



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 23 May 2018

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 23 May 2018

Presiding Officers

ABSENCE OF THE SPEAKER

The Clerk announced the absence of the Speaker.

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

The Deputy Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise in the gallery and extend a very warm welcome to participants of the Kiama Electorate 2018 Student Leaders Forum, who are guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama, who is present in the House. I trust they will have an educational and enjoyable day.

Bills

ELECTORAL FUNDING BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 17 May 2018.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:14): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. The Opposition opposes the bill. We also reserve our position to move amendments in the other place to ameliorate some of the objectionable features of this bill. Our position reflects our opposition to some of the provisions in the bill, especially those that are a cynical attempt by this Government to obtain a partisan advantage and stifle the voice of trade unions and third-party campaigners. We also note the con trick that is at the core of this bill, which pretends to implement the Schott report but in fact does nothing of the sort. We saw the bill for the first time last Thursday. That is a process that is in stark contrast with the consultation that surrounded the electoral bill debated in November last year.

The object of the bill is said to be to provide provision for the disclosure, capping and prohibition of certain political donations and for electoral expenditure for both local government and State parliamentary electoral campaigns. It is also said to provide for the public funding of State parliamentary election campaigns. The bill follows—but is not actually the result of—a lengthy process. The bill's overview and Government commentary point to the Schott report, which is the short title of the Final Report on Political Donations by the Panel of Experts that was dated December 2014. It also points to two reports by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. These two reports were the June 2016 report on the inquiry into the Final Report of the Expert Panel—Political Donations and the Government's response, and the committee's November 2016 report on the Administration of the 2015 NSW Election and Related Matters.

There was also the December 2014 report by the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] entitled "Election Funding, expenditure and disclosure in NSW: Strengthening accountability and transparency", which is relevant to these topics but largely discarded in the debate and mostly not mentioned by the Government. It is of some interest to look at the Government's rhetoric surrounding this piece of legislation and measure that rhetoric against the reality. In his second reading speech, the Special Minister of State went to some trouble to identify the Government's position with that of the Schott committee. He claimed the Government had adopted 49 of the committee's recommendations in principle. In this case the phrase "in principle" is simply weasel words.

In this bill the Government unceremoniously has dumped many of the big elements of the Schott report into the rubbish bin. I make the point that not every recommendation in that report should have been adopted. My view is that they should be properly assessed and supported or not on their merits. The point I make is that the Government says it is implementing the Schott committee recommendations when it very clearly is not. It should drop that hypocrisy. I know that we shall shortly have a conga line of Government speakers restating this untruth.

They will read out their prepared speeches, making the false claim of the Government implementing 49 of the Schott committee's 50 recommendations. The motivation for this hypocrisy is at least transparent.

Some of the recommendations give the Government partisan advantage and they want to support those recommendations. This reality is somewhat obfuscated if these recommendations are simply seen as several among many which are all being adopted by the Government. The Government wants to pretend it is implementing all of the Schott committee recommendations to hide the fact its real interest is to pursue partisan advantage by adopting selected recommendations, certainly those around third-party campaigns and acting in concert.

Let me itemise the key recommendations of the Schott committee that have been spurned and rejected by the Government in this bill, despite the claims in the Minister's second reading speech. Part 4, division 2 of the bill—especially clause 67—institutes a dollar-per-vote model for public funding and rejects the funding linked to the electoral expenditure model. This is exactly the opposite of recommendation 14 of the Schott committee. The report said the dollar-per-vote model adopted for the 2015 election should not be pursued and that the type of model used for public funding for the 2011 election be adopted. The Government's repudiation of this recommendation on this point is a dramatic repudiation of its rhetoric surrounding the bill. Page 74 of the Schott committee report states:

The distinct advantage of a reimbursement scheme is that parties and candidates only receive public funding up to the level of their actual campaign expenditure and cannot profit by standing for election.

The Schott committee's report pointed to the most notorious failure of the dollar-per-vote model: In 2004 Pauline Hanson expended \$35,000 in running for the Senate. She received \$200,000 in public funding because it was a dollar-per-vote model. She made \$165,000 pure profit merely for running. It is that model that is in this bill. The Government not only wants Hanson's preferences but also wants her funding model. As to the dollar-per-vote model, I note also that the Schott committee report points to how expensive it is. According to the report, if the dollar-per-vote model had applied at the 2011 election, the Coalition would have received more than \$14 million, rather than just under the \$9 million that it did receive. The Greens would have got an extra \$1 million and the Christian Democratic Party an extra \$600,000. For the new model for the 2015 election, the Electoral Commission budgeted a total increase of \$11.5 million. Page 72 of the report states:

The move to the "dollar per vote" model will make New South Wales more generous in terms of public funding of elections—even without taking into account the significant amounts of public funding provided for party administration ...

Turning to another issue, the Schott report recommendation 16 is as follows:

That a candidate's entitlement from the Election Campaigns Fund be paid directly to the candidate, unless the candidate directs otherwise. That is clearly not what is in this bill. Clause 70 (2) provides that payments from the Election Campaigns Fund are not to be made to any candidate who is endorsed by a party that is otherwise eligible for party funding. If nothing else, this represents the triumph for the Liberal Party machine over individual Liberal members of Parliament. On page 80 of the report, the Schott committee said:

... there is extreme pressure on candidates to win their seats, not only for the sake of the party, but because their own careers and futures may depend on it. This pressure can drive candidates to "win at all costs", thus creating a strong incentive to fund their campaign in any way possible if the party decides not to provide the funds the candidate believes they need to win the seat.

On balance, we do not see any merit in the move to strip endorsed candidates of their public funding entitlements and further centralise public funding in head office. We agree that this creates a significant corruption risk. We support a return to the previous model where payments to reimburse a candidate for their campaign spending were made directly to the candidate, not the party.

Recommendation 18 of the Schott report recommends the model for calculating entitlements from the administration fund, which operated prior to the 2014 amendments, be reinstated. This would involve winding back the amounts paid for administration to the parties. Page 83 of the report notes that the second reading speech on the 2014 legislation introducing these increases was largely silent on the policy basis for such a move. Public funding for party administration in New South Wales far exceeds that in any other State, according to the report at page 86. The Government's response to this recommendation is best revealed in the second reading speech of the Special Minister of State, in which he said:

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.

The only change in provisions for administrative funding seems to be to increase it. It is precisely the opposite of what Schott recommended. Recommendations 33, 34, 35 and 36 deal with internal party governance. Notably, parties have to submit a list of senior office holders to the Electoral Commission for approval. That is conspicuously missing from this bill. Whether that is a desirable provision is not the point. The point is that the Government says it is implementing Schott but it is not. Other provisions propose various roles for the Auditor-General. They have not been adopted by the Government either. Recommendation 42 is the one recommendation the Government conceded it would not implement.

Recommendation 41 provides that senior office holders be approved by the Electoral Commission to lodge disclosures and claims for payment. That is not adopted in this bill. The rejection by the Government of the Schott committee recommendations does not end there. Recommendation 12 of the Schott report requires that an electorate-based cap on expenditure apply to all electoral expenditure which encourages or tries to persuade voters to vote for or against a candidate in a particular electorate at an election. This is aimed to extend the expenditure caught by the cap. As the report makes clear at pages 67 and 68, the only expenditure presently caught by this cap is advertising which mentions the name of a candidate contesting that electorate. That narrow definition is contained in section 95F (13) of the current Act and the Schott report wants this narrow definition broadened. The bill does not do that. Clause 29 (3) maintains the current position and thus explicitly rejects Schott.

Recommendation 40 says that the current scheme of party and official agents be abolished and candidates and elected members be responsible for compliance with the Act. Once again this is not what the bill does and even the Special Minister of State conceded that in his second reading speech. The bill keeps the party agent as being responsible for disclosures under the single point of contact theory. Recommendation 26 of the Schott committee requires political parties to identify where a political donation has been solicited by or made for the direct benefit of an endorsed candidate for the party. This is another recommendation that the Government has refused to implement in this bill.

According to the Minister's second reading speech, this is, at some stage in the future, being referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for further consideration as part of its review of the 2019 State election. I am inclined to say, "Pull the other one, it's got bells on." I think I can safely say that recommendation has been rejected. It has not been kicked down the road; it has been transported to another galaxy. Recommendation 2 about national reform of electoral laws at the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] led by the Premier has gone nowhere; at most it has been honoured with lip service. The Government's response to the Schott committee recommendations has been spectacular cherrypicking. Contrary to the Government's rhetoric, it has not implemented all or almost all of the Schott's committee recommendations. The Government has selectively decided to support some of it and reject some of it, depending upon their political imperatives.

While no government is obliged to adopt every recommendation made to it, that is not the issue and that is not the point I am making. This Government says that it is implementing Schott, but it is not. The Government is hiding behind that hypocrisy to pursue some of the other recommendations it does support. The other piece of rhetoric in which the Government has indulged has been for it to say that New South Wales has the toughest political donation laws in Australia, that this bill is in line with that tradition, and that this bill introduces the strongest and most transparent political donation laws the State has ever seen. That is a fine piece of rhetoric. The reality is slightly more tarnished.

The laws are only as good as their enforcement and the extent to which they are observed. One is entitled to be slightly cynical about the Government's claims. Granted it is in court desperately trying to avoid some of the provisions of the current law, with a present detour all the way to the New South Wales Court of Appeal. In February this year the New South Wales Liberals were ordered to repay nearly \$250,000 after moneys given to the party by two wealthy candidates, Ronney Oueik and the member for East Hills, were found to be illegal political donations. There were issues about breaches of caps and money not going into campaign accounts.

On the facts, the breaches—the failure to observe the toughest political donation laws in Australia—were crystal clear. Notwithstanding this, the Liberal Party disputed the bleeding obvious in the Supreme Court and had to endure the inevitable consequence of orders against it. Compounding its obduracy, it has recently been revealed that it has appealed to the Court of Appeal. The Special Minister of State's claims that he has the toughest political donation laws in Australia look decidedly odd when his own party is moving heaven and earth to ensure that the laws do not apply to the New South Wales Liberals.

The structure of the scheme of this bill does not make dramatic changes to the current system. It repeals and replaces the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act but the primary elements of the current scheme are maintained: caps on donations, limits on expenditure, disclosure of donations and public funding. Various aspects of the current structure are amended, although not to the extent recommended by the Schott report. One of the changes which is to be welcomed and is positive is the more immediate disclosure of reportable donations—those of \$1,000 or more in the six-month period before a State election. If the donation is received or made within that six-month period, disclosure must be made by recipient and donor within 14 days of it being received or made. At any other time it must be disclosed by recipient and donor within four weeks of the end of the quarter in which it was received, or made under clause 15 (1) (b), although clause 15 (2) has disclosures of reportable political donations by major political donors made within four weeks of the end of the financial year.

Clause 17 provides that disclosures are to be made and declarations lodged with the Electoral Commission in a manner and form specified in the regulations. The regulation pursuant to clause 17 (2) may provide for an internet-based system of lodgement of disclosures. Clause 15 (2) (b) mandates that disclosures for

a local government election are to be made within four weeks after the end of the quarter within which the donation was received or made. Whilst the more instant declaration will be broadly welcomed—it is certainly welcomed by me—there is a possible problem with the regime. While a reportable donation is caught by the provisions, there is no apparent mechanism in dealing with aggregation and this may be a weakness in the scheme.

Another welcome change in the bill is that expenditure caps are extended for the first time for local government election campaigns. This is a positive change, but it has been hideously delayed by this Government. The caps are lower than for State elections and would prohibit some of the extravagant conservative election campaigns in recent years—such as that by Mannoun's Liberals at Liverpool in 2012. Granted how that ended, the Liberals will not want a recurrence of that. The varying type of council structures and size mean that it is sensible for numerically different caps to apply to different local government areas. However, the end result is a capping structure for local government of Byzantine complexity.

The reality is that the Government has been dragged kicking and screaming to this reform. The Government received recommendations to do this a number of years ago but resolutely resisted implementing them before the 2016 local government election. The Minister's second reading speech spoke of the Government's adoption of the principle several years ago, but those opposite could not bring themselves to implement the principle before the last council election. The Government position reminded me of St Augustine of Hippo: "Lord, make me pure, but not yet". The Government's recalcitrance gave wealthy council candidates one last hurrah to try to outspend their progressive opponents.

Another significant change is the alteration to the definition of "property developer". Donations from property developers are prohibited. The current definition of "property developer" is, broadly speaking, a corporation or close associate of the corporation engaged in a business that regularly involves the making of relevant planning applications by or on behalf of the corporation in connection with the residential or commercial development of land with the ultimate purpose of the sale or lease of the land for profit. This has been the subject of criticism on the one hand for uncertainty and on the other, on some occasions, for not including enterprises almost everyone else thought were developers.

Clause 53 of this bill introduces a new definition of "property developer". Under this definition a "property developer" includes an individual or corporation carrying on a business mainly concerned with the residential or commercial development of land with the ultimate purpose of the sale or lease of the land for profit, and if they fulfil an activity test. That test is that in the course of that business one relevant planning application has been made by or on behalf of the individual or corporation and is pending, or they have made three or more relevant planning applications that have been determined within the last seven years.

The introduction of this activity test of one application creates the possibility of a loophole where the donor has not yet lodged the application. This is dealt with by other provisions of the bill. The definition probably creates greater clarity around who or what is a property developer; although, even in this formulation, it is not completely free from doubt. However, it also seems to potentially narrow the category of those who will be found to be property developers. There is merit, I would have thought, in erring on the side of an expansive definition.

I think the most controversial elements of the bill are clauses 29 (10) and 35. Clause 29 (10) imposes caps on third-party campaigners of \$50,000 for a general State election. If this third party was not registered before the capped State expenditure period commenced there is a lower cap. This represents a substantive reduction from the current cap of about \$1.2 million. This cap reduction, in practical terms alone, will impact on progressive campaigners—on people and organisations who are, by definition, opposed to the current Government. It is a cynical and opportunist stunt by a tired conservative government that is terrified of the coming electoral contest in March next year.

According to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, at the last election in 2015 the Electoral Commission recorded only three third-party campaigners whose expenditure was in excess of the \$500,000 level: the Electrical Trades Union with \$997,555, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association with \$907,831, and Unions NSW with \$843,283. Curiously, the next two highest were the NSW Business Chamber with \$490,375 and the NSW Minerals Council with \$481,479. Of course, this is sweet serendipity for the Government. Those last two would be supportive of the conservative side of politics and their expenditure—each below the \$500,000 limit—and would not be affected by the new cap. The other three would be affected by it.

The cynicism is breathtaking. The justification offered in the second reading speech is threadbare. There is a half-hearted effort to use the recommendations of the Schott committee to justify the lowering of the cap. That is a nonsense argument. As I have made abundantly clear already, the Government has already ditched large slabs of the Schott report. Whether or not Schott recommended a proposal is not the basis upon which the Government is proceeding. If that were the case, this would be a dramatically different bill and far less money would be going to political parties. Even in their own terms, the Schott committee recommendations have difficulties on this point.

Dating from before the last election, the only example of third-party campaigners the Schott committee had from the 2011 election were all under \$500,000 even though 16 were registered. So at the time they were made, the third-party cap recommendations, if implemented, would not have had an impact upon the only concrete instance that they had before them. The Schott committee conceded this at page 112 of the report, agreeing that the figure of the cap should be reviewed after 2015. Four years later and it is very different. Granted that there seems no serious argument that third-party campaigners should be able to participate in elections, the question is, on what basis? Most overseas jurisdictions do not have regulations of the sort we have here—at least according to the Schott committee. Indeed, banning them altogether would probably fall foul of the High Court, as would capping them too severely.

The conservative approach to this topic is based upon the Government's visceral hatred of unions. Tories just do not think it is fair for people without money or power to organise together to pursue their interests. That is obviously perceived as a threat to the rich and powerful, as represented in this place by the Coalition. They simply refuse to concede the legitimacy of unions—full stop. The conservatives only think it is possible to have a balanced debate when the voices of unions are silenced. There are other broader reasons why third-party campaigners should not be unduly limited in their participation in elections.

Restricting them simply means that election campaigns will be dominated just by parties. Despite the party-centric nature of this Chamber, that is unhealthy for our democracy. The quality of our democracy benefits from a diversity of views and the ability to promote the diversity that comes from third-party campaigners. Some of this is missed by the Schott report. For example, the equation on page 110 of the report—of opposition to electricity privatisation, to wealthy interests and being opposed to reformist governments—does pretty vicious damage to both history and the plain meaning of the words of the English language.

One of the practical consequences of having a third-party expenditure cap significantly lower than party caps—as proposed in this bill—is the possibility of these campaigners becoming party candidates, especially in the Legislative Council. Creating artificial and unnecessary pressure to increase the number of upper House candidates hardly seems sensible policy. In conjunction with the issue of capping expenditure by third-party campaigners is the issue of third-party campaigners acting in concert, which is dealt with in clause 35 of the bill. This clause purports to declare unlawful—in the broadest terms possible—cooperation between third-party campaigners and anyone else where expenditure exceeds the newly reduced cap.

I suspect discussion here is all a bit pointless because this is likely to be resolved in the High Court. There is no other provision in the bill which represents as glaring an example of an invitation to High Court litigation. In its tone and intent, it reminds me of the combination acts banning trade unions, in effect, or the unlawful oaths legislation used against the Tolpuddle Martyrs. That is where this is ideologically. It is almost an ideologically obsessive kneejerk reaction against collective action. Schott devoted one whole paragraph to this proposition in recommendation 32 (c). There will clearly be difficulties of proof in establishing an offence against the section. For that reason, I assume the section has been drafted incredibly broadly. That almost always makes a bad law and is an incredibly bad principle on which to draft legislation. The Opposition will oppose the bill.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (10:33): Before I start, I take the opportunity to acknowledge in the gallery students of eight schools from the Kiama electorate attending the Student Leaders Forum. I acknowledge students from my old high school of Bomaderry High School as well as Shoalhaven High School, Kiama High School, Albion Park High School, Nowra Anglican College, Illawarra Grammar School and St Joseph's Catholic High School. Members are debating legislation, and what we saw from the Opposition was an attempt to hide what it thinks by making the speech as boring as possible. The shadow Attorney General came into the House and sought to mislead anyone reading *Hansard* or listening to this debate about the Labor Party's position. The shadow Attorney General was a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, which the member for Wollondilly and I have chaired. That committee considered all of the provisions in this legislation. The Opposition said that it opposed the legislation, but how many provisions did it oppose during that committee? Just one: the provision dealing with the \$500,000 cap on third-party contributions. We must understand why it did that.

Ms Anna Watson: That is right.

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the authentic voice of socialism of the member for Shellharbour. Of course, the member has no tact or manners. Members opposite are behaving badly because they do not like what I am saying. I listened very quietly to them, but of course the foul-mouthed member for Shellharbour engages like this—

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: I know the member is on a rant.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! What is the member's point of order?

Ms Anna Watson: The member for Kiama is making unparliamentary comments. I have never been a foul-mouthed member and I never will be. I ask the member to withdraw that comment.

Mr GARETH WARD: The truth cannot be withdrawn.

Ms Anna Watson: That is disgusting.

Mr GARETH WARD: If the member for Shellharbour were to be quiet she might learn something. A 2012 case involved Unions NSW opposing Coalition legislation providing that only people on the electoral roll should be able to contribute to an election campaign. Why was that legislation introduced? It was introduced because the Coalition did not want a culture in this State that allowed governments to be bought by donations. Why would anyone not on the electoral roll or who did not want to have a say in the government of the State want to make a political donation? Clearly, they would want something in return. The Opposition opposes this provision because it wants the union movement to be able to continue to buy and to own the Labor Party and to ensure that everything it does benefits the union movement and not the people of New South Wales. Members opposite are opposing only one provision because it will prevent the funnelling of union dollars into their campaign coffers. I acknowledge that the member opposite is nodding. They want to be owned by one section of the community, and it is not small businesses—

Ms Anna Watson: Unions represent workers.

Mr GARETH WARD: No, not ordinary people. The shadow Attorney General's speech was the most telling I have heard on the floor of this Chamber in some time. He said that the Opposition cares about only 12 per cent of the workforce and not the people of New South Wales.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: New South Wales already has the toughest political donations laws in Australia. What the shadow Attorney General said about the Schott report was totally inaccurate. This Government will continue to ensure that New South Wales has the toughest donations laws in the country so that we weed out corruption and that people cannot be bought. That is why this Government has introduced these provisions. The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 implements a range of reforms that have been recommended by an independent panel of experts and by the cross-party Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

In May 2014, the Government appointed an independent panel of experts, led by Dr Kerry Schott, to consider and to report on options for the long-term reform of the State's electoral funding laws. Members on this side of the House believe that it does not matter where people come from or their industry or trade, everyone should be able to influence the outcome of elections fairly—not unfairly. In its final report, the panel made 50 recommendations to strengthen the existing framework. 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. Members opposite had 16 years in government to clean up this mess. They did not do so because they were benefiting from it.

In June 2016, the committee concluded its inquiry into the panel's final report. It 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 achieved its objectives of being fair, transparent and honourable and to restore decency to a State that had suffered enormous indignity as a result of the corruption that we saw under the Labor Government. The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 is the culmination of the expert panel's—

Ms Anna Watson: What about corruption on that side?

Mr GARETH WARD: Does the member for Shellharbour really want to talk about Eddie Obeid, Joe Tripodi and Ian Macdonald?

Ms Anna Watson: No, I want to talk about your lot.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Shellharbour might want to talk about—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Members will direct their comments through the Chair.

Mr GARETH WARD: To quote the counsel assisting the Independent Commission Against Corruption, we witnessed "the worst corruption since the Rum Corps". The bill implements the majority of the recommendations for reform that have been made by the expert panel and committee for a stronger and more transparent electoral funding scheme. This bill would not be possible without the valuable contributions made by the NSW Electoral Commission, parties, academics and other stakeholders, who made submissions to the expert

panel to the joint standing committee. The bill preserves the key pillars of disclosure, caps on donations and expenditure, and public funding, which make up the current New South Wales electoral funding regime—the toughest in the country.

The reforms implemented by this bill will, however, increase the integrity, transparency and accountability of political donations in New South Wales. If the Opposition opposes those, what is its solution? What is the Opposition going to do to ensure transparency, accountability and, most importantly, fairness in this system? I will now list some of the key reforms implemented by this bill. Political donations of \$1,000 or more will be required to be disclosed within 14 days during the six-month period before a general election, and quarterly at other times. The caps on indirect campaign contributions will be increased from \$1,000 to \$2,700 for candidates and to \$6,100 for parties, in line with the caps that apply to other donations. Small donations of \$50 or less made at a fundraising function will be exempted from the provisions requiring donations from the same donor to be aggregated for the purposes of the disclosure and donation caps. That means someone cannot go to a series of functions and provide \$50 each time to try to avoid the cap; it is about one-offs.

The NSW Electoral Commission will be required to publish explanatory material and analysis to inform the public about the sources and amounts of political donations. The caps on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners will be decreased to \$500,000 and third-party campaigners will be prohibited from acting in consort with others to exceed the cap. Provisions requiring associated political parties to aggregate expenditure caps will be repealed. As mentioned by the shadow Attorney General, caps on expenditure will apply to local government elections as they do currently to State elections. I commend the committee, particularly the chairman, on ensuring that that occurs.

Parties will be required to identify expenditure aimed at influencing the voting in specific electorates. Entities operating solely for the benefit of a party—an associated entity—which are controlled by the party will be treated as part of the party; associated entities will be subject to the same disclosure obligations as parties; and associated entities' expenditure will be aggregated with that of the party for the purposes of the expenditure cap. That means you cannot set up a series of companies and say that they have got nothing to do with a particular political party; they are, in fact, connected.

The dollar-per-vote model for entitlements from the Election Campaigns Fund that applied for the 2015 State election will be reinstated, and advance payments to parties will be increased from 30 per cent to 50 per cent. Public funding from the Administration Fund will be increased, as recommended by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. Candidates will no longer be required to appoint an official agent, making candidates responsible for their own disclosures but allowing party candidates to make the party agent responsible, with consent. Parties can still have their own financial code of conduct, which means that they can regulate their candidates as they see fit.

Political parties will be required to disclose their senior officeholders to the NSW Electoral Commission to ensure that they have similar but not the same obligations as company directors. If they believe there is untoward activity, they are also required to be part of the process and to call it out. Common law duties that already apply to senior officeholders will be codified, and senior officeholders will be required to report breaches of electoral funding laws to the NSW Electoral Commission. The maximum monetary penalty that can be imposed by the Local Court for offences will be increased from \$4,400 to \$22,000.

The definition of a prohibited property developer will be strengthened to cover individuals and will be clarified by removing the test of "regularly" making planning applications. There is now a duality, or a two-limb test as we say at law: Are you a property developer and how frequently are you doing that? A "property developer" will be defined as an individual or corporation that carries on a business mainly concerned with the residential or commercial development of land for the purpose of selling or leasing that land for profit, and has a pending planning application or three or more planning applications determined in the last seven years. [*Extension of time*]

I will now deal with the main provisions of the bill; first, the real-time disclosure of reportable political donations. Donations of \$1,000 or more that are made in the six-month period before a State election will need to be disclosed within 14 days. Outside the pre-election period and for donations for local government, disclosure will need to be made within four weeks after the end of the relevant quarter. Currently, political donations are only required to be disclosed on an annual basis. That means there can be a delay between when a donation is made and when that donation is disclosed to the public. We want to narrow that gap.

Both the panel and the joint standing committee strongly supported real-time disclosure of political donations in the pre-election period in the interests of increased transparency. Bear in mind that members opposite have said they are going to oppose all these things. The new disclosure requirements will mean New South Wales voters are given access to the sources and amounts of reportable political donations before an election. The

Government expects the new electoral funding laws to be in place for the 2019 State election, including the 14-day disclosure time frame for reportable political donations.

As I mentioned, the expert panel recommended that the bill retain the existing ban on political donations by property developers as well as existing bans on donations from liquor, tobacco and gambling businesses, which the court outlined in its 2012 obiter dictum in the Unions NSW case. Although I had issues with that judgement, we accept it. The bill strengthens and clarifies the definition of a prohibited property developer. Individuals who are carrying on the business of property development will be prohibited donors, not just corporations. That 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. I am sure the Opposition agrees with that.

The requirement for the property developer to be "regularly" involved in making planning applications is replaced with clear and specific criteria, namely, if they have had three or more relevant planning applications determined within the last seven years. That is to address difficulties in determining whether a particular business regularly involves itself in the making of relevant planning applications, which is part of the definition in the current Act. The provision will clear up inconsistencies and confusion. The Government is also closing a loophole in the existing provisions introduced by the former Labor Government to ensure that a newly established property developer is unable to donate before a relevant planning application is lodged. That will prevent corruption. If someone makes a donation before they lodge an application, what are they seeking? Clearly, they are seeking reciprocity.

Proposed section 58 provides for the recovery of unlawful political donations by the NSW Electoral Commission. Proposed section 58 (3) provides that if a person makes a political donation and then becomes a property developer within 12 months they will be required to pay double the amount of the donation to the State. People will not be able to say one minute that they are not a property developer and then say, "Hold on a second. I have decided to be a property developer but I have made all these donations." That will not be on. The bill imposes a new duty on senior party office holders to report any conduct that they know or reasonably believe constitutes a contravention of the bill. It is not the Government's intention that these be the same duties as those placed on company directors. As we have outlined in the bill, it is a different standard. The provision implements recommendation 36 of the expert panel, which was supported by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. The bill makes it an offence for a senior office holder to fail to report conduct that they know or reasonably believe constitutes a contravention, without a reasonable excuse.

The bill also deals with the deeming of parties to be legal entities for prosecution. The expert panel noted that major parties operate as voluntary associations with no separate legal status and cannot therefore be prosecuted in their own right. The panel therefore recommended that registered political parties be deemed to be legal entities for the purposes of prosecutions and the imposition of penalties under the Act. The bill implements that by allowing proceedings for an offence or for the recovery of money to be brought against an unincorporated party in its own name. Any fine is payable out of the property of the party, which is included in proposed section 151. That provision will ensure that unincorporated parties can be held to account for breaches of electoral funding laws.

The bill repeals and replaces the Electoral Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 to implement recommendations made by an independent expert panel and the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. It is about making our electoral system the strongest in Australia. I want a set of laws that makes our election system fair. The shadow Attorney General has said today that Labor will oppose the bill. The Greens have been generally supportive of us when it has come to implementing measures such as these, and Labor members have been left sitting on their lonesome. I call on every member to look at their conscience to see whether they want to be on the dodgy side of history or the one that improves transparency and accountability.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (10:48): What an interesting performance by the member for Kiama. I say to the people present in the gallery, only a Labor government will look after the rights of workers in New South Wales. It is what Labor does best, and that is proven by history. The Labor Party has a five-point plan to protect workers from wage theft and those opposite will oppose that plan every step of the way because the Coalition does not care whether workers are being ripped off or not. Today I ask every member of this House to oppose this bill. This piece of legislation will effectively outlaw unions working together on campaigns. It seeks to put a muzzle on union members and working people and prevent similar groups cooperating in their fight for a future in this State.

This Government poses the most direct threat to the future of workers. By introducing this bill, those opposite are effectively protecting the Government's shameless privatisation agenda through a relentless attack on the rights of workers to be properly represented by their unions. It is a direct attack on the political communication rights of union members and workers across the State. If those opposite claim to be the party of

the workers, why are they trying to silence those workers? To vilify the union movement is to vilify workers' rights, safety regulations, minimum wages, overtime, paid leave, and penalty rates on weekends. This is blatant union bashing. Those opposite like nothing better than to union bash.

Unions act as the collective voice of the State's individual workers. It is through their union that an individual is able to push back against big corporations, the wealthy and this Government. This attack on unions is an unapologetic attack on our workers. Those opposite prefer to give huge tax breaks to the big end of town while silencing workers across New South Wales. This bill silences unions, charities, churches and community organisations whilst simultaneously lifting restrictions currently placed on candidate donations, which will effectively allow some political candidates to make unlimited donations directly to parties.

Mr Andrew Constance: Why are you so defensive? You are on a level playing field.

Ms ANNA WATSON: My concerns with this bill follow three lines of thinking. Are you done?

Mr Andrew Constance: We are on a level playing field.

Ms ANNA WATSON: No, we are not. We are not on a level playing field.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Shellharbour will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I ask the Minister be directed to do the same.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I have instructed the Minister to come to order.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I did not hear that instruction.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): You were talking.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I am listening now. First, this bill halves the expenditure cap for third-party campaigners. The spending cap for third-party campaigners drops dramatically for those that are registered before the election, and from \$525,000 to \$250,000 for those that are not registered before the election. As a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, I am aware the committee recommended that the Government consider whether there was sufficient evidence that a third-party campaigner could reasonably present its case within this expenditure limit before the cap was decreased. I have seen no evidence that this research was ever undertaken by those opposite.

Secondly, this bill places restrictions on third-party campaigners acting in concert. This bill will make it unlawful for third-party campaigners to act in concert with other persons so as to prevent them acquiring electoral expenditures that exceed the cap. Sadly, the term "act in concert" has not been strictly defined. It could refer to a formal or informal agreement to campaign with the principal object of having a party or candidate elected, or opposing their election. This is a part of the bill that has not been tested. It is not clear what activities would be captured or how it could be enforced. It is possible that any of the following could be considered unlawful: first, third-party campaigners sharing the costs of airing joint television advertising; secondly, third-party campaigners publishing their logos side-by-side on campaign material; thirdly, third-party campaigners sharing research; fourthly, third-party campaigners meeting with a political party to discuss the key issues and strategies of their separate election campaigns.

My third concern relates to the inclusion of associated entities in this bill. This bill introduces the concept of associated entities and defines it as "a corporation or another entity that operates solely for the benefit of one or more registered parties or elected members". This definition is not the definition that was recommended by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. I note that the chair of the committee is in the Chamber and he is nodding his head in agreement. For the purposes of the expenditure cap, the electoral expenditure of associated entities would be combined with that of the relevant political party and elected members. Associated entities would have to register with the Electoral Commission.

I believe that the term "associated entity" should be more strictly defined as "an entity within the control of a political party or member". This definition would ensure the constitutional validity of the provision without limiting the political participation of third parties. This is a bill that had a lot of promise, but in its current form I have no choice but to oppose it. This bill is a threat to every single one of our State's union members and workers. It is a bill that seeks to put a muzzle on our unions and their members and I ask that every single member of this House stands with me in opposing it. I am disappointed but not surprised that the member for Kiama is supporting the bill. As the sole Labor member of the joint standing committee in the Legislative Assembly, I ask members to look at where this bill differs from our recommendations and draw the same conclusion that I have reached. This bill includes a disguised attack on our unions.

We would not and should not allow a government to silence any of our citizens in this way, so why would we allow this Government to silence those representing their interests? Of course, there are a number of provisions within this bill that are worthy of support but hidden amongst these agreeable, even commonsense provisions is a blatant attempt to silence our unions and our workers and to restrict their power to stand up against this Government. I urge everyone not to fall for the political spin of those opposite. I ask every member of this House to support our State's workers—as those opposite say they do—and our State's unions by opposing this bill.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (10:56): I thank the member for Shellharbour for acknowledging that I was in the Chamber and that I was nodding that I was in the Chamber. Like all members of this House, I agree that this is a very important bill. I am not going to go through the theatrics of all of this for all of those in the gallery and those listening elsewhere, but I want to thank every member of the committee that I chaired when this report was tabled. They were the Hon. Robert Borsak, Mr Adam Crouch, the Hon. Ben Franklin, the Hon. Courtney Houssos, Mrs Melinda Pavey, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, the Hon. Peter Primrose, Mr Mark Taylor and Ms Anna Watson, from whom we have just heard. I do that to highlight the fact that it was not just one political party—there was Liberal, Labor and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers.

During that inquiry there were none of the theatrics that have been displayed by the last few speakers on this bill because, bar one recommendation, it was a unanimous decision of that committee on all the other recommendations. That is because I treat electoral reform seriously. I believe all members of this House—regardless of whether they are Labor, Liberal, The Greens, Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, or Independent—are custodians of democracy and should all be working together to improve the electoral system. That is the way in which I approached the chairmanship of that committee at that time, and that is why just about every recommendation that committee put was done unanimously. We worked over a long period to achieve that; it was not rushed through. It was not rammed through in the way it is from time to time in other jurisdictions. Everyone was given respect and everyone from all sides of politics made valuable contributions and, I believe, improved the recommendations of that report. So I am disappointed to come into the Chamber today to hear that the Opposition will now oppose this bill in its entirety.

Mr Michael Johnsen: They previously supported it.

Mr JAI ROWELL: The member for Upper Hunter is exactly right; it is beyond words. Those Opposition members who were on that committee are discredited by their own side. They made valuable contributions to points and, I do believe, made some points better. Again, that is the Opposition's prerogative. I commend the staff—which includes Jason Ardit, Vedrana Trisic, Jessica Falvey and Derya Sekmen—who spent a very long time assisting committee members and obtaining additional information. They did a fantastic job. As I said, this inquiry was not rushed; it was done in a methodical way. The inquiry was held following Dr Schott's report and also considered the High Court decision in the case of McCloy. The committee took the time to get it right.

The Government has adopted the majority of the recommendations in Dr Schott's report as well as including provisions regarding issues that have come to light. As the member for Kiama said, New South Wales has the toughest political donations laws in Australia, which came about when this Government took office. Over the past seven years, I have chaired this committee a number of times. On the whole, the committee members have worked well together in order to get this right. I will not go into theatrics; it was the right thing to do.

In May 2014 the Government appointed an independent panel of experts led by Dr Kerry Schott to consider and report on options for the long-term reform of the State's electoral funding laws. In its final report, the panel made 50 recommendations to strengthen the framework. In March 2015 the Government accepted 49 of those 50 recommendations and referred the issue to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. As I said, the inquiry took a while because we wanted to get it right. In June 2016, the committee finalised its inquiry and the committee endorsed 44 of the panel's 50 recommendations in principle. That means the Opposition endorsed 43 of the 44 recommendations of that committee. All committee members came to the conclusion that the current Act needed to be comprehensively reviewed and rewritten to ensure that it achieved its objectives.

There were issues of legacy and law all over the place; we wanted it all together in the one legislation. That is what this bill does. It is a combination of the work of the expert panel and the joint standing committee. The bill implements the majority of the recommendations and allows for a more transparent electoral funding scheme. The bill preserves the key pillars of disclosure, caps on donations and expenditure and public funding that make up the current New South Wales electoral funding regime, which, as I said, is the toughest in the country. The reforms implemented by the bill will increase the integrity, transparency and accountability of political donations in New South Wales.

The committee examined similar reforms for local government. That has now come into law and again was supported by all members of this House. In relation to real-time disclosures of reportable political donations,

donations of \$1,000 or more that are made in the six-month period before a State election will need to be disclosed within 14 days. Outside the pre-election period and for donations for local government, disclosure will need to be made within four weeks after the end of the relevant quarter. Previously, political donations were disclosed only on an annual basis. That was not good enough, particularly when we talk about the need for elected officials to be transparent. Why would a member be afraid to say, "I have received x amount of dollars from certain organisations or individuals"? Members should be proud of the donations they accept and to declare them. Again this was supported by every political party represented on the committee. I do not understand why there is opposition to it now.

As recommended by the expert panel, the bill retains the existing ban on political donations by property developers as well as existing bans on donations from liquor, tobacco and gambling businesses. The bill strengthens and clarifies the definition of a prohibited "property developer". Individuals who are carrying on the business of property development will be prohibited donors, not just corporations. This is consistent with the position of the NSW Electoral Commission—which gave evidence to the committee—which has advised that the definition should be extended to include individuals, as well as corporations, who carry on a property development business.

Members on the other side will say that the Government is watering down the requirements on property developer participation in the electoral system. In fact, property developers are not allowed to participate and the Government has toughened the requirements by including individuals who carry on the business of property development. The requirement for property developers to be "regularly" involved in making planning applications is replaced with clear and specific criteria, namely, if they have had three or more relevant planning applications determined within the last seven years. This provision addresses 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.

A sensible provision that has been included by the Government closes a loophole in the existing provisions, as introduced by the former Labor Government, to ensure that a newly established property developer is unable to donate before a relevant planning application is lodged. Clause 58 provides for the recovery of unlawful political donations by the NSW Electoral Commission. Clause 58 (3) provides that if a person makes a political donation and then becomes a property developer within 12 months, they will be required to pay double the amount of the donation to the State. Under this bill, it will be illegal for a non-property developer to donate money before an election campaign and after the election become a property developer. The Government has strengthened the obligations in that respect.

I could speak to so much more in the bill. The Government has imposed an obligation on senior office holders to report breaches, which relates to recommendation 36 of the expert panel, and the bill contains provisions relating to the deeming of parties to be legal entities for prosecution. The list goes on and on. I commend the Government on adopting the majority of the committee's recommendations as well as including further provisions on other aspects. This bill is about transparency. Every member, whether Labor, Liberal, The Greens or an Independent, should support transparency and integrity in the system. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:06): As usual, this Government is attempting to stifle debate and act against the majority of people in our community who want to have a say in government and against union members who want to have an industrial voice in our democracy. That is at the heart of this legislation. Our department—

Mr Michael Johnsen: The department of unions.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: They cannot handle the truth.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Maitland has the call and will be heard in silence.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The members on the other side of the House do not agree with what they are doing here. They proclaim that New South Wales has the strongest laws in the country on political donations, but that is inconsistent with their current attempts in the Court of Appeal to avoid the provisions of the law. Today I want to talk about the provisions relating to the cap on third-party campaigners and the prohibition of acting in concert. Labor opposes those provisions. There are workers in my electorate who have been completely shafted by this Government. Government jobs have been taken away, resulting in cuts in the community of 200 jobs. Why does this Government want to gag people who belong to unions who may want to have a third-party campaign at the upcoming State election? Why is the Government restricting the rights of these workers to have a say about the terrible consequences for them and for the small businesses that are missing those 200 pay packets that have

been ripped out of Maitland in the long eight years of this Government? Members should not be surprised about the approach taken by this Government. We only have to go back to yesterday in this House when the Government disgracefully voted against small businesses on the mid North Coast—

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order—

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The Minister is taking a point of order—seriously?

Mr Andrew Constance: I ask that the good member opposite be drawn back to the leave of the bill. Small business on the Pacific Highway, to which she is alluding, has nothing to do with the Electoral Funding Bill 2018.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I uphold the point of order. The member will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I am appalled by the Minister's comments. If those workers want to advocate against this Government because of what has happened to them, who is to say that they would not be deemed to be a third-party campaigner in this State? Who is to say that they cannot join a group to fight the Government? Some of them are union members. Again, the Minister is trying to gag them. We know that this Government does not want to hear about contractors, small businesspeople or employees and their problems. At question time in this Chamber the Government talks about being the party of the workers. That is a complete lie. It wants to stop everyone from having a say. It wants to gag debates in this place about improving workers' rights and now it wants to gag the community. It does not have the right to do that. Free speech is at the heart of democracy in our community.

The Schott report contained 50 recommendations and this Government has ditched 49 of them by not implementing them properly in this bill. The Government has increased the model for fundraising. Government members say they reject Hanson but they will not reject her preferences and they want her model for fundraising. There are at least 20 points that have not been addressed in the bill, and that is a disgrace. The union movement in this State has advocated time and again to this Government on behalf of the community to protect workers' rights. We only have to look at fantastic campaigns such as Your Rights at Work. This Government has shafted workers in this State.

Mr Andrew Constance: What about their successful poles and wires campaign at the last election? How did that go for you?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I cannot believe that Government members are interjecting. They must have constituents in their offices on a daily basis talking about the impact that the changes to workers compensation have caused. Will Government members talk about how they have ripped money from injured workers? Are they going to take away the rights of unions? Unions NSW conducted a huge campaign for the Maitland Hospital, assisted by the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Health Services Union and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation. This Government will deny those unions the right to advocate for the Maitland Hospital. It is a disgrace.

This Government has lost touch with reality. Its members want to shut their ears to any sound of dissent. They are more interested in spending \$2.2 billion on stadiums in Sydney rather than addressing the bread and butter issues for the workers of this State. They do not want to listen to anyone who tells them differently. Look at what has happened to refugees in this State. If the refugees talk about what has happened to them they lose their funding. This Government rips funding from those people who want to stand up for themselves and defend their important work.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: Mr Temporary Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that the member opposite is now blatantly disregarding your previous ruling, which was that she should speak to the leave of bill. If this continues, I will ask you to reflect on whether she should be asked to sit down. This is getting ridiculous. The member for Maitland should speak to the leave of the bill and behave like a good member.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Maitland will return to the leave of the bill. If she continues on this path I will ask her to resume her seat.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: In relation to the point of order, I am aware that this is the Electoral Funding Bill, but it has a strong relationship with everyone in our community who wants the ability to have their say about elections. In social media, anyone can say what they like about elections on Facebook and there are no transgressions regarding caps. But when it comes to unions, suddenly this Government wants to paint them as black-hearted organisations and wants to limit their ability to campaign. The electoral campaign expenditure is being reduced by more than half, and that is wrong. Will the Government put the same cap on the NSW Business Chamber?

Mr Kevin Conolly: Yes, that is the point.

Mr Andrew Constance: That is the point. Thank you for making a point. Own goal; you just made your point.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: There are other organisations. I cannot believe that this happens every time I come into this place.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Maitland will direct her remarks through the Chair.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I am. I am outraged by the fact that Government members continually try to gag debate in this State. They will not listen to the people who are telling them that what they are doing is wrong. It is a disgrace. The people want to talk about what the Government should be doing in respect of supporting democracy and transparency in elections. The introduction of caps on local government is a grudging concession that Labor was correct. That meets a longstanding Labor demand, which this Government had not introduced. It will be interesting to see whether the complaints we have made about developer donations to the conservatives will be caught up in the new definition. We must remember that this Government has no credibility when it comes to electoral transparency. We must remember the paper bags that were thrown around repeatedly by Government members in the Hunter. Even though 12 Government members have appeared before the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Government members still come to this Chamber and preach to the Opposition about electoral integrity. It is a shame.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:16): On behalf of The Greens I speak in debate on the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. First, I thank John Macgowan and Tom Payten for their assistance and for providing advice to us in relation to our concerns with this bill. I foreshadow that The Greens will move amendments that will help clarify issues and we hope those amendments will lead to a positive outcome. The bill does some positive things. There will now be caps for local government elections. We have faced multimillion-dollar campaigns which have resulted from developers loading up campaigns in local government elections. That is an important element to introduce to local government elections. How much can be spent in a particular area is another issue because the amount of funding is determined by ward or council area and not by elector. That creates the perverse situation that a council with 100,000 people can spend the cap and another council with a few thousand people can still spend the cap. Those matters will have a significant impact and The Greens will address them in the other place.

I will go through the key issues that I ask to be addressed by the Government. One piece of good news is the provision that ensures that during the cap period any donations have to be disclosed within 14 days. The Greens believe that such disclosure should be required throughout the entire year rather than just the cap period. It is important that political parties disclose those donations within 14 days even outside the cap period. A further issue that The Greens have raised with the Government relates to the party agent. Our view is that a statutory declaration should be provided by party agents and if statutory declarations are not made correctly they incur a more serious punishment. That would help to beef up our confidence in the system as to how disclosures are made because party agents would be making statutory declarations.

In the past, concerns have been raised about how we define spending for seats in the lower House. The new provisions in the bill explicitly indicate that a candidate's electorate and their name must be stated. The Greens contend that that provision should be tightened. For example, I am the member for the electorate of Balmain. I could produce material, with a photograph of me, stating, "Vote 1 The Greens—Glebe". That would not breach the cap for the lower House because it does not mention the electorate and it does not mention my name. That is an area that could be improved. Further, there are issues in relation to how the Electoral Commission holds documentation. The Greens are concerned about candidates for a seat in the Legislative Assembly and those on the Legislative Council ticket being able to make significant donations—\$60,000 in the lower House and \$50,000 in the upper House. That will encourage parties to preselect candidates who have \$60,000 to spend rather than those who rely on fundraising.

For a long time the position of The Greens on donation limits has been to take the money aspect out of elections. We believe that political donations should be reduced from \$6,100 to \$2,500, and that instead of \$2,700 for a seat in the lower House it should be \$1,000. We already enforce that policy on ourselves. Our policy is that we do not receive funds above our self-imposed cap, even though it is legal to do so. As to prohibited donors, I appreciate that the definition of a "property developer" has been clarified. Under the old provisions, I am sure it was challenging for the Electoral Commission to determine a developer.

Members will recall that I introduced a private member's bill on this matter. The Greens believe that the mining and petroleum industry poses a corruption risk and that those persons who have contracts with the State Government for a particular amount of money should also be prohibited from making donations. We contend that

that satisfies the test of the High Court, which has determined that property developers, for example, could be prohibited donors. Given the current issues with mining licences before the Independent Commission Against Corruption, it poses a corruption risk.

I turn now to the issue of third parties and, in particular, the "act in concert" provisions, which in formal or informal agreements are prohibited under this legislation. It is the view of The Greens that the "act in concert" provisions muzzle the capacity of groups to work together. The Government is proposing spending caps for third parties. We agree that that is an appropriate way to deal with this issue rather than banning third parties from being able to discuss, debate and examine issues about which they might share a common cause. The Greens consider the "act in concert" provision is overkill. We are happy for caps for a third-party campaigner to be reduced from \$1,288,500 to \$500,000 if there is a commensurate reduction in the amount that political parties can spend.

Currently, political parties can spend \$22 million-plus. The Government is saying, "We want to keep the cap that political parties can spend plus load in additional administration funding for the parties, but we want to dial down the volume on third parties by more than half". We do not think that is the appropriate balance that should be struck. It is an interesting and important debate about who has a voice in politics. If we dial down political parties, third parties and associated entities, does that give too much of a voice to the media and not enough voice to political parties? How do we balance the rights and responsibilities of those who are seeking election and those who are third parties? What role do corporations play?

In our view, corporations should be banned from participating together with third-party for-profit organisations. It should be exclusively available to community and membership-based organisations. It is not right to say that political parties can spend \$22 million but at the same time donations of the voices in the community—whether they are trade unions or churches or whoever—should be halved. I foreshadow that The Greens will be moving amendments to reflect this view. Overall, the Government has attempted to address the problem in local government but it does not seem to have been well thought through. For instance, up to \$3 per person can be spent in local government areas that have a small number of electors while as little as 20¢ per person can be spent in areas like the City of Sydney. The Greens believe that that issue needs to be addressed.

I invite the Minister in his reply to address a number of questions. First, will the Minister clarify if during the capped period the communication allowance expenditure by members of the Legislative Assembly would not somehow be captured? Currently, the requirement for lower House expenditure only needs the member's name and his or her electorate. The Greens invite the Minister to clarify that issue to alleviate any concerns. Secondly, the bill, as it is currently drafted, will allow an individual member of the Legislative Council or a number of candidates who may act together to spend to the cap in the Legislative Council—\$11.4 million—to campaign for a vote for the party they represent, so long as it is not made as a donation to the party. Will the Minister clarify that the amount that a member of the Legislative Council can contribute is not to the \$11.4 million cap if they are funding their own campaign?

The Government has said it is concerned about limiting donations to third-party campaigners so that only three parties can be donated to. Why three? What if I like 10 different organisations and want to give each of them \$50? So long as the donation cap is not breached, that should be the provision used to determine donations to third parties rather than a prescription on the number of parties one can donate to. I wonder what the High Court would have to say about that? Finally, I turn to the issue of the \$50,000 donation by members of the Legislative Council. What will stop a party from putting 10 candidates on the Legislative Council ticket in unwinnable spots in order for them to provide \$50,000 each to the party, a total of \$500,000? How does that not pose a corruption risk? It provides a loophole under the political donations cap. I again foreshadow that The Greens will be moving amendments to this bill.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (11:26): I contribute to debate on the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. The people of the Hunter know a great deal about electoral funding laws. For months these laws occupied the headlines as former members who sat opposite were dragged through the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] for breaches of the political donations laws. The object of this bill is to create transparency in political donations and to change the property developer model of payments for access. I fully support a strong electoral donation regime but I cannot support the partisan changes to our current laws that the Government is seeking to include in this bill. Political donations are more than just a headline. When the laws are not as robust as they need to be they can have a real impact. We must ensure that the people of this State have adequate protection from undue influences at all levels. That is why I support a very strong electoral donation regime.

In my electorate I have seen the impact of inadequate laws on political donations on families. The former Liberal member for Port Stephens sought to evade these laws. For some time in Port Stephens, the Hunter and Newcastle and on the Central Coast we saw significant access to politicians by developers and the consequences of that which were borne by this Government. Using these laws as a weapon against the union movement and

other third-party campaigners is a partisan attack on those who do not agree with this Government's policies and "privatise everything" agenda. Months out from an election we see a government on the rocks and plagued with scandals, cost blowouts, failed programs and policy backflips. What does the Government do? It has already dumped two Premiers, so to dump a third Premier would presumably be unseemly.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: The member for Port Stephens should be drawn back to the leave of the bill, which relates to electoral funding. This is not an opportunity for her to attack the Government because it is fun. The member needs to speak to the leave of the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I uphold the point of order. The member for Port Stephens will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I was pointing out that there seems to be little else left for this Government to do other than to attack those who will be campaigning against it in 2019. This bill is a direct attack on the freedom of association which underscores the union movement. If working people use their own money to fund a campaign to defend their rights, what right does this Government have to put different spending caps on them? This bill will cut by up to 80 per cent the amount a union or other third-party campaign can spend on an election. This is a blatant attack on the free speech of union members and their families.

This bill will also prohibit third-party campaigners from working together on campaigns. If the Health Services Union [HSU] and the Nurses and Midwives' Association [NMA] both want to fight cuts to hospital staffing—something that deeply impacts on our communities—under this bill they are forbidden to work together. This bill would stop the NSW Teachers Federation and the Public Service Association [PSA], which cover teachers aides and administration staff, from running joint campaigns on school maintenance backlogs, overcrowding in schools, the lack of air conditioning in classrooms and decaying demountables in our schools—all issues that deeply affect our families. Under this bill, those unions will be prevented from working together to speak out against things that affect workers and families in this State.

The importance of unions working together was highlighted in the recent community campaign to keep the new Maitland Hospital in public hands. The HSU, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation (NSW), the Nurses and Midwives' Association and Unions NSW worked hand in hand with a community which faced the prospect of a new privately run hospital funded by the public. Only through this collective action was the Government forced into doing the right thing—to backflip on its privatisation agenda. If these unions were prevented from taking this action, the views of the community would have been ignored and the outcome would have been devastating for that community.

It seems to escape the Government's understanding that unions represent some of the most lowly paid workforces and workforces that face high risks in the workplace and that are vulnerable to governments and their policies. I have seen firsthand the good work undertaken by unions. The PSA campaigned to stop this Government from privatising disability services. It campaigned because disability workers knew the impact it would have on those for whom they care. The Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union ensures that workers going into coalmines return to their families at the end of the workday. The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association stands up for low-paid workers who are powerless when it comes to fighting for their rights.

I have stood side by side with United Voice and childcare workers who are only seeking a living wage and to have their work valued. The Rail, Tram and Bus Union stood with Newcastle bus drivers in an effort to stop the disastrous privatisation of Newcastle buses. The union movement, the conscience of our community, represents workers on issues that make a real difference to the lives of people in this State. This Government is seeking to silence that voice. As Mark Morey from Unions NSW says, working people have to pool their money to have a say in democracy, and only unions provide that voice. This bill is an effort to silence that voice, which is why Opposition members strongly oppose it. Most obvious of all, this is an attack on the Unions NSW and Australian Council of Trade Union's Change the Rules campaign.

One hundred thousand people marched through the streets of Melbourne against the direct attack on the union movement and all that it stands for—fighting for working people—and this Government hates it for that. This bill represents all that hatred. This Government knows that its "privatise everything, trickle down" myths have worn thin. People are ready to demand their fair share. The Government's big business mates are under threat and, as always, the Liberal Party is ready to throw itself on the barricades to protect the big banks and multinationals rather than stand up for the people of New South Wales or let them have a voice in our democracy. Only the conservatives could spend \$80 million on a royal commission for no reason at all and achieve nothing.

Which of these groups should have their rights to campaign in elections curtailed? Should it be the banks or the unions? Which of these groups should have restrictions placed on them? It is unconscionable that this

Government would choose to attack its opposition rather than those who have engaged in demonstrated harm to the community. The Government has provided zero examples to justify this decision, other than a nervous backbench going into an election in 2019—not one example of a union or third-party campaigner trying to hide donations, dropping off bottles of Grange or setting up front companies like Eightbyfive to funnel illegal donations.

When Labor in government took the bold action of banning property developers and the gambling industry from donations, it did so after serious examination of the impact that those donations were having on public policy and the questionable outcomes they were generating. Labor did that to protect communities from undue influence. That is not what this bill is about. This bill is about trying to silence workers and the people of this State who do not agree with the Government's agenda. How often have we heard this Government proclaim that New South Wales has the strongest donations laws in the country? If that is the case, why are we here today? We are here today because of a partisan attack on the working people of this State who stand up to this Government and its flawed policies. This State deserves a strong and robust electoral donation framework, not this partisan attack on families and workers in New South Wales. My Labor colleagues and I oppose this bill.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (11:35): The electorate deserves to have confidence that government is free from corruption, backroom deals and inappropriate influence. Parliamentarians and executive members should also feel unhampered by undue influence or pressure when making decisions that affect many people's lives. New South Wales has the strictest donation laws in Australia. The introduction of the Electoral Funding Bill 2018 will make them even stricter and more consistent with community expectations. In response to public concerns about the potential for political donations to influence government policy and decisions, the Government established a panel of experts, chaired by Dr Kerry Schott, to consider and report on options for long-term reform of political donations.

This bill acts to implement recommendations from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, which reviewed the work of that expert panel. These reforms fulfil an election promise by the Government to make donations by individuals, businesses, unions and third-party organisations more transparent, and State governments more accountable to the public for the origin of their electoral funds. Our democratic values and freedoms need to be protected and these reforms introduce important changes to reduce the risk of corruption and undue influence, and promote compliance. They send a message that New South Wales is off limits to those who engage in corruption or those who illegally influence others.

New South Wales already has strong donation laws. First, individual donors must be on the electoral roll to make political donations, and non-individual donors need to possess either an Australian Company Number or Australian Business Number to make political donations, and that precludes foreign entities. Secondly, the financial year donation cap for combined political donations, to or for the benefit of a registered political party, is currently \$6,100 and \$2,700 for individual candidates. Under the bill these caps will apply to all indirect campaign contributions and to non-monetary contributions as well. Thirdly, prohibited donors cannot make political donations—for example, property developers, the tobacco industry and the liquor or gaming industries.

Fourthly, annual donations over \$1,000 must be declared to the Election Funding Authority. Fifthly, donations made by the same donor to elected members, candidates and groups of candidates endorsed by the same party in a financial year are aggregated for the purposes of the donation caps. Sixthly, there are relevant expenditure caps for election campaign purposes. Compared with the rest of Australia these rules are very strict. For example, in the Australian Capital Territory there are no caps on donations, with the previous \$10,000 cap removed in 2015. Currently no other State has a donation cap to a party other than New South Wales, which has a cap of \$6,100, although other States have disclosure rules. At the Commonwealth level political parties, branches and associated entities only have to disclose their name, address and the amount they donate if it is more than \$13,500 annually.

The Victorian Government is proposing to introduce strict new donation laws this year that will include donation caps of \$4,000 per parliamentary term to political parties, associated entities and third party campaigners. It will also require disclosure of donations over \$1,000. However, it will still allow foreign donations, unlike New South Wales and Queensland. Donation disclosure aims to minimise undue influence on the political process by exposing donors, and subjecting decisions that involve them, to greater scrutiny. Queensland introduced real-time donation disclosure last year and all donations over \$1,000 now have to be declared within seven days. This bill also introduces more real-time donation disclosure. Political donations of \$1,000 will need to be disclosed within 14 days in the six months leading up to a State election and quarterly at other times. Currently, disclosure is required only once a year.

This means from October this year the New South Wales electorate will know in almost real time who is donating to which political party. This gives the public a better awareness of which businesses, unions, people and organisations support each party and will help inform people's votes and preferences. Another key reform is

that small donations of \$50, which are often made at fundraising events, will not be aggregated for the purpose of donation or disclosure caps. This will make it easier for candidates to receive small payments as tokens of support at community events without having to record details of donors in what is often a social environment.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull once remarked that it is difficult to design donation laws that stop donors playing the system by using third-party entities to fund election campaigns. However, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has faced the same dilemma and is addressing this important issue. This new bill decreases the cap on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners to \$500,000 and will not allow them to act in concert with others to exceed the cap. Limitations on third-party electoral communications expenditure impedes unions or businesses running political advertising campaigns outside relevant limits, as this unfairly benefits candidates or parties affiliated with associations or organisations.

I understand the self-interest of Labor members in resisting this reform in concert with some of their union mates. However, contrary to what the shadow Attorney General said and the suggestions from those opposite, many overseas jurisdictions have a similar or lower limit on registered third-party campaigners. For example, in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and New Zealand it is less than the amount proposed. In Ontario, Canada, it is slightly more—approximately \$600,000 in the six months before the election and \$100,000 during the election. Those examples were derived from a quick google search this morning. The third-party donation limits in five of these six jurisdictions are less and in the sixth they are almost the same. That point is made for The Greens, who in good faith have looked at this issue and should look at it again.

Caps on expenditure will apply also to local government elections, the same as at State level. In 2016 the New South Wales Parliament passed the Local Government and Elections Legislation Amendment (Integrity) Act 2016. Provisions were introduced to curb the actions of dishonest councillors, tighten donation laws and restore community confidence in local government. This new cap on expenditure will tighten local government donation and election expenditure rules even more, and reassure members of the public that their local councillors are representing them, not big business or developers. The bill not only makes donation laws stricter, but also punishes law breakers harder. Under the current Act—clause 149—the maximum monetary penalty that can be imposed for an offence is \$4,400. This will be increased to \$22,000. The Government is serious not only about improving and enforcing donation laws, but also about severely penalising anyone who breaks them.

Large ongoing political donations to representatives, parties or organisations have the potential to create a culture or impression of bribery and corruption. An ethical and democratic system of government should not prioritise donors of moneys, whether individual, corporate or union, in the decision-making process over electorate demands. The New South Wales Government continues to support greater transparency, integrity and accountability when managing the State. The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 will deliver key reforms to further strengthen donation legislation. The Victorian Government says it will have the strictest donation laws in Australia by the end of this year, but they will not be stricter than New South Wales once this bill is passed.

Unfortunately, some people will try to bypass State laws at a Federal level, leading to ongoing public cynicism about the sincerity of legislative changes made at State and local council level. If Australia is serious about improving democracy, with more transparency and accountability, nationwide donation laws need to be tightened and made consistent. This would make New South Wales donation laws even tighter. Electorates have become increasingly disenchanted around the world, as resentment and cynicism about the integrity of political systems unfortunately grows. Clear donation laws need to regulate all relevant activity, including expenditure and third-party political funders, mindful of constitutional restraints. New South Wales is leading the nation in setting the benchmark for integrity, transparency and accountability in election funding. Members of Parliament need to be able to perform their jobs as representatives of the people without actual or perceived undue influence. I commend the bill to the House and condemn Labor members for their self-interested and politically driven opposition to the bill.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:45): The aim of any electoral funding reform should be to enable a fair and transparent system that discourages donations in exchange for political influence, prevents rorting, does not place an unnecessary burden on the public purse, and ensures anyone, regardless of wealth or party affiliation, can run for office. Over the past decade, a significant number of changes have been introduced to make election funding more transparent and reduce opportunities for corruption. New South Wales now has one of the best systems in the country. The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 rewrites funding laws. I am concerned that some changes are unworkable, antidemocratic and unfair. Important legislation that directly affects democracy should involve wide consultation with stakeholders and then stay on the parliamentary table more than six days so that members can assess details and consult with their communities. I also note there are no Independent members on the electoral matters committee, despite repeated requests.

My concerns relate to local government election changes. It is of great concern the Government has not even consulted with the local government association. The result is a bill that fails to recognise any nuance in

local government elections or differences in divisions and candidate groupings. I am concerned that local government elections will be less fair as a result of the bill. Expenditure caps for local government elections will be as follows: for councils with 200,000 or fewer electors, \$30,000 for parties and \$35,000 for independent groups of candidates; and, for larger councils, \$40,000 for parties and \$45,000 for independent groups of candidates. This is around a quarter of what State candidates can spend, when State divisions are much smaller. This small cap makes having a campaign office impossible. During local government election time, the major parties may be able to run a central office for all divisions, but groups that only run in a particular division will not be able to, particularly in divisions with high rents like the inner city. The small cap also benefits the incumbent, who can use existing corflutes, T-shirts and badges from previous elections to reduce expenditure.

Distinguishing between council areas based on whether they have more or less than 200,000 electors is crude and fails to acknowledge the wide variation in council sizes. For example, in the City of Sydney there is an uncapped number of electors as a result of the Government's undemocratic business vote law changes to give two votes to businesses. New South Wales now has "super councils" with almost one million electors. Candidates running for these local councils will only have around \$10,000 more than the smallest councils with approximately 10,000 electors. It is unclear how mayoral candidate caps will apply when mayors are popularly elected. The way the legislation is drafted appears to assume that mayoral campaigns run separately to council campaigns, when the reality is that one campaign will cover both.

Mayoral candidates are generally required to also run on the council ballot box, as is done in the City of Sydney election. It is unclear how candidates will be required to separate the disclosure campaign expenditure and there is a risk that compliance will be impossible. While I support caps in local government elections, they must be fair and workable and the Government's failure to consult with local government means this bill does not achieve these outcomes. Further work is needed before I can support this bill and I foreshadow that I will move to postpone consideration of it.

There are some good provisions in the bill, such as new requirements to disclose donations within two weeks during the six months before an election. Most donations are made in the final period before an election and it is important that the community is given as much information about donations to a candidate before an election. I am concerned that the existing need to aggregate multiple small anonymous donations made at fundraisers to determine whether they are from the same donor is being removed. I understand that it was a recommendation of the Schott panel but raffle tickets are a common way to raise funds and tickets could be set at \$50 each or \$50 for a bundle on purpose to allow big donors to buy a large number and escape disclosure. I do not believe recording these donations is onerous and I support retaining the provision.

I again state that disclosure thresholds should be reduced. Currently only donations over \$1,000 in a financial year period must be disclosed and this means the vast majority go unreported. The cap allows a candidate to receive \$8,000 and a party to receive \$20,000 from one donor in a four-year electoral cycle without disclosure. Such large amounts could be seen to create a sense of debt between the donor and a candidate or party and disclosure of these is in the public interest. Most community-based donations are small and donations to my campaign rarely exceed \$200. Sources of campaign funding are in the public interest and disclosure thresholds should be reduced to \$200 per year. I have listened to contributions of Labor and The Greens speakers and their concerns about how cuts to third-party caps will affect union campaigns and the ability for workers to have a voice in elections. I believe we all need more time to consider the details of these provisions. A number of amendments have been circulated only today. As a result, I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out the word "now" and adding the words "this day one month hence" after "second time".

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): The member for Sydney has moved an amendment to the motion. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment negatived.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:52): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. No-one would argue against the need for really strong laws to govern donations, especially around the political process, which must be clear and transparent. People need to have faith in donations made and in the political system. We must make every effort to ensure that the community has confidence that members are seeking to do the right thing by them. I am concerned with the measure in the bill that seeks to prevent union involvement. Members from both sides have spoken about unions. I do not have a problem with unions campaigning for members. I was a union member; I joined the Teachers Federation in my days at university when I had a long, flowing mullet.

Mr Brad Hazzard: I would have liked to have seen that.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Jeez, it was good. Those were the old days but we have moved on. I have always believed that union membership is important. As a principal, I had some stinks with the union but people do not always get everything they want. Nevertheless, I always encouraged my staff to join a union, saying that they would be doing themselves a disservice by not doing so. My reason for doing that was the collective voice of unionism ultimately gives everybody a stronger voice. Many people have had to rely on unions for advocacy in a number of situations and it is good to know there is someone who can take up the fight. Everybody here is articulate, confident, strong and able to speak. Many of us have the means to financially support whatever is necessary. However, unions represent some of the most marginalised, underprivileged and disadvantaged people in the community.

I think about a recent campaign, especially involving school cleaners, for example, where United Voice ran an important and ultimately successful campaign. United Voice was able to negotiate with the Government to meet the needs of workers. I give as an example Cathy, a cleaner I knew quite well. I never knew her age but she would have been in her mid to late fifties or even early sixties. This lovely lady worked with incredible pride and passion cleaning the school, and boys do not leave schools at the end of the day in a clean and tidy state. Cathy worked her guts out. Her English was okay but I could never imagine her standing up, feeling completely confident to argue her case. Thousands of people like Cathy would be in a similar position of not being able to stand up for their rights but the union has done so on their behalf.

I do not have an issue with people joining unions or with unions advocating for people who cannot advocate for themselves. That is why we have union support. I always bring it back to schools but we have had campaigns around schools, health and early education. Everything unions do is to try to ensure their members are treated better, their work conditions are fair, their employer does the right thing by them, their workplaces are safe and that they are not taken for a ride.

The concept of reform is important and this bill is an important reform that is needed. It is an opportunity to say that we want the reform, governance and transparency but the bill is designed in a way that stops the third-party approach from organisations. I will argue for the unions because I have seen what they can do firsthand. When I see people like constitutional law expert Anne Twomey voicing concerns, I need to take that seriously as she knows a great deal more about constitutional law than I do.

What do unions when considering restricting union involvement? My daughter is nearly 18—although she thinks she is 30. When she started a part-time job about six months ago I suggested she should join a union. Being young, she said that she did not need to as she was only working a few hours a week. I still urged her to join. I said, "Look, you should. First, you give strength to the union by doing that; and, secondly, if you have an issue at least you have somebody who can advocate for you." Sure enough, there was a little issue she had to deal with and she was able to resolve it with her boss, who was very understanding and really good at resolving it. However, I thought to myself: What would 17-year-old workers know about laws, about what is right and what is not right, about entitlements and breaks, about ensuring that they are not being mistreated and ensuring their uniforms are of an acceptable and appropriate standard? I do not want my 17-year-old daughter not knowing there is someone who can stand up for her. That is why I believe in unions; I know what they fight for.

The current Change the Rules campaign has been so successful. Why would 100,000 people march along the street if they did not believe in something? They believe in it because they see that this trickle-down economics idea is not working. We live in a prosperous State and country yet so many people cannot afford to pay for their electricity. They must make a choice between turning on their heaters or putting food in the pantry. That should not be happening. Every member in the House, regardless of their politics, wants to create a better society and better opportunities for every person. Everybody has the right to have a good job and to live a comfortable life when we live in one of the most prosperous countries in the world.

I have made the point fairly clearly, particularly about the combined voice of the union and the fight for all people demanding that a fair share. I heard one of my colleagues opposite saying that this is about protecting union mates. This is not about union mates; this is about the little people. I have told the story of Cathy, but I could tell any number of stories. One of my constituents—he has asked me not to mention his name—works at one of the local train stations. A lot of things have changed for workers at train stations. His hours have been cut and his conditions have changed. He has gone from having a decent job to having to battle every day. He is a proud member of the union because he knows that somebody can fight for him. My constituent cannot fight for himself. He does not have the means, the confidence or the language skills to do so.

Why do we keep bashing unions? If we are sincere about looking after the most vulnerable, protecting people and wanting the very best for everyone, why do we have a go unions? Why would we say that everyone can make a contribution, but a third party cannot? I want people like Cathy and my constituent who works for Transport for NSW to be heard. They cannot be heard singularly, but as a collective voice they can. I do not know why we keep stopping them from having a collective voice. The concept of the bill is good. Everybody wants

reform and transparency. We do not want to see corruption; nobody does. But you cannot get around that by stealth to destroy the voices of those who are disadvantaged, and say that this is about the unions.

This is about the little people who do not get a chance, who cannot do it on their own. We need their voices to be heard because every one of us—the 93 members in this place—represent the constituents of New South Wales. We may never meet these people, but on election day we say, "Vote for me because I will be your voice." We cannot sit in this place and not be their voice. The capping certainly works. Labor has spoken about the need for reform—donation laws, transparency and fairness. But, unfortunately, on my reading of this bill it does not do that.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:01): The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 aims to make provision for the disclosure, capping and prohibition of certain political donations and electoral expenditure for parliamentary and local government election campaigns, to make provision for the public funding of parliamentary election campaigns and other activities, and for other purposes. The objects of this bill are:

- (a) to establish a fair and transparent electoral funding, expenditure and disclosure scheme,
- (b) to facilitate public awareness of political donations,
- (c) to help prevent corruption and undue influence in the government of the State or in local government,
- (d) to provide for the effective administration of public funding of elections, recognising the importance of the appropriate use of public revenue for that purpose,
- (e) to promote compliance by parties, elected members, candidates, groups, agents, third-party campaigners and donors with the requirements of the electoral funding, expenditure and disclosure scheme.

The objects certainly sound like honourable intentions, and, yes, there are some positive aspects to the bill. In particular, it provides for the capping of electoral expenditure for local government elections, which would bring local government campaign expenditure into line with State election campaign expenditure caps. It has been Labor policy for years. In fact, the day after the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] report on Operation Spicer was released back in 2016, we on this side called on the Liberal-Nationals Government to immediately extend the caps on donations and spending to local government elections in the interests of integrity and transparency. The New South Wales Labor leader, Luke Foley, said at the time, "It defies logic that Mike Baird and I can run for office and be subject to strict caps, while at the same time you can run for a ward of a suburban council without any limits on what you can raise and spend." It is good to see that the Liberals and The Nationals have finally agreed with Labor policy that has been in place for two years.

But there is a fundamental problem with this bill, which is that it is an attack on the ability of working people and the organisations that represent their interests—trade unions—to campaign in an election. That is why I have taken a particular interest in this bill. It significantly restricts the ability of unions and other third-party campaigners to participate in New South Wales elections. Politics should be an honourable profession, which is why we must be honest, fair, transparent and equitable about what we are talking about in this debate. The truth is that this bill is a direct attack on working people and their right to campaign in election periods. This is a blatant attack on the union movement—the backbone of the party that I represent.

There are so many reasons that unions are important. Many of the rights that we enjoy at work have been won because of union campaigns. I am proud to be a member of, and have worked for, United Voice, an organisation of more than 120,000 Australian workers. United Voice represents the interests of some of the lowest-paid workers in New South Wales—cleaners, early childhood educators, bakers and hospitality workers. We are united in our belief in the dignity of workers, and the right to campaign for fair and just treatment at work. However, this bill limits their voice.

New South Wales needs unions today more than ever. Unions play the utmost constructive role in helping management and labour to work together collaboratively. Unions help managers work cooperatively with their workforce, and assist in finding solutions to workplace problems. Unions are resilient. Despite the intentions of the conservatives, unions are not going away. Unions, in partnership with the Labor Party, will continue to fight for jobs and for a fair go. We will continue to fight because members are not the problem with Australian industry; they are the solution. This Government has no credibility in relation to honourable intentions with this bill, and I will tell members why. One of the 14 recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters stated:

... when the NSW Government considers its timetable for introducing the new electoral legislation into NSW Parliament, the NSW Government aims to have the legislation in place at least 12 months prior to the 2019 election.

I am not sure if those opposite are aware, but we have just over 300 days until the 2019 election. The joint standing committee provided its report to the Government in June 2016, which is clear evidence that the Government is asleep at the wheel, and not truly committed to electoral funding reform. I remind those opposite that three years

ago, when the opportunity came to extend the statute of limitations so that all of those who had been corrupt in the Liberal Party in the lead-up to the 2011 election could be caught by the legal system, Government members snubbed it, ensuring that their own would be sheltered from New South Wales laws. While I am taking a trip down memory lane, some of those opposite seem to have forgotten that only a few years ago Liberal members of Parliament accepted donations from developers in an elaborate financial plan; some of them lied to the ICAC about that plan.

The good people of Charlestown, whom I represent, were rightly angry when they had to go to the polls in October 2014 to vote in a by-election caused by the resignation of Andrew Cornwell following explosive revelations in the ICAC. The same could be said for the people of Newcastle, who went to the polls following the resignation of Tim Owen. The Operation Spicer report was made public on my birthday in 2016. It was right that the ICAC made the findings that it did, but it was also a very sad reflection on what some people, a significant number of whom were in this place—the vast majority of whom were Liberals and their mates—will do for power. This legislation aims to gag the ability of working people to work for change to make their everyday lives better. The ICAC's findings in Operation Spicer included that Andrew Cornwell, Garry Edwards, Christopher Hartcher, Timothy Owen and Christopher Spence, among others, acted with the intention of evading election funding laws relating to the disclosure of political donations and the ban on donations from property developers.

Mr Owen and others were also found to have acted with the intention of evading the election funding laws relating to caps on political donations. The commission also found that Craig Baumann, Darren Webber and others acted with the intention of evading the election funding laws relating to the disclosure of political donations, and that Bart Bassett knowingly solicited a political donation from a property developer. We all now know that the Free Enterprise Foundation was used to channel donations to the New South Wales Liberal Party—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 sets out some very clear objects. I just had another look through the legislation and I do not believe it is appropriate that this debate should broaden beyond that. I ask you to draw the member back to the leave of the bill because if she continues on this path we run the risk of having a very broad debate about Eddie Obeid and a number of other members of the Labor Party. Let us stick to the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): I uphold the point of order. The member has been given some latitude, which was permitted to a degree by the Minister, but I draw the member back to the leave of the bill.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: It is worthwhile noting that it was the Liberal Party itself that attempted to evade electoral funding laws at that time. Although there are some positive aspects to this bill, they have been packaged with changes that are a hypocritical and relentless attack on the ordinary working people that the union movement represents. For that reason I strongly oppose the bill.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:10): I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I also acknowledge my friend Lenny Hemmings, who has come down from Darkinjung Guringai land and is a proud member of our Aboriginal community. He was a proud member of the Seamen's Union of Australia, the Maritime Union of Australia and also the World Federation of Trade Unions. Welcome to the oldest Parliament in Australia, but perhaps a different parliament from how Aboriginal people operated before us. Thanks, Lenny.

I make a contribution to debate on the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. This Government likes to crow about having the strongest campaign finance laws in the country, but what we see in a number of these amendments is a goal not to make the system fairer but to make campaigning against the Government impossible for third-party campaigners. Gone will be the days of community groups or advocacy organisations speaking up for their members and their interests. This Government has successfully smothered the voice of all community groups so as to hurt the unions that represent so many of our workers in this State. Locking up community voice through red tape is an assault on free speech that should not be tolerated.

I put up my hand to come into politics because I know the Labor Party represents the people of New South Wales who often do not have a voice. The people, the workers in New South Wales, join their union to have a voice. Those opposite stand up here and say they are the party of the workers but, through this legislation, they are, in essence, gagging the voice of the workers of this State. As a collective member of the NSW Teachers Federation, I am a proud advocate for quality education and support for students in public education in New South Wales. As a collective voice of teachers in public education, we stand for the rights of students across New South Wales to have a fair education and adequate support, and for funding for public schools.

We know, like those on the other side, that the Federal Liberal Government has significantly cut the fair funding for education across New South Wales. In fairness, the Government opposite, alongside the Teachers Federation, in its support of students in public education across New South Wales is in disagreement with this

funding cut, and I thank the Government for that. Without the unity and the unified voice, we are so much less powerless to make change. The Teachers Federation knows that a Labor government will provide fairer funding for the students of New South Wales, especially for those in disadvantaged communities like mine, allowing them to have greater access to the funding pie, thereby increasing their educational and life opportunities. This bill will silence not only the workers but also the voice of students in New South Wales schools.

Recently we have seen the power of community voices in changing government policy, and why the Government is so keen to shut it down. I commend the efforts of the Stand By Me campaign. Without the activism across New South Wales by advocacy groups, the New South Wales Government would have walked away from the very important \$13 million in advocacy funding. This Government knows the power of community groups standing up for their interests in helping to sway voters, and, boy, does this Government have a lot to worry about. The Government finally backflipped last month, but only after some organisations lost staff and advocacy experts with years of experience. The Government backflipped because the voice of people with disabilities and their carers and families across New South Wales was heard loud and clear in our statewide campaign to re-enact this funding.

But what has the Government done? Rather than continuing advocacy funding, it is drip-feeding this funding to organisations, with conditions that prohibit the previous open advocacy that was available to people with disabilities across our State. I stand by the Public Service Association and its fight to have the rights of workers in the disability sector protected. Those workers are fighting not only for their own rights at work but also for the wellbeing of the people with disabilities they are supporting. Like the big businesses—which are offered tax cuts by their Federal counterparts—

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: The member has been talking for a few minutes, but she has not mentioned any of the provisions of the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. Although I may share some of her views, I ask her to return to the leave of the bill. I am particularly supportive of the Maritime Union gentleman in the gallery and the work his union did in Tranby—excellent work. The unions did good work, but this is not the issue. The issue is the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. I ask you to direct the member to return to the leave of the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): The Minister has raised Standing Order 76 in relation to previous speakers. Again, I uphold the point of order. The member will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms LIESL TESCH: The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 decreases the amount that third parties can provide in electoral support—in effect, gagging the voice of not only the workers in New South Wales but also the people of New South Wales. The unions, as the collective voice of the workers of New South Wales, use their collective pool of money to fight for fair rights at work. They have a right to campaign accordingly. Only a Labor government will look after the rights of workers. We have a five-point plan to protect workers from wage theft. The people of New South Wales want to see their rights at work protected. This new legislation will effectively outlaw the collective voice of workers across our great State.

Those opposite believe they have strong laws in place. By introducing this bill, those opposite are further promoting their \$6 billion privatisation of public assets, as their big brother companies exploit workers across New South Wales. Every day I hear from locals about the mismanagement of this State: stadiums over schools and hospitals, cuts to disability advocacy funding, and the Government forgetting about the regions while dumping cash into the city—all issues that people will stand up against as we approach the next election. But by introducing this bill the Government will make it harder and harder for people to fight for their own benefit.

The workers of New South Wales have had their penalty rates cut and cannot afford to make donations to political parties that they know defend their rights at work. They know that their unions stand up for their rights, and they proudly stand by their unions at election time, knowing that Labor looks after their rights at work. They know that the Labor Party will protect the wellbeing of workers in the workplace and will act in their best interests. They know that the Labor Party offers better protection to people who are injured in the workplace. The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 is not a recommendation by the workers' party; it is an attack on trade unions. It aims to put a muzzle on the voices of the workers across New South Wales. The Government wants to halve the amount a third party can spend; it is attempting to silence our unions and our workers, and to further restrict their power to stand up against the injustices of this Government.

The Electoral Commission should be a regulator, not an analyst of political parties. It should provide best-practice advice and allow political parties to operate. Is a democracy fairly represented if the workers that the trade unions represent cannot afford, as individuals, to support political parties? Yet their collective voice can and should be heard. It is through the sound operations of collective unions that we saved The Rocks and Maiden's Brush, and the unions of New South Wales will continue to protect the collective rights of not just workers but the communities of New South Wales. They deserve the opportunity to continue to donate to political parties that represent the rights of workers and the greater good of communities.

This bill will silence not only workers but also that voice that speaks for the greater good of the community of New South Wales. If this Government was acting in a considered way that invested in the right things, brought the community along with it and did not forget about rural and regional communities, then it would not legislate to remove basic rights to campaign and have a voice in political decision-making. I am proud to stand beside nurses who, as individuals dealing with today's ever-increasing living costs, may not be able to afford a political donation, but can as a collective work to improve their work rights and the health outcomes for patients in our public hospitals.

I am proud to stand beside members of the Rail Tram and Bus Industry Union [RTBU], which offers a very fair voice on behalf of its members to protect the jobs of train guards. These guards are not in it for themselves, they are a protective set of eyes for all people, a safeguard for people travelling in trains across New South Wales. They ensure people get on and off trains safely. Without them, we know that people with disabilities and oldies, who are already discriminated against through lack of access to stations, could not safely ride the public transport system. This bill will silence the workers and the voice of those who protect the commuters of New South Wales.

This bill strikes me as a little rich coming from a Government that lost a dozen members under a cloud of illegal donations during its previous term. A dozen members of this place were turfed out for breaching the Government's own laws. Unbelievable! Those opposite know that scrutiny of political donations has impacted previous Liberal members on the Central Coast. Although I welcome changes to stop this corruption, I cannot support gagging the voice of workers to do so. I welcome many changes proposed in this bill, including the capacity to receive small donations of under \$50 that are often made at social functions. They are very appreciated, and those donations will no longer be scrutinised under the aggregate political donations policy. However, I stand with my visitor today and cannot support the changes to the current laws that, in effect, gag the voice of the workers, the people of New South Wales— [*Time expired.*]

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:21): I support significant parts of the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. Unfortunately, my support and comments will be heavily qualified. I acknowledge that the bill contains many of the recommendations made by the independent review panel in 2014 headed by Dr Kerry Schott. In that sense this legislation has been a long time coming. I have some history in contributing to electoral donation reform, including to the panel formed by the Government, chaired by Dr Kerry Schott and supported by former Deputy Leader of the Labor Party John Watkins and Mr Andrew Tink. I believe that panel and the Government made an honest attempt to implement significant reforms to the electoral system in New South Wales. We all know they were very greatly needed.

I will support any legislation that reforms the electoral funding system and increases the transparency, accountability and overall integrity of political donations in New South Wales. The system in itself must have integrity and that is what legislation and regulation can, to a significant extent, bring. Unfortunately, no amount of reform can ensure the integrity of individuals who participate in the political process. The truth is that there will always be some people looking for a political advantage and, as we have seen clearly in recent times, much of this involves the gathering of funds. However, it certainly is not confined to funds and we know that a whole range of clever tricks is used when it comes to elections, including some that have been referred to as "black ops".

As I have pointed out previously, as we contemplate necessary changes to provide for integrity in the system, others will contemplate how to get around any new restrictions that might be introduced. That prediction was well and truly borne out with the activity surrounding and fallout from the 2011 election that subsequently occupied so much of the Independent Commission Against Corruption's time, damaged the standing of the Government and, indeed, further eroded community confidence in the political system in New South Wales. That is one of the reasons this bill is before the House. Although that matter stands out in debate in the House, I do not think it can fairly be said that this type of political shenanigans is the sole domain of the conservative government. It has been going on for a long time—certainly well before Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*.

As members know, I am a proud Independent member. It is not always easy when it comes to elections. As an Independent member, and surrounded by questionable activity over the years, leading up to the 2011 election I took the position not to accept any donations towards my electoral work or the election campaign. My wife and I self-fund those costs. That may sound righteous, but I understand that I am in a good position to do that.

Mr Bruce Notley-Smith: Having married well.

Mr GREG PIPER: Having married well, as the member for Coogee says. Having been elected for a significant period, I had the benefit of incumbency and the ability to plan for the election. That is not something everybody can do, nor would I expect them to do it. The system has improved and I acknowledge that the Government has improved the situation for candidates, allowing them to receive remuneration from public

funding. That has helped many candidates. I would not want to deny members of the public, friends, family and supporters of a person or cause the right to contribute to the political process. I believe it is important not to impinge too far into that space.

Although we should always seek to reform and improve the electoral and political donations system, I do not believe we should see all donations as being tainted or seeking to buy influence; nor should we pander to the populist perception that all politicians can be bought by political donations. As it is in all walks of life, there will be those unfortunate examples where some do the wrong thing. During my Independent political career, which includes 21 years in local government and the past 11 years in the New South Wales Parliament, I do not believe that such a generalisation is fair, and I do not believe it is something that could be ascribed to the majority of people I have dealt with in this place. The community must have trust in its elected representatives—not only does the right thing need to be done; it must be seen to be done in an open and transparent way.

I turn to the contents of this bill. I acknowledge and support the proposed caps on donations. I also support reforms to the time frames in which donations are required to be reported. That is, donations of \$1,000 or more that are made within six months of an election must be declared publicly within 14 days of the donation being received. For periods outside that six-month period, donations must be declared within four weeks of the end of each quarter. These reforms were key parts of submissions I made to a number of reviews during my time in this place. They will, I believe, provide for a more transparent system. [*Extension of time*]

I have also noted the proposed reforms to small donations from anonymous sources—that a single political donation of \$50 or less made by a person at a fundraising dinner does not have to be reported. The member for Gosford referred to this reform, but I have a different opinion. I hold concerns about this process because it still leaves the system open to abuse by those who seek to find loopholes—and there will be plenty of them. I accept that somebody buying 500 raffle tickets for \$50 each at a political fundraiser will be required by law to declare the aggregate amount of the donation, but the non-requirement to record all donations under \$50 leaves the door open to those who might seek to skirt the rules and donate anonymous or illegally.

I accept the advice of the expert panel, which said that in all practicalities small, anonymous donations are onerous to report and provide little benefit. As we have seen before in various circumstances, which were uncovered by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, people are willing to purchase \$5,000 worth of raffle tickets. If candidates will take donations, then all donations should be recorded and declared publicly. I note my support for caps on political campaign expenditure, which will be reformed under this bill. Capping expenditure and requiring candidates to declare what they spend removes the need for big money donations and provides clear reconciliation of income and expenditure.

It is important that we limit expenditure and limit the size of donations. However, I have concerns about the inequity of those rules being applied at local government level. It is difficult to have a one-size-fits-all cap at council elections because the size of a council area, and populations can differ enormously. For example, we all know Hunters Hill is one of the greatest councils in New South Wales, but it is also the smallest geographically and in population. If we compare it with the new Central Coast super council or Blacktown or Parramatta councils, we can see the disparity straightaway.

I am also concerned about the capacity of candidates to self-fund their campaign for an upper House or State seat. Some of those issues have been considered by the Government. It may well be examined at a later stage. We need solid reporting and regulatory regimes and open and transparent reporting methods. That is the only way to keep integrity and trust in the system. To a large extent this bill does that. I share the concerns raised by others, particularly the Opposition members, about the impact on third-party campaigns and, in particular, the ability of unions to work effectively together on campaigns in this space.

This morning I heard a union representative on radio say that, if this bill proceeds, the union movement will challenge the laws. They expect to see restrictions on their rights to campaign in this way to be struck down. I tend to agree. I am not a lawyer, but I think this area of legislation is fraught. No doubt the union movement will work hard to ensure it gets its message out at the appropriate time. The provisions in this bill for local government are inconsistent when they are applied to local government areas of varying populations and geographical size. Other variations include whether they have wards or no wards, and popularly or council-elected mayors. I understand limited discussion has taken place with local government and Local Government NSW has not had any specific input. With that in mind, I take this opportunity to foreshadow that I will move an amendment that will remove all references in the bill to the electoral provisions for local government and have it referred for consideration by a committee. The amendment will include that that removal be considered in consultation with local government and be subject, if necessary, to a subsequent bill.

The State and local government systems are substantially different in the way the electoral system works, including that there is no provision for any public funding. I do not believe the two jurisdictions should be dealt

with in one bill, which is why I have foreshadowed moving an amendment. The local government provision should be excised from the bill and dealt with in a separate and specific bill at a later date, which allows for proper consultation with the sector. While the bill has many good elements, I am concerned about those aforementioned matters, and about the system becoming unduly complex, which is perhaps deterring people from participating.

I have raised this issue in this place before and in different forums. In 2010 I said to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters that any amended system should not be so complicated or difficult that it deters people from participating in the democratic process. Regulation and reporting regimes should not be so difficult that inadvertent mistakes can be made by participants, nor so complicated that an interested member of the public could not easily view and understand contribution and expenditure declarations.

I will give an example of undue complication in the last local government elections resulting from a complex regulatory regime. My wife made a legal contribution of \$3,000 to a local government group in Lake Macquarie and received a receipt for \$3,000. She also reported the donation within the required time frame. She was surprised to find a letter of demand from the Electoral Commission that she redo her declaration on the basis that it was reported by the group as three separate donations of \$1,000. The fact is that she made one donation of \$3,000 and properly declared it. Subsequently, the group split it up between three different members and declared it separately. It was an unnecessary and unforeseen complication that had the Electoral Commission ask my wife to change her declaration to fit with something that she was totally unaware of. The Electoral Commission recognised that its demand was improper and subsequently withdrew it. Once again, it shows that we have to be careful about the complications that we create in the system.

Debate adjourned.

KOSCIUSZKO WILD HORSE HERITAGE BILL 2018

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr John Barilaro, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (12:37): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill recognises the cultural significance and heritage value of brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park and sets a framework for their future protection and management. The new laws will require the Minister for the Environment to prepare a heritage management plan for the brumby, identifying areas within the Kosciuszko National Park where populations will be maintained, and setting rules around how brumby populations are managed. Before I go to the detail of the bill, I want to speak first on why this bill is important to me, as the member for Monaro, and important to my constituents, and why the New South Wales Government is introducing it.

Wild brumbies have been roaming the Australian alps for almost 200 years and they are part of the cultural fabric and folklore of the high country. I have said in this House before that nothing is more synonymous with the Australian outdoor lifestyle than the brumby, from *The Man from Snowy River* to the integral role that the Snowy Mountains bush horses played in the Australian Light Horse campaign during World War I. They even featured at the opening ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympics. For the first time, the New South Wales Government will introduce legislation that will recognise and protect the heritage values of brumby populations in parts of the Kosciuszko National Park while enabling active management of brumbies to reduce their impact on the national park's alpine environment.

The previous draft plan set an aggressive target for reducing the population. That would have resulted in a horrific mass slaughter of the iconic brumby—600 horses—in the Kosciuszko National Park. Culling is cruel and barbaric. Let us not forget what happened in October 2000 under the previous Labor Government. The National Parks and Wildlife Service hired contractors to conduct an aerial shooting operation or a culling of brumbies in the Guy Fawkes River National Park. The real picture of how that culling played out sparked outrage. Over three days more than 600 horses were shot and it was found that many of those horses took days to die. One horse took 10 days to die. Another was shot in the front leg twice, in the back leg and then in the body. Another horse was shot in the gut five times, once in the neck, and once in the head. Yet another horse had two shots to the back, two in the gut and three in the jaw. The National Parks and Wildlife Service was charged with 12 counts of cruelty but those charges were eventually dropped on a guilty plea.

Let us not mince words: Those who oppose this bill are advocating for the slaughter of 5,000 horses. The carcasses of those horses would be left in the national park and attract wild dogs, and wild dogs pose a greater

threat to native wildlife than would any horse. That is not an acceptable situation and this new legislation will ensure that that does not happen again. There has been significant debate around the number of brumbies that reside in the Kosciuszko National Park. Estimates vary between 3,000 horses and 9,000 horses, but we do not really know how many horses there are in the national park. That is why the new framework will include a research and monitoring program to inform future wild horse management in the Kosciuszko National Park, and that will be supported by the appointment of an independent technical reference group.

We hear claims that each year the horse population is increasing by 20 per cent but there is no evidence to back up those claims. However, the same groups also claim that each year 20 per cent of the horse population die from natural causes. If taken at face value, it could be argued that the brumby population is not growing at all. That is why we need to better understand horse numbers, breeding cycles, where the horses range and where they can have a minimal impact in the environment. Currently low-stress mustering and passive trapping of wild horses and their removal are the only methods adopted to manage the brumby population in national parks in New South Wales; those methods are operationally feasible and acceptable to the community. The 2016 Kosciuszko National Park Draft Wild Horse Management Plan set an aggressive target of reducing the population to 600 horses.

In that draft plan lethal methods were considered, including ground shooting. That is not an acceptable situation and this legislation will ensure that that does not happen. Other control options were examined and considered in the preparation of the last plan, including fertility control, tranquilising, fencing, ground shooting, aerial shooting, mustering from the air and brumby running and roping. Let me be clear: This bill does not promote maintaining any specific number of brumbies nor does it promote increasing the number of brumbies within the national park. It simply recognises the heritage and cultural value of brumbies and shifts the focus away from lethal population control methods. In fact, this bill will set a framework for managing brumby populations in a humane way. It is about balance.

If we accept that the brumby has a right to exist in the Snowy Mountains region—a right that this bill encapsulates—and we recognise the brumby's unique place in Australian history, then we must find ways to preserve a sustainable population in a way that minimises harm to the environment. Let me be clear: While brumbies will remain in the region we will continue to manage their population. Right now little is being done to identify areas within the national park that are environmentally well suited to brumbies. The new wild horse heritage plan will prioritise supporting populations in less sensitive areas and resources will be allocated to relocating brumbies to those areas. Lethal culling of brumbies will not occur. The brumby population in the national park will continue to be reduced to a more sustainable number by using passive trapping and rehoming, as well as by mustering and relocation to less sensitive areas in the national park.

This bill will end the uncertainty as to whether brumbies will be shot: They will not be shot. Resources will continue to be allocated to passive trapping and rehoming brumbies outside the national park. This bill will not end that practice. It is not in line with the national park's environmental values to allow brumby numbers to increase. By recognising the heritage and cultural values of the brumby, we are changing the way in which they are managed. Rather than focusing solely on reducing the brumby population through targets and quotas, the focus will now be on identifying areas where a population can be protected without significant environmental harm. The priority will be to move brumbies to those areas. However, trapping and rehoming will be considered if the number of brumbies increases too much, and that poses an environmental threat or safety risk.

Vaccines for immunological control of fertility methods are still evolving. If this method becomes effective in larger populations, then it will and should be used. In the meantime, the New South Wales Government will launch a marketing campaign to promote adoption and rehoming. The aim is to increase the number of horses that can be rehomed outside the park rather than sending them to the knackery. At times there may be a need to shoot a horse—for example, when a horse is injured or poses a threat to human life or safety—but that should only be a last resort. The bill recognises the heritage value of brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park and helps to set a framework for their future protection. The new laws will require the Minister for the Environment to prepare a management plan for the brumby. That plan will identify areas within the Kosciuszko National Park where populations will be maintained. The plan of management will also set rules around brumby management.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. The bill recognises the heritage values of a sustainable wild horse population in the Kosciuszko National Park. It requires the Minister to adopt a heritage management plan for a sustainable wild horse population and to identify zones within the park where sustainable wild horse populations will be retained. It also requires the Minister to consider the advice of the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council and the Heritage Council of New South Wales before adopting a management plan. Further, it requires all future plans of management for the Kosciuszko National Park to recognise the cultural significance of wild horses.

The new framework of managing brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park will also involve a number of new approaches, including brumbies found in "highly sensitive" alpine areas of the national park being

relocated by authorities; the establishment of a Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel to advise the Minister of appropriate management approaches for the brumby; a research and monitoring program to inform future wild horse management plans; a brumby count to gain a more accurate assessment of brumby numbers and where they range; and a marketing campaign to promote rehoming and adoption of brumbies that need to be removed from the national park. Through the community advisory panel, for the first time the community will have direct involvement in shaping the management of brumbies within the national park.

A Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel will be established to advise the Minister of appropriate management approaches for the brumby. If that committee believes there are benefits in including community groups and experts in active management within the park, then it will advise the Minister on how that can be done. The members of the panel will include at least one Aboriginal person, one representative of the community from the locality around the Kosciuszko National Park, one representative of the Minister, and other persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, have expertise and experience in any one or more of the following: recreational planning and management, including horseriding; horse or other animal welfare management; alpine tourism planning and management; and involvement in conservation and, most importantly, the community.

Today is a historic day in both New South Wales and Australia. Today I am privileged to present a bill to this House that for the first time will recognise the cultural and heritage value of the wild horse, the brumby, to the Kosciuszko National Park. It has been a long campaign over the past seven years to get to this point. However, that campaign has been derived from the passion and commitment of so many in my community who have been fighting their whole lifetime for such a day.

I will acknowledge many people in this campaign but, first and foremost, I acknowledge the former member for Monaro, Mr Peter Cochran, who is in the public gallery. Peter Cochran was elected to this Parliament 30 years ago and in his time was recognised as a passionate advocate and someone who always would fight for the rights of regional communities, especially the people and communities in the Monaro. He has always recognised the connection of the wild horse, the brumby, to the Kosciuszko National Park and has sought access by horseriders to the wilderness areas in national parks. Peter left politics 20 years ago but he has never stopped fighting for people's rights and recognition of the brumby from a cultural and heritage perspective, which is part of folklore and the Australian story.

I have already said that many wild horses were used in the war effort and were left behind on foreign land. But those horses were celebrated during the opening of the Sydney Olympic Games and are part of our folklore in Banjo Paterson's poem, *The Man from Snowy River*. Some would argue that Peter Cochran is today's modern man from Snowy River because of his advocacy and passion for where we have come to today. Peter is a representative of the communities on this issue. There are many within his organisation and members of the community who have supported Peter and me such that I am able to introduce a bill in this House that recognises the importance of these horses to the Kosciuszko National Park. Many said we could not achieve that. It is an historic day.

I acknowledge the work of Peter Cochran for leading the charge, for the community debate that he has been part of and for rallying the community to get behind this issue. Peter has been accompanied by many other people, some of whom I will name because it is right to record their names in *Hansard* for future generations to identify as people who fought for the right of brumbies to be recognised. They include Leisa Caldwell, Rebecca Atkinson, Jack French, Deanne Kennedy, the late Clive Edwards, Richard Armstrong, Jenny Boardman, Ted and Helen Taylor, Paul McIver, Henry Filtness, Kylee Hepburn, members of the Snowy Mountains Bush Users Group, the Snowy Mountains Horses Riders Association and many volunteer workers across the Snowy Mountains. They have all been on this long journey, which for some has extended over two to four decades. For others like me—a Johnny-come-lately—the journey has been part of my life for the past seven years.

My job as the member for Monaro and as the Deputy Premier of New South Wales is to be the voice of my community in this House. Since the announcement of the intent of this Government to introduce this bill a debate has raged on social media and also in the public domain and, significantly, we have received support. Last Sunday we made the announcement at the Three Mile Dam in the Kosciuszko National Park, where we were privileged to see the grey mob, especially Paleface. I am not sure how Peter Cochran achieved that because it is remarkable that we were able to be so close to these fantastic horses, the brumbies.

Mr Austin Evans: The horse whisperer.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Everyone says that Peter Cochran is the horse whisperer. Since last Sunday's announcement the Government has received a lot of support. But I must acknowledge that some people are not happy with it. I said that some people who are part of the pro-brumby movement will say that this legislation does not go far enough and others on the side of conservation and environment will say it has gone too far. During the past 200 years these horses have been part of the landscape, our environment, our story and the history of Australia

in that region. Having an unfettered approach and putting our head in the sand will not deliver an outcome for the horses, the brumby, or the environment. For the first time this bill takes away the conflict about whether to recognise these horses and will recognise them from a cultural and heritage perspective.

All people in the region must accept—even those who are against the idea of seeing the horses in the park—that there is a heritage and cultural connection of these horses to the Kosciuszko National Park. No-one would disagree with that. Importantly, for the first time, this bill will end that conflict and tackle the issue of how to manage population numbers of the horses in the future. Last year's draft management plan caused a lot of anger and concern in the community. At the time the horse numbers in the park were 6,000, which at best is a guesstimate because the method of the count has always been controversial. Assuming the park has 6,000 horses—and the number of horses could range from 3,000 to 9,000; some have even said it is as high as 12,000—the 20-year management plan, which was part of the draft plan, indicated that we would consider bringing that population down to 600. But in my view that would mean the end of the brumbies—the wild horses in the mountains.

The people of my community say that is not acceptable and should not be in the management plan because it aims for extinction of the wild horses. This Government has introduced this legislation and I know that, when it is examined by both Houses, not all members will support it. I hope that some of the crossbenches, especially in the Legislative Council, will support it. I hope that this legislation will put the conflict of recognition to the side and we will be able to get on with the management of these horses. That is the key. I have been asked why, as part of the management plan, we have removed the idea of shooting horses. I think about the Guy Fawkes example in 2000 when 600-plus horses were shot by people in helicopters and left to die; when 600 horses, including a mare and foal, were left to die on the forest floor. For most Australians that is not acceptable.

In my region, the brumbies have been labelled majestic. No-one who cares about conservation will want to see the rotting corpses of horses left on the forest floor. When that happens, it invites more pigs and dogs, along with deer and rabbit and other feral pests, into the park and that will have a greater adverse environmental impact. I do not think that would be a good outcome. In 2000 there was a public outcry when that occurred. I have been asked why people cannot go into the park and shoot the brumbies. In this day and age in a society that has a social conscience we should consider other tools—for example, the idea of rehoming and moving the horses to other parts of the park that are less environmentally sensitive. That should be our focus. That is why the Government has said that only as a tool of last resort—for example, if a horse is lame or has an issue around its wellbeing and health, or an issue of public safety—would we use the lethal means of shooting. I think that is acceptable to our nation.

As a nation and as a community, even those who are against any horses in the park, would accept that this Government's management plan will manage numbers in line with community expectations. If we want the conflict associated with this issue to disappear over time, we must put in place methods that are in line with community sentiment and expectations. For me, that is the balance that must be struck. I acknowledge Peter Cochran, who has worked with the community to find the middle ground that accepts we have to consider the numbers and avoid a population explosion of brumbies. We want to make sure there is a viable number of horses in the park for future generations to see. It is an important part of our story and our heritage, but it is also an important tourism driver for the mountain.

Everyone associated with the Kosciuszko National Park accepts that sensitive wilderness areas in the park need special protection because we do not want them destroyed. That is why this legislation sets the parameters. The Government does not have a head-in-the-sand or do-nothing approach to this matter. Anyone who opposes this bill needs to say what their approach will be. The do-nothing, head-in-the-sand approach that we have endured for decades has not achieved a single thing, except conflict in the community between the pro-brumby groups, the community at large and the environmental and conservation groups. That does no justice and achieves no outcome.

After 200 years, the brumbies in the park issue is still being talked about. I will forever believe the brumbies have cultural and heritage connections to the park. The bill will cement and enshrine that in law. I looked at my Facebook account—the parts that I want to view that do not keep me up at night and depress me—and saw there were approximately 300,000 views of the Channel 7 clip, which was a very balanced piece. I acknowledge all the networks that ran the story for their balanced approach. I was lucky enough to be involved with the filming of those brumbies, including Paleface. A number of photographs were also taken with the drone, and there are up to 15,000 views of those photographs on my Facebook page. My Facebook site has now become a forum for debate about brumbies and pest animals.

Mr Michael Johnsen: You put your chin out.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: But I put my chin out as an elected representative, as the member for Monaro, as Deputy Premier and as part of the Government. My job is to lead community conversation. It should never be

stifled. Everybody is entitled to an opinion on this issue, but the conversation should be conducted in a respectful manner. During the interviews I have participated in over the past three days, I have been inundated with positive responses to the announcement. Some members of the Government expressed concern about the issue at large: Should a hard-hoofed animal live in a very environmentally sensitive area? Are horses pests just like dogs, pigs and other feral animals? But those same members have approached me in recent days and agreed that what the Government is putting on the table and the way it is managing the language around the bill amounts to a balanced approach. It delivers the environmental outcome that it has been a struggle to achieve over the years, but at the same time recognises the value of the horses.

It has been a long journey. Many will criticise that this issue has been outstanding for seven years. I acknowledge that. I have always acknowledged that it was never an easy issue, but the balance has been found. My colleagues in Cabinet, both Liberal and National, have worked tirelessly. I acknowledge the Minister for Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage for her pragmatic approach in working with my office to ensure that the environmental protections are locked in place. She ensured that the values of the National Parks and Wildlife Service were not lost. Kosciuszko National Park is the largest tourism driver in the Snowy Mountains, with the winter ski season and summer tourism products being developed. It was announced recently that \$27 million will be provided for new Snowy Mountains infrastructure such as walking tracks and shared trails. Some of the most beautiful wilderness areas will be open to the public to enjoy. When the public enjoy their park, they will fight for their park.

Mountain biking tracks are also being developed through the National Parks and Wildlife Service. That is another summer tourism product. No-one in the Monaro region wants to see Kosciuszko National Park destroyed. We all want the opportunity to embrace the park, to enhance it and to use it in a way that drives the community to continue to fight for and protect it. Sunday's announcement about the bill allows the Government to do just that. People of my vintage who have grown up in the Monaro region know of Banjo Paterson's *The Man from Snowy River*—the movie or the poem. Brumbies would not have been showcased at the opening of the Sydney Olympic Games if they were not considered to be part of the Australia of today.

I have spoken to generations of families who are connected to the mountains, and their family stories include the brumbies. Acknowledging brumbies for the first time is historic and paves the way forward. Finding a balanced approach is most important. Peter Cochran, a former politician, is a community leader. Some would argue that more can be done outside the House as a community leader than inside the House, as members are constrained at times by the parties. The reality is that the bill is a victory for the people of Monaro. It is also a victory for the people who have taken a commonsense approach to balancing and managing both our cherished horses and our cherished wildlife.

I have always been a strong advocate for the Snowy Mountains brumbies. They are part of our rich history in the Monaro region and it is important the Government fights for them. They are part of life in the Monaro. I will always stand for their preservation, hand in hand, arm in arm, in lock step with the community and community leaders. These animals are a living part of Australia's history and this State has a responsibility to protect them in a balanced way for the generations to come. That is what the bill does. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ELECTORAL FUNDING BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (13:06): I am pleased to speak in debate on the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. I acknowledge the comments of the previous speaker, the member for Lake Macquarie. He was right on the money when he said that no matter what law is put in place, there will always be somebody who is going to find a loophole or a way around those laws. There is no silver bullet in the Act that will remove all uncertainty about the origins and expenditure of campaign funds. Parliament needs to be forever vigilant to ensure that those loopholes are sealed before they are exploited. The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 implements a range of reforms recommended by the independent panel of experts and by the cross-party Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. The expert panel, led by Dr Kerry Schott, handed down 50 recommendations to strengthen the existing framework around electoral funding in New South Wales. The Government accepted 49 of those 50 final recommendations.

This Government has done more to reform electoral funding laws than any previous government—as it should. In the last two or three years of the former Labor Government, then Premier Nathan Rees came down very hard on electoral funding and major changes were made. They were in response to issues that had arisen at a local

government level. In July 2000 I was elected to Randwick City Council. It was an interesting time to be elected. During that election campaign, I received a phone call from a member of the public who said, "We would like to donate to the Liberal Party campaign for the July 2000 council elections." This is totally relevant to the bill, by the way. I said, "Okay. Send it to the campaign address." I think the donation was \$500 or something and it was from a company that I knew nothing about. I contacted the donors after the election and said, "I need you to fill out and sign this form, which says that you have made this donation." They said, "Yes. No worries. Come out to our office."

In the foyer of the office in Ashfield there was a list of names, but all those names belonged to only one office in the building. I went up to the office and they explained vaguely why they were donating to local government in Randwick when their office building was in Ashfield. I later learned why they had donated when a development application came up a few months later and I saw the two gentlemen sitting in the gallery. I asked them, "Why are you here?" They replied, "We have a development application today, but it is fine." I said, "I am going to declare an interest; I am not going to vote on this." This was long before any formal declaration process was imposed on local government. They said, "Do not worry. That is fine", because they had already stitched up the numbers with the Labor Party.

In October 2000 I made my first declaration of interest and exempted myself from voting on that development application. Some years later, to my astonishment, this development application appeared in the newspaper. It was featured quite prominently. The development was in Mons Avenue, Maroubra, and involved a series of Labor Party identities. Kate McClymont goes into it at length in her book. I am fortunate to have declared an interest and not voted on the matter, because it shows just how murky the world of political donations can become.

Ms Kate Washington: Come up to the Hunter and see what it is like there.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: I saw it down in Randwick in 2002 or 2003 when the Kensington development control plan [DCP] was up for review. When it finally came to a vote, sitting in the gallery were a number of people whom I recognised as being associated with the local Labor Party. Sure enough, development applications for properties along Anzac Parade in Kensington came in straight after that DCP was approved. This was not an isolated incident. We have seen it happen time and time again across New South Wales, from one local government area to the next. This is why we must be forever vigilant in ensuring that campaign funds are clean.

The amendments to the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Amendment Act 2012 introduced by former Premier Barry O'Farrell were the single most effective way of cleaning up corruption in politics with regard to campaign donations. Unfortunately, the High Court did not see it that way and later knocked down the amendments. I believe only those whose names are on the electoral roll should be able to donate to electoral campaigns because they are the only ones who have a genuine stake in the process. Donations should be capped at a modest amount of money so that no individual person will ever be able to influence the political process more than any other.

Business interrupted.

Community Recognition Statements

WINGHAM BEEF WEEK

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:15): Last Friday I had the pleasure of attending the 2018 Wingham Beef Week, held at the picturesque Wingham Showground. It was a record-breaking year for an event that has continued to grow. Some 28 schools from across regional New South Wales attended, including eight new schools. More than 400 students took part, which is 100 more than last year. I congratulate Grant Coleman, chief executive officer of major sponsor Wingham Beef Exports, on his untiring efforts to promote not only beef week but also the Wingham Show and other events in the Wingham community. I congratulate the committee and I was pleased to help the organisation with a \$500,000 grant secured through the Minister.

WALLSEND ELECTORATE NSW FIRE AND RESCUE OPEN DAY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:16): I thank Lambton Fire Station workers for allowing me to enjoy the NSW Fire and Rescue Open Day. It was a huge success. More than 800 Lambton locals attended. A kitchen fire simulation was a big hit. Hundreds of people climbed over the trucks and played with the equipment. Kids had fun turning on the fire hose and loved the mini fire truck, which had a video screen that simulated the drive to a fire call with sirens and lights flashing. I acknowledge station officer Troy Kempnich, senior firefighters Chris Ranse and Joshua Brander, qualified firefighter Kyle Macorig and retained firefighters Ryan Agland,

Chris Baggs, Ken Brinkley, Mark Chesher, Mick Mifsud, Trent Rostron and Mick Tully. I thank them for a wonderful day had by all.

EPILEPSY ACTION AUSTRALIA FUNDRAISER DONNA MALONEY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:17): I recognise Donna Maloney of Voyager Point for her generosity in helping others with epilepsy. Donna donated an artwork to Art for Epilepsy, an online art auction that promotes awareness and supports the work of Epilepsy Action Australia. Epilepsy Action Australia is an important Australian charity that provides education and support services to children and adults with epilepsy and other seizure disorders. Epilepsy can affect anyone at any time. It is estimated that around 250,000 people in Australia live with this condition. Ms Maloney had her first seizure at the age of 13 and has described it as "disrupting to her social and school life". Ms Maloney said that the only element she felt comfortable in at school was art. This pushed her to pursue a lifelong interest in visual arts. All the artworks in the Art for Epilepsy auction included the colour purple, an internationally known colour for epilepsy. I thank Ms Maloney for her generosity in donating her artwork.

AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:19): On Saturday 19 May 2018, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea was held at the Fairfield Youth and Community Centre. Guests were entertained by local students and musical artists, who performed many well-known classic and modern songs. The morning tea was packed with a variety of sweet and savoury dishes donated by volunteers, supporters and local businesses. The event was the sixteenth morning tea hosted by Cancer Council volunteer Mrs Sinilia Radivojevic. Sinilia has been a Cancer Council volunteer for 35 years. The morning tea raised \$4,062. Over the past 16 years, the event has raised \$45,000, thanks to the volunteers and supporters.

The aim of the morning tea is to gather, share and give support to members of the community affected by cancer. Attendees were informed of the Cancer Council's new ENRICHing Survivorship program, which is being offered at Liverpool Hospital. The ENRICHing Survivorship program aims to facilitate exercise with the support of physiologists, physiotherapists, dieticians, yoga instructors and volunteers to restore physical and emotional wellbeing after cancer treatment. I congratulate Sinilia, the volunteers, supporters and performers on hosting another successful Australia's Biggest Morning Tea.

TALDUMANDE YOUTH SERVICES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:20): Taldumande Youth Services is an incredible local not-for-profit organisation that supports vulnerable children, young people and their families across northern Sydney. Earlier this month, I was very pleased to attend the organisation's annual gala dinner alongside its vice patron and my predecessor, Jillian Skinner. The sold-out event, held in the Grand Ballroom at Luna Park Sydney, delivered one of Taldumande's most successful fundraising dinners to date, raising more than \$100,000. The proceeds will enable the organisation to continue its valuable work supporting vulnerable and homeless children and young people.

I acknowledge the work of Chair Virginia Howard, Chief Executive Officer Lisa Graham, Kevin Tran and the rest of the organisation for the wonderful event and the work they do in supporting the North Shore community. The event was hosted by ambassador Jean Kittson and guests were treated to a jazz a cappella performance by students from Redlands. We heard stories from people who have experienced the support of Taldumande. An event of this scale would not be successful without the support of everyone who attended on the night. I thank everybody for supporting Taldumande in the work it does to address what is sadly an increasing homeless situation in northern Sydney.

WORLD BEE DAY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:21): Happy World Bee Day! I congratulate the Amateur Beekeepers' Association NSW for its fabulous inaugural conference, which was held in the beautiful electorate of The Entrance on the weekend. It was great to hear Costa speak about spreading the good word about healthy bees and healthy gardens in the context of planting a strong social community. We need a healthy bee population to pollinate approximately 70 per cent of the food we eat. The Governor, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, spoke about the great New South Wales invention of the Flow Hive.

Our Governor has been keeping and speaking about bees since he started in his role, with a view to spreading the important conversation about bees, ecology and promoting "made in New South Wales". The Governor pointed out that bees provide great lessons to us humans: They live and work in harmony; are cooperative, hardworking and organised; and respect that each bee has a task to complete and is accountable for what they do. I thank Len, Max, the Central Coast Amateur Beekeepers and all the fabulous volunteers for

coordinating the 300-plus beekeepers who came from across New South Wales and Australia to join us on the beautiful Central Coast last weekend. As a new beekeeper, I wish everyone a happy World Bee Day.

AUSTRALIAN FAMILY EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE AWARD RECIPIENT CHERRIE SEALE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:22): I acknowledge the outstanding Cherrie Seale for her efforts over the past 23 years in the childcare industry and congratulate her on being named as a finalist in the Australian Family Early Education and Care Awards. Cherrie is one of the highly regarded directors at Kids Haven Early Learning Centre who facilitate the educational growth and development of children aged six weeks to six years. The goal of the Kids Haven Early Learning Centre is to provide families in the Camden Haven area with high-quality care and education within a supportive, nurturing, stimulating and engaging environment. The centre strives to deliver excellence in early learning to all the children in its care. As a finalist for this year's Australian Family Early Education and Care Awards, Cherrie will compete against 116 nominees from across the nation who were sought from a pool of more than 1,000 entrants. I take this opportunity to once again congratulate Cherrie Seale from the electorate of Port Macquarie on her outstanding professionalism and dedication in her field of child care over an incredible 23 years.

NEWCASTLE ANGLICAN DIOCESE ORDINATIONS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:23): On 10 May, I was honoured to be present at an historic occasion at Newcastle's Christ Church Cathedral as the Anglican Church appointed two new assistant bishops, including the first woman bishop to serve in the diocese of Newcastle. In an episcopal ordination featuring bishops from across Australia, Sonia Roulston and Charlie Murry were ordained to work alongside Bishop Peter Stuart. The appointments represented two firsts: It is the only time the diocese has had more than one assistant bishop, and it is the most senior role a woman has ever held in the 171 years of the diocese. Assistant Bishop Roulston trained for ministry at St John's Theological College, Morpeth; has served in many parishes in the Newcastle Diocese; and, prior to her installation, was the Archdeacon of Newcastle. Originally from north Queensland, Archdeacon Murry joined the diocese in 2010 from Brisbane. Before his appointment, he was Archdeacon for the Upper Hunter. I take this opportunity to formally congratulate Assistant Bishop Roulston and Assistant Bishop Murry on their history-making appointments.

WORLD BUTCHERS' CHALLENGE AWARD WINNER ADAM STRATTON

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:24): Today I extend huge congratulations to one of my favourite butchers and one of the all-time greatest blokes, Adam Stratton. Adam was recently awarded third place in the World Butchers' Challenge in Ireland. This amazing achievement showcased Adam's craft and passion for what he does. On top of his fantastic international results, Adam and his business, Tender Gourmet Butchery, are the most-awarded butchery in Australia, with more than 200 titles. Adam has also been named as one of the top six butchers in the world, and his gourmet sausages are consistent winners at the Sydney Fine Food Show and Competition. Adam is very innovative when it comes to his sausages. He has a vegemite and cheese sausage, beef and VB sausage and—wait for it—the "lambington" with chocolate sausage. I congratulate Adam and the entire team at Tender Gourmet Butchery. They deserve every bit of their significant success.

THE ENTRANCE FIRE & RESCUE NSW OPEN DAY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:25): I commend the fine firefighters across the Central Coast and my electorate. Fire & Rescue NSW firefighters and local Rural Fire Service [RFS] volunteers do an amazing job protecting our community. Last weekend I had the pleasure of meeting many Fire & Rescue NSW personnel who are stationed at The Entrance, Bateau Bay and Berkeley Vale stations in my electorate, as well as the RFS volunteers at Berkeley Vale and Ourimbah. On Saturday, Fire and Rescue NSW held its annual open day. This was a great day that allowed members of the public to have a closer look at what our firefighters do on a daily basis. Fire & Rescue NSW volunteers not only put out fires; they also perform rescues at car accidents, respond to spills of hazardous materials and conduct education campaigns in the community. The fires of the Central Coast are respected across the State. I thank the fires of the Central Coast, the electorate of The Entrance and the entire State for their hard work and dedication to their duties.

WESTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT AWARDS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:26): Recently, I attended the annual Western Sydney Local Health District awards event that recognises the local hardworking nurses and midwives. The presentation was part of celebrations for International Midwives' and Nurses' Day, with award ceremonies held across the district. The event was attended by the board of directors and our great healthcare professionals from hospitals and integrated community health centres. Award recipients from hospitals within the Seven Hills catchment included: Suzanne Stevens, the acting nurse manager of the surgical unit at Westmead Hospital; registered midwife Jan Gatti

and clinical nurse consultant Lesley Jack from Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital; and clinical nurse consultant Lana Sengstock and clinical midwifery educator Kate Gillis from Westmead Hospital. It was a pleasure to attend such a great event, which sought to recognise the caring and dedicated nurses and midwives who look after patients across the electorate of Seven Hills and the wider Western Sydney area.

TENPIN BOWLER KALLAN STRONG

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:26): It is with great pleasure that I update the House on the achievements of a rising star in my electorate. I have previously noted the achievements of Kallan Strong, a tenpin bowler from Wadalba who has gone from strength to strength in his chosen sport. He has now returned from 10 days of competing at the Australian Junior Championship, which was held in Frankston, Victoria. He has returned triumphant with four medals and a new Australian record. His highest score at the tournament was 279, just 21 short of a perfect 300 game. Soon his team will compete at the Disabilities State Championships to defend their shield for the fourth year running. I wish him the best of luck in defending this title and look forward to seeing what he does next.

LINDFIELD VILLAGE OPENING

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:27): On Saturday 26 May, I will be pleased to officially open the new Lindfield Village development by Aqualand in Lindfield Avenue. Lindfield Village consists of 141 apartments, 2,500 square metres of retail space and 62 underground parking places in Lindfield Avenue, opposite Lindfield railway station on the eastern side. Lindfield residents welcome a modern and exciting new retail mix, which includes a new concept IGA supermarket, Harris Farm Markets store, patisserie, family-run restaurant, barber, estate agency, travel agency and liquor store. The development is part of a wider village plan for the eastern side of Lindfield railway station. The adjacent Lindfield Village Green proposal is a Ku-ring-gai Council open-space initiative that will include cafes, a playground, seating and underground parking, including parking for commuters, which will be funded by the New South Wales Government. Lindfield is undergoing a major transformation that is bringing new facilities to local residents. I congratulate Aqualand on its successful development and commend it for supporting various cultural events in Sydney.

RUSS COOPER, OAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:28): I recognise Russ Cooper, OAM, of Metford on the fiftieth anniversary of him becoming a Rotarian. Russ first joined the Rotary Club of Moss Vale in 1968 and over the next five decades held membership and executive roles in the Rotary Club of Kempsey West and Rutherford Telarah Rotary Club. Additionally, he was chairman of the district committee for the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program for 10 years. Russ received the Rotarian Award, Paul Harris Fellow, and the Sapphire Pin. The Medal of the Order of Australia was awarded to Russ in the 2009 Queen's Birthday Honours List for his service to the East Maitland community. The golden anniversary of membership to a community service organisation such as Rotary is a special achievement and Russ deserves recognition for reaching this milestone. I thank Russ Cooper, OAM, for his contributions to Rotary and to Maitland. May his special anniversary provide inspiration to others who volunteer and serve their community.

NUNGERA CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY HOMEWORK CENTRE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:29): I offer my congratulations and support to the Nungera Co-operative Society, which has commenced a program to help Indigenous kids tackle their school homework. This initiative has seen the Hillcrest Community Hall filled with kids of all ages enthusiastically getting into their homework in a safe and nurturing environment. This environment helps to teach the kids to support and help each other not only with their schoolwork, but also in everyday life. I commend Dee-Anne Kapeen and her group of volunteers for this wonderful initiative and hope that it continues to grow and prosper into the future.

FORMER RANDWICK MAYOR JOHN PROCOPIADIS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:30): I pay tribute to the enormous contributions made by John Procopiadis of Kensington to local government and to the Greek community of New South Wales. John served as a Randwick City Councillor for almost 20 years after he was elected in a by-election in 1994. In that time he was not only able to serve as deputy mayor on two occasions but also elected Mayor of Randwick in 2009. John is an integral part of the Sydney Greek Orthodox community. The Cathedral of God's Wisdom and the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Surry Hills both owe their State heritage listing to John. These magnificent churches are internationally significant. On 29 May this year, it will be 120 years since the foundation stone of the Holy Trinity Church was laid—the first Orthodox church in the Southern Hemisphere. John has of all this and much more to be proud of. The House commends John Procopiadis and thanks him for his service to the community.

PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:31): Today I bring to the attention of the House the hard work of Boomerang Bags and its committed efforts to reduce the use of plastic bags. This dedicated group makes reusable bags by hand using donated second-hand materials and ensures its project remains local and sustainable. Earlier this year Boomerang Bags attended the Gundagai Show where volunteers distributed 80 bags, after which they held several working bees to make sure their supply was replenished. The group relies on donations that go towards paying for sewing thread, the maintenance of volunteers' sewing machines and the use of the Gundagai Uniting Church hall, where they do their wonderful work. This is a superb example of selfless dedication to a cause. I commend Carol Harris and her colleagues for all their work.

MOUNT DRUITT RECONCILIATION GROUP WALK AND GATHERING CONCERT

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (13:32): On Saturday 19 May, it was a privilege to once again attend the Mount Druitt and District Reconciliation Group Walk and Gathering Concert—now in its twenty-first year—at Dawson Mall, Mount Druitt. This day is about celebrating the spirit of reconciliation and building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It is a privilege to attend every year. Thanks go to Blacktown City Council—particularly my colleague Mayor Stephen Bali, and member for Blacktown—for sponsoring this important event; Lyn Leerson, OAM, for her dedication to reconciliation and heading up this great group; my colleagues the member for Mount Druitt and the Federal member for Chifley for attending; and all the convenors, including Aunty Gloria Matthews, Aunty Sandra Lee, Uncle Wes Marne and, of course, Uncle Greg Simms. I thank them for their work in preserving and celebrating Aboriginal culture and language in our community.

STEBER INTERNATIONAL BOAT BUILDERS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:32): I congratulate Steber International boat builders in Taree. Since decentralising to Taree in 1974, Steber International has had a number of achievements and has received a number of accolades. This year it is about to undertake its fourth expansion since moving to Taree. Current work includes commencement of the contract to build five naval support vessels, delivery of a 52-foot resort vessel to the Seychelles, and beginning construction of a 60-foot research vessel for the Government of Mauritius and construction of a 34-foot commercial vessel. It is in the process of appointing six first-year apprentices and is looking to employ skilled shipwrights, carpenters and boatbuilders. Its refits continue at a hectic pace, from small boats to medium and large boats. I congratulate Alan, Colin and Graham Steber and note that after 31 years Graham Steber is leaving the company to go into the tourism business.

TILLIGERRY AUTO CLUB MOTORAMA

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:33): I pay tribute to the organisers, sponsors and supporters of the fantastic Tilligerry Motorama. Ian and Elaine Jones have been spearheading this event since 2013, alongside their Tilligerry Auto Club members. This year's event saw about 6,000 people come through the gates to see the 400-plus cars and bikes on display, as well as local stallholders. Every time I looked up from my mobile office, there were more and more people milling around with big smiles on their faces. This terrific event would not be possible without the Tilligerry RSL Sports Club for the use of its grounds, as well as sponsors Club Lemon Tree, Port Stephens FM, Australian National Street Machine Association, and BP and FoodWorks Salt Ash. Special thanks go to the impressive Tilligerry Peninsula Lions Club, local real estate offices Coastal Real Estate, Raine and Horne, and Portside Real Estate, as well as the many local business that donated raffle prizes. All proceeds from the event will go to the John Hunter Children's Hospital Paediatric Oncology Unit and five local kids' sporting groups. Congratulations to the winner of the Best Tilligerry Club Car, Steve Stone's 1954 FJ Holden, and the People's Choice winner, Greg Hodson's ironhead Harley-Davidson.

ARTIST AND AUTHOR GRAHAM LUPP

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (13:34): I congratulate Bathurst artist Graham Lupp, who has spent the past five years researching and writing a book on the architectural history of Bathurst. The lifelong Bathurst resident had hoped to complete the work in time for the city's bicentenary in 2015, but he found that the task grew. Graham started this work in January 2013, writing on the architectural history of Bathurst between 1815 and 1915 and the people responsible for its development. His work has seen original building plans, historical photographs and his own paintings and drawings displayed in this historical book.

Graham has been supported by private sponsors, Bathurst Regional Council and the New South Wales Government. The work that Graham carried out grew because he discovered that many of the 70 architects and builders featured in the book were responsible for many of the buildings in the Central West. *Building Bathurst: the story of those who built Bathurst and central NSW 1815–1915* is 800 pages long with 1,000 illustrations, and there are 1,500 limited editions. This is about preserving our history for generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO PETER ROBERT HENRY HUTTEN

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:36): Last week many in the village of Mount Kembla were saddened to hear of the passing of long-term resident Peter Robert Henry Hutten. Peter was born in Berlin and moved to England when he was 12. At the time, his family were concerned about the changing political climate in Europe. He served in the British Army, rising to the rank of captain, and left in 1947. A keen fencer, it was at the fencing club where he met Julia, whom he would later marry. They spent the remainder of their time together until Julia's passing in July last year. In 1967 Peter and Julia moved to Australia, settling in Araluen Avenue, Mount Kembla, and raising their four children, Robin, Nick, Sebastian and Tim.

Peter was a fierce advocate for the rights of and need for better care and opportunities for people with an intellectual disability. He was tireless in his advocacy, and many will benefit from it in the future. He also wanted to preserve the history of Mount Kembla, spending hours collating the village history—again, an effort from which future generations will benefit. As renowned playwright Wendy Richardson said at Peter's funeral on Saturday, all communities would benefit if there were more people in them like Peter and Julia. Our condolences to the family.

MOSMAN ROWING CLUB

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:37): I acknowledge the Mosman Rowing Club, which was the most successful club at the recent 2018 national rowing championships. The championships were held earlier in May on Lake Barrington International Rowing Course in Tasmania. Despite the reported cold temperatures, wind and rain making conditions very difficult, the Mosman Rowing Club proved resilient, ending the regatta in sixth place on the champion club points score out of 95 competing clubs. It was the most successful New South Wales club competing, with 38 Mosman Masters rowing and/or coxing, along with coach Steve "Rocky" Gordon.

Rocky also coached the New South Wales Men's State Eight, consisting entirely of Mosman Rowing Club members and coxed by the club's very own Wendy. They finished in a very close second spot, gaining a silver medal. Mark Connaghan co-coached the New South Wales Women's State Eight, which included Mosman Rowing Club members Jane and Liz, with Claire coxing them to an exciting bronze medal. Mosman Master Jenny had a seat in the New South Wales Women's State Four, finishing sixth in tough conditions. Congratulations to all these participants in the regatta and good luck for their future endeavours.

ISLAMIC CHARITY PROJECTS ASSOCIATION RAMADAN DINNER

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:38): Last Friday I had the pleasure of attending the twenty-fifth annual Islamic Charity Projects Association [ICPA] Ramadan Dinner at the Al Amanah College assembly hall in Liverpool. I was joined by my colleagues the member for Liverpool, the member for Lakemba and the member for Fairfield, amongst Federal members of Parliament and many councillors. It was a wonderful opportunity for all of us to celebrate Ramadan during this very special time for our Islamic community and also to acknowledge the wonderful work of the Islamic Charity Projects Association and Darulfatwa. I acknowledge the outgoing president, Dr Ghayath Al-Shelh, with whom I have been friends for many years, and congratulate him on his amazing service and efforts in supporting the Islamic Charity Projects Association for many years. I congratulate Mr Mohammed Mehio on his appointment as the new president of the ICPA.

ALBURY ELECTORATE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:39): As a regional finalist in a nationwide Say No To Bullying Poster Competition, Mia Lavis, a student at Howlong Public School, attended Government House to receive an award from the Governor of New South Wales. Mia is hoping to make a difference by encouraging more kindness to change the statistics after learning that Australia is one of the worst countries to deal with bullying and is number one for the most cyberbullying. I say to her: Well done, Mia. What a wonderful achievement and experience. Your example serves as an inspiration to all.

I extend congratulations to James Fallon High School Principal Jenny Parrett, who has been awarded a scholarship to Harvard from the Public Education Foundation. Jenny is the only rural principal to be selected for this scholarship. I congratulate also year 9 students Ellie Brosnan and Asmita Guragai from James Fallon High School; and Ritesh Adhikari, Naomi Birungi, Winnie Masudi, Sostika Rai and Ester Musemu from Murray High School, who were awarded Harding Miller Education Foundation scholarships or Friends of Zainab Tertiary scholarships. We wish them success in their studies over the next four years.

CAMPBELLTOWN FIRE & RESCUE NSW OPEN DAY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:40): This past weekend I was delighted to visit the Campbelltown fire station as part of Fire & Rescue NSW open day celebrations. Our local firefighters, and indeed

firefighters across New South Wales, do a wonderful and at times thankless job in keeping our communities safe and providing assistance in times of despair. Their work is tiresome, physically demanding and often outright dangerous. Fires and other emergencies do not only occur between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. on weekdays, which means our firefighters are on call 24/7 and are ready to jump into action when required. The Fire & Rescue NSW open day was a great initiative and a wonderful opportunity for our community to visit and say thankyou to the men and women at Campbelltown fire station. Personally and on behalf my community, I once again thank our brave firefighters in Campbelltown and across New South Wales for their honourable service. Particularly today on Wear Orange Wednesday, I thank the State Emergency Service volunteers for their invaluable contributions to our communities in times of need.

CINDERELLA'S GIFT INITIATOR CHELSEA CONNELL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:41): I recognise a young entrepreneur in my electorate, student Chelsea Connell from Heritage Christian School in Port Macquarie, for her initiative in starting up Cinderella's Gift to support underprivileged children to afford to purchase clothing for their school formals. Chelsea, at the age of 17 years, learned that many of her fellow students were struggling to attend their school formal because of the expensive costs associated with purchasing a formal outfit. In taking the initiative to rectify this problem, Chelsea took to Facebook and started up Cinderella's Gift, requesting donations of any unwanted formal clothing to offer to students feeling the unnecessary burden of trying to afford a new dress to attend their school formal.

Already Chelsea has received 100 dresses from women around the Hastings region who have offered their unwanted clothing as a donation for students in need. The cost of an outfit for a formal can exceed \$250, with some girls feeling obligated to spend upwards of \$1,500 for a designer dress. It is well known that the formal season can put pressure on young girls and families on lower incomes, so I am delighted to see Chelsea Connell making a difference in the community by assisting families. I commend her for this unique initiative and her efforts.

PEARL BEACH PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:42): If there was a prize for the best progress association in New South Wales, Pearl Beach Progress Association would definitely be right up there. I congratulate all members, past and present, on building a super-inclusive, warm, accommodating, hardworking and successful community team. In the beginning there were banksias and angophoras, burrawangs and bloodwoods, with an understorey of grevilleas, boronias, wattles, flannel flowers and more. The Guringai and Darkinjung people camped there, with access to bountiful supplies of shellfish, seafood, mammals and reptiles.

Then came the Central Coast's historic boatbuilder Rock Davis as one of the first settlers, with his cattle and goats chewing up whatever they found edible. And so it goes at Pearl Beach, with development continuing and Pearl Beach growing into the pearl she is today: a spectacular beachside village hosting a small, caring community who recognise and work hard to conserve the precious local ecology. Today Pearl Beach has 600 blocks, with most streets retaining a natural tree cover, where native animal still have shelter and food, and where many inspired artists, musicians, poets, writers and a very caring Pearl Beach Progress Association ensure that the heritage is passed on. Thank you, Pearly.

SOUTH GRAFTON JUNIOR ATHLETE ERICA TILLMAN

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:43): I offer my congratulations to South Grafton long jumper Erica Tillman who finished her Little Athletics career with a gold medal. At the recently held State championships in windy conditions Erica jumped a very impressive 11.85 metres in the triple jump final to win gold. Erica also competed in a number of other events at the championships, finishing ninth in the long jump and sixth in the high jump and competing also in the 100-metre hurdles. Erica has been a terrific junior athlete and I wish her every success in the future.

WALLSEND FOOTBALL CLUB EPILEPSY AWARENESS FUNDRAISER

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:43): Wallsend Football Club [FC] donned its purple away kit and collected gold coin donations to raise awareness for epilepsy. In a gesture of solidarity, all four Wallsend women's premier league grades—the under-14, under-17, under-20 and first grade sides—ran on in their purple kit and raised more than \$400 for Epilepsy Action Australia. The fundraiser was the brainchild of David Quickmons, the father of Wallsend FC player Montana, whose daughter Hayley lives with epilepsy. I am grateful to our wonderful Wallsend FC women for using their athletic talent and skills to raise so much money for such a worthy cause.

GANMAIN PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:44): I recognise Renee Lucas and the Advance Ganmain Committee who have worked with the community to eliminate plastic bags from their village of 779 people. After watching the ABC's *War on Waste*, Ms Lucas was inspired to take action. The Advance Ganmain Committee surveyed local shops, finding Ganmain was using around 13,000 single-use plastic bags per year. An extensive consultation phase followed and businesses were won over. Local school students Lucas Hatty from Saint Brendan's Catholic Primary School, and Claudia Bingham, Eva Lucas, Chloe Clark and Hannah Sheridan from Ganmain Public School designed a logo and slogan to be printed on new re-usable bags. It is with pride that I recognise little Ganmain, which jumped the gun on the large supermarket chains that are moving to eliminate plastic bags in our region from next month. Well done, Ganmain.

WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:45): Today is Wear Orange Wednesday in support of the thousands of incredible State Emergency Service [SES] volunteers across New South Wales upon whom we all rely in times of disaster and emergency. My electorate of Port Stephens not only is a particularly stunning part of the State but also is an area particularly prone to wild weather. So the hardworking and dedicated SES volunteers in both the Port Stephens unit based in Raymond Terrace and the Tomaree unit based in Corlette deserve not only recognition and support but also celebration and our sincere thanks. The people of Port Stephens know they can depend on the local men and women who turn up in orange in times of emergency. They have a proud history of protecting, repairing and restoring our community through floods, wild weather and other local emergencies. I pay tribute to and thank Tomaree Unit Controller Maureen Philpott, Raymond Terrace Unit Controller David Douglas and Hunter Region Controller Stephen Hart for their dedication to our community and for so ably leading our wonderful local SES volunteers.

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

Announcements

WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank members for taking part in Wear Orange Wednesday, a day on which we recognise the State Emergency Service [SES] volunteers and their selfless work across this State and across the nation. I thank all members for the lovely display of orange I see before me and I thank them for meeting with the SES volunteers who were here this morning. The SES volunteers are selfless in their protection of our communities.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to students and teachers from St Benedict's College, Oran Park Anglican College and Mount Annan Christian College, guests of the Government Whip and member for Camden. I welcome back to the Chamber participants from the Kiama Electorate 2018 Student Leaders Forum, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama. They were here this morning and were so well entertained that they have decided to come back this afternoon.

I acknowledge students and their teachers from Mosman Church of England Preparatory School, guests of the member for North Shore. I acknowledge also the principal and students from Lakes Grammar, guests of the member for Wyong. I also welcome the participants in the Legislative Assembly's Public Sector Seminar, whom I had the pleasure of meeting this morning. I did apologise beforehand about the behaviour of members, but we welcome you all to the Chamber.

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from the Lieutenant-Governor:

T F BATHURST
Lieutenant-Governor

Government House
Sydney, 12 May 2018

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), being absent from the State, he has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

DAVID HURLEY
Governor

Government House
Sydney, 18 May 2018

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

*Notices***PRESENTATION**

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister for Health will come to order. I apologise to all the school students here this afternoon. I have already apologised to the Public Sector Seminar participants who are in the gallery today. This in no way is how you should be encouraged to live your life.

*Question Time***GOVERNMENT CONTRACT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23): My question is directed to the Premier. A second company, the Australian-owned VAC Group, is now suing this Government claiming misleading and deceptive conduct over the CBD and South East Light Rail. Is it time for the Government to start telling the truth about this shambles that it has inflicted on Sydney?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24): Wakey-wakey! I understand—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand that that company has been in dispute with the Government for more than a year.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand that a trenching company has been in dispute with the Government for more than a year. Wakey-wakey, Opposition members.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Opposition members cannot handle the truth about infrastructure projects.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Opposition members get very excited about something they cannot do.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The other day I said to my office staff, "Let us make a list of all the projects we have completed since we have been in government." In public transport alone, I have a long list of 123 projects that we have completed. I am happy to indulge the House by going through those projects. This Government completed the South West Rail Link one year ahead of schedule and \$300 million under budget.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. A motion accorded priority that is before the House will enable the Premier to go through that list. The question that was asked referred to the CBD and South East Light Rail and the VAC Group. I would appreciate an honest answer from the Premier. Why did she not tell anyone this was happening?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The shadow Minister for Transport should tell the truth. Opposition members moved a motion in this place that states that this Government has never finished a project when more than 150 transport projects have been completed. The member for Strathfield should tell the truth. Opposition members cannot handle the truth.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. If the Premier wants to go through her list, the Opposition's motion should be accorded priority and she can go through every project. The question refers to the VAC Group and what this Government did not tell the community.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Opposition members cannot tell the truth about this Government's infrastructure plans. I inform all those students who are present in the gallery that Opposition members cannot accept how much progress this Government has made in the past seven years.

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

Mr Andrew Constance: It's called construction.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is called construction. Opposition members would not know what that is. They cancelled projects and wasted billions of dollars.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: After 16 years under Labor, this State was in shreds—an absolute debacle. Let us go through some of the projects on the list.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do not have enough time to go through all 860 projects that have been completed by this Government. I have a list of 860 projects.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Opposition members cannot tell the truth. Their only transport policy is to cancel projects. They want to cancel the F6, they do not support NorthConnex and they do not support WestConnex. They do not support light rail or the Sydney Metro.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Their only transport policy is to cancel projects. They cancelled the metro to Bankstown. This Government completed the South West Rail Link ahead of budget and within time. This Government has also completed Wynyard Walk—an accessible pedestrian tunnel that links Wynyard station with the Western Sydney central business district. Opposition members used to talk about inner west light rail but they never delivered it. This Government completed that project.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government has completed easy access programs and the Newcastle Interchange at Wickham. The Labor Government never delivered but this Government has delivered for Newcastle. This Government upgraded stations at Seven Hills, Berowra, Blacktown, Jannali, Broadmeadow and Pendle Hill. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to order for the first time.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:30): I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Premier for her answer. If the Government has been in dispute with this company for a year why has the Premier never revealed that to the public? Why did I have to reveal today that four weeks ago this company went to the Federal Court to sue this Government for deceptive and misleading conduct? Why did I have to reveal that?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30): Lazy Foley over there is also a fibber. He is a fibber.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume her seat. The Leader of the Opposition asked a supplementary question. The Premier will answer the question and she will be heard in silence. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Leader of the Opposition should get his facts straight before he comes into this place. The shadow Minister for Transport should stop misleading the public and this House. Opposition members should hang their heads in shame about the Labor Government's failure to deliver infrastructure projects. When this Government was elected—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Kogarah to order for the third time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. I call the member for Barwon to order for the first time. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the third time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: For 16 long years the Labor Government was more concerned with backroom deals, supporting the union mates and employing middle managers. It did not care about infrastructure. Now that this Government is getting on with the job Opposition members cannot handle the truth. They cannot handle the fact that this Government has completed 870 projects since it has been in office—major and local projects for roads, rail, schools and hospitals. The list goes on. This Government will continue to deliver because that is what the people of New South Wales deserve. I said this morning and yesterday that it takes more than one or two years to build these mega projects. If we had not started delivering infrastructure it would never have been done.

The Labor Government talked about the north-west rail line for decades but it never delivered. It spoke about light rail but it never had the guts to deliver. It spoke about the M4 and the M5 but it never had the guts to deliver. All it did was rip up contracts and waste billions of dollars. The Labor Government did not even know where regional and rural New South Wales was. Country Labor did nothing for all our highways, roadways or all hospitals in regional New South Wales. I will not have those fibbers opposite telling us about infrastructure. I will not allow those fake and lazy people opposite to lecture us on infrastructure. This Government will continue to deliver for this State. The Labor Government left it in a shambles but this Government will continue to deliver.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have completed my answer.

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

NATIONAL SPACE AGENCY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (14:34): People in the gallery must be wondering what on earth Opposition members are on about.

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

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Keira left the Chamber at 14:34.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister for Corrections to order for the first time.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier inform the House what the New South Wales Government is doing to secure Australia's future space agency and to create more jobs?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:35): I thank the member for Davidson for his question. I know how much he appreciates jobs and investment in New South Wales. This is a reminder to those opposite that we are the party of the workers. This Government is creating jobs. Only last week the Australian Bureau of Statistics released figures that reveal that half a million jobs have been created since this Government has been in office. This Government has an eye not only on current jobs but also on jobs for the future.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government wants to ensure that the students in the gallery today are able to pick from an array of jobs in the future and that they have the skills and the ability to study for those jobs, which will make a difference for this State, for them and their families.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What do Opposition members have against jobs or the space industry? The problem is that Opposition members are obsessed with their own jobs, with union jobs and the jobs of middle managers.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I digress from an important issue. Today the Minister for Trade and Industry from the other place and I had the honour to announce that Australia's first astronaut, Dr Paul Scully-Power, will be the space industry ambassador in New South Wales. The space industry today is different from

what was envisaged decades ago. It is not just about going into space and looking at planets, solar systems and galaxies; it is also about using satellite technology to make a difference in people's lives. We know we can do better in New South Wales and Australia—we can capture a piece of the space innovation industry market. That is why the Government was pleased to announce today that Australia's first astronaut, Dr Paul Scully-Power, will be used for this purpose. There is no better person to advise the Government on this important policy area than Dr Paul Scully-Power.

Many members would know that in 1984 Dr Scully-Power was on board the National Aeronautics and Space Administration space shuttle for eight days conducting studies of the earth below. At the end of the mission he had travelled more than 5.5 million kilometres in 133 earth orbits and logged more than 197 hours in space. What touched us this morning was his excitement when he spoke about the space industry and jobs for the future. He gave us a few examples of how space industry technology can be applied in New South Wales. First, he used the example of a farmer in Moree using low-flying satellite technology to determine which part of the crop needed water or fertiliser. In the future farmers will have that technology in the palm of their hand. Secondly, he referred to an issue that was close to his heart—the use of drone technology to save lives. Recently Minister Blair watched someone being winched from the water using drone technology—space industry technology being applied in day-to-day life.

Thirdly, he said that traffic management systems would be utilised through satellite technology for driverless cars. Dr Scully-Power, who has global contacts in the space industry and with defence companies, advised us that in New South Wales 170 businesses or industries are utilising space industry technology. There is more to do. We need to take a bigger share of the market and we need to create opportunities to ensure that New South Wales is leading Australia in the creation of jobs in this industry. Currently the space industry employs 3,000 people across the State, but I want to double that figure and create opportunities for this industry to grow. One such opportunity would be to have the signature home for the space industry as the aerotropolis in the Western Sydney airport precinct. [*Extension of time*]

On Monday the Prime Minister and I will be hosting an aerotropolis summit. The aerospace and defence industries will play a key part in that forum. We would love to see the space industry headquarters located in that precinct, but there are opportunities in regional New South Wales and in other parts of the State to locate it. The space industry should not exist in only one location. New South Wales wants to increase its global share of the market. At present, New South Wales has 41 per cent of the Australian market but Australia has only a small percentage of the global market. We want to see that increase. Applying technology that is used in the space industry will only create jobs.

By 2030 I want to double the number of jobs in this industry in New South Wales. I also want to ensure that the revenue from the space industry increases. Currently New South Wales benefits from about \$2 billion a year in revenue. I would like to see that number increase to at least \$5 billion. However, what is of more importance to me is the jobs that it will create—an increase from 3,000 jobs to 6,000 in the future. The aerospace industry will also attract similar industries such as robotics, mechanics and satellite technology which are spurred on by the space industry. When the market share is increased in the space industry it will increase also in many other industries. The people of New South Wales should be in no doubt that this Government cares not only about the jobs of today; it is also reaching for the jobs of tomorrow. This Government understands what that means for successive generations, for our young people, and for the quality of life for citizens in the future.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (14:42): I address my question to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government helping local councils to achieve better outcomes for communities in regional New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:43): The member for Murray, a fantastic local member, became a member of Parliament after winning the Murray by-election last year. As a former councillor and mayor, he understands the importance of local government in regional and rural New South Wales. One of the key platforms for a stronger local government sector is collaboration. This Government wants councils to work together, to share services and to deliver for communities. That has been done informally in the regions through the regional organisations of councils [ROCs]. Recent legislation replaced ROCs with joint organisations in regional New South Wales.

Joint organisations are operated on a volunteer basis. Councils in a region come together and work collaboratively to deliver infrastructure and services on the ground. This Government is making regional communities great places for people to live and it is ensuring growth for future generations. Last week the 11 joint organisations were proclaimed across the State. The 74 councils that volunteered to join those joint organisations

represent 90 per cent of councils in regional New South Wales. Those joint organisations are located in Canberra, central New South Wales, Hunter, Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Mid North Coast, Namoi, New England, Northern Rivers, Orana, Riverina and Murray. As I said, those joint organisations represent 90 per cent of the councils in regional and rural New South Wales.

Over the past 15 months the Government has worked closely with local government to deliver the amenities that make our communities a great place in which to live, play and call home and for our kids to grow up. In order to ensure that our kids grow up and remain in regional and rural New South Wales, we have to put in place infrastructure and amenities such as sporting facilities, culture, arts, local parks and good roads. We have to work with councils to deliver the best roads because connectivity is important. The Government will ensure that our communities do not miss out by investing in telecommunications connectivity programs such as the Mobile Black Spot Program. By empowering local communities and joint organisations, local councils and communities will have a say in the future of their region.

In years to come I hope that the decision and commitment of the Liberal-Nationals Government to joint organisations will empower local government to make decisions. Decision-making should be decentralised—from Macquarie Street to local councils. I believe local members and their staff are better placed to make decisions on behalf of councils and communities. That has been proven in some of the work that this Government has done through its regional growth funds. The Stronger Country Communities Fund allocates funds to local government associations and their communities to make decisions about things such as sporting fields, local park upgrades, showgrounds or Country Women's Association halls. The Government is empowering local councils and the community to have a say. We know we are getting it right because when we test those projects within the community they align with councils, which is a fantastic outcome.

The Growing Local Economies fund is empowering regional councils to work together to unlock economic potential in regional New South Wales. We want people to live in regional New South Wales. My colleagues and I know that regional New South Wales is a great place to live and to raise a family. But jobs are the key. This Government is committed to working with local government to deliver the enabling infrastructure that will unlock economic development, and businesses will be able to create local jobs. If we want our kids to stay we have to build amenities in regional New South Wales—the best schools, health and community options. Most importantly, we have to be able to create jobs not just for today but also for the future. Our regional growth funds are all about building great cities and great towns in regional New South Wales where families can raise their children. Our regional growth funds are also about unlocking economic potential. Joint organisations will bring those councils together in a collaborative way to work on local government and regional footprints. *[Extension of time]*

If local government is to succeed it must be approached from a regional perspective. Strong regions lead to strong local communities. That is this Government's focus. Last week this Liberal-Nationals Government recognised that some communities in rural and remote New South Wales have different issues that need to be addressed. One of those issues is the tyranny of distance for anyone in the Far West. Last week this Government announced a significant package to encourage councils in the Far West to recognise the differences—something for which the member for Murray and the member for Barwon have advocated. The Government put together an exciting funding package worth \$20 million to support joint organisations and to ensure that we build resilient local governments and communities in regional and remote areas. An amount of \$250,000 will go to each joint organisation to update the existing Western Roads plan because infrastructure such as roads is important for the region; \$500,000 will go to each joint organisation to employ an executive officer and any support staff who are required; and \$250,000 will go to each joint organisation towards planning support with NSW Public Works.

We recognise that there is a capacity issue. We want to ensure that NSW Public Works collaborates with local government to deliver infrastructure on the ground for those communities. The Government has provided \$5 million in funding for each joint organisation to invest in tourism and cultural infrastructure projects. In the regions, especially the Far West, culture and tourism go hand in hand and significantly drive the economy. Tourism is a big employer and a big part of the economy. The final component is a multimillion-dollar package to return air flights to some areas in regional New South Wales. This \$20 million package will ensure that we have resilient communities in the Far West of this State.

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

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (14:50): My question is directed to the Premier. Allegations of misleading and deceptive conduct from the VAC Group follows legal action by Desane Group Holdings over compulsory acquisition and 23 contractors being left stranded after working on a Roads and Maritime Services job on the Pacific Highway. When will the Government stop punishing small businesses for its mistakes?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Premier does not require any assistance. I call the member for Clarence to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:50): I thank the member for Maitland for the question. I notice that the member is getting a rather healthy share of questions, which is a good thing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Bankstown that she is on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Given that the member's question referred to this Government's response to small business, I am more than happy to talk about our record in supporting small business across the State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Shellharbour that she is on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government is investing billions of dollars in infrastructure for Newcastle—something that those opposite never did. This Government is creating jobs. Young people in Newcastle are really pleased about the jobs that we are creating, and small businesses are thriving.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: I asked the Premier why she is blaming small businesses—

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: My point of order relates to Standing Order 74. The Premier is being argumentative on this issue. I asked why this Government has failed small business.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the Premier responded to some interjections. I am sure the Premier is coming back to the leave of the question. I call member for Newcastle to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Very few things give me more satisfaction than talking to—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Very few things give me more satisfaction than talking to small businesses. When I travel the length and breadth of New South Wales, including Newcastle, and speak to small businesses they tell me that they are buoyed by our infrastructure investment because it is spurring on private investment. In fact, since we have been in government—I know the member for Newcastle—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know that Opposition members cannot handle this, but business confidence and investment in New South Wales has never been higher. In the last two budgets I am proud to say that the Liberal-Nationals Government slashed \$2 billion worth of taxes that were imposing burdens on small business. We have removed transfer duties on non-real transfers between businesses—I am not sure whether Opposition members understand what that is. The member for Rockdale probably would; he is probably the only one on that side of the House who understands what that is. The member for Rockdale is a real Liberal; he gets it. He should be on the front bench; he gets small business.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Premier, I do not think that was the question.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We understand the mechanisms that the Government has put in place to help with acquisitions and mergers of big business. We are asking what it is doing for small business.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, those opposite cannot handle the truth that we have slashed taxes and charges imposed on small business to the tune of at least \$2 billion. We have also increased the payroll tax threshold and we are looking at further opportunities to support small business. We appreciate that small business is hiring, small business is employing and small business is helping our economy to be not only the strongest in the nation but also the strongest in the region. In fact, New South Wales is growing faster than 27 OECD nations, and that is in no small part as a result of the efforts of the small business community.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank all small businesses that support us, whether they are in infrastructure delivering services or whether they are providing our citizens with the support they need. We will continue to support small businesses in return. The question asked by the member for Maitland allowed me to

recall that when the Labor Party was in office it introduced 26 different taxes and charges, including those on small business. They want to forget all that. Remember how those opposite increased the club tax, the pub tax and the parking space levy, and they brought in land tax. Vendor duty, remember that? You had to pay stamp duty and vendor duty. Remember that one? [*Time expired.*]

WESTERN SYDNEY EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:56): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government delivering quality education for Western Sydney?

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

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:56): I had an opportunity to meet some excellent student school leaders from the constituency of the member for Camden. It is wonderful to meet school leaders.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time. He might not have been able to talk last week, but he can resume his seat.

Mr ROB STOKES: It is wonderful to meet school leaders and to be reminded why we are all here: It is to provide opportunities for those young people so they can take those opportunities and make a contribution to an even better society for our children to inherit. I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question and for her fierce advocacy on behalf of the wonderful constituency she represents. It has been great to work with the member for Holsworthy on some significant upgrades in her area such as Prestons Public School, which we visited not so long ago. It has a great school community. Moorebank, Holsworthy and Casula have also undergone significant maintenance works.

The question related to education in Western Sydney. As every member in this place can attest, Western Sydney is undergoing profound and transformative change. This Government is committed to providing the physical and human resources and infrastructure required to ensure that the change improves people's lives and empowers the families of Western Sydney. There is nothing more foundational to enable human flourishing than education. Access to quality local school education provides opportunities to learn, grow, relate and serve. It is an opportunity to create a cohesive, peaceful and progressive society. That is why this Government is doing more than any other government in history and providing physical infrastructure improvements to schools in Western Sydney.

This year alone, we have provided \$220 million to progress 13 specific projects in Western Sydney, but over the next four years 67 new and upgraded schools in Western Sydney will benefit from the Government's \$4.2 billion school infrastructure spend. To put that another way, that is \$1.5 billion of the \$4.2 billion to be spent across the State. That is reflective of the growth and change that Western Sydney is seeing. We know that the population density of our urban centres across Western Sydney has grown exponentially, and it is important to ensure that the social infrastructure, such as schools, is there to empower the families that are part of that growth.

As the member for Parramatta knows, his electorate is one of the epicentres of growth in Western Sydney. Some significant upgrades are underway. Perhaps none are more significant than the new Arthur Phillip Public School and the Parramatta Public School sites. As members would be aware, there was a fire at the site over the weekend. Sadly, it was in one of the heritage buildings that hopefully will be preserved as part of that build because it is central to the re-imagining of that site. My instructions to School Infrastructure NSW is to do whatever it can to ensure that that building is saved and preserved. The first demand is to ensure that the site remains safe and secure for students in the precinct. It is important to celebrate the past as we build new schools. Preserving whatever we can of that heritage will be an important part of the project as the Government remains committed to creating a landmark school for generations to come, despite the setback of the recent fire.

So much is going on with building schools across Western Sydney. Since 2011, we have seen a large number of works, whether it is new schools in Bankstown, Auburn, Camden and Riverstone or whether it is new schools under construction in Baulkham Hills, Hawkesbury, Parramatta and Castle Hill or upgrades to dozens more schools in Cabramatta, Fairfield, Wollondilly and Mulgoa. Recently the Premier, the member for Parramatta and I had the opportunity to visit the newly opened public school at O'Connell Street in central Parramatta. It was wonderful seeing the families arriving safely on their bicycles using the new infrastructure, which was not possible beforehand. It is a wonderful re-imagining of that site. [*Extension of time*]

It was wonderful to see the school rebuild receive a significant heritage award for adaptive re-use. It speaks to the primacy we are putting into design to ensure that the money that is being invested produces great buildings that will operate for generations to come. It is not only about the investment in buildings. It is far more about the investment in teachers and students. This year alone \$219 million of the Resource Allocation Model is

being delivered directly to schools in flexible funding across Western Sydney. That is empowering incredible innovation in teaching. To provide one example, Westfield Sports High School will receive \$610,000 extra this year alone for principal Roger Davis and his team to allocate funds for the specific needs of students in that diverse school community.

Recently the member for Holsworthy and I visited the Prestons Public School. It was wonderful to meet young Jacob, who, from memory, is nine years old. I asked him what he was learning. He was able to go to a manila folder that was pasted to the side of the schoolroom and pull out a chart to tell me exactly what he was doing, where he was going and what his goals were for the remainder of the term. It was exciting to see the transformative power of education in that young boy's life and the incredible love, dedication and support of his remarkable teachers. Some fabulous work is happening in schools across Western Sydney. It is exciting to be part of a government that is delivering for families and students in Western Sydney.

CBD LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:03): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Is the CBD light rail project, the construction of which is severely impacting on my electorate, on time and on budget as the Minister and Premier keep asserting?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:04): I thank the member for his question. Earlier in question time today the Leader of the Opposition asked a question involving a contractor that builds trenches, which is somewhat apt for the Leader of the Opposition—he is a corpse. He stood up and said, "It has taken me to reveal this matter which has gone to court four weeks ago." The advice that my office has been given is that this matter first went to court in November 2016. So a claim dispute that has been ongoing since 2016 is now some sort of conspiracy theory. Guess what? He said, "I am revealing it to the world today because I am the Leader of the Opposition." Proceedings before the Federal Court are somewhat public. I hate to inform the Leader of the Opposition that he is a bit late, a bit slow. On any construction project there are often claims that are disputed. While the Labor Party has been out there busily calling press conferences and making out that this is something new, it is not.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. We are now well over two minutes into the Minister's answer. The question was: Is it on time and on budget?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The member for Heffron would know that there are elements to the light rail project, particularly in his part of the world, where they are already testing the trains. That is exciting. If the member for Heffron were alert to this—and he is a fairly observant sort of a bloke—he would know that 71 per cent of the track slab has now been laid on the light rail project.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If the member for Heffron bothered to walk through zones 5 and 6 he would soon realise that they are now a pedestrian mall in the heart of George Street. Those opposite are very loud and noisy today.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is everyone except for the Leader of the Opposition, who seems to be very quiet. I would really like to know why he is being so quiet lately.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Leader of the Opposition does not know what he is doing. The member for Maroubra and the member for Strathfield are very chirpy. There is something going on with the dream team.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question was: Is it on time and on budget? The Minister is refusing to answer that question. That makes me think it is "no" and "no", but we would appreciate an answer from him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has made that assumption. All members will be referred to by their electorates or their correct titles.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Just to help the Opposition out with their question, they should read the newspapers because it has been well documented in terms of Acciona and it has been very well documented in terms of what we have been saying about Acciona. The bottom line is that they have released a program timing that we find unacceptable and we are going to continue to keep pressure on them to deliver it.

Ms Trish Doyle: You should be Sacky McSackface.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The trains do not fit down the tunnel—\$2.3 billion to help her out and that is what she says? Give me a break. The member is an embarrassment. [*Time expired.*]

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

COST OF LIVING

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) (15:10): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. How is the Government working to reduce the cost of living for the people of Western Sydney?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (15:10): I thank the member for East Hills for his question and I acknowledge the great work that he does in his community. He is such a strong advocate and a role model for so many. Everyone in this House knows that the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is working hard to drive down the cost of living for families and motorists across New South Wales. This Government has done more to address the cost of living than those opposite did in 16 years in government. I know those opposite want to get rid of it, but we have introduced FuelCheck. Queensland is now following suit and the Northern Territory is following suit. Eventually it will roll out across Australia, but those opposite want to continue to live in the last century. We have lowered the cost of green slips—the member for Swansea should not worry; it is coming. We are delivering green slip refunds. We are reducing the cost of sport through Active Kids and we are working to provide motorists with free registration through our Toll Relief program.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: These initiatives are saving the people of New South Wales millions of dollars—

Mr Troy Grant: Throw out the member for Swansea.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: No. Do not throw out the member for Swansea. I have to make reference to her. As I said, these initiatives are saving the people of New South Wales millions of dollars, with families eligible for all these initiatives able to claim more than \$1,000 worth of savings. We are still getting very good feedback on all these initiatives: FuelCheck, 7,200 responses and a satisfaction rating of 95 per cent; Active Kids, 26,000 responses and a customer satisfaction rating of 99.8 per cent; and green slip refunds, 167,000 responses and a customer satisfaction rating of 98.9 per cent. I have some great news for Western Sydney members today.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Please do not throw her out. Their constituents are loving these Government cost-of-living initiatives. Let us look at the electorate of the member for East Hills. Those opposite are not interested, but I know the member for East Hills is. In his electorate: 3,365 Active Kids vouchers have been issued, an average greens lip reduction of \$157, and almost 14,000 drivers have claimed more than \$815,000 in green slip refunds. For the benefit of those opposite, let us have a look at the electorate of Auburn. The Leader of the Opposition will be aware of the great initiatives that we have introduced: 5,432 Active Kids vouchers have been issued, an average green slip reduction of \$157, and 14,200 drivers have claimed more than \$834,000 in green slip refunds. In relation to the green slip refunds, I must pay credit where credit is due. I thank those opposite for getting the word out. Across New South Wales those opposite are helping us to get the message out to claim green slip refunds. I particularly thank the member for Swansea.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair, rather than across the Chamber.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I particularly thank the member for Swansea. She has done some really good work. On 12 May the member had a story in the *Daily Telegraph*. In the article she said:

This is the Government's signature cost-of-living initiative and yet he [me] is making it harder not easier for people to claim.

The member for Swansea posted the article from the *Daily Telegraph* on her Facebook page and said:

Why has the Government made it so hard to claim our CTP refunds?

Ms Yasmin Catley: Why have you?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the member listened, she might hear the answer.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: We decided to have a look at her Facebook page.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swansea is in the Chamber only because the Minister asked that she be allowed to stay.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: You can throw her out now, if you want.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I will ask the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee to consider not removing people from the House but keeping them in the House for three hours. I am sure that members interject because they want to go home early. They are not getting that opportunity today. The member for Swansea will listen to the Minister in silence. She is not being sent out.

[Extension of time]

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: When the member for Swansea tried to bag out how hard it was to claim the refunds, one of her followers on her Facebook page said:

Yasmin, [claiming my green slip refund] was super easy actually. A very straightforward process.

Another one said—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I am sure the member for Swansea wants to hear this answer. If she does not, the rest of us do. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Another follower said:

Yasmin, [The NSW Government] sent me an email with a link and I just followed it to my account, hit the claim button and it was all done for me!

Another follower said:

Yasmin. I found it easy. Got an email. Clicked the link. Had the money in a couple of days.

These are people who follow her page.

Mr Gareth Ward: That was her mum.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Yes, that was her mum.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister did not ask that the member for Bankstown stay in the Chamber. She has been called to order on three occasions. I direct the member for Bankstown to remove herself from the Chamber for one hour.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Bankstown left the Chamber at 15:17.]

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Another Facebook fan of the member for Swansea said:

Yasmin, I got mine the next day after doing it online. Yasmin, what's the fuss?

Mr Gareth Ward: That was Luke Foley.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Yes. Another follower said:

Yasmin, I walked into Service NSW and did it on their system during the office hours and had the refund in 2 days.

Another stated:

Hey Yasmin, I got mine. It didn't take much time [at all].

Another stated:

Hey Yasmin, Got mine, no worries. [Thank you very much].

That is a small selection, but I could go on. Even the Gosford branch of the Labor Party took the opportunity to send a reminder to everyone to claim their green slip refund. We give money back to motorists; they take it away. *[Time expired.]*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Swansea that she is on three calls to order.

BRUNSWICK HEADS FLORA CONSERVATION

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:18): I direct my question to the Minister for the Environment. What is being done to protect the endangered ecological community of cypress pines estimated to be up to 400 years old and located on Crown land in the Terrace Reserve Holiday Park at Brunswick Heads? Will the Minister ensure that this precious stand of trees is protected into the future?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (15:19): I thank the member for Ballina for her very sensible question

and for raising her concerns. I have heard similar concerns from the good Parliamentary Secretary for the North Coast, the Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC, who is a strong advocate for his community. The coastal cypress pines are located at the Terrace Reserve Holiday Park. As the member for Ballina said, they are remnants of an endangered ecological community on the North Coast. As that name suggests, they are environmentally precious and deserving of protection not only today but also for generations to come.

The NSW Crown Holiday Parks Trust has control of the holiday park where the cypress pines are located. It is important to remember that endangered ecological communities such as these cypress pines are already protected, as the member for Ballina would know, under the Biodiversity Conservation Act. Notwithstanding that—and this is where the concerns of the member for Ballina and the Parliamentary Secretary for the North Coast come from—the local community is concerned about plans of holiday park managers to further develop that park as a tourist location. They are concerned that it could adversely affect the coastal cypress pines.

Right now, the camp site is available for rent within a stand of those pines. The member for Ballina knows better than I do that that has been the case for many years. To allay community concerns, I am happy to say that, first, the Crown Holiday Parks Trust, which controls the land, is working with Byron Shire Council to protect and regenerate those pines within the holiday park. That is good news. The trust has commissioned some reports to ensure that the health of those pines is taken care of, and is working with the council to manage their ecological and heritage values, given that they are at least 200 years old, as the member pointed out.

The preservation of those pines is in the current plan of management for the holiday park. Late last year an agency under my oversight, the Office of Environment and Heritage [OEH], responded to a complaint from the public about potential damage to these coastal cypress pines, and visited the park. No damage was found. I remind the member that the OEH has a close eye on this community of pines and reminded the park managers that it is serious offence to knowingly cause damage to the pines. It is also worth remembering that any potential future works at the holiday park would need to comply with strict environmental protections. That is where we are at at the moment.

I know it is unclear whether the holiday park managers will choose to lodge a development application through the council. I do not know whether that is the case. An alternative, as the member for Ballina may know, is for the manager to make an application to the Office of Environment and Heritage. That application has not been made, as I understand it. I make the strong point in this House that we all value significant locations across New South Wales. It is great that this Government not only values them but also acts to protect such important ecological communities.

This Government is considering whether it needs to do more to protect these cypress pines. It may be that we can look to our Save Our Species funding to address some of the concerns that the member for Ballina raised in this House and the Parliamentary Secretary raised in the other House. The Government is aware of the issue. I thank the member for Ballina for asking this question. We will continue to protect that ecologically endangered community of wonderful cypress pines.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I welcome to the public gallery His Excellency Mr Kristiarto Legowo, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia; Mr Hartanto Subolo, Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia in Sydney; and Mr Billy Wibisono, First Secretary, Political Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia.

Question Time

WESTERN SYDNEY HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:24): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. What is the New South Wales Government doing to improve health services in Western Sydney and across New South Wales?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:24): I thank the member for Parramatta for his question. He has a strong commitment to health and medical research. On Saturday 26 May he and I will be celebrating 21 years of medical research at the Westmead Medical Research Institute, which is situated on 75 very fine hectares, with the executive director, Professor Anthony Cunningham. The 16 years of the former Labor Government were a sorry situation for New South Wales Health.

Mr Guy Zangari: Yes, but we have had eight years of you lot.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I can hear the Labor Opposition saying "Yes, that is right." The State had 16 miserable years of Labor. In approximately half of those years the Health budget was cut each year. In 2011

more than half of the hospitals in New South Wales were in excess of 50 years old. It has been a big task to rebuild those hospitals, but this Government has been doing that. The Labor policy that was handed down by the Leader of the Opposition was more like a policy on how Labor could do less in hospitals. It is quite fascinating. The Labor Government was going to provide \$100 million for the Campbelltown Hospital paediatric surgical centre. This Government provided \$730 million to the Campbelltown Hospital.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This question did not have "and related matters" at the end of it. It was specifically about Western Sydney Health.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time. The Minister has the call.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: No matter where we look, there is new NSW Health infrastructure being built across Sydney. But if there was a Labor Government in New South Wales, next to nothing would be built. "Lukey's doing less" policy was going to provide \$351 million to the Nepean Hospital, which serves the magnificent Blue Mountains area. This Government is providing \$1 billion over the next six years to build the Nepean Hospital. If the Labor Government had the money to do it—and, of course, it did not—\$430 million was to be provided to the Westmead Hospital. The Coalition Government is providing \$900 million for phase one of the Westmead Hospital. Whether it is in the western suburbs or across the State, the Government is building hospitals. The member for Wagga Wagga is well aware of the massive new hospital in his electorate.

The Government has built a fantastic new hospital in Tamworth with amazing facilities. Dubbo Hospital also has amazing facilities. New hospitals are being built everywhere across the regions, but particularly in Parkes, Forbes and Tamworth. In addition to that, the Government is also improving health services more generally inside hospitals. I thank the staff of the hospitals and paramedics across the State, who have done an amazing job of transferring patients. Under the Labor Government, year after year there would be photographs of ambulances lined up outside emergency departments. Labor could not cope.

Ms Kate Washington: That is what there still is. There were six of them outside last Sunday night.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: You are very noisy, potty-mouth.

Mr Guy Zangari: Mr Deputy Speaker, the Minister should withdraw the comment.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I withdraw that comment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has withdrawn the comment. The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Transfer of care has improved out of sight because there has been an incredible effort, not only by the Government but also by the people at the front line—paramedics and nursing staff. In the Auburn Hospital, under Labor in October to December 2010, 54.8 per cent of patients were transferred within four hours. In October to December 2017 it was 80 per cent. [*Extension of time*]

Perhaps I could summarise it this way: Under Labor, overall about 65 per cent of patients were handed over from the paramedics to a hospital within the prescribed time. Overall in 2016-17 it was not 65 per cent, not 75 per cent, not 85 per cent—it was 92 per cent. That is the best result NSW Health has ever seen. I thank the medical staff, the clinical staff, the paramedics and the Deputy Secretary, System Purchasing and Performance, Susan Pearce, for their work. In addition to that, the Government has done a lot of work to employ new nurses, doctors and paramedics. Labor could not and did not do that for 16 years. Since 2011 when this Government came to power, were an extra 1,000 nurses employed?

Government Members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What about an extra 2,000 nurses?

Government Members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What about an extra 3,000 nurses?

Government Members: No.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will come to order.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What about an extra 4,000 nurses?

Government Members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What about an extra 5,000 nurses?

Government Members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What about an extra 6,000 nurses?

Government Members: No.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What about an extra 6,700 nurses?

Government Members: Yes.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Yes. The New South Wales Liberal-National Coalition is delivering for New South Wales.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I thank the member for Cessnock and remind him that I got an improved tearoom for the staff.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I assure members that if the Minister was not finished before, he is now, so there is not point of order. The behaviour of members was disgusting. I remind the member for Shellharbour that she is on three calls to order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. The behaviour of members during the last answer was unacceptable. It was an embarrassing display by Government members. The time for questions has expired.

Announcements

CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INQUEST

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I inform the House that, on 16 April 2018, the Speaker received a letter from the Counsel Assisting the Coroner of Western Australia requesting access by officers of the Coroner's Court of Western Australia to the in-camera evidence taken before the Legislative Assembly Select Committee upon Prostitution, which was in operation between 1983 and 1986. Access to the in-camera evidence has been requested to assist the Coroner's inquest into the death of Ms Shirley June Finn.

Motions

CORONER'S COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INQUEST

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:34): By leave: I move:

That this House grants leave to officers of the Coroner's Court of Western Australia to inspect the in-camera evidence taken before the Select Committee upon Prostitution to assist the Coroner of Western Australia's inquest into the death of Ms Shirley June Finn, on condition that:

- (1) The evidence is inspected in Parliament House.
- (2) Any information obtained be used by the Coroner's Court of Western Australia to pursue appropriate further inquiry without revealing to any person other than the Coroner and officers of the Coroner's Court of Western Australia the contents of the in-camera evidence, and its contents not be made public.
- (3) Before adducing into evidence of the inquest any evidence taken before the Select Committee upon Prostitution, the Coroner seek leave of the Legislative Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Pet Shops

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

Short-term Holiday Letting

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

Companion Animals on Public Transport

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

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

Wallacia Golf Club Cemetery Development

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

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

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

- (1) General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills) No. 1 [Crimes and Anti-Discrimination Legislation Amendment (Racial and Other Vilification) Bill] and General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 2657 to 2675 have lapsed.
- (2) General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 2678 to 2694 will lapse tomorrow.

NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

Reordering

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:36): I move:

That General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) given by me this day [National Palliative Care Week] have precedence on Thursday 24 May 2018.

National Palliative Care Week is an annual event that highlights and raises awareness about palliative care. The theme this year is: "What matters most?" My motion should be given precedence because it recognises that what matters most to the New South Wales Government is delivering services to the people of New South Wales. In this instance it is access to palliative care services in every single corner of this State. The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of palliative care and is committed to ensuring that people with a life-limiting illness can access the care they need, including access to specialist palliative care services whether they live in metropolitan Sydney or in rural and regional New South Wales. This is why investment in palliative care services is at record levels, with the New South Wales Government allocating over \$200 million each year to deliver palliative care services. In addition, the New South Wales Government announced a further \$100 million over four years for palliative care from 2017-18 to 2020-21. This funding is focused on increasing the palliative care workforce capacity and improving access to services in rural and regional New South Wales.

This Government wants people and their families and carers to be confident that they will be well cared for during this vulnerable time. Palliative care aims to improve the quality of life of patients with an active, progressive disease that has little or no prospect of a cure. Palliative care identifies and treats symptoms that may be physical, emotional, spiritual or social. We recognise that when faced with this most difficult time the needs of individual patients differ greatly. The New South Wales Government's funding for palliative care has expanded choices for people at the end of life by delivering community-based palliative care services that support people to remain at home, if they wish.

The New South Wales palliative care home support services have provided more than 10,000 packages of support across New South Wales since December 2013. In addition, a statewide network of paediatric palliative care services has been established. The statewide palliative care after hours helpline has been established for palliative care patients, their carers, families and health professionals. The helpline has a particular focus on assisting rural and regional areas where after-hours care may be limited. The New South Wales Government has prioritised and invested in palliative care like none before it. National Palliative Care Week serves as a timely reminder of the New South Wales Government's unwavering commitment to honour the dignity of people to the very end of their lives.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Maroubra, I point out to members that as father of the House and having been a member of the House for almost 28 years, this is the first time I have seen a motion moved with such language—language that has been allowed by the Clerk. Words such as "crazed", "bizarre", "wasteful", "treachery" and "disloyalty" are not normally allowed in motions. I remind a number of Opposition members that they are on two or three calls to order. I warn them that if they disregard Standing Order 52 while the member for Maroubra is speaking, I will place all Opposition members who are on two calls to order on three calls to order; and anyone who is on three calls to order will be asked to leave the House under Standing Order 249. I call the member for Maroubra and ask him to temper his language in relation to this motion.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:40): Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. I have some very nice things to say about the Deputy Premier. There are times in here when I wish that members on both sides of the House were represented by trade unions, but today is not one of them. Indeed, when the Deputy Premier gets up to speak I am glad there is no representation of members in this House by trade unions. If there was, there would be a demarcation dispute as members of our union would be saying to members of the Deputy Premier's union, "Get your member under control". It is not his job to make a fool of himself; it is our job.

People can say what they want about the Deputy Premier but he is brave and he is all over the detail. He said earlier, "We need to have a discussion about nuclear power and we need to have it now". Luke Foley challenged him to a debate—for him to talk about nuclear power anywhere in the State—and he is still ducking the invitation. But he wanted to beef up the issue. Recently he went to the Advanced Reactor Summit in Atlanta, Georgia. He came back and he said he wanted to debunk some of the myths tied to nuclear power. He did that in an interview with the *Canberra Times* on 21 April this year when he said, "This isn't Homer Simpson driving the power plant". Good on you, John. That has just nailed it, mate. We are waiting for the nuclear power debate to move on from that pearl of wisdom. Having conquered nuclear power, he moved into the future—coal and the Liddell coal-fired power station. Members are aware of the clapped out old station that he and his Government sold to AGL for nothing. He said he absolutely supported a Government-led acquisition of the Liddell power station.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens is on her final warning.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: We are waiting for him to use those powers where he said, "Maybe the Government should consider using its powers to do so." We await the compulsory acquisition of the Liddell power station bill. We will not hold our breath. People can say what they want about the Deputy Premier, he is a heavy hitter. He is viewed as a very heavy hitter and a person of quite some regard on the Coalition side of politics. Only a person of quite some standing could do what he did and say that Malcolm Turnbull is showing no leadership, should quit before Christmas and that he had lost all hope in the Prime Minister. He steadfastly stuck to that view like a man of bravery for a full 24 hours—until he got a phone call from Sally Cray, the principal private secretary to the Prime Minister, who, as quoted in the *Daily Telegraph*, said:

You guys are on the second rung ... Don't mess with the big boys—

"I don't give a fig"—and she did not say "fig"—

if I have to quit my job in order to sit down in front of (*The Daily Telegraph* editor) **Chris Dore** and tell him all about your boss and what he has been up to.

So the brave member for Monaro scurried off and now Malcolm Turnbull is on his Christmas list. People can say what they want about him. He is a man of many things. He is a man of conviction—and if members do not believe me, they should just ask the member for Dubbo.

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

The House divided.

Ayes48

Noes30

Majority.....18

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr A.W.
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L.J.
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

AYES

Williams, Mr R

Williams, Mrs L

Wilson, Ms F

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dib, Mr J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S
 McDermott, Dr H
 Minns, Mr C
 Smith, Ms T.F.
 Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
 Car, Ms P
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Donato, Mr P
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 McKay, Ms J
 Parker, Mr J
 Tesch, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Daley, Mr M
 Doyle, Ms T
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D (teller)
 Scully, Mr P
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G
 Constance, Mr A
 George, Mr T
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Perrottet, Mr D

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

Motion agreed to.

Motions Accorded Priority

NORTHCONNEX

Consideration

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:49): My motion should be accorded priority because NorthConnex will transform road travel to Sydney for my Central Coast community.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! If members wish to have conversations they should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: In partnership with the Commonwealth, this Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering NorthConnex. Labor had 16 years in government to take action on NorthConnex and did nothing. Time and again Labor promised to link the F3 to the M2, but on the Central Coast we saw nothing delivered. However, this Government promised to deliver this transformative road link and we are delivering. Hundreds of millions of dollars is committed from the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments for this project, and work is well underway, with expected completion on track for late 2019.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind members of Standing Order 52.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: NorthConnex involves twin nine-kilometre tunnels, providing a vital link between the M1 Pacific Motorway—also known as the F3—at Wahroonga, to the Hills M2 Motorway at West Pennant Hills. This includes significant interchanges at both the north and south ends of the road to provide connections to the existing network. Once completed in late 2019, it will link Sydney's north to the Sydney Orbital Network and will form part of the National Highway route. This is a fantastic outcome for Central Coast commuters and road users. Motorists will be able to travel from Newcastle to Melbourne without encountering a single set of traffic lights. Also, using NorthConnex instead of Pennant Hills Road will bypass 21 sets of traffic lights, and will provide up to a 15-minute saving in travel times for motorists.

Once completed, NorthConnex will be able to be used also as an alternative route to the Sydney central business district, which will avoid 40 sets of traffic lights on the Pacific Highway. We are improving connectivity on roads in Sydney and across New South Wales because less time spent in the car means more time spent with family and friends. Indeed, it is estimated that daily users will save five days' worth of travel each year. I note the member for Gosford does not care about that, but as someone who did the drive for 13 years, that five days' worth of travel a year will mean a lot to me, a lot to my family and a lot to the families of the people who drive from the

Central Coast. As I have said, NorthConnex will transform road travel to Sydney and will have a massive positive impact on my Central Coast community when it is completed in late 2019.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I call the member for Gosford to order for the second time.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Make no mistake: under 16 years of Labor Government, the F3 to M2 link was promised countless times, but was never delivered. The Liberal-Nationals Government is building NorthConnex, and we are committed to delivering infrastructure for communities right across New South Wales.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I call the member for Gosford to order for the third time.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: That is why my motion should be accorded priority.

ROADS AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Consideration

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:52): My motion should have priority because the Premier has had eight long years to open a major transport or road project, and she has failed to do so. It has been eight long years and we have seen problem after problem with projects. It has been eight long years and more than a billion dollars has been wasted on infrastructure projects because of her mismanagement. Let us start with WestConnex. WestConnex started out at \$10 billion, then \$11 billion and then \$12 billion, and guess what it is now? It is \$17 billion, although we believe it is more than that because we know there is a billion-dollar claim against it. We know that road improvements are around \$1 billion. The Labor Opposition knows that the Government is not telling the truth.

Let us talk about the Sydney Gateway. That is \$1.8 billion. Those opposite do not even know how to get to the airport; they do not even know how to build the Sydney Gateway. Then there is the Rozelle interchange—a project that was approved two weeks ago—and we do not even have a design for it. Then there is the CBD and South East Light Rail project, and don't Government members love talking about that. It is now \$600 million over budget. It has a \$1 billion claim against it and it is running a year late. The Premier said, "Give me 18 more months to finish this". Let me tell members that in 18 months the CBD and South East Light Rail project will not be open. It is a disaster. When we walk down George Street, we can see the incompetence and mismanagement of this Government laid bare.

I refer also to the hundreds of business owners that this Government has abandoned because of the CBD and South East Light Rail project. The shadow Minister for Small Business is nodding. She understands the pain that those small businesses feel. Another project is the northern beaches tunnel and the Premier is prioritising a tollway over the Sydney Metro West. The Premier wants a further 18 months to build another tollway. I am sorry the member for the Blue Mountains is not in the Chamber because I know how strongly she feels about the intercity fleet and the \$2.3 billion spend on trains that do not fit on the tracks or through the tunnels.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind Opposition members that a number of them are already on three calls to order. If they continue to interject I will have them removed from the Chamber.

Ms JODI McKAY: Labor understands that commuters will have to contend with the closure of the Blue Mountains line because the Government did not do its homework. This Government has been in office for eight long years, yet it has failed to complete a single major infrastructure or road project.

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

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes29
Majority..... 17

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr A.W.
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L.J.
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M

AYES

Lee, Dr G
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

Maguire, Mr D
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Petinos, Ms E
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Provest, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dib, Mr J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S
 McDermott, Dr H
 Minns, Mr C
 Tesch, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
 Car, Ms P
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 McKay, Ms J
 Piper, Mr G
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Daley, Mr M
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D (teller)
 Scully, Mr P
 Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

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

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

Motion agreed to.**NORTHCONNEX****Priority**

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:01): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that Labor promised to build the F3-M2 link over 16 years in government, but failed to build it.
- (2) Commends the Government for getting on with the job of building NorthConnex, linking the M1 Pacific Motorway with the Hills M2 Motorway, which will allow motorists to bypass 21 sets of traffic lights along Pennant Hills Road, saving drivers up to 15 minutes.
- (3) Notes that the project will be a huge benefit for motorists travelling from the Central Coast and across northern and Western Sydney.
- (4) Supports the Government's construction of NorthConnex.

Once again those opposite refuse to support NorthConnex. NorthConnex will have the transformative impact of linking the M1 at Wahroonga and the M2 at West Pennant Hills. For 13-odd years I travelled the M1-F3 by car, as a train was not an option for me. I know how hard that commute becomes on individuals and families. The removal of the traffic lights from that trip will make an enormous difference to the quality of life for the people who drive that route each day. In February 2015 the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments announced the execution of contracts for the NorthConnex project. Construction is well and truly underway on this \$3 billion, nine-kilometre twin tunnel motorway. The project, which is on time to be delivered in late 2019, will provide relief to motorists travelling from the Central Coast to Sydney every single day.

My wife and I were among the many thousands who had to do that commute. It is important to emphasise that this Liberal-Nationals Government is achieving what Labor promised countless times but never delivered. This side of the House does not just talk about important projects, it delivers important projects. NorthConnex is

an example of this Liberal-Nationals Government working to improve the lives of our communities, especially those on the Central Coast. For my community, commuters driving to work in Sydney will be able to bypass 21 sets of traffic lights on Pennant Hills Road. NorthConnex will enable motorists to travel from Newcastle to Melbourne without hitting a single set of traffic lights.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will cease interjecting. She will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: This new road will have a speed limit of 80 kilometres per hour, which is much faster than the 60 to 70 kilometres per hour speed limit for Pennant Hills Road. As well as improving travel times by an estimated 15 minutes, this massive investment in road infrastructure will create 8,700 jobs for New South Wales over the project's lifetime. In fact, it is expected that throughout 2018 there will be between 1,800 and 2,000 workers on site every single day.

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

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The member for Gosford is not interested in the 8,700 jobs being provided by this project because she continues to interject. It is also expected that 15,000 people will be inducted onto the site during the course of the project. To date, more than 9,300 people have been inducted onto the site. These jobs are a huge boost for the State's economy and particularly on the Central Coast. On the Central Coast the local unemployment rate is higher than the State average. That is why it is so important that 400 locals have been employed on the NorthConnex project. That is 400 Central Coast locals on this project which those opposite do not support. As well, 55 locally based Central Coast businesses have been engaged to work on the project since it began in June 2015. In addition, in 2015, when the project first began, a local business register was established to advertise the thousands of jobs that have been and are continuing to be created during the construction phase.

Not only will the road assist Central Coast locals who travel to and from Sydney for work but NorthConnex will better enable people in Sydney to travel to the Central Coast. Tourism is one of the key economic drivers of jobs and investment in the Central Coast region and that is why this project is such great news for our region. Day visits or weekend trips undertaken by Sydneysiders will be made so much easier as a result of the opening of NorthConnex. NorthConnex improves connectivity on the road networks around Sydney and will enable Sydneysiders to more easily visit the Central Coast region—the peninsula, the south region, the strip beaches in my electorate of Terrigal, The Entrance or Wyong. NorthConnex is a boon for the entire Central Coast region.

Work is powering along with a massive seven million working hours completed on the NorthConnex site; more than 194,000 cubic metres of shotcrete and concrete poured, more than 100,000 of a total 300,000 rock bolts installed to support the tunnel; and more than 19 kilometres of a total of 21 kilometres of tunnels excavated. A total of 20 road headers and two surface miners are excavating across the NorthConnex site. Almost 1.9 million cubic metres of spoil has been evacuated from across the site, with 550 cubic metres of soil delivered to the Hornsby Quarry. Finally, I note that the member for Wyong supports this project, as he stated in the *Central Coast Express Advocate*. All the members opposite should get on board and support NorthConnex.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:06): On this side of the House we are very supportive of NorthConnex, and we always have been. The problem is that the Government often tries to rewrite history. I seek to move an amendment that will correct their version of history. I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

"this House:

- (1) Notes that Labor committed funds in the 2013 Federal budget.
- (2) Condemns former Prime Minister Tony Abbott for changing the name from the F3-M2 Link to NorthConnex and claiming it as his own.
- (3) Commends the Government for getting on with the job of building NorthConnex, linking the M1 Pacific Motorway with the Hills M2 Motorway, which will allow motorists to bypass 21 sets of traffic lights along Pennant Hills Road, saving drivers up to 15 minutes.
- (4) Notes that the project will be a huge benefit for motorists travelling from the Central Coast and across northern and Western Sydney."

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind all members, including the member for Epping, that Standing Order 52 states that a member will be heard in silence. I will place all members on three calls to order if members continue to interject. I remind Opposition members that a number of them are on three calls to order.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Could the clock be stopped?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. If members continue to interject I will have them removed by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms under Standing Order 249. I have had enough.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I refer to a press release from Anthony Albanese which states:

Tony Abbott's magical infrastructure re-announcement tour hit the New South Wales Central Coast today where he again pretended he was responsible for a project initiated by the former Federal Labor Government and funded in the 2013 budget. Mr Abbott's claim today that the Federal Coalition had somehow initiated the NorthConnex project which connects the F3 and M2 does not meet the most basic fact check. While the New South Wales Government has renamed the F3 M2 project NorthConnex, this is not a new project.

Again the Government is trying to mislead the people. If we go back through the history of this project to understand why it did not occur immediately, we see there has been a lot of Federal intervention—and, I might say, with some good reason. In January 2001 the Australian Government allocated one million dollars for a feasibility study for a link between the orbital and the F3 Freeway and at the same time announced commencement of the Western Sydney orbital, now known as the M7. In March 2002 a study into the proposed F3-M2 link commenced and included extensive public consultation. In April 2004—this is during the 16 years of the Labor Government "when nothing happened"—Sinclair Knight Merz [SKM] completed the study and recommended a preferred option. It was only in 2004 that there was a preferred option, a tunnel connecting the F3 at Wahroonga with the M2 at the exiting Pennant Hills Road M2 interchange, with an alignment generally following Pennant Hills Road. In May 2004 the preferred option was endorsed by the Australian Government and the New South Wales Government concurred.

In 2004 and 2005 the private sector made submissions that included estimates of higher traffic volumes and toll revenues on a more easterly route. The private sector wanted to vary the path. That is a fact; it is in a document from PricewaterhouseCoopers. In January 2006 the then Federal Minister for Local Government, Jim Lloyd, a Liberal member, commissioned Masson Wilson Twiney [MWT] to undertake an independent review of the traffic forecast used by SKM and the private sector. MWT completed an interim report in March 2006 and its analysis supported the preferred route. In 2007 the Australian Government engaged the Hon. Marla Perlman, OA, to review the assumptions and the data in the SKM report—this is the Federal Government, not the New South Wales Labor Government—to review the assumptions and data in the reports and consider whether any significant changes to projections would alter the conclusions reached in the 2004 report. The Perlman report concluded that the assumptions and data in the SKM report were valid at the time and the study and changes since had reinforced the selection of preferred group.

In 2007 there was a funding commitment of \$150 million to undertake feasibility and planning studies under the National Building Program—again the Federal Government. In 2007 there was a commitment by the then Coalition Federal Government of \$1.5 billion funding over seven years. In 2011 the Australian Government announced a deferral of \$150 million. When we go back through the history we see that the New South Wales Government had very little to do with delays. It was the Federal Liberals who were holding up the project. It was members of the Coalition that held up the project, which we wholeheartedly support and always have done. The members opposite should read the facts.

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

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It was the Federal Liberal Government that held this project up and that is the reason it did not happen. It was not until 2013 when the Federal Labor Government committed funds—the New South Wales Labor Government was not in office—that the project started. Once again the Government has been caught out trying to move motions that misrepresent what happened. If they want to talk about 16 years of nothing, they should look at the Federal Liberal governments.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Once again I remind the members representing the electorates of Gosford, Kogarah, Keira, Port Stephens, Cessnock, Newcastle, Maitland and Shellharbour that they are on three calls to order. If members continue to interject I will direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove them from the Chamber.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:12): Today is the first time that the Assistant Speaker has had to call me to order. I apologise wholeheartedly that the Assistant Speaker had to do so. The member for Wyong gave an excellent diatribe on the reasons why Labor should never ever be in power in this State. They deliver infrastructure by the delivery of reports. This Government does infrastructure. Those opposite get reports about the delivery of infrastructure and do nothing. In 2003, as the member admits, we started the exploratory process for this project and we had to deliver it in 2013—10 years later. When they were in government, for eight years, from 2003 to 2011, they did nothing except get reports. They did exactly the same with the Sydney Metro Northwest—"we announce it, we get a report, we do nothing". For them, a report took the place of delivering infrastructure.

This Government is in the business of making the lives of families better. We deliver the infrastructure that will improve the lives of families in Sydney. We recognise it is important that families are connected. We are actively relieving congestion in this State to assist families when they go to work each day and arrive home each night. Labor left us with a city that was congested and ignored the future generations of Australian families. This Government is committed to enhancing the quality of life of future generations of this State. Labor members could not possibly drive along Pennant Hills Road and say that this Government is not acting to improve the lives of people in this State. Any government that did not attempt to alleviate congestion on Pennant Hills Road would be irresponsible—but that was the Labor Government, of which the member for Wyong was a part. I commend the motion and this Government for its delivery of outstanding infrastructure for the generations of the future.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:15): Eight long years—

Mr Gareth Ward: How about 16?

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

Mr RON HOENIG: —and the Government has not cut the ribbon on a single infrastructure project. All of them are a shambles, all of them bar this one.

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

Mr RON HOENIG: All of them bar this one are over budget and a shambles. The member for Epping thinks is he a genius on history. The genesis of this program goes back to 1977. This project, which was supposed to achieve its objective as part of the Long Term Transport Master Plan and the National Land Freight Strategy, stopped at Wahroonga because in 1989 Nick Greiner and the Greiner Government stopped it. It was resurrected in 2001 by the Howard Government. The member for Wyong was right when he said that it was 2013 when the Hon. Anthony Albanese, the then Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, funded the project. It is this Government that has given it the political brand of WestConnex and NorthConnex.

Why is the project on time and on budget? It is because the Berejiklian, Baird and O'Farrell governments had nothing to do with it. This Government handed it over to Transurban and it has given them a free go. Transurban designed it and it is constructing it. Meanwhile, this Government punishes people, particularly those on the Central Coast, with outrageous tolls. Those who live in areas with 20 per cent youth unemployment and travel to Sydney by road will have to pay a toll on the M2, a toll on the NorthConnex, a toll on the Lane Cove Tunnel and a toll to get over the Sydney Harbour Bridge. We hope they do not have to go south of Sydney because they will have to pay another toll on the M5.

Government members must understand—and if they ask their contractor Transurban will tell them—motorists are becoming toll fatigued. As soon as the toll was introduced on the M4 the number of motorists using the road reduced by 25 per cent, and that number has not improved. The people of New South Wales have had enough of the "higher tollers" that this Government is imposing on them, and they have had enough of this Government. It has created this congestion with overdevelopment. Come March next year, you will be out on your tushes.

Mr GARETH WARD: I seek leave to speak to the motion.

Leave not granted.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:19): In reply: I thank the member for Wyong, the eloquent member for Epping, and the member for Heffron for their contributions. As members know, our State is growing incredibly quickly. Between now and 2036 our State's population is expected to grow by more than 100,000 people every year. It is predicted that an extra 75,500 people will call the beautiful Central Coast home by 2036. That is why this Liberal-Nationals Government is investing in infrastructure across New South Wales, and NorthConnex is a part of that. I am proud to be a member of a government that is delivering NorthConnex. I appreciate the member for Wyong's perspective on history, although he is slightly deluded. The members opposite talked about NorthConnex for years but nothing ever happened. I drove on Pennant Hills Road for 13 years while Labor was in government and they delivered nothing. That is fact. Thousands of commuters who drove that route know the truth.

The twin tunnels are being built to accommodate three lanes of traffic. It will initially be marked for two lanes in each direction with one breakdown lane, which means that the tunnel will allow for future expansion as the need arises. By taking an estimated 5,000 trucks per day off Pennant Hills Road, NorthConnex will enable local roads to be returned to local communities. NorthConnex will enable motorists to travel all the way to Melbourne from Newcastle in the north without encountering a single traffic light. Using NorthConnex instead of Pennant Hills Road will enable motorists to bypass 21 sets of traffic lights, which will provide a saving of up to

15 minutes travel time. NorthConnex will be used also as an alternative route to the Sydney central business district, which means motorists will avoid 14 sets of traffic lights on the Pacific Highway—and I know every one of them.

The project is another example of how this Liberal-Nationals Government is getting on with delivering world-class infrastructure, which will grow the New South Wales economy by creating thousands of jobs. We are improving connectivity on roads in Sydney and across New South Wales: less time spent in the car means more time spent with family and friends. It is estimated that daily users will save five days' worth of travel each year. My wife and I travelled that route for 13 years. I defy anybody to say that driving down the Pacific Highway in the early morning traffic is a pleasant experience. NorthConnex will enable all of those people, including my wife and I, to drive to and from work without incurring traffic lights and heavy traffic conditions. This Liberal-Nationals Government is working for communities across New South Wales and is making significant investments in transformative road projects such as the fantastic NorthConnex.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the words stand.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes30
Majority.....16

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr A.W.
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Smith, Ms T.F.
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McKay, Ms J
Parker, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Greenwich, Mr A
Hoenig, Mr R
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Perrottet, Mr D

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

Motion agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes46

Noes30

Majority.....16

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Cooke, Ms S
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
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Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr A.W.
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Smith, Ms T.F.
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McKay, Ms J
Parker, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Greenwich, Mr A
Hoenig, Mr R
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G
Dominello, Mr V
George, Mr T
Perrottet, Mr D

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

ELECTORAL FUNDING BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (16:33): Earlier I was talking about electoral funding rorting. *[Extension of time]*

Back in those days it was not technically illegal. The behaviour of the Labor Party at Randwick council was one of the reasons why Nathan Rees' reforms, prompted by the antics of Wollongong council, were so welcome. As I said, it was widespread. This bill serves to continue to clean-up politics at all levels by making sure that donations to political parties are both transparent and made public in a timely fashion. It will also make sure that campaign funding is appropriately expended under the law. Earlier I heard a number of those opposite scream that on this side of the House we had funded lavish campaigns.

The 2004 local government campaign, run by the Randwick branch of the Labor Party, amounted to more than \$117,000. That was an all-time record for New South Wales; they set the benchmark. But anyone who attempts to shower themselves in virtue in this space will get a rude awakening when it comes round to bite them on the backside. As I said earlier, there will never be a silver bullet in these types of areas. We must continually look at how these laws can be exploited or bypassed. We must be forever vigilant so that the electors in this State—whether for local or State governments—can rest assured that campaign money that is raised is expended according to both the law and ethical principles. We also must make sure that there are appropriate and transparent declarations of conflicts of interests because often in the past that has not been the case.

This bill is almost a complete rewrite of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. It is a great piece of work by the Minister and it deserves the support of this House. The people of New South Wales want to be confident going into the 2019 election that we do not see the scandals that have plagued this House and local governments across New South Wales time and again over many years. We live in a technological era and it is getting more and more complex, but in many ways it is making it so much simpler for declarations and online reporting of donations and/or expenditure. It is also making it so much simpler to track and authenticate those who have made donations and that any expenditure has been appropriately made. This Government has done more for electoral funding, and disclosure of interests and expenditure than any other government this House has seen. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:39): The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 repeals and replaces the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. The Opposition opposes the bill, and for good reason. The object of the bill is to make provision for the disclosure, capping and prohibition of certain political donations and electoral expenditure for State parliamentary and local government election campaigns, and for the public funding of State parliamentary election campaigns. We are told that the bill has been prepared in response to the final report on political donations by the Schott panel, dated December 2014. It has also been prepared in response to the report titled "Inquiry into the Final Report of the Expert Panel—Political Donations and the Government's Response", dated June 2016, and the report titled "Administration of the 2015 NSW Election and Related Matters", dated November 2016, both by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

The central finding of the panel was that the 1981 Act had been complex and difficult to administer. The panel's first recommendation was that the 1981 Act be comprehensively reviewed to make it simpler and easier to understand, and that there be clear policy objectives. The people in my electorate and the people of New South Wales expect a simple explanation of electoral funding rules and how they apply to them so that if they wish to participate in the democratic process they can do so without fear of slipping up and falling foul of the law. People should not be discouraged from participating in the democratic process. However, this bill falls short of achieving that objective.

The people in my electorate want electoral funding laws that protect the integrity of the political process. They well remember the results of Operation Spicer and the Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiry, which saw five Liberal Central Coast politicians either resign or stand aside from the Liberal Party and sit on the crossbenches. Subsequently all of those politicians were removed from this Parliament because they sought to step outside the electoral funding law as a group and they worked around the figure of Christopher Hartcher. Indeed, he is still feted in this place by those opposite. From time to time Christopher Hartcher still pops in to confer with those opposite, to have lunch and to wield influence over the Liberal Party on the Central Coast.

I hold a number of concerns about this bill, but I am particularly concerned about the inclusion of an associated entity in proposed sections 4, 12 and 30. Associated entities have been introduced into this bill, but they do not feature in the 1981 Act. They are defined as a "corporation or another entity that operates solely for the benefit of one or more registered parties or elected members." The Minister said that the Government had accepted the recommendations of the Schott panel in the drafting of that definition. That is not the case. The definition that was recommended was that an associated entity would be an entity controlled by a political party or that operates solely for the benefit of a political party. That is completely different. The community generally is right to suspect that those opposite are simply seeking a definition that captures the trade union movement. This is an attempt to hobble the trade union movement by the use of a definition to capture trade union activities under

the bill and link that to the third-party provisions in the bill to limit the amount of money trade unions can spend on elections and influence elections in this State.

People in my area are also concerned about the acting in concert provisions in sections 35 and 58 of the Act. How will people in my electorate who are concerned about the actions of this Government respond to this bill if it becomes an Act of Parliament and they want to agitate in the lead-up to the State election next year? Members of the Kangy Angy Residents Action Group have agitated strongly against the Government's decision to locate the inner city rail maintenance facility at Kangy Angy instead of another location on the Central Coast. Even though the community and the council want it at a different location on the Central Coast, it is the intention of this Government to locate it in the middle of a floodplain right next to Ourimbah Creek. If members of the Kangy Angy Residents Action Group encourage a vote against the Government at the next election will they be acting in concert? Would Michelle Nicholson, Tracey Stewart and Tony Caldersmith, who have led that campaign, be found to be acting in concert and fall foul of the law?

It is not easy to tell from the Act and it is not easy for members of the public to get the sort of advice that they should be able to get to exercise their democratic rights. How would the Central Coast community be able to operate if it had not already been able to stop the privatisation of Wyong Hospital? How would the Health Services Union, the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation (NSW), and community members who sought to cooperate with them be able to do anything under the provisions of this bill, if it became an Act of Parliament, to stop privatisation in the context of an election campaign without falling foul of the acting in concert provisions in this bill?

This bill, which will lead to an appalling diminution of democratic rights, is aimed squarely at the trade union movement and at people in the community who want to work and participate in the democratic process. In the drafting of this bill the conservatives on the Government benches have gone back into the history books and to opposition to collectivism. The early unions were declared illegal combinations and conspiracies. In the nineteenth century a major achievement of the early labour movement was receiving recognition for the fact that unions could act collectively without falling foul of the law and being declared an illegal combination or conspiracy. Those opposite have proven once again that deep down they are miserable conservatives. In the drafting of this bill they have gone back to that definition and to their hatred of trade unions. This bill was presented to the House only last week and the community and the Parliament have had little time to absorb it. It is a bad bill that should be rejected by this House.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (16:47): In reply: I thank those members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Kiama, Shellharbour, Wollondilly, Maitland, Balmain, Davidson, Ku-ring-gai, Lakemba, Gosford, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Charlestown, Coogee and The Entrance for their contributions to debate on the Electoral Funding Bill 2018. The bill is a rewrite of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. It provides a modernised legislative framework for the funding of elections in New South Wales. The bill implements the majority of the recommendations for reform, which have been made by an independent expert panel and the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. It delivers the strongest, most transparent political donations laws that this State has seen.

I will briefly address some of the points raised in the debate. Concerns have been ventilated about the \$500,000 expenditure cap for third-party campaigners. This was a specific recommendation of an independent panel of experts. As the expert panel pointed out, there is widespread support for third-party participation in elections, within limits. However, third-party campaigners should not be able to drown out the voices of parties and candidates who are the direct electoral contestants. The panel examined the amount of the current cap closely, and found that it is too high. Indeed, the current cap of more than \$1.2 million is the same as the cap for parties that only contest Legislative Council elections.

The panel recommended reducing the cap to \$500,000 to guard against third parties dominating election campaigns. The joint standing committee considered the panel's recommendation and supported reducing the amount of the cap. A spending cap of \$500,000 strikes the right balance. It allows a third-party campaigner to reasonably present its case and have a genuine voice in the debate. It will also serve to guard against third-party campaigners dominating election campaigns. Concerns have been raised in the course of the debate about the offence in clause 35 of acting in concert with others to incur electoral expenditure that exceeds the third-party campaigner's expenditure cap. Again, this implements a specific recommendation of the expert panel.

Clause 35 introduces a new offence to prevent third-party campaigners from circumventing the caps by procuring other individuals or entities to campaign on their behalf. Third-party campaigners should not be permitted to circumvent the expenditure caps by setting up "front" organisations. I emphasise that the offence does not seek to aggregate the expenditure caps for multiple third-party campaigners who are each campaigning on a particular issue. The offence does not prevent third parties with a common interest from campaigning on the

same issue. It applies where a third-party campaigner acts under an agreement to incur expenditure in excess of the third-party campaigner's spending cap. The expert panel considered the acting in concert offence to be important in maintaining a fair and balanced electoral contest and the integrity of expenditure caps generally.

A question has been raised about whether expenditure of members' communication allowance would be captured by the expenditure caps in the bill. The Members' Entitlements Handbook makes clear that the communications allowance cannot be used for electioneering or political campaigning. Using the communications allowance in the permitted ways will not constitute payments for electoral expenditure. Questions have been asked about contributions by Legislative Council candidates to their respective parties. Clause 26 (5) and (6) permit Legislative Council candidates to contribute up to \$50,000 to their party or group in an election year. This removes uncertainty under the current Act about the maximum amount Legislative Council candidates may contribute to their own campaign. Given that campaigning for the Legislative Council is generally conducted by a party or group and not by an individual candidate, it will also ensure that Legislative Council candidates are able to make self-funded contributions in the same way as are candidates for the Legislative Assembly. However, Legislative Council candidates will only be able to contribute up to \$50,000, plus the normal cap of \$6,100.

A concern has also been raised about the definition of associated organisations not including organisations controlled by a party. This is correct. However, I draw the attention of members to clause 9 (1) (d) of the bill which deems anything done by an organisation that is controlled by a party to have been done by the party. This means any political donations received by such an organisation would be deemed to have been received by the party, and any electoral expenditure of such an organisation would be deemed expenditure of the party. The Government is pleased with the support of members for the proposals in the bill. On behalf of the people of New South Wales it is with great pleasure that I commend the bill to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes44
Noes33
Majority.....11

AYES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K
Cooke, Ms S	Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A
Davies, Mrs T	Donato, Mr P	Elliott, Mr D
Evans, Mr A.W.	Evans, Mr L.J.	Gibbons, Ms M
Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T	Griffin, Mr J
Gulaptis, Mr C	Hazzard, Mr B	Humphries, Mr K
Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M	Lee, Dr G
Maguire, Mr D	Marshall, Mr A	Notley-Smith, Mr B
O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Mrs M
Petinos, Ms E	Provest, Mr G	Roberts, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J	Sidoti, Mr J	Speakman, Mr M
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	Greenwich, Mr A
Harris, Mr D	Harrison, Ms J	Hoenig, Mr R
Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S	Leong, Ms J
Lynch, Mr P	McDermott, Dr H	McKay, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D (teller)	Minns, Mr C	Park, Mr R
Parker, Mr J	Piper, Mr G	Scully, Mr P
Smith, Ms T.F.	Tesch, Ms L	Warren, Mr G

NOES

Washington, Ms K

Watson, Ms A (teller)

Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Henskens, Mr A
Perrottet, Mr D

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

Motion agreed to.**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Jamie Parker, Mr Greg Piper, and Mr Anthony Roberts.****Consideration in Detail**

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 3 be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:02): I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet C2018-036J.

No. 1 **Definition of "senior office holder"**

Pages 5 and 6, clause 4, definition of "senior office holder", line 38 on page 5 to line 9 on page 6. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

control of the party or the operations of the party.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendment No. 1 on sheet C2018-036J be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that clause 4, as amended, be agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 5 to 8 be agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8 agreed to.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:03): I seek leave to move Government amendments Nos 2 to 4 in globo:

Leave not granted.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:04): I move Government amendment No. 2 on sheet C2018-036J:

No. 2 **Electoral expenditure incurred by party and invoiced to Assembly candidate**

Page 11, clause 9 (9) (a), line 16. Insert "direct or indirect" before "benefit" wherever occurring.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendment No. 2 on sheet C2018-036J be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:04): I move Government amendment No. 3 on sheet C2018-036J:

No. 3 **Electoral expenditure incurred by party and invoiced to Assembly candidate**

Page 11, clause 9 (9). Insert after line 20:

Such an amount of electoral expenditure is taken, for the purposes of this Act, not to be an amount of electoral expenditure by that party.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendment No. 3 on sheet C2018-036J be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:04): I move Government amendment No. 4 on sheet C2018-036J

No. 4 **Amounts donated to electoral district campaign before candidate selected**

Page 11, clause 9. Insert after line 20:

(10) **Political donation made for benefit of a campaign before candidate selection**

For the purposes of this Act and despite section 38 (3) (a):

- (a) a political donation may be made to a party agent on behalf of a future candidate for election in an Assembly electoral district before the candidate has been identified, selected or otherwise endorsed by the party, and
- (b) it is unlawful for such a political donation to be used otherwise than to incur electoral expenditure for or on behalf of the candidate endorsed by the party for election in that electoral district.

Note. The party agent is responsible for disclosures under Part 3 of this Act for any such political donation and electoral expenditure.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:04): The Opposition does not support this amendment for two reasons. First, it is almost impossible to work out what it is about. Second, it seems to impose far more control by the Electoral Commission over internal party mechanisms. There is certainly an argument for public intervention in parties through Supreme Court proceedings and so forth when that is appropriate. This seems to be going a little too far in terms of giving the Electoral Commission too much involvement in candidates, non-candidates or maybe being raised by candidates and used by somebody else. That is the basis of our problem.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:05): Government amendment No. 4 inserts a new subclause into clause 9 allowing political donations to be made for the benefit of a candidate in a particular electoral district before the candidate has been identified or selected by the party. Before such a donation can divert it can only be used to incur electoral expenditure for the candidate who is ultimately endorsed by the party for that electoral district. The party agent will be responsible for disclosure of those donations. We believe this is a sensible provision to ensure that donors may contribute to a candidate for a particular electorate before the candidate is formally registered.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: If the member for Hornsby, the member for Wollondilly and the member for North Sydney wish to have a private conversation they should do so outside the Chamber. The question is that Government amendment No. 4 on sheet C2018-036J be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that clause 9, as amended, be agreed to.

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 10 to 13 be agreed.

Clauses 10 to 13 agreed to.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:07): I move Government amendment No. 5 on sheet C2018-036J

No. 5 **Person responsible for disclosures—local government elections**

Page 13, clause 14 (2)–(5), lines 27–40. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (2) Despite subsection (1), the following persons are responsible for making a disclosure required under this Part:
 - (a) in the case of an elected member who is a councillor (including the mayor) of a local government area who is a member of a registered party—the elected member,
 - (b) in the case of a candidate in a local government election who is a member of a registered party—the candidate,
 - (c) in the case of a group in a local government election where all (or one or more) of the members of the group are members of a registered party—the lead candidate of the group.

- (3) However, if a party agent consents in accordance with this section to be the person responsible for making any such disclosure, the party agent is the person responsible for making such disclosures for the elected member, candidate or the group concerned.
- (4) A party agent of the registered party may, by notice in writing given to the Electoral Commission in an approved manner and form, with the agreement of the elected member, candidate or group concerned, consent to be the person who is responsible for making a disclosure required under this Part for the elected member, candidate or group.
- (5) A party agent, elected member, candidate or group may withdraw such a consent or agreement (as the case requires) by a notice in writing given to the Electoral Commission in an approved manner and form.
- (6) The regulations may make further provision dealing with the consequences of the giving or withdrawal of notices by persons under this section.

Government amendment No. 5 amends clause 14, which provides for who is responsible for making disclosures. The bill provides that in the case of a candidate or elected member who is a member of a registered party, the party agent responsible for making disclosures under the Act, that the party agent may decline to be the person responsible for candidates or elected members in a local government election. Amendment No. 5 provides for an opt-in rather than an opt-out scheme. The default position will be that an elected member or candidate in a local government election is responsible for making disclosures, that the party agent can opt-in and agree with the member or candidate to become the person responsible. The amendment also allows the party agent, the elected member, candidate or group to withdraw this consent. It also creates a regulation-making power to deal with such consent or agreement.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendment No. 5 on sheet C2018-037J be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that clause 14, as amended, be agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:08): I move The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet C2018-037E:

No.1 **When disclosures of political donations to be made**

Page 14, clause 15 (1) (b), lines 10 and 11. Omit "the end of the quarter within which the political donation was". Insert instead "the political donation being".

This amendment seeks to ensure that there is increased transparency. At the moment the Government proposes that during the capped period disclosures be made within 14 days but outside of the capped period disclosures be made at the end of every quarter. This amendment attempts to ensure that disclosures within 14 days can happen any time, including outside of the capped period.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:09): The Government opposes this amendment. It would require donations made outside of the pre-election period to be disclosed within four weeks of the donation being received or made rather than within four weeks from the end of the quarter in which they were received or made. This is unnecessary and creates a significant administrative burden for little benefit. An expert panel identified the problem with the current scheme as being that New South Wales voters are denied access to the sources and amounts of political donations that fund campaigns until many months after an election. The panel considered that requiring real-time disclosure in the pre-election period and annual disclosure at other times would provide a sufficient level of transparency. The bill already goes further than this, requiring quarterly disclosure of donations outside of the pre-election period and more than adequately addresses the issues identified by the expert panel.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to.

Amendment negated.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:10): I move The Greens amendment No. 2 on sheet C2018-037E:

No. 2 **How are disclosures to be made**

Page 15, clause 17. Insert after line 18:

- (5) A declaration lodged under this section in relation to a relevant disclosure period or a quarterly period is also to contain a statement that no political donation has been accepted by the relevant person or entity from a prohibited donor (within the meaning of Division 7) or a person on behalf of a political donor.

- (6) A declaration lodged under this section by a party agent must be verified by statutory declaration.

This amendment is in relation to how disclosures are made. It proposes that disclosures by party agents also include a declaration that no prohibited donations have been received. It also seeks to ensure that the party agent's declaration must be satisfied by a statutory declaration. Obviously that imposes a higher and more rigorous standard on party agents. We encourage the Government to support the amendment.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:11): The Government opposes the amendment to amend clause 17 to require that a disclosure declaration contain a statement that no political donation has been accepted by the relevant person or entity from a prohibited donor and that a declaration by a party agent must be verified by a statutory declaration. Again this amendment is unnecessary. The bill already contains a number of offences relating to providing false or misleading information to the Electoral Commission under clause 148, including making a statement that is false or misleading without having taken reasonable steps to ensure the statement was not false or misleading and omitting a matter without which the document is misleading without having taken reasonable steps to ensure this did not occur. In relation to donations from prohibited donors, the offence arises from the acceptance of that donation, not from a declaration about such donations. Clauses 52 and 147 of the bill already make it an offence for a person to accept a political donation from a prohibited donor if the person was aware of the facts that made this unlawful.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendment No. 2 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to.

Amendment negatived.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:13): By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 3, 21 and 22 on sheet C2018-037E in globo:

No. 3 **Electoral expenditure incurred for the purposes of a particular district, area or ward**

Page 16, clause 18 (3) (a), lines 10 and 11. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (a) explicitly mentions the name of a candidate in the election in that electoral district, the name of that electoral district or the name of any identifiable geographic area or landmark within that electoral district or contains an image of a candidate in the election in that electoral district, and

No. 21 **Electoral expenditure incurred for the purposes of a particular district, area or ward**

Page 23, clause 29 (13) (a), lines 39 and 40. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (a) explicitly mentions the name of a candidate in the election in that electoral district, the name of that electoral district or the name of any identifiable geographic area or landmark within that electoral district or contains an image of a candidate in the election in that electoral district, and

No. 22 **Electoral expenditure incurred for the purposes of a particular district, area or ward**

Page 26, clause 31 (13) (a), lines 41 and 42. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (a) explicitly mentions the name of a candidate in the election in that local government area or ward, the name of that area or ward or the name of any identifiable geographic area or landmark within that area or ward or contains an image of a candidate in the election in that area or ward, and This relates to something we all have an interest in, that is, what is the definition of electoral spending for a lower House member of Parliament? he spending for a lower House member of Parliament is obviously constrained by the cap and we want to ensure that this is an adequate definition. Currently, the definition of expenditure in the lower House is simply that the predominant amount of that advertising or promotion, obviously directed to people in one's electorate, has the candidate's name and the electoral division on it.

Our concern is that the advertising materials could simply say "Vote 1 Labor" or "Vote 1 Green" and have a big picture of the candidate. People in Glebe or in whatever suburb would not know that that would not be subject to the cap because it does not include the name of the candidate and it does not include the division. These amendments simply propose to include an image of a candidate and any landmark or other location that could be identified so that it would be included as Legislative Assembly capped expenditure and would tighten up the definition to ensure that the cap is a genuine one.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:14): The Government opposes The Greens amendments Nos 3, 21 and 22. Amendment No. 3 amends clause 18 (3). Clause 18 requires that a party's disclosure of electoral expenditure include details of electoral expenditure incurred substantially for the purpose of an election in a particular electoral district. Amendment No. 3 amends that to provide that in addition to advertising that mentions the name of a candidate or

the name of the electoral district that this includes advertising that mentions the name of a geographic area or landmark within that electoral district or includes an image of the candidate. This is unnecessary and does not appear to be an issue in practice.

The Government also opposes amendments Nos 21 and 22. We oppose amendments to clauses 29 and 31 in relation to the additional cap on electoral expenditure incurred for the purposes of a particular district, area or ward. The amendments seek to provide that in addition to advertising that mentions the name of a candidate or the name of the electoral district that this includes advertising that mentions the name of a geographic area or landmark within that electoral district or includes an image of the candidate. This is unnecessary. The amendments are directed at a concern that does not appear to be an issue in practice.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:16): I speak in favour of these amendments. I appreciate that the Minister has said that this is not an issue in practice, but I was in Brisbane on the weekend and there was a very large yellow billboard for Clive Palmer that had the simple words, "Make Australia great again". Under this legislation—and I urge members on the other side to listen to this, especially members in marginal electorates—a large billboard with just the candidate's face and a slogan on it would not be included in the electoral expenditure cap. I warn members what the reality is and I urge them to consider the ramifications if it is not included in the electoral cap.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:17): First, I question what the member was doing in Queensland spending money there. Secondly, Queensland deserves Clive Palmer, quite frankly.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendments Nos 3, 21 and 22 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to.

Amendments negated.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:18): By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 4 and 5 on sheet C2018-037E in globo:

No. 4 **Declarations to be kept by Electoral Commission in perpetuity**

Page 18, clause 22 (4), line 25. Omit "for at least 6 years after the period to which they relate". Insert instead "in perpetuity".

No. 5 **Public access to declarations**

Page 18, clause 22 (5), line 27. Omit "may". Insert instead "must".

These two amendments together are designed to meet an issue around declarations in the period within which declarations should be maintained. The bill currently provides that they should be maintained for only six years. Given current digital technology, this amendment seeks to have declarations held in perpetuity so that people can inspect donations or declarations that have been made, and they are not destroyed after six years.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:19): The Government opposes The Greens amendments Nos 4 and 5. Amendment No. 4 amends clause 22, which would require that the Electoral Commission keep copies of disclosures in perpetuity rather than for at least six years. This is unreasonable and unnecessary. It would create an unreasonable administrative burden that is disproportionate to any potential benefit. Amendment No. 5 amends clause 22 purportedly to require rather than permit the Electoral Commission to provide copies of or extracts from disclosures to a person who applies for this and pays a reasonable fee. This is unnecessary. On a proper construction of clause 22, the Electoral Commission is already obliged to provide copies or extracts if the requisite fee is paid. In addition, clauses 22 (1) and (2) already require the Electoral Commission to publish the disclosures of reportable political donations and electoral expenditure on its website as soon as practicable after the disclosures are due. Information about material political donations will therefore be made freely available to the public very soon after the disclosures are made.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendments Nos 4 and 5 on sheet C2018-137E be agreed to.

Amendments negated.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:20): By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 6 and 7 on sheet C2018-037E in globo:

No. 6 **Applicable caps on political donations**

Page 19, clause 23 (1) (a), line 3. Omit "\$6,100". Insert instead "\$2,500".

No. 7 Applicable caps on political donations

Page 19, clause 23 (1) (b), line 5. Omit "\$2,700". Insert instead "\$1,000".

These amendments relate to the caps on political donations. It is our view, and we expressed this in the 2013 submission as well as in the debate in the 2015 legislation, that political donation caps should be limited to \$2,500 instead of \$6,100, and that for a lower House candidate it should be limited to \$1,000 instead of \$2,700. This goes towards our aim to reduce the amount of cash involved in elections. We encourage the Government to support that amendments.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:20): The Government opposes The Greens amendments Nos 6 and 7. The amendments propose reductions to the caps on political donations to parties and groups from \$6,100 to \$2,500, and to candidates and others from \$2,700 to \$1,000. The bill reflects the current caps on donations, which have worked well enough to encourage parties and candidates to seek modest contributions from a broad base of constituents rather than being beholden to any large donors. The expert panel considered the current caps and determined that they remain appropriate.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendments Nos 6 and 7 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being fewer than five members in favour of the question, the question is resolved in the negative.

Ayes, 4

**Mr Greenwich
Ms Leong
Mr Parker
Ms Smith**

Amendments negatived.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:23): By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 8, 10 and 11 on sheet C2018 037E:

No. 8 Contributions to candidate's own campaign

Page 19, clause 23 (5), lines 35–38. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

(5) **Non-aggregation of contributions to candidate's own campaign (other than Legislative Council candidates)**

A contribution by a candidate (other than a candidate in a periodic Council election) to finance the candidate's own election campaign is not a political donation and is not included in the applicable cap on political donations to the candidate.

(6) **Aggregation of Legislative Council candidate contributions to own campaign**

A contribution by a candidate in a periodic Council election to finance the candidate's own election campaign is taken, for the purposes of this Division, to be a political donation and, for the avoidance of doubt, is to be included in the applicable cap on political donations to the candidate.

No. 10 Candidate contributions to own parties and groups to count as donations

Page 21, clause 26 (3)–(5), lines 14 to 28. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 11 Candidate contributions to own parties and groups to count as donations

Page 21, clause 26 (8), lines 41–42. Omit all words on those lines.

This range of amendments deals with candidates' donations. Currently, a lower House candidate can donate \$60,000 to their own campaign and not be subject to the spending cap, and an upper House candidate can donate \$50,000 to their own campaign and not be subject to the donations cap. It is our view that if we are encouraging people to run who can contribute large sums of money, it will distort the way parties preselect because we will have candidates saying, "I will put in \$50,000 or \$60,000 " and another candidate who may not have that money may be at a disadvantage.

In the upper House, 22 candidates can stand but a party will elect a maximum of eight or nine people, so candidates who can drop \$50,000 each will be encouraged to sit on the upper House ticket. The upper House ticket can take 22 people, but we know a maximum of only nine will be elected. We think it important to exclude this option, which means that all candidates will start from the same position of having to raise support in their community rather than having a head start by dropping \$60,000 of their own money.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:24): Amendment No. 8 amends clause 23, part 5. It would make a contribution by a Legislative Council candidate to finance their own election campaign a political donation, and so limit that self-financing to the cap on political donations to a candidate, which is \$2,700. The amendment also provides that a contribution by a non-Legislative Council candidate—for example, a Legislative Assembly or local government candidate—to finance their own election campaign is not a political donation, and the cap on donations would not apply. Discriminating against Legislative Council candidates in that way is not justified. Clause 32 part 5 of the bill simply replicates section 95A part 4 of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 and is appropriate and fair to all candidates. For the reasons I stated, the Government opposes The Greens amendment Nos 8, 10 and 11.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendments No. 8, 10 and 11 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:26): I move The Greens amendment No. 9 on sheet C2018-037E:

No. 9 **Limiting prohibition on donations to more than 3 third-party campaigners**

Page 21, clause 25. Insert after line 7:

- (4) A political donation to a third-party campaigner in contravention of this section is not unlawful if the total amount of donations to third-party campaigners made, within the same financial year, by the person making the donation does not exceed the third-party campaigner applicable cap amount as referred to in section 23 (1) (b).

This amendment seeks to deal with an unusual provision in the bill that states it is prohibited for anybody to donate to any more than three third parties. The Greens' view is that if someone wants to donate \$50 to five different third parties, that should be fine. The issue is the cap on donations to third parties, not how many third parties someone is donating to. The amendment states it is not unlawful if the total amount of donations to a third-party campaigner made within a financial year does not exceed the third-party campaigner cap. Whether you are donating to one third party or 10 third parties should not be the issue. It is not the quantum of how many third parties a person is donating to, but the maximum amount that the cap provides.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:26): The Government opposes The Greens Amendment No. 9. It amends clause 25, which replicates section 95C of the current Act, which makes it unlawful to make or accept political donations to more than three third-party campaigners in the same financial year. This applies only to a political donation that is to be paid into the campaign account of a third-party campaigner. The expert panel and the joint standing committee did not recommend any changes to this provision. The amendment would mean that it would not be lawful if the total amount of donations to third-party campaigners by the person did not exceed the donations cap of \$2,700. This has not been identified throughout the extensive review of the Act as an issue that requires addressing.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:27): The Labor Opposition supports The Greens amendment. There is no logic behind the prohibition beyond three third-party campaigners.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendment No. 9 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to.

Amendment negatived.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:28): I move Government amendment No. 6 on sheet C2018-036J:

No. 6 **Self funding by candidates**

Page 21, clause 26. Insert after line 20:

- (4) For the avoidance of doubt, it not unlawful for a candidate for election to the Assembly who is a member of a registered party, during a financial year in which the election is conducted, to make:
 - (a) contributions to the party agent for payment into the State Campaign account of the party to finance the candidate's own election campaign, and
 - (b) political donations to the party, being:
 - (i) political donations subject to the general applicable cap in section 23, and
 - (ii) political donations that are disregarded for the purposes of this Division by subsection (3).

Note. The applicable caps on electoral expenditure under section 29 for the 2019 State general election limit electoral expenditure by a candidate endorsed by a party to \$122,900. Therefore, such a candidate could self fund and make a contribution of that amount to the party agent and also make political donations to the party, during the financial year of the election, of \$67,600 (being the sum of \$6,100 and \$61,500).

Amendment No. 6 is a good amendment. It amends clause 26 to clarify the way endorsed candidates contributions to their own campaign are to be treated. It confirms that the candidate may self-fund their own campaign up to the amount of the expenditure cap for the candidate's campaign. In addition, the candidate may self-fund the amount a party is able to spend on their particular electoral district up to the cap on expenditure by parties in a particular electoral district.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendment No. 6 on sheet C2018-036J be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:29): By leave: I move The Greens amendment Nos 12 to 20 on sheet C2018-037E in globo:

- No. 12 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 22, clause 29 (2), line 41. Omit "\$122,900". Insert instead "\$61,450".
- No. 13 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 22, clause 29 (3), note, line 47. Omit "\$11,429,700". Insert instead "\$5,714,850".
- No. 14 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 23, clause 29 (4), line 5. Omit "\$1,288,500". Insert instead "\$614,500".
- No. 15 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 23, clause 29 (5), line 8. Omit "\$1,288,500". Insert instead "\$614,500".
- No. 16 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 23, clause 29 (6), line 11. Omit "\$122,900". Insert instead "\$100,000".
- No. 17 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 23, clause 29 (7), line 14. Omit "\$184,200". Insert instead "\$150,000".
- No. 18 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 23, clause 29 (8), line 17. Omit "\$184,200". Insert instead "\$150,000".
- No. 19 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 23, clause 29 (9), line 20. Omit "\$245,600". Insert instead "\$200,000".
- No. 20 **Applicable caps on electoral expenditure**
Page 23, clause 29 (12) (a), line 33. Omit "\$61,500". Insert instead "\$30,700".

The Greens are delighted to support the Government's proposal to reduce third-party caps from \$1.288 million to \$500,000 provided that the amount of expenditure the political parties can undertake is reduced by a commensurate amount. At the moment parties can spend in excess of \$22 million and third parties are now only able to spend \$500,000. The amendments would reduce political party expenditure to a measly \$15.42 million rather than \$22 million. The Greens believe that if we are dialling down third parties then political parties also need to be dialled down. There is no balance if each party can spend \$22 million while third parties can spend only \$500,000. These amendments will reduce the amount that political parties can spend in elections.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:31): The Government opposes The Greens amendment Nos 12 to 20.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendment Nos 12 to 20 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:32): By leave: I move The Greens amendment Nos 23 and 27 on sheet C2018-037E in globo:

- No. 23 **Third-party campaigner acting in concert**
Page 28, clause 35, lines 19–31. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 27 **Third-party campaigner acting in concert**

Page 41, clause 58 (5), lines 41–46. Omit all words on those lines.

Amendment Nos 23 and 27 relate to third-party campaigners acting in concert. I addressed this issue in detail during my contribution on behalf of The Greens in the second reading debate. It is in *Hansard*. Clause 35 is onerous and unworkable and will act to unnecessarily and unfairly affect third-party campaigners. The way it is written in terms of formal or informal agreements is problematic and will cause significant legal disputation. Clause 35 should be removed in its entirety.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:34): The Government opposes amendment No. 23. It deletes clause 35, which makes it unlawful for a third-party campaigner to act in concert with another person or persons to incur electoral expenditure, during the capped expenditure period, that exceeds the expenditure cap for the third-party campaigner. The bill implements the specific recommendation of the expert panel that prevents third-party campaigners from acting under an agreement with another person to incur electoral expenditure that exceeds the third-party campaigner's expenditure cap by, for example, establishing front organisations to incur electoral expenditure on their behalf. It does not require the aggregation of expenditure of third-party campaigners, or stop third-party campaigners from agreeing to campaign on the same issue, provided that they each do not exceed their separate expenditure caps.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: For clarification, the member for Balmain has moved The Greens amendments Nos 23 and 27 in globo.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The Government also opposes amendment No. 27. It deletes clause 58 of part 5, which requires a third-party campaigner who incurs electoral expenditure in contravention of clause 35—the prohibition on acting in concert with another person to exceed the expenditure cap—to pay an amount double the amount in excess of the cap to the State. This is an appropriate penalty for a serious breach of electoral funding laws.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:35): The Labor Opposition supports The Greens amendments Nos 23 and 27 for the reasons we discussed at length in the debate earlier today. I make the point regarding the prohibition that it is incredibly difficult to be able to prove. That was one of the arguments made in the Schott report. Because of that there is now a provision that is drafted so broadly that it is just extraordinary. As a matter of drafting, it is an incredibly bad way in which to proclaim new law. Labor supports The Greens' amendments.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:35): I speak in favour of The Greens amendments Nos 23 and 27. It is completely unclear from the way that this legislation is written what it means in practice. The idea that it is unlawful for a third-party campaigner to act in concert with another person, whether formally or informally, is completely unclear. I can think of a situation, in fact multiple situations, where individuals, who are a part of an organisation and who would be registered third-party campaigners, would see each other at an event or at a community action meeting or at some other activity and would speak to each other about their activities. If that happened in the electoral cap period we would see a situation where those two campaigners, talking to each other, could result in them engaging in unlawful action.

However, those two people talking may have no control over the strategy or budget of those organisations. By default of them talking to each other, we would see those two people being seen to be acting in concert informally. As a result, those two organisations would have their caps combined under this law and it would be found to be unlawful, even if those two individuals did not understand the electoral laws and were not responsible for the budgets of the third-party organisations that were allegedly acting in concert. This may be an attempt, which is clearly unsurprising for this Liberal-National Coalition in New South Wales, to crack down on the union movement working collaboratively. The impact will be huge. The risk to resident groups that act and connect together and talk to each other—such as the Save Our Sydney Coalition, which I believe Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party attended the launch of—were all acting in concert.

If they had engaged in that action at that time they may have been acting unlawfully and acting in concert. It is completely unworkable as a model to have informal interactions captured in this part of the legislation. It is by far, as we have heard from Hands Off Our Charities, GetUp! and the union movement, the largest attack of anything in this legislation that has so far been introduced. It is clearly something that the Minister enjoys. I appreciate that the Minister may not have many community organisations and groups working to support the election of this Government, but it is truly one of the most appalling and outrageous elements of this legislation. It is completely unacceptable for individuals talking, communicating and collaborating with each other will be made unlawful as a result of this legislation.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that amendment Nos 23 and 27 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:38): By leave, I move The Greens amendments Nos. 24 to 26 on sheet C2018-037E in globo:

No. 24 **Additional prohibited donors**

Page 37, clause 51. Insert at the end of line 42:

- , or
- (d) a mining or petroleum industry business entity, or
 - (e) a person who has contracted with the State government,

No. 25 **Additional prohibited donors**

Page 39, clause 53. Insert after line 1:

- (5) Each of the following persons is a *mining or petroleum industry business entity*:
 - (a) a corporation engaged in a business undertaking that is mainly concerned with an extractive industry,
 - (b) a corporation that has made an application for any of the following:
 - (i) an authorisation under the *Mining Act 1992*,
 - (ii) an exploration permit, retention lease or production licence under the *Petroleum (Offshore) Act 1982*,
 - (iii) a petroleum title under the *Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991*,
 - (c) a corporation that has made a relevant planning application in relation to development for the purposes of an extractive industry,
 - (d) a person who is a close associate of a corporation referred to in paragraphs (a), (b) or (c).
- (6) Each of the following persons is a *person who contracts with the State government*:
 - (a) a corporation engaged in a business undertaking that has, in the previous 4 years (following the commencement of this Act), applied for or held a contract for the provision of goods or services to the government of the State or any of its agencies with a value of \$50,000 or more,
 - (b) a person who is a close associate of a corporation referred to in paragraph (a) or (b).

No. 26 **Additional prohibited donors**

Page 39, clause 53 (5). Insert after line 29:

extractive industry means any industry that primarily involves any of the following:

- (a) prospecting or mining for minerals within the meaning of the *Mining Act 1992*,
- (b) prospecting for or mining petroleum on land within the meaning of the *Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991*,
- (c) exploring for or recovering petroleum in an adjacent area under the *Petroleum (Offshore) Act 1982*,
- (d) the winning or removal of extractive materials other than minerals or petroleum (including sand, soil, gravel, rock or similar substances) by methods such as excavating, dredging, tunnelling or quarrying, including the storing, stockpiling or processing of extractive materials by methods such as recycling, washing, crushing, sawing or separating.

These are also known as the "we are persistent" amendments. These are the amendments we moved as a private member's bill in order to ensure that an additional prohibited donor is added, —that is, the mining or petroleum industry business entity. We have seen when it comes to coal, mining and petroleum that this would be defensible from a High Court perspective. The High Court has already determined that developer donations can be prohibited donors. These businesses in particular have an incredibly strong stake in influencing government decision-making on exploration, licences and so on. The mining and petroleum industry businesses and the contracting businesses in clause 6 should be prohibited donors.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:39): The Government opposes The Greens amendments Nos 24 to 26. The expert panel considered the existing prohibited donor provisions and did not recommend any changes to prohibit other organisations and individuals from making donations. Any such prohibition would need to be carefully considered, given the obvious effect on the constitutional freedom of political communication.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:40): The Labor Opposition does not support The Greens amendments Nos 24 to 26. While we are not forever closed to an increase in the category of prohibited donors, the legalities are too difficult. On the basis of the material we have before us, it would invite a High Court challenge, which would probably be successful. If it were given greater consideration and more thought, perhaps it could be revisited at another time. It is not appropriate to support these amendments at this time.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendments Nos 24 to 26 be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:41): By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 28 and 29 on sheet C2018-037E in globo:

No. 28 Prepayment amount when suspicion of contravention of Act

Page 49, clause 77 (2), lines 36–38. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (2) The preliminary payment is to be of the following amounts (reduced by the amount of any advance payments made for the election concerned):
 - (a) if the Electoral Commission reasonably believes that the party has contravened this Act and the contravention is outstanding or unresolved—an amount equal to 70% of the total amount estimated by the Electoral Commission to be payable to the party,
 - (b) in any other case—an amount equal to 90% of the total amount estimated by the Electoral Commission to be payable to the party.
- (3) If the Electoral Commission has made a preliminary payment under subsection (2) (a), the Electoral Commission is to make a further payment of the outstanding 20% of the total amount estimated by the Electoral Commission to be payable to the party if the Electoral Commission is satisfied that:
 - (a) the party did not so contravene this Act, or
 - (b) the contravention has been adequately rectified.

No. 29 Prepayment period suspended while requested information outstanding

Page 49, clause 77. Insert after line 46:

- (6) Despite subsection (1), in determining whether the 14 day period has expired, any period between a request being made by the Electoral Commission to the party for further information about the claim for payment and the response on behalf of the party to that request is to be disregarded.

The Government said it would consider the amendments but I suspect it will not take on the issue about prepayments. Under these two provisions, if the Electoral Commission suspects there is a breach of the Act, prepayment of 90 per cent of the invoice does not have to occur within 14 days because the system is robust and if there is any suspicion it will not issue a prepayment. The related clause that I have moved in globo is that the prepayment period should be suspended while requesting information. What is interesting is that political parties get 70 per cent, which is now 90 per cent, of an invoice within 14 days.

Mr Anthony Roberts: That is right.

Mr JAMIE PARKER: That is what political parties get. What do companies and businesses get? It is nothing like that. When the law was written it seems that the Government was saying that political parties can get prepayment within 14 days, and if they do not receive prepayment 90 per cent must be paid. That is not a bad deal. We are saying that there should be a stop-the-clock provision. If the Electoral Commission asks for information, then the clock should be stopped on the 14 days so that political parties do not just drag payment out to the 14 days because they know they will get 90 per cent of the invoice paid. The Government may say in the future the money can be recovered, but the issue is that we should ensure integrity in the system. The amendments say quite simply that if there is any suspicion of a contravention of the Act, then the payment can be delayed. If there is a request for further information from the Electoral Commission, then a stop-the-clock provision should be applied and the 14 days does not run out.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:42): The Government opposes this bill. We have considered it in great detail. The Greens have a very strong position on this, so I would welcome them amending the bill to suit their particular party in the upper House to get less up-front if they feel strongly about it. It would deal only with The Greens and no-one else.

Mr Jamie Parker: Don't be rude.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:43): No, not at all. If you feel strongly. I do not want The Greens spokesman joining in

something he is not comfortable with. If less is wanted, we can make a specific amendment just for The Greens. Amendment No. 28 amends clause 77 to provide that a preliminary payment of funding to a party is to be 70 per cent of the amount estimated to be payable rather than 90 per cent, if the Electoral Commission reasonably believes the party has contravened the Act and the contravention is outstanding or unresolved. It also provides for the Electoral Commission to pay a further 20 per cent when satisfied that the party did not breach the Act, or that the breach has been rectified. This amendment is opposed. Payments other than advance payments are conditional on the party being compliant with its disclosure obligations. The Electoral Commission should not prejudge the outcomes of any potential contraventions by depriving a party of its public funding entitlements.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendments Nos 28 and 29 on sheet C2018-037E be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Before calling for the Government amendments, I will call for The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet C2018-040.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:45): By leave: I move The Greens amendment Nos 1 to 3 on sheet C2018-040 in globo:

- No. 1 **Applicable cap on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners**
Page 23, clause 29 (10) (a), line 23. Omit "\$500,000". Insert instead "\$1,288,500".
- No. 2 **Applicable cap on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners**
Page 23, clause 29 (10) (b), line 25. Omit "\$250,000". Insert instead "\$644,300".
- No. 3 **Applicable cap on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners**
Page 23, clause 29 (11), line 27. Omit "\$20,000". Insert instead "\$24,700".

It must have really hurt when the Electoral Commission kept that money. The Greens amendment Nos 1 to 3 on sheet C2018-040 relate to third-party campaigners. The Government is proposing reducing third-party campaigning from \$1,288,500 to \$500,000. If the Government wants to halve what third parties can spend, it should halve what political parties can spend to keep the volume of both similar. The Government is saying it prefers to spend up to \$22 million while cutting third-party expenditure to \$500,000. These amendments propose to restore the Government's proposed cuts in three separate areas.

In response to those who have asked questions about this, the amount of \$644,300 in amendment No. 2 is in the most recent order and that is the new figure as a result of the legislation, which allows for increases over time. It is the same in respect of the applicable cap on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners in specific electorates, which we propose should be \$24,700. Those amendments seek to restore the balance between the voice of third parties and the voice of political parties.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:46): The Government opposes The Greens amendment Nos 1 to 3 on sheet C2018-040. Those amendments would reinstate the current expenditure caps for third-party campaigners under the current Act. This is contrary to the expert panel's recommendations following its detailed examination of the appropriateness of the proposed caps. It is contrary to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters [JSCM] recommendations, which support reducing the amount of the caps. It also is contrary to the recommendation made by The Greens to the expert panel in its inquiry—to reduce the caps to \$250,000, which is half the amount proposed in the Government's bill. The Government's proposed spending cap of \$500,000 strikes the right balance. It will allow a third-party campaigner to reasonably present its case and have a genuine voice in the debate while guarding against third-party campaigners dominating election campaigns.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:47): The Labor Opposition supports The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet C2018-040. This matter was debated exhaustively today in the second reading debate. For the reasons that we advanced then, we think these amendments are an entirely sensible way to proceed.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that The Greens amendment Nos 1 to 3 on sheet C2018-040 be agreed to.

Amendments negatived.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:48): By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 7 to 9 on sheet C2018-036J in globo.

- No. 7 **Party electoral expenditure on behalf of candidates**
Page 22, clause 29 (2). Insert after line 42:

Note. Under section 9 (9) any amount of electoral expenditure incurred by a party for the benefit of a candidate endorsed by the party and invoiced by that party to the candidate for payment is the electoral expenditure of the candidate (that is subject to the applicable cap). Therefore it is not electoral expenditure of the party that is subject to the applicable cap under this subsection.

No. 8 Management requirements for parties

Page 28, clause 36 (1), lines 36–38. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (1) It is unlawful for political donations to a party to be used otherwise than for the objects and activities of the party, including the following:
 - (a) the administration of the party and community activities,
 - (b) electoral expenditure for State elections and local government elections,
 - (c) electoral expenditure for or on behalf of elected members, candidates or groups of candidates who are members of the party.

No. 9 Dealing with amounts held for elected members, candidates and group

Page 30, clause 37. Insert after 30:

- (9) Any amount standing to the account of an elected member, group or candidate that remains in a campaign account after the elected member, group or candidate ceases to be an elected member, group or candidate becomes the property of the party.
- (10) The regulations may make provision for or with respect to campaign accounts (including the control of accounts, separately accounting for amounts held for elected members, groups and candidates and the provision of information to and the audit of accounts by the Electoral Commission).

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendments Nos 7 to 9 on sheet C2018-036J be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 15 to 77, as amended, be agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 77, as amended, agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 78 to 159 be agreed to.

Clauses 78 to 159 agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that schedule 1, as amended, be agreed to.

Schedule 1, as amended, agreed to.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:49): I move amendment No. 1 on sheet C2018-050A:

No. 1 Act not to apply to local government elections

Page 86, Schedule 2. Insert after line 25:

Part 3 Suspension of application of Act

7 Non-application of Act to local government matters

Despite any other provision of this Act, until the Parliament otherwise provides:

- (a) this Act does not apply to any matter relating to or concerning local government elections or elected members of councils (including mayors), and
- (b) the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981* and the regulations under that Act continue to apply to local government elections and elected members of councils (including mayors) as if that Act had not been repealed.

How nice it is that we are all working together. We do not often see the House working like this. Democracy is a well-oiled machine here. This amendment effectively suspends application of the bill until after the Government has an opportunity to further review and, dare I say, consult on issues relating to local government. I have been considering how we can somehow extricate all the components of the bill that relate to local government. I respectfully say, and most of us here understand, that how members of the community see the operation of elections is significantly different to how local government and State Government elections work.

A local government election will have a number of different entities that have vastly different geographic situations and populations. We can have small councils and mega councils, as well as newly merged councils, and they have all been given what I believe to be unrealistic caps. They are being treated as though they are similar councils. I hope that is not the intention of the Government. I acknowledge that members of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters are present in the Chamber. This matter must be revisited. I understand that local

governments have not been explicitly consulted on the matter. In the interests of brevity, I made my point in my second reading speech. I ask that the Government throw us a bone and support the amendment.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (17:52): The Government opposes amendment No. 1 on sheet C2018-050A moved by the member for Lake Macquarie. The Government understands that the member for Lake Macquarie has some concerns with the bill's proposed expenditure caps for local government and the impacts of the caps on local government areas of differing population sizes. This is a complex issue, given that some items of expenditure such as newspaper advertisements are generally fixed in cost while the cost of other items such as printing flyers will depend on the number of electors. The Government proposes to refer the impact of expenditure caps on different local government areas to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for further inquiry.

The Government understands that the proposed amendment seeks to continue the provisions of the current Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 for local government. However, this bill fundamentally reforms many of the existing provisions in the current Act. Therefore, continuing the current Act for local government while forging ahead with the new Act for State elections is likely to lead to confusion and uncertainty, particularly for councils and the New South Wales Electoral Commission. For example, the bill incorporates a new definition of a "prohibited property developer". The amendment would result in the old definition applying to donations for local government election campaigns and the new definition applying to political donations for State elections. This would not only be confusing for parties and candidates but also for donors. The Government opposes the amendment.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:53): I strongly support the amendment of the member for Lake Macquarie. This bill makes far-reaching changes to council elections but there has been no consultation with the local government sector, nor have members been given time to do their own comprehensive assessments or to undertake consultation. As I said earlier, the caps set for local government expenditure appear too low to support workable campaigns, especially for larger councils such as the City of Sydney in my electorate, which has both resident and business voters. Indeed, the caps appear to significantly restrict normal campaign activities and to favour incumbents and political parties that can reuse campaign or party political paraphernalia already purchased. They also appear to be unfair when compared against expenditure caps in State electoral divisions or when they are compared for different sized councils, which range from tens of thousands to near a million.

During my earlier contribution I talked also about the lack of clarity around how expenditure is separated when candidates run both on the mayoral ticket and the council ticket. The sections on caps are unintelligible and I am concerned that compliance could be impossible. These changes to local government elections appear to have been poorly thought through. In fact, it is unclear how the Government came up with the cap figures. More work must be done. A new bill should be introduced after engaging with the local government sector, councils and candidates to establish caps that are fair and that enable anyone to run in local government elections, regardless of party or group affiliation, or the size of the local government division. I welcome the Minister's announcement about the referral to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. I commend the amendment.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:55): I thank the Minister for indicating that this issue will be referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. I will identify two issues. Because the spending cap for parties is based on wards or one ward being a full council, it leads to perverse outcomes. For example, compare the City of Sydney with the Central Darling Shire, which is a three-ward area in which parties will be able to spend \$101 per enrolled elector. The City of Sydney is a one-ward area, with a total of 141,000 electors, and parties will be able to spend 21¢ per elector.

Canterbury-Bankstown Council is a five-ward area, with a total of 224,00 electors, and parties will be able to spend 67¢ cents. Walcha has a population of 2,296—some apartment blocks in my electorate have more than 2,296 people who live in them—and parties will be able to spend \$52 per elector. I really appreciate that the Minister will look at this again because it is important for there to be some balance. I understand that is challenging because in places such as the City of Sydney the exact number of electors is unknown because of the business roll. But it does not seem reasonable that in some councils parties can spend more than \$100 per elector yet in others they can spend only 20¢.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:57): The Labor Opposition does not support the amendment of the member for Lake Macquarie. I am happy to concede that the bill does contain some complexities. Indeed, when I spoke earlier today I described the provisions about caps for local government as truly Byzantine. I also said that the Labor Opposition generally said one of the few good things about this bill was the fact that it was extending caps to local government. It seems to me the solution to whatever the problems are is not to suspend the operation of the bill but to proceed with the bill and to do whatever else has to happen after that.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that amendment No. 1 on sheet C2018-050A moved by the member for Lake Macquarie be agreed to.

Amendment negatived.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that schedule 2 be agreed to.

Schedule 2 agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that schedule 3 be agreed to.

Schedule 3 agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Briefly, I again thank everyone for their assistance on something that will be very transformative in respect of electoral donations. In particular, I thank Mr Tom Clayton who works in the Premier's office. Tom has been remarkable in his dealings in this matter.

Mr Jamie Parker: What about Tom McGowan?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank all those who have added their professionalism in this matter. I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Matter of Public Importance

PREMIER'S READING CHALLENGE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:00): This is the eighteenth year of the Premier's Reading Challenge. The aim of the Premier's Reading Challenge is to encourage reading for leisure and for the enjoyment of students. It enables students to also experience quality literature. It is not a competition but a challenge to each student to read, to read more and to read more widely. Over the years the schools in my electorate have participated in the Premier's Reading Challenge. The practice of regular reading is highly recommended by educators and parents. It is regarded as vital in improving the literacy standards in Australia. Indeed, the skills of reading are crucial. Everything a student achieves at school and beyond is dependent on a strong foundation in literacy. The Premier's Reading Challenge is strongly aligned to the Government's \$340 million Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2017-2020. It provides a wide range of quality texts to help students to develop a love and appreciation for reading.

My wife is a schoolteacher—she teaches English. Together we are raising our son, James, who is now four and a bit. Reading is vitally important to the development of every child, regardless of their age. Students also develop creative and critical skills through reading a wide range of texts. The Premier's Reading Challenge is open to all students in New South Wales from kindergarten to year 9 in public, non-government and home schools. As a local member of Parliament I receive the newsletters from all my local schools. In those newsletters the efforts of the schools in response to the Premier's Reading Challenge—from the principal, the teachers and the librarians to the parents and students—are apparent. In the challenge the list of optional texts is organised into age-appropriate categories and includes a wide variety of Australian authors.

Since its inception in 2001 participation in the Premier's Reading Challenge has increased steadily each year. In 2017, just under 300,000 students successfully completed the challenge—they read more than 8 million books. The following special awards are presented during the course of the challenge: gold certificates, platinum certificates and Premier's Reading Challenge medals. I am sure I am not the only local member of Parliament to attend many of these award ceremonies where these special awards are presented to students who have done an amazing job. More than 30,000 gold certificates were issued for the completion of the challenge for four years; 6,900 platinum certificates were issued for the completion of the challenge for seven years; and 480 Premier's Reading Challenge medals were awarded.

Reading is so important for the development of children. My wife and I try to read to our son, James, every night to enforce the importance of reading. Reading is fundamental and extremely vital for the future not only of my son but also the future of every child in our State and country. The success of programs such as the Premier's Reading Challenge is a testament to the character and aptitude of the schools and the teachers. The future of our State could never be brighter with the teachers and schools in my electorate. The reading challenge provides a remarkable opportunity for kids to participate. It is in its eighteenth year. I promote the challenge in my newsletters and e-newsletters as much as I can. I remember quota spelling—

Mr Jihad Dib: Bring it back.

Mr MARK COURE: Bring it back. The challenge is an opportunity for children to enjoy reading and at the same time compete and challenge other students in the classroom.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:05): I thank the member for Oatley for bringing to the House this matter of public importance and for sharing his personal stories. The member for Oatley and I disagree on many things but on this occasion I agree on the importance of reading. The Premier's Reading Challenge was introduced in 2001 by the then Premier, the Hon. Bob Carr, because of his love of reading. Everybody knows that Bob loves reading. Members should read his book *Diary of a Foreign Minister*. It is a good book. I spoke to Bob and said that when I read his book I only could feel how tired he would be going in and out of time zones.

Mr Mark Coure: Did you check the index?

Mr JIHAD DIB: Yes, I checked the index. I was not in it. One of my favourite books in the Premier's Reading Challenge is *To Kill A Mockingbird*—

Mr Kevin Anderson: By Harper Lee.

Mr JIHAD DIB: By Harper Lee. Who does not want to be Atticus Finch? Scout was an amazing person. It is a wonderful book. As the member for Oatley said, more than 2,500 schools have participated. The challenge is cross-sectorial—government and non-government schools and homeschooling. The ultimate goal is to encourage children to read. There was a big drop-off in the amount of reading for fun. Adults still need to read for fun. Our job requires us to read a lot of reports but our most enjoyable reading should be for pleasure. More than eight million books were read in the past year. The most popular book in the K-2 range was *Pig the Pug*. As a sign of the times, for the older kids up to year 9 the popular book was *The Hunger Games*. I discovered in the reading list one of the series of books is Bear Grylls *A Survival Guide for Life*. I hope he will write a survival guide for new members of Parliament, which we can issue to them on their arrival in this place.

When I was at Punchbowl Boys High School I discovered that boys did not like to read. The school had low literacy levels and we had to find a way to encourage the boys to read, so we signed up to the Premier's Reading Challenge. When I spoke to the volunteer teacher who ran the program we decided to start with the year 9 boys because they were not interested in reading. We bought a series of books, with the help of a big discount from a local book shop, and that got reading started in the school. We ran the program during roll call to ensure that the boys read the books. It was one of my main concerns as I knew they were not reading. I wanted them to love reading and learning about new things and be transported to new and different worlds from the one they lived in. I wanted them to understand that in this world of fiction they could be anything they wanted to be.

At the time we read *Romeo and Juliet*. Members will remember Baz Luhrmann's version of *Romeo and Juliet*, which made Shakespeare cool again. That was the best thing that could have happened for schools because kids got into the Shakespearean language and particularly books that were written in contemporary language. In our first year of the Premier's Reading Challenge 24 children were involved. At the time, we wrote to Bob Carr, who had retired, and he came to the school and presented the certificates. It meant a great deal to the children and their families. I am pleased that children in years 7, 8 and 9 are involved in the Premier's Reading Challenge. It is said that if there are books at home there is a good chance that the kids will go on to university. Six books at home mean a child will go to university. So we must have a reading culture.

As a former English teacher, I love reading. Sometimes the children did not enjoy reading if we were in an afternoon lesson and they had to learn about something they were not interested in. The member for Oatley mentioned that he tries to read to his son, James, every night. My wife and I do the same with our young kids. We have read the same book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, to our three children from when they were toddlers. It is etched in my mind "In the light of the moon". I have read it so many times I can recite it by heart. I thank those who run the Premier's Reading Challenge, the volunteer teachers. It involves a fair bit of work but it makes a huge difference to the lives of children, especially those who do not have a reading culture at home. With so many books to choose from, every child will find something they are interested in. I thank the member for Oatley for bringing this matter of public importance to the House.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:11): I am delighted to support this matter of public importance that has been brought by the member for Oatley regarding the Premier's Reading Challenge. Reading is such an important part of the development of a child. It is certainly something that I enjoyed as a young child. This year is the eighteenth year of the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge. The purpose of the challenge is to encourage children to read for leisure and enjoyment and to enable them to experience quality literature.

The member for Lakemba referred to some of the popular books and noted that the K-2 favourite at present is *Pig the Pug*. I know that book very well; I regularly read to my nephew. Admittedly, we had to get him the book with the matching soft toy to encourage him to read it, but once he knew the story he absolutely fell in love with *Pig the Pug*. That is the purpose of this challenge. We want to encourage children to start reading and

to realise that it is not only about reading for learning but that they will enjoy reading. It will go from that simple book to fostering a love of novels and more complex topics.

I am sure all members will attest to the fact it is a privilege to present students at their end of year school functions with platinum and gold awards in the Premier's Reading Challenge. In my three years in this place I know that the number of certificates awarded to students is increasing, particularly in the platinum category. It is heartening to know that more and more students are taking up this challenge in their younger years and following it through to enable them to win a platinum award when they finish their primary school education.

In 2017, 291,000 students successfully completed the challenge, reading a staggering eight million books. That is a large amount of reading by students across the State. Students can choose from 10,500 different texts which range from fiction, non-fiction, picture books, poetry and drama. There is something for everyone, as there is in a library. We are discussing a very important matter today. I commend the member for Oatley for bringing this matter of public importance to the House and I commend the contribution of the member for Lakemba.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:15): By leave: I am very lucky because my mother gave me the ultimate gift—that is, the gift of literacy—by teaching me to read at the age of three. I still remember the vivid pictures, both real and imagined, from my childhood favourite books, including *The Cherry Family*, Dr Seuss books, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *Peter Rabbit*, *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-duck*, *The Famous Five*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Watership Down*, *The Magic Pudding*, *Snugglypot and Cuddlepup*, and school readers that my mother had kept from her childhood in South Australia. Instituted by the former Labor Premier Bob Carr in 2001, the Premier's Reading Challenge started with a list of 500 books that went out to all schools, with an invitation to children to read as many as they could. Those who met the challenge received a certificate from the Premier. Those who met it for four years received a gold certificate. Then Premier Carr's answer to a question in question time in 2001 sums up why this program was so important:

I am sure the lucky children who today saw the first screening of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* will enjoy every second of it. But there are no green landscapes, questing knights, or marauding monsters more vividly apprehended than those we conjure up by reading unassisted from a book that stirs our hearts and imaginations to thrill and high adventure. No childhood pastime does more to save the soul from poverty, substance abuse, teenage depression, and temptation to petty crime than reading excellent literature.

That quote by the person who introduced the challenge shows the testament of good policy when it is heartfelt. When this challenge was introduced, I remember as a young mother, with one baby and another one on the way, thinking what a fantastic idea it was—a call to action to young children to read more. I wanted my children to share my love of reading. As someone who loved completing the MS Readathon every year to raise funds for people living with multiple sclerosis, the idea of a challenge every year across the State made me very keen to get my children involved.

Members of this place know that I do not hold myself up as an example of good mothering, but something I succeeded at was instilling a love of reading in my children. They love to read. There is nothing I love more than seeing a young child who is just learning to read and making up the story from memory when they do not know yet how to decipher the words. It even makes me emotional to think about that now. In 2017, 291,000 students from more than 2,500 schools read eight million books in the Premier's Challenge, with 30,000 golden certificates offered. So far nearly 60 million books have been read by children in this challenge, which I think is Bob Carr's best legacy.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:17): In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Maitland, Lakemba and Miranda for their contributions to today's matter of public importance relating to the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge. If there is one thing that I remember of my childhood, it would be a particular book given to me by my mum called *My Place*, an Australian classic. It is a picture book about a time machine that takes the reader through the last 200 years of settlement in Australia and beyond. It shows various children and their families and how they have lived over time. The book, which I read in 1988, aims to teach the reader about Australian history, multiculturalism, families and the traditional owners of the land before settlement. Each child's story covers a decade in time. It is a fascinating and amazing picture book, which later went on to win the 1992 Children's Book Council of Australia Award (Picture Book). I still have the book today.

Reading is so important for children. As the member for Maitland mentioned, it does sometimes choke you up. I think of young James, who probably cannot read any of the words in his book, memorising the book from start to finish. The Premier's Reading Challenge is a program that I love promoting. It is not only about reading within our schools but also reading at home, which is vitally important. In today's community, reading is something that parents are forgetting. There are a lot of children playing video games and watching television. It must be drilled into schools and parents that reading is important. As much as half an hour of reading each night goes a long way to instil a love of reading in children. If children have a culture of reading and enjoy it, it is something they will take with them to high school and beyond. It is exercise for the mind.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): My favourite book was *HMS Ulysses*. That is a plug for Alistair MacLean.

Private Members' Statements

ILLAWARRA TRAIN SERVICES

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:20): There is no clearer example of the Government focusing on the wrong priorities than the fact that seats at Sydney stadiums are prioritised ahead of more seats on South Coast trains. Yesterday, like almost every weekday, rail passengers travelling to Wollongong on the South Coast railway line were forced to stand for much, if not all, of their journey or to sit on the stairs or in the vestibule area. Welcome to the Wollongong commute. This is, in part, because two of the afternoon services from Central are four-car, not eight-car, services and weekend services are similar. Recently, one constituent mentioned that to get a break from standing they went and sat in the toilet for a while, as this was the only seat available. For those members who do not realise, it takes the 3.25 p.m. service from Central 89 minutes to reach Wollongong. I encourage any member who considers it acceptable to stand for that period of time to join me on a trip to Wollongong on one of these services.

I have raised this problem and other problems on the South Coast railway line multiple times with the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, both in this Chamber and through direct correspondence. The response from the Minister defies any real understanding of the issue or sympathy for passengers. As I have previously pointed out, the Minister claims that there are no additional carriages available to turn these afternoon services into eight-car services. It makes me wonder how maintenance is undertaken on carriages if there are no additional carriages available to replace carriages on peak services. How can a transport system be mismanaged in such a way as to end up with no extra carriages available for peak services? I do not believe that there are no carriages available in the entire network to add to these services, nor can Wollongong commuters. But it gets worse.

Not content with a flimsy excuse about carriages, the Minister suggests that we should be satisfied with what the Government has done to improve services. Incredibly, he cites a timetable change in 2014, which was only introduced to correct a massive oversight on the Government's part. Commuters have basically been told to sit quietly—if they can find a seat—and wait for the new intercity fleet to arrive. Apparently, the fewer seats on the new intercity fleet services is the panacea for commuter ills. A date when the new fleet will be used on the South Coast railway line remains as elusive as the additional carriages that are needed right now.

There appears never to have been the consideration of additional services on this line to match the twice hourly off-peak services that travel to Newcastle. Why? Because the line is full when it comes to passenger services. Why? This in part dates back 30 years to the Greiner Government. That is right, this year we mark the dubious 30-year anniversary of the then Greiner Government cancelling construction of the Maldon-Dombarton rail link, which would have enabled passenger and freight rail services to be largely separated. This is the single biggest improvement that could be made to the line and one necessary for future improvements to be made.

This year marks 30 years since the pre-1988 election commitment from Mr Greiner that "a Coalition Government will complete this railway by 1991". This was followed by a commitment from the then shadow Transport Minister Bruce Baird in February 1988: "The completion of the Maldon-Dombarton rail link is a Coalition priority". They were locked in, but soon after coming into government, the Greiner Government cancelled construction. Thirty years on and almost eight years into this Government, the Maldon-Dombarton rail link, despite its logic, its support and its extremely positive benefit-cost ratios remains on the Berejiklian Government backburner.

Sadly, I should not be surprised as the current Premier, in her previous capacities as Minister for Transport and Treasurer, systematically—some would say wilfully—ignored Illawarra rail services, despite a community coalition of commuters, councils, union leaders, residents, disability advocates, advocates for older persons and business community leaders advocating for improvements. After all, this is the same former Minister for Transport, former Treasurer and now Premier who cancelled the construction of lifts at Unanderra station almost eight years ago and has fiercely resisted providing the funds to build them ever since—so what should we expect? It is the same Government that will leave commuters struggling with 72 steps to and from the platform at Unanderra station.

We are just 27 days away from the budget, which provides the Government with the opportunity that it has ignored for the past eight years. The 19 June budget is an opportunity for the Government to get serious about passenger rail services in the Illawarra. In the budget, the Government can end the commuter crush. In the budget, it can lift its game on Unanderra station access. In the budget, it can match Labor's \$50 million commitment to work with the private sector to get the Maldon to Dombarton rail link built. The traditional gift for a thirtieth wedding anniversary is pearls, but Wollongong commuters would gratefully accept commitments on South Coast

rail services. If the Government likes these ideas there are other initiatives that it could include in the budget such as automatic train protection systems on this line. It could upgrade the signalling system to allow increased train frequency. It could upgrade Coniston junction and prepare for future investment in the Maldon to Dombarton rail link. Something—anything—would be a good start. Instead, I expect that the 2019 budget, like those that went before it, will be a triumph of wrong priorities over right ones when it comes to the Illawarra.

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE NINETY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:25): Last month I paid my respects to the incredible sacrifices of all former and current service personnel at the Seven Hills RSL dawn service, where it was great to see thousands of locals in attendance. Anzac Day is one of the most solemn days on our national calendar. As is tradition, the Seven Hills-Toongabbie and Wentworthville Sub-Branch members marched from Seven Hills train station at Boomerang Place to the RSL club on Best Road. The sub-branch members were accompanied by fellow service personnel, family, friends, and local groups. In particular, I acknowledge the many young people in attendance that day, including Toongabbie Public School representatives and the Winston Hills Girl Guides. Both groups laid wreaths at the service.

I thank the Seven Hills RSL board of directors for their assistance in hosting the event. The board is led by President Barry Wilson and Vice-President Graham Black, with John Burgess, Warren Evans, Peter Harrington, Bob Mackay, Annie Moore, William North and Graeme Quinn. I also thank the sub-branch, led by President Graeme Quinn, Senior Vice-President and Events Secretary Peter Harrington, Junior Vice-President and trustee John Burgess, Honorary Secretary and trustee Chris Gammage, Treasurer Peter Dwyer, Minutes Secretary Peter Sparrow, committee members Graham Black, Warren Evans, Bill North and Ross Coughran, and trustee Warren Stickens for yet another memorable and touching service. Credit is also due to the Seven Hills RSL staff, who each year help to make the service the best it can be. They provided breakfast and coffee to thousands of local dawn service goers.

After the service, I was delighted to have breakfast at the RSL club with sub-branch Vice President and RSL board director John Burgess and his family. John served as a member of the Royal Australian Air Force. In December 1962 John was deployed to RAAF Butterworth and served two years with the base squadron. Whilst having breakfast, John mentioned that he was going to the Sydney march because his mates and fellow servicemen had called him—as they do each year—to wrangle him to attend the march in Sydney, despite John saying each year that it would be his last march. This is a shining example of how deep mateship still reigns supreme.

It was great to see once again new additions to the memorabilia in the foyer of the Seven Hills RSL. The sub-branch is incredibly proud of its collection, which is viewed by the public and schoolchildren on a regular basis. Anzac Day is so important and gives recognition to our service personnel, who put their lives on the line so that we may continue to live in peace. Anzac Day commemorations such as the Seven Hills RSL dawn service bring our community together, and I am proud to be a part of such a great local community. This year I held an Anzac-inspired creative writing competition for primary school students within the electorate of Seven Hills. After reading through numerous entries, the panel eventually decided on the winner; a poem titled *ANZAC Day* by Jenifer Hobbs of year 5 at Toongabbie Public School. Her poem reads:

The 25th of April is sad.
Imagine if it was your Dad
who fought in Gallipoli
and died miserably.
Hiding in the trenches at risk,

not knowing what's going to happen next.
You couldn't even text.
It is a day we remember with bright red poppies.
On this day we remember how grateful we should be,
how we live in peace with no war, we are FREE!

This poem was written by an outstanding student. It captures the past with an interesting modern twist. Recently I attended an event in Martin Place held by Air Force Association NSW to recognise the ninety-seventh anniversary of the Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF]. I was honoured to lay a wreath at the cenotaph in memory of our fallen servicemen. Two 37 C-130J Hercules transport aircraft marked the occasion with a fly-by over Martin Place after an address by former Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshall Sir Angus Houston, AK, AFC (Ret'd). The commemoration was attended by representatives of the New South Wales Parliament, the Prime Minister, army, navy and RAAF.

The RAAF was formed as an offshoot of the army in 1921, and as such is recognised as one of the oldest independent air forces in the world. At the event, I met Seven Hills electorate constituent Alan Moffat, OAM,

who serves as President of the Royal Australian Navy Communications Branch Association. He is a community-focused man and a stalwart of Toongabbie. In conclusion, I thank the cohesive community of Seven Hills for coming together for such a solemn occasion.

NORTH COAST DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (18:30): The history of the dairy industry on the North Coast spans more than 120 years. It is a proud history, but not one without struggle. Over those years the industry has grown to be worth around \$80 million to the North Coast economy. One company that has shared the journey is Norco. Founded in 1895, Norco is a dairy cooperative that now represents 214 North Coast and south-east Queensland dairy farms, which produce more milk than the 6,000 producers did previously. So it can be understood why the decision to transfer the contract from Norco to another operator has caused unrest in the community. On Friday 11 May the Health Services Union [HSU] in Lismore went public, attacking HealthShare NSW's decision to award the milk contract for the Northern NSW Local Health District to Dairy Farmers.

This decision was the result of a thorough statewide tender process, which subsequently saw Norco lose the contract to supply hospitals on the North Coast. Tenders were called for in September 2017. I was first notified of HealthShare's decision to end Norco's contract on 17 April—nearly a month before the tender decision was released. Three weeks prior to this decision going public, I made representations to the Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard, requesting that he look into the decision and put forward any possible solutions. I make it clear that, despite the HSU and the Labor Party candidate accusing the Government of inaction on this issue, not once did either of those parties make any representations to me or my office. Typical of Labor, it puts out a press release and that is its representation.

I recognise the overwhelming support of the community for not only Norco but also the hardworking dairy farmers and employees of Norco. My office fielded phone calls from people as far away as Sydney expressing their views on the tender process and their support for Norco. On 17 May Minister Hazzard announced that the contract had been overturned and Norco had been reinstated as milk provider to the local health district. We as a government should strive to level the playing field for regional businesses and enterprise. In the dairy industry, increased production costs and inconsistent farmgate milk prices cause many to question the viability of the sector. In his opinion piece on 15 May the editor of the *Northern Star*, David Kirkpatrick, made the following observation about government tender processes: ... if one milk service is cheaper than another, then it's beholden on organisations to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. If it means the difference between saving some dollars on milk, or axing a frontline health service job, then I know which one I would be choosing. But a lot of these assumptions are based on us having an equal playing field in regional areas and when it comes to that we just don't.

I support those comments entirely. Last week I had further meetings with the Minister for Finance, Services and Property, Victor Dominello, to discuss the opportunity for government procurement services in New South Wales to give country and regional businesses a weighting or a loading to support them when they tender for government contracts. Despite initially supporting the HSU going public on this issue, the Labor Party's shadow spokesperson in the other place has fallen short in publicly supporting these measures. He criticised the Government, saying that a decision to source milk for North Coast hospitals from a Queensland company should be made public. I know—and the Hon. Walt Secord in the other place should know—that when the former Labor Government was in power for 16 years it did exactly the same thing with other New South Wales Government contracts. I queried that Government about larger contracts than this one, but it never acted. I again thank the Minister and my North Coast colleagues for their support for Norco.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I thank the member for Lismore and congratulate him on his handling of question time.

EPPING ELECTORATE EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (18:36): I report to the House the excellent work being carried out in my electorate in delivering quality infrastructure for education. As the end of the financial year approaches, I am certain that we can expect another strong budget for New South Wales from the Treasurer. In 2016-17 we recorded a \$5.7 billion surplus, with a surplus of \$3.3 billion forecast for 2017-18. Compare this with what we inherited from Labor: a \$5.2 billion deficit. Among the achievements in last year's budget was the announcement of two new upgrades to schools in the Epping electorate as part of a record funding initiative for education. The Government announced that it would spend \$4.2 billion on new, relocated and upgraded schools over four years—the biggest investment in public school infrastructure in New South Wales' history.

The New South Wales Government is delivering new classrooms at Epping Public School as part of a record \$13.7 billion funding initiative for education in 2016-17. Since April 2011, the Government has delivered

59 new or upgraded schools and provided funding for more than 3,000 new classrooms, providing around 70,000 additional student places. In the Epping electorate we have three major school upgrades underway that will add more than 50 new classrooms. I thank Minister Stokes and his team for delivering them. The major upgrade at Cherrybrook Technology High School—the largest high school in New South Wales—will be completed later this year. Last year I was pleased to join the Premier and the Minister for Education when they visited the school to inspect the progress on this important upgrade.

Principal Gary Johnson and all the staff at Cherrybrook Technology High School do an outstanding job and it is not hard to see why this school has such a great reputation. We are delivering 18 new classrooms under a \$12 million expansion, which includes a new building incorporating general learning spaces, visual arts and multimedia workshops; conversion of existing visual arts and multimedia workshops in block G into two new labs; and five general learning spaces to enable consolidation of science facilities. Cherrybrook Technology High School is also the home of Australia's most famous mathematics teacher, Mr Eddie Woo. He recently received Australia's Local Hero Award as part of this year's Australian of the Year Awards. Anyone who has met him and heard about the difference he has made in the lives of his students knows that he is a very humble man and the recognition is well deserved.

On the other side of my electorate, in Epping and Carlingford, two further school upgrades are planned. Construction will begin soon on major upgrades to Carlingford and Epping public schools that will provide new and improved classrooms and facilities. When the Government announced these upgrades last year I visited the schools with the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, the member for Kiama. We spent time with the staff and representatives from the parents and citizens association [P&C]. Epping Public School principal John Ford and Carlingford Public School principal Neil Hinton lead a great team of teachers, some of whom we met during our visit. It was also great to catch up with John Chung from the Epping Public School Parents and Citizens' Association. They told us what a massive difference these upgrades will make to their schools and how happy they were to be receiving these extra classrooms and facilities.

The upgrade at Carlingford Public School will include 20 new classrooms, a new hall and upgrades to other facilities, including the school's library. At Epping Public School we are delivering 22 new classrooms and an upgrade to other important school facilities, including a new library, special programs rooms and an administration area. I am pleased that the Government is able to deliver the infrastructure these schools need to meet the challenges of a growing community, and to continue providing quality education for the families in my electorate. I mention also the continued success of funding specific programs through the Community Building Partnership program. This is another great way that I am able to support schools in my electorate through grants to their parents and citizens associations.

For example, we provided \$20,000 to Cheltenham Girls High School for its Pathways to Sport program; \$50,000 to Cherrybrook Public School to improve and extend its covered outdoor learning area; \$15,000 to Epping Public School to fence the sports field; \$49,000 to Roselea Public School to create a disability inclusive playground area; and \$50,000 to Carlingford High School to add seating to its covered outdoor learning area project. I am proud to be part of a forward-thinking government that is delivering for the people of New South Wales, and I am proud of the projects we are constructing in my electorate. I thank the Government for its commitment to delivering quality education and quality education infrastructure.

TOUKLEY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:41): I raise an issue that was brought to my attention by Adele Sands, who lives in Toukley. She has made some very good points about a proposed development in that area. It rang alarm bells as soon as I saw it. Toukley is an area consisting of single-dwelling houses. A local developer has consolidated some blocks and wants to build a four-storey, 34-unit development. The brand-new area of Warnervale, which has a lot of greenfield development, is zoned low density—that is, single and two-storey dwellings. But the older suburbs are being rezoned to medium density, which is changing the flavour of those communities. This is such a proposal.

There are some issues with this proposal. The developer had to withdraw the original application and submit an amended development application [DA]. However, it has not changed significantly enough to address the issues raised in the submissions from local residents. There are some significant issues in the area. One that has been highlighted is that the development is very close to the Beachcomber Hotel. The hotel attracts large crowds to events, but unfortunately the patrons often engage in unsavoury behaviour outside the hotel. This is not the fault of the hotel, which has employed many staff, but when patrons start walking home it is very hard to control them. A few years ago there was a murder across the road from the hotel, which upset the local community significantly. The developer wants to build this block of units virtually opposite the Beachcomber Hotel, even though on Friday and Saturday nights there is already pressure on car parking in local streets.

There are significant traffic and safety issues. The developer's own crime risk assessment report conducted by Barr Property & Planning, which was submitted with the DA, states that the overall crime risk rating for the project has been assessed as high due to the characteristics of the area. The developer is acknowledging already that it is building in a high-risk area and will potentially put vulnerable people into a recognised high-risk area. The issue of parking has not been addressed at all in the amended development application [DA]. In fact, the amended DA proposes fewer parking spaces. The public transport in the area is limited and unreliable. Anyone who knows the area would know the main road of Toukley. There is only one way in and out; traffic must cross the bridge. There are already traffic issues there.

Most dwellings these days have one or two vehicles so we could expect 60 or 70 cars and, at the very least, 35—one per unit. The allowance is certainly for fewer cars than that. Tamar Avenue cannot support two-way traffic; it is a single-lane street. Further, it cannot support cars parking on one side of the street unless they park on the grass verge or median strip. A nursing home is due to be built backing onto Tamar Avenue. The report attached to the approval for the nursing home states that Tamar Avenue could not be used for entry or exit to the development. The report says, "The existing condition, width and form of Tamar Avenue is poor, narrow and suited to local access only." So the report on the development right next door to the proposed housing acknowledges the traffic problems around Tamar Avenue.

To be more specific about council's own planning, I note that the proposed development application does not fall within the objectives of the medium residential zoning. The objectives of the R3 zone are to provide for the housing needs of the community within a medium-density residential environment; to provide a variety of housing types within a medium-density residential environment; to enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day-to-day needs of residents—which is why the aged care development will be built there—and to maintain and enhance the residential amenity of the surrounding area. This development certainly does not do that. There are a whole lot of issues with this development. In other areas, like Ryde, there is a moratorium on these sorts of developments. Members on the other side of the House have asked for a moratorium on developments in their electorates. I ask that there be a moratorium in areas like these and that higher-density developments take place in the newer areas.

UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE SPORTS AMBASSADORS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (18:46): I take this opportunity to inform the House of the very talented sporting Hatch family who reside in Singleton in the Upper Hunter electorate. This family competes in the sport of archery all around Australia and internationally. They are talented and accomplished archers consisting of Matt Hatch, who is the dad and coach; Bec Hatch, who is the mum and manager; Brodie Hatch, who is 16 years old; Jamie Hatch, who is 13 years old; and Josie Hatch, who is 11 years old.

Within the Australian archery community there are not many people who have not heard of team Hatch. Most families have only one to three shooters, but the Hatch family is a team of five who shoot competitively, and this makes them somewhat unusual. Matt Hatch took up archery as a child, competing nationally and internationally and winning three junior world titles. He still holds a world record. In 2014 Matt picked up his bow and taught his two boys, Brodie and Jamie, how to shoot. Not long after that, Bec and Josie learned how to shoot as well. Matt, Bec, Brodie and Josie shoot with compound-style bows, whilst Jamie, due to his dream of one day competing at the Olympics, shoots a recurve-style bow. During the last four years, the Hatch family has competed in all four archery codes within Australia—Australian Bowhunters Association [ABA], International Field Archery Association [IFAA], 3D Archery Association of Australia [3DAAA] and Archery Australia [AA]—and with outstanding success.

At this point, I advise the House of some of the latest achievements of the Hatch family. Josie Hatch, who is 11 years old, in 2018, competing in AA, was selected to compete in the 2018 Australian Trans-Tasman team, where she won silver in her individual ranking round. She was selected for the 2018 New South Wales youth State team to compete at the National Youth Archery Championships, where she won silver and three bronze medals in her events. In the IFAA, she came first in the State championships.

Jamie Hatch, who is 13 years old, was selected in the AA for the 2018 New South Wales youth State team to compete at the National Youth Archery Championships. He won gold for overall best recurve team, silver for the field event, and bronze for the short course event. In the IFAA he was first at State championships. Brodie Hatch, who is 16 years old, was selected in AA for the 2018 Australian trans-Tasman team, where he won two bronze medals for his team events. He was selected for the 2018 New South Wales youth State team to compete at the National Youth Archery Championships. I note that Brodie has been requested to attend the prestigious George Ryles Seminar, which is considered an honour within the sport of archery. In the IFAA he was first at the State championships.

Rebecca Hatch, in 2017 in the 3DAAA was undefeated all year. She was first at the nationals, gaining a record. She was first at the national indoor and New South Wales State series events. She also was named Shooter of the Year. In the AA events Rebecca came first at State indoor event, first in the State field event, first in the State target, first in State short course, and first in the national indoor event. She broke nine State records throughout the year. In 2018 in the IFAA, Matthew Hatch gained a first at the State championships. Unlike a lot of sports, archery does not have an off season. So the Hatch family compete all year round.

I had the pleasure of meeting the Hatch family at their home a few weeks ago. I congratulate them once again—as a family and individually—on their sporting prowess and all their recent successes. They are such an outstanding sporting family with such outstanding talent. They compete around Australia and internationally and they hold some world records. For all five members of that family to compete at such a high level on an ongoing basis, the cost is high. Matthew works in a coalmine and receives a reasonable income but to travel around to compete in these competitions at State, national international levels is costly. It would be wonderful if the community—or even the Government—could find a way to support this outstanding family and defray some of the costs. The members of this family are wonderful sporting people and true ambassadors for Australia and the Upper Hunter.

RUSSIAN VICTORY DAY CEREMONY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (18:51): On 9 May 2018 I joined my local Russian and Eastern European communities to commemorate Russian Victory Day. The memorial service took place at the cenotaph at Waverley Park. It was solemn, dignified and moving, taking place just a couple of weeks after our Anzac ceremonies which captivated our nation. Victory Day, now in its seventy-third year, is a day of both celebration and mourning. It marks the anniversary of Nazi Germany's surrender to the brave and persevering Soviet troops, thereby ending World War II in Europe. With no leadership, no capital and no hope, the last remnant of Germany's forces signed the unconditional surrender to the Allies on 7 May 1945, thus bringing a close to the last open conflict that would envelope Europe.

In Russia and former Soviet states, Victory Day is a national holiday. The streets there echo with triumphant marches and fireworks mark the day as people come together to remember the sacrifices of their country women and men and their families. No matter where we are, we gather annually to sadly remember the incomprehensible loss of life. It is estimated that around 28 million Soviet citizens were victims of the war. Twenty million of them were civilians—everyday people who must always be remembered so that we never take for granted the hard-won freedoms of World War II.

Although on many occasions since World War II it has appeared that the world was once again destined for conflict and destruction, the ghosts of those European battlefields of the first half of the twentieth century have reminded us of the costs of conflict. Sometimes that has proved a hindrance to future conflict. Following the end of the Second World War, Australia welcomed an influx of Russian immigrants who chose Australia to be their home. The eastern suburbs, where my electorate is based, is the area in Australia with the largest proportion of people from the Russian community. It is so wonderful to see such a strong community flourishing. In Bondi, in my electorate, Russian restaurants and specialist stores thrive and Victory Day is a major community event. World War II was intended to divide people by their race, religion and ethnicity, but today we are so lucky to live in a tolerant and peaceful community.

On the day, the memorial service at Waverley Park was generously hosted by Semyon Pinchuk, publisher of the *Horizon Newspaper* and the Russian-Speaking Association, in conjunction with the NSW Association of World War II Veterans from the Soviet Union. It was attended by the Russian Ambassador to Australia, Grigory Loginov, and the Consul General, Sergey Shipilov. My colleagues councillors Sally Betts and Leon Goltsman from Waverley Council joined me at the memorial service, along with Bruce Notley-Smith, the member for Coogee.

Also in attendance were Reverend Father Alexander Korganevsky of the Russian Orthodox Church and Rabbi Yoram Ulman, Spiritual Leader of the Russian Jewish community; the NSW Rabbinic Judge of the Jewish Rabbinic Court; Bronislav Mazur, President of the Russian Social Club; Vladimir Kuzmin, Chief Editor of Russian weekly newspaper *Unification*; Clare Vernon, Chief Executive Officer of JewishCare NSW, and Vice-President Shirli Kirchner; Faina Polonskaya, President of Russian Association Compatriot; Boris Greis with Janna Alifanova from Russian Radio Australia; and Waverley citizen Alexander Hooper Schlack, who served in World War II. I thank Waverley Council for organising the event. It is always an honour to remember those who fought for the freedom that we experience and treasure today. Lest we forget.

KINGSGROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (18:55): Earlier this month I attended the centenary celebrations of Kingsgrove Public School. It was a fantastic day for the whole community to come together and celebrate not only the history of a great school but also the school's future. Kingsgrove Public School opened in 1918 after an application to build a school in the suburb was finally accepted. Six separate applications were lodged with the Department of Education between 1887 and 1913 before one was agreed to in 1913, and land for a public school was finally purchased. Construction began in 1918. It is worth noting that construction began during the First World War, which is a funny idiosyncrasy of this interesting school—that the Government diverted labour power and infrastructure to the building of a school and kept its commitment even during a period of war.

Kingsgrove Public School started out as a single-storey timber structure with just three classrooms. This building is still standing today. By the end of 1918 the school had 147 enrolled students. By 1942 the school population had grown to 1,230 students spread over two campuses. Today Kingsgrove Public School is a rich and diverse multicultural community providing twenty-first century learning. The fantastic staff work hard to ensure they are developing creative, confident and literate citizens. It is estimated that around 500 teachers and 10,000 students have attended Kingsgrove Public School over its 100 years of learning.

Saturday was an opportunity for former pupils, staff and parents to come together with current school community members and share the history of the school by looking at old photos and footage and hearing stories about uniforms, assemblies, favourite teachers, games played at lunchtime, school excursions, carnivals, events and, no doubt, the discipline book. Current students showed off the incredible technology used in classrooms today, while former students told stories of learning before the internet, mobile phones and smart boards. Current school community members gave tours around the school campus to former students and teachers so that they could see the changes to their old school and reminisce and share stories about what it used to be like. There were displays of uniforms, class photos and school performances from over the years, as well as teaching tools and classroom items to show how education practices have changed significantly over the past 100 years. It was wonderful to see so many past and present members of the school community.

In particular, I acknowledge the generous financial support of Kingsgrove RSL, which seems to be on the spot and always available to local community groups, whether it is for grants or to provide extra volunteer help and support. It is a well-led and fantastic community club. It was good to see the community come together to celebrate and remember such a great school. It is such an inclusive and vibrant school community—just like all the public schools in the St George area, which provide quality education to students. I congratulate Kingsgrove Public School on its 100 years of successful and excellent education in a great community and wish the school the best for the coming 100 years.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:59): Tonight I will update the House on the recent dry conditions being experienced in the New England north-west region and in particular throughout the Tamworth electorate. Parts of my electorate have been seriously affected by the drought. I am deeply concerned for the welfare of those families experiencing significant drought conditions not only on their properties but also in surrounding areas and I am concerned about the effect it is having on their welfare. When I talk to these families I witness firsthand the pain, despair and hopelessness they are facing as they experience drought conditions.

The NSW Rural Assistance Authority is an organisation that is heavily promoted to families in need of assistance. The New South Wales Government has a suite of available drought measures that are offered to those needing assistance, whether it be through the Drought Transport Fund, the Farm Innovation Fund, transporting donated fodder, the Animal Welfare Transport Subsidy, or other measures. We try to put families in touch with Local Land Services, which can assist them on the ground to get through this difficult time. DroughtHub is a one-stop online destination for information services and support that is available to primary producers and their families and communities to assist them in preparing for and managing drought conditions. Recently the Deputy Premier visited the Tamworth electorate and saw firsthand the dreadful condition of some of the properties.

Drought affects the whole region but some parts of the Tamworth electorate are still holding on. Some farmers are telling me that they have enough hay, fodder and feed to keep their stock going but they do not know how long they can do that as they do not know when it will rain again. Farmers have dry sown crops in the hope that it will rain and that they will be ahead of the game. Some families have sold their stock and have run out of feed and are in a desperate holding pattern. The needs of each property are different. One property might need a one type of assistance measure to get it through, such as the Farm Innovation Fund, while the farm next door might need assistance with the transporting of donated fodder. Each farm is unique and their needs are different.

I have said to those families who desperately need help to put up their hands because we want to assist them. We need to devise unique assistance packages for every property. Many organisations are looking at ways to fundraise and support families during this time. The agricultural sector is resilient. It has wet times and dry times but it is still a fantastic industry and one that we should support. There is light at the end of the tunnel. It will rain again, the crops will grow and farmers will once again have fat paddocks. I know that many people are praying for rain. For those who desperately need help, the NSW Rural Assistance Authority is the first port of call. It will help farmers identify unique opportunities and drought measures that will suit their farms. At our level, we will continue to do everything we can. My heart goes out to those families in need. We will continue to support our families during this difficult time.

WOOLGOOLGA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (19:04): Once again I speak on behalf of Woolgoolga Surf Life Saving Club and in doing so congratulate President Les Pepper, Rod McKelvey, who is greatly assisting the club, and Peter Brown, a longstanding member, on their efforts to raise funds to rebuild the surf club. Indeed, any building other than a surf club would have been condemned. This surf club has been there for as long as I can remember. The observation deck has fallen off and the clubhouse, which is probably full of asbestos, is leaning and the floor is sinking. In short, it is one hell of a mess.

Woolgoolga Surf Life Saving Club has phenomenal volunteers who have been engaged in a large number of rescues over the years. They have entered many surf carnivals and have done Woolgoolga and the Coffs Harbour electorate proud. I commend Federal member Kevin Hogan, who obtained \$1 million in Federal funding to help rebuild the clubhouse, but unfortunately the rebuild will cost a little over \$3 million. Some \$350,000 has been received in ClubsGRANTS funding and the club has some funds but there is still a significant shortfall. The benefit-cost ratio [BCR] as presented for surf clubs in New South Wales is 46:1. The club has not met the requirement on any application made for regional road funding or regional development funding. I am at a loss to understand why the club could not meet those requirements when it does such a great job in protecting not only the citizens of Woolgoolga but also the thousands of tourists who visit during holiday periods. The club has sought an opinion from a local solicitor about construction of a new clubhouse and the existing clubhouse. In part, the legal opinion states:

We note that the Club has complied, as far as it can, with the actions for tasks required by the audit and that some of the defects have been rectified (e.g. removal of the steel structure and upper deck and repair and re-piering of the lower deck). We note, however, that some of the defects identified in the Audit cannot be removed, fixed or replaced without major structural renovation. For example the following:

- Replacement of concrete piers ... underpinning the building in the area described as External South.
- Structural integrity of piers and external walls in area described as "Gym" is very poor and the suggested solution is to fix piers and "knock down or straighten" external walls.
- Replacement of floor in the boat store.

It goes on to state:

The possible ramifications for the Club not being able to comply with the statutory obligations for safe premises for its members and invitees are:

1. The risk that an insurer of the Clubhouse will not be required to meet a claim due to non-compliance with its statutory obligations. This is especially so when items such as asbestos and non-compliance of entry and exit stairs are identified in the building.
2. The risk that a statutory body (acting on its own volition and beyond Surf Life Saving NSW audit requirements) carries out a workplace safety audit and identifies other aspects of non-compliance with Work place and Safety Laws.

The purpose of regional funds is to support the regions. Yet this surf club, with its hundreds of members, currently stores its rubber duckies and other equipment externally. When a rescue operation is required it may take 25 or 35 minutes—indeed up to an hour—to get the rescue equipment, putting at risk the lives of the people the lifesavers are trying to help. I implore the Government to provide the additional funds this club needs to build the new surf club.

Council and the lands department have held up the process in the past. I urge everyone to get on with the job and give these great volunteers, who have raised a lot of money and who provide a great service to the community, the money they need to build their new building. I was amazed when Lismore was granted \$4.9 million for a new baseball stadium, which is for recreation. Members of the Woolgoolga surf club save lives and with a BCR of 46:1 it is imperative for the Government to provide the additional funds required to build a clubhouse at the earliest possible time. Council has approved the development application, despite it being a long-winded affair, and funds are needed now to build the clubhouse to ensure the safety of locals and tourists alike.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:09): Today I speak about National Volunteer Week, which is an annual celebration that acknowledges the generous contribution of our nation's volunteers. I will use my time today to acknowledge the contribution of North Shore volunteers. It is particularly pertinent to start with the work of my local State Emergency Service [SES] units as this is Wear Orange Wednesday. First, I acknowledge Mosman SES unit, including Vanden Helby, Philip Cleary and the many volunteers. I look forward to seeing them again this weekend at the Balmoral Burn, which will raise funds for the Humpty Dumpty Foundation and its lifesaving contribution to children in hospitals. For many years Mosman SES has supported the Balmoral Burn and supports Anzac Day services locally. I congratulate them and look forward to recognising them more formally at their presentation night in June.

North Sydney SES unit is represented by Controller Dale Harley. I acknowledge Alan Price, who recently celebrated 25 years of service to North Sydney SES, and community engagement officer Morag O'Gorman. Earlier this year, the Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing and I presented her with an award for outstanding service to the community. Morag joined the NSW SES in 2000 and has made significant contributions through her public engagement work to keep our community aware, resilient and safe. A number of volunteer-led clubs in my community contribute so much to the local community.

Balmoral Sailing Club is run by a dedicated group of volunteers. I thank the club's board—Graham Hanna, David Johnson, Laurie Hoffman, Will Jones, Nick Collis-George, Anita Daum, Murray Freeman, Marco Teering and Roly Webb—for their tireless work and contribution to the club. I was glad to join them at their presentation night last weekend to celebrate their contributions. Impact 100 Sydney North is a wonderful group that works to raise money for worthy causes where \$1,000 per person donations are brought together and crowds determine where the lump sum of money will go. I congratulate co-founders David Day and Tina Jackson, Gill Dryland, Andrew Everingham and Fairlie Ruggles.

A number of Rotary clubs do significant work in the community, particularly during the Red Shield Appeal, which was underway in the Mosman area last weekend and will be in the North Sydney area this weekend. North Sydney Rotary club leaders include Silvio Gmur, John Taylor, Tammy Chu, Sam Lee, Doug Garner, Kevin Thomas and Jenny Thomas and I acknowledge also their many members. Mosman Rotary club members include President Derek Andrew, Ken Palmer, Peter Young, Leigh Morgan, Seymour Major and many others who are always within our community supporting and running programs.

My own branch of Rotary, North Sydney Sunrise, is very ably led by Iain Clark. I know they will be out on Sunday working for the Red Shield Appeal. Crows Nest Rotary President Alon Beran, along with President elect Mark Staples, Owen Houston, John Saunders, Peter Coote, Michael McQueen, Sue Raveane, Ian Pocock, George Condell, Phillip Smith and Tom Sweeney do a great job supporting our community. I will be joining them this coming Saturday in Crows Nest to fundraise for the Red Shield Appeal. A number of local coordinators run the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal locally, including Mosman's Penny Murray and Meredith Hellicar and fellow local volunteers Elwyn Grigg and Debbie Hindle. I note that the North Sydney region is also well supported in a volunteer capacity by my colleague the Federal member for North Sydney, Trent Zimmerman.

I acknowledge also a number of other clubs and sporting organisations, including Middle Harbour Amateur Sailing Club, which is led by Commodore Chris Kelleway, alongside Vice Commodore Graham Jennings, Jonathan Brown, Diana Sissingh, Rob Lowndes, Sean Atherton-Feeney and Warwick Foy. A couple of weekends ago I went to the premises inspected some work that the club has undertaken with the help of some government grants. I acknowledge the North Sydney Community Centre volunteers, including John Coffey, Lynn Oswald, Helen Ritchie, Beate Reinhardt, Norma Molloy, Drew Truslove, Ashley Macpherson and Rosemary Garrett. Were it not for time constraints, I would go on to mention many other organisations and volunteers. To each of those organisations, I say a heartfelt thank you for all that they do.

STREET RACING

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:14): Over the past five months, nearly every night, as soon as Pemulwuy families put their children to bed, the residential streets of Pemulwuy have been taken over by hoons and street racers. I have received regular reports that gangs of 30 to 40 young people have brought heavily modified vehicles into Pemulwuy and have been street racing until the early hours of the morning. Pemulwuy families are frustrated with this issue and have had enough of this antisocial behaviour. Local resident Glen Pollard wrote to me in March, saying:

... the crowd started to gather at 3pm, probably 15 or so. Street racing, on both sides of the road was the event of choice. By 6pm the group had grown to 30 or so, and all the previously mentioned anti-social behaviour was on display.

He goes on to state that the group played games with the police, running and hiding, utterly unafraid of law enforcement and showing nothing but contempt towards the police and local residents. Silvana Corti wrote to me in April, stating:

We have had a number of young P-Plate drivers come into our street night after night with their loud cars driving in an unsafe, unlawful manner, disturbing the peace. They congregate on the street at night, stopping cars from passing freely. We need you to make sure that the local police are aware of these events and are working on a way to stop these disturbances once and for all, and to restore the community to the safe, quiet, family-oriented neighbourhood we are all entitled to live in.

These matters came to a head last Sunday night when a car that was street racing crashed into three parked vehicles. The perpetrator was trapped in his vehicle and was unconscious for more than 30 minutes and local residents suffered massive damage to their property. Emergency services needed to cut the driver from his car. Both the owner of the crashed vehicle and his street-racing mate rightfully had their licences suspended. In my opinion and in the opinion of the local residents of Pemulwuy, that is not enough. I am disgusted by these reports. People have a right to peace and quiet and there is no place in our neighbourhood for this criminal behaviour. We have been working hard with NSW Police at Cumberland Police Area Command and with local Cumberland councillors to put an end to this misbehaviour.

The anti-hoon measures that have been put in place so far include introducing alcohol-free zones in the area, installing closed-circuit television to assist police to identify offenders, building a fence around the Pemulwuy lookout; installing additional lighting, increasing the number of police patrols across the area, and installing speed humps along the major thoroughfares. But Sunday night has demonstrated that these measures have not been enough to deter these criminals from our streets. Yesterday and again today I met with the New South Wales Minister for Police about this matter. Enough is enough; we need decisive action. If weeks of community outrage and corrective measures will not fix this issue, the law must be changed to empower the police to deal with this matter and bring it to a close. If this is happening in my community, it is surely happening in other communities as well. These hoons have no regard for the safety of our families. New laws must be made. Pemulwuy resident Eugene Byelyakov sent me an email on Monday, writing:

I'm asking that you consider changing legislation which would forbid anyone on P-Plates from operating modified vehicles.

Mr Byelyakov has my full support for such a measure. I would go one step further. If these criminals are caught making our streets unsafe, they should be made to understand that there are tangible consequences to their actions. These hoons need to be targeted in a way that hurts them the most. Their cars should be seized by police and destroyed. In Victoria, under legislation introduced by the Labor Government, more than 100 cars are crushed every month to deter street racing, excessive speeding and drink-driving. Queensland police crushed 40 offending vehicles a day in 2013 alone.

In South Australia, under Labor Government legislation, 42,000 cars were impounded between 2010 and 2017, and 2,000 cars were used in crash testing. Similar legislation has been considered in both Western Australia and Tasmania. These hoons' cars should be seized and impounded and, after a quick court process, they should be forced to watch as their cars are taken to a wrecking yard and their prized possession is crushed in a compactor. I look forward to working with the Pemulwuy community to make these penalties law and to rid our community and our streets of these criminals.

SMALL BUSINESS TAXATION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:19): Having grown up in a small business family I know how hard people in small business need to work to be successful. As members would know, I have always been an advocate for small business on the floor of this House and will always stand up for people who, more than anything else, simply want government to get out of the way. It does not require a government white paper, working group or department—just let people in small business use their skills and entrepreneurial spirit to determine their future. Members of the House would be aware that I have frequently raised payroll tax in this place. Of all the revenue-raising measures open to a government, this is the one I most detest.

Whilst I appreciate that government must raise revenue to spend on infrastructure, health and education, the way we do this must be carefully considered. The way governments raise revenue must be fair and reasonable but it should not act as a handbrake on jobs, prosperity and opportunity. Today I use the time of this House to bring forward the plight of people who do not often get political, who do not have the time to organise and who do not have a union but who are often casualties of a bureaucratic war of over-regulation and excessive taxation. These people are the men and women, the hardworking people who run the largest employer group in our State—small business.

In New South Wales, the present payroll tax-free threshold is \$750,000. That threshold is simply too low and is an anti-competitive barrier for our State. Let us compare this threshold to other jurisdictions. In the Australian Capital Territory the threshold is \$2.1 million, in the Northern Territory it is \$1.5 million, in Tasmania

it is \$1.25 million, in Queensland it is \$1.1 million, in Western Australia it is \$850,000, in New South Wales it is \$750,000 and in the People's Republic of Victoria it is \$650,000. I say to the Government: we must do better. Today in this House I want to ensure that all our small businesspeople are not the forgotten people. I will read some of their comments onto the record.

Chance Hanlon is the owner of Hanlon Windows Pty Ltd in my electorate. The company's wages bill is \$2,184,149 and it pays \$110,672 in payroll tax. The business employs 82 people and would put on more people if the payroll tax-free threshold was increased. Ron Arthur is the owner of Nowra Truck and Tractor Repair Pty Ltd. To the end of April the business has paid wages and superannuation of \$2,390,367 and has paid for the same period \$83,312.00 in payroll tax over eight months. As Stephen Cartwright, the Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Business Chamber, quite rightly says:

Payroll tax is a tax on jobs and job creation. Increasing the payroll tax threshold from the current \$750,000 threshold to \$1 million will help small businesses, particularly those in regional NSW to grow and employ more staff.

A survey of members by the NSW Business Chamber reveals the tax administration costs for the typical business just over the payroll tax threshold are around \$10,000. This suggests a business with a payroll of \$800,000 would pay just \$2,725 in payroll tax but would incur \$10,000 in tax administration costs. As a local member of Parliament, I hear on a regular basis that businesses are actively avoiding taking on new staff for precisely this reason. To ensure continued investment and growth it is essential that New South Wales has a tax regime that is competitive with other States and Territories. Businesses approaching the payroll tax threshold are reluctant to hire more staff, not only because they become liable to pay payroll tax if they employ additional staff but also because they become subject to the reporting and compliance requirements associated with lodging payroll tax returns.

I have noted in my time in this place that sometimes government thinks it knows best. I have seen job generation programs come and go. I have seen grant programs and funds thrown around the State in a so-called effort to generate jobs. I have a message for Executive government: If costs on businesses are reduced, the businesses will reinvest and grow the economy—not through government knowing best but by allowing business to do what it does best. In South Australia, my good friend and new Premier Steven Marshall is addressing this issue. That government will scrap payroll tax for all small businesses in South Australia to create more jobs. From 1 January 2019 the South Australian Liberals plan for businesses with taxable payrolls of up to \$1.5 million to be exempt from paying any payroll tax. Premier Marshall stated, "Payroll tax is a tax on jobs and it prevents small and medium businesses from creating more jobs for South Australians." I call on the Treasurer to deal with this issue in this budget to free up small business and to allow this Government to provide a clarion call for economic freedom that backs our State's small businesses.

COST OF LIVING

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) (19:25): This Government understands the impact that cost-of-living pressures have on people and families across our State, which is why it is working hard to ease the cost of everyday living for people and families through the Active Kids Rebate program, CTP green slip refunds and much more. As members, we come into this place to try to make a difference to the lives of people in our community. We especially want to improve the lives of the disadvantaged and those in need in the community. As the colder winter nights have begun, one real concern that continues to arise within my community is electricity bills. Residents sit in the cold because they cannot afford to pay their bill.

The electricity is being disconnected from houses across the country. In the last financial year approximately 110,000 houses across Australia had their electricity disconnected. In New South Wales approximately 27,500 houses had their electricity disconnected. It is a direct result of energy price increases. It is not acceptable. This stuff happens in Third World nations—not in Australia, not in East Hills. Despite households purchasing electrically efficient light globes, switching off power points and following power-saving tips, they still worry about turning on their lights and heaters. These people are living in darkness because prices are high.

Prices are a function of supply and demand. As our population increases demand will continue to increase, so we must address the fundamental of supply. It concerns me that because of greed power stations such as Liddell are closing, thereby not allowing other operators to continue the operation. This profit for the company is at the expense of customers: everyday families, people and businesses across our State. According to the Australian Energy Market Commission's 2017 Retail Energy Competition Review and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Retail Electricity Pricing: Preliminary Report, one of the main reasons for the shortage in supply is the lack of certainty in the electricity industry. Energy companies and political parties must understand that this is affecting people.

Each week I have people come into my electorate office explaining how the high prices are impacting on their daily lives. Australians are a very proud and passionate people. They do not want to tell others they cannot

afford to pay their electricity bill and they will not reach out for help. When I was a child growing up and living in a housing commission area with my mum, I remember her struggling to pay the rent and the electricity bill to keep the power on. She would not tell anyone. As an elected representative for the whole of the East Hills community, it is my duty to make sure that they are not suffering in silence. As a government, it is our responsibility to do something about it. The elderly are sitting in the cold because they cannot afford to heat their houses and families have no power to cook dinner. These are real people and this is a real problem that requires real action.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I can relate to your speech.

ALBURY ELECTORATE MUSEUMS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (19:29): Tourists like going to museums. Why? Do we get a kick out of seeing old things? The focus is often on blockbuster exhibitions and basically anything involving dinosaurs or Lego, preferably together. Yet there is a special charm and more unique experience that comes from entering a small museum while touring regional New South Wales. Whereas the major museums in capital cities are well-oiled machines involving numerous staff moving thousands of people around, a country museum is often run by passionate locals who have taken their hobby or interest to the point where there is something valuable to see.

A perfect example is the National Museum of Australian Pottery, found along Albury Street in Holbrook on the Hume Freeway. This clever museum is the brainchild of owners-directors Geoff and Kerrie Ford whose enthusiasm and knowledge drive this centre of excellence. In the museum one can find the greatest collection of historic Australian pottery in the world. The museum is dedicated to Australian pottery from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, covering the period from European settlement to the end of World War I. There are nearly 1,900 items produced by 126 Australian pottery businesses, including works made by the convict potter Jonathan Leak. The collection focuses on domestic pottery, the stuff of ordinary homes and lives—from a butter churn to a cheese cover, a decorated water filter to a bread plate, teapot or jug.

One of the most famous small museums in the Albury electorate is the Jindera Pioneer Museum. Only a 15-minute drive from Albury, Jindera was founded by German immigrants who travelled by wagon from the Barossa Valley, South Australia, in the 1860s. This year Jindera is celebrating 150 years as a town. There are special events throughout the year, with a focus on this wonderful small museum. Essentially, it is a time capsule of that pioneer settlement era, including many of the household products, tins and tinctures one would have found stocked in Wagner's store as well as the blacksmith's shop and an original slab hut. I am pleased to say the New South Wales Government is supporting Jindera's anniversary and its pioneer museum with more than \$100,000 in grants which are designed to boost the celebrations and to restore heritage items.

In Glenroy, near the town of Tumbarumba, deep in timber and wine country, we might stumble upon Australia's greatest museum dedicated to the experience of women in those early, remote and isolated decades of settlement. The Pioneer Women's Hut is not simply about history. Through the exhibits displayed principally in a pioneer hut of the era we gain insight into the ingenuity of these women and their strategies for survival in an often hostile landscape. An offshoot is the Quilt Exhibition Museum, which was established in 2010. It was found that the Pioneer Women's Hut's collection of heritage quilts required more tender loving care. This interest grew out of a Centenary of Federation project to establish a national quilt register. The quilts are rotated on a regular basis and many are displayed on antique-style beds, with a history or story behind each quilt that you can read in passing. The Pioneer Women's Hut and Quilt Exhibition Museum are run by volunteers under the auspices of Snowy Valleys Council.

At the Yarrawonga-Mulwala Pioneer Museum at Mulwala the industries of pioneer agriculture and aviation come together, as they did in Mulwala's farming land in the early twentieth century. In 1913, local pioneer aviator Douglas Sloane designed and built his biplane within the family's woolshed. That Australian aviation design is one of the few to have survived from those innovative times. We are privileged to be able to see an example of the design in the town of Mulwala on the Murray River. Other exhibits include vintage cars, a dental surgery, blacksmith's shop and items used for sport and leisure.

Timed to coincide with the final year of the First World War, the Yarrawonga-Mulwala Pioneer Museum is currently displaying an exhibition exploring the life and work of the famous soldier General Sir John Monash. A key stop on the Ned Kelly Raid Trail is the town of Jerilderie, which is where the Kelly gang settled into the Royal Mail Hotel and Ned delivered what became known as the "Jerilderie letter", outlining grievances and a personal defence. The town is almost a living museum as there are so many places and buildings associated with the Kellys. Focusing on three days the gang spent in Jerilderie in February 1879, the saga reveals itself if you stop at the Old Printery, Willows Homestead, the post and telegraph office and, of course, the bank.

There are 16 Kelly-related sites to visit. One can run the gauntlet from a whipping post to a whipped cream and Devonshire tea, historic flags, shackles and even a jail door. I encourage everyone to get out and about, and visit New South Wales regional areas and our small regional museums. The hours of operation can be easily found on the internet. It will be an experience of passion, expertise and enlightenment, and there will be no waiting in a long queue or a 20-minute walk back to the car. Come down to Albury soon and follow the trail of its marvellous, miraculous small museums.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:34): I raise my concerns about a number of councils in my electorate and a widespread practice in local government that I consider to be unlawful. I call on the Office of Local Government to investigate immediately and put a stop to this practice. It applies both to councillors and to independent hearing and assessment panels [IHAPs] that consider council development applications. The practice of have briefing sessions with councillors behind closed doors has developed in local government. Some councils have abolished their committees, and are having councillors briefing sessions and workshops. Following those private conversations a report is then written, which is publicly available and is reported to councils. I invite the attention of members to the Local Government Act, its provisions and the spirit of the legislation. Chapter 4, which provides for "How can the community influence what a council does? Part 1 Open meetings, section 9 Public notice of meetings" states:

- (1) A council must give notice to the public of the times and places of its meetings and meetings of those of its committees of which all the members are councillors.
- (2) A council and each such committee must have available for the public at its offices and at each meeting copies (for inspection or taking away by any person), of the agenda and the associated business papers (such as correspondence and reports) for the meeting.
- ...
- (3) The copies are to be available to the public as nearly as possible to the time they are available to councillors.
- ...

Section 10 (1) of the Act provides:

- (a) everyone is entitled to attend a meeting of the council and those of its committees of which all members are councillors, and
- (b) a council must ensure that all meetings of the council and of such committees are open to the public

There is an exception under very narrow categories. Councillors must act collectively and the matters that they take into consideration must be subject to public scrutiny. It is improper and unlawful to convey to councillors behind a closed door matters that they consider when ultimately making a public decision. It is inconsistent with the meeting practice note issued by the Office of Local Government under clause 2.3. I have a typical example of a minute of a council meeting—I will not disclose the name of the council—which states that a person, a director, briefed the community on "X", a community engagement strategy that is proposed to be undertaken after the general manager briefing to councillors.

The committee endorsed the proposal of a comprehensive community consultation. In other words, that council admitted to transmitting matters to councillors that are not subject to public scrutiny. The whole premise of local government is not only that councillors act collectively, but also that all the matters they consider must be subject to public scrutiny. The people impacted by council decisions are entitled to know—when they go to council—what is in the minds of councillors, and those meetings must be open. Council planners are briefing independent hearing and assessment panels privately before they consider development applications. Although the reports to those representatives are open to the public, the private discussions are not.

There is no reason for any of those discussions to take place in a private forum. Councils, whether they are through appointed panels or councillors, must be transparent in their considerations and deliberations. This increasingly widespread practice of council bureaucrats is ensuring that councillors are on side before reports are written, which restricts discussion and disputes before the council to a minimum. That is not how democracy works in the third tier of government. All deliberations and all information before councils must be subject to public scrutiny. If they are not, it makes for bad decision-making, is unlawful and contrary to the spirit of the Local Government Act 1993. The practice must stop.

PROBLEM GAMBLING

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:39): Gambling is an activity undertaken by many Australians, with 80 per cent of Aussie adults engaged in gambling of some kind, which is the highest rate of gambling in the world. Approximately 4 per cent of our adult population plays the pokies every week. The Central Coast has a higher prevalence of problem gambling than the New South Wales average, ranked only second to Western Sydney. Our

young men between the ages of 18 to 24 are the State's biggest pokie addicts—the highest risk group for problem gambling. These young men are the biggest players of poker machines in New South Wales. I speak in support of these young men and their families being able to access assistance for their addiction. Chris Davidson, who has been counselling gamblers on the coast for nearly 20 years, says that "if it's alcohol, ice or any other drug, you can tell if someone's addicted, but with a gambling addiction you can't tell as easily, which is making it a hidden crisis for the region."

The Gosford electorate has approximately 1,928 poker machines spread across 37 venues. That is the equivalent of one poker machine for every 71 adults. In 2010-11 venues in the Gosford electorate made approximately \$95,865,000 in profit from pokies, with only a portion of that going directly back into the community in the form of club community grants. That equates to \$700 for each adult member of the Gosford population. Community Connections revealed that 373 people sought help for problem gambling at local services in 2015-16. I praise those people seeking help and I encourage others to get support to kick their habit. Central Coast Gambling Help emphasises the importance of supporting not only the problem gamblers but also all those around them who are impacted. Families suffer greatly when a family member throws their weekly income into pokies, creating financial stress that feeds into other impacts, including domestic violence, divorce and suicide.

In 2008 Central Coast Gambling Help carried out a survey of 200 young people aged 13 to 24 years and found some shocking results: 96 per cent of people aged 18 to 24 years had gambled for money or possessions; 62 per cent of those aged under 14 years and 77 per cent of those aged up to 17 years had gambled for money or items, including mobile phones; 25.5 per cent of 14- to 17-year-olds and 55 per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds had lost more than they had intended; 6 per cent of those aged under 18 years had played a poker machine. Central Coast Gambling Help advocates also expressed concerns about the increasing ease with which young people access gambling on their mobile phones. While they are not yet gambling money, kids are training to access the bells and whistles, wins and all the psychological benefits of pokie-like opportunities and potential addictions on their handheld devices. Even more frightening is that some of these websites are allowing our young people to invest their phone credit in gambling.

Members in the New South Wales Parliament will soon need to investigate the possible protective mechanisms within these devices to protect our young people and their families, many of whom can ill afford to foot these bills. I commend all those at Mingara Recreation Club at Tumbi Umbi who have supported the introduction of a gambling counsellor at their club. It should be noted that in the first six weeks at the club 40 new clients sought access to this counsellor for help with their gambling addictions. I know many clubs on the Central Coast and across the State are working to reduce their reliance on income from pokies by increasing other profit-making activities and serving up improved food and beverage options. These clubs are a big part of our community and they have a great opportunity to be a community meeting place. They should be looking to be more than a place to have a punt.

I look forward to the time when clubs provide even more family friendly opportunities and encourage new customers to walk through their doors, even those who thought a club was not for them. While clubs are working hard to minimise the impact of pokies, we must do more. Recently I was advised by a constituent that they have seen gambling advertisements on trains. While I hope this is not true, I will be asking questions of the Minister about it this week. Gambling advertisements still litter our television screens, despite restrictions on hours. We must work constantly to minimise their impact and their air time. I encourage anyone who knows they need support to take the first step: Google Gambling Help or call the gambling helpline on 1800 858 858.

WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:44): As members are more than aware, today is Wear Orange Wednesday [WOW], which is a day to celebrate the work of our tireless State Emergency Service [SES] volunteers. As members can see, I took the memo very seriously. Cootamundra is protected and served by two SES regions—Murrumbidgee and Lachlan—which have 11 units in the electorate. Bringing attention to the phenomenal commitment and selfless drive of these volunteers is significant, but one day of recognition pales in comparison to the many decades served by volunteers in the Cootamundra electorate. I am the thirteenth and newest member of the Junee unit, No. 40040872.

Local Controller Mick Webb has been in the service for more than 10 years, spending six of those in the top job. Deputy Controller Brett Porter has served 20 years as a volunteer, which is closely followed by Michael Anschaw who has racked up 19 years of service. Kira Lewis has served 10 years as a volunteer and Daniel Wattie has served eight years as a volunteer. The rest of the crew—Jeff Guymmer, Andrew Muir, Taylor Whitton, Chloe Webb, Mal-a-kai Hi-a, Lee Rowe and Nick Rowe—have between four months and six years of service. The volunteers never ask for anything in return and it is my honour to wear orange in Parliament today, which goes a tiny way towards acknowledging them for their service.

Six of the seven local units in the Murrumbidgee region—Coolamon, Cootamundra, Gundagai, Narrandera, Junee and Temora—are in the Cootamundra electorate. Lachlan is served by the Gooloogong, Grenfell, Cowra and West Wyalong units. With such a huge electorate and so many longstanding members, it would be impossible to recognise the hundreds of incredible members individually. The Cootamundra and Gundagai units alone have more than 60 full-time and spontaneous volunteers combined. One of them is Joe Bond from Gundagai, who served in the Gundagai Rescue Squad before becoming a founding member of the local SES unit in the early 1970s. With more than 40 years of service, Joe has been described by his local controller, Ross Tout, as "incredibly dedicated" and "always there". Laurie Reid, who is from the West Wyalong unit, has more than 10 years of service. Today I am wearing orange for every SES member in my electorate—from Gundagai in the south-east to West Wyalong in the north-west and everywhere in between.

WOW is about celebrating the volunteers who put the community ahead of themselves. I hope their day has been full of support and recognition from their communities, friends and families whom they serve so well. The SES performs a number of vital roles during storms and emergencies, including tarping roofs in howling winds, rescuing people and animals from floods, attending serious road accidents, clearing fallen trees, coordinating community education programs, and searching for missing people. They give up their time to train for and respond to emergencies and natural disasters 24/7. In the Cootamundra electorate they are mobile, often travelling hundreds of kilometres to neighbouring units and towns in times of crisis. They stop at nothing to help. It is important that this Government and we as individuals help and support them too. We know that being a first responder can take its toll.

In 2016 this Government launched a world-first collaborative Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for emergency services organisations. Today I encourage all serving or former SES members who are struggling with their experiences to speak up and seek help through their peers, seniors or resources such as beyondblue. It is also important that we acknowledge the NSW Police Force, the NSW Rural Fire Service, Fire & Rescue NSW and the Ambulance Service of NSW for their vital work and the collaboration of all first responders for the safety and good of our communities. Although today has been about recognition, I hope it has spurred a few people to sign up. Junee is always looking for new members. If Mick can find jobs for me in Junee, anyone can join and make a contribution. I thank the SES volunteers in the Cootamundra electorate. They are true blue—and orange—heroes for the sacrifices they make to help others. Your service does not go unrecognised.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I admire the member's earrings. I am wearing this dress for Wear Orange Wednesday; I am not a Tigers supporter. I am a Jets and a Knights supporter. I call the member for Charlestown, who also supports those teams.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:50): I take this opportunity to talk about some important community events that have had an incredible impact on my local community. Last Sunday I had the pleasure to attend the Hunter Blitz on Ovarian Cancer. The charity luncheon raises awareness and funds for women living with ovarian cancer. The event was organised by the former Federal member for Shortland, Jill Hall, who is passionate about helping to find a cure for this terrible disease. The keynote speaker at the luncheon was local ABC Radio presenter Jill Emberson, who gave a heart-wrenching account of her ordeal with the disease. Jill left the ABC two years ago to receive treatment for ovarian cancer. Sadly, Jill's diagnosis is terminal.

Despite being midway through another round of treatment, Jill returned to work at 1233 ABC to record a podcast about the disease. Jill is an incredibly effective advocate for public investment into research for ovarian cancer diagnosis and treatment, which she described as being 40 years old and barbaric. Associate Professor Nikola Bowden from the Hunter Medical Research Institute also spoke about the work she is doing to help save lives like Jill's. Dr Bowden is a graduate of the University of Newcastle and has a 10-year fellowship to undertake research to make ovarian cancer treatment more effective. I thank Jill Hall and all the people who attended the luncheon for their ongoing and tireless efforts to improve the lives of people doing it tough in our community.

Recently I took part in Dementia Australia's Memory Walk and Jog at Speers Point Park. I may have harassed some members to help me raise funds. I ran the 7.5 kilometres in a bid to help those impacted by dementia, which is a condition that will have the greatest social and economic impact of our time. In New South Wales an estimated 138,700 people are living with dementia. The services of Dementia Australia have never been in higher demand. All funds raised from the Memory Walk and Jog increase Dementia Australia's ability to provide vital support services such as counselling, support groups, education to help family carers, and professional training across New South Wales. Those services help to reduce feelings of isolation, and empower people living with dementia and those caring for them. This fundraising event makes sure that Dementia Australia's support is always available to those who need it. I thank everyone who donated to my fundraising effort, especially my parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the House; it was greatly appreciated.

I was pleased to have been a guest of the Hunter Academy of Sport and the Regional Academies of Sport at the official opening ceremony of the 2018 Your Local Club Academy Games. The welcoming ceremony was attended by more than 1,000 athletes and family members. Some of the State's finest young athletes were in the Hunter for the games. Hosted by the Hunter Academy of Sport, events were held at various venues across the lower Hunter between 27 and 29 April. The games brought together the 11 Regional Academies of Sport in New South Wales including the Central Coast, Far West, the Illawarra, Hunter, North Coast, Northern Inland, South East, South West Sydney, Southern, Western Region and Western Sydney. It was the first time that the Hunter Academy of Sport hosted the event after it was passed on from the Central Coast. Representing massive growth from previous years, approximately 1,300 athletes competed in eight different sports including basketball, golf, hockey, netball, softball, surfing, Australian Football League and tennis. I congratulate the academy's chief executive officer, Brett O'Farrell, and his staff on this very professional and well-run event.

On 18 May I joined a number of members of the Hunter business community at the launch of the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal for 2018. The guest speaker was the former Commissioner of Police, Mr Andrew Scipione. He spoke about the triumphs and challenges of leading the NSW Police Force and the support the Salvos had provided to him, his police officers and the community during his lengthy career. The primary goal of the lunch was to raise funds for the Salvos, who play a vital role in our community and offer hope where it is needed most. Whether it is providing shelter, blankets and food to the homeless, giving victims of domestic violence the support to change their situation or delivering programs to help individuals suffering mental illness to make ends meet, every 31 seconds the Salvos make a difference in someone's life. I thank all those who attended the launch for the generous financial support they gave on the day.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I welcome to the gallery Mr Brett Moxham and Ms Therese Smith, guests of the member for Orange.

Private Members' Statements

ORANGE ELECTORATE PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:55): National Palliative Care Week is being held from 20 to 26 May 2018 and this year its theme is "What matters most?" It is fair to say that theme describes the sentiment of the Orange community, who see palliative care in their community as a matter of high priority. More than half of the adult population in Orange indicated that palliative care in their community was something that mattered most to them when more than 10,000 people signed the Push for Palliative petition for a dedicated specialist palliative care facility. It is not often that a community as large as that of Orange demonstrate such overwhelming and cohesive support for any single issue, but they have identified and agreed that—as excellent as their existing medical services are—they lack an essential dedicated space in which to provide residential specialist palliative care. I proudly tabled that petition and it was subsequently debated in this place. Sadly, to date it has failed to remedy the issue.

I was determined to champion this cause so I coordinated a group of stakeholders to help the quest for a dedicated palliative care and hospice facility at Orange advance towards becoming a reality. I also have regular meetings with the palliative care working group, which I chair. The working group comprises representatives from the Western NSW Local Health District, the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service, the Push for Palliative, the Orange City Council, general practitioners in Orange, the Orange Health Service, the Cancer Council and other agencies. I am pleased to advise that recently there have been some promising developments because the working group's cohesion and enthusiasm towards seeing a dedicated palliative care facility, nourished by continued community support, has led to a possible short-term solution. The Dudley Private Hospital in Orange, which is part of Ramsay Health Care, has expressed an interest in entering a public-private partnership with the Orange Health Service to provide a four-bed, four-room facility at that hospital to provide dedicated care for palliative patients.

This proposed public-private partnership would allow patients the option of having their local credentialed general practitioners involved in their palliative care. That would provide for the seamless delivery of health care with unique and unparalleled knowledge of a patients' medical history and background. It would also serve to foster continued trust, which in many cases is forged over a lifetime in the doctor-patient relationships. That is absolutely essential at a time when such assurances can provide relief and reduce anxiety for the patient and their family. This proposal would work similarly to other health services commonly delivered at various satellite local health district facilities—namely, the local health district would be required to fund palliative care services for public patients on a user-pay needs basis.

Recently the acting chief executive officer of the Dudley Private Hospital, Prudence Buist, and I hosted a general practitioner palliative care session to discuss this public-private palliative care proposal. I was encouraged to learn that each of the general practices in Orange supported the concept. I was pleased to discuss the exciting opportunity that this generous proposal will potentially provide to the broader Orange community and to palliative patients and their families, as well as to the general practitioners as they continue to provide health care for their patients. Last Sunday I was honoured to chair a palliative care forum where a number of guest speakers from across the community spoke about the importance of such a facility. That meeting received widespread community support and public interest. It now rests with the Western NSW Local Health District to decide whether it will support the Dudley Hospital proposal. I trust that chief executive Scott McLachlan and the board will see the tremendous benefit this model would provide to the community of Orange.

I acknowledge and accept that most people desire and hope to die in their own home with their loved ones at their bedside. But in many cases that is not possible or practical. There are many circumstances in which palliative patients are unable to be cared for by their families or their homes are not a suitable environment for medical professionals to deliver the necessary care for the patient or respite for the family. Sadly, some patients do not have family to care for them. The reality is that most palliated patients are hospitalised in their final weeks and days. Unfortunately, the Orange Health Service does not provide a dedicated ward for palliative patients or their families.

It is essential that Indigenous people and other communities and cultures are also considered. They should be able to perform their rituals and practices in the palliative care facility both before and after the death of a patient. I understand that the Dudley Hospital has encompassed this consideration in its proposed model. This will build trust between healthcare providers and Indigenous communities. Finally, I acknowledge the amazing, nurses, medical practitioners and clinicians, allied health and other medical staff who dedicate themselves to providing tender care and compassion to palliative patients and their families. Without them, many people in their final months, weeks and days would otherwise be isolated, lonely and scared. The family and loved ones of patients appreciate the support they all provide at the end stage of the lives of their loved ones.

RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (20:00): Tonight I update the House on the provision of school infrastructure in my electorate of Riverstone. When I was selected as the Liberal candidate in 2010—some eight or nine months before the 2011 election—the need for a high school in the Stanhope Gardens region was one of the first issues that was brought to my attention by the residents with whom I met. At that time I was surprised to learn that the Glenwood High School, which was built for a capacity of 1,100 students and was the only high school in that region, had reached almost 1,400 students. The high school required many demountables to accommodate the students and many of the residents in the area had written to complain to their local Labor member of Parliament, who passed it on to the then education Minister. The Minister responded that the Glenwood High School could cope adequately with the need and there was no need to build a new high school at that time.

Anyone familiar with this area would know that in 2010 the growth in that region had by no means concluded. At that time The Ponds was barely starting but there was rapid urban development occurring in Kellyville Ridge and the plans showed many, many thousands of new homes still to come. At that time also many young children were attending primary schools in the area, which should have indicated to anybody who knew anything about education, or indeed simple town planning, that there would be a need for a new high school. So why did the Minister respond that there was no need for a new high school at that time? The short answer is that the Government of the time did not have the money and therefore it was not going to commit to building a high school, even though it was so obviously needed. From that time on, I made it my priority to campaign for a new high school for the region. Proudly, when we were elected to govern I was able to persuade the Minister for Education and the Cabinet collectively to fund the new high school that is now open in The Ponds. What is more, that high school is fairly full as the growth I was talking about earlier continues.

Ms Kate Washington: That was never said to me.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: Later I will return to the point raised in that interjection. At the same time as that was occurring in 2010, the then Labor Government sold the site for the primary school, which had been identified at Sentry Drive and Ponytail Drive in Stanhope Gardens. There are houses there now. We heard from members of the Labor Opposition who recently visited the area that they were concerned about the number of demountables on a school site in a neighbouring suburb. Surprise, surprise: If a primary school site is sold off in Stanhope Gardens then more children will have to go somewhere else.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: So why do you keep doing it?

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: It was the last Labor Government that sold the site; not this Government. We have not sold a primary school site in my electorate. There has been, of course, much rapid growth in the Riverstone electorate—it being the North West Growth Area of Sydney—and thousands upon thousands of new homes are being developed. It would be a very strange thing for a government to sell off a site that had been identified and reserved when the houses continued to grow around it. Yet that was the reality.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: When we came to government we immediately commenced to build new schools. Indeed, in 2015 I had the distinct pleasure of opening three schools in one year in The Ponds: a high school, a primary school and a special purpose school. I do not think many local members have had that privilege. The Government is providing major upgrades to the Schofields Public School, due for completion by mid-2020, the Quakers Hill East Public School also due for completion by early 2020, the Riverstone High School that eventually will have a capacity of 2,000 students, due for completion by mid-2020, and additional facilities at the Riverbank Public School in early 2020.

In the 2017-18 budget the Government committed to building new primary schools in the Alex Avenue Precinct, Schofields, and at Marsden Park, with planning and development work underway. The sites have been secured and we are moving towards the construction phase of those projects so that those two schools will be opened in 2021—at least that is the projected time line at the moment. All of that is happening as part of this Government's record investment in school infrastructure right across New South Wales. I am so proud it is this Government that is putting money where its mouth is.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (20:05): I congratulate the member for Riverstone on his dedication to his community, particularly in the field of education, which presented huge problems when we came to office. My electorate was represented by a Labor member for 49 years straight. His Government closed the Drummoyne Boys High School and the Rhodes Public School, which left a deficit in education facilities in my area. Thanks to this Government's record investment the Lucas Gardens School was knocked down and rebuilt, which was a \$15 million investment, and we have the brand-new Victoria Avenue Public School in Concord West. Russell Lea Public School will be knocked down and rebuilt, and recently we had the pleasure of opening St Patrick's Catholic Primary School in Mortlake. This Government delivers on education; its record speaks for itself. We had 49 years under Labor in my electorate, and it will be another 49 years before it has another Labor member.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:06): I am surprised that we have not heard more from this Government about the Turnbull Government's recent decision to cut \$7 million from our State's coffers without warning. The national partnership was created to ensure that there was consistency of quality in the provision of early childhood education and care services across the country. In a sneaky move, the Federal education Minister Simon Birmingham announced on the morning of the budget that his Government would not be renewing funding for this program for 2018-19.

Currently, New South Wales receives almost \$7 million each year from the Federal Government under the national partnership to conduct the important work undertaken by inspectors and regulators who ensure that long day care centres, preschools, family day care providers and before- and after-school care operators are adhering to the National Quality Framework and keeping our children safe. This funding cut puts at risk the nationally consistent regulatory agenda, which has been rolled out since the Gillard Government introduced these important reforms many years ago. Put simply, the cuts to the funding to the States create a long-term risk to the quality of services and, ultimately, the safety of children.

So, whilst the Turnbull Government is delivering huge corporate tax handouts to big business, it could not find \$7 million to ensure our children are kept safe. With this decision, the priorities of Liberal-Nationals governments are laid bare: They can find \$17 billion in tax cuts for the banks, but they have cut \$7 million for the oversight of early childhood education services in New South Wales. One only needs to look at recent news headlines to see the importance of this funding. When early childhood education and care providers are not up to scratch we see dangerous situations unfold.

We have seen certain providers blacklisted after children with disability wandered away from before- and after-school care centres. We have seen dangerous situations where children have been forgotten or left behind without adequate supervision. The lack of compliance with the quality framework combined with a lack of oversight can only increase risks to children. The Federal Department of Education website lists 50 early childhood service providers from New South Wales who had action taken against them in 2016-17. Sadly, many of those centres are family day care providers. I have spoken in this House before about the risk of fraud in these

centres generated by the Federal Government's inadequate approach to childcare regulation and a less than responsive approach from the New South Wales Government.

The Federal Minister can talk about tough action on dodgy family day care providers, but his words are hollow if he is cutting frontline regulatory staff who assess these services and other early childhood education and care services. Of course, fraud in the family day care sector has the potential to tar all family day care operators, which is incredibly unfortunate and, quite frankly, terrible for the majority of providers, who are of high quality and who continue to play a very important role in the broader early childhood system.

Now, Minister Birmingham made the ridiculous claim that the funding cut was fine because the transition to the National Quality Framework was "well and truly over". Well, everyone in the sector knows that is not the case, and surely the Minister knows that too. There is a need for ongoing implementation of the quality framework. If we fail to do so, we will only lose the gains we have made. In truth, this was nothing less than a shameless cost-cutting exercise. We know that providers are waiting years longer than they should for assessments. In this environment, parents are not being given accurate, up-to-date information about the quality of providers; and providers are not being dealt with fairly. The situation as it stands is unsustainable, and the gains that have been made in relation to quality and compliance are now at risk.

So "business as usual", as Minister Birmingham frames it, is not acceptable. Far from being complete, the transition process must be reinstated—and indeed improved upon. We need more assessment staff, not fewer. We need more resources to detect quality and compliance issues, and ensure that providers are meeting and exceeding standards. We need a cultural shift in the department from adversarial to supportive. Families and children in New South Wales deserve much better, and providers do too. I note that the New South Wales Minister for Early Childhood Education, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC, agrees with me on this issue. She even shared my Facebook status when I posted an article about the unfair cuts. I also note the Minister responded to a question without notice last week in Parliament and said that she had written to Minister Birmingham to communicate her concern.

Early education and care is an important element of the education continuum—indeed, many would say, and studies have shown, that it is the most important. It lays the foundation for children for their schooling over their lifetime. Hidden in the Federal budget, the Turnbull Government has threatened to undo a critical element of the sector, which is quality. The sector cares about outcomes and has no appetite to go backwards. Everyone wants to build on the momentum and see more children accessing the lifeline, which is quality early childhood education and care. For the sake of our kids and the future wealth of our State, the New South Wales Minister must step up to ensure that hard-fought gains are not lost.

NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (20:11): I encourage everyone to participate in National Palliative Care Week, which is being observed this week. It celebrates life whilst asking us all to plan ahead for end-of-life care and discuss those wishes with our family, friends and health professionals. Palliative care is very much in focus in my electorate, with two organisations taking a lead role in raising community awareness. The Volunteers for Palliative Care is a non-clinical palliative care support service providing respite at no cost for palliative care patients, carers and their families. They provide a range of services to ensure people can spend time with the one they are caring for in their home. They work in partnership with and take referrals from the Hunter New England, general practitioners and other palliative care non-government organisations. People can also self-refer into this service.

The volunteers have a very exciting project, which is to establish a hospice in the Maitland area. Their coordinator, Judith Robinson, is a particularly strong advocate, and I know, even from when I was a candidate for election in 2015, she is such a passion advocate for palliative care. I am sure that she will help our community to achieve this goal. A couple of weeks ago the volunteers held a fundraiser for this initiative, which raised a substantial sum of money. I thank all their amazing supporters for their ongoing assistance. The Friends of Palliative Care assist and support the providers of services within the Lower Hunter and are committed to promoting community awareness of the services available to meet the needs of terminally ill patients and their families and carers.

The Friends of Palliative Care recently held its annual walkathon last weekend. I thank them again for all their work to raise funds. Unfortunately, I could not attend their event last weekend—for the first time since I was elected—but I know that I was ably represented by Ms Maitland, Caitlin Hipwell. Maitland does not have a hospice; rather, it has a virtual hospice. In recent years we have struggled with the lack of funding from this Government. In 2016, Maitland had one full-time equivalent palliative care physician. Recently we saw the resignation of that physician, Dr Susan Newtown, who called for—but was not heard for so long—more resources to meet the growing needs of palliative care in our community.

The Government chose to replace her full-time equivalent [FTE] position with a 1.5 position. However, one of the two staff who took up this position has left, leaving us with 0.8 of a palliative care position in Maitland. This is of such concern to the broader palliative care community that Dr Yvonne McMaster visited me in Parliament this week. Dr McMaster told me that a doctor on the Central Coast is willing and able to do the 0.7 of the FTE, but the position has not been advertised by Hunter New England Health.

This is one of those stealthy cuts to health that happens again and again in my community. Positions are advertised, but they are not filled or resourced. This leaves a situation where there is one person doing the job of one and a half people with half of the resources. It is an enormous increase in workload because of the doubling of hospitals that are now covered by the Maitland Palliative Care Service, with the addition of Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Hospital, as well as an intensive care unit at the Maitland Hospital. The task is growing evermore without the resources. A review was promised on the provision of staffing in the palliative care service in Maitland which covers Kurri Kurri, Cessnock and Dungog. The review has not been released, and so the service is unaware of the recommendations to assist in dealing with this great need, or of the Government's intentions.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data released recently, the number of Australians admitted to hospital for palliative care has soared by nearly 30 per cent, increasing from about 57,600 in 2011-12 to almost 74,000 in 2015-16. I assume that figure would be greater today. In 2015-16 cancer was responsible for about half of all admissions and deaths in palliative care patients. This is an enormous crisis in the Maitland community. I have had representations from families, such as the Murphys, who watched their mother suffer night after night without pain relief. There was confusion between the ambulance service, the palliative care team and the local health district as to who could administer injections, leaving this woman languishing in complete agony in the last weeks of her life. Everyone deserves better than that. I call on the Government to fund Maitland's palliative care service properly to ensure that people can die with dignity.

KEMBLA GRANGE PRISON PROPOSAL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:16): I am delighted to report that on Saturday 19 May, 300 residents came together at a public meeting to discuss the Government's proposal to build a prison at Kembla Grange. As this House would be aware, this is the same public meeting that I called for following the blatant contempt and the sham consultation announced by those opposite about this proposal. These residents had every right to be angry. They are concerned and scared, and this Liberal-Nationals Government could not care less. The Government's representative for this region, the member for Kiama, who is the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast, is becoming more childish and disrespectful towards these residents with every passing day. The member for Kiama should be ashamed of himself, but the member has no shame.

Thankfully, the voices of everybody in attendance came together with a single shared message: "We are not against jobs; we are not against a prison. But what we are against is a prison in this location because this location is inappropriate." I thank Troy Wright from the Public Service Association for coming along and speaking to the residents. The response from everyone who attended this meeting is that they really appreciated Troy Wright's expertise and insight into the reality of Corrective Services NSW. I also thank Stephen Jones, the member for Whitlam, for mediating the event and my parliamentary colleagues the member for Wollongong and the member for Keira for attending. I thank Councillor David Brown, Councillor Chris Connor and Councillor Vicky King for coming along and contributing to the discussion. I also thank every person who came along, gave up part of their weekend and spoke passionately and respectfully in the discussion.

Unsurprisingly, there was no mention of the member for Kiama in that list because he could not be bothered to turn up. He was too busy. What was the reason the member for Kiama gave for his absence? He claims he had not been given enough notice. Heads-up, Gareth: I gave you as much notice as I gave to every other person who attended that meeting, and that includes the local, State and Federal representatives. But still the member for Kiama could not turn up. People make time to attend the things that are important to them. Sadly, it seems that listening to the people the member for Kiama is supposed to represent was not important enough. He also claimed I had not consulted with him before deciding on a date for the meeting. Funny that he is happy to complain about the lack of consultation now that it affects him. This is coming from the member for Kiama, who has shown blatant disregard for residents who have been forced to wait nearly three months to be consulted about the prison proposal.

I have in my hand more than 300 letters from residents that are opposed to the jail being built at West Dapto. The Government is proposing to build this jail in West Dapto, where people have bought into a dream of owning their own small piece of dirt. They have paid the best part of half a million dollars to buy into this dream; then they had to spend at least \$400,000 or \$500,000 to put a house on this piece of dirt. The member for Kiama cannot even be bothered to turn up to a meeting to hear the residents' concerns about building a jail right in the middle of a State significant site. This is the wrong jail at the wrong time in the wrong place. I will not back down from representing my community on this issue. The community has every right to be angry about this. I am

supporting them 100 per cent in this issue. The State Government needs to do its homework. The Premier stands here, day in and day out, saying, "You have not done your homework." I say to the Premier, "You have not done your homework. Find an appropriate site for this jail and it will be supported."

DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (20:21): It gives me great pleasure to talk about where my community was in 2011 and where it is today, particularly in the areas of health, education and public transport. This evening I speak about education. When I was elected in 2011, the shortage of school placements and rundown infrastructure were major issues. I had the pleasure of working with my community, my council and my Federal member to see schools improve to a high standard in 2018. I recall visiting the Lucas Gardens School, which is probably one of the most disadvantaged schools that services some of the most intellectually and physically handicapped children in this area. It was sad that many of the children could not access the services within the school, such as the hydrotherapy spa. In their wheelchairs, they could not access the spa via the stairs. The Government came to the rescue and knocked down and rebuilt a new state-of-the-art \$15 million school with a beautiful hydrotherapy pool. The principal, Jenny Zagas, and her staff do an amazing job. My visit to that school will be a highlight I will remember forever.

The Victoria Avenue Public School also was opened in Concord West. Again, this was a collaboration with the local council that donated some contaminated parkland, which was remediated and a state-of-the-art school was built. That alleviated pressure on enrolments at the Concord West Public School and the North Strathfield Public School. The Russell Lea Public School is under renovation. Previously it catered only for students to year 2 or year 3, but will now cater for students to year 6. It will be ready for occupation next year.

My main reason for making this private member's statement was to state how touched I was to attend the opening of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School at Mortlake, in the western end of my electorate. I attended this fantastic opening, which commenced with an acknowledgement of country. The history of Mortlake was given, particularly about the Irish settlers during 1895 and their strong religious beliefs. It was the time of Australian colonisation, when many Irish people settled in Mortlake where the gasworks were situated. Father McCarthy encouraged the Archdiocese of Sydney to purchase land in Mortlake in July 1889 on which the church was built—a small, brick building with an iron roof. It was given the name of St Patrick's to represent the large number of Irish Catholic community members who had settled in Mortlake.

St Patrick's was one of the first schools and Father McCarthy requested the Sisters of Charity to work at the school. In 1896 the little school was opened for children too young to walk with their older brothers and sisters to Concord. Almost 70 children presented themselves at the very first open day of St Patrick's. The school closed for a period around 1910 but reopened in 1917 in a little timber fire station and the brick fireman's cottage that is now used as the church office. Some 118 students attended the school in those days. Today we celebrate the opening of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School in Mortlake all these years later. We are blessed to have such magnificent buildings and facilities—they have to be seen to be believed. I take this opportunity to thank the principal and staff of St Patrick's. They have had a remarkable journey over the past 12 months in building a school that will be centre of the Mortlake community, a school of which the principal, staff members, students and the builders can be very proud.

Bills

ROAD TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (DIGITAL DRIVER LICENCES AND PHOTO CARDS) BILL 2018

Returned

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill without amendment.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 8.27 p.m. until
Thursday 24 May 2018 at 10:00.**