lifts the fortunes for our growing economy—reforms that improve the lives of the people who work, live and operate productive businesses in New South Wales. I reinforce the commitment of the Government to deliver prosperity for everybody, especially workers in New South Wales. Since coming to government, we have worked tirelessly to improve living standards, and create new and better job opportunities for the people of the State. Almost half a million new jobs have been created in New South Wales since we first came to office in 2011. New South Wales has had the lowest unemployment rate of any State for almost three years.

One of my greatest challenges is to create opportunities that allow people to get good jobs so they can be all that they want to be. Having a job ensures that a person can pay their mortgage, rent and grocery bills, and can put food on the table. A job gives a person the economic and social freedom to achieve what they desire in life and provide for their families in the great State of New South Wales. It is fantastic that New South Wales has remained number one out of all States and Territories for 33 months in a row. Every month, the CommSec State of the States report continues to show that New South Wales is achieving excellent growth in employment,

productivity, and home approvals. I am proud to say that we have turned the State around since we came into government in 2011, when things were fairly tough in New South Wales.

At the time, we ranked lowest on the CommSec State of the States reports. We ranked eighth, behind Tasmania, which was a bit of a shocker. Being number one is great, but we must continue to work hard. The Government continues to fight for what is right, and for workers and small businesses. Small businesses are the engine room of the economy. The Government is doing everything it can to help small businesses throughout New South Wales. Small businesses keep communities strong, and support local schools and charities. The people behind small businesses are brave and willing to take risks, work hard and invest their livelihoods to ensure that their businesses work. We will consider any reform in the context of our broader plan to improve the regulatory framework in New South Wales and will continue our work to make this State the best place to live, work, run a business and raise a family.

I am a passionate advocate of small business, having had my own small businesses, including a garden centre, plant hire company and landscape construction company, for approximately 12 years. When I was an academic for a decade or so, one of my interest and research areas was small business. We often say that small business is in the DNA of the Liberal Party, and I am sure The Nationals would say that as well. Small businesses are the heart and soul of New South Wales. They provide innovation and employment for this State. There are a couple of things that differentiate small business owners from other businesses and workers. The first thing I always commend small business owners for is that they risk their livelihoods. Every morning when small business owners wake up they have to make decisions that will affect the business not only this week but also next week and in the years to come.

I remember on Fridays I would go to the bank to withdraw the wages in cash—which dates me—to pay the workers. There were times when there was not enough money in the account. Most small business owners will face cash flow crises and will often withdraw the wages from their personal savings because they know that employees and their families depend upon their wages being paid. Small business people do it tough. They often trade off their time for money. They have to work long hours to ensure that their businesses survive. They sometimes have to mortgage their houses to run their businesses. Every decision they make is made while considering whether the business will be successful or will fail. Research shows that many small business owners that fail, pay off their debt at the expense of their personal wealth. They do not hide behind company structures or legal entities to avoid their liabilities. They work hard to pay their suppliers, workers, liabilities and appropriate taxes to fulfil their commitments to the business at their own expense.

In small businesses, it is not only about the individual, but also the whole family. It becomes an obsession because without obsession, drive, hard work, risk-taking and entrepreneurship, the business would fail. They often do not have a large asset base to fall on when cash flow is difficult. I am sure all members would join me in paying tribute to small business owner-operators for their hard work, diligence and focus on generating employment and innovation, which is driving the economy. The electorate of Parramatta is one of those economies that is driven off the back of hardworking and entrepreneurial small businesses, including those in the building, retail, hospitality, entertainment and cultural industries. The Government will not support the bill.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:45):** I support the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018. The member for Parramatta said that we should look to make the lives of small business owners in this State easier and that is the object of the bill. The Government has shown that it is not interested in making the lives of certain classes of small business owners any easier. The object of the bill is:

... to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to include contracts for the transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under that Act.

It does this by removing a small part of the Act—section 309 (4) (d). I acknowledge the member for Campbelltown for his work. He has put a lot of energy into the drafting of the bill and has delivered an elegant bill that addresses the problem in a way that I would have thought all members could support. The bill seeks to extend the provisions of chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to certain people who work for themselves, including self-employed owner-drivers. It deals with an issue that I would have thought the House would be prepared to do more to address, and that is the precarious nature of employment arrangements in our society.

The re-regulation of how people in our society work has resulted in a whole bunch of people who used to be classified as employees now being classified under different contractual arrangements. These people now find themselves classified as "self-employed", rather than as an employee. As soon as that happens, they lose a great deal of the protections that have been built up over many years under various industrial relations Acts in this country. The bill affords the protections of chapter 6 to owner-drivers. These people invest a lot of money into the purchase of expensive equipment, a truck and the servicing of the truck. It is usually a family business in which one partner does all the books while the other partner does the driving; where one partner does all the negotiations

with head business contractors on the work to be done and how it will be done while the other partner does the work. It is a family business and a huge investment.

Chapter 6 affords those people some protection and enables them to develop their remuneration arrangements collectively and, if they choose, with the help of a trade union. They can also have those arrangements registered within the New South Wales industrial relations system. If those arrangements are disputed, they can be resolved through conciliation within that system, thereby avoiding the huge expense and adversarial nature of disputes sorted out in the commercial courts. Chapter 6 is a good provision, which has been in place since the 1950s. It has served this State well. Together with chapter 9, which deals with unfair contracts for individual workers, chapter 6 contains a set of regulations that provides a number of the protections traditionally afforded to employees. That is a strength of the New South Wales system and it is one that this Parliament should be keen to preserve and to build upon rather than to diminish.

Section 309 (4) of the Industrial Relations Act lists a number of different types of owner-drivers who are not covered by the chapter 6 protections. The most notable exceptions are those in section 309 (4) (d), which exempts owner-drivers engaged in a contract for the carriage of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale. Members have talked about why that exemption was included in the legislation. Perhaps it was because of the essential service nature of those industries. My view is that it probably relates to how State awards were developed as minimum wages and conditions documents and regulations, and that is still the case in this State for groups of workers. Those arrangements were based on the recommendations of various industrial committees and were included in section 198, which lists groups of workers for the purposes of forming awards. Back in the 1950s, the bread industry traditionally was vertically integrated—that is, bread carters were employed by bakers. They had small vans and carts and they were not covered by the conciliation arrangements that applied to transport workers more generally.

That is neither here nor there. The point is that as they have developed, vertically integrated industries have contracted out their services, and transport usually has been the first service to be contracted out. That contracting has proceeded in two ways. First, the contract was given to an external transport company and from there it often went to individual drivers working as self-employed owner-drivers. At the moment, those people are excluded from the legislation. They should be included to ensure that commerce in this State is equal and that there is a level playing field.

The Minister for Industrial Relations referred to the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act 2006 and alluded to it covering the field, thereby making this bill unconstitutional. However, that Act specifically exempts chapter 6 of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act. Therefore, it is open to this Parliament to make a sensible amendment to this State's legislation to include a group of drivers who have been unwittingly denied the protection available to other owner-drivers. It should do what it can to make commerce fairer and to do something for the self-employed small business people of New South Wales.

My father was a truck driver for the Newcastle removalist company Tim Farragher Removals Pty Ltd, and he was a member of the Transport Workers Union. My grandfather was a crane driver in Newcastle, and he was also a member of the Transport Workers Union. I owe it to them to support this bill, and I owe it to the small business people in my electorate and in the State generally to make their work arrangements fairer. I commend the bill to the House and urge members to support it.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:54):** I speak in debate on the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018. I understand the intent behind the member for Campbelltown's introduction of this legislation. I think all members appreciate the complexities in industrial relations instruments that have emerged over time because of different legislation at the State and Federal levels that have left us with some historical oddities and difficulties. In this case, drivers carrying bread, milk and cream were specifically excluded from chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 because they were deemed employees elsewhere in the legislation. That arrangement provided them with an award, and that is why they were carved out.

I accept that history has moved on and that things have changed in a number of ways. In 2006 the Commonwealth passed legislation intending to cover contractors, and that legislation has overridden provisions in the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act 1996. The difficulty we have in addressing the member for Campbelltown's legislation is that that 2006 Commonwealth Act, legally passed, explicitly considered these sorts of exemptions. They were detailed in the second reading speech and were considered in the formation and drafting of the bill. It seems very clear that the intent of the Commonwealth Parliament was to cover this field, including this category. That is the basis of the advice provided by the Solicitor General—that is, the proposed amendment in this bill would be inconsistent with the 2006 Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act because that Act was specifically intended to cover this field.

The member for Macquarie Fields at least had the decency to acknowledge that legal advice can differ, and that argument could be had one day. The member for Wollongong asserted that simply because the Labor Opposition had different advice it must be right. I am not sure that is how it works; in fact, I am certain it is not. When the Solicitor General gives the Government formal advice that a bill is likely to be inconsistent with Commonwealth law, it makes sense for it to take notice. If the Government wished to address the issue, it would need to find a different way to do so. It is pointless this Parliament trying to legislate something that will not work and that will be overturned in the fullness of time because it is inconsistent with Commonwealth legislation. That is the bottom line.

The Government has decided that it cannot support this legislation, first because it will not work; it will not do what the member for Campbelltown intends it to do. Secondly, it would amount to a piecemeal approach to regulation of industrial relations when there are many other categories that could be examined regarding contractors, the self-employed and who is and who is not an employee. Those issues must be considered from a much broader perspective. When it makes regulatory changes, this Government prefers to do so on a broad front. It seeks to advance the interests of the entire community of New South Wales and to improve the regulatory framework by making it simpler and less complex rather than more piecemeal and more complex. Despite the member for Campbelltown's apparent good intentions, this bill serves neither of those ends.

The member for Campbelltown and other speakers referred to what they believe is a lack of clarity about the reason for the separation of drivers involved in carrying bread, milk and cream. As I have indicated, it is because of their different treatment in the past, going back to the 1950s. Following amendments to the Industrial Arbitration Act 1940 in 1957 and 1959, certain groups of workers, including bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers, could be deemed to be employees for the purposes of the industrial arbitration, annual holidays and long service leave Acts, even though they may be independent contractors at common law. It was that historical carving out that was picked up and continued in the 1996 Act.

In 2011 the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act overrode the deemed employees provisions in the New South Wales Industrial Relations Act. In its place, the Commonwealth introduced provisions for independent contractors to remedy contract terms that are harsh or unfair. Since that date, pay and conditions for these "deemed employees" have been matters to be negotiated between the relevant principal contractor and the driver looking to contract with them. That is, the Commonwealth has set up another process explicitly intended to deal with these situations. That is where our legal difficulty arises.

The Commonwealth also has provisions on sham contracting to ensure employees are given the rights that employees deserve and are not disguised as contractors. This means that where an employee genuinely is an employee at law, they will be given the rights to which employees are entitled. Under the sham contracting provisions of the Fair Work Act in the Federal jurisdiction, an employer cannot misrepresent an employment relationship or a proposed employment arrangement as an independent contracting arrangement; dismiss or threaten to dismiss an employee for engaging them as an independent contractor; or make a knowingly false statement to persuade or influence an employee to become an independent contractor.

Employees and independent contractors can request assistance from the Commonwealth's Fair Work Ombudsman if they feel their rights have been contravened. Fair Work inspectors can also seek the imposition of penalties for contraventions of sham contracting arrangements. They may also apply to the courts to grant an injunction or an interim injunction if an employer seeks or threatens to dismiss an employee for engaging them as an independent contractor. The purpose of the injunction would be to prevent the dismissal from occurring or otherwise remedy the effects. Courts can also make other orders to have the employee reinstated or compensated.

### **Business interrupted.**

#### *Motions*

### **DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION MONTH**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:02):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises that May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, which aims to raise community awareness of domestic and family violence and to send a clear message that violence is not tolerated.
- (2) Reaffirms the Parliament's commitment to tackling the scourge of domestic and family violence.
- (3) Congratulates the Government on leading the nation in supporting victims and holding perpetrators to account.

I welcome the opportunity to speak in the House today about the Government's achievements in tackling the scourge of domestic and family violence. The Government's investment of more than \$350 million over four years is supporting victim survivors to rebuild their lives and holding perpetrators to account. This investment is in

addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars the Government spends each year to combat domestic and family violence through mainstream services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness services. The Liberal-Nationals Government will continue to be tough on perpetrators. It will continue to invest a record amount of money to support victims and to help to keep them safe.

The results of these initiatives are already evident. Last December the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research recorded that for the first time in nine years recorded incidents of domestic violence-related assault have fallen in New South Wales. It is a major step forward in the battle to combat this scourge. And we on this side will not stop there. We want that number of recorded assaults to continue to fall. It is why we are investing record amounts of money to support vulnerable women. We are doing more to support women in crisis, we are funding more women's refuges, we are doing more to keep families together and we are doing more to enable vulnerable women to lead happier, more fulfilled lives.

On this side of the House we recognise that supporting women at risk means more than just providing a safe place to stay. It means restoring dignity, providing opportunity and allowing them to take control of their future. We know one of the challenges facing some women wanting to leave violent relationships is that they do not have financial independence. The skills offered through the New South Wales Government's fee-free training can provide a new start. More than 100 women have taken the opportunity to upskill, secure employment and gain financial independence through the New South Wales Government's Smart and Skilled program, which offers survivors of domestic violence free vocational education and training.

We have a range of other options that support victims of domestic and family violence in New South Wales. We have Rent Choice Start Safely, a private rental subsidy for women leaving domestic violence to support them to live independently. We know that those escaping domestic and family violence need ongoing support to rebuild their lives. In 2016-17 more than 2,500 households across New South Wales were assisted with the private rental subsidy Start Safely. Start Safely provides assistance to those escaping violence by giving them financial support for up to three years to help them move into stable housing in the private market. Last August this Government announced that Start Safety would be expanded and made available to those earning a moderate income, not just to those eligible for social housing or on very low incomes. It is a big win for some of our State's most vulnerable.

Another option is Staying Home Leaving Violence, which supports women and their children to remain safely at home while the perpetrator is removed. In 2016-17 the Staying Home Leaving Violence program supported more than 5,700 clients, comprising more than 2,100 women and 3,600 children, to stay safely in their home while police removed the perpetrator. It is a wonderful result that has ensured the ongoing safety of so many women and children and has allowed them to retain some consistency in their lives.

Rather than create a patchwork of services, the New South Wales Government has created a domestic and family violence system that responds in a consistent and effective way. Safer Pathway is a tailored multi-agency response to high-risk domestic violence victims. This Government has invested more money into specialist homelessness services, including women's refuges. It is a 43 per cent increase in funding over four years. The Government is building additional units on the grounds of existing refuges in regional New South Wales to increase the capacity of refuges and provide women and their children with greater privacy and independence.

Recently it was announced that the first of several services will undergo major upgrades, thanks to a \$4 million commitment from this Government to trial the core and cluster refuge model. A core and cluster model provides independent units in a home-like environment for women fleeing domestic violence. Housing Plus in Orange, the first site to be identified, will be the first homelessness service of its kind for women in New South Wales. The cluster will consist of six independent duplex units that will have the flexibility to be either four-, three-, two- or one-bedroom units, depending on the needs of a family. The core facility will provide audiovisual links to legal systems and courts, space for training and professional development, a 24/7 sleepover room with closed-circuit television viewing, an intake and assessment room, communal facilities, specialist spaces for Aboriginal women and their children, and two in-reach rooms for external service providers.

But that is not all the Government is doing. This Government has spent a record amount of money on specialist domestic violence initiatives and is building a new domestic violence service system. There are behaviour change interventions for high-risk offenders. The Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund invests in innovative prevention, early intervention and crisis responses. Last year this Government awarded contracts for seven projects under the first phase of the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund, which include initiatives that will provide greater support in rural areas, for people with a disability and for Aboriginal communities. The successful applicants for the second round of the innovation fund will be announced shortly.

Recently, this Government has undertaken an online workplace survey to identify policies and practices across a range of industries and companies in New South Wales. The results and feedback from that survey will

be shared later this year. Those of us on this side also understand that for many victims the criminal justice system can be a traumatic and upsetting process. We are doing more than ever before to support women through the courts. We have the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service to support victims through the process. We have body-worn cameras so police can record victim statements that can be used as evidence in court.

New South Wales has played a leading role in making domestic violence orders automatically enforceable across Australia. We have the NSW Police Force high-risk offender teams, with two new teams being rolled out later this year. We have non-government organisation-led community-based perpetrator interventions. We have the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program, a coordinated multi-agency initiative to prevent the escalation of domestic and family violence. There is so much more I could speak of. I am proud that this Government is leading the nation in tackling domestic violence. Those of us on this side of the House will continue to be the champions of social policy reform.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:09):** From the outset, I say that I disagree with paragraph (3) of the motion, which states:

(3) Congratulates the Government on leading the nation in supporting victims and holding perpetrators to account.

A couple of weeks ago, I raised as a matter of public importance National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day to recognise and mourn the scores of women, children and men in our community who have suffered and whose lives have been marred or cut short by domestic violence. National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day falls on the first Wednesday of May. Queensland marks Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, but the month is not formally acknowledged by the New South Wales Government other than through the Mid North Coast Local Health District.

The member for Holsworthy spoke about the Government providing more funding for women's refuges. That made me angrier than I ever thought I would be in this place. The Government cut \$20 million in funding from refuges and set up one core and cluster refuge in Orange. Yet the member boasts about the Government's commitment to victims. That is a disgrace. The Government cannot justify its actions. In the past few months, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] has released three reports on this Government's approach to domestic violence. The report entitled "Assessing the impact of NSW's Safer Pathway Program on recorded crime outcomes—an aggregate-level analysis" was produced in February 2018. Its conclusion states:

In stage 2 LACs, there is evidence for a small improvement in several DV indicators after the program was implemented. The results for stage 1 LACs are mixed.

The next report from BOCSAR, in March 2018, is entitled "Evaluation of the EQUIPS Domestic Abuse Program". That is a perpetrator program aimed at rehabilitation and behaviour change. The conclusion states:

There is no evidence of a treatment effect for those who start DVEQUIPS within 12 months of referral when compared with those offenders who were referred but did not start.

The third report from BOCSAR, which was released in April 2018, is "The Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT) and intimate partner repeat victimisation". The report's conclusion states:

This study highlights the importance of empirical validation when developing a risk assessment tool and provides evidence in support of further evaluation and review of the DVSAT.

This conclusion was drawn because the classification of "at serious threat" was a better indicator of repeat victimisation than responding "yes" to 12 or more items; however, predictive accuracy was still poor. Under that assessment, having a partner who is unemployed is considered just as much a risk of serious domestic violence as is strangulation or choking. Clearly, those are two completely different ends of the threat spectrum. It is ridiculous. The Government talks about introducing measures but when it comes to the testing and evaluation of those services we find they are failing. In the meantime, the Government has ripped the guts out of the refuge sector in our State. It is a mark of how far this nation has to go in its handling of domestic violence issues that only now are governments beginning to dedicate resources to collecting and analysing data on this issue. This Government is failing.

Under this Government, many refuges in the State were forced to close. Others were sacked by agencies in what can only be seen as abusive processes designed to cut out the women's refuge movement. It is an absolute disgrace. The member for Holsworthy spoke about the Safer Pathway program. The backbone of that program was the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, which received a 20 per cent increase in funding six months after it was given carriage of the program. That agency has experienced a 100 per cent increase in its workload. Today the staff of that agency are in limbo, hoping to goodness that this Government might deign to renew their contracts—even though it is the backbone of the Safer Pathway program. The Government has no strategy for countering domestic violence. It has released an eight-page infographic.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Shame!



**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Newcastle. It is shameful. During the term of this Government we have seen some of the most horrific domestic violence crimes ever committed in this State. If Government members do not believe me, I invite the member for Holsworthy to come up to Maitland and talk to the people about the 12-year-old girl who died. She was sexually assaulted and killed by her stepfather. What led to that? There was no space in the refuge, no oversight by the Department of Education and no assessment of that family by the Department of Family and Community Services. No-one noticed because there is no pathway and there is no capacity to help girls like her.

The Government brags about being a leader. The leaders in this space are Queensland and Victoria. Queensland is using the "Not Now, Not Ever" report, which was produced by a task force chaired by the former Governor-General Quentin Bryce; Victoria had a royal commission and the Victorian Government has provided genuine funding in order to implement the 227 or so recommendations. This Government does not even join Our Watch or collaborate with other States. It says that it is number one, even though it may not be. The Government's respectful relationships education in New South Wales schools applies only to students in years 7 to 12 and consists of three dot points in the curriculum. Under pressure from the Opposition, the Government extended the program, which had previously been for students in years 10 to 12, to include those in years 7 and 8.

What about the kids in kindergarten who are experiencing violence at home? The Attorney General and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault have put the issue of consent to the NSW Law Reform Commission, although there is no sexual assault strategy and no respectful relationships training for young people. Such an education strategy would have provided an opportunity to teach young people about consent, respectful relationships and not being violent well before they ended up in the court system and having to rely on the Government's pathetic programs that do not work.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:16):** I thank the member for Holsworthy for moving this motion today, acknowledging Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month and noting that the Parliament of New South Wales has a commitment to preventing domestic and family violence. I want to speak about the Government's work in leading the nation in supporting victims and holding perpetrators to account. Domestic and family violence has a significant and unacceptable impact on the New South Wales community. Many members in this place, including me, have experienced domestic and family violence, and their experience leads them to contribute to debates on this issue.

I congratulate and thank all those who work within the domestic violence space. They are the ones who are on the front line to address one of society's most complex problems. We know that domestic violence costs the New South Wales economy more than \$4.5 billion a year and that one in four women has experienced violence from an intimate partner. This week I met with one of the hardworking local advocates in my electorate, Josie Gregory, who is the North Shore area coordinator for the Northern Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services. It has been a great pleasure for me to spend time with Josie since I was elected. I have been to Manly Local Court, where most of our local domestic violence court proceedings take place, and sat with Josie in the safe room with victims and survivors of domestic violence. Josie has spoken to me about an increase in the demand for the agency's services between 2014 and 2017. The number of clients for this service in my electorate also has grown. I appreciate that Josie has brought this information to me and we are working together to represent their needs.

I also received feedback from Josie Gregory on the Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool [DVSAT] tool. We spoke about the safety action meetings [SAMs], which is a new initiative by this Government to bring together all the different agencies—police, support services, the Department of Education and the Department of Family and Community Services—so that we can identify those who are at the most significant risk of harm. Josie identified to me that DVSAT is an incredibly powerful tool. No tool is perfect; however, it is an improvement on the historic way to identify and respond to risk. I thank her for that feedback, particularly given the member for Maitland's comments attacking the DVSAT. I have observed the work of the court advocacy service in situ and I have spent a lot of time with the local police and Rob Nielsen, a domestic violence liaison officer based at the North Shore Local Area Command. My local area command has a number of dedicated domestic violence liaison officers, led by Superintendent Allan Sicard. Recently I met with Superintendent Sicard and he spoke in particular about how the introduction of the Domestic Violence Evidence in Chief [DIVEC] program was ensuring that we could prosecute and hold perpetrators accountable for their violence against women and families.

The Government has done a lot of work in New South Wales with the Staying Home Leaving Violence program to support women and their children to remain safely at home while the perpetrator is removed. We have the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program, which is a multi-agency initiative to prevent the escalation of violence. The new GPS trackers to improve victim safety are another tool in getting tough on the criminals who perpetrate domestic and family violence. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR]

data for my electorate shows that domestic violence incidents are increasing. I have worked with Mary's House and Manly Women's Shelter, which provide support for victims. It takes a community to save a family from violence. I congratulate the Government and the member for Holsworthy on bringing this motion.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (12:20):** I indicate that the Labor Party supports paragraphs (1) and (2) of the motion; however, on behalf of the Opposition, I seek to amend the motion by omitting paragraph (3). New South Wales has a high level of domestic violence and the highest rate of homelessness nationally. There has been a 37 per cent increase in domestic violence offences and a 30 per cent increase in people seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services. One-third of those people seeking assistance for accommodation do so because of domestic violence. It is absurd that the Government congratulates itself. Paragraph (3) of the motion, which states, "congratulates the Government for leading the nation in supporting victims and holding perpetrators to account", should be omitted because there has been a 37 per cent increase in homelessness. In the member for Holsworthy's electorate there has been a 44 per cent increase in homelessness. In my electorate there is a 79 per cent increase. These are major increases and, I repeat, one-third of those people are homeless due to domestic violence.

The Government's women's health centres in the regions and domestic violence liaison officers will say very clearly to the Parliament that it is absurd to self-congratulate, particularly in a month when we acknowledge the organisations that work tirelessly to support women who are fleeing horrific circumstances. I ask the member for Holsworthy to be reasonable and agree to the amendment to the motion by omitting paragraph (3). It is reasonable that we recognise that May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. It is completely reasonable that we speak here in a bipartisan manner and acknowledge the many organisations that work tirelessly across this State, together with police, health services and other agencies, to support women fleeing domestic violence. They support families and do everything they can to provide safe accommodation, emergency accommodation in particular, as well as the wraparound services that are often required to support women in those times of need.

As an example, I mention Sally whom I have worked with closely. Recently the Bankstown Women's Health Centre assisted Sally. She had the courage to speak publicly about her horrible experience of domestic violence, which found her homeless for the first time in her life as a 36-year-old woman with three kids. After being provided with temporary accommodation, she has now moved into long-term accommodation. I congratulate the Bankstown Women's Health Centre on its work in supporting Sally and her family. She has been brave to step forward and share her story and experience with others—that one never knows what will happen, and it is never too late to escape the horrible circumstances such as those that she found herself in. In particular, I pay tribute to Mariam Mourad, the Chief Executive Officer of the Bankstown Women's Health Centre, for the work she did to support Sally.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:24):** I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Holsworthy. Let there be no doubt that the New South Wales Government and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in particular are leading the nation in tackling domestic and family violence. In addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Government spends each year to combat domestic and family violence, through services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness services, the Government has invested more than \$350 million over four years in the 2017-18 budget. Not only will the Government continue to be tough on perpetrators; it will continue to invest a record amount to support victims and keep them safe.

Whilst the motion outlines that the month of May is dedicated to this issue, it is important that we raise awareness and have a steadfast and unwavering commitment to stamping out domestic and family violence wherever and whenever possible. This important motion gives me the opportunity to bring the work of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter—formerly known as the Manly Women's Shelter—to the attention of the House. Like most practical solutions to a problem, the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter began as a result of passionate community members coming together. Today the shelter consists of a number of properties providing vital services for women in crisis, who are often experiencing domestic and family violence.

In 2010 the shelter opened its doors to homeless women across Sydney's northern beaches. In its first year of operation the shelter's two properties provided 70 homeless women with accommodation and emergency support. The shelter assisted them to find secure housing on a long-term basis. Fast forwarding to 2014, the shelter acquired a third property adjacent to existing properties to be used as a transition house for the women who are moving away from crisis accommodation and are preparing for a further move. In recent years the shelter has helped more than 300 women but, unfortunately, the numbers keep growing. The shelter, which does a fantastic job, now comprises a number of properties providing vital services for women in crisis.

With the continued support and funding of the New South Wales Government in partnership with the motivated and effective community-based organisations such as the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, I believe

the future has a positive outlook for tackling the scourge that is domestic and family violence. I thank the member for Holsworthy for bringing this motion to the House and allowing me to speak in support of it. I place on the record my appreciation and sincerest thanks to the shelter manager Jacqueline Leonard, Diana Jenkins and Rosy Sullivan and the entire team at the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter. I commend them for the hard and vital work they do for our community. As patron of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, I take seriously my responsibility to advocate on their behalf and I am happy to do so today. I support the motion.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:28):** I speak in support of the member for Holsworthy's motion recognising that May is domestic and family violence prevention month. The aim is to raise community awareness of domestic and family violence, to send a clear message that violence will not be tolerated and to reaffirm the Parliament's commitment to tackling the scourge of domestic and family violence. Regardless of the Opposition's amendment to the motion to omit paragraph (3), we all speak today in unison that domestic violence cannot, should not and will not be tolerated in our community.

As elected representatives in this House we must stand together and with one voice say that we will put an end to the scourge of domestic violence. The Camden electorate runs the White Ribbon Campaign for 16 days from November through to early December and includes a community breakfast, which is always oversubscribed. Those in attendance include more than 300 community, civic and business leaders as well as many members of the NSW Police Force, including the Commissioner of Police who has been a tremendous supporter of it from when he was assistant commissioner and deputy commissioner. I thank him for his support. The community breakfast is run by the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee, which is chaired by Tanya Whitehouse. Tanya is a wonderful advocate who does a remarkable job. Tanya was recognised by the Government by being named Camden's Woman of the Year for 2018.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Well deserved.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** It was very well deserved. Tanya is a tremendous advocate for ending domestic violence throughout the State. She provides legal counsel and pathways for victims and their families to be able to access the much-needed support networks. I acknowledge Tanya's efforts and others who organised the community breakfast, which brings the community together as one to say no to domestic violence. I acknowledge also Senior Constable Lyndall Blackmore, who is the Camden police domestic violence liaison officer. Lyndall not only is a strong advocate and supporter of the breakfast but also works daily to support victims of domestic violence. I commend the Camden Local Area Command [LAC] under the stewardship of Superintendent Ward Hanson because, sadly, the highest rise in crime in the Camden LAC is domestic violence-related crime. We must all be aware of that. We must stand as one to denounce this scourge and do everything we possibly can to prevent it. I acknowledge and commend the member for Holsworthy for moving the motion.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:32):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Maitland, North Shore, Bankstown, Manly and Camden for their interest in this motion and for participating in the debate. The purpose of the motion is to raise community awareness of domestic and family violence and to send a clear message that violence is not tolerated. All members in this House agree that violence should not be tolerated, and not just violence against women. We have many campaigns about violence against women but violence against anyone should not be tolerated. It is important that we come together to say that. It hurts me to say, because the member for Maitland and I get along very well and I know she is passionate about this issue—

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Just accept the amendment.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** I will not accept the amendment.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Because you want to do a self-congratulatory message.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** No, because I think it is important that it is stated on the record what this Government is doing to support people who are going through horrendous situations. If the member for Maitland were as passionate as she claims to be today—and I know she is passionate about the issue—yesterday she would have voted for this motion to be debated today as a matter of urgency instead of supporting a development motion being given priority. When we come down to it, people suffering from domestic violence should have their voices heard. Yesterday the Labor Party wanted to defeat the motion to give debate on domestic violence priority. I think it is important that members be heard today.

**Mr Mark Taylor:** Politics is more important.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** I think the member for Seven Hills is right: Politics apparently is more important for Labor members who prefer to support a motion on development instead of speaking about this issue, even in May, which is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. I understand that the member for

Maitland is angry and upset but it is important that this issue is spoken about in the House today. I would have liked to have seen all members reach consensus. I reiterate that the Government cares deeply about this issue and I am proud that the New South Wales Government is leading the nation when it comes to tackling domestic violence. The Government is getting tough on the criminals who perpetrate domestic and family violence. The Government also is providing the support services and accommodation options for domestic and family violence victim survivors.

I am proud that the Liberal-Nationals Government has invested more money—a 43 per cent increase over four years—in specialist homelessness services, including women's refuges. Moreover, I am proud to have supported the Staying Home Leaving Violence program, which supported more than 5,700 people, comprising more than 2,100 women and 3,600 children, to stay safely in their own home while police removed the perpetrator. That is a far better option for many people than going into a refuge, but it is important for both options to be available. That is a truly amazing result. The program has helped to ensure the ongoing safety of so many women and children within our society.

As I mentioned earlier, it should be noted that educating people in relation to domestic and family violence is important in helping to reduce the occurrence of domestic violence in the future. I am pleased that all secondary school students in years 7 to 10 across New South Wales have been learning about domestic and family violence as part of their personal development, health and physical education syllabus. Decisions on how this information is best delivered are made at the local school level. I thank all the organisations and everyone who helps people to leave horrific situations. Anyone who helps women, children, men—anyone who is suffering—as a result of horrific situations are true heroes. I thank members for their support of this motion. I also thank the Government for its proactive efforts in helping to reduce the prevalence of domestic and family violence within our society.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The question is that the words proposed to be left out stand.

#### **The House divided.**

Ayes .....50  
Noes .....32  
Majority.....18

#### **AYES**

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

#### **NOES**

Aitchison, Ms J	Atalla, Mr E	Bali, Mr S
Barr, Mr C	Car, Ms P	Catley, Ms Y
Chanthivong, Mr A	Crakanthorp, Mr T	Daley, Mr M
Dib, Mr J	Doyle, Ms T	Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D	Harrison, Ms J	Hoenig, Mr R
Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S	Leong, Ms J
Lynch, Mr P	McDermott, Dr H	McKay, Ms J

## NOES

Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Smith, Ms T F  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Tesch, Ms L (teller)  
Zangari, Mr G

Minns, Mr C  
Scully, Mr P  
Washington, Ms K

## PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G  
George, Mr T  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Pavey, Mrs M

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

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

## SCHOOL CLEANERS JOB SECURITY

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:44):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the mother of the member for Wallsend was a school cleaner of 24 years service.
- (2) Notes that the Government intends to roll back the conditions of school cleaners in New South Wales.
- (3) Notes cleaners will be forced to reapply for their jobs at the end of every contract, which will see them lose their accrued sick and recreational leave as well as jeopardise their job security.
- (4) Urges the Premier to take urgent steps to protect school cleaners' jobs and conditions.

Last year thousands of cleaners were left wondering if they would be thrown out of work when the Government announced plans to make cleaners reapply for their jobs at the end of its contract this coming July. The previous arrangements have been in place since 1994, enabling cleaners to work, raise their kids and plan their lives with the knowledge that they had work security. They did not have to worry that when the Government picked a new contractor, they would lose their job security, their entitlements and potentially, their livelihoods. It was a worrying time for many in the industry. A cleaner at a local school told me:

I was terrified that I would lose my job and be out on the street... We are already struggling with the amount of work we need to do and the hours we have to do it in. A cut to our staffing numbers or our working hours would just make it untenable.

In November, NSW Branch Secretary of United Voice, Mel Gatfield, told the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

For the first time in 24 years, every cleaner will have to reapply for their job, with many facing an anxious wait to see if they will have a job come July next year. After years—and in some cases, decades—of service to their school, many cleaners fear that finding another job will be next to impossible, particularly in regional areas.

As many as 7,000 cleaners were left anxious and worried over Christmas. Thanks to the hard work of Ms Gatfield and the United Voice, the Government has backed down. In February, it was announced that cleaners who were already in their jobs would not have to reapply and United Voice secured important concessions on entitlements. In the wake of the cleaners' victory, a primary school cleaner, Alison Redman, said to me:

We're all so relieved that we now have job security and our hours guaranteed, and can go back to taking care of our schools.

What this Government tried to do, and would have succeeded in doing were it not for the campaign launched by United Voice, was deeply concerning. All school cleaners play a vital, often unacknowledged, role in our society. Without them, schools grind to a halt. We all remember the school cleaners strike in 2004, which caused schools across the State to close. Just like everyone else, school cleaners deserve fair pay, fair conditions and job security. We are living in a time when the workforce is increasingly casualised. For many people job security has become a thing of the past, which is a worry.

The rise of the so-called gig economy means many people are forced to live hand-to-mouth. How can people be expected to build their lives when they are worried about getting enough work to pay the rent next week? Forcing school cleaners to reapply for their jobs and forcing them to take short-term contracts shunts them into this difficult lifestyle. This is an issue close to my heart. For 24 years, my mum, Roma, was a school cleaner at Weston Infant School in the electorate of the good member for Cessnock.

I know how hard she worked. I know how important her work was to her school. Her work, her wage was crucial to keeping my family going. I applaud United Voice for standing up for their members and forcing the Government to the negotiating table. I salute my mum and every cleaner in New South Wales for working so hard and doing such an important job. Imagine a hospital without good cleaning staff: What sort of risk would that place on the patients and staff? A hospital would not be a place that was hygienically safe without the wonderful cleaners, who are often not acknowledged. I thank each of the cleaners at Parliament House, who are wonderfully hardworking people. I love to see them here in the morning.

**Mr Damien Tudehope:** Hear! Hear!

**Ms SONIA HORNERY:** I am pleased that all the Government members present in the Chamber agree. I call upon the Government to prevent the casualisation of the State's workforce and the erosion of pay and conditions. Every worker deserves security.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (12:50):** I regret to say that this apparently well-intentioned motion that has been moved by the member from Wallsend has a disingenuous foundation. In New South Wales Government cleaning services were outsourced to the private sector as long ago as 1994 following a transition from the Government Cleaning Service. It requires a story based on a previous generation of cleaners to try and make some point about the renewal of the current contract. Cleaning contracts were tendered and awarded to the private sector by the Carr Labor Government in 1999 and again in 2006 before the current contract was put in place in 2011. Neither the existence of private sector cleaning contracts nor the fact that they are renewed should be a surprise to the Labor Party because Labor entered into those contracts as the government of this State on two occasions—in 1999 and 2006.

Labor was content to engage the private sector to perform this work when in government, but, as often happens in this place, pretends what the Coalition Government is doing is something different to what they would do, if they were in government. Labor should not pretend to unions from which it seeks funding for its election campaign in 2019 that Labor would do anything different. Labor's past performance in relation to this matter in 1999 and 2006 is the best guide to their future actions. Another example in which the Labor Opposition pretended it would do something different from this Government's policy includes the Land and Property Information [LPI] concession to a private operator. After Labor kept misinforming the public on how bad and dangerous the Government's policy was, the State Labor Governments in Victoria and South Australia quickly did exactly the same as our Government did and let their Government's concession to private operators for its land title services. Many would be unaware that, without any public complaints whatsoever, the LPI private operator has been running the New South Wales concession since the middle of last year.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: I am conscious of the time. My point of order relates to Standing Order 76. The motion is about school cleaners. It is not about the LPI.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member will confine his remarks to the leave of the motion.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I am addressing the motion and the renewal of a private contract by the Government. Nobody has had to take out title insurance with regard to the LPI concession, as was dishonestly suggested.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: I take the very same point of order. Mr Temporary Speaker, you just made a ruling. The member is flouting that ruling.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member is attempting to address the leave of the motion. I will listen further.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** The Government has a long and extensive history of supporting the rights of cleaners and other workers. The Coalition Government provided employment guarantees when cleaning services were first outsourced to the private sector in 1994. Since that time, contracted companies have provided a reliable and quality service to keep our schools and other public buildings clean and well maintained. Approximately 6,300 cleaners are employed in permanent, part-time or casual roles to service the current facilities' management contracts. These cleaners are employed directly by cleaning providers, not by the Government. This should not be any surprise to the member for Wallsend. No doubt if she has attended her local schools and spoken to the principals, she would be aware of that. I am sure that the member for Wallsend would be aware that a private contractor cleans her electorate office.

The whole of the New South Wales Government's facilities management is the contract under which cleaning services are delivered to approximately 4,200 sites in New South Wales, which include government schools, TAFE colleges, courthouses, government offices and essential services buildings such as ambulance,

police and fire stations. The Government is focused on ensuring the new cleaning contract delivers value for money for the people of New South Wales. That is accomplished through facilities management practices that not only are innovative but also reflect market norms and provide both large and small-to-medium enterprise providers with the opportunity to participate. This provides opportunities for disadvantaged members of our community because it includes Aboriginal businesses, thereby creating jobs for Indigenous Australians.

Following a two-stage procurement process, broad consultation with cleaners and feedback from stakeholders, the Government has agreed to continue with the current principles in the existing contract. That means that cleaners' rights are fully protected. If my word is not accepted on the matter, I invite members to do something I rarely do: Look at the union website and see what United Voice has to say. In a post on 12 February 2018, United Voice said that the job security of cleaners has been guaranteed. The New South Wales Government has had a long history of supporting the rights and entitlements of cleaners and workers, having guaranteed their entitlements under private contracts for the past 20 years. While the Government considers its next step in the procurement of the new cleaning contract, it has secured an eight-month contract extension with the current service providers to 1 March 2019. The extension will ensure that there will be no disruption to service delivery and will provide job security and peace of mind for cleaners up until that date and beyond.

The Government will continue to consult with stakeholders and remains committed to ensuring the new contract will deliver value for money for taxpayers and improved service levels across the State. The Government already has awarded eight new facilities management contracts to deliver maintenance services to approximately 3,000 government sites across the State. Those new contracts have saved the Government \$60 million over the term of the contracts. Efficiency and value for money is not an end in itself, but that \$60 million will provide more services for the people in this State. Cleaners perform important work that is valued by the Government and critical to the running of New South Wales schools. The Government will ensure that that continues in the future.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:54):** I recognised a number of accuracies in the member for Ku-ring-gai's contribution relating to when cleaning was tendered out, renewed and renewed again. All those details and dates are absolutely spot-on. That was something that was done by the previous Labor Government. Motions take quite a while to come before Parliament after being notified.

**Mr Damien Tudehope:** Then withdraw it.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Congratulate us.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The member will be heard in silence.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** The question that was at hand when this motion was moved some time ago is that all members of this House should be united in support for the motion. The motion is about protecting some of the lowest paid and most vulnerable workers in the workforce. On a number of occasions government practices demonstrably have not adhered to protecting workers. If not for the campaign by the cleaners, this motion may not have been moved. Many Government members are probably not aware that the issue has been around for some time. During budget estimates last year, a number of Ministers asked questions about the cleaning contracts that were being reconsidered at the time. A PricewaterhouseCoopers report indicated that savings of up to 30 per cent could be made.

The great majority of the money spent on any cleaning contract is for labour. The chemicals cost pretty much the same amount of money and the machines and equipment used cost pretty much the same amount of money. That means that the 30 per cent saving could come from one of two places—either reduced hours leading to reduced wages or a reduction in the amount of time allocated for cleaning. The first option is to drive down wages even further. Of course, every commentator in the country is talking about flat and stagnant wages growth which is affecting the economy. The second option is to talk about the cleanliness of our public facilities. At the time the Minister for Education was offered the opportunity to partake in a "clean our classroom" challenge, which involved trying to clean a classroom in six minutes, which is how long cleaners get to clean a classroom.

Deducting 30 per cent off six minutes means that classrooms need to be cleaned in four minutes. As a former schoolteacher, I have a fairly good idea about what classrooms look like at the end of the day. The only way that the cleaning gets done is by schoolteachers, students and cleaners cooperating. Teachers and students make sure that their classrooms are as clean as possible before they leave and then the cleaners go through and do their best to improve that cleanliness in the couple of minutes they have in each classroom. If the time that cleaners have to clean classrooms is reduced, who will pick up the extra workload? Teachers and students will have to clean the classrooms. That is where the 30 per cent saving will come from. That is why the member for Wallsend moved this motion. Some Government members would not be aware of the history relating to this matter. Job guarantees have been supported but cuts to cleaning services cannot be supported because there is nothing left to cut.

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (13:02):** One of the most prolific speakers in this Chamber is the member for Wallsend, who every sitting day gives notice of the motions that she intends to move. I congratulate the member on her diligence in moving motions that generally relate to issues affecting her electorate. She is a passionate advocate for her electorate. However, when the motion she is asking the House to debate is significantly out of date she has an opportunity either to withdraw her motion or to amend it. The motion refers to the fact that her mother has been employed as a school cleaner for 24 years. Her mother should be congratulated on the level of service she has provided to school communities in New South Wales, which is fantastic. I am sure all members are happy to acknowledge the level of service she has provided. The motion continues:

- (2) Notes that the Government intends to roll back the conditions of school cleaners in New South Wales.

That is not true and the member for Wallsend knows that. She may have given notice of her motion months ago but how can she move that motion knowing full well that the fundamental tenet on which it is based is not true. The motion also states:

- (3) Notes cleaners will be forced to reapply for their jobs at the end of every contract, which will see them lose their accrued sick and recreational leave as well as jeopardise their job security.

That is not true. The member for Wallsend knows it is not true. Her mother has the benefit of a contract that will protect her entitlements. Why did she move this motion when she knows it is not based on fact? It is an abuse of the time of this House. Finally, the motion states:

- (4) Urges the Premier to take urgent steps to protect school cleaners' jobs and conditions.

The member for Wallsend knows that that has already been done. Why are we using the time of this House to debate a motion that is no longer relevant? It defies belief that we are taking up time the time of this House to debate this motion. However, it gives me an opportunity—

**Ms Anna Watson:** Did you read it?

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I just read it out.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Did you understand it?

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** Of course I understand it. The member for Shellharbour knows that this motion is flawed and untrue. The Minister for Education was in the Chamber earlier. We welcome the contracts that the Department of Education enters into for the benefit of students and schools. Members should oppose this motion on the basis that it is a waste of the time of this House.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:06):** I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend which relates to our State school cleaners. I am disgusted by the Government's relentless attacks on State workers, its privatisation agenda and its efforts to casualise workforces across New South Wales. Last year I met with six school cleaners from my electorate who collectively had worked 134 years—an average of 22 years each—at schools and other government sites across the Illawarra. Government members decided that despite decades of loyalty and dedication to their jobs, workers rights should still be questioned. Their quality of work and ethics have not changed but the Government decided their livelihoods should be put on the line. These government employees have been completing their work to the highest possible standard for decades.

It should shock me that Government members are so devoid of compassion they think this policy is acceptable at any level, but it does not. Time and again Government members have shown us that they do not care about the State's workers. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure cannot wait to sell off every public transport service across the State. He looks forward to the day when he will not "...have to deal with the rail union anymore because we're going to have driverless trains here." Cabinet members shirk their responsibility to this State's citizens by selling everything off to the private sector. Common sense and decency tell me that some things should not be up for sale, including a policy that will rob State school cleaners of their job security even if they have been in service for 20 or 30 years.

**Mr Ray Williams:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 86. I move:

That the question be now put.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47  
Noes .....33  
Majority..... 14



## AYES

Anderson, Mr K  
Brookes, Mr G  
Cooke, Ms S  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr A  
George, Mr T  
Grant, Mr T  
Henskens, Mr A  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Griffin, Mr J  
Humphries, Mr K  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Roberts, Mr A  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
Fraser, Mr A  
Goward, Ms P  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Rowell, Mr J  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

## NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dib, Mr J  
Finn, Ms J  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Scully, Mr P  
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Donato, Mr P  
Harris, Mr D  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Tesch, Ms L (teller)  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Piper, Mr G  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

## PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Pavey, Mrs M

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:15):** In reply: I express disappointment that this important debate about the most vulnerable people in our society has been gagged by the Government. This motion was put forward in November last year. Government members know when they put their motions forward that they will have precedence and be dealt with in 24 hours. The rest of us have to wait. I wait and wait for my important motions to be dealt with. I acknowledge those members who have made contributions to the debate: the member for Ku-ring-gai, the member for Cessnock, and the member for Epping. I am sorry that the contribution of the member for Shellharbour was so good that the Government determined to cut it short. It shows how wonderfully well she was speaking. I am also disappointed that the member for Lakemba did not get an opportunity to make a contribution.

In 1994 the Carr Government outsourced cleaning. I know that I am old, but I was not a member of Parliament at that time. If I had been I would have spoken in caucus about that notion. Nevertheless, we are dealing with what the Government was prepared to do late last year to the livelihoods of our most vulnerable and hardworking people. Again, I thank each and every one of the cleaners in New South Wales for their hard work. The member for Ku-ring-gai also acknowledged cleaners and made some good points, but he got off the track and

talked for some time about land titles services, which is a pity because it has no relevance to cleaners. We are trying to acknowledge today their hard work and to ensure that we protect their working conditions.

There was no acknowledgement from the Government of the hard work of the union to protect the rights of cleaners, or of the hard work of cleaners to ensure that their jobs and livelihoods are protected. I acknowledge the valuable points made by the member for Cessnock. He spoke about how the Government was trying to shave 30 per cent off the cleaning contracts, which effectively would mean a loss of 30 per cent of labour. That would have meant that cleaners would have had to work shorter hours and do more work. In the end, it would have affected the conditions of our schools, and we do not want that. The member for Cessnock made the good point that teachers do as much as they can to assist cleaners but that cleaners have only six minutes to clean a classroom, which is crazy. They are run off their feet, poor things, and we need to consider that in the future.

The member for Epping read the motion but he is out of date. It seems that he is not aware that I gave notice of this motion on 21 November 2017 and only now is it being debated. I acknowledge the changes made by the Government but we must protect the most vulnerable people in our community, many of whom are cleaners. My mother did not have many opportunities when she was growing up in an orphanage. She was pregnant to my dad when she was 14. I consider her to be an example of a person who was vulnerable. I urge members to support my motion.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....32  
Noes .....48  
Majority..... 16

#### AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harris, Mr D  
Hornery, Ms S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Piper, Mr G  
Tesch, Ms L (teller)  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Finn, Ms J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Dib, Mr J  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Smith, Ms T F  
Washington, Ms K

#### NOES

Anderson, Mr K  
Brookes, Mr G  
Cooke, Ms S  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr A  
George, Mr T  
Grant, Mr T  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Rowell, Mr J  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
Fraser, Mr A  
Goward, Ms P  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Humphries, Mr K  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Roberts, Mr A  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

## PAIRS

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

Barilaro, Mr J  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Pavey, Mrs M

**Motion negatived.**

**S. ANTONIO DA PADOVA ASSOCIATION**

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (13:26):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the contribution of the S. Antonio Da Padova Association on its forty-seventh annual ball function.
- (2) Acknowledges the contribution made by President Peter Maniscalco in his 25 years as president.
- (3) Acknowledges the contribution of the organisation in delivering an aged care facility for the community.

It is important to recognise grassroots multicultural organisations that support and include members of our community. One such organisation is the S. Antonio da Padova Protettore Di Poggioreale Trapani (Sydney) Ltd. This organisation comprises a small group of Italian migrants from the town of Poggioreale in Sicily who came to Australia many years ago. In October last year the S. Antonio da Padova Association held its forty-seventh annual ball at Mediterranean House in my electorate; a function centre that was started 58 years ago and one of the first function centres in Sydney to cater Mediterranean style for the Italian community.

The night celebrates all things Italian and is an opportunity to gather with friends and family over food, dance and laughter and to raise funds for those who are less fortunate. The forty-seventh annual ball was an extremely successful event that raised funds for various causes and enabled members of the Italian community to come together. It is revolutionary that that humble group has transformed into a not-for-profit organisation that supports the Italian community, in particular, elderly residents. I congratulate the S. Antonio da Padova Association on its forty-seventh annual ball and I wish it a prosperous and successful future. I look forward to attending the next ball later in the year, and I thank board members for their hard work in organising this annual event and for their contribution to the Italian community.

I recognise the contribution of President Peter Maniscalco who has served for 25 years as president of this organisation. He was president from 1986 until 1995, and again from 2003 until now. I am very supportive and encourage all Italians to strive for success. Mr Maniscalco has achieved recognition for his work in the community. He has served in many executive positions in the Rotary Club of Hunters Hill branches, including as president for a number of years and as treasurer. Mr Maniscalco also served on a number of State committees in 2012, including the Trade and Commerce (Subcommittee), the Health and Age Care (Sub-Committee) and the Italian Community Ministerial Consultative Committee.

Last year, I had the honour of presenting Mr Maniscalco with a Certificate of Appreciation from the New South Wales Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP, to congratulate him on his 25 years of leadership and service to the Italian association, S. Antonio Da Padova Protettore Di Poggioreale Trapani (Sydney) Ltd. I also recognise the contribution of the S. Antonio association for its contribution to delivering an aged-care facility for the Italian community, which is in Minister Dominello's electorate of Ryde. The S. Antonio da Padova Village Nursing Home has grown from having just 26 beds when it opened in 1987, to 112 beds in 2017. This nursing home is located in Ryde and seeks to foster a sense of community and quality care for the elderly. Many Italians have transitioned to this aged-care facility and it is so nice to see that they can retire with members of their community and feel comfortable in doing so.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to the students and teacher from Kingswood High School, guests of the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport, and member for Penrith. I also welcome the East Gosford Probus Club, guests of the member for Terrigal. I acknowledge in the gallery a delegation from the Rotary Club of Nowra, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary

for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama. I also welcome Mr Ian and Mrs Inta Scully, parents of the member for Wollongong and the member's guests.

*Announcements*

**MEMBER FOR GOSFORD**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I recognise that today the member for Gosford is celebrating her birthday. I apologise to the member for Terrigal, whose birthday I missed yesterday.

**DEATH OF TOM FAUVETTE**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I sadly inform the House of the passing of Tom Fauvette. Tom worked as a parliamentary attendant for the Legislative Assembly from 1991 until 2002. He was a welcome presence on the floor of the House and at the Legislative Assembly front desk. He will be remembered by his wife, Julia, and two sons, Ben and Louis, and his extended family and friends, who can all be assured that our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time.

*Members*

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House today that the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure will be answering questions in the absence of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight.

*Question Time*

**GOVERNMENT CONTRACT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:20):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the Government engaged Pacific Complete as delivery partner on the Wave 5 section of the Pacific Highway upgrade, and given that the Government's delivery partner promised that all subcontractors would be paid for works performed, why has the Government allowed 23 subcontractors to be left unpaid to the tune of \$7.3 million?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:22):** When the Coalition came to Government we made a point of ensuring that whoever engaged with us was paid in an appropriate time. When departments are engaging with small business, in particular, they impose deadlines on themselves as to the payment of suppliers of products and services to government. Similarly, when an example such as the one raised by the Leader of the Opposition is brought to the Government's attention, both Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and the Small Business Commissioner continue to work with the subcontractors. We value the contribution of non-government operators assisting in the delivery of infrastructure. The Government applauds those parties who seek to assist the Government in delivering the massive record infrastructure pipeline, but we also want to ensure that everybody is treated fairly and appropriately during these processes.

When organisations let other organisations down, there are systems and processes in place to ensure that both the Small Business Commissioner and RMS are engaged. From preliminary advice I have received, I understand that both RMS and the Small Business Commissioner have been on this case. The Government always endeavours to ensure that there is timely support for those businesses working for and with the Government. The Government believes in not only doing things fairly and correctly, but also pushing ahead with the regional roads program, in particular.

I was pleased to hear that the Federal budget indicated the Coffs Harbour bypass would be proceeding. I was with the member for Coffs Harbour when we heard that news. As we did the street walk and spoke to local residents, it was clear that they appreciated not only what the New South Wales Government had done on Pacific Highway but also the Commonwealth Government's contribution. I assure all members in rural and regional New South Wales, in particular, that this Government appreciates both the imperative of road safety and timeliness in the construction of major roads. This Government will ensure that that is done as quickly as possible. The Government is also providing support—as it always does—to local councils that sometimes engage people on its behalf to help in the construction of local and State roads.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. With respect, the Premier has strayed a long way from the substance of the question, which was about 23 subcontractors who are facing financial ruin because they have been left unpaid for the work they have done.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Premier is answering the question. There is no point of order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight is at a meeting with other roads Ministers from around the country. However, I can advise the House on her behalf that she is working to resolve the issue as soon as possible and will consider what else can be done. The Government has also established a working group with relevant New South Wales agencies to consider options to strengthen contract and project management processes involving road projects like this one.

#### ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (14:26):** I address my question to the Premier. What is the New South Wales Government doing to create more jobs and prosperity for Aboriginal people?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:26):** I heartily thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question because I know that he and many of our colleagues care about not only job creation in New South Wales but also, and particularly, job creation in Indigenous communities. Before I detail an exciting announcement that the Minister for Finance, Services and Property and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the other place made about that issue, I have some information hot off the press. I do not want to steal the Treasurer's thunder, but the job numbers released a few hours ago are phenomenal. I am pleased to say that 500,000 jobs have been created since the Coalition has been in government in New South Wales. That is why ours is the party and the Government of the workers. That is why our State is blowing all the other States out of the water when it comes to jobs.

I nearly fell off my chair when I heard that figure. This is the thirty-fifth consecutive month in which New South Wales has recorded the highest jobs growth and the lowest unemployment in the country. During the election campaign in 2015, the Government gave itself a target of creating 150,000 new jobs. Today's numbers indicate that 305,000 jobs have been created. We have doubled our own target. That is why ours is the party of the workers. This Government supports hardworking men and women who are providing food and support for their families and who are driving economic activity in New South Wales. The Government also appreciates that 60 per cent of the new job entrants to the market are women, and the overwhelming majority of new jobs are full time. They are real, sustainable jobs. This is exciting news for everyone in New South Wales because no matter how well our State is doing, as Premier, I appreciate that job security is top of mind for everyone whatever they do or where they do it. Everyone can be assured that this Government understands that and that it will support the workers of this State because it appreciates what that means.

More directly in response to the admirable question asked by the member for Wagga Wagga, I am pleased to say that the Minister for Finance, Services and Property, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and I attended an inspiring morning tea with 60 leaders and business leaders from the Indigenous communities of Redfern. We proudly announced that 3 per cent of all goods and services that the Government relies on will be provided by Aboriginal businesses. That will generate 1,000 jobs every year; it is a real, practical solution for our Indigenous brothers and sisters to ensure that we support job creation for them. Not only is this positive support for those running Indigenous businesses but also it will encourage them to employ more Indigenous workers. The announcement was warmly received and the feedback that morning was truly inspiring.

The Government strongly believes record infrastructure pipeline projects and record jobs in construction should benefit everyone because of the opportunities they create. Of course, we cannot forget that the jobs growth we are experiencing in New South Wales is because of this Government's record investment in infrastructure. The record investment in WestConnex—which members opposite do not support—has generated 10,000 jobs and 500 apprenticeships alone. We also have the metro rail projects around the State, and I thank the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure for his efforts in that regard. Sydney Metro Northwest and the Sydney Metro City and Southwest—the project that members opposite want to cancel—will generate another 21,000 jobs, and Sydney Metro City will generate 500 apprenticeships. Of course, the Government also has targets for Indigenous employment on larger projects. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his interest in this important issue. We all care about jobs, job creation and job security. The Government enters into about \$20 billion worth of contracts a year for goods and services. If 3 per cent of that work is supported by Indigenous businesses, which then employ Indigenous workers, that will be a huge boost to their communities. This Government understands what it means for someone's self-satisfaction and dignity to have a job they love that is rewarding and that supports them, their family and their community. That is why the gathering last Friday was so inspiring for the Government. I thank the members of the chamber of commerce, the Indigenous community leaders, the elders and the people running those businesses. I was inspired by a number of stories I heard on the day. For example, two young gentlemen have established a construction business based in Redfern. I think they have already employed 60 people and they are looking to employ more. That is the kind of success story we like to hear across the board.

I am extremely pleased that the member for Wagga Wagga asked this question today because the most recent jobs figures were released just a few hours ago. I am not often pleasantly surprised by the magnitude of the figures, but today I was. Those of us who have been here since the Coalition came to government appreciate the amount of work that must be done to turn around the budget, to build a strong economy, and to get projects off the ground. Today's job numbers were truly inspiring and they give the Coalition the heart to keep going because we govern for the workers.

#### **GOVERNMENT CONTRACT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:33):** I direct my question to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in his capacity representing the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister confirm that Ostwald Bros were trading while insolvent for many months, yet due diligence was not performed by the agency of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and her delivery partner, leaving 23 contractors owed \$7.3 million for their work?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:34):** I thought the Premier did a pretty good job at answering that question—the same question—and obviously I am going to deliver a similar response.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** It won't be as good.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** It will not be as good as the Premier's but it will be good. The observation I make is that we on this side have had to reform the Security of Payments Act since coming to government because we recognised that after 16 years of belligerence—16 shameful years—we had to make some changes. I make that point. I know that a number of finance Ministers have sought to do that, because we recognise the important role that subcontractors play on building sites across this State. Unfortunately, from time to time head contractors do the wrong thing in terms of those subcontractors. We have seen instances over the years when some head contractors have even signed statutory declarations to say that subcontractors have been paid but have been found wanting. So we have made some sensible changes. This is a very serious situation for some subcontractors. I know for a fact that the roads Minister, through her agency, has sought to find ways not only through Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] but also—

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** She's just blaming the contractors.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Is the member for Maitland going to listen? I wish the ears worked as well as the mouth.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Of all people to take a point of order on this one—should I insert a beep?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will resume his seat. Does the member for Maroubra have a problem with that comment?

**Mr Michael Daley:** Yes, I do—big time.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member knows what he should do.

**Ms Kate Washington:** I am trying to do the right thing, Deputy Speaker. My point of order is under Standing Order 73. I request that you ask the Minister to withdraw his comments about the member for Maitland. They are disorderly and disrespectful in the highest order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** So is dropping the f-bomb in Parliament, but we will not worry about that. I apologise to the member for Maitland. Rather than sit in place and yell at me, she should get up and take a point of order or give notice of a motion.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** She does not have to do that.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question was about the failure of the Minister to exercise due diligence. It was about the 23 contractors who are out of pocket by \$7.3 million. It is wrong of the Minister to make a joke out of this.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I make this point: First of all, we are doing an enormous amount of work on the Pacific Highway because work was not done previously by the former Government—fact. The point

is that there has been action taken both through the Small Business Commissioner and RMS to try to assist these subcontractors. The roads Minister is obviously going to continue to work through that issue. I also confirm for the House that RMS has also looked very closely at the financial performance of some of these head contractors at regular intervals, which makes sense.

The RMS is also determining ways in which mechanisms can be applied to put in place better ways to pay subcontractors directly. There is a lot of work happening up there. Obviously RMS will do everything it conceivably can to assist those subcontractors affected by this situation. It is unfortunate that this has happened. The roads Minister has been working around the clock on this matter because she does not want to see good local people put under enormous pressure as a result of a head contractor going under—but occasionally it happens. Those opposite can play their politics; we on this side will look after the small businesses concerned. We will continue to deliver upgrades to the Pacific Highway.

### STATE ECONOMY

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (14:39):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Treasurer update the House on the state of the New South Wales economy, and are there any alternative approaches?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:39):** I thank the member for Miranda for her question. I congratulate her on the great work she does day in and day out for the people of Miranda. She is the best member in Miranda's history. In a short time she has delivered \$60 million for the Sutherland Hospital redevelopment, \$40 million for the Alford's Point Road upgrade, and the Jannali station upgrade—all achieved by this member. She is awesome. For the past eight years the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has been hard at work making our State strong, free and fair. We have created opportunities for families and communities to get ahead. Those opposite do not understand, but that is what true fairness is all about. This is a Government that keeps its commitments, especially when it comes to delivering jobs.

Those opposite try to represent us as the party of the better off, but that is not true. In David Cameron's words, we are the party of those who want to be better off, of those who aspire to create a better life for themselves and their families. Nothing creates more opportunities than giving people a job. In contrast, those opposite have a shameful record. In Labor's last five years in office, the New South Wales unemployment rate was above the national average for nearly all that time. New South Wales was a dead weight on the national economy, dragging the entire country down. Today things are very different: New South Wales is the engine room of Australia's economy, driving things forward.

As the Premier has pointed out, and as I am also proud to announce today, our State has hit another important milestone on the journey to prosperity. Since coming to office in 2011, for the very first time—and as of today—the Liberal-Nationals Coalition has delivered more than half a million jobs for the people of this State. Never before have so many jobs been created in such a short space of time. This is a golden era of opportunity in New South Wales. At the last election, we promised to deliver 150,000 jobs over four years. Today, three years in, there are 300,000 jobs—double our original commitment. Unlike Labor, this Government underpromises and overdelivers.

This is a beautiful set of numbers. In the past year alone, 156,000 jobs were created—double the rate in the rest of Australia and by far the highest jobs growth rate of any State. Our participation rate has hit an all-time high of 64.8 per cent. The youth unemployment rate of 10.8 per cent is the lowest of any State in the nation. Even better news is that this is a jobs revolution that has been led by the women of New South Wales. Of the 156,000 jobs created in the past year, nearly 70 per cent were filled by women. The female participation rate is also at an all-time high of 59.4 per cent, and the New South Wales female unemployment rate of 4.7 per cent is the lowest of any State in Australia. Forget being the party of the worker; we are also the party of women.

The numbers that have come out today are a ringing endorsement of our economic policies and a damning indictment of the policies of those opposite. The member for Port Macquarie has pointed out there are not many smiles on the other side of the House today. That is because good news for the people of New South Wales is bad news for the Labor Party. The shadow Treasurer is miserable. I feel sorry for him because he has the toughest job in the country. He cannot talk about the economic growth rate. He cannot talk about the jobs growth rate. He cannot talk about the unemployment rate. He cannot talk about the participation rate. He cannot talk about the interest rate. So yesterday he spoke about the discount rate. [*Extension of time*]

Yesterday the shadow Treasurer said that he wanted to lower the discount rate so that he can increase the benefit-cost ratio and fund dodgy projects in Labor electorates. But the reality is that Ryan Park thinks that the discount rate is something you get at Lowes.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will refer to members by their correct titles.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Labor thinks that funding big infrastructure projects is like buying a big I TV from Harvey Norman—no deposit, no interest and nothing to pay forever. But under Labor the people of New South Wales will always be paying. It does not matter if the discount rate is 4 per cent, 10 per cent or 20 per cent, if the delivery rate is zero the discount rate will not even matter. The discount rate on nothing is still nothing. Members of the Labor Party love discounts. The idea of discounts comes very easily to them. Ian MacDonald loved discounts on mining licences. Eddie Obeid loved discounts on leases down at Circular Quay. Sam Dastyari loved Chinese discounts on his expenses. Craig Thomson loved discounts of another kind! The member for Strathfield likes discounts on the Newcastle Post Office. We will come back to that in February next year. The Leader of the Opposition likes discounts on blood money. When it comes to economic delivery and jobs growth the Liberals and Nationals will always take our State forward from the miserable days of those opposite.

#### GOVERNMENT CONTRACT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:46):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the lack of due diligence from her Minister's agency and her delivery partner, will the Premier pay the 23 subcontractors currently facing financial ruin for the work they performed and step into the subcontractors' shoes as a creditor under the liquidation of Ostwald Bros?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:47):** I thank the member for Maitland for asking the same question for the third time. I start by saying that, of course, we appreciate that everybody who has contracts with the State Government, whether they are subbies or main contractors, need to be treated fairly. That is exactly what we are doing in this process. The advice we received from the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight is that her agency and the NSW Small Business Commissioner are absolutely committed to making sure that everybody who is owed receives their share in a timely fashion. That goes without saying.

Today's job figures demonstrate the Government's commitment to business confidence in New South Wales. Government members know that, because of all the contracts we have issued to the business sector and because of the massive \$80 billion infrastructure pipeline, which comes on top of the \$111 billion the Government has already spent in infrastructure, there has been business investment—not Government investment—of about \$15 billion per quarter in New South Wales, which has the highest rate of business investment of any State by far. In fact, the last time I looked at those figures—I stand to be corrected—there had been a 20 per cent increase on business investment as compared to the previous quarter.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Are you going to pay?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The contractor in that instance has been paid. The issue is with the subcontractor. That is exactly what we are doing. That is an important distinction. I stress again that the advice I have just received is that the contractor has been paid. The issue is with the subcontractors. Have you got that?

**Mr Michael Daley:** That is why we asked the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** You asked the same question three times. Doesn't the Opposition have any more questions?

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: It was not the same question. I can read the question out again for the Premier.

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

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Premier is boasting about all the money in the State coffers and business investment, but there are 23 contractors. We have asked in this question—it has not been asked before—whether the Premier will pay: Will the Premier go down as the subcontractor's creditor under the liquidation? It is a very different question. Obviously, the Premier has not listened to it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Premier is addressing the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for Maitland because now I have heard the question four times, not three times. As I said, the contractor has been paid. That is why we have engaged the Small Business Commissioner to support our Roads and Maritime Services to ensure fair payments.

**Mr Michael Daley:** It is an indictment of your management.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** It is your failure.



**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Do not pretend that you care about business. At every opportunity you have you attack business and rip up contracts. The message that the Labor Party sends to the business community is, "We will rip up all the contracts. We will tax you. We will put you out of business."

#### **SMALL BUSINESS RED TAPE REDUCTION**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:51):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. What is the New South Wales Government doing to reduce red tape and other related matters?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: I draw the Deputy Speaker's attention to the fact that there is a prop on the table. I am not sure whether it is a flop or a prop. I am not sure about the standing orders on flops.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. I place the member for Maitland on three calls to order.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (14:51):** The member's first interjection was a fizzer. Her next interjection was a fizzer.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. Order!

**Mr Daryl Maguire:** Point of order: Standing orders require that when a member seeks to take a point of order they should rise in their place and wait until they are given the call. The member has continually walked to the microphone before she has been given the call. I ask that you inform her of the standing order and ensure that members obey the standing orders of this House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is exactly the reason the member for Maitland is on three calls to order. There is no other reason.

**Mr David Harris:** To the point of order: That point of order was upheld, so when members on this side of the Chamber stand to take a point of order, Ministers should resume their seats immediately. They continually fail to do that. They rant and rave. They ignore and disrespect the Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Before I ask a member who seeks to take a point of order to speak, I always wait until the Minister has sat down.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** They haven't sat down on their side.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will maintain order in this House.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** We will call the points of order, as we are entitled to.

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The member for Cootamundra is an outstanding member. She is the best member that Cootamundra has ever seen, absolutely outstanding. I have just been told Katrina is in the gallery.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** No-one is better placed to understand the pressures on small business than the member for Cootamundra because, for those members who do not know, in 2012 she was the New South Wales Florist of the Year. She is uniquely placed to understand the impact that red tape has on small business. Unlike those opposite, all on this side of the Chamber are committed to supporting small business and getting rid of red tape. That is why this Government is working hard to make it easier to do business in New South Wales.

Recently, we introduced the Easy to Do Business program. Those opposite are very interested in this program. It is a free service for business owners that offers one point of contact with the New South Wales Government. It is one simple, online portal that shares information with government agencies, reducing duplication and providing small businesses with a one-stop shop and a case manager to assist with compliance. I know the member for Cootamundra is very interested in this. Already the program is having an impact, reducing the amount of time it takes to open a cafe, restaurant or small bar from up to 18 months to just three months. That is a huge win. We will extend that program from cafes, small bars and restaurants to include the housing construction industry. There is more.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Steak knives.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Not just steak knives, what we will also throw in is our knowledge. Red tape is the biggest burden on small business in New South Wales. That is why since this Government came to power we have repealed more than 237 laws in this State. We have repealed the Valuers Act, the Transfer of Records Act, and who could forget the repeal of the home fund restoration legislation. We have abolished licences for property valuers and travel agents and reduced the number of licences for motor dealers from 22 to three.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Maitland to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maitland left the Chamber at 14.58.]*

**Mr MATT KEAN:** These were steps taken to remove the red tape and regulation that was stifling business, jobs and growth in New South Wales. There are reams of archaic pieces of unnecessary regulation stifling business and competition in New South Wales. It is time to remove laws dealing with the liability for damage caused by guests' horses at inns, as well as laws allowing the State to requisition and ration goods if necessary—no doubt fully supported by the member for Liverpool. There is more to do. In the last seven years of the Labor Government it passed 841 new laws, which is more than 260 new laws in the same period that this Government has been in office.

Labor has never seen a law that it did not want to introduce and it has never seen a business in New South Wales that it did not want to regulate. When Labor was in office it passed laws requiring home decorators in New South Wales to have a licence. Labor wanted to tell people what wallpaper they could put on the walls in their homes. It did not stop there. It was not good enough to regulate carpet and cushions. Under Labor, if one wanted to hang a few picture rails on the wall, one needed a licence in this State. *[Extension of time]*

No-one in this State was safe from Labor's red tape and regulation. It decided that a licence was needed in New South Wales to clean property. Under Labor, even cleaners in this State needed a licence. Labor legislated it. Under Labor everyone needed to comply with the law, except for Labor. Labor did not need to comply with the law—just ask Eddie. The Government knows that markets work best when red tape is reduced, when they are freer and there is more competition in the marketplace, and when they are more transparent. The only person who does not want more transparency is the shadow Minister, who wants to get rid of Fuel Check in New South Wales, and the app that gives consumers the information that they need to make better decisions to save money at the bowser. The shadow Minister does not want commuters in this State to have the information they need to save money at the bowser.

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Even Queensland Labor likes it. Is it any wonder Labor left New South Wales in an absolute mess? Is it any wonder that while Labor was in office we saw Tasmania lapping New South Wales when it came to economic performance? This Government will always stand up for small business. We will always stand up for freer markets and more competition, driving down prices and giving consumers in New South Wales a fair go. We will always put consumers first, unlike those opposite, and we will continue to support our economy and business as the engine of growth in New South Wales.

#### TEA GARDENS AND HAWKS NEST WATER SUPPLY

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:02):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment. What action will the Government take to protect the environment and the town water supply of Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest, given the illegal construction of a 17-kilometre long canal by a property developer?

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (15:03):** I thank the member for Port Stephens for her question. As you know, this Government has been keen to serve your community well. We have worked well with your community over the issues at Williamstown. We will continue to serve your community well. Both the Premier and I are 100 per cent supporting your community. Last week in support of environmental protection within your local community an announcement was made for the provision of a koala hospital. I am happy to hear from this member on any other issue that she would like to share with me.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to the member not speaking through the Chair but instead talking across the table.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** The Government always stands ready to help the community across New South Wales. I am happy to meet with the member to hear what she has to say, to meet with members of her

local community, which the Premier and I have done on a number of occasions, and to assist her community so that it is better served than by her efforts.

### SOCIAL HOUSING

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:04):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's outstanding record in social housing and on any other inconsistencies that appear in alternative approaches?

**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) (15:05):** I thank the member for Drummoyne for remembering his question and acknowledge his commitment to delivering better outcomes for vulnerable tenants in his community. I am very pleased to remind the House that we have the biggest and best social housing building program of any State or Territory across the country. Of course, we should recall that I have also been asked about inconsistencies that have appeared in alternative approaches.

Last week the member for Bankstown certainly put out a very alternative approach and, sloppy as ever, it was full of inconsistencies. I have her press release here and I think I should go through it. I begin by reminding the House of the record of those opposite. At an average of more than 850 a year, Labor sold off more than 1,700 social housing properties between 2008 and 2010. By contrast, the member's own arithmetic shows a net increase in social housing properties in the three years under this Government, so there is a very stark contrast there. I will address the inconsistencies in the release and the position taken by the member.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I would have thought that all members would want to listen to this answer.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** In the second line the member for Bankstown criticises the Government for vesting 75 properties in the community housing sector last financial year. I am very surprised that the member would do that, given the following ringing endorsement of the Government's policy:

... we should build on their success and transfer more of the Government's stock to the community housing sector.

Who said that? I will give the member for Bankstown a hint. It was not me; it was not anyone on this side of the House. It was said at the 2015 Neville Wran lecture, which gets us a bit closer to who said it. It was delivered by someone on the Opposition benches—we are getting warmer—someone sitting on the front bench. In fact, it was none other than the Leader of the Opposition. The member for Bankstown has attacked her leader's position on vesting!

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I think it is clear that these two cannot even agree on a community housing policy, but we all know how the Leader of the Opposition feels about his shadow Minister—but we will leave that for another day. The shadow Minister's embarrassment should not end there. In another line in this release the claim is that "4,200 FACS cluster property titles have been sold." As usual, in that typical Labor way of trying to mislead the people of New South Wales, she is implying that these are public housing sales.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** That is actually correct; 4,200 property titles have been sold off in the FACS cluster.

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Listen and you might learn something.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** No, you learn something, Pru—4,200—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I place the member for Bankstown on three calls to order.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Keep going and you will be out. What the member for Bankstown neglects to mention is that the figure includes the sale of vacant land and green spaces to the non-government sector, so they are far from being social housing properties. How can this member ever expect to be the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing when she cannot even get through without disparaging the non-government sector and is once again at odds with the Leader of the Opposition? We should recall that Labor did nothing in this space for 16 years. It had no ideas then and it continues to have no ideas or plans. It delivered nothing—a very stark contrast. Did Labor have a plan for new supply? No. Did Labor have a plan for new forms of investment into social and affordable housing? No. Did Labor have a plan for how to actually improve the lives of tenants? No. It had nothing. [*Extension of time*]

It has taken this Government to come up with a real plan for social housing and homelessness and in doing so championing integrated social policy reform, which puts the history and the legacy of those opposite to shame. It is this Government delivering the \$22 billion Communities Plus, which will create 23,000 new and replacement—

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** No, they are not new.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** —new and replacement—

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Oh, now you are clarifying it.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** No, it has always been new and replacement because if you have dwellings that have not been repaired for 16 years you will have to replace a few of them, so it is 23,000 new and replacement social housing, 500 affordable and 40,000 private housing dwellings over a decade. This Government is delivering the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, which will deliver 3,400 social and affordable dwellings. It is this Government delivering almost 1,500 homes for vulnerable families funded by sales at Millers Point. It is this Government delivering a record investment into homelessness services and programs—a 43 per cent increase over four years.

It is this Government delivering initiatives that support people who need housing assistance and delivering better quality social housing and quality of life across the State. It is this Government that launched Link2home, a specialist 24/7 phone line to direct people to services. It is this Government that launched pop-up housing offices to take services direct to people sleeping rough. It is this Government that launched a social benefit bond to support a youth foyer. It is this Government that launched Rent Choice Youth. It is the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government that will continue to deliver for the most vulnerable people in New South Wales, which is something Labor never did.

#### **ORANGE ELECTORATE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS CENTRE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. This is not a robocall. In Orange the reported incidence of domestic violence is twice that of the State average. Will the Minister provide an update on the core and cluster funding for the essential establishment of a domestic violence crisis centre in Orange for the safe refuge of victims and their children?

**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) (15:13):** I thank the member for Orange for his question and for his advocacy on this matter. Recently I was pleased to announce the first of several services that will undergo major upgrades thanks to a \$4 million commitment from the Government to trial the core and cluster refuge model. A core and cluster model provides independent units in a home-like environment for women fleeing domestic violence. Housing Plus in Orange, the first site to be identified, will be the first homelessness service of its kind for women in New South Wales. The cluster will consist of six independent duplex units that have the flexibility to be four-, three-, two- or one-bedroom units, depending on the needs of a family.

The core facility will provide audiovisual links to legal systems and courts, space for training and professional development, a 24/7 sleepover room with closed-circuit television viewing, an intake and assessment room, communal facilities, and two in-reach rooms for external service providers. I congratulate Housing Plus on its leadership and the Orange community on its support for this groundbreaking project. The Government is committed to making sure that women in crisis have access to a range of support options that are part of a system that has the interests of victim survivors and their children at the centre. Those opposite may profess to be the champions of women's refuges. This Government is building a domestic violence response system that they never could. I remind the House that in 2011 a report of the Auditor-General, which was the Government's starting point, said:

The response to domestic and family violence remains fragmented ... Organisations do not have a strategy for working together ... there is no shared understanding between organisations of each other's roles ...

That was what the Government inherited, that was our starting point and that is from where we began to build a system. This Government has led the nation with the investment of more than \$350 million over four years to tackle domestic violence by supporting victim survivors and holding perpetrators to account. This Government has Start Safely, which supports people who are escaping violence to move into stable housing in the private rental market; behaviour change interventions for high-risk offenders; Staying Home Leaving Violence to support women and their children to remain safely at home; the NSW Police high-risk offender teams; new GPS trackers to improve victim safety; and more women's refuges.

Last month, the member for Penrith and I had the privilege of opening The Haven, a new women's refuge in Penrith. It brings the number of refuges receiving funding from this Government to 82—up from 76 in 2014. The Haven has been established by the Women's Community Shelters with the support of this Government and the local community. However, that is not all. This Government has invested money into specialist homelessness services, including women's refuges. It is a 43 per cent increase over four years. This Government has spent a record amount of money on specialist domestic violence initiatives and we are building a new domestic violence service system. Under this Government the number of refuges has increased and the capacity of our refuges is increasing. That is our record and we are proud of it. I am proud that we are building a system that supports women and children. I thank the member for Orange for the question.

#### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE ACCESSIBILITY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:18):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister provide updated details to the House on public transport accessibility and infrastructure investment across New South Wales, and are there any risks in this program?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:18):** Like the Minister for Family and Community Services, I thank the good member for remembering to ask the question and I compliment him on all the work he does in his electorate on transport access. Like many members of the Government, he has been working hard and constructively with the transport department to deliver great outcomes. I see a couple of hands. I look at the member for Seven Hills and say that every train station in his electorate is now fitted with access as a result of this Government's program. It is a tremendous program.

Listen to the Opposition members. They are like a bunch of seagulls around a packet of chips. This Government has invested \$1 billion to deliver lifts at stations and ferry wharfs. You name it, this Government is delivering it. Members should be conscious of the fact that the last government did not do much in this space and this Government has. Since 2011, \$1 billion has been invested in wheelchair accessibility upgrades at approximately 50 stations, knocking down that barrier for people with disabilities accessing public transport. That must continue, and I know there is bipartisanship on this issue.

As well as the 20 upgrades that are currently underway, the Government has upgraded 15 commuter wharfs across the harbour, with six upgrades on the way to completion. That \$1 billion did not come about by accident. It has come about through good financial management which has enabled this Government to get on with the job of delivering across the State. It is not only Government electorates that have benefited from the program. I take issue with the marginal member for Strathfield who said that the Government is putting politics ahead of people with disabilities, the ageing and parents with prams, implying that this Government is not delivering in seats held by the Opposition. That is simply untrue. Unfortunately, the member for Maitland is not in the Chamber. I will table her plaque. We have delivered for the member for Maitland. The member for Maitland did not turn up to the opening and I soon worked out why.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister said that he would table the document.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is a plaque and the Minister is using it as a prop.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Do you want it?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** No. Why would I want anything from him? It is a prop.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister has placed it on the table. There is no provision for the Minister to table it.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I have tabled the plaque for the member for Maitland who is not here so that she can see it. It is now formally part of the record of Parliament. The project was pushed by someone who is not a parliamentarian—the Liberal candidate for the seat of Maitland in 2015. I congratulate Steve Thompson on the work he did to secure that project. It is interesting that the marginal member for Strathfield, who I understand is hunting for a safer Labor seat—there is a big smile on her face; something is going on. I have a post.

**Mr David Mehan:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is not answering the question. He is talking about a Labor preselection. I ask that he be directed to return to the question.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I would respond to the point of order but I do not know who that bloke is. I want to get to the post. [*Extension of time*]

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order: That is the same line that four people used when he rang them up to ask for his leadership support.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume his seat. I did not give him the call.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I have got this post about the Transport Access Program.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: I refer to Speaker Murray's ruling on 23 September 1988 that the use of props is disorderly.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It was 1999, because I was in the Chamber.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I would not be worried about the rules of the Parliament if I were the member for Fairfield; I would be worried about the rules of preselection. A post on the member for Strathfield's Facebook page says that the Transport Access Process is a cause for celebration. There is a photo of the member with a red party hat on and a party popper in her mouth. It says, "Now open." The interesting thing about it is that she has a clenched fist.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: He is using a prop and it is disorderly. I ask the Deputy Speaker to ask the Minister to refrain from using props in the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** He was reading from the document.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The Labor Party says that we put politics ahead of people with disabilities, even though we are delivering in the electorates that they represent. It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition, who has been somewhat silent for the past few weeks—I do not know what is going on—has decided to walk away from accessibility upgrades in five stations between Sydenham and Bankstown by cancelling the southwest metro. If Labor members want to accuse the Government of putting politics ahead of people with disabilities, they should look first at their own stupid policy to cancel the southwest metro, because they are not going to upgrade the lifts.

#### *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**.

#### **Electricity Network**

Petition calling for the New South Wales electricity network to revert to a public asset, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

#### **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**.

#### **Brisbane Water Channel**

Petition requesting the funding of a long-term dredging solution for Brisbane Water Channel, received from **Ms Liesl Tesch**.

#### **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**.

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

#### **South Coast Rail Line**

Petition requesting that the Government provide new carriages and extra services on the South Coast rail line and ensure that the new Intercity fleet has increased seating capacity to cater for population growth in the Illawarra and South Coast regions, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

## RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Newcastle Transport Review—lodged 12 April 2018 (Mr Tim Crakanthorp)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Regional Taxi Licences—lodged 12 April 2018 (Mr Troy Grant)

### *Condolences*

## DEATH OF THE HON. GRANT ANTHONY MCBRIDE, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN AND MEMBER FOR THE ENTRANCE

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** On behalf of the Parliament I extend a very warm welcome to the family of the late Grant McBride: his wife, Barbara McBride; his daughter Emma McBride, MP, the member for Dobell; his son William McBride and his children Gabriel, Augustin, Isabel and Vincent; his son Leonard McBride and his wife, Kelly, and their children Florence and John; his son Edward McBride and his wife, Leigh-Anne, and their children Finn and Iona; his daughter Aimee McBride with her baby, Ana; and his son Ignatius and his partner, Dejana.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:28):** I move:

That this House extends to the family of Grant McBride the deep sympathies of members of the Legislative Assembly over the loss sustained in the death on 12 February 2018 of the Hon. Grant Anthony McBride, a former Minister of the Crown and member of the Legislative Assembly.

On 18 January 1992 I had recently moved to the Central Coast and was working my first booth at a Central Coast election at the Wamberal Public School booth in a by-election for the State electorate of The Entrance. The by-election had been ordered by the Court of Disputed Returns because hundreds of voters were disenfranchised by errors made by polling booth officials during the May 1991 State election, which had narrowly returned the sitting Liberal member, Bob Graham. That night, at the home of the Killarney Vale Australian Football Club, I watched a helicopter land on the oval and a media scrum illuminated by television lights direct its attention to the then Leader of the Opposition, Bob Carr, who had just arrived. Bob Carr recalled the day in his diary and said:

Yesterday the longest wait until, at 6.50 p.m., the first results confirmed a run in our vote. Then booth by booth—until it was safe to assume victory... We collected the candidate at the campaign office while I pumped out quotes over the car phone to the *Sun-Herald* and *Sunday Telegraph*. We arrived at the ALP celebration at a football club on an oval. It was quickly illuminated with TV lights as we walked across arm in arm. I acclaimed "McBride the magnificent".

Grant McBride won The Entrance for Labor. The result gave Labor 47 seats in this House, equal to the number held by the Greiner Government. The result made the Government reliant on the five Independent members to govern in this House. In his inaugural speech, Grant observed:

The result in The Entrance by-election was a victory for the Labor movement of New South Wales, a repudiation of the arrogance of the Greiner-led Government and an omen for the future of this limping, wounding and soon-to-expire Government.

And so it was. The Greiner Government soon offered a government job to one of the independent members, a former Liberal Party member, Terry Metherell, to induce him to leave Parliament. The Government hoped that it would regain his seat in the by-election and would regain a majority in Parliament. The Independent Commission Against Corruption made findings against Premier Greiner, which led to his resignation. And on it rolled until Labor came into government in 1995. Grant McBride's by-election win marked the beginning of the end of the last conservative Government in New South Wales. That is something to celebrate as we remember Grant's service in this place.

I note that Michael Lee, a former President of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Labor Party, former member for Dobell and close personal friend of Grant McBride, is in the public gallery. In 2003 Grant was appointed Minister for Gaming and Racing, in 2005 he was appointed Minister for the Central Coast and in 2007 he was appointed Assistant Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. He retired at the 2011 election after 19 years of public service. At the time, he stated that he wanted to smell the roses and play more tennis. In 2016 Grant was awarded life membership at the annual conference of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Labor Party.

When Grant was nine years old he lived in a two-bedroom flat in North Bondi with his family. When the fourth child was expected, the family moved into a three-bedroom Housing Commission home in Dundas Valley. Grant was very fond of Bondi, though. In his valedictory speech he said, "The beach was my own personal playground." Grant observed that after moving to Dundas he realised:

I had a fantastic lifestyle at Bondi but was now in a wilderness. I was definitely robbed. This was when I became radicalised. Shortly after that, Grant's mother and father joined the local branch of the Australian Labor Party, affirming, "We wanted a slice of Bondi back in our lives." During Grant's time of service in the former Labor Government,

employment in the health industry on the Central Coast doubled. Gosford and Wyong hospitals were rebuilt and expanded. The Labor Government relocated the WorkCover Authority to the Central Coast, providing 600 jobs to the region. The Roads and Traffic Authority set up an office at Woy Woy, creating 40 jobs for the region. The police assistance line was established at Tuggerah, creating 100 jobs for the region—and on it goes.

There has been nothing like it since in terms of jobs relocation and public employment on the Central Coast. Grant was able to deliver two new schools, Narara Valley High School and Tumby Bay Area High School, as well as significant upgrades at other high schools in the electorate. A new primary school was built at Narara. The Entrance Ocean Baths were refurbished as a consequence of his advocacy and they have recently been renamed in Grant's honour. In the last three parliamentary terms of the former Labor Government, \$300 million per term was committed to the construction of main roads on the Central Coast, including the Central Coast Highway. Where there had been a collection of local and State roads, a major highway on the Central Coast ensured it was a proper main road deserving of appropriate funding. That was Grant's invention.

Grant McBride and I did not always see eye to eye. That is not uncommon and should not surprise anybody in this House: That is the life of a Labor Party branch. But, as the current member for The Entrance, I can report that Grant is fondly remembered. In finishing today, I will use Grant's words. This is what he said in the final speech he delivered in this place on 26 November 2010:

I began my time as a politician on 18 January 1992 when I was elected by the people of The Entrance to represent their local community, and this period of my life will draw to a close on 25 March 2011, almost 20 years later. It will come as no surprise to members that my ability to serve the community has been underpinned by the ongoing love, support and encouragement of my family—Barbara, my wife, and mother of our eight children.

Vale, Grant McBride.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:36):** It is a tough way to reflect on our colleagues on either side of politics. In the presence of Grant's family today, I think back on the years when Grant McBride was in this place. Grant came here in 1992; I entered this place in 1991. I remember the by-election at The Entrance. Bob Graham had gone and there was an election campaign. It was a very difficult time for the Coalition; we had a hung parliament. The Government was very keen that Grant not win. The Government threw everything at Grant—not personally—to make sure that The Entrance stayed a Liberal seat. I recollect being in and around the electorate and all the usual things that go on during campaigns, such as speeches from the back of tabletop trucks. I gained the impression very early on that it was going to be a hard ask for the Government to win that seat because Grant McBride was, to put it bluntly, such a nice bloke. He did win.

In all the time Grant was here, from 1992 to 2011, he and I had many conversations and there was never one element of acrimony. He was an absolute gentleman. To his family, who are here today, I say on behalf of the Coalition that he was a person whom people not only loved and respected but whom we on the Coalition benches, although he was our political foe, considered a gentleman and someone that we were proud to work with as part of the parliamentary process in New South Wales.

As the previous speaker said, Grant held a number of ministries, and I am quite certain he was chairman of the Staysafe. I particularly remember that because in those years Staysafe had a high public profile and it was considered a conduit for members of Parliament who were on their way to being a shadow Minister or a Minister. I also had the pleasure of being the chair of Staysafe. It was a bipartisan committee. When people come into this place, particularly at question time, they might think that there is no courtesy, no politeness and no respect for each other. But Staysafe was one of those committees where the members worked extremely well together. I was very pleased to see Grant get that appointment. I knew that as he progressed in that job he would become a Minister, and he did.

It is extremely sad that Grant in his last few years had that particular illness that befalls so many of us. Unfortunately, an increasing percentage of people succumb to that disease—a disease that changes people and the way they live their life. On behalf of the New South Wales Coalition, I say to Grant's family that Grant was respected and extremely well loved by many of us in the sense that he was a very honourable person. I remember Grant talking about his family and that his daughter Emma was standing as a candidate to become a Federal member of Parliament. I am told that she is the member for Dobell. I congratulate her on that. I remember Grant being very proud of the fact that she used to help out during his campaigns. She was one of his biggest assets in terms of his re-election.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Don't worry about the seven other children.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** There is a total of eight children.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Emma is one of them.



**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I particularly remember that Grant was always temperate in his words and language and he was also temperate in his social activities. As I recall, he was a non-gambler, or at least he told me he did not gamble and he did not drink. To have worked with Grant in this place was a privilege that members on both sides will never forget. On behalf of the Coalition, I extend to the family our warmest wishes and condolences on the very sad passing of Grant.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:42):** I thank the member for The Entrance and the Minister for Health for their remarks. I will never forget the evening of 18 January 1992. I was at a floodlit oval in Killarney Vale on the Central Coast. Grant McBride and Bob Carr strode across the oval to the rapturous applause of hundreds of enthused and excited true believers to claim victory in The Entrance by-election. The Liberals had won the seat by 116 votes at the 1991 State election. The Court of Disputed Returns ordered a fresh election.

McBride's victory in overturning the Liberals' narrow win in the seat months earlier was a death blow to Nick Greiner's premiership—of that we were certain. McBride was our hero. With that win, Labor drew equal with the Liberals and Nationals on the floor of this House, with 47 seats each. The Government was to limp on for another three years, but Greiner himself was gone within five months of The Entrance by-election. McBride was our hero. We were convinced that Bob Carr was on the path to the premiership. This was a decisive turning point in New South Wales politics in modern times. I came to know Grant over the course of his 19-year career as a Labor member of Parliament. He was always proud that his dad had come from the north of Ireland. He was from Derry.

My wife, Edel, is from Tyrone—the neighbouring county. She went to college in Derry, and she and I married in Tyrone. Grant and I often talked about Ireland—about the north, Belfast and Derry. In my early weeks as Leader of the Labor Party in 2015, we held a campaign launch on the Central Coast. Grant was in the front row, and even then his health was deteriorating. Despite that, he recognised me and embraced me. We were to meet once more, on Valentine's Day in 2016 at that most romantic of places, the Labor Party conference at the Sydney Town Hall, when I awarded him life membership of the Labor Party. The delegates rose as one to pay tribute to his contribution to our party.

Grant was proud of his achievements on behalf of his constituents, first and foremost and always, but also on behalf of the party and the wider Labor movement. He was justly proud of his family and everything his sons and daughters achieved. The Catholics from the north of Ireland always believed in breeding. My wife is one of nine children and Grant and Barbara had eight children. He achieved great things in politics, but his and Barbara's greatest achievement is their eight children. In his inaugural speech in this place, Grant nailed his colours to the mast when he talked about his mother, Elaine, and his father, William. He told us that they were true believers. He said that they imbued in him the spirit, the will, the belief, the values, the philosophy and the commitment to accept Michael Lee's challenge to represent the Labor Party in The Entrance.

He had already worked as an young electorate officer for the greatest of the Labor greats, Gough Whitlam. He was a qualified engineer, so he knew what he was talking about in debates in this place. He was appointed as Parliamentary Secretary to assist the Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for the Olympics and Minister for Roads. Of course, as the Minister for Health said, when he was appointed Minister for Gaming and Racing, Grant brought with him some terrific attributes—he neither gambled nor drank—which gave him a head start. As a teetotaler he made worldwide headlines in 2005 when he proposed a ban on the Dutch beer Shag, claiming that its name was offensive to many Australians and that it flew in the face of public education campaigns that had been conducted for decades.

I think that if Grant were here he would say that, of all the roles he played during his 19-year parliamentary career, the one closest to his heart was as Minister for the Central Coast. This was his community. He viewed The Entrance as a microcosm of New South Wales. He was part of a Central Coast that was once viewed as a mere retirement home for Sydneysiders. It was transformed by the Wran Government with an expressway to Newcastle and electrification of the railway line. It became a place of opportunity for young families. Grant McBride was part of that.

He campaigned using stories from his own experience; he would speak about fare increases, higher electricity prices, expensive car registration, pensioners losing rail concessions and so on. He talked about how one of his sons had to wait 14 months for a hernia operation and how a college student from Bateau Bay attended TAFE for free until the Greiner Government came to office. He was a tireless lobbyist for the suburbs around The Entrance and the Central Coast as a whole. There was no artifice about him or pretentiousness. He was a truly authentic local representative and he had no airs or graces.

One of Grant's sons said recently that Grant was always thrilled when he achieved government funding for a local program because of what it would mean for the people of his community who would benefit. His contribution to the development of the Central Coast was immense. As the current member for The Entrance said,

Grant McBride petitioned to have the 1930s The Entrance Ocean Baths heritage listed. He said it was part of Central Coast life and had been for thousands of people who had learnt to swim there. The pool was heritage listed. The Carr Government, the Wyong Shire Council and community groups injected funds and the baths were overhauled, upgraded and officially opened by Premier Carr. Today we can celebrate the fact that the Central Coast Council will officially rename the baths as the "Grant McBride Baths".

There was one photo in the local newspaper that I lingered over for some time after Grant's passing. It shows him holding onto a raft packed with some of his grandchildren, nieces and nephews on the river at Wyong. Everyone looks happy, relaxed and at peace. After his long battle, Grant has found peace again. It is our loss that he is not with us to share it. Our prayers and thoughts remain with his family—Barbara, his children and grandchildren. Grant McBride personified the very best of "old Labor". I mean that as the highest of compliments. He was loyal to his family, loyal to his class, loyal to his faith, loyal to his community, and loyal to the people he represented. May he rest in peace.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:51):** I join the member for The Entrance, the Minister for Health and the Leader of the Opposition in offering my condolences to the family of Grant McBride. Condolence motions give members an opportunity to reflect on our relationships with former members who have passed away. I got to know Grant McBride during three periods of my life. I acknowledge in the gallery his former chief of staff, John Whelan, from the Australian Hotels Association [AHA].

It has been a tough couple of weeks for the industry for which Grant was responsible as Minister because we have also marked the passing of Bill Galvin, OAM. I do not think there was a time when I worked at the AHA that I attended a function and I did not see Grant McBride or Bill Galvin, or usually both of them. Even though I had campaigned against him in 1992, I first met Grant when he won the by-election. I think the Minister for Health correctly said that it was clear to those campaigning for Bob Graham that Grant was a very popular local candidate and would no doubt win and hold the seat.

I then got to know him when I worked at Parliament House as press secretary to Peter Collins. The Leader of the Opposition used the term "old Labor". I saw "old Labor" in Grant McBride. Both of my grandfathers were members of old Labor, which had a sense of decency. I am not at all suggesting that members opposite or others in the Labor Party no longer have that sense. However, I remember seeing in Grant a man without airs or graces who respected others and who demonstrated perseverance, passion and compassion. Indeed, he loved those around him and his church. Peter Collins and Grant had a good relationship—it could have been a Catholic thing. I saw in both of them, and particularly in Grant, a deep love for their electorate. I often said to him when I worked here that he had one of the hardest jobs in the Parliament because he had to leave his electorate to come to Sydney. Many other members probably preferred to be here than in their electorates dealing with constituent problems.

I lost contact with Grant after I left this place in 1999. I popped up at the Australian Hotels Association when Grant was appointed as Minister for Gaming and Racing. I knew that Grant knew I had come from the other side even though we had lost contact for a few years. Not once during the time I worked for that association—under an entrenched Labor Government—did I feel that Grant held against me my political position or political views, or respect them differently to the views of anyone else, which said a lot for the man. He would happily take me into his confidence. He would regularly treat me as a guest in his office and happily talk to me about things other than politics and the parliamentary business of the day. That was something that helped me grow as an industry executive because it highlighted to me that although across the Chamber we might say and do things, outside this place we have other things that we need to achieve. We have to work together. In my time as an industry chief executive officer I never felt more appreciated, respected or supported than I did by Grant McBride when I worked in the hotel industry.

Grant and I then left our respective industries in 2007—he not so willingly. When he left the Cabinet, I left the Australian Hotels Association. His family and some of those who know his professional career would appreciate the irony of the fact that I left the hotel industry to work as chief executive of the Civil Contractors Federation, Grant being a civil engineer. I remember the first person to contact me when it was announced that I had taken that position was Grant McBride. He reminded me that he was the only civil engineer in the party, he was the only civil engineer in the parliamentary wing and he was very relieved that somebody else in politics had taken an interest in civil engineering.

This afternoon as I was preparing for this speech I looked at one of his speeches and I remembered some of his other speeches. Having served on a board of civil engineers, something stood out to me. His speeches had a sense of logic that so many of us in here miss. His speeches had a sense of understanding of complex issues. Members, particularly those on the backbench, would know how quickly he needed to prepare some of his speeches. I can tell from reading his speeches that he had an intelligence at a level that only an engineer can

acquire. Unfortunately, when he retired and I left the Civil Contractors Federation our paths did not cross again. Obviously that is something I am very sad about.

On behalf of the members of the Government I reflect on a decent man and pay tribute to his family. I mourn their loss. I think I speak on behalf of the hospitality industry when I say that he was probably one of the best Ministers we ever had, albeit the only one I can recall who was a teetotaler and non-gambler. That was probably why he was faultless in his policy deliberations. I also reflect on a man who is not only mourned by his community but also respected by the Parliament. Vale, Grant McBride.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:57):** I acknowledge all the people in the public gallery today and pay my deep condolences to them, including Michael Egan and Grant's former staff who are present today. As I thought about what I was going to say in this expression of condolence, it was difficult for me. I am here because of Grant—it is as simple as that. People may not know that Grant rang me, invited me to Sydney and started my pathway into this place. But it was many years before, when Grant won that by-election, that I got very energised about politics. My aunt, Lorraine, had worked for Michael in his electorate office, so I had grown up around politics but I never thought my pathway would be in politics. Working on that campaign as a young person, learning and watching Grant, and seeing what hard workers he and the team around him at the time were, really started my interest in politics. I am probably here because of him. Lots of people make speeches about who introduced them to politics, but it is really because of Michael and Grant that I am here today and I am forever thankful for that.

Other members saw Grant in this place, but they probably did not see him in his community. I was lucky to see him operate in his community. He had the best political weathervane I have ever seen. Grant knew how people thought. He could pick up the smallest issue through conversations. One of the first things he taught me was that whenever I was out in the electorate I should have a little notepad in my top pocket so I could write down the name and issue of anyone I met so as not to forget. Grant was brilliant at that. He was someone who was very willing to share his wisdom.

As a young person I was secretary of the Wyong branch and I ran head-on with a fairly obstinate branch member. I was pretty devastated. My wife was devastated too because she had been the victim of the phone call from this branch member over a particular issue. Because she was so upset I was ready to pull the plug, walk away and leave it all behind. Grant invited my wife, Sherelle, and me out on his little putt-putt boat that he had lovingly put together and restored. It was not a particularly good day, but we went down the Wyong River. On that journey he imparted so much information to my wife and to me that my wife, who was not into politics at all, became a believer in the things I believed as well. That was because Grant had been so open in talking about his experiences with his family and how to deal with difficult people. It was so good to have him there. From that time on, after I was elected and so on, Grant was one of the first people I would turn to for information.

Grant was someone who liked to develop people. I can attest that all his staff would say Grant was someone who encouraged them, who did not hold them back and who helped them reach new heights. When I look at his former staff and see what they are doing in their current jobs, not just in New South Wales or Australia but also around the world, it is clear that Grant was someone who moulded great human beings. I do not know that that can be said about too many people. It was a pleasure catching up with Dan Cook, for example, at the funeral. I had known Daniel since we were very small and were both at Umina surf club, way before politics. Daniel has reached great heights, and he will tell anyone that that is because of the way Grant guided him in his early career, particularly in his ministerial office. Daniel is now doing great things and is living in Europe.

In this place we saw Grant as the politician, but we should pay tribute to Grant, the person, who put other people before himself, particularly his family. He always said, "David, your family comes first. In any situation, your family comes first, then it is politics. That is the important thing. Never lose that thought." It is certainly something I held onto. Grant had a wicked sense of humour. In this place the former member for Cessnock, the former member for Blacktown and Grant formed a fearsome trio. People in this place were very worried when they saw the three of them approaching.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** The Premier was even more worried.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** That is exactly right. They were the practical jokers of the place. One of the great legends of this place is when the member for Cessnock and the member for Blacktown "stole" Grant's bust of Gough Whitlam. It is a legendary story, as is that of Grant's reaction afterwards. While the two of them were trying to get to the lift well with the bust in their hands, Grant came out of the lift and caught them. There are many versions of this story. I have put the many versions together to come up with the real version of what happened. They put the bust down near their feet, which happened to be inside the lift. When Grant went inside, they turned around and the lift had gone and so had the bust, so they went into a panic. They were fearful of what Grant would do to them when he found out. Grant was not a happy man.

It was said that it turned up about three days later in the Sydney Hospital, and was returned through the front desk, but I do not think that happened. I think the member for Blacktown found it and handed it in anonymously at the front desk, despite that being very difficult for him to do. One of the other things they really enjoyed doing was that they would go as a team to the café and pick one poor person who was sitting by themselves, sit down around them, and then eat that person's lunch. When they walked into the cafeteria, people would pull their shirts forward and lean over to cover their lunch, as those three moved towards them. The other thing for which Grant was legendary in this place was playing squash. He was very proud of the fact that he was a difficult person to beat. They often played squash downstairs. We would see them coming back after lunch, with sweat pouring off them.

The thing Grant really loved was taking on the then member for Gosford, Chris Hartcher, in the Chamber. Grant grew 15 feet tall when that happened. Chris Hartcher would sit with the Government—we would see him on the screen—and Grant would come into the Chamber and say, "You wait. I'm going to get this bloke." They knew each other so well and there was such friendly rivalry between them. But Grant's famous thing—and I still picture him doing it now—was that he did not just stand still at the despatch box. Grant would walk up and down along the bench with his arms waving, talking and pointing and going off at Hartcher about everything under the sun. Chris would be sitting there with the biggest smile on his face, just waiting for the opportunity to get back at Grant again. At the end, the two of them would almost hug outside the Chamber after ripping into each other.

That is how Grant was: He was a real person. He was someone who knew there was politics—and we have to play politics in the Chamber—but outside he respected people and he knew that the system did not work unless people got along. He was always happy to discuss different issues with people from the other side of politics. I know he had a lot of friends on the opposite side of the House. One of his biggest supporters right until the end was the person he later beat in that preselection, Bob Graham. Bob became great friends with Grant, and stuck by him right up until the very end. I have a lot of respect for Bob Graham because of that. Usually if someone beats one in a preselection, it finishes one's career, and one can get very hung up on it. But Bob always respected Grant. Bob was always there—I think behind the scenes he was helping Grant during elections. Bob ran for a few parties—I think he ran for The Nationals at one stage as well.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Yes, he did.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Yes. Bob's respect for Grant was a reflection of what the whole community thought of Grant. I pay tribute today to Barbara. Whilst we are in this place, doing the job that we do, we are away from home for so much of the time. Barbara single-handedly held the fort. Luckily, Grant had good kids—they are all pretty good, I am sure—and there were only one or two incidents. The kids in the gallery are all looking now at one person. Grant was very proud of his whole family, but he was able to do what he did because Barbara supported him. It has to be said in this place that Barbara is a powerful woman. She is someone who should be respected. She was a pillar and supported Grant throughout the whole 20 years. He could not have done it without Barbara. That is not taking away from all the other people who worked around him, but Barbara's work must be recognised.

I also remember the early days when Grant and Barbara owned the little café in the Wyong Plaza. Some of my earliest memories of Grant were from that time. I had only just moved back to the Central Coast from the Riverina. I remember going to the café and having mince on toast. I had never seen it advertised anywhere else. It was great, and I looked forward to having it. Grant loved the café because he could talk to people and one could see him getting around there. Grant just loved dealing with people. People have talked about some of Grant's achievements but, as I said, he really had a good political weathervane.

When he was first elected, the coast had gone through a pretty long period of neglect. Grant really felt that. When he became the Minister for the Central Coast, he used that position to improve things for people on the coast. The member for The Entrance mentioned the Central Coast Highway. That was a master stroke. I think Grant was then Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Minister for Roads, Carl Scully. Grant learnt a lot from Carl about how to build infrastructure. It was interesting that when he first came up with the idea of creating the Central Coast Highway, a lot of local people laughed at him because it was basically a goat track. People asked how this could be called a highway. But Grant knew that as soon as he lifted the status of the road, the funding would flow. Now, from Kariong all the way to Wamberal, it is a dual-lane highway, and one of the last major intersections has just been finished. That was because of Grant's vision. While everyone else doubted him—they did not listen to him—it was his vision that got that highway built.

I remember that sometimes I did not listen to him but I should have listened to him. When the electricity debate came up for us—which ended up dividing and destroying our party at the time—Grant was one of the first people who stood up against privatisation. He knew the industry and he knew the people. He knew it was the wrong way to go, and Grant was able to put his views forward against that. I remember I went to a rally when I was new—I had just been given a parliamentary secretary's position. Someone from the Premier's office rang

me up and said, "David, we need you to go Vales Point and put the Labor Government's position." I went there in the car. I felt a little uncomfortable about it because I was not 100 per cent sold on the idea either. I was on the speaking list, and the first person who came over to me was Grant. He said, "Dave, what are you doing?" I said, "Morris's office has asked me to come and put forward the Government's position." He said, "Don't do it, Dave. Look at the crowd, and understand that this will be a mistake."

I got on the phone and rang the Premier's office. I said, "I'm here at the rally and I've been talking to the member for The Entrance, and he doesn't think this is a very good idea." They said, "Don't listen to him. You're not saying whether you back it or not; you're just putting forward the Government's position." Kerry Hickey was looking at me disapprovingly. I stood up and quietly said, "This isn't my position, but it is the Government's position." I cannot remember what I said after that, but I do remember as I tried to drive out, people were rocking my car from side to side. Grant was standing over by the oval, saying, "I told you not to say that." After that my recommendation to everyone was, "Listen to what Grant says because Grant is generally right."

It is good to remember there were a lot of good times with a lot of laughs. On the other side, Grant had that serious side where he really wanted to get things done—do things for people and make a difference to their lives. Other people have talked about that but I saw it firsthand. When we would have meetings, there was Marie Andrews, the member for Gosford, Grant and me. Grant was really passionate and often he would disagree with Marie. But he agreed with Marie a lot more than he agreed with the former member for Wyong, Paul Crittenden—Paul and Grant just did not get along. But Grant would not even say a bad word about that; Grant was always a straight up-and-down person.

Today, through this motion, we remember one of the truly good politicians—one of the good people. Some people have described him as "old Labor". I think any side of politics would have been proud to claim Grant as one of their own. He is an inspiration to us all in the way to do politics and the way to do life. Grant lived his life the way he spoke; he was not phoney in the slightest. The way his family has turned out is a testament to him and to Barbara. So is the way he developed his staff. He was proud of his family and his staff and their achievements. He thought of himself as being part of their journey. He thought his job was to help develop them.

I miss Grant. When we are faced with difficult situations—and we often have them—I think, "What would Grant do?" Just after I got elected there were some huge storms—the storms that stranded the *Pasha Bulker*. At Cabbage Tree Harbour in my electorate, the cliff was collapsing and houses were falling down. I talked to the experts about what we should do and how we should do it. The Premier put people up in helicopters to look at the damage and studies were carried out. Grant had often spent time there in the mornings swimming with what were known as the "ramp rats". I rang him and said, "Mate, I can't work my way through this. Will you come and have a look?" He said, "I don't have to come and have a look; I can tell you now," but he came. That section of the beach had been fenced off and the security guards would not let us through. Grant sweet-talked a security guard in about 30 seconds, and she ended up walking with us.

Grant said, "Dave, they're all wrong. I have been coming here for many years. The damage is not being caused by the surf hitting the bank. The stormwater coming from the other direction is doing the damage. If you don't believe me have a look at the water. What is over there?" I said, "It is all cloudy and sandy." He said, "That's right. That is not coming from the ocean; it is coming the other way." When I told the engineers what he had said they looked at it again and said, "That is 100 per cent right." Grant was a very knowledgeable man. I am proud to have known him, to have worked with him and to have been mentored by him. I send my condolences to all the members of his family. I know they miss him deeply. It is a really sad loss for all of us. Vale, Grant McBride.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Coffs Harbour—on this occasion, the father of the House—I welcome the Hon. Michael Lee, a former Minister and member for Dobell, and John Whelan. It is great to see them both here.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (16:17):** I feel for Barbara and the family. I offer my sincere condolences to them. I was elected to this place in a by-election on 3 November 1990 and ran into an election six months later. Some time after that, a by-election was called in The Entrance. As a result, all hands were on deck. As I had earlier had the support of Ministers and members of my party, I travelled from Coffs Harbour to The Entrance to assist the Coalition in retaining the seat. That was when I first met Grant McBride—as a candidate. We all know that news photographers always try to get poor photographs of members and candidates. I ribbed Grant for many years about a photograph that I think was published in the *Daily Telegraph*—although I could be corrected. It was a photograph of him leaning forward to tell Bob Carr something and grabbing him on the coat-tails. I think the headline was something along the lines of "Grant McBride Riding on the Coat-tails of Bob Carr". Everyone in this place knew that that was not the case. Grant McBride was an extremely good local member with a great sense of humour.

Grant was a good man—a good bloke. In the mornings I used to walk around the Royal Botanic Garden or from Potts Point across to the Parliament. On a number of occasions I saw Grant taking his children to school. I think they went to school in Sydney. I was a good mate of Grant's. Parliament is a funny place; you can have mates on both sides of the House. He had a fine sense of humour. Grant was a very staunch member of the Labor Party and, as the member for Wyong said, he had the respect of Bob Graham—the man he beat. Bob served on council in that area and I was a friend of his as well. I know the regard that Bob had for Grant. When I saw Grant on my morning walks he empathised with the fact that country members spend time away from their families. I often say that my wife raised three great children. Barbara raised eight! That is a big experience. I know that Grant loved his family, his party and his electorate.

When Grant McBride was Minister for Gaming and Racing he came to my electorate for the Coffs Harbour Cup. I was amazed that the Minister for Gaming and Racing was a teetotaler who did not bet. I only ever bet on Coffs Harbour Cup Day and Melbourne Cup Day. On those occasions the bookies normally walk away with money in their pockets. As Minister, Grant got on well with the gaming and racing officials. He got on well with members of the Australian Hotels Association and others—I see John Whelan in the gallery—despite the fact that he did not drink and did not bet. As someone said earlier, it probably gave him—and I use the word deliberately—a sober look at legislation with respect to those two portfolios. There was definitely no vested interest.

I turn now to his sense of humour. We heard the story about Gough Whitlam's bust. The then member for Oxley, Bruce Jeffery, was a bit of a larrikin and regarded himself as a magician of some note. In those days there were a few drinks had—often while the House was still sitting or after the House had adjourned in the wee hours. There was always a party going on somewhere, whether the Coalition was in government or Labor was in government. I am sure that Grant was there one night when Jeffery put some water in a glass that had powder in the bottom of it. The trick was that the powder would turn the water to gel and he could make the water disappear when he threw the contents of the glass at someone. He threw the contents at John Aquilina—who was not noted for his sense of humour—but the water had not quite gelled. I will never forget the look on John Aquilina's face, as he stood there with gel hanging off him. He said to me the next morning, "You know, that Bruce Jeffery is a funny fella."

There were other stories that went around the place. On one occasion a tie that was purported to be mine was cut in half. It was a trick that many of The Nationals knew about. We used to go down to the lost property office and find an item of clothing. Newspaper would be wrapped around it and Bruce Jeffery would cut it in half with a pair of scissors. Grant often wore a tan sports coat. One night there was a party in The Nationals party room. Bruce Jeffery had what looked to be Grant's sports coat wrapped in newspaper and he cut the sleeve off it. Grant was indignant that his best sports coat had been ruined.

Some members still think Bruce cut the sleeve off Grant's coat, but that did not happen. The coat that was destroyed had been left in lost property. Not 30 seconds after that had happened, a division was called. There was no time to get Grant's real coat, so we got a stapler and stapled the sleeve back onto the coat. Grant attended the division with the sleeve stapled on, and everyone in the House believed it was his coat. I think there are people who still believe it today. The coat and tie was always a bit of a joke, especially between Grant and me, because I told him my tie that was cut in half had been given to me by my children when I was first elected.

I enjoyed Grant's company immensely. When he was Minister there were no problems getting through his door. If anyone had an issue, he would gladly see them—unlike other Ministers from both sides of the House; sometimes one has to wait a long time for a meeting. With Grant, one would pretty much get a meeting the same day. If it was an important issue, there was no problem. I respected him. I did not hear about his passing. I knew he had been ill. His colleagues had told me he was ill but I did not know of his passing until after the funeral. So my apologies for being unable to attend. I think if Grant had one flaw it was encouraging the current member for Wyong into this place. But I would not hold that against him; I would probably hold it against the member for Wyong. My condolences are with you, Barbara, your family and your friends. In my opinion, Grant was not just a good member of Parliament and not just a good Minister, but a good bloke. Vale, Grant.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (16:26):** It being close to 4.30 p.m., with the leave of the House I propose that the debate on the motion of condolence continue before commencing the discussion on the petition with 10,000 or more signatures.

Before I call the next member, as Deputy Speaker I take this opportunity to offer you, Barbara, and all your family my condolences. Please be assured that our prayers and thoughts are with you all. As the member for The Entrance, Grant was well and truly entrenched when I came to this place in 1999. I certainly had many enjoyable times with him—that is a common theme running through all the speeches this afternoon. Whilst Grant never had a bet or a drink, I do not think there is anyone who enjoyed going to the races or the pub more than he did. I invited him to Lismore, not thinking he would accept because it was a parliamentary sitting day. I said,

"They have invited you up for the Lismore Cup." He asked, "Will you go?" I said, "Yes." He said, "We will get leave and we can both go." I thought he must love a bet or a beer. We got there and I found out on the track, "No, I don't bet and I don't drink." We had an enjoyable trip, and that was the measure of the man.

He was Assistant Speaker in this place; I think that was one of his roles in Parliament that he did not really enjoy. He did his shift, but he did not like calling people to order; he just loved being one of us. We could all speak for hours tonight on this motion. Barbara, I know how proud he was of you and all the family. It is a blessing to see you in the gallery this afternoon. Again, I offer my sympathy and my prayers to you all. I know that Grant will be missed for a long time.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:28):** I make a brief contribution about my friend and one-time mentor, Grant McBride. I did not know Grant very well until I came to this place. I had hoped to meet him on the day of his by-election in 1992. It was obvious that Bob Carr was on the cusp of taking government and we knew that Grant would be around for a long time. Another young fellow from Maroubra, Chris Bastic, and I decided—as young wannabes—to roster ourselves all day to work for Grant. We were sent to Lisarow Public School. We wanted to meet Grant and to be seen working all day on the booth. We also wanted to meet Bob Carr. We stood there all day until about 3 o'clock, waiting and waiting. Then we had to go for a comfort stop, and ran across the playground. Of course, that is when Bob and Grant turned up, shook all the hands, did a whistlestop tour and left. And we were not there. Our contribution was not for nothing, but an opportunity was lost that day.

I remember the first time I met Grant as a Minister, together with his former chief of staff and our good friend, Johnny Whelan, who is here today. We had about 30 minutes blocked out to discuss an issue to do with Randwick racecourse, or something like that. We spent the first 20 minutes with Grant telling us jokes and the business was dispatched in about 10 minutes. I remember thinking, "If I am ever fortunate enough to become a Minister, I am going to remember this meeting and emulate Grant and make sure that I have fun during what is often too serious a business." That was one of Grant's trademarks: He was a great prankster. I remember when I first came to this place, Grant pulled me aside, as he did with a lot of new members—there was no course or induction back then; it was sink or swim—and said, "Mate, there's a debate coming up on a bill. It's an important bill. I don't care if you don't know anything about it, you have to get yourself on your feet as quickly as possible and immerse yourself in this place."

So I did. I stood opposite where I am now and I was very, very nervous. I did not know anything about the bill. But I had done my research, and I was standing there talking away when I got a note saying, "Speak up; you are not speaking loud enough." I looked around and Grant was sitting there. He winked at me. So I started speaking louder. A couple of minutes later I got another note saying, "Mate, you are speaking too loudly." I did not turn around; I thought he had changed his mind. Then I was talking away and I got a note shoved in front of me that said, "Morris wants you to talk it out." I thought, "Okay" and started to ad lib, getting embarrassed with sweat starting to break out. I then got another note saying, "Jeez, you're boring. Will you hurry up?" I looked around and saw Grant sitting there with Gerard Martin, Paul Gibson and Kerry Hickey, splitting their sides laughing. It was probably the fiftieth time they had done that to a new member but they always thought it was funny. That was Grant's style.

Grant worked hard. He respected others. He was respected in return and he had fun. There are many stories about Grant. We used to sit on the benches opposite all day just telling stories about a great many people and a great many things. He always had a joke. He loved to talk about his family and about Ireland and Irish republicanism. As happy as he was, it would be a mistake to think he was anyone's fool. He was no pushover, this guy. I do not recall having too many disagreements with him. I had a big one, which the member for Wyong alluded to, with the electricity debacle. But when one disagreed with him he was forceful, he was respectful and he was always to the point. He was never disrespectful.

I never heard Grant put anyone down. In fact, on occasions when people were being treated unfairly, he would either stick up for them or he would pull them aside later and say, "Don't worry about this. It is the way of the world; this is the real situation. The truth is don't take it to heart." Grant was always there to stick up for people. I was very proud to see him get his party life membership a couple of years ago, and I am very proud to be able to say that I served in this place with Grant McBride.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (16:33):** Deputy Speaker, colleagues, Barbara and family and friends, it is an honour to be elected to this place to serve the communities of the 93 electorates across this State. Not many members of this place will receive the rare honour of being the subject of a condolence motion, however it was well earned by Grant McBride. I came to this place in 1999 as one of only two Liberals—Don Harwin in the other place being the other—and one of the first members I met was Grant McBride. He always made a very good impression on me. He was a gentleman and would give members the benefit of his knowledge and his help.

When Grant became Minister he would converse with members. Getting in to see Grant was no problem; he would help whenever he could. He was one of those Ministers who called when visiting the electorate or when something special was happening. Not all Ministers showed such respect at that time. As members have said, Grant had a wicked sense of humour. I know the member for Blacktown, another teetotaler, the member for Cessnock and others would get together and play wicked jokes on any individual who happened to get in their path, but it was funny and done in good humour. In the Parliament Grant and Chris Hartcher and others fought like cats and dogs. They sparred over what they believed in—something we all should do—but once outside this place the swords were put down and they would converse. Grant was a master at that. He was also well liked by the industries with which he engaged.

I speak also on behalf of those who do not have the opportunity to speak to this condolence motion. Members are relaying to family and friends their involvement and connection with Grant McBride. However, people who serve this place, such as the Clerks, the former Clerk of the Parliament, staff and everyone with whom Grant came in contact respected him as well and they would love to join us in speaking to the motion. Therefore, I place on record on behalf of the staff their admiration for the way in which Grant McBride conducted himself.

A particular person who springs to mind is Jan Clifford. Jan served in the Whip's Office for probably 20 or more years. She served several Ministers and went on to be the Whip's Assistant. I think she might have started with Bill Beckroge, the member for Broken Hill, and she served every Whip until her retirement a couple of years ago. Even in retirement, Jan keeps us up to date with the happenings of members and former members from around the State. Indeed, when Grant left here in 2011 it was Jan who communicated to me that he was in failing health. In fact, reflecting on some events that happened in this place, I suspect there was a touch of Alzheimer's settling in while he served here. It is a terrible affliction but I know that he faced it with dignity and with the support of his family.

We come to this place for all the right reasons—to fight for our community and to do what people expect us to do. I recall the establishment of the Police Assistance Line. In those days it was spread around staff in Tamworth, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo and Wollongong. Tony Kelly was the Minister at the time and the battle for the line went on for weeks then months. Despite staff being located in Wagga Wagga, Dubbo and other places, as I said, Grant won and the Police Assistance Line was established in his electorate. I have never forgotten that and I am working hard to get it back. Hopefully, by the time I give my farewell speech in this place—not this coming election but maybe a couple after that—I will have succeeded in retrieving that valuable resource.

Members become involved in those kinds of debates. We spar and argue, but Grant was always a gentleman. I remember that he was always well presented, with beautiful shoes. I do not know where he shopped but, wherever he did, he was always dressed immaculately. I cannot remember him ever wearing a suit—unless it was a black-tie event at the Australian Hotels Association or something similar. Apart from such occasions, he always wore beautiful sports jackets and was immaculately attired. That said a lot about Grant McBride and the way he approached things. He was always systematic and methodical. He could arc up when something happened in this place and let rip, but never in a demeaning or a derogatory way. He would say what he thought but when he stepped outside it was basically all forgotten.

Grant went on to be a great comrade and friend to members on his side of the House but also to members on our side. Anyone who comes to this place, serves and leaves with a reputation like that has done well. Grant McBride leaves a great legacy to this place and to his family and friends. I know he appreciated their wonderful support, particularly in the days when he was in decline. Vale, Grant McBride.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:39):** It is a great privilege to contribute to this condolence motion moved by the member for The Entrance. Grant's passing in February is a great loss to his family, to the community and certainly to his friends in the Labor Party. Grant is remembered as a Labor man. Grant's love for Labor went very deep and it was expressed every day in everything he did. He stood up for the things that mattered most to ordinary working people and their families. Things like jobs, TAFE, health care and education were important to Grant and drove him in his public life. His values of fairness, justice and equity—those same values shared by us in this place—also drove Grant, certainly in his capacity working for the community. He was perfectly placed to represent his community's opposition to what Grant referred to as the "arid marginalisation" of the Greiner Government. Grant's intelligence and his unending compassion for everyday people meant that it was no surprise when he was eventually elected to represent his community in the New South Wales Parliament.

His election to this place came off the back of a strong community grassroots campaign, which defined his approach for the rest of his political life. He was hardworking, a good listener and a highly effective local member. In the lead-up to the election, Grant doorknocked every house in The Entrance. Grant brought people's concerns to this place and that enabled him to be a wonderful local member. Unlike some members who spoke before me, I did not work with Grant in the New South Wales Parliament. However, as members know, my



husband, Robert Coombs, a former member for Swansea, did know Grant and I learnt a lot about Grant through Robert's stories about him.

As the member for Wyong said, Grant loved squash and Robert was one of Grant's squash partners. They played most mornings. The problem is that Robert does not like losing and Grant was a very good squash player, but he soldiered on and continued to play with Grant every day. He referred to Grant as a "bit of an old fox" and a "cagey old bugger". They were terms of endearment of course. Robert loved Grant very much. He, like other members in this place, was mentored by Grant and respected him enormously. He was certainly on the same side of privatisation as Grant. He misses Grant and asked me to pass on his condolences to Barbara and to the rest of the family.

In the 19 years that Grant was an elected member, his love of and commitment to his community and the Central Coast communities never faltered. In 2005 he was proud to be appointed as Minister for the Central Coast. As someone who represents an electorate that straddles both the Hunter and Central Coast regions, I am particularly aware of the important work Grant did in building those communities on the Central Coast during his time in Parliament. He was seen everywhere, as the member for Wyong said.

Grant had a genuine understanding of the tangible impact that governments can have on people's lives—things such as improving public transport services to areas that previously had been quite isolated and ensuring public transport was affordable to those who relied on it the most on the Central Coast. Members know the important role that our families play in supporting our work in this place. I acknowledge Grant's wife, Barbara, and their children and grandchildren. I offer my deepest sympathies to you all. Grant will be sorely missed not only by his family but also by the Labor Party.

Grant will be missed by his former colleagues in this place and by those communities he represented so well for such a long time. Grant certainly set the benchmark for my Central Coast colleagues and me in standing up for the people of the Central Coast. He set a strong example for us to follow in being a good local member. As Grant often said, it is an honour and a privilege to be able to serve one's community. I feel equally privileged to be able to help build on Grant's legacy and to deliver for Central Coast communities.

But his legacy lives on in other ways as well. Grant's passion and dedication to his community and his contribution were recently memorialised by the Central Coast Council with public amenities being named in his honour. To the very end, Grant was a dyed-in-the-wool Labor man. He was a man of integrity who always stood for fairness, justice and equality, and as a Minister of the Crown he worked as hard as he could to make New South Wales a great State. It is heartbreaking that his illness took him so soon after his retirement. I hope his family can find some comfort in the knowledge that New South Wales and, most importantly, his beloved Central Coast are grateful for the 19 years he served in this place. Vale, Grant McBride.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:46):** I join my colleagues in remembering a great and long-serving member of this Chamber, the Hon. Grant McBride. At the beginning of his inaugural speech in this place Grant called the initial election a rort and he did not stop swinging until the end of that speech, and in the following 19 years he took every opportunity to stand up for his community, the Central Coast and the Labor Party. The issues Grant highlighted in his first speech, fought a by-election on and won, and spent his career delivering on, are oddly similar to the ones we now face with the current Liberal-Nationals Government. Grant took the opportunity in his inaugural speech to highlight the perils of replacing public health services with private companies as the Government had done in Port Macquarie—an example we still use today—and of cuts to pensioner travel supports.

Grant called on the Government to provide the best possible education to the youth of our State. He said the Government, "should unshackle itself from the budget-driven mentality stifling our public school system". He also beautifully argued a push for environmentally compatible industry—for the clean high-tech growth industries of the twenty-first century to come to the Central Coast. Few members in this place would have been thinking in such terms, but Grant saw the opportunity and never stopped fighting for it. Grant sat on the opposition benches for only a short time, as the by-election that swept him to office was the precursor that soon saw Bob Carr become the Premier.

Grant had seen great changes to his electorate and to the Central Coast. He noted the role of the electrification of trains from Sydney to Newcastle and the construction of the then F3 between Sydney and Newcastle in bringing a new influx of young families to the region. He saw that this produced a more balanced and diverse population mix from the popular view of the time that the Central Coast was, "exclusively a retirement village for Sydney". As a young dad, Grant embodied this generational change and brought his passion for workers' rights to the New South Wales Parliament. Indeed, he foresaw the challenges that we are still grappling with today. He noted: ... the power station worker who was made redundant, the miner who does not know when he will be made redundant, the school cleaner, the government printer, the hospital nurse and the Roads and Traffic Authority labourer who have been made redundant.

As we debate whether the Government should spend \$2.3 billion on Sydney stadiums, Grant's words from 1992 still ring true. A Liberal government, "does not care how its policies impact on individuals. Only the bottom line of its balance sheet counts, never its effect on ordinary people." Some things change, and some stay the same. It would be remiss of anyone speaking about Grant not to mention his family, as they were such a large part of his life and mission. The energy of his wife, Barbara, is amazing and a credit to their family. She was an amazing support to her husband during his time in this place and throughout his life. His children, William, Emma, Nicholas, Edward, Leo, Aimee and Ignatius are all off doing amazing things, from the coast to Sydney and around the world. They are the people they are today and are doing the things they are doing because of the love and support of their father, and the wonderful lessons that Grant instilled in them as they grew up.

Grant was a giant of the Central Coast. He knew every corner and street of his electorate. He was a role model and an example to us. He knew every issue, however seemingly small and insignificant. Grant was the model local member of Parliament and person. Illness took Grant too soon to enjoy a proper retirement with his family, one that I am sure would have seen him continuing to fight for the Central Coast and its people. Even after his passing, his tough journey with dementia continues to be a lesson for us and to make an impact as Emma and the Federal Parliament take on the conversation about carers, and supporting people with dementia and their families. I thank Grant for making a difference even after passing. Vale, Grant McBride.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:51):** I commence by extending my condolences to Barbara and the rest of the family, some of whom I know and some of whom I do not. I will make a brief contribution this evening. We have heard a lot about the funny and entertaining side of Grant, but there was a serious side to him as well, and I will touch briefly on one of the things that he took seriously. I was elected to this place in 1995, so I spent a number of years in this Chamber with him. Grant and I came from very different traditions and, to be blunt, factions of the Labor Party. I was not close to him for a long time. Then I moved a motion in this place that called for an investigation into the death of a woman named Rosemary Nelson, a solicitor who was killed in Ulster by Irish extremists.

I organised the motion with Jimmy Anderson, who was born in Belfast in the shadows of Divis Tower, and Deirdre Grusovin, who, with a Brereton heritage, clearly had an interest in Ireland. I had never seen Grant angry until that day. He was apoplectic that I had not asked him to be part of the debate. I had not understood his interest in Irish republicanism, Irish history and Irish heritage. That led to a series of discussions between Grant and me over a number of years. He told of me of his family and relatives in Derry and the role that at least one of them played in the republican struggles in Derry. To describe that individual as staunch is probably a good way of putting it. Subsequently, Grant was involved in a range of events that we held.

Grant co-hosted a fundraising event with Paul Hill, who is one of the Guildford Four, the four people featured in *In the Name of the Father*. Even more spectacularly, a number of years ago Grant and I co-hosted Gerry Adams at a fundraising function we had in this building. He was also significantly involved in raising money for the Irish Famine Memorial near the Hyde Park Barracks Museum, which is one of the world's most spectacular monuments to the Great Hunger. The entertaining stories about Grant are all absolutely true, but no-one should ever think that there was not a serious core to him and a serious set of beliefs. He will be missed by the Irish republican diaspora in Sydney. His loss is significant. Vale, Grant McBride.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

*Petitions*

## **NEWCASTLE TRANSPORT NETWORK**

### **Discussion**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (16:58):** I am proud to lead the discussion on behalf of more than 20,000 Newcastle and Lake Macquarie residents who have signed a petition calling on the Government to fix the Newcastle bus services. I thank everyone in the public gallery for taking time out of their lives to show their commitment to getting our public transport system fixed. I thank the union movement, especially the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and Hunter Workers for their strong support. I specifically thank our tireless advocate Pat Mulligan, who has been running street stalls and collecting signatures since the changes were introduced. We received more than 20,000 signatures, which has enabled us to have this issue discussed twice in Parliament. That is a rare occurrence but one that demonstrates the community's dissatisfaction with changes to our bus network.

In January this year the transport Minister and Keolis Downer plunged the bus network into chaos. Our phone was ringing off the hook. Letters and emails were flying in from residents affected by the changes and

people were coming to my front door of my office in an unprecedented manner. All these concerns were raised with the Minister. However, he ignored them—as he appears to be doing now—and told the House that he had heard of no complaints. Minister, there are more than 20,000 signatures from concerned residents. I ask the Minister to stop burying his head in the sand. Time and again, he has dismissed the Opposition as it recounted stories of the chaos unfolding in Newcastle and in Lake Macquarie. The Minister fudged the figures in Parliament by adding a lot of trips to Opal that were not previously counted, effectively comparing apples to oranges and trying to spin out of the mess that he had created.

We held a community protest meeting that was so popular we had to turn away hundreds of people at the door. The Minister knows about the meeting. It was the meeting where he sent Parliamentary Secretary Mr Scot MacDonald to represent the Government instead of fronting up himself. We also held a community protest march and we had to ask the police to close the road because so many concerned commuters turned up. The next step in our campaign to fix the mess was to carry out the critical step that Keolis Downer did not: we asked the community what it wanted. We surveyed thousands of commuters and asked them what worked and what did not, and 1,500 told us exactly what they wanted. That is almost three times the number of commuters Keolis Downer engaged with during the so-called extensive community consultation.

People told us their stories. Students told us they had been left on the side of road; teenagers had to leave home at the crack of dawn to get to school; people who needed regular hospital treatment missed appointments; the elderly who rely on public transport to retain their independence were badly affected; and workers, who did not want to contribute to congestion in the city, were forced back into their cars. Beaumont Street businesses no longer have a bus stop—in the busiest street in the second largest city in the State. We heard from disabled employees who rely on public transport for their livelihood, workers who are having their hours cut because they struggle to get to work on time because of this broken bus system, and blind commuters who, wanting to retain their independence, bought a house based on the network routes but who found that their bus stop had disappeared. These are the people I represent and have the honour to serve. They are the people this Government has let down.

The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure will make a contribution to this debate during which he will probably crow about introducing 1,000 new services. If one bus route is chopped into three routes, of course that will result in more services. There is no doubt about that. The Minister most likely will harp on about the refinement of the network that was announced by Keolis Downer on 1 April, just hours before the Minister was due in town. The Minister is again demonstrating his arrogance by turning his back, on not only me but also the people who have come from Newcastle for this debate. He is talking to his advisers and ignoring the debate.

As we have come to expect from this Government, few details about the routes or timetables have been released. The general manager of Keolis Downer acknowledged today that some connections are not working. Welcome to our world; welcome to a failed privatisation experiment. Watch out Sydney! We will be watching the Minister's refinements closely, and if he does not improve the system we will be back in this Chamber holding him to account.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! I advise visitors in the gallery that it is disorderly to applaud. I ask them to restrain themselves. I am aware of their interest in this matter, but we must observe the rules that apply to this Chamber.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (17:03):** I acknowledge the people in the gallery who have travelled from the Hunter today to observe this debate, for the second time. I thank them for doing so. As I said, a review is underway and changes will be made as a result of community input. I thank everyone for contributing to this process; it is the right thing to do. The Government has introduced 1,200 new bus services in Newcastle. I acknowledge that the system is not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, and that has also been acknowledged by Keolis Downer. That is why some changes will be made. I will help out the member for Newcastle by explaining them.

First, there will be some key changes as a result of the review that was undertaken. Those changes include direct connections from Cardiff, Cardiff South and Macquarie Hills to Kotara with route 44 to continue along Charlestown Road and Park Avenue to Kotara; better links between south-eastern Lake Macquarie to Charlestown with routes 41 and 43 extended to Charlestown, while maintaining route 28; direct services between Swansea Heads, Charlestown and the central business district as route 14 will now travel from Swansea Heads through to Charlestown and the central business district, and the route 29 bus will travel from Swansea North to Belmont, Warners Bay, Cardiff and Glendale; and better access to House with No Steps at Lambton with the route 27 bus being diverted along Young Road.

The member for Newcastle mentioned Access Industries. I checked with my adviser as to Keolis Downer's approach to Access Industries. Keolis Downer has indicated that it is comfortable with the Broadmeadow stop. But I am happy to take any further information the member for Newcastle has in that regard

and explore that further. In relation to the frequency of some of the routes, 49 per cent of the customer base is using four of those routes, and we continue to get feedback on that. We acknowledge that there are better connections to train stations with route 29 going to Cardiff and that there is easy access to Broadmeadow station. When I was in Newcastle I had some direct feedback in that regard.

The key point is that we acknowledge that there are better direct connections, which I believe was the principal concern raised by local members. In relation to some of the refinements—and I acknowledge Chris Preston from the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] in the gallery—there is engagement with the union movement. I am sorry for referring to Chris but he is here, he is a union leader and his union plays an important role. It is key that the union representatives and the staff are engaged in the rostering as a result of what I hope will be a much more collaborative process, and I note that there have been some staffing changes. With any timetable it is impossible to meet the needs of every commuter, but the aim is to get more people to use public transport. We note that some people have been used to a timetable for a long time and that some changes have caused them concern. I am hoping that with these changes most of their concerns will be resolved.

If there are any other issues that those opposite want to raise they should come and see us, and we will feed that back through to Newcastle Transport. The member for Newcastle highlighted the fact that Keolis Downer had recognised that some of the connections were not working. Again, this is the point of refining the timetable to try to make it work. We want to get more people onto public transport. There has been a decline in patronage in Newcastle because—if people are fair dinkum and honest about it—the timetable was not working in some instances. In fact, going back a number of years, people have told me that we should change the timetable. These refinements are designed to get people onto public transport. We want to continue to invest. There are 1,200 new services, more frequent ferry services and more frequent bus services. As a result, and with the big changes that we have made to the city—and Newcastle is going through an incredible change—hopefully we can start to see more people catching public transport. In closing, I thank those people who continue to provide input into the process. Hopefully we will get it right fairly soon.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (17:08):** The Newcastle bus privatisation experiment is a failure. First there were problems with service delivery. Without warning, hundreds of services were cancelled, leaving many of our commuters stuck. Then there were staffing issues: Workers did not receive pay and entitlements on time—in some instances, not for weeks. Then came the rollout of the new timetable and routes, which was nothing short of a catastrophe for Wallsend commuters. During the first stage of the new timetable, phone calls flooded our office—as they did in Newcastle—as well as emails and messages from frustrated commuters.

School students were stranded because the bus never came. People lost jobs because they could no longer get to work on time. In the months since, it has become worse. Short-term inconveniences have metastasised into serious problems. One woman called my office reporting that without the 111 service to take her from her home in Waratah to medical appointments and social engagements, she has become increasingly isolated and her health has suffered markedly. One young man, who has autism and is reliant on schedules, saw his world up-ended when the two buses he used to catch to work became four—throwing his schedule worryingly out of whack.

Hundreds of people have warned that the new timetable has forced them off the public transport network altogether. They are driving now and exacerbating the congestion crisis, which paralyses the Wallsend to Newcastle route, pumping more greenhouse gases into the air. Is it any wonder that we were able to gather more than 1,500 responses to a survey on problems with the new network? Is it any wonder that Hunter members were able to gather enough signatures to have this petition debated in Parliament not once but twice? Is it any wonder that we have people volunteering to travel down to Sydney to support us? I thank them.

I acknowledge those in the gallery who have come down to show the Government their frustration. I thank them for taking the time to do so, and I apologise for our running late. I also thank my union colleagues. I acknowledge that some of the services have been positive—let us keep them. I have been calling for a review of public transport in Wallsend for some time but it has not happened. I also acknowledge that Keolis Downer has initiated a review of the network but it is a tiny Clayton's review—we want a complete and comprehensive review of all of our services for the people of Wallsend and Newcastle. Wallsend needs it.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:11):** I thank the member for Newcastle for tabling this petition today. I also thank the many who have travelled from the Hunter region to be here today in the gallery. Transport for NSW is working closely with the operator to transform the existing Newcastle bus and ferry network into a world-class service for Newcastle. I understand there have been issues and technical problems, but Transport for NSW is working closely with the community to design a network that locals want and use. The Government has listened with the development of the new network strongly influenced by the ideas from the Voice of Newcastle program. The private sector has strong incentives to use infrastructure efficiently, deliver better operational performance and improve the consumer experience.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** What are the KPIs?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I gave member for Newcastle respect; he should give me respect. Private companies such as Keolis Downer are also able to leverage significant global experience operating multiple public transport networks to deliver better outcomes for customers. The new network, launched in January this year, provides more than 1,200 extra weekly bus and ferry services, and better connections between buses, trains and ferries. Sure, there have been issues and teething problems, but they are improving. The four direct routes have been implemented from the outer suburbs to the city centre. These services run every 15 minutes between 7.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. Monday to Friday. Bus connections have also been improved between key locations such as the John Hunter Hospital, the University of Newcastle, major shopping centres and the beaches.

A well-integrated transport network will allow people to move around quickly and easily, provide for future population growth and support the revitalisation of Newcastle. Keolis Downer has been awarded a 10-year contract to design and run Newcastle Transport and will continuously review the network in this time. We are only a few months into a 10-year journey towards improving services in the region. The Government knows there are a number of improvements that need to be made. They cannot necessarily be produced overnight. I have signed and served, and also spoken directly to some of the residents who may even be in the public gallery. I understand this service was implemented only recently. It is improving over time. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure, I will continue to determine how better to increase transport connections in Newcastle.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** I seek leave to participate in the discussion.

**Leave not granted.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** The member for Charlestown has sought leave. Leave is not granted under Standing Order 125A. Members will be aware that the standing order sets out the time for discussion of petitions.

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 54/56**

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:15):** I thank the House for the opportunity to speak in debate on Legislation Review Digest No. 54 of the Fifty-sixth Parliament. This sitting week the digest reviewed the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2018 and the Road Rules Amendment (Slowing Down for Police and Incident Response Vehicles) Bill 2018. The digest also commented on two regulations. I will now draw the attention of Parliament to some of the issues raised.

The National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2018 facilitates the participation of New South Wales in the National Redress Scheme, which was a scheme recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Subject to the passage of legislation, it is intended to commence on 1 July 2018 and to run for 10 years. The National Redress Scheme involves three elements: a monetary payment of up to \$150, 000, access to counselling and psychological support and an apology from the responsible institution.

Having regard to the issues set out in section 8A of the Act, the committee noted a few issues with the bill. First, the bill enables State institutions and other persons to share information requested by the operator of the National Redress Scheme regarding an application. The bill expressly provides that no State law prevents an institution or person from complying with the request. The committee noted this may operate to override privacy and confidentiality protections afforded individuals under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. However, the committee considered that rights to privacy and confidentiality must be balanced against other objectives, such as providing redress to those who have suffered child sexual abuse. As such the committee made no further comment.

Another issue the committee noted is that certain people are restricted from applying for redress under the scheme. These include people who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents, people in jail, people subject to a security notice and children who will not turn 18 before the scheme's sunset date. The committee highlighted that the royal commission recommended that the National Redress Scheme be extended to all persons regardless of their citizenship or residency.

In its report the committee noted that restricting access to the scheme may trespass against an individual's right not to be discriminated against, based on their nationality, and referred this matter to the attention of

Parliament. A third issue the committee noted was that the bill provides that, once a person accepts an offer of redress, that person releases and forever discharges civil liability for the abuse of the person by all participating institutions determined to be responsible. The committee considered this may infringe a person's right to adequate compensation. The committee acknowledged that this provision may be necessary to ensure the viability of the scheme. However, the committee referred this matter to the attention of Parliament.

A final issue on this bill concerns certain matters being deferred to subordinate legislation. The National Redress Act defers certain matters relating to entitlement and eligibility for redress under the scheme to the rules. The question of what abuse is within the scope of the scheme is also deferred. The committee generally prefers substantive matters such as these to be addressed in principal legislation, which is subject to a greater level of parliamentary scrutiny. The committee considered that deferring such matters to the rules may inappropriately delegate legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny. With regard to the Road Rules Amendment (Slowing Down for Police and Incident Response Vehicles) Bill 2018 the committee made no comment with respect to the issues set out in section 8A.

I turn now to one of the regulations the committee reported on in this digest. The Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Amendment (Passenger Service Levy) Regulation 2018 amends the principal regulation to limit the number of objections that a taxpayer may make to an assessment of liability to pay the passenger service levy if a third party fails to collect the levy amount or fails to pay the levy amount to the taxpayer. The committee noted that limiting the ability to object to an assessment of liability may impact on a person's right to review. However, the committee noted that this measure may assist with the administrative operation of the passenger service levy scheme. As such, the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on the fifty-fourth digest of this Parliament. As always I encourage everyone to read the full digest, which is available on the committee's website. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions and commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

*Matter of Public Importance*

**FOOD ALLERGY WEEK**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:20):** I draw to the attention of the House Food Allergy Week, which this year runs from 13 to 19 May. Food Allergy Week is an initiative of Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia, which is a registered charity and Australia's only national organisation that is dedicated to supporting individuals or their carers who are managing allergies and anaphylaxis. Food allergies are a significant public health issue in Australia, with 5 per cent of children and 2 per cent of adults suffering from a food allergy. Astonishingly, half of all children experience an allergy in one form or another before they reach the age of four years. Some food allergies are simply inconvenient, requiring exhausting and constant awareness of individual ingredients of every meal; some allergic reactions are minor and their symptoms are mild, manifesting in simply a swelling or coughing; and a severe reaction known as anaphylaxis can indeed be fatal.

Thankfully in Australia deaths from allergic reactions are rare. Despite high awareness of allergy risks and a growing appreciation of the importance of allergy avoidance, hospitalisations in Australia for anaphylactic reactions have doubled in the past decade. This is associated with the rapid rise of food allergies in Australia. Indeed, research by Murdoch Children's Research Institute indicates that Australia's childhood food allergy rates are some of the highest in the world. We hold the unwelcome record of being the food allergy capital of the world.

I would not wish it on anybody to live with a child who suffers from such an allergy or, in fact, anaphylaxis, as I have. My youngest son, Matthew, is now 26 years of age. Since he was born, he has been susceptible to anaphylactic shock from dairy products. One drop of dairy intermixed with anything he consumes sends him into a severe anaphylactic reaction, which effectively causes him to stop breathing within a minute or two. My wife and I spent much of Matthew's childhood and teenage years at the Sydney Children's Hospital, to which he was frequently rushed suffering from an anaphylactic reaction. It is not widely understood that most foods consumed have some part of dairy intermixed with them. I cannot count the many times he has collapsed at shopping centres or on sporting fields and been rushed to hospital for treatment. While some people thought he might be able to grow out of that anaphylaxis, even at 26 years of age he regularly suffers from an anaphylactic reaction.

Imagine a child who cannot go out for a meal with his mates for fear that something as simple as one drop of dairy will be added to his meal, which might kill him. It is indeed quite worrying. Even as a 26-year-old practising physiotherapist, every time the phone rings or we do not see our son for some time, we are in fear that he has been, at best, rushed to hospital after having used his EpiPen. When he travels to countries where the hospital facilities are not as good as teaching hospitals around Sydney, for that entire time my wife and I are in

fear. Relatively recently, in fact, one EpiPen was insufficient to stop a severe anaphylactic reaction, and he required admission to Sutherland Hospital for some three or four days. Now he has to travel with two EpiPens. There is currently a major shortage of EpiPens in Australia and that is risking the lives of so many children and adults.

New research by the Murdoch Institute shows that probiotic and immunology treatment practically eliminated peanut allergy permanently in a majority of children who participated in the trial. I commend Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia for its vital work in raising awareness of food allergies during Food Allergy Week. I recommend that the Government consider the current practice in Europe, where signs are required at all food outlets asking customers to advise immediately of any food allergy that they have prior to ordering food. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:26):** I thank the member for Heffron for bringing this issue to the Chamber today. As he said, Australia has one of the highest rates of food allergy in the world, with more than half a million people diagnosed with a food allergy. One in 10 babies born in Australia today is likely to develop such an allergy. That is a scary thought; a significant part of our population are affected by this issue.

Food allergy is an immune system response to a food protein that the body mistakenly believes is harmful. When people eat a food to which they are allergic, their immune system releases massive amounts of chemicals, triggering potentially life-threatening symptoms. Just 10 food types cause 90 per cent of those reactions: cows' milk, egg, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, sesame, soy, shellfish, fish and lupin, which is the most recent notifiable allergen to have been included on the list—a change that becomes enforceable from 26 May this year. As we have heard, for many people allergy might be inconvenient and distressing. But for a small number of people it can be far worse than that; it threatens death in situations of severe reaction.

Knowing how to recognise the signs and symptoms and respond to an allergic reaction could save someone's life. This is the key message from Food Allergy Week if someone is experiencing anaphylaxis: Place them on the ground, administer adrenaline autoinjector—that is, the EpiPen—and call 000. Do not delay, do not reconsider and do not second-guess. If people take that action they may be saving someone's life. The Food Allergy Week website has a range of fantastic resources to read and share with one's workplace or at home. I encourage everyone to be aware of the responsibility we all have to be food allergy aware of those around us.

In New South Wales all food businesses are required to provide information about the most common allergens and sulphites in food through correct labelling and information. The NSW Food Authority works with businesses to ensure that consumers can have confidence and certainty that they are getting accurate information about the food they buy and that it is safe for them to eat. For those dealing with a serious allergy, product labelling can literally be a matter of life and death. We heard from the member for Heffron how a tiny amount of dairy product could affect a member of his family.

It is true that for some of those common allergens, tiny amounts can trigger severe reactions from the immune system of the body. Labelling is critical and the monitoring of the labelling system is critical to ensure that people can safely consume foods that are on sale. While this is a serious and complex issue with sometimes devastating consequences, it is a fairly simple task for each of us—individuals, food businesses and sporting, educational and community organisations—to be part of the solution by being aware of these basic facts. The NSW Food Authority works closely with its health colleagues and Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia, and they have developed a wealth of information and resources on food allergy. That information and the resources are available and are being promoted during Food Allergy Week.

I join the member for Heffron in endorsing the work of Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia, a charitable non-profit organisation established in 1993. It is a trusted charity providing allergy support and listening to, guiding and educating Australians on living with allergic disease. I encourage all members of the community who may help people who have anaphylaxis or allergic reactions to make themselves aware of the common symptoms and to take basic steps to ensure that they can contribute to public safety in our community. I thank the member for Heffron for bringing this matter to the House today.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:30):** I thank all those involved in the organisation of Food Allergy Week and those who advocate generally on these issues. I love all types of food—I suspect members can see that—and I am lucky that I have never suffered from any major food allergies. However, I understand the severe impact that food allergies can have on the lives of affected people and their loved ones as my two daughters suffer from Coeliac disease. I acknowledge the contribution of my friend the member for Heffron and I know how anxious his family is about their young son, Matthew. It is important for us all to get across this issue. While Coeliac disease is slightly different from a food allergy, its impact on a person's life is similar to a severe food allergy. It is about knowing what to eat in order to look after a particular condition.

In 1984, when I became a father at the age of 20, very little information was available and there was little or no understanding of the huge impacts of food allergies or the dangers that they can pose if an appropriate diet and education are not available. As young parents, it was an incredibly traumatic experience for Magda and me not to have an understanding of what was happening to our eldest child, Tina, and it was difficult to find help. Thankfully, these days we acknowledge the existence of food allergies and we cater to the needs of people with severe food allergies. While things are still not perfect, we have come a long way in developing labelling requirements and safety standards and in providing specialty products that cater to people with various food allergies. For parents who had to struggle to find foods appropriate for their young children, the availability of products such as lactose-free milk, nut-free products and the whole gamut of gluten-free substitutes for basic foods like bread and cereal were a real game changer.

Over time we have also found that a lot of the hypoallergenic food options are healthier for all of us, and in many cases taste fantastic. When my mum bakes spanakopita—spinach pie—we now prefer the gluten-free filo pastry to the regular stuff. One in 10 infants in Australia is affected by significant food allergies, and around 2 per cent of the adult population is affected, with many more suffering from food allergies to some degree. Ninety per cent of allergic reactions to food are caused by a fairly small number of products: egg, cows' milk, peanuts and other nuts, sesame, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. Finding alternatives to these products and making the alternatives widely available has benefited the lives of many people. That would not have been possible without the advocacy and awareness raising of events like Food Allergy Week.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:34):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Riverstone and Rockdale for contributing to the discussion on this matter of public importance. It is so important that the issue of food allergies and anaphylaxis is brought to public attention. There has been high awareness of allergy risks and a growing appreciation of the importance of allergy avoidance, but hospitalisations in Australia for anaphylactic reactions have doubled in the past decade. I ask the community to consider donating to Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia to help those who live with food allergies. The news is not all grim, however. Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia last year released data showing that children can and do outgrow their allergies.

Peanut allergy is the most infamous, common and dangerous food allergy but its prevalence has halved in four-year-olds. However, I indicate from experience that my youngest son has not outgrown his anaphylactic reaction to dairy, which he must live with for the rest of his life. Unlike Sydney, Europe does not have the benefit of having so many teaching hospitals. It is essential that all food outlets have signs reminding patrons to alert staff to any food allergies that they may suffer from. Such signage exists in many States of Australia. Ensuring that those who supply food, particularly fresh or fast food, are aware of the dangers of anaphylaxis is key to avoiding tragedy. When my then 11-year-old son ordered a fruit juice my wife said, "Make sure you clean the equipment, he has an allergy to dairy." The young shop assistant made a fresh fruit juice but mistakenly added a scoop of yoghurt. My son took one mouthful and collapsed to the ground. I agree with the member for Riverstone, but we must advocate to those purchasing food about the need to disclose their allergies in order to avoid the significant risk of death.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE RELAY FOR LIFE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (17:37):** Congratulations to organisers of and participants in the seventeenth Sutherland Shire Relay for Life. On the wonderful sunny weekend of 5 and 6 May the member for Miranda, the member for Heathcote and I attended Cronulla, where participants had 24 hours to complete the main marathon of 96 laps, or 40 kilometres. During this time onlookers were entertained by a variety of local musical acts and the local surf club hosted a nippers challenge to help fundraise. To date, \$364,000 has been raised and there were 1,948 participants and 127 teams.

The Sutherland Shire Relay for Life has raised almost \$6 million over 17 years for the Cancer Council. I congratulate Rod Coy and Rob Stanley-Jones on their ongoing support and Alison Todd, who is the parliamentary liaison for Cronulla. This event was an amazing community effort, and has been each year. Survivors, carers, local businesses, volunteers and other participants contribute to make this day the important fundraiser and community event it is. Local schools, clubs and workplaces form teams to complete the run and raise funds for vital research.

#### **FAIRFIELD-LIVERPOOL CRICKET ASSOCIATION**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:38):** I acknowledge the Fairfield-Liverpool Cricket Association whose annual senior presentation was held on Sunday 12 May. This followed the junior presentation night on 9 May. I was able to attend for part of the night on 12 May. The association teams have players with boys and girls from six years of age. A modified format is played up to under 10s. The association has a number of member



clubs, including Green Valley, Moorebank, Prestons Hornets, Cabra Vale Diggers, Mounties, St Andrews Macarthur, Smithfield RSL, Marconi, Casula Giraffes, Fairfield RSL, Chipping Norton and Moorebank Sports. I acknowledge Peter Moore, who is both president and secretary of the association and plays a critical role in its organisation. Whilst the association clubs have players from six years old, I understand that some players in the seniors competition are in their sixties. As with many organisations in my part of the world, there is a significant element of volunteering—it is the glue that keeps communities together.

#### **ST GEORGE LIONS CLUB CHARITY GOLF DAY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:39):** The Lions Club of St George's annual charity golf day, with the support of Club Rivers, raised more than \$12,000 this month to support three local Lions projects. The projects are local, State, national and international in their focus, showing the breadth of Lions Club projects. I acknowledge the wonderful president, John Craig, and the entire executive of the Lions Club of St George. The proceeds of the charity golf day held at Beverly Park Golf Course on 11 April will see St George Lions donate \$4,000 to the Big Red Kidney Bus project, \$4,000 to the Lions Kids Cancer Genome Project and \$4,000 to the Operation Smile project. I acknowledge the wonderful work of Lions clubs—not just the St George club but Lions clubs across my electorate. From the Lions Club of Lugarno to Oatley Lions, every Lions club does a wonderful job in our local community.

#### **FREEMASONRY LODGE ENTERPRISE NO 400**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (17:40):** In 1994, Lodge Enterprise No. 400 was formed by the consolidation of Lodge Ferndale, Lodge Dugald Dobie and Lodge Pegasus Roberts. In recent times, Worshipful Master Geoff Williams and Past Master and Director of Ceremonies Arthur Rolph have done a wonderful job opening up the Masonic Lodge to the community and giving back to the electorate. New Lambton Masonic Centre had a wonderful open day recently, which I had the pleasure of attending. The centre shared the history of freemasonry, a worldwide fraternal organisation that promotes moral and personal development amongst its members. Its core values include caring for others, helping those in need and acting with honesty and integrity.

#### **MANNING VALLEY DAIRY FARMERS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:41):** Today I pay tribute to the Gibson Family, one of many local dairy farming families in the Manning region. In 1963, Ted Gibson purchased the family farm on Comboyne Road, Killabakh, with his two sons, Les and Don, by his side. The Gibsons became stalwarts of the Manning's proud dairy industry. Recently, after 55 years, Les informed me that, at 71, it was time for him to retire. He quipped that the Department of Primary Industries owed him a gold watch for his years of service. Les and Don were founding members of the Killabakh Rural Fire Brigade and their dad, Ted, served as brigade captain. Les will continue in retirement as a trustee of Killabakh Hall and as the treasurer of Killabakh Landcare. Les was an active sportsman and was honoured with life memberships of the Killabakh Tennis Club and Wingham Cricket Club. It is families like the Gibsons who make up the rich tapestry that is the Manning Valley.

#### **CANLEY VALE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL CEREMONY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:41):** On Thursday 22 March 2018, I had the great privilege of presenting leadership pins to the newly elected student leaders at Canley Vale Public School's Student Representative Council induction ceremony. Student leaders play an important role in the school environment. The unique challenges that are posed in such an environment help students grow into the leaders of tomorrow. It is always wonderful to meet student leaders to discuss the importance of leadership and the great challenges they will face over the coming year. I thank Principal Ben Matthews, members of the school faculty and the students for their kind invitation to join them on this special day.

#### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNER ANGELA LITTLE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:42):** I give special mention to Mosman resident Angela Little, who is set to move to Los Angeles, having been awarded a year-long partial scholarship by Oscar-nominated film composer Alan Silvestri, who wrote music for Steven Spielberg's new film, *Ready Player One*. As a pupil at Beauty Point Public School, Angela soon realised her desire to be a musician after seeing a band practise. Sensing her keen interest, her mother enrolled her in violin lessons, which has led to an incredible musical career that has included Angela co-composing the music for Baz Luhrmann's film *Australia* straight out of university. Angela will be studying a Master of Music degree in screen scoring at the University of Southern California. Her scholarship is offered to the top-ranked applicant in the year, which is a big achievement as the course accepts only 20 applicants. I wish Angela all the best in her endeavours and I look forward to welcoming her back to the North Shore on her return to Australia, where I am sure she will continue to create great work.

**TOUKLEY TENNIS CLUB PLAYER SYLVIA TURNER NINETIETH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:43):** Today I recognise Sylvia Turner, a fantastic woman who has lived in my electorate of Norah Head for 30 of her 90 years. Most people who reach the age of 90 do not do too much running around—but Sylvia is not most people. She maintains a strict exercise and training regime so that she can stay healthy and fit. Another reason she aims to stay fit is to keep up with the younger players at the Toukley Tennis club. She started playing tennis 50 years ago and has been a regular at Toukley Tennis club for most of that time. She has told the other ladies at the tennis centre to let her know if she is not up to standard. They have not yet told her so and I suspect they will not do so for a long time. I am proud to have Sylvia in my electorate. I wish her well with her many tennis matches ahead.

**KIRRAWEE CHILD CARE CENTRE**

**Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:44):** I acknowledge Kirrawee Child Care Centre, which was officially recognised as a Little Scientists House on 20 March 2018. Little Scientists Australia's purpose is to help children grow into resilient, critical-thinking and problem-solving individuals through inquiry-based learning and playful scientific exploration as well as to change the educational landscape of Australia. The centre encourages children to explore, experiment and learn through play experiences. However, to become a Little Scientists House, the centre has had to successfully engage in daily scientific research with the children, document their progress and attend ongoing professional development programs with Little Scientists Australia.

It was a pleasure to join Kirrawee Child Care Centre for this celebration and to see the children's joy as they engaged in innovative and fun science, technology, engineering and math [STEM] activities. I acknowledge the hardworking executive of the centre, Fikry Bassiuoni as well as Penny Driver and Sarah Murray, who saw this program through to its fruition. I commend Kirrawee Child Care Centre for its commitment to STEM education and congratulate it on its success in becoming a Little Scientists House.

**BELMONT BASEBALL CLUB AWARD WINNER MITCHELL ELLISON**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:45):** I am always thrilled to hear about the success of people from my local community. Mitchell Ellison of Marks Point, who was recently featured in the *Newcastle Herald*, is one of those people. The 17-year-old has been selected to play for the Australian Schoolboys side after winning a second national title in Adelaide earlier this month. Mitchell, who also plays locally for the Belmont Baseball Club, had a batting average throughout the tournament of .321. He was awarded most valuable player following his performance against Western Australia. In addition to representing New South Wales at school sport, he has represented New South Wales at the under-18 national titles for the past two years. I wish Mitchell and the rest of the Australian Schoolboys side the best of luck in their tour of the United States in September. I also look forward to watching Mitchell continue to achieve great things in his efforts to realise his goal of playing college baseball in the United States.

**WEST PYMBLE NOVELIST JACQUELINE HARVEY**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:46):** Members may be familiar with the best-selling *Alice-Miranda* series of books and possibly the *Clementine Rose* series or perhaps even *Kensy and Max*. All those stories are creations of West Pymble's Jacqueline Harvey, who admits that the characters in her books—of which more than 1.2 million copies have been sold—were inspired by the children she came to know and admire during a 20-year teaching career. She was a successful teacher, having been deputy head and then director of development of the Abbotsleigh Junior School in Wahroonga.

In 2012 Jacqueline made the decision to become a full-time writer. The result was a series of books about a positive, clever and kind seven-year-old girl, Alice-Miranda, that has won the hearts of readers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Turkey, Brazil and Hungary. The series has been shortlisted for numerous children's book awards in this country and optioned for television. The *Clementine Rose* series is enjoying similar success in the United Kingdom, Brazil and the United States of America. Jacqueline is passionate about improving literacy standards for children. She is an ambassador for Dymocks Children's Charities and takes great pleasure in introducing books to disadvantaged children who otherwise lack the opportunity. I congratulate Jacqueline on her success as an author and for sharing the joy of reading with children in Australia and around the world.

**BLUE MOUNTAINS COMMUTER AND TRANSPORT USERS ASSOCIATION PAUL TREVASKIS NINETIETH BIRTHDAY**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:47):** On the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, I acknowledge and recognise the work of Mr Paul Trevaskis over many decades in his role as Honorary Secretary of the Blue Mountains Commuter and Transport Users Association. Since 1983, when Paul Trevaskis and Ed McKenzie reformed the association to represent the needs of commuters in the Blue Mountains, the association

has written many thousands of submissions and letters, made representations and held many meetings to raise awareness of commuters' concerns and needs. I first met the energetic Mr Trevaskis in 1983 when I was working for the Hon. Bob Debus, AM. It was the first of many meetings, and our liaison around public transport issues have continued to this day. Born on 25 April 1928, Paul Trevaskis was a long-term resident of Glenbrook and now lives in Bodington Aged Care Nursing home in Wentworth Falls. I visited Paul recently to wish him a happy birthday and to discuss all things trains. Paul Trevaskis, I thank you for your many years of dedication, knowledge, sharing and advocacy. Good man! You are salt of the earth. Enjoy the chocolates.

#### **CRONULLA**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (17:48):** Earlier this month I attended the reopening of the Arts Theatre Cronulla after major renovations. These refurbishments include a beautiful extended foyer, new technical control room and restored heritage features. More accessible seating and space enables the community to meet with the actors and crew behind the theatre's exciting productions. The Arts Theatre Cronulla opened in its current form in 1963, but the building dates back to the 1910s. The School of the Arts existed before the 1960s and performed shows across the shire before settling into the theatre at Cronulla.

Many prominent Australian actors have come through this theatre, including Anthony LaPaglia. Since the 1960s, more than 200 productions have been put on at the Arts Theatre Cronulla. The theatre also runs drama classes catering to young actors and adults alike. All participants, from actors and crew to front-of-house staff, are volunteers and produce these lively shows in their own time. I thank all the volunteers who have contributed to this important local cultural space, including president Shirley Miranda. I look forward to seeing the Arts Theatre Cronulla thrive.

#### **PARRAMATTA DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:49):** Congratulations to captain Nick Bertus and players of the Parramatta District Cricket Club's successful men's first grade team. On 31 March the team defeated Sydney University Cricket team at Bankstown Memorial Oval to take out the premiership for the first time since 1964-65. The Parramatta District Cricket Club was founded in 1843 as Central Cumberland and is a foundation member of the Sydney grade cricket competition. It is the oldest living club in New South Wales and the second oldest in Australia. It was the home of former Australian captain Richie Benaud and cricketing legends John Benaud and Doug Walters. I also congratulate the premiership-winning teams from the club, captain Harrison King and the A. W. Green Shield under-16 team and captain Meryl Halton and the women's second grade team. I also acknowledge Jason Coleman, who was recognised by Cricket NSW by receiving the Bob Simpson Award for NSW Premier Cricket Coach of the Year 2017-18. The club's players, coaches, managers and supporters have well and truly built on the legacy of strong and determined cricketers to achieve great success.

#### **INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:50):** Last Friday I visited Manning Hospital to help celebrate International Nurses Day. There was a great lunch and an awards presentation. I congratulate the 2018 award winners: Jennifer Higgins, Jane Wright, Paige Law, Keerly-Ann Wardle, Karla MacTaggart, Darren Figallo, Neolie Eady, Sharyn Newell, Brendan Brown, Justin Davis, Emma Currie, Julianne McDougall, Lucy Halliday, Maggie Collins, Judith Bennett, Paige Law again, Tracy Wilson, Wayne Lewis, Michelle Anderson, Roger Revill, Jennifer Beilby and Erin Marshall.

#### **DEAFBLIND ASSOCIATION (NSW)**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:50):** People who experience the dual disability of hearing and vision impairment face enormous barriers to engage with, interact and enjoy the world around us. The DeafBlind Association (NSW) advocates for its members in an effort to reduce those barriers. I thank the committee of the DeafBlind Association (NSW) for sharing its insights with me. I pay special tribute to president Irene McMinn; secretary Sharon Dennis and her dog, Tulip; vice president Mark Hoarau; development coordinator Shel O'Toole; founder Janne Bidenko; Carleeta Manser, who is a delegate to the World Federation of DeafBlind Conference; and Rosemary Lipman, an experienced interpreter. It was impressed on me that people who are both deaf and blind face different challenges from people who experience only vision or only hearing impairment. I pay tribute and thank the DeafBlind Association (NSW) for its tireless advocacy on behalf of its members who face more challenges than many of us will ever understand.

#### **KEN DONE EXHIBITION**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:51):** Local Mosman resident and very well-known and revered artist to all of us, Ken Done had a recent exhibition at the Harvey Galleries in Mosman, entitled "Paintings you Probably Haven't Seen". The exhibition, which was launched with a book by the same name, was warmly

received by the North Shore community. The paintings bring the viewers to multicoloured reefs, golden beaches and purple oceans. The arts are an incredibly important facet of our life, giving the individual an opportunity to reflect on their thoughts and feelings as well as on themselves while providing a mental escape to be enjoyed. I thank Ken for his ongoing artistic contribution to the North Shore, to Australia and to the world. I congratulate him on his recent exhibition. He has been a longstanding supporter of our local community. I know he was a close friend of my predecessor, Gillian Skinner, and I thank him for everything he does. The artistic scene in North Shore is incredibly vibrant. I look forward to continuing to enjoy our community's future works.

#### **PADDINGTON PUB FOUR IN HAND HERITAGE LISTING**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:52):** Congratulations to the campaign to save the Four in Hand, a much-loved historic pub in the people's republic of Paddington. More than 7,000 people have signed a petition to save the Four. Residents First Woollahra councillors Harriet Price and Luise Elsing have tabled a notice of motion to have the local council seek heritage listing. Both the mayor and I hope it will pass unanimously. I have written to the Mayor of Woollahra to consider making changes to the local environmental plan to prevent hotels from being turned into residences. The campaign is not just about saving a much-loved pub; it is about protecting the heritage, diversity and livability of historic Paddington. I toast all of those involved in this awesome community campaign.

#### **CSIRO CHIEF SCIENTIST JENNIFER STAUBER**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:54):** I congratulate Dr Jennifer Stauber of Illawong, who has been honoured with the CSIRO Medal for Lifetime Achievement. Dr Stauber is a Chief Research Scientist for the CSIRO and began her extensive career in 1979 at the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography in Cronulla. She continued her groundbreaking work at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation in Lucas Heights when the division moved to Hobart. Her outstanding work has been used by the Australian and New Zealand governments to write guidelines for safe concentrations of pollutants and has found her investigating the impact of chemical contaminants in the environment. Dr Stauber was honoured with the lifetime achievement award for 40 years of dedicated work throughout her career. The CSIRO recognised her exceptional science leadership and landmark research on the bioavailability and toxicity of metals underpinning the national water and sediment quality guidelines for environmental protection in Australia and globally. I thank Dr Stauber for her 40 years of contribution and dedication to our environment and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **RED POINT ARTISTS EXHIBITION**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (17:54):** In May 2008 a group of local artists came up with the idea of using art to help revitalise Wentworth Street in Port Kembla. After 10 years of hard work, Red Point Artists are hosting two major exhibitions to celebrate their anniversary. The first exhibition was opened last weekend by the member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird, and includes an exhibition of sculptural and 3D artworks. The second exhibition opens this Saturday evening. Wollongong Art Gallery will be hosting a major exhibition of Red Point members' artworks from tomorrow until June 30. I encourage everyone who visits Wollongong between now and then to take some time to view their amazing work. I have had the privilege of attending many exhibitions of Red Point Artists, including spending a number of Saturdays enjoying their Art on the Grass events. The group has built a strong following, which is testament to their talent and hard work to build art studios and a thriving gallery from scratch. What started as the brainchild of local artist Gino Chiodo is now a fantastic asset for Port Kembla and Wollongong. I congratulate current President Dulcie Dal Molin and the team on organising the exhibition entitled "A Touch of Red" to celebrate a decade of fantastic local art.

#### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRIES GOOD NEWS DAY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (17:55):** Each year Community Outreach Ministries holds an event in Cronulla mall to promote crucial public issues. Previous events have highlighted homelessness and domestic violence. Last weekend its event called "Good News Day" highlighted people with disability and the work of their carers. I acknowledge organisers Reverend George Capsis, OAM, and Russel Kinred. Reverend Capsis said:

It is simply an opportunity for the local community to show its appreciation of those unsung heroes who continuously and tirelessly care for those with disability or those who are really struggling through adversity.

I acknowledge the work that Reverend Capsis does for those in the shire who are vulnerable and marginalised. I was privileged to present him with a NSW Government Community Service Award to recognise his ongoing great efforts. Gospel singer Esther King, formerly of the Platters, also performed. It was an awareness-gathering exercise that brought attention to the plight of the disabled, their carers and their work.

**SHELL COVE PUBLIC SCHOOL GOODBYE SUMMER FETE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:56):** I bring the attention of the House to the extraordinary success of Shell Cove Public School's Goodbye Summer fete. On 8 April I attended the fair, presented by the school's parents and citizens association, which had the beautiful Killalea State Park as its backdrop. The day was filled with rides, games, stalls and performances. The sun was shining and everyone who attended had a great day. The fete was also a huge success because more than \$16,000 was raised for the school and its students. I congratulate every member of the Shell Cove Public School Parents and Citizens Association on organising an extraordinary event. The entire community is grateful for their efforts and they should be incredibly proud of what they have achieved.

**MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS HOLLI WHEELER AND JONTY HEMMINGWAY**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:57):** Tonight I recognise Holli Wheeler and Jonty Hemmingway, two sportswomen in my electorate who are excelling in rugby league. I have spoken about these women in the House previously. Women's rugby league is growing across the Manning and Great Lakes district and is one of the drivers for upgrading sporting facilities across my electorate. Holli Wheeler from Old Bar was recently selected to play in the Country team, after a fantastic season last year with the Newcastle team in the NSW Women's Premiership competition. Newcastle came runner-up to Redfern. Holli grew up around rugby league and hopes to represent Australia. Jonty Hemmingway from Wingham became the first Wingham league tag player to represent the North Coast when she lined up in the opening round of the Country Championships against Central Coast at Macksville last week. One of the Premier's priorities is tackling childhood obesity. I hope Holli's and Jonty's success will inspire other young women to join a local sporting team.

**SAROJ CARE FIJI INCORPORATED ANNUAL DINNER**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:58):** On Saturday 28 April I had the opportunity to join members of the local Fijian community at Saroj Care Fiji Incorporated's annual dinner and dance fundraiser for 2018. The fundraiser was well attended and jam-packed with a variety of entertainment throughout the night. I take my hat off to the master of ceremonies, Mr Annan, who was incredibly entertaining and kept the guests engaged throughout the evening. I commend and congratulate the president of Saroj Care Fiji Incorporated, Mrs Saroj Raj, and her committee on a remarkable community-orientated evening and for all their time, dedication and commitment towards helping those in need throughout the community in Australia and abroad. Saroj Care Fiji Incorporated's passion to help those who are less privileged in society is unwavering and it truly deserves nothing short of our sincerest thanks and admiration for its efforts over the years.

**BEAUTY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:59):** I pay tribute to Beauty Point Public School, which is located in Mosman in my electorate of North Shore. Last Monday I had the great privilege of meeting with the relieving principal of Beauty Point Public School, Janelle Warhurst, who is currently filling in for Shanti Clements, who had won the Commonwealth Bank of Australia award for Principal of the Year and is currently working overseas. This Saturday Beauty Point Public School is hosting its annual fireworks night and family fun fair and I encourage everyone in the North Shore community to attend. It is a day of food and fun, with games and stalls from 2.30 p.m. onwards, with the fireworks kicking off from 6.30 p.m. The event attracts many thousands of people and creates great community spirit. In addition, it raises tens of thousands of dollars for the school to invest back into its infrastructure. I congratulate the parents and citizens association. This year local organisation Pet Butler Dog Walking will take pets that are afraid of the fireworks away from the local area.

**BARNARDOS MOTHER OF YEAR NOELENE LEVER**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:00):** I bring to the attention of the House the Barnardos Mother of the Year Awards for 2018 and all its nominees. Last Thursday 10 May 2018 I was honoured to attend the ceremony for these awards, now in their twenty-third year. Ultimately, this year's incredibly deserving winner was Noelene Lever from Forster, New South Wales. Despite being widowed at a young age, Ms Lever raised her five children while working two jobs. She worked closely also with the Aboriginal community in Redfern and dedicated her life to caring for children from all walks of life. She has now fostered more than 50 children and proudly lives in a home where her door never closes. I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt congratulations and admiration to Ms Lever, all her fellow nominees and her family.

**MICHAEL BONNICI**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:01):** I acknowledge Michael Bonnici of Alford's Point, recipient of the NSW/ACT Young Achiever of the Year Award for his inspiring community service work across our shire

and overseas. Michael has dedicated over 200 hours of voluntary work to a range of causes, including Meals on Wheels, the Australian Red Cross, the Salvation Army and Surf Life Saving at Wanda Surf Club. I have previously spoken in recognition of Michael's service to Surf Life Saving NSW and his Sydney South region Volunteer Award and overall regional winner's award for his contribution to Surf Life Saving NSW. Michael recently visited Cambodia as part of the Tradies Schools for Cambodia program to assist in the construction of schools in Battambang. Michael's service shows remarkable character and makes him a role model to not only other young people but also the entire community. I thank Michael for his service and congratulate him on yet another wonderful and well-received award.

#### **SWANSEA ELECTORATE BASKETBALL AWARD RECIPIENT NIKOLAS BRILL**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:02):** I have more good sporting news from the electorate of Swansea. It was an honour to be able to present Nikolas Brill of Valentine with a State representative award last week. Members of this House would know that a State representative award is awarded to someone who has represented New South Wales in a competitive field. Last year Nikolas was selected to be a part of the NSW State Basketball Team and travelled to Adelaide to compete at the School Sport Australia Pacific School Games. Nikolas' sporting success is not limited to school sport. For the last four years Nikolas has played for the Hunter-Newcastle representative basketball team. Most recently he competed at Albury where he was one of four country New South Wales under 14s players to be selected to play in a basketball tournament in New Zealand at Easter. His team finished fourth overall, despite playing up a grade. That is an incredible achievement. I congratulate Nikolas and wish him success.

#### **BULLYING AWARENESS COMPETITION WINNER EMILY FALCONI**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:03):** Emily Falconi is a year 3 student from Coast Christian School located at Bensville in my electorate of Terrigal. Emily recently participated in the 2018 "Say No To Bullying" poster competition and has drawn a beautiful A4-sized poster depicting friends holding hands, a girl who is sad having been bullied, and a tree and garden landscape. It reads, "Real heroes don't make others feel like zeroes. Bullying—no way!" This is an important message to spread. I am very pleased that Emily took part in this initiative. Following Emily's excellent artistic work, she has been specially chosen to attend a special awards ceremony next week and will be presented with an award and a prize by the Governor. I congratulate Emily on this achievement. I thank her for raising awareness of the fact that we all need to say no way to bullying.

#### **NORDS WHARF PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:04):** Today I inform the House about the wonderful fete held at Nords Wharf Public School a couple of Saturdays ago. Nords Wharf Public School has possibly one of the best views of Lake Macquarie—it is situated opposite the lake.

**Mr Matt Kean:** They have great cupcakes too.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I note the interjection of the member for Hornsby: they do have great cupcakes. But it was the community spirit that was celebrated that day. This was the first fete to be held in some years and it felt as if everyone from Nords Wharf was there to celebrate. It was fantastic to see the kids so excited and involved. The Nords Wharf Public School is not only providing a wonderful education but also building a community that I am proud to represent. I applaud the commitment of the staff of Nords Wharf Public School.

#### **MARINE RESCUE HAWKESBURY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:05):** Today I pay tribute to the amazing work of the Marine Rescue Hawkesbury volunteers. This wonderful group of people provides a vital service for those residents who have no road access to their homes. They also provide assistance for anyone enjoying time boating on the river. I was pleased to see Unit Commander Ken Edwards, along with fellow volunteers Mark Dryza, Greg Groppenbacher, Peter Moore, and Greg Rottinger, presented with the Unsung Hero Award at a recent Sydney Kings basketball game.

Marine Rescue Hawkesbury has two search and rescue vessels, which serve around 1,200 residents who, as I have said, have no road access to their homes. Although these volunteers play a vital role in transporting paramedics to various locations, they are also trained in first aid and advanced resuscitation. So many good people are involved with this organisation, including my great friend Mathilde Kearney-Kibble and my former parish priest, Father Carmelo Sciberras, who do wonderful work with the organisation. Whether responding to emergencies or transporting paramedics, their work is saving lives in our community and is enormously appreciated. I am proud to be the patron of these wonderful volunteers and I thank them for their amazing efforts.

### HOME BUSH TAMIL SENIORS

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:06):** Last Thursday I was delighted to join the member for Strathfield in addressing the Tamil seniors at Homebush about our recent trip to Sri Lanka. The Tamil seniors meet in three locations across Sydney: Wentworthville, Auburn and Homebush. On our trip to Sri Lanka we visited the predominantly Tamil region of Jaffna. It was great to be able to share with the Tamil seniors our experience of visiting their homeland. We were accompanied on our trip by a number of people. We told the Tamil seniors about a number of fond memories—for example, the Jaffna Hindi College, where many of those at the meeting had gone to school. We talked also about Jaffna hospital and the support it receives from a number of people in Australia through their fundraising activities as well as homes for senior citizens in Jaffna. Many of the people at the meeting knew people in those homes. It was a delightful occasion.

### ASQUITH BOYS HIGH SCHOOL LEUKAEMIA FOUNDATION WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:07):** Today I make special mention of 16 teachers and students at Asquith Boys High School who participated in the Leukaemia Foundations World's Greatest Shave. Over a four-week period the students managed to raise an incredible \$7,292, and \$2,500 was raised in the two final days. Not letting the students have all the fun, Principal Bryce Grant, along with teachers Mr Kennedy, Mr Josephs and Mr Murphy, joined a brilliant group of young men in shaving their heads and beards in support of the cause. I would have joined them but these days I do not have much hair left to shave. The students who participated and lost their hair for the cause included year 12 students Adam West, Jamie Griffin, Joe Parry, Tim Harris, and Robert Campbell; year 11 students Sebastian Eliasson, Aaron Surace, Alister Pirrie, Aruto Isobe, Brody Camp, Jack Dolden and Nick Barratt; year 9 students Patrick Bostelman and Blake Davenport; and year 8 student Timothy Batey. Congratulations to Asquith Boys High School on getting behind this worthy cause. It is wonderful to see such a generous school community. I thank each and every student and teacher and the principal for getting behind this event.

### VISION AUSTRALIA CARINGBAH

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (18:08):** Last week I was delighted to visit Vision Australia Caringbah for the presentation of awards to volunteers. In 2004 Vision Australia became Australia's first national blindness agency. Currently, 27,000 individual clients are assisted by the services and network that it provides. I particularly acknowledge the work of Ted Cramsie of Caringbah, who was presented with an award for volunteering with Vision for two decades. Other volunteers had served for one, five and 15 years. Mr Cramsie said that he saw an advertisement in the paper asking for people to volunteer to record reading the newspaper and decided to give it a go. From then on, he has been reading books onto tape. He helps with social days out for clients and drives them to different activities. I congratulate all the volunteers of Vision Australia, who provide a wonderful service for people with blindness or low vision across the country. In particular, I thank the volunteers that we acknowledged last week in the Sutherland shire.

### *Private Members' Statements*

### FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE MULTICULTURAL EVENTS

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:09):** Fairfield is one of the most culturally diverse electorates in New South Wales and I am incredibly proud to represent that truly amazing community. Multiculturalism is alive and well in Fairfield because the community continually bands together and embraces the ideal of a multicultural Australia. This sentiment is emphasised by not only the numerous multicultural events that are held throughout the region and that bring the community together but also the small local events that aim to unite local residents from all walks of life under one umbrella. Recently I attended several local events that promoted those ideals, including the Fairfield Local Area Command "Coffee with a Cop" event, the Fairfield High School Intensive English Centre National Rugby League [NRL] In League In Harmony event, and the St Merkorious Charity community luncheon for Mother's Day. I also made a visit to Lost In Books.

All of those events share common goals of inclusion, understanding, respect and community. Although we all come from different parts of the world, with different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs, there is far more that unites and binds us than divides us. Despite what certain individuals will try to make us believe, multiculturalism works and it is thriving in south-west Sydney. At the recent NRL In League In Harmony event at the Fairfield High School Intensive English Centre, it filled me with great pride to see the tremendous amount of passion and commitment that has been dedicated to running the In League In Harmony program with newly arrived migrant students. The program directly engages with students through sport and promotes the importance of respecting one another, working together as a community, and the value of multiculturalism in Australia. Nelson Mandela summed it up quite eloquently when he said:

Sport has the power to change the world ... It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers.

We are fortunate that the NRL has listened and remains dedicated to breaking down barriers throughout communities across Australia and focusing on youth who may otherwise end up unengaged and disconnected from our community. It was incredible to see the Fairfield Local Area Command "Coffee with a Cop" event grow from just a few dozen attendees to literally hundreds of participants in such a short period of time. The event aims to break down the social and cultural barriers that separate members of our community from our local law enforcement agency. The ideals of inclusion, understanding and respect have been emphasised and an open dialogue has been developing between local residents and the police that is built on trust, respect and mutual understanding of one another. These relationships do not occur overnight and fostering them takes a lot of time, effort and dedication. Thankfully these relationships have been nurtured and built upon, and our community is that much stronger as a result.

The same ideals were promoted through St Merkorious Charity, which has been hosting a number of multicultural community luncheons with the aim of bringing people together by uniting them through their common love of food. It was amazing to see such a great turnout at the charity's recent Mother's Day luncheon at the Community First Step centre on Barbara Street. I cannot emphasise enough how fortunate we are to have such amazing people operating out of Fairfield. They make a huge difference in the lives of so many people in our community. I also give a quick mention to Ms Jane Stratton and her remarkable team at Lost In Books in Fairfield, who cater to our culturally diverse community.

Lost In Books offers a wide variety of services, including books in a variety of languages, programs on literacy, creative workshops, performance nights, conversational language workshops and so much more. Lost In Books is dedicated to engaging with our culturally diverse community and offering a range of programs that aim to break down barriers, promote social inclusion and empower individuals on so many levels. We are grateful to the plethora of dedicated volunteers, organisations and community groups that are committed to bringing our community together and creating our diverse cultural hub where we can all thrive and prosper. On behalf of the residents of Fairfield, I thank each person who dedicates their time and energy to help others in the community. Their continued efforts to make our community a better place are greatly appreciated.

#### ETTALONG CHANNEL DREDGING

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:14):** The Ettalong Channel at Brisbane Water is an important local waterway to the Central Coast region. Every year thousands of local recreational boaters use the channel and it also serves as a vital transport route, linking Wagstaffe, Ettalong, Saratoga and Empire Bay in Brisbane Water to Broken Bay and Sydney's northern beaches. For several years the Ettalong Channel has been silting up and causing navigational problems to the range of boats that frequently travel through it. Frankly, the state of the channel is unacceptable—it is close to becoming unnavigable. State funding is available for exactly this purpose. In accordance with the NSW Coastal Dredging Strategy, the Government co-funds dredging work in local waterways in partnership with local councils. The strategy makes it crystal clear that waterways on our coastline that do not contain State maritime infrastructure assets are defined as local waterways and are thereby a responsibility of local councils.

I will correct some mistruths being peddled by members opposite, including the member for Gosford. It is something my constituents raise with me on a regular basis. The NSW Coastal Dredging Strategy makes it absolutely clear that waterways that do not contain State maritime infrastructure assets are classified as local waterways; those that do contain the assets are classed as regional waterways, where the State undertakes dredging work. For example, Swansea Channel at Lake Macquarie contains breakwaters and groynes that are State assets and are therefore State funded. The member for Gosford has stated the opposite. I suggest that she may want to get her facts straight when she talks about the subject in public. The revenue gained from jetty rents and similar fees derived from our waterways is invested directly in the system through the Rescuing Our Waterways program. The fund provides \$6 million over four rounds for maintenance dredging.

Since 2011, 14 coastal councils have applied for and received funding through the State Liberal-Nationals Government's Rescuing Our Waterways program. They include the councils of Port Macquarie-Hastings, Greater Taree City, Great Lakes, Eurobodalla, Coffs Harbour, Sutherland, Shoalhaven City, Nambucca, Ballina, Georges River, Hornsby, and Wyong on the Central Coast. Even the former Gosford council received funding in 2014 for dredging at Woy Woy, which is located within the same waterway as the Ettalong Channel. After many months of pressure from community groups, locals and small businesses on the Central Coast, I am pleased to inform the House that on Monday night the council voted at long last to apply for funding under Rescuing Our Waterways with a compliant application. Plenty of other councils along the New South Wales coastline fulfil their responsibilities. I am pleased that our local council has finally decided to fulfil its responsibilities.



It is disappointing that for the past few months, the member for Gosford, her Labor council colleagues and some Independent councillors have put politics before people, and continue to do so. It is not okay to put politics before the safety of waterway users. I am glad council now realises the need to act on the issue. However, it must be said it is a pity that council took so long to reach that position, given that the channel has continued to deteriorate. As Peninsula Chamber of Commerce President Matthew Wales rightly said, "Council's decision is a stunning backflip." It is a backflip, but it has been welcomed by our community that for many months has been demanding that the council step up and take responsibility for the channel. On the Thursday night, it was made clear that the more than 400 people in the room expected and demanded the council to take responsibility for its waterway.

A significant piece of feedback that I receive regularly is about the need for a short-term fix as well as a long-term solution. This week I met with the Minister for Lands and Forestry, Paul Toole, to bring my community's concerns to his attention. Within the next few weeks, the Department of Industry's Crown lands staff will be available to all coastal councils in New South Wales—including the Central Coast Council—to discuss potential dredging projects and provide advice on applying for Rescuing Our Waterways funding. As I have always said, this Government stands ready to assist the council in every way possible to help it manage the waterway.

I pay tribute to the persistence and advocacy of community leaders in our region. Last week Ettalong Diggers Club Chief Executive Officer Bill Jackson did an excellent job convening a very well-attended meeting that was crucial to prompting council to take action. I also acknowledge the work of Peta Colebatch, the President of Wagstaffe to Killcare Community Association, who is a strong voice for the suburbs of Wagstaffe, Hardys Bay, Killcare and surrounds. I also pay tribute to local councillors Jilly Pilon and Rebecca Gale Collins, who have had their dredging motions defeated by a Labor-Independent alliance at almost every council meeting this year but did not give up and continue to advocate for our community. I thank every local resident who made their views known to council by attending meetings and signing the online petition, which has sent a loud and clear message that the community expects and demands action to keep the channel open.

#### **PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:19):** I draw the attention of the House to the section of the Pacific Highway between the roundabout at Charmhaven and Wallarah Creek Bridge. This section of road, which has a 70 kilometre an hour speed limit, is becoming very dangerous. A large number of residential dwellings have driveways opening onto the road and there are 10 intersections. There are also numerous local businesses and a shopping centre fronting the road. More than 20 accidents have occurred in the area over the past five years. If my memory serves me correctly, two of them were head on. Another three-car collision occurred just last week.

I spoke to regional Roads and Maritime Services personnel in August last year and they were extremely helpful. They were able to find \$200,000 to undertake a safety audit, which has been completed. The New South Wales budget is about to be handed down, and I have spoken to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight very briefly and asked that the Government seriously consider allocating funds for safety upgrades to be undertaken. The work will not require a great deal of money. We know that money is tight and many projects require significant funding. However, sometimes projects that cost only \$4 million or \$5 million can make a huge difference.

When I met with residents in August last year, they told me about some of the problems they face. Kerry Orams is an NRMA driving instructor who has lived in the area since the 1970s, so she has seen enormous development. She has also been a Roads and Maritime Services licensed driving examiner and she believes she is still a very good driver. The *Central Coast Express Advocate* reported her as saying that she will not turn right out of her road anymore because it frightens the life out of her. Vicki Matheson, who has lived in the area since the 1960s, said that she will not do a right-hand turn out of Moala Parade because of the danger. She said, "You take your life in your hands trying to turn on to the highway." They are two of the many stories I heard.

One of the major problems is that the road has a single lane in each direction. As residents stop to turn into their driveway, cars travelling behind them crash into them. Drivers are trying to do the speed limit but for a range of reasons they are not paying attention. As a result, cars are forced into the oncoming traffic. We all know that infrastructure must be upgraded to accommodate new development. When I was a member of the Labor Government, the section between the link road at Doyalson and the other side of the Wallarah Creek Bridge was upgraded slightly to service the new North Lakes Shopping Centre. Unfortunately, traffic turning into the shopping centre created five-kilometre traffic jams. I approached the then Minister responsible for roads and managed to get \$4.5 million to have the section fully upgraded with two proper intersections, turning lanes and so on. As a result, the traffic congestion was eased and there were no accidents in the area.

I ask that consideration be given to this project. It is not one of the landmark projects, such as the road through Wyong, the upgrade of the Pacific Highway at Lisarow or Manns Road, and I know the member for Terrigal probably would like some more money for Terrigal Drive. We know that congestion is growing, but having that many accidents occur in such a short time, including head-on collisions, tells us very clearly that there are significant problems there. Following the study, five or six improvements were chosen that can be done fairly easily. Now it only needs the necessary funding to ensure that the project goes ahead. I hope that after the budget I do not have to stand here before the next election and report to the Parliament that unfortunately there has been a fatality occur in that area; that is the last thing any of us want. With the huge Roads budget, I am sure that the Government can find a few million dollars to ensure that people's lives are protected.

### **LISMORE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (18:25):** Over the past few weeks I have had the pleasure of outlining the achievements of this Government in many of the towns and villages across my electorate. Today I take the opportunity to speak about Tenterfield and what the Government is doing to improve the town's lifestyle, wellbeing and infrastructure. Only last week I toured the Tenterfield, Torrington, Mingoola and Jennings areas of Tenterfield Shire Council. During this trip I had the pleasure of announcing that Tenterfield will receive \$4,480 in funding for local sports clubs and community initiatives. Tenterfield District Tennis Association was very excited to receive \$3,090 to purchase a new ball machine. This equipment will create new training opportunities for young, up-and-coming players in the district, and older players will appreciate the opportunity to practise. Tenterfield Traditional Archers will have a similar opportunity, with \$1,390 made available to secure new archery equipment for the new area it is developing.

Also during the visit I was able to announce that one of our region's latest events, the Peter Allen Festival, has secured \$20,000 from the New South Wales Government's 2018 Incubator Event Fund. Tenterfield was the home of Peter Allen; the Tenterfield saddler was his uncle. The community of Tenterfield have been working on this project and this year they are holding the inaugural Peter Allen Festival, which will add to the economy of Tenterfield. I congratulate the Tenterfield Chamber of Commerce, Josh Moylan, who is the coordinator of the Peter Allen Festival, and Katelyn from Tenterfield council. They all worked together not only to prepare the program but also to fill out a great application for funding, which was successful. The funding will support them in putting together a wonderful Peter Allen Festival. Everyone has heard of the Elvis Festival at Parkes; this event will make the north of the State famous for the Peter Allen Festival. I extend an invitation to everyone to visit Tenterfield; they will be well looked after. Tenterfield is where our history started.

The Government is not only funding and delivering for sports and tourism, it is also significantly boosting infrastructure and transport. For example, the new Tabulam Bridge across the Clarence River is starting to take shape significantly. The \$48 million crossing is being funded under the New South Wales Government's Bridges for the Bush program to improve road safety and traffic efficiency. It is on the main Bruxner Highway between Casino and Tenterfield and it is being appreciated already. Although it is nowhere near completion, it will be completed over the next six months. The 290-metre bridge will have one lane in each direction—currently, it is only a single-lane bridge—and it will have a separate footpath for improved pedestrian and cyclist safety for the Tabulam community.

The New South Wales Government, in conjunction with our Federal colleagues, is continuing with planning for the Tenterfield heavy vehicle bypass project, with field investigations being carried out as part of the environmental assessment. This means we are another step closer to providing safer streets in Tenterfield and building our corridor of commerce with faster freight solutions along the New England Highway. Residents used to say that Tenterfield was the most northerly town in New South Wales but I would remind them that coming from Queensland it was the first town in New South Wales. I have continued to work with the community and the Government to ensure the delivery of vital infrastructure in my electorate. These are just some of the projects that have been delivered in Tenterfield. I thank the Government for funding infrastructure projects in my electorate.

### **UNITED STATES EMBASSY JERUSALEM**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:30):** This week the world witnessed the spectacle of the grotesque loss of life in Palestine coinciding with the opening of the relocated United States embassy in Jerusalem on the seventieth anniversary of the Nakba, or catastrophe, on 14 May. The celebrations for the relocated embassy occurred less than 100 kilometres from where 60 people lost their lives and thousands were injured in a peaceful protest, the Great Return March. Those of us who are strong supporters of a peaceful two-state solution on internationally recognised boundaries despair at the contempt shown to human rights and peace. In condemning the killings of Palestinians this week, Pope Francis stated:

... War begets war and violence begets violence.

Amnesty International described it as:

... another horrific example of the Israeli military using excessive force and live ammunition in a totally deplorable way. This is violation of international standards, in some instances committing what appear to be wilful killings constituting war crimes.

These events are especially distressing for many Palestinian Australian families in my electorate who love their adopted homeland of Australia but who fully understand the displacement that is going on in Palestine, as it happened to them. These events bring back traumatic memories from the past 70 years. They feel guilty about enjoying life in Australia in safety while others suffer. This was evident at the recent Palestinian graduates and Higher School Certificate high achievers dinner, with their lives, their opportunities and their exciting futures in stark contrast to what young people endure in Palestine.

It is even more distressing for those who have relatives who have been injured or killed in the current bloodshed. One family from Greystanes has had several cousins and nephews seriously injured, one of whom is expected to die as there are insufficient hospital beds and medical treatment available. Why are they protesting? They are protesting for many reasons, primarily the right of return. This week marks 70 years since approximately 750,000 Palestinians were dispossessed of their lands by Israeli forces. The gross deprivation endured by people in Gaza can be traced directly to this and to the failure of the peace process to deliver anything resembling peace, prosperity or even normality for the two million residents of Gaza.

They are also protesting against the conditions in which they live. There are two million people on just 365 square kilometres of land, where the water is not safe to drink, where people lack food and other basic goods, where there are only four hours of electricity every day and where unemployment is estimated at 44 per cent. The situation is so bad that even senior members of the Israel Defence Force [IDF] have urged the Government to address this humanitarian situation. Unfortunately, the response has been to ban the term "humanitarian crisis". The relocation of the United States embassy to Jerusalem signifies a shift in support for the peace process. Approximately 300,000 Palestinians live in East Jerusalem. The relocation of the United States embassy to Jerusalem adds support to Israeli claims over the entire city and adds to the insecurity felt by Palestinians. It is utterly provocative and opening the embassy on the anniversary of the Nakba adds injury to insult. Some dismiss what has happened and call for restraint on both sides, as if responding to rock throwing with live ammunition is somewhat equivalent.

Since 30 March, residents of Gaza in their thousands have protested at the border, mostly peacefully. The protestors are people whose lives are characterised by crisis, overcrowding, unemployment, destruction and poverty. In the past, the incidents to which the IDF responded were far more violent and provocative than the recent protests. The response has always been characterised by a violent overreaction and show of force, as this week's events have been, but responding to events could realistically be construed as a threat to the security of Israel. These protests, including the rock throwing, cannot be construed in that way. Some also portray any criticism of the actions of the Netanyahu government as akin to anti-Semitism. That is as unfair as it is untrue. Criticism of the current government abounds within Israel as well as internationally.

No government is above criticism—not Israel and not the Palestinian National Authority. To believe in the importance of human rights, the importance of peace and the safety and security of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians is to see the current situation in Gaza and the establishment of the United States embassy in Jerusalem as deeply problematic. The current government of Israel includes many Ministers who are publicly opposed to the peace process and who are clearly working against it.

What does the end of the peace process look like? If not a two-state solution, what does a one-state solution look like? There are two options: one in which Palestinians and Israelis live side by side peacefully and equally or one in which they do not. The right of return is key to this; it is central to freedom of movement and assembly that Israelis enjoy. Palestinians retain an attachment to their traditional villages even decades after they have been destroyed, just as Jewish people around the world value their right to return to Israel. Political rights are central too. But given that there are similar numbers of Jewish citizens of Israel as the combined populations of Palestinians and Arab Israelis, the current government is unlikely to extend the rights their citizens enjoy to Palestinians. The alternative is subjugation and colonisation; a state in which the full rights of citizenship are limited to a preferred section of the population. This will not bring peace nor will it address in any way the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

#### **RYDE ELECTORATE OVERDEVELOPMENT**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (18:35):** Overdevelopment, without question, is the number one issue in my community and because of its many layers it is not a simple problem to fix. In my view, one of its main causes is the pace of migration. On 25 April 2018 an article on *news.com.au* stated:

More than 18,000 people abandoned Sydney last year to make way for nearly 85,000 overseas migrants, with the total population growth in the nation's biggest city topping 100,000 for the first time ever.

Those 100,000 people will not go to Dubbo or, Mr Temporary Speaker, to your great seat of Tweed. But they will be attracted to Ryde, and I do not blame them. Ryde has a university, a metro, schools, TAFE—

**Mr Jonathan O'Dea:** A great sitting member.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, a hardworking local member. Ryde also has a business park that is the second-biggest economic engine in our State and attracts many people. Overdevelopment is an issue not only for local council or State government but also for the Federal Government. In this Chamber there is a degree of unanimity about the need for the Federal and State governments to discuss migration laws so that we can align infrastructure with population. People who say that overdevelopment is a political issue really do not understand the core problem. I am sure the Premier of Victoria has similar issues in his booming State.

In Ryde, I have been fighting against overdevelopment for the past 10 years. We have stopped 23-storey apartment buildings being built in Meadowbank and 12-storey apartments being built in Allengrove Crescent and Whiteside Street, North Ryde. We have stopped developments occurring at Tennis World, Blenheim Road, and Smalls Road, North Ryde. Currently, we are fighting to protect the T G Millner Field in Marsfield. Ryde has done more than its fair share of heavy lifting in providing housing for our booming population, but it is time to say enough is enough to allow the infrastructure to catch up. In the past 10 years Ryde council has directly approved 73 per cent of developments. This included 24 per cent under the former Labor Government's part 3A system and 3 per cent under the current Government.

To paint a picture of our changing landscape and of Ryde council's development history, in 2015 Ryde council voted to support a 19-storey development in Lane Cove Road, even though the council's local planning law only allowed for a maximum height of 11 storeys. In another example from May 2017, Ryde council voted to support 49 towers in Macquarie Park, notwithstanding that local planning laws provided for a height limit of only 10 storeys. Again, in April 2018 Ryde council voted to support a record 60-storey tower in Macquarie Park, notwithstanding that council's local planning laws allow for only 27 storeys. Last week I wrote to the Minister for Planning seeking urgent action to save our community from, in my view, council's broken planning laws. I was relieved when I received his reply on Tuesday indicating that there needs to be an urgent solution to this rampant overdevelopment.

The solution is fourfold. First, the local council should be allocated \$2.5 million to conduct an urgent and comprehensive review of its local environmental plan. Secondly, the council should be prevented from entering into planning agreements in which developers are allowed density higher than that in the local environmental plans in exchange for financial contributions. We will introduce a number of other provisions. I address the Chamber today to announce that the Government has a solution that is different from that of Ryde council. Ryde council's solution is a bandaid; the solution we are putting forward is comprehensive.

#### **NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:40):** More than 18 per cent of Australians live with disability, including 51 per cent of Australians over the age of 65 years. Unfortunately, people with disability are still more likely to be removed from their family, excluded at school, denied appropriate housing, imprisoned, suffer sexual assault, or die of a preventable death. Without the right support, many are at risk of social isolation and financial hardship. People with disability should have full opportunities to contribute to society and make decisions about their lives. This belief has led to the adoption of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS], which is about inclusion and personalised support and care.

The NDIS aims to provide people with disability greater control and choice from a broad range of services and support to meet their needs and their priorities. I am increasingly hearing from constituents reporting that it is difficult to get into the NDIS or to get appropriate plans established. I understand similar concerns are being raised with my Federal counterparts. The system is due to be fully in place in New South Wales on 1 July but serious gaps have been identified that could result in a crisis for some people. Until recently, the New South Wales Government planned to cut all funding for independent disability advocacy and information even though the NDIS clearly does not fund this function. The NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance initiated an excellent campaign, Stand By Me, which I proudly supported, and the Government responded with a commitment to retain funding for two years. Independent disability advocacy services have been vital in helping people with disability access their entitlements and find solutions to barriers for care.

As people transfer to the NDIS system, the need for independent disability information and advocacy does not reduce but becomes more vital because people need help to navigate what is a new and evolving system while ensuring they do not fall through the cracks. The extensive expertise built up over many years about supports, services, equipment and aids is at risk, with information and advocacy services now reporting that they

have to reapply to secure any of their current funding and their grants are being cut if they receive NDIS information, linkages and capacity [ILC] building grants even though these do not fund advocacy work.

Disability organisations say that core advocacy funding is being stripped completely when the department finds they have received an ILC grant. Others report that the insecurity of funding means that they are losing experienced staff and expertise. ILC grants are for activities that build capacity to help mainstream services and community activities become more inclusive. This is a distinctly different role from that of advocacy with individuals and their families through case management, mediation, representation and appeals of decisions affecting these individuals. It also covers advocating for systemic change to government when laws and policies do not work.

The ILC grant guidelines clearly state that the program will not fund individual or systemic advocacy or legal representation. ILC grants are clearly not for advocacy services and should not be used as an excuse to cut funding to independent disability advocacy. These organisations need secure funding to continue their vital work and people with disability need their expertise and advocacy. Funding for information and advocacy should not end in two years. Advocacy services will continue to be needed to help people with disability through the NDIS system and ensure that all services, programs and facilities become more inclusive. Independent advocacy can signal early warning signs to the Government about problems before they escalate and help resolve individual problems negotiating barriers.

The NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS] has identified massive cost benefits for the State with permanent independent disability advocacy funding. People with a disability will benefit from better support, care and inclusion. Without advocacy services, people with a disability are more likely to end up in crisis services provided by the State, including crisis accommodation, hospitals and prisons. NCOSS identified multiple services that Ageing, Disability and Home Care NSW currently provide that will not be picked up by the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS], such as specialist health services, justice, housing, education, education, family support and transport. For example, experts who develop mealtime plans for people with dysphagia so they are not at risk of choking could disappear.

The State should invest in independent disability advocacy to ensure the NDIS systems deliver and protect vulnerable people, promote inclusion and ensure no-one falls through the cracks. We will only achieve full inclusion if there is a whole-of-government response to people with a disability. I call on the Government to reinstate full, ongoing funding for independent disability information and advocacy services to ensure that people with a disability can live their lives and be fully part of our community.

#### **TRIBUTE TO BILL GALVIN, OAM**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (18:45):** It is with a heavy heart that I inform the House this evening of the passing of a very dear friend to many members in this place, Bill Galvin, OAM. It is burdensome at best to attempt to pay tribute to Bill in words in this Chamber. I am sure many members would agree that for those who knew Bill—or others who have passed away—giving this sort of speech is not an easy task. A private member's statement will often fall short of capturing an individual's life and true essence.

I must confess that I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They live on, and that is certainly the case with Bill; he regenerates in every thought that we have, everything we do and the choices we make in our own journeys. Bill was an unforgettable individual. I find solace in the fact that I appreciate the life that he lived and the meaningful contribution that he made to the hotel, hospitality and tourism industry. That said, I dedicate this evening's private member's statement to not only Bill, but also those who were inspired by him and his contribution to tourism and travel.

In the words of Bill Galvin's close friend Reverend Jay Bacik, who was a mutual friend of Bill's and mine, "Bill had a capacity to motivate people and corporations to give generously, sometimes by publicly embarrassing them at events. It was called being 'Galvinised'. Bill never saw a charity that he did not want to help." I am sure that Parliamentary Secretary O'Dea would have been embarrassed into giving some sort of contribution to a charity at a function that he attended on Bill's behalf. In the time that I knew Bill—initially through my role as the deputy chief executive of the Australian Hotels Association in New South Wales—his unwavering devotion towards family and friends, coupled with his unswerving commitment to charitable causes in his private life, was exemplary.

I recall Bill to have been a very kind person when it came to providing things such as Christmas lunches to the homeless. He actively supported the Sydney City Mission foundation, which was headed up by former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, John Singleton and Alan Jones. He involved himself with Diabetes Australia, donating what I believe to be a significant amount of money to the condition that plagued him with ill health. He

committed to donating even more after he raised \$460,000 at a single Diabetes Gala dinner that he organised. I am sure it will be of no surprise that I was delighted when our paths crossed again in my subsequent position as a director of Life Education. Bill's contribution to that organisation was known to many.

I may not be able to list all of Bill's achievements, but I believe the following examples will suffice. In 1997, Bill was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia. In 2000, he was given the Australian Sports Medal for his contribution to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games bid. He was recognised by the New South Wales Government as the most significant contributor to tourism. In 2008 he was appointed Chairman of the Order of Australia Association: New South Wales. In 2010 Bill was appointed President of the Tourism & Hospitality Catering Institute of Australia, and in 2016 Bill was awarded the Restaurant & Catering Australia Award for Excellence by Restaurant & Catering Australia. I know that Temporary Speaker Provost, in his past life as an executive in the club industry, probably had some exposure to Bill Galvin.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** A big shot.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** The Temporary Speaker was a big shot in the club industry. Nobody knew Bill better than those in the club industry. If I walked into an established club in New South Wales or a five-star hotel in Sydney the chances are that the concierge, the chef, the maitre d', or—if I was really lucky—a sommelier, would have been trained by Bill. That could make a person feel special because they all knew Bill Galvin, OAM. I join the House in acknowledging the contribution of the great Bill Galvin, OAM, I wish his family and friends the best as they mourn his loss.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:50):** I commend the member for Baulkham Hills, the Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs, on his fine words in honour of Bill Galvin. Bill was a luminary in the hotel, hospitality and tourism industry. I knew him before I became Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism. When I moved into that role he was a source of great advice and the sort of inspiration that the member referred to. I also pay tribute to the member who has galvanised those in the Chamber tonight in appreciation of Bill Galvin's life in a similar fashion to the way that Bill Galvin galvanised so many others.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provost):** I knew Bill Galvin over many years. He was not only good at advice but very good at direction as well. I concur with the member for Baulkham Hills and the member for Davidson. It is a loss, but he is leaving a great legacy.

### **BUS SERVICE X03 CANCELLATION**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (18:51):** I refer to the Government's recent cancellation of the X03 bus service, which previously serviced my electorate of Rockdale and the southern Sydney region. Sadly, the Government recently cancelled the X03 with little notice and an appalling lack of community consultation—essentially none—which has left commuters who relied on this service with poor quality transport from Rockdale to the city. Last week the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight said that many people in southern Sydney do not want to travel into the city, but I can assure those opposite that a great many people do. Minister Pavey said, "Not everybody wants to come into the centre of Sydney ... a lot of people want to travel across Sydney." It is bizarre that the Minister would make such a tone deaf statement when all the promised benefits of the WestConnex southern extension revolve around faster travel time to the city, although those promises are increasingly looking as if they are not worth the paper they are written on.

For a resident in Kyeemagh, the X03 leaving at 7.30 a.m. took just under an hour to get into the city, comfortably arriving at around 8.30 a.m. in time for work. On the comparable 303 service, which is the only bus route remaining for those commuters, anyone leaving on the 7.42 a.m. 303 service can expect to travel for almost an hour and a half, arriving in the city at around 9.05a.m. I am sure the Temporary Speaker is familiar with this bus service as he worked in that area. Those opposite may think it is acceptable to drop service standards by 50 per cent—that might be a good day at the office for the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight—but the people in my community are furious at the Government's incredible lack of competence in deciding to cut this important transport service.

Kyeemagh is located just 11.5 kilometres from Central station, yet it is now slower to get a bus from Kyeemagh to central than it is to get a train from Thirroul or Gosford. We thought it was bad enough that those opposite were privatising our 400 bus services—with the damage that that will do to the quality and frequency of our local buses—but cutting the X03 on top of that is just adding insult to injury.

Few in the Chamber would disagree that one of the biggest issues facing Sydney is traffic congestion and that the challenge is growing. It beggars belief that for no good reason those opposite would cut a service that is relied upon by people to get to work each day. It all seems to be part of the Government's chronic mismanagement of our road and transport systems. Last week *Nine News* revealed that the Government's WestConnex South

bolt-on is not designed to get people into the city faster; it is simply a toll trap to bolster numbers for the WestConnex. Figures show that Wolli Creek is the number one train station for cancelled and missed services. I am starting to think that those opposite do not like me, and they certainly do not care about the people of Rockdale.

The Government is privatising our buses, building toll traps on roads that go nowhere, cannot get our trains to run on time and is now cutting a great local bus service, the X03. The service has been totally wiped out. I call on the Government to reinstate the X03 bus service, to fix our transport and road system and to get on with the job of easing congestion. I can assure those opposite that the residents of southern Sydney will not forget the way they are being treated and they will be coming for those opposite at the ballot box in March next year. I call on Minister Constance to take a personal interest in this matter and resume the X03 bus service as soon as possible.

#### **MACULAR DISEASE FOUNDATION PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

**Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:55):** Today I speak about macular degeneration, as it is an matter that is dear to my heart. May is Macular Month—a public awareness campaign run by the Macular Disease Foundation. The foundation seeks to raise public awareness of macular degeneration and encourage those at risk of macular disease to have an eye test for macular degeneration in order to detect the disease early and save people's eyesight. The campaign includes education on detecting the signs of macular degeneration as well as preventative measures.

The ability to see is an enormous gift that allows us to appreciate and interact with the world and others. Sometimes it is taken away from us. Some forms of vision impairment are preventable. Vision impairment affects 9 per cent of the population globally and poses a significant challenge to the medical profession, governments and the entire community. Vision impairment causes substantial disability that may prevent people from earning an income and others may require support services. In 2004 it was estimated that vision impairment had a direct and indirect cost of more than \$5 billion to the economy. Macular disease is the leading cause of vision impairment in Australia, with nearly 1.3 million Australians having some evidence of macular degeneration. This figure is expected to increase to 1.7 million by 2030.

In its most common form, known as "dry form", it causes the deterioration of the central part of the eye's retina and the tissue behind it. The loss of a functioning retina results in distorted vision which, if untreated, can lead to the complete loss of eyesight. In some cases, macular degeneration can occur suddenly and without early symptoms. It is most prevalent among those over the age of 50, with one in seven Australians over 50 experiencing some form of macular degeneration. As I have previously mentioned, this cause is dear to my heart as my grandmother suffers from macular degeneration. In New South Wales alone it is estimated that 361,000 people have some form of macular degeneration.

In 2014 the Miranda electorate was estimated to have 3,316 cases of macular disease, with numbers expected to grow by 46 per cent to 4,843 in 2030. As there is no treatment for the disease in dry form, it is important to make the public aware of the condition. Macular degeneration can be limited through preventative steps. While the condition is often associated with age, it can be the result of genetics, with 70 per cent of macular degeneration diagnoses associated with a family history. Those suffering from diabetes also face an increased risk of macular degeneration, with numbers expected to increase as the number of diabetic sufferers increases. Smokers also face a significant risk of contracting macular degeneration, with studies showing they are up to four times more likely to develop the disease and develop it 10 years earlier than non-smokers.

Macular degeneration can result in additional symptoms as a result of the difficult circumstances that arise from the condition. Research shows that, compared to the general population, people with macular degeneration are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety disorders. As part of Macula Month, in order to raise awareness, preventative measures are being promoted. These measures include visiting a general practitioner or an optometrist for an eye test, avoiding smoking, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy diet, and protecting eyes from the sun.

The Macular Disease Foundation Australia does an incredible job in conducting research, providing advocacy and educating the public about the disease. Macular degeneration can have a devastating impact on people. This makes it all the more important to raise awareness of the disease to help those vulnerable to understand the risks and know their options for prevention, early detection and management. Macula Month is a great opportunity to raise awareness of this prevalent disease. I wish the Macular Disease Foundation and their supporters all the best in their efforts this month and in the future.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** I compliment the member for Miranda on raising awareness of macular degeneration. I encourage the members of this place and the general community to have annual testing. As I am just over the age of 50, I am regularly tested for macular degeneration.

### MANNING BASE HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:00):** I want to update the House on the Manning Base Hospital redevelopment. I have spoken about the hospital on numerous occasions in the House. I call on the Government to fund the detailed planning for stages two and three of the redevelopment of the hospital. Stage one is under construction and is expected to be completed later this year. The master redevelopment plan, which was completed in late 2013, called for a three-stage redevelopment of the hospital. I now call on the Government to fund the detailed planning of stages two and three in accordance with the master redevelopment plan. Detailed plans are required to be able to build stages two and three.

The concept plans, as part of the master redevelopment plan, have been completed. Now we require the detailed designs and plans, which will show the costs involved for stages two and three. Stages two and three include parts of the hospital that need refurbishment. Some of the hospital buildings are at least 70 years old. Facilities that were state-of-the-art 70 years ago are not up to the standard required for the twenty-first century. The people of the Myall Lakes electorate and the hospital staff have an expectation that our Government will deliver in accordance with the master redevelopment plan. In order to get the construction of stages two and three underway, we need the detailed plans. I call on the Government for funding to prepare those plans.

When I have spoken previously in the House about the Manning Base Hospital, I have complimented the nurses, doctors and ancillary staff on their work at the hospital. I have noted that the hospital and staff have met key performance indicators and have exceeded the State average in just about every measurement. They deserve to have a hospital suitable for the twenty-first century. The hospital and staff have performed to an exemplary standard; it is probably the best hospital in the Hunter New England Local Health District. However, in some parts of the hospital the staff are working in mid-twentieth century conditions, rather than in facilities made for the twenty-first century. The staff should be rewarded for their hard work.

I attended the hospital last week for International Nurses Day. I had the pleasure of cooking the barbecue for the nurses and then taking part in the Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards ceremony. The week before, I met with midwives for International Midwives Day. I have been to the Manning Base Hospital many times. As a former nurse I am always interested in what is happening in nursing and I am amazed at the new technology, skills, ability and professionalism of nurses today. I always talk to them about the resources they need and what needs to be done at the hospital. That is why I fight so hard and why I have spoken many times in this Chamber about the hospital.

During the last election phase the Labor candidate for my electorate said I was lying and that we had no plan and no money for the redevelopment of the hospital. Even this year the Hon. Walt Secord came to the Manning Valley and told the people that there was only \$9 million in the budget for hospital redevelopment. But if we look in the budget we find \$20 million. This financial year the Government budgeted \$9 million for the building of stage one of the hospital. The Hon. Walt Secord also said we have downgraded oncology services. When we formed government, there were no oncologists at the hospital. Now there are two oncologists. Part of the stage one redevelopment is a new oncology unit at the hospital. If that is called downgrading, I love it. There is nothing better than seeing bricks and mortar and there is nothing better than having two oncologists when there were none.

### TUGGERAH LAKES

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:05):** Tonight I bring to the attention of the House some issues about the Tuggerah Lakes system and the work of Tuggerah Lakes Care, a committed group of volunteers whose primary mission is to carry out activities and advocacy that improve the important Tuggerah Lakes system. The system consists of Tuggerah Lake, Budgewoi Lake and Lake Munmorah. Recently I attended the Tuggerah Lakes Care monthly meeting at the Wallarah Bay Recreation Club and heard its concerns. I also recently travelled to Fingal Head in the Tweed and I note that Assistant Speaker Geoff Provest has many waterways in his neck of the woods. After meeting with a local community group in Fingal Head, I spent some time looking around. I am sure that there are some good volunteers looking after the lake and water system in that area.

I am concerned that the Tuggerah Lakes system is currently receiving little support. When the region was under the Wyong Shire Council, which was later abolished in a merger, the Wyong estuary management committee was disbanded. It seems that since then the local council has taken its eye off the ball when looking after that lake system. State and Federal governments have put significant money into the area, but Tuggerah Lakes Care is concerned that we are not achieving results. It pointed out to me some interesting facts about which I was not previously aware. The council has a weed harvester and employs a contractor to collect weeds. I often see both those machines idle and not collecting weeds. However, Tuggerah Lakes Care brought to my attention the fact that the machine belongs to the contractor. I assume the old Wyong council and the current Central Coast Council have undertaken a contract for weed harvesting.



For the benefit of the House, weed harvesting is required because if weeds break free they float on top of the water and accumulate near the shoreline where they start to deteriorate. If weeds are not collected they deteriorate until they become a smelly sludge. This means that in order to access the water people sometimes have to walk through knee-deep or even hip-deep sludge. The volunteers of Tuggerah Lakes Care work around the shorelines and keep the gross pollutant traps clean, but they have commented to me that over the past few years maintenance has been going backwards. Less and less is being done, and when volunteers ring council about some of the reserves they do not receive timely responses.

The workers want to do the work but they have had their budget cut and are unable to. The group advised me that their primary concern about the contractor who has been engaged to collect the weed is that since December 2017 the harvester has been on blocks on the shore. It looks as if it is parked on the edge of the water, but it has not been in the water for almost six months. I am not sure how the contractor can be meeting its contract collecting the weed. The excuse has been that it is broken and there are no parts available. I wonder what the council is doing about it.

I made a commitment to the group that I will contact the council on its behalf, find out what the situation is and ensure that what is supposed to be done is done. It is a knife through the heart of volunteers—who are putting in their own time collecting the rubbish to ensure that one of the key geographical features that makes our area a lovely place remains that way—to discover that governments at all levels are not pulling their weight to ensure that the contracts are followed up. The Tuggerah Lakes Care action group meets at the Wallarah Bay Recreation Club on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.00 p.m. I encourage anyone who is interested in looking after our beautiful lake system to attend and, even if they can put in only a few hours, to help ensure that we have volunteers to keep our beautiful lakes looking good—not just for tourists, which is important, but particularly for residents.

#### TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND INNOVATION

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:10):** I place on the record my support for the Government's commitment to innovation, particularly as it relates to transport and the opportunity it presents all of us. According to the World Economic Forum, cities occupy just 2.6 per cent of the earth's crust but are home to more than 50 per cent of the world's population, generate more than 80 per cent of the world's gross domestic product and use 75 per cent of the world's natural resources. The way we get around our cities is vital to our wellbeing and health.

Like many aspects of our life, transport is undergoing a profound change and will continue to do so, probably even more rapidly in the coming years. As electric vehicles become more popular, as ridesharing expands and, eventually, as autonomous vehicles fully participate on the open roads, there is a lot to be excited about. This Government has a proud record of embracing technology to improve the transport experience. Since 2011 we invested in and rolled out innovative measures across the public transport and road network, including the Opal Card, tap and go on the ferries, the Smart Motorway projects, driverless vehicle projects through the Smart Innovation Centre, and the New South Wales Smart Shuttle.

I take this opportunity to reference the outstanding work of the New South Wales Parliamentary Research Service, which has recently produced a report authored by Tom Gotsis, "Electric vehicles in NSW". It provides an insight into the future of electric vehicles in New South Wales and the opportunity and challenge that it presents, not only to government but also to the private sector and consumers. It is of note that 95 per cent of electric vehicle sales take place in just 10 countries: China, the United States, Japan, Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. Disappointingly, Australia is not on this list, but there are a number of completely understandable reasons for this. For the members in this place who are yet to read the research paper "Electric vehicles in NSW", I highly recommend it to get a very clear and useful understanding of where New South Wales and Australian policy sit in the context of global electrical vehicle trends and policy settings.

It is clear that partnering with the private sector is key to providing solutions and fostering innovation in the transport and road infrastructure spheres. I met recently with the Chairman of the NRMA, Tim Trumper, to discuss the possibility of the private sector investing in electrical vehicle charging stations—and of course I have identified Manly as an ideal location. The global market for electric vehicles is strong. International sales grew by 40 per cent in 2016 to nearly a million vehicles; however, the market share in Australia is still very low. The question is not whether the New South Wales Government should better foster electric vehicle uptake, but how and why we must do so to help face the challenges of the future.

The intersection of technology, innovation, transport and forward-looking government policy is demonstrated in full by an amazing project underway in Manly Vale. The world-first project will install more than 9,000 plants on the external walls of the three-storey commuter car park being built as part of the new B-Line bus

rapid transit network. This commuter car park will provide free parking for 150 cars. Beyond being a simple green wall, the project will use "botanical biofilter" technology developed in collaboration between the University of Technology Sydney Plants and Environment Quality Research Group and industry leaders Junglefy, whom I have enjoyed meeting to discuss continuing these sorts of projects.

The car park is the first in the world to use Junglefy's latest innovation, which is a rotating breathing wall. The breathing wall panels rotate to provide easy and safe access for ongoing maintenance of the plants. The rotating panels provide clean air and noise reduction for locals as well as an aesthetic design for an otherwise bland-looking building. Dr Fraser Torpy from University of Technology Sydney said:

If living infrastructure is to contribute to developing healthy and sustainable urban futures, its true capacity for ecosystem service provision must be quantified to determine its true capabilities in the cities of the future.

The Manly Vale B-Line project will be the next step in a series of projects that have transferred this technology from the laboratory to the real world. To that end, the University of Technology Sydney will work with Transport for NSW to monitor the performance of the breathing wall over the next two years. I thank the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, his team, Transport for NSW, the University of Technology Sydney and Junglefy for their effort in bringing this project to life. I encourage the Government to consider how green infrastructure and smart technology can play a role in other urban infrastructure projects of a similar nature. This project represents an insight into the exciting future that this Government is charting when it considers innovation, urban design and the considerable changes that technology brings to society. As we grapple with the opportunities and challenges ahead, we need a continued bold leadership, which is being delivered by this Government.

### **CABBAGE TREE ROAD SAND QUARRY**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:15):** Port Stephens residents are asking: How bad does a development have to be before the Department of Planning and Environment will reject it? Today I will provide a record of one of the dodgiest developments to occur in Port Stephens in recent years. Despite the stink that lingers over this development, the Minister for Planning, his department and the Independent Planning Commission have given it a tick of approval. The development is so dodgy that ABC Radio National came to Port Stephens to report how a self-interested mayor and his council allowed this to occur. That was before we knew about the per- and poly-fluoroalkyl [PFASs] substances contamination of the site. Whilst the decision of the Independent Planning Commission was made last week, the issue came to light when it started in 2013 when the Port Stephens Council decided to put to tender the rights to construct and operate a sand mine on land it owned at Cabbage Tree Road. Residents opposed the sand mine from day one. It will be metres from people's homes and bring hundreds of heavy trucks every day onto already busy roads.

Residents formed an action group and started contacting their councillors. One person they contacted was then Mayor Bruce MacKenzie, whose company submitted a tender for the sand mine. It has been reported extensively that at the 2012 council election a year earlier, Bruce MacKenzie co-funded the election campaigns of the majority of councillors on the Port Stephens Council and this so-called independent group voted in lock step with the mayor on almost every decision. In the days before council voted on the sand mine tender, the mayor learned that he was not the preferred tenderer. He withdrew his tender application so that he could vote on the final decision. Bruce MacKenzie told ABC Radio National that he wanted to vote so that the project did not go to the preferred tenderer, which was Sydney-based Collins Sands—a competitor of the mayor's company. Instead, the mayor used his voting block to sway the vote on a different tender to a company owned by none other than Nathan Tinkler.

Council staff were dumbfounded that the mayor, against the council tender panel's recommendation, had given such an important contract to a \$2 shelf company with no history of sand mining and an already chequered corporate history. The contract was awarded at a time when no other entities were prepared to enter into a commercial agreement with a Tinkler-related company because he was already on his downward trajectory and not paying debts left, right and centre. Tinkler's business empire continued to implode and the lease of the sand mine was transferred without another tender process by the council to a new owner, Williamtown Sand Syndicate. I will tell the House who is behind that company. Darren Williams will be known to many members on the Government side of the House because of the Independent Commission Against Corruption's [ICAC] Operation Spicer, which investigated dodgy donations. Williams teamed up with Liberal Party donors Chris Sneddon from Maxim Accounting and a former managing director of Colliers International's Newcastle office, Peter Dodd, to create the Williamtown Sand Syndicate.

The new company continues to pursue the sand mine. Objections were made to the then Minister for Local Government, but nothing happened. I wrote to the Ombudsman and ICAC also was notified. But no-one acted to protect my community from the dodgy deals. It is no wonder that my community has a deep distrust of

this Liberal Coalition Government when it is protecting its mates instead of protecting people. Its priorities are all wrong.

Despite all of this, the project proceeded and ultimately gained approval. Whilst the dodgy history should have meant it was stopped before final determination, there are a multitude of other reasons why the project should never have been given the tick of approval by the department or the commission. This project will clear 43 hectares of koala habitat. The Premier wants to boast about spending \$3 million on a koala hospital in Port Stephens, but the reason those koalas need a hospital is because this Government keeps selling off their habitat or approving more and more land clearing. This land is also within the Williamstown perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl [PFASs] contamination zone. This is not a regular development where residents who object can move away. Residents are stuck as a result of the PFASs contamination, with banks unwilling to buy or lend to landowners. The full health impact of the chemicals is unknown so this development is unprecedented.

The residents living on contaminated properties can do little with their own land and yet a sand mine has now been approved over their back fence. I remind members that the area in which this sand mine will go is also known for having a cancer cluster. In March I hosted a public meeting and subsequently many residents attended a meeting of the Independent Planning Commission. They gave a fulsome description of why they did not want the sand mine. This brings me back to my opening comment: In New South Wales today how bad does a development have to be before it will be rejected? How many residents have to be negatively impacted, how much habitat destroyed, how many unknowns have to be ignored? The Minister for Planning should now intervene and suspend this development until the Federal Government offers meaningful compensation to the residents of Williamstown.

### **BARTON HIGHWAY UPGRADE**

**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) (19:20):** Today I update the House on the upgrade of the Barton Highway in the electorate of Goulburn. This 52-kilometre stretch of highway is a vital artery for our communities in the south and west of New South Wales. It is the aorta of south-west New South Wales—a main thoroughfare for our freight and produce, linking a growing region with the nation's capital. It runs from the Hume Highway to Canberra, bypassing Yass and slicing through the growing village of Murrumbateman.

As the House may recall, I spoke on this issue almost year ago to the day, at which time I advocated for the State and Federal governments to work together for real action. I am pleased to advise that the Australian and New South Wales governments are working together by providing \$200 million over four years to duplicate the Barton Highway. Last Friday 11 May the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, representatives from Roads and Maritime Services and I attended Yass Bowling Club for an industry and community meeting. This briefing was aimed primarily at industry and potential contractors and sought to drive innovation and customer value on this important project.

The briefing allowed road designers and construction companies to learn about the opportunities that would flow from the Barton duplication work. It was the perfect opportunity to begin productive and innovative conversations about future investment in this significant piece of regional infrastructure. I owe Minister Melinda Pavey a huge debt of gratitude for making that happen. What is more, she is now challenging contractors to bid competitively for work and is having them say how many metres of road they can build for the money. That way the taxpayer's dollar will be stretched as many kilometres as possible—who knows, maybe as far as Murrumbateman. The upgrade will make the journey more efficient and safer for the 12,500 vehicles that travel on the road every day.

As an added bonus, I am advised that the planning to completion of this first stage of the Barton Highway duplication will deliver 120 jobs to the local community. The importance of local jobs generated from State Government investment, especially in New South Wales regional areas, cannot be underestimated. It is frankly senseless to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in a region and then bring the workforce from Sydney when there are local contractors who could and would love to do the work. I was very pleased to see so many local contractors at the briefing because that heralds the promise of local jobs. I am in regular contact with Mayor Rowena Abbey and General Manager David Rowe from the Yass Valley Council. I also receive regular and very clear feedback from my constituents on the Barton Highway. Everybody wants the Barton Highway duplicated and finally they will have their wish.

Some money already has been spent on safety measures, including travel time warnings, adjustment of line markings, tree and vegetation clearing and the erection of safety barriers, but duplication is what is exciting these communities. It will take time but the big increase in safety will be achieved in duplication; to say nothing of commuting times to Canberra. I note that the cost of land acquisition will be significant and that parallel

processes are in place. Discussions with local landowners are about to commence and the construction work is expected to start in the last half of 2019.

This region is thriving with cheaper land, larger block sizes and country-style living. The Yass Valley shire and surrounding districts are increasingly appealing areas in which to live, with small acre farms, lifestyle blocks and communities close to the services of Canberra. Towns such as Yass, Murrumbateman, Gundaroo and Sutton are destination New South Wales—one gets the ambience and charm of a rural village lifestyle alongside close proximity to metropolitan services. I am so pleased that we are finally seeing action on this dangerous stretch of road. The Yass community and I eagerly await the next stage of works and thank the New South Wales Government for its vision in turning the upgrade of this road into its duplication.

#### **DAVIDSON ELECTORATE URBAN GREEN SPACE**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:25):** The New South Wales Government understands the need for sensible planning, particularly when it comes to balancing urban development with open space and recreational facilities. Over the summer months the Government conducted a successful trial involving more than 80 public schools opening their gates during the school holidays to allow the broader community to enjoy their playgrounds, ovals and sports courts. One of these schools was St Ives Park Public School in my electorate of Davidson. Plans are also underway to develop recreational facilities, including basketball courts on St Ives High School grounds which can be shared by the community year round, in cooperation with the local Ku-ring-gai Council. The New South Wales Government also provides financial support for recreational venues such as St Ives Showground and individual sporting organisations, particularly through the popular Community Building Partnership program.

In Belrose the Government has gone even further by offering land, formerly held by TAFE, to the Northern Beaches Council for new open space and recreational facilities. I am pleased to have brokered an arrangement, through strong lobbying of relevant New South Wales Government Ministers, to transfer this land to the Northern Beaches Council for community use at the grand cost of \$1.00. Three blocks along Wyatt Avenue will be dedicated to new recreational facilities, with two land blocks to become active sporting areas and an additional block to become a new park for passive recreation on the corner of Wyatt Avenue and Forest Way. The new sporting facilities will be funded by the Northern Beaches Council and will include all-weather sports courts for use by the local community. It is envisaged that toilets, change room facilities and a spectator area also will be built.

The dedication of this land for new passive and active recreational facilities is a great win for the local community. I especially acknowledge the contributions of TAFE NSW, Property NSW, the Northern Beaches Council and my ministerial colleagues—particularly Minister Marshall, Minister Barilaro, Minister Dominello and Minister Perrottet—because without their cooperation and collaboration these new facilities would not be possible. It is expected that the new park and sporting amenities will be opened in 2019. But wait, there is more. A major new mountain biking facility is being established on the former Belrose landfill site. The rebirth of part of the former tip site into a modern biking facility is another fantastic win for the local community.

Work is already underway for thousands of tonnes of fresh soil to be shaped into professionally designed bike trails and jumps for biking enthusiasts. In addition to this design and construction work, access is being created for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. The wasteland will be put to good use. The transformation from tip to track will provide a major and much-needed biking facility for cycling enthusiasts from Belrose and beyond. I am pleased to have been instrumental in driving this project, which hopefully will be open and operating by the coming Christmas school holidays. Once operating, the Northern Beaches Council has agreed to maintain the facility, using reserve capital funds raised from a State levy placed on waste prior to the landfill's closure. Those same funds are being used to build the new bike park.

Special recognition should be given to Property NSW, which includes the Waste Assets Management Corporation, for its management of the landfill site. The local residential and biking communities also have been involved over many years. Trail Care has provided valuable input to the design and construction works currently underway. I acknowledge them all. Three new recreational facilities are being delivered in Belrose—a new bike park, all-weather sports courts and a new passive recreation area. These projects are facilitated by a forward-thinking Government that has the needs of local communities in mind. I thank all those who have contributed to making each of those facilities a reality.

#### **KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:31):** The upper North Shore of Sydney, which I have the privilege to represent, was a textbook piece of good urban planning. In the 1890s before the railway line was put in place, Ku-ring-gai largely consisted of orchards and small farms. After the provision of the rail

infrastructure, the orchards near the railway stations were progressively subdivided into quarter acre or larger building blocks for residential homes. More than 100 years later, that rail infrastructure investment is still being used every day to take large numbers of residents to work or to recreational activities. The subdivisions that occurred in the upper north shore up until the term of the last Labor Government provided a tree-lined spacious environment with adequate local roads and other infrastructure.

I will do everything I can in this place to protect the unique tree-lined character of Ku-ring-gai. Under the Labor Government, a former planning Minister, Frank Sartor, started vandalising the good planning principles that formed the basis of Ku-ring-gai. He started an irreversible process that is responsible for the many apartment buildings that have been built and are still being built in Ku-ring-gai today. In 2010 Labor planning Minister Tony Kelly, under part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, approved 200 apartments, which many local residents are concerned about and oppose, on the site that houses the Sydney Adventist Hospital and the Wahroonga Adventist School. Luke Foley said that he will triple the amount of high-rise developments on the north shore of Sydney if Labor returns to government in this State.

The Coalition Government has made several beneficial planning reforms that should be acknowledged. It rightly repealed the unprincipled part 3A system that allowed State planning Ministers to give development approvals to large developers. The Government has also made it more difficult to obtain spot rezoning of land for multistorey or commercial developments. The recent rejection of a proposed Aldi rezoning on Eastern Road, Turramurra, is a good example of that. Spot rezonings are inherently unprincipled and are unplanned developments outside the zoning put in the local environment plans produced after consultation with the local community. There need to be compelling reasons to justify them. But there still exists a kind of spot rezoning, the impact of which I encourage the planning Minister and our local council to work together to remedy. That is the impact of State environment planning instruments on the local amenity of the Ku-ring-gai electorate.

Councils can apply to the planning Minister to have State environmental planning policies [SEPPs] exempted from operation in their council area. In the past couple of years I have received consistent complaints about inappropriate developments in residential neighbourhoods allowed by SEPPs in Ku-ring-gai. Concerns by the local community have included SEPP concessions for senior living, childcare centres, boarding houses and affordable housing. The main amenity concerns relate to traffic and the inappropriate bulk of these kinds of developments in suburban neighbourhoods. I commend the planning Minister for undertaking a review of all SEPPs and I hope that he is able to ameliorate the undesirable impacts on our local community of these unplanned incursions into our area. For example, there has been an explosion of childcare centres, often in completely inappropriate locations in my electorate, as people try to commercialise residential zonings and improve the value of their land.

A number of residents have drawn to my attention the so-called affordable housing SEPP in relation to many developments. A recent example is the development site at 4-8 Marian Street, Killara, which is just over 1,900 square metres and is zoned R4 high density residential. It is also close to the Killara station. The developer is attempting to use the affordable rental housing SEPP to increase the allowable floor space ratio from 1:1 to 1.4:1 by incorporating 14 miniature affordable rental apartments. The result is said by many concerned residents to be one of the ugliest buildings in Ku-ring-gai. It is sandwiched between the historic Marian Street Theatre and Springdale, which is a 2008 high-quality Mirvac development described by some as one of the finest apartment buildings in Ku-ring-gai.

The Springdale owners corporation employed a town planner, who raised a significant number of major issues with the proposal. Rather than deal with the community concerns, the developer announced that the application was subject to a deemed refusal and took the matter to the Land and Environment Court. In its statement of facts and contentions lodged with the court, Ku-ring-gai Council points out that the 4.73 metres extra height represents a 32.6 per cent variation to the 14.5 metre height control. Killara is an expensive suburb to live in—even with the 20 per cent discount provided under the affordable rental housing SEPP. The people in our area whom the SEPP is designed to assist will not be able to afford the rent for units in the proposed development.

Developers should be required to justify the need for affordable rental housing in the suburb in which they want to build, there should be a ceiling on the rent that they can charge and the apartments should be available only to people working in essential services—teachers, paramedics, nurses and the like. There is nothing more important than the amenity of our local areas. I encourage the Minister to scrutinise the planning and policy settings of the SEPPs that operate in Ku-ring-gai.

#### **SHELLHARBOUR NURSES AND MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:35):** Last week I was joined in my office by four members of the Shellharbour branch of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. Nadia Rodriguez, Glenn Hayes, Julie Ljubovic and Silvana Dimovski approached my office to ask whether I would sign a pledge to support

improved and extended nurse-to-patient ratios in our hospitals. Of course, my answer was yes. Like the other union campaigns, the ratios campaign that the association has undertaken is centred on delivering safer patient care and better outcomes for everyone. Research has shown that as nursing hours increase, outcomes for patients improve. Put simply, the more nurses who are employed and working in our State's hospitals, the greater will be the health, safety and wellbeing of our patients.

That seems like common sense to me, but members opposite do not always abide by common sense. Specifically, our nurses and midwives are calling on the Government to improve and extend legally enforceable mandated nursing hours and equivalent ratios. Victoria and Queensland introduced the nurse-to-patient ratio legislation in 2016. I ask members opposite why they believe residents in our neighbouring States to the north and the south deserve better health care and better outcomes than do residents in New South Wales. If their answer is that they do not, then it is time to look at legislating the same ratio protections for our citizens as a matter of priority. In addition to improved ratios, the Nurses and Midwives' Association is also fighting for guaranteed staffing for outpatient settings, specialists provided whenever clinically needed, the payment of superannuation while on paid parental leave, pay for clinical advice when not rostered on, a five-day sick leave increase, the payment of higher grade duties for all shifts, and five weeks minimum notice for display of rosters. I do not think that is asking too much.

As I said, I believe everything the campaign is fighting for is completely reasonable and, honestly, overdue. Ratios are a matter of life and death—that is what it comes down to. Anyone working in a local hospital who saw the workload that our nurses and midwives are forced to deal with on a daily—if not hourly—basis would support the calls for improved ratios and conditions. Our healthcare system is something to be proud of, but it is not perfect. The nature of our health care is constantly changing and evolving but one thing will stay the same: We will continue to need nurses and midwives. As the nature of their work becomes more complex, and their workload increases, we need to support them—and we can support them through these reforms. This is the only way to ensure the best possible outcomes for our State's patients.

These nurses and midwives raised another campaign with me that also has my full support. I refer to the Mums Matter, Babies Count campaign. Nurses can often have a 4:1 patient-to-nurse ratio, but midwife loads can be even greater. Midwives regularly report having five women to look after on a good day, and on some occasions caring for up to eight at a time. However, the mothers in their care also have babies. Shockingly, babies are not counted as patients in the ward's ratios. Like any other patient, babies require care and constant monitoring, and new mothers can often be unable to fulfil this role completely so soon after giving birth. Therefore, that care and workload can often fall to the midwife. In a scenario where a midwife is caring for eight mothers, she can therefore technically be caring for up to 16 patients at a time if babies are counted as patients. That is not good enough. It sounds like common sense to me, but babies should be—and need to be—counted as patients in these ratios.

I remind the House that universal and high-quality health care lies at the foundation of a free and just society. We in this House are elected to represent the interests of our State's citizens, and these reforms would be in everyone's best interests. Therefore, I call on members opposite to consider the health of every person in this State, and the working conditions of our nurses and midwives. We should heed their calls for improved and extended ratios and the counting of babies in nurse-to-patient ratios. I can say, with my hand on my heart, that at the end of the day it is only Labor that cares about workers.

#### **PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (19:41):** I pay tribute to a special organisation in the Hornsby community. The Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre will be celebrating its seventieth anniversary, making it the longest-running childcare centre in the country. Known to locals as "Shields Lane", the preschool started in modest buildings with only 18 students. That is a little different from today, when 125 children come through the doors each week. In the 1940s, local parents formed a committee to provide better educational opportunities for children in the area. Many avenues were followed, including one local, Mrs Kabel, running a children's library on her front verandah.

But the parents still wanted a preschool, so after a number of years of fundraising and a donation from the Hornsby Shire Council, the committee was able to purchase land in Warne Street. Officially opened on 18 May 1948, it was originally set up as a public memorial to the Second World War, which meant that the centre qualified for tax concessions. There were 18 students, who were housed in wooden buildings with modest equipment, but the facility did include a swing and sandpit—something we will still find in many preschools today. The first director was Jean Reid, and children would bring toys from home to play with and their own mattresses to rest on the floor. Word spread of the wonderful preschool and enrolments increased quickly to 34 by the following year.

However, it was not until 1951 that the preschool was fully established. In the early days, a great deal of assistance was provided by members of the parent committee, who often cleaned, donated items and raised funds

for new equipment. By the end of the 1950s, the preschool had grown to 40 students a day and there was a need for bigger facilities. The Hornsby Shire Council acted as guarantor for a loan, which saw the purchase of a new wing. This enabled the preschool to grow and accept up to 60 children a day. Ten years later there was a further need for the preschool to grow, and that is when it was decided to build a new kindergarten facing Shields Lane. That is why the preschool came to be nicknamed "Shields Lane".

It is undeniable that the community has had a great love for this preschool throughout its history. From its beginnings to this day, parents have been the backbone of creating and ensuring the preschool's success. There have been more fundraisers than I could ever mention. I thank every parent—and there have been many over the past 70 years—who has contributed to this wonderful community preschool's success. The preschool started with a parent committee and that arrangement has continued to this day. Run by a dedicated group of volunteers, the management committee oversaw the running of the preschool.

I thank the current committee headed up by President James Noble and the senior vice-president Huw Pollock, along with their team: vice-president, Claire Rampling; secretary, Carlie Titley; assistant secretary, Merissa Barden; treasurer, Sonya Tong; and general members Bernadette Whiting, Julie Jackson, Kerie Luke and Aldis Liepens. Looking after the social activities and the fundraising efforts at the preschool is the Parent Club headed up by Emma Ottery and Gemma Haggemueller. Having a supporting parent community is what draws so many families to choose this wonderful preschool.

Some notable ex-former students include former Hornsby mayor and current President of the Liberal Party, His Worship Philip Ruddock. His father, Max Ruddock, who was the former Mayor of Hornsby Shire, was one of the original committee members who worked to see the preschool open. Also attending the preschool was former member for Ku-ring-gai and New South Wales Premier Barry O'Farrell. The preschool clearly has a knack for producing great political leaders. In many cases, several generations of families have attended the preschool. Grandmother Dale Turnbull went to the centre in 1956 and now drops off her grandson Noah there.

The success of the preschool would not happen without amazing staff. I take this opportunity to thank the wonderful people who work there. I thank them for the incredible work they do in providing a nurturing environment in which children learn and grow. Current director, Jill Crispe, leads a team of six early childhood teachers: Jodie Elliot, Alison Gierek, Nerida Hall, Ann Lincoln, Sue Rosenblum and Cathy White. These teachers are supported by Ginny Fox, Georgie James, Dianne Gunstone, Myra Lucky, Laudie Miate, Rose Moait, Eva O'Hara, Jane Pines, Sandra Sosic, Sam Thomson and Lorraine Zeiter. In the office, Margo Leggott ensures the preschool runs smoothly.

The anniversary will be held officially on 27 May, with a display of photos from 1968 to the present. Former staff member Jenny Taylor has been working hard putting together a full history of the preschool for the celebration. Author Lesley Gibbes will read her stories and there will be a welcome to country and smoking ceremony. I congratulate the Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre on reaching this impressive milestone and I hope it continues to provide education for the young people of the Hornsby shire for another 70 years. I take this opportunity to acknowledge particularly the parents, past and present, for the incredible work they do in providing a wonderful education experience for all kids who go through this wonderful preschool.

#### **SCONE CUP CARNIVAL FASHIONS ON THE FIELD**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (19:46):** As many in this House will know, Scone and the Upper Hunter region recently celebrated the Scone Horse Festival, which culminated in the Scone Cup two-day carnival held on Friday 11 May and Saturday 12 May 2018—a country race meet that, due to its popularity, the quality of racing horses and the prize money, is graded as a metropolitan race meet. Apart from the racing, one of the things that often brings many people to this country race meet is the ever-increasing popularity of Fashions on the Field, which is open to both men and women—locals and visitors alike.

At the recent Scone Cup, contributions to the fashions were made primarily from our local community, which helped to ensure that the Fashions on the Field at this year's carnival was a huge success. To put this into perspective, Fashions on the Field in Scone is now one of the biggest pools for racing fashion anywhere in New South Wales. Sharon Lenton of Thoroughbred Events Australia—who is in the public gallery listening to this speech—was the coordinator. Her business hosts many Fashions on the Field events around country New South Wales. Sharon not only has a passion for fashion but also has a strong drive towards sponsorship for off-the-track thoroughbreds. Both those interests naturally often bring her to the Upper Hunter. Sharon has held the position of coordinator of Fashions on the Field for the Scone Cup Carnival for five years now.

The Fashions on the Field sponsorship has grown from approximately \$10,000 to between \$18,000 and \$21,000 in recent times. It should be noted that when local small businesses give, they give wholeheartedly and for no financial gain. Due to the generosity of the Upper Hunter community, the increase in prize money has

brought the level of fashions in the Upper Hunter region to a competition level resembling that at any city track in Australia, including Flemington. The continual growth of Fashions on the Field at our two-day carnival has certainly encouraged our local businesses to give generously. Those generous local businesses who gave to the Fashions on the Field include: Helloworld, General Surf Co., The Herd Store, the Belmore Hotel, Asser House Café, Victoria's Hair and Beauty, Stillpoint Equine, Chocolate & Moss Florist, Caffè Mobilita, Ruby's Girl, Kodak Express Scone Camera Centre, and Hunter Belle Dairy from Scone; and Double Picc and the Remington Motor Inn from Muswellbrook.

Businesses further afield that contributed included Emirates airlines, which was the major sponsor for the Fashions on the Field; the Australian Turf Club, Randwick; Lauder Taylor Millinery from Victoria; North Sydney Harbourview Hotel; Julie Herbert Millinery, Orange; La Fleur D'Alyse, Sydney; Morrison Bar & Oyster Room, Sydney; Hanley Hats Millinery & Racewear, Newcastle; and Ava Jaxon from Victoria. I congratulate and thank those businesses for their generosity to our Scone Cup Carnival. This year, to allow the local girls to be competitive, a purely local competition was held whereby only a person born in the area or a person who had moved to the area and was known to the Scone community was allowed to compete. This year saw a dramatic increase in the number of men competing, with their grooming and style being topnotch by all accounts. I was there, but I did not intend to mention how good they looked—they did look pretty good. A new category was introduced to encourage younger girls to compete who, due to the high standard of fashionistas competing, perhaps would not feel they could enter.

The number for the fashions at this carnival has increased, with competitors coming from all over Australia. I am reliably informed that social media, both local and further afield, went into a frenzy with the fashion racing world last Friday and Saturday over the Fashions on the Field. All fashion eyes were definitely on the Upper Hunter prior, during and after the carnival. This is a great credit to Sharon Lenton's hard work for women in racing, and for racing in rural and regional New South Wales. Our local paper, *The Scone Advocate*, did an amazing coverage through its social media. Special mention must be made of this year's Ambassador for the Scone Cup Carnival, Andrea Baker, who is the wife of one of Sydney's leading horse trainers, Bjorn Baker, made herself available to help at the fashions whenever she was asked. While the weather was not as kind as it has been in previous years, the competitors were interacting. The overall feel of the event was extremely friendly with well wishes for the winners. I congratulate all of the winners of the Scone Cup Carnival Fashions on the Field. I thank and commend the organisers and sponsors alike for their marvellous contribution to the 2018 Scone Cup Carnival Fashions on the Field.

#### LAKE MACQUARIE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (19:51):** The eleventh day of the eleventh month this year will mark 100 years since the guns fell silent on the First World War. It was known as "the war to end all wars", which, sadly, it was not, but it gave rise to what we now know as the spirit of the Anzacs. It was a moment in our history that defined what our country would be, and who we could be. Today we still honour a wonderful, yet sombre, tradition. Three weeks ago, like many in this House if not all, I attended a number of Anzac Day ceremonies in my electorate. Thousands gathered, as they have every year, to honour and remember all the men and women who served, fought and died in defence of this great country, and of course those who continue to do so.

In Lake Macquarie thousands are drawn to the many dawn services, marches and ceremonies held by the numerous communities throughout the area. These close-knit communities often hold histories that have ensured a deep connection with Australia's wartime efforts. I have spoken previously about the wartime exploits of the Catalina flying boats, and the role that Rathmines and Lake Macquarie fulfilled as the site of the largest seaplane base in the Southern Hemisphere during World War II. Many of the local residents still have direct family links to those who served at Rathmines during the war, and appreciate a resurgence in the interest in the history surrounding this base. During World War II the Royal Australian Air Force used 168 Catalinas extensively. Many regard their role in Australia's wartime efforts as being as important as were the legendary Spitfires to the defence of England.

Officially, 320 lives were lost in Catalina flying boat operations, which included long-range bombing missions, reconnaissance patrols, mine laying as far away as the Chinese coast, rescue operations and coast watch support. Catalinas were active in the Battle of the Coral Sea, which was marked last year with seventy-fifth anniversary commemorations. Even at the end of World War II, the Catalina crews fulfilled delicate missions to fly home the men and women who had suffered as prisoners of war.

For better or for worse, the Rathmines base is our direct link to one of history's most significant events. A magnificent war memorial stands adjacent to the former base at Rathmines and this year I had the honour of once again joining many people at the memorial for the Anzac Day service. The base is widely regarded as the spiritual home of 11 Squadron, which is now based at Edinburgh in South Australia. I note that 75 years ago



11 crew aboard 11 Squadron's Catalina A24-25 were killed when their aircraft crashed in waters off Cairns while on anti-submarine missions.

Number 11 Squadron now flies the P-8 Poseidon aircraft which made two fabulous flyovers during this year's Anzac Day service. The squadron maintains an important relationship with the Rathmines community and always sends representatives to the annual services. Their attendance is greatly appreciated. I also appreciate the work carried out by Rathmines Catalina Memorial Park Association, which has long-held plans for a memorial museum to be built at the site. Members are involved in the expensive and labour-intensive restoration of a PBY-5A Catalina, which they hope will one day be housed there.

I am very pleased and proud that small communities throughout Lake Macquarie come together each Anzac Day in the way that they do. At Wangi Wangi, the spirit also remains very strong. Wangi Wangi, which is located to the south of Rathmines, is home to the remnants of World War II gun emplacements that were used to protect the base at Rathmines. The Anzac Day parade at Wangi Wangi is like no other and has developed a tradition of its own. Each year more than 60 historic World War II vehicles join the parade along Dobell Drive to the RSL club. The collection, including tanks, gun carriers and even an amphibious Jeep, is thought to be the biggest private collection of such vehicles in the world. Anzac Day services are also hosted at Morisset, Toronto, Cardiff, Speers Point and Teralba and all are well attended.

After 100 years, I am so pleased and very proud that our community continues to honour the sacrifices of our original Anzacs. This anniversary is an important milestone that will again be observed throughout my electorate of Lake Macquarie. As the years go by, our fascination with the Anzac story appears to grow. Perhaps it is because we have so much to learn from those original Anzacs—their selflessness, camaraderie and dedication. They cannot have known that their gallantry and deeds would become part of a national legend and that they would be held in such high regard 100 years later. For that we thank them, and I thank the many thousands of people in Lake Macquarie and around New South Wales and Australia who continue to honour and remember them. Lest we forget.

#### YOUTH RECREATION FACILITIES

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:56):** Matt Smith, a local resident of Hamlyn Terrace, contacted me via Facebook about a matter of concern in his suburb. Hamlyn Terrace, where I live, has many new houses on very small blocks of land with limited or no backyards. Many of the families placed portable basketball rings at the front of their homes. The children in the street would play together and when a car came along they would move the ring off the driveway or the road and put it back when the car had passed. Unfortunately, someone complained to the local council and the rangers asked everyone to remove their basketball rings.

Mr Smith was concerned that all of the children, who had been actively playing sport and getting fit, had returned to their indoor PlayStation. He said the whole vibe of the street had diminished. Mr Smith said that when estates with small blocks of land are developed, we should ensure that the open space and small pocket parks have not only swings and slippery dips for small children but also facilities for older children. He said a lack of amenities for older children can create social behaviour issues and contribute to obesity. He also noted concerns about children having to travel long distances to get to a nearby park with suitable facilities.

Mr Smith is very involved in basketball. He said that a small half court or one-third court located in a small park can be used for many activities. He said that basketball can be played by one person or up to 10 people on a small concrete court with a basketball ring. One of the local parks is being upgraded through the Community Building Partnership. Mr Smith is concerned that the park is getting replacement equipment only for the very young children and there is nothing for the older children. He asked me to contact the council—which I will do, and I am raising the issue in this place—to say that in suburbs with no backyards and narrow roads we have to start thinking outside the square. It is not necessary to build full basketball courts or tennis courts, or those types of facilities. We can build much smaller courts and get much the same result.

Mr Smith is someone who cares about the welfare of young people. In the community he organises basketball competitions and get-togethers not only with local kids but also at a regional level. He believes it does not matter what sport a person plays as long as they are playing some sort of sport and that physical activity is important. I am impressed that instead of sitting back and whingeing about the council and inadequate parks, Mr Smith came forward with good, affordable solutions that can be achieved quite easily. His suggestions will help to build vibrant communities and make sure our youth have proper facilities to encourage their physical activity and divert them away from other activities such as I have mentioned, involving socially bad behaviour, graffiti and so on.

Residents at Blue Haven have contacted me about a playing field where they take their children to play football on a Saturday morning being strewn with broken bottles. On the Friday night a local gang gets together

and destroys things. If Mr Smith had his way, there would be organised activities for these youths. For example, we do not have a police citizens youth club in the northern part of the Central Coast, so it is up to local people such as Matt Smith to organise activities. At all levels of government we should be helping people like Matt Smith to facilitate programs that help to support activities for our young people. I thank Matt Smith for contacting me. I hope I can give him the support he needs to create these meaningful activities.

### OUR LADY OF LEBANON MARONITE CHURCH

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (20:01):** I recognise the 40 years of service by the Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite parish in Rosehill. I commend the Most Reverend Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Bishop of the Maronite Church in Australia, and Father Tony Sarkis, Dean of Our Lady of Lebanon, for their leadership within the church over many years. I commend also all those who came before them. The Maronite community always has been an active community and the parish plays a central role in the lives of its many parishioners and the broader community. It is both a spiritual and a community beacon throughout Sydney.

Through Our Lady of Lebanon's many dedicated and committed volunteers and committees, the parish makes a real difference to the lives of many. Our Lady of Lebanon runs programs for seniors, families, couples and teenagers, to name a few. I recognise the Maronite Youth Organisation, a voluntary youth committee of Our Lady of Lebanon Church. The youth committee plays an important role in helping the community through its spiritual, social and charitable activities. I commend the youth chaplain, Father Raphael Abboud; assistant youth chaplain, Sub-Deacon Charbel Dib; coordinator, Joanne Elias; assistant coordinator, Roy Farah; secretary, Helena Katrib; treasurer, Joseph Ghalloub; spiritual coordinator, Mary Raffoul; charity coordinator, Joanna Michael; social coordinator, Roni Hanna; logistics coordinator, Charbel Bou Daher; media coordinator, Anthony Khoury; and Maronite Youth Organisation works assistants, Tony Lahoud and Rafqa Hadchiti.

I also recognise the Stewardship Committee, which works hard to assist the parish priest in his pastoral mission and provides the much-needed administrative and financial support that is so important to the running of the parish. The Stewardship Committee members are Monsignor Shora Maree as president; Father Pierre El Khoury, assistant parish priest; Patrick Kahwaji, treasurer and financial planning; Sid Saad, co-ordinator of building, maintenance and property; Tony Michael and Gabi Dagher, also for building and maintenance; Theresa Simon for legal and properties; George Harb for maintenance and financial support; Baghous Ghabache and George Khouri for information technology and planning; Raghida Younis, secretary and financial planning; Loui Abouhamad for building, maintenance, property and occupational health and safety; Raymond Mawad, legal and properties; and Tina Salame, who is the minutes secretary.

A particularly inspiring element of Our Lady of Lebanon is MaroniteCare, which helps individuals and families participate in and contribute to the wider community. MaroniteCare operates under the most important guidance and leadership of His Excellency Antoine-Charbel Tarabay and the great management of the board members. Of course, I cannot conclude my speech without mentioning the wonderful works done by the Maronite College of the Holy Family. Their work in educating the next generation of students in our community is particularly important. The entire community should be proud of themselves for what they have done under the committed stewardship and leadership of Sister Margaret Ghosn.

This week I was privileged to attend the premiere of *Widows of Parramatta* and to see an example of how the Australian Maronite community works to better the whole of society. I commend Fadia Abboud, the acclaimed director of this five-part web series promoting organ donation in the Australian Arab community. The Maronite community always has had a large influence in Sydney. I recently saw the five-part documentary and I pay tribute to the three widows, Layla Kisrwani, Jamilie Joseph and Genevieve Khawaji, who shared their very personal and meaningful stories about what organ donation means to them and the community. For 15 years they have been friends and neighbours in Parramatta and recently they allowed their true stories to be told in *Widows of Parramatta*, which I recommend that everybody download. They talk about organ donation and raise the question: What if their husband's heart were used in somebody else's body? It is a frank and in some ways confronting but joyous approach. I congratulate Mrs Randa Kattan of the Arab Council Australia, who was promoting this. I certainly congratulate Our Lady of Lebanon for its 40 years of dedication and service to the Maronite community in Australia.

### DEFENCE VEHICLE HMAS WAGGA

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (20:06):** In 1938 the Australian Commonwealth Naval Board identified the need for a general-purpose local defence vessel capable of both anti-submarine and mine warfare duties while easy to construct and operate. The vessel was initially envisaged to have a displacement of approximately 500 tons, a speed of at least 10 knots—90 kilometres an hour—and a range of 2,000 nautical miles, or 3,700 kilometres. The opportunity to build a prototype in place of a cancelled Bar-class boom defence vessel saw the proposed design increased to a 680-ton vessel, with a top speed of 15.5 knots—28.7 kilometres per hour—

and a range of 5,280 kilometres, armed with a four-inch gun, equipped with asdic and fitted with depth charges and minesweeping equipment.

On 8 March 1942, HMAS *Wagga* was laid down by Mort's Dock and Engineering Company in Sydney. She was launched on 25 July 1942 by Mrs H. E. Gissing, the wife of the Mayor of Wagga Wagga, and commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy [RAN] on 8 December 1942. *Wagga*, a corvette, entered service and saw extensive operations in New Guinea. In 1943 she operated in support of Operation Lilliput. On 14 April, during the operation, *Wagga* and several British and Dutch ships were attacked by more than 100 Japanese aircraft. *Wagga* was not damaged, although several other ships were set on fire. Following Operation Lilliput, she returned to combat duties until the end of 1943.

In December 1943, *Wagga* visited Williamstown, Victoria, for refits before spending the rest of the war operating in New Guinea. At the time, *Wagga* fulfilled many roles: escorting convoys, performing anti-submarine patrols, transporting troops and supplies and bombarding enemy land positions in support of Allied troops. At the conclusion of the war, *Wagga* sailed for Hong Kong, arriving 29 August 1945. At the conclusion of World War II, HMAS *Wagga* sailed for Hong Kong, arriving on 29 August 1945. She remained there until October 1945, conducting minesweeping and anti-piracy patrols. The corvette returned to Melbourne on 7 November and was decommissioned into reserve on 28 November. HMAS *Wagga* has many Pacific battle honours.

The ship was reactivated and recommissioned as a training ship on 12 December 1951. As well as training reservists and national service trainees, HMAS *Wagga* was called on to tow the cruiser HMAS *Hobart* to Newcastle in August 1952. It performed patrols in New Guinea in 1954 and 1956. HMAS *Wagga* underwent several refits and modernisations, and was decommissioned and recommissioned at least six times. On one occasion it was in commission for only 11 days. HMAS *Wagga* was decommissioned for the final time on 28 October 1960 after travelling 190,000 nautical miles—350,000 kilometres. She was the last of the Bathurst class to leave Australian service. The corvette was sold for scrapping. Recently the Turnbull Government announced that it will purchase 12 new ships to replace the patrol fleet. Those new ships are similar in size to HMAS *Wagga*.

Every second year the remaining men who served on HMAS *Wagga* come to home port Wagga Wagga. One of those people was Ken "Grassy" McGrath who, sadly, passed away on 9 March this year. He regularly updated us with newsletters, as did Neville "Lofty" Rackemann. I always enjoyed reading their newsletters. We created an associate membership so that families, friends and people of Wagga Wagga could join to support this organisation. As we know, members are departing. In his last newsletter, "Grassy" McGrath wrote:

I believe that this year 2018 brings HMAS Wagga Association members, and the Political Representatives that support our cause the Duty to Focus on one of our main objectives. The Focus should be clearly on the Task of getting a New Royal Australian Warship named HMAS *Wagga II*, to not only honour the great work done by the Corvette, but, also, to honour the men who served in her, and the Citizens of the Great City of WAGGA WAGGA.

This year marks 76 years HMAS *Wagga* was laid down on Saturday 8th March 1942 at Morts Dock and Engineering Co. Ltd, Sydney.

He continued:

Fifty Eight years ago on Friday 28th October 1960 Australia's latest serving World War II Corvette was finally paid off. Now after all these years of Campaigning for a new ship *Wagga II* I believe we should continue the Focus! What do you think?

Hopefully this objective can be achieved by the time some of us meet in WAGGA WAGGA sometime during the week commencing Monday 22nd April 2019. This may perhaps be a final Wagga Rumble for us?

Sadly, "Grassy" McGrath will not be there to join former shipmates. He will be remembered fondly, and I call on all involved, including our Federal colleagues, to name a ship HMAS *Wagga II*.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:12 until  
Tuesday 22 May 2018 at 10:00.**