



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 24 May 2018

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 24 May 2018

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.

Announcements

AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind all members that the Speaker's Biggest Morning Tea will be on in the Speaker's Garden today from 10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. Entry is a \$5 donation at the door, with all proceeds going directly to Cancer Council NSW. Guest celebrity judges Will and Steve from *My Kitchen Rules* will be judging the bake-off competition—this has attracted a lot of attention—and will be handing out prizes for the raffle. I encourage all members and staff to make their way to the garden to help support this very worthy cause.

Bills

ELECTORAL FUNDING BILL 2018

Returned

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

[*Notices of motions given.*]

GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE BILL 2018

GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE LEGISLATION (REPEAL AND AMENDMENT) BILL 2018

First Reading

Bills introduced on motion by Mr Dominic Perrottet, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations)
(10:14): I move:

That these bills be now read a second time.

The Government Sector Finance Bill 2018, which will be referred to as the GFS bill, is introduced as a cognate bill with the Government Sector Finance Legislation (Repeal and Amendment) Bill 2018. Together these bills will deliver reforms that strengthen accountability, transparency, performance and innovation in the New South Wales Government. These bills are the culmination of the Government's 2013 commitment to bring government financial management of New South Wales into the twenty-first century and address concerns that the existing framework is outdated, fragmented and overly prescriptive. The Government's approach to financial management reform comprises three pillars. The first pillar is a new financial management system, known as Prime. Prime enables end-to-end management of the budget from the programing planning stage to the allocation of funding, to tracking expenditure, and to the benchmarking of results. The second pillar is the outcomes budgeting framework—a suite of policies to support outcomes-based budgeting and reporting. The third pillar is the simplification and updating of the legislative framework governing public sector financial management.

The first two pillars of our financial management transformation program were implemented in 2017 and 2018 respectively. The legislation before the House will give effect to the third pillar. The existing legislative framework for public sector financial management has been in place for more than 30 years and consists of four separate pieces of legislation: The Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the Public Authorities (Financial Arrangements) Act 1987, the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984 and the Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985. Under the legislation before the House, that framework will be replaced with two statutes: the Government Sector Finance Bill 2018 and the renamed Government Sector Audit Act 1983, formerly known as the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. The Government Sector Finance Bill 2018 will cover all public financial

management matters, except audit matters. The Government Sector Audit Act 1983, known as the GSA, will separately address audit matters and the governance of the Parliamentary Accounts Committee.

This legislation will deliver significant benefits for New South Wales. It will improve accountability and transparency, reduce red tape, reduce interest expenses and improve debt headroom. It will strengthen the Government's focus on performance through outcomes budgeting, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of public expenditure. It will improve information sharing across Government and the public sector, enhancing the ability of Ministers to access information to inform resource allocation decisions. It will improve cash management processes to protect the State's triple-A credit rating and strong fiscal position and to maximise our ability to make the State's balance sheet work harder for the benefit of the people of New South Wales.

The legislation will deliver better value on the State banking tender, facilitating access to innovative financial services from a broader range of providers than the current framework allows. It will save public funds by reducing unnecessary duplication in government financial reporting while at the same time improving the quality of information that government agencies provide. To some, reforming public sector financial management may not be the most exciting challenge for government to tackle. Treasury would disagree with that. It is a very important reform. The Government is proud to be delivering on another reform initiative that will yield dividends for the people of New South Wales in the years to come. I now turn to the detail of the bills.

The Government Sector Finance Bill establishes a new accountability framework for public sector bodies and personnel. First, it clarifies roles and responsibilities for effective financial management. Secretaries of departments and heads of agencies that are not departments will be accountable authorities—a new concept under the bill. Accountable authorities will be responsible for the performance and financial management of the agency and accountable to the relevant Minister. The key roles and responsibilities of accountable authorities include: developing and maintaining the policies and procedures regarding financial management, and ensuring compliance with the government sector finance legislative framework; establishing and maintaining effective risk management procedures; ensuring the integrity of financial and performance information; and ensuring that expenditure of money for the agency is done in a way that is authorised.

The proposed roles and responsibilities for all government officers under the Government Sector Finance Bill are designed to promote compliance with this new legislation. Officers will be held responsible for any loss of government resources through dishonesty or misconduct. The framework requires officers to perform their roles in accordance with specific values—accountability, integrity and transparency—which are now codified for the first time as guiding principles for government sector financial management. The Government Sector Finance Bill also seeks to rectify an existing legal ambiguity in the current framework, which provides no clear authority for agencies to spend own-source revenue. A significant proportion of State revenue comes from agencies' own-source receipts, such as donations, proceeds from the sale of assets and fees for service. By convention, agencies may receive this revenue directly and subsequently spend it. It has become apparent that this convention may not be adequately supported by the current legal framework. To rectify this ambiguity, this legislation will provide a legal basis for this established practice to operate without risk to the Government and agencies, while acknowledging Parliament's role in authorising appropriations.

The bill addresses this with a provision enabling the regulations to deem own-source receipts as an appropriation. The bill also clarifies that money from taxes, fines, royalties for mining, and general purpose Commonwealth grants cannot be considered deemed appropriations, in accordance with current practice. This issue is not unique to New South Wales. Other States have implemented similar reforms for their financial management frameworks in recent years, including similar provisions to provide legal authority to spend agencies' own-source receipts. The special deposits account [SDA] will continue to exist under the Government Sector Finance Bill. However, the bill provides an opportunity to provide clarity to agencies about accounts under the SDA that previously were not widely understood—that is, the special deposits account or SDA, not the union.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Good union.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The union is probably not also widely understood. To avoid any doubt, and to make sure that we are all on the same page, I am referring to the special deposit account, or SDA.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I did not know that the bill included related matters.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I repeat, the bill provides an opportunity to provide clarity to agencies about accounts under the SDA that previously were not widely understood and were not adequately explained under the current legislation. Specifically, provisions relating to the establishment and operation of working accounts within the SDA will be reformed to make clear the types of money that may be paid into and from a working account, and who has the authority to spend funds from those accounts. This will be achieved through the bill, as well as through subsequent regulations.

One of the key areas of reform under this legislation is the modernisation of government arrangements with financial services institutions. Currently, under the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 the Government is able to enter statewide agreements only for banking services with a bank, building society or credit union. This legislation expands the range of services and service providers that the Government can engage to include financial technology providers. This will provide a more efficient experience for the people of New South Wales and streamline government processes. The proposed legislation also increases the scope of public money that can become part of the central Treasury banking system [TBS]. Currently, the framework prevents State-owned corporations and some other entities from depositing their funds into the central account.

Internalising surplus funds that are currently outside the system will enable more efficient management of those surplus funds. For example, such surplus funds could be used to offset borrowings for total State funding or liquidity purposes until such time they are expected to be used for their intended purpose. This will assist in maintaining the State's triple-A credit rating and strong fiscal position. The Treasurer will consult with Ministers and agencies before any decisions are made on whether certain funds ought to be placed within the central banking system. Where such funds are included in the TBS, the bill enables the Government to provide for interest earned to be credited back to those funds. The Government also intends to exclude from the central banking system private trust monies, and potentially other types of identified "restricted cash". For example, the trust funds that form a part of the NSW Health special purposes and trust funds will not be moved to the central banking system.

This legislation also will remove red tape within government and improve the efficiency of government processes. The bill will remove duplicated and unnecessary annual and other financial reporting to achieve further operational savings. Current legislation creates instances where information in annual and/or financial reports must be duplicated or unnecessarily provided at significant cost and of no benefit to the citizens of New South Wales. Regulations, made in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards [AAS] framework, and developed in consultation with the Auditor-General, will provide the detail about when a Government entity can be exempt from certain requirements, or provide modified reporting.

This provides flexibility to ensure that the inefficiencies under the current framework are avoided whilst accountability is maintained. Treasurer's Directions made in accordance with the AAS framework will establish the relevant thresholds that define what constitutes a reporting government sector finance agency [GSFA] under the bill; the detail required in the content of financial reports; the application of tiered reporting frameworks within the sector; and when agencies need to submit reports. Consistent with the move to a modern framework that can keep pace with changes, the bill also permits reporting time frames to be adjusted by regulation.

The Government's commitment to driving outcomes and performance is also strengthened through provisions requiring agencies to keep information that explains their performance. Performance information will be published in Budget Paper No. 3—more affectionately known as BP3. This will help to identify the achievements of each agency in a financial year. Ultimately, this reform is aimed at giving taxpayers better value for money by shifting the focus onto the outcomes that public expenditure achieves, rather than just the amount spent. I must say that government must be the only organisation in the world that measures success in the size of the spend, rather than the outcomes that are achieved. This amendment will shift government thinking in this space.

As the scope of the framework under this bill is broader than the scope of current legislation, directions by the Treasurer will be expanded to cover those new areas. For example, as I noted previously, the legislation allows the Treasurer to require agencies to retain performance information, such as outcomes indicators and program key performance indicators [KPIs]. The flexibility that the bill provides means that those directions may be tailored to classes of agencies and government officers to ensure government is better able to respond to changes. In addition to flexibility, the bill enhances transparency as Treasurer's Directions will now be subject to consultation before implementation and also will be published online. It is important to emphasise that the new framework does not affect the operational independence of separate agencies. The legislation specifically exempts the following agencies from the scope of the Treasurer's Directions: the Audit Office, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Judicial Commission, the NSW Electoral Commission and the Ombudsman's Office.

Those separate and independent agencies are not required to comply with Treasurer's Directions if they believe those directions are inconsistent with their statutory functions. However, those agencies must report any non-compliance to Parliament to maintain accountability and transparency. Additionally, the Government Sector Audit Act makes clear the role of the Auditor-General as an independent and accountable statutory officer. Those with functions under the bill are given additional discretion to appropriately devolve powers and responsibilities, where appropriate. The current lack of clarity and power for delegations will be resolved to create efficiencies and remove red tape. For example, at present the same procedures apply to the approval of a government agency credit card with a \$500 limit and a State guarantee for \$50 million. This legislation will enable those accountable and

responsible to delegate tasks, where appropriate, in order to reduce paperwork and make the day-to-day operations of government more efficient.

These reforms also provide a clear delineation between criminal offences under criminal law, and civil offences under the Government Sector Finance Bill. The Government Sector Finance Act will not contain any criminal offence, but breaches will instead rely on existing provisions in the Crimes Act and other applicable legislation. For example, theft of government resources or fraud resulting in a loss of government resources will be dealt with under existing and well-established offences in statute and at common law. Breaches may also be dealt with by way of employment sanctions, including those available under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 or through employment contracts.

The Public Finance and Audit Act currently contains civil recovery provisions, which allow for the recovery of a debt in certain circumstances where a government officer loses government money or property through misconduct or culpable negligence. The Government Sector Finance Bill contains simplified and more appropriate civil recovery provisions allowing for recovery of a debt where there has been such a loss and that loss was the result of misconduct or a deliberate or serious disregard of reasonable standards of care, or where there has been a dishonest and unauthorised gift of government property. The civil recovery process can be commenced only by the Treasurer with the approval of the Attorney General.

The existing offences in the Public Finance and Audit Act which relate to the Public Accounts Committee will be retained in the Government Sector Audit Act. Specifically, offences that deal with a failure to provide access to documents or information to the Auditor-General when requested are in that Act. There are presently no legislative provisions that address the gifting of government property in New South Wales, which leads to uncertainty and inefficiency. The Government Sector Finance Bill will introduce provisions making it clear that gifts of government property cannot be made unless one of the following applies: the property was acquired or produced to use as a gift; or the gift is authorised by the Treasurer in writing, is made in accordance with the Treasurer's directions or is authorised by or under any law. These proposed provisions are consistent with and appropriately codify current policy.

This bill implements a framework for ex gratia payments, or act of grace payments, as they are sometimes known. Ministers have authority to make act of grace payments; however, the scope of that authority is presently unclear. The Government Sector Finance Bill clarifies the circumstances in which act of grace payments are authorised to be made. These are when a Minister is satisfied there are special circumstances for making such payments or they are made under prescribed conditions. Act of grace payments may also be made subject to terms and conditions imposed by a Minister. The bill also resolves uncertainty around when and to whom Ministers may delegate authority to make such payments.

Under the current legislative framework, only the financial arrangement provisions in the Public Authorities (Financial Arrangements) Act are expressed to be paramount provisions. This means that in the event of an inconsistent provision in another Act addressing a similar matter, the Public Authorities (Financial Arrangements) provisions override those in the other Act. In addition to keeping financial arrangement matters paramount, the Government Sector Finance Bill contains further paramount provisions addressing tax equivalent payments, financial distributions and reporting. This more comprehensive coverage of paramount provisions provides greater clarity as to where Government Sector Finance Bill provisions displace the operation of other State laws.

The reforms under these bills will be carried out in stages to allow a more manageable transition. The first stage is proposed to commence on 1 July 2018 and will be for all provisions except those relating to financial services and arrangements, act of grace payments, gifting of government property, annual and financial reporting, budget papers, statutory deposit accounts and appropriations. The second stage is proposed to commence on 1 December 2018 and will implement the new financial services and arrangements provisions. The remaining provisions are proposed to commence on 1 July 2019.

These bills are the culmination of a detailed and collaborative reform process that commenced in 2013. The first two pillars have been successfully implemented. The enactment of these bills will bring the Government's Financial Management Transformation Program to a close. These reforms will bring public sector financial management into a new era in New South Wales. They will take advantage of new technology and new opportunities in modern financial service offerings. They will make government more efficient and reduce the cost of interest on borrowings, delivering savings for taxpayers. They will improve the outcomes that Government spending achieves, delivering real improvements to the lives of the people of New South Wales.

The reforms will increase our capacity to fund and invest in the services and infrastructure we all rely on and they will hold Government and the public sector to higher standards of accountability and transparency. In short, they will bring financial management in New South Wales up to world's best practice. That is in line with

our efforts to transform the New South Wales Treasury into a world-class treasury. NSW Treasury has become the gold standard in relation to financial management. In conclusion, I thank the tireless work of the financial management team in NSW Treasury for their extensive efforts since 2013 in bringing this reform to fruition. I commend these bills to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ELECTORAL FUNDING BILL 2018

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 24 May 2018

- No. 1 **SFF No. 1 [c2018-044A]**
Page 4, clause 4. Insert after line 43:
half-year means a period of 6 months ending on 30 June or 31 December.
- No. 2 **OPP No. 1 [c2018-038F]**
Page 8, clause 7 (1), line 2. Omit "includes such expenditure of the following kinds:". Insert instead "which is expenditure of one of the following kinds:".
- No. 3 **OPP No. 2 [c2018-038F]**
Page 8, clause 7. Insert after line 38:
(5) For the purposes of Division 4 (Caps on electoral expenditure for election campaigns) of Part 3 (Political donations and electoral expenditure), electoral expenditure does not include expenditure of amounts of additional entitlements within the meaning of *Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989*.
- No. 4 **SFF No. 2 [c2018-044A]**
Page 14, clause 15 (1) (a), line 19. Omit "14 days". Insert instead "21 days".
- No. 5 **SFF No. 3 [c2018-044A]**
Page 14, clause 15 (1) (b), line 21. Omit "quarter". Insert instead "half-year".
- No. 6 **OPP No. 1 [c2018-052B]**
Page 8, clause 7 (1). Insert after line 15:
(h) expenditure incurred in raising funds for an election or in auditing campaign accounts,
- No. 7 **SFF No. 4 [c2018-044A]**
Page 14, clause 15 (2) (b), line 43. Omit "quarter". Insert instead "half-year".
- No. 8 **SFF No. 5 [c2018-044A]**
Page 15, clause 17 (4), line 27. Omit "quarterly". Insert instead "half-yearly".
- No. 9 **SFF No. 6 [c2018-044A]**
Page 15, clause 17 (5), line 32. Omit "quarterly". Insert instead "half-yearly".
- No. 10 **SFF No. 7 [c2018-044A]**
Page 15, clause 17 (7) (a), line 39. Omit "quarterly". Insert instead "half-yearly".
- No. 11 **OPP No. 3 [c2018-038F]**
Page 18, clause 22 (1) (b), lines 26–27. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 12 **OPP No. 4 [c2018-038F]**
Page 18, clause 22 (6)–(7), lines 40–46. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 13 **OPP No. 11 [c2018-038F]**
Page 59, clauses 100 and 101, lines 12–20. Omit all words from those lines.
- No. 14 **OPP No. 12 [c2018-038F]**
Page 73, clause 139 (1) (b), line 7. Insert ", by notice in writing," after "request".
- No. 15 **OPP No. 13 [c2018-038F]**
Page 73, clause 139 (1) (c), line 9. Insert ", by notice in writing," after "request".
- No. 16 **OPP No. 14 [c2018-038F]**

Page 73, clause 139. Insert after line 16:

- (2) A person being examined by an inspector under subsection (1) is entitled to be represented by an Australian legal practitioner.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (10:35): I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

Motion agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2017-2018

Debate resumed from 16 May 2018.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (10:35): I speak to the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government's 2017-18 budget and its ongoing impact on both the people of New South Wales and the residents of my electorate of Rockdale. It is hard to get started on speaking to the wrong priorities, the tricky accounting and the poor public policy outcomes that lie at the heart of this Government's budgetary process. The deterioration since the departure of Premier Baird has been on full display in the past year, which I am sure the member for Tamworth would appreciate. Despite rosy forecasts and grant promises, anybody with an ounce of economic credibility opposite knows that the budget relies on artificially inflating figures through the capitalisation of operating expenses—recurring costs. It amazes me that so many members opposite do not realise the profound impact the Transport Asset Holding Entity has on the budget bottom line by increasing the budget position by up to \$2 billion per annum and, in some cases, making up the entirety of each year's surplus in the forward estimates.

In the corporate world in the United States of America directors have been sent to prison for knowingly capitalising operating expenses and misleading shareholders about the true performance of the organisation. The Enron scandal comes to mind as an infamous example of this type of accounting practice. The Treasurer may not be old enough to remember the scandals of the early 2000s. Sadly, our State seems doomed to repeat history but with the people of New South Wales being substituted for the Enron shareholders. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure is doubling up and it appears that he is attempting to pull the same trick again with the new Sydney Metro. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has called out this Government on multiple occasions but those opposite are so short-sighted they doggedly continue with this dishonest accounting approach, knowing that they will not be there to mop up the mess once the real figures have to be reported.

I wish that the Government's obsession with inflating the budget bottom line only involved dodgy reporting. Sadly, the drive to flog off public goods and to privatise services and assets is biting into the social fabric of local communities like mine in Rockdale. Recently I was appalled when the Government's secret plan to sell off the Cairnsfoot school site was revealed. Local educators knew that the land was needed for educational purposes. It did not even make economic sense to sell it. The local community wanted to keep it and anybody with a shred of common sense could see that with the acceleration of apartment approvals in electorates like mine it would be sheer lunacy to sell off a public school. I could not believe the Parliamentary Secretary's response or the condescending language that this Government thought was appropriate when discussing a local school. I am glad that the Minister eventually saw sense and committed to keeping the site. It is a shame that it took a public campaign and a headline on the nightly news to make the Minister see sense.

Governments should sell assets, particularly land, but only in cases where better returns can be achieved by divestment in the long term, not just in the short term. Creating artificial sales targets for Government assets through Property NSW is like putting a real estate agent in charge of the management of our essential public services, schools, hospitals and vital State instruments. We have a fine real estate agent in Minister Ray Williams. He could be the in-house auctioneer, conduct a lot of these sales and maybe reduce some of the costs. However, the New South Wales Government is not a public trading company and this business should never be about trying to hit quarterly targets.

The Government should not have allowed itself to become lost in short-term sugar hits to spin to the media as good news while at the same time ripping record dividends out of State-owned corporations, with the certain knowledge it will not be around to deal with the chronic under-investment in utility infrastructure it is overseeing. The Government is basically taking old retained earnings and plugging holes in the budget to keep the numbers in order. It has the wrong priorities when it sells off assets the people want retained in public hands to pay for projects only the Government wants. Although the figure has dropped slightly in recent months, the Government still proposes to spend over \$2 billion of public money rebuilding perfectly good sporting stadiums that are rarely at capacity—\$2 billion that could be spent on schools, hospitals, the public transport system and the road network.

If one were to ask the residents of Western Sydney if they would rather ANZ Stadium be rebuilt or have the Government remove the M4 toll it reinstated, the resounding response would not be in favour of the Government's actions. The Government proposes to spend more than \$1.5 million relocating the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta—a proposal supported by nobody, not even Government members in the other place. The Government can build a new museum if it wishes but it should not use the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum as an excuse to flog off an apartment site in Darling Harbour and break up a 140-year-old museum collection in the process. This Government pays lip-service to suburban Sydney but at the heart of many decisions, supposedly made in the interests of people, one can smell the stench of backroom deals and the Government's close ties to PremierState and other questionable interests.

The Government has its pet projects, such as the eastern suburbs light rail, which will take longer for a commuter to travel its fixed route than the flexible bus service it replaces, and the Sydney CBD light rail, which has experienced massive cost blowouts and will provide dubious benefit to our city. It highlights the Government's lack of business acumen that it thought it could undertake a major construction project outside hundreds of businesses that rely on walk-in trade without there being severe adverse impacts. While at long last the Government has made a paltry effort to compensate severely affected business owners, it will do nothing for all the small businesses already forced to close their doors as a result of the Government's mismanagement of these projects.

Where the Government is spending money in the electorate of Rockdale and the broader region of southern Sydney it is spending it on the wrong projects. Even though a fickle commitment was made last year to the WestConnex south extension, I hear it is increasingly likely that the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight will be forced to commit further funding to the first stage of the project to prop up the failing WestConnex business model prior to sale—the WestConnex Ponzi scheme. I make it clear to the House that the Government is not proposing to build the F6. It has become obvious that the Government will only ever commit to looking at stage one—a sad attempt to create a toll trap before it finalises the WestConnex transaction. The Government should be honest with the people of New South Wales that it will not build the F6 but will merely build one leg of a WestConnex bolt-on. That one leg—a dog of a leg at that—will not even direct traffic to the city.

What shocks me most about this Government's budgetary process is that despite all its big talk on budget surpluses and the State's lack of debt, largely due to the efforts of the Carr Government, no real effort has been made to reduce inefficient State taxes. New South Wales is currently among the highest taxing jurisdictions in Australia. The Treasurer, the self-promoted small government, low-tax, neoliberal-type guy, spoke earlier this week about the impact of Government red tape on business in this State. I do not see any meaningful reform coming from him in the areas of business taxation and red tape reduction. The payroll tax threshold in New South Wales at \$750,000 is woefully outdated. It has not moved in years and inflation has extended this to thousands of new businesses that were never meant to be captured by the tax. For all the talk that we need to encourage employment and jobs growth, it is disappointing that the Government has made no effort to reduce a tax that actually discourages employment. The Treasurer must be commended—

Business interrupted.

Bills

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SYDNEY MOTORWAY CORPORATION) BILL 2017

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jodi McKay, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:46): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Public Accountability Legislation Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2018 aims to restore accountability and transparency to the Sydney Motorway Corporation and in turn the project it manages, which is WestConnex. This is the second time this bill has been introduced into this Parliament. Labor tried last year to have the bill debated but the Government shut down that debate, so the Opposition is trying again with the introduction of this bill today. I hope that given the impending sale of 51 per cent of the Sydney Motorway Corporation the Government this time will do the right thing and allow this bill to be debated. There has never been a more important time than right now to restore accountability and transparency to the Sydney Motorway Corporation as we near the 51 per cent sale of WestConnex—a process that is currently happening without any transparency.

The Sydney Motorway Corporation was established as a private entity, which effectively shrouds the largest infrastructure project in the State's history, WestConnex, in absolute secrecy and removes all accountability and transparency mechanisms that apply to every other New South Wales Government agency and infrastructure project. Before working through the content of this Labor bill, it is worth reflecting on why it is needed and how we found ourselves in this situation where, for the first time in New South Wales, an agency is not subject to the usual transparency and accountability mechanisms of government.

In 2015 the Government abolished the WestConnex Delivery Authority which was originally tasked with delivering the WestConnex project. In its place the Government established the Sydney Motorway Corporation. However, unlike other Government agencies delivering infrastructure projects in the State, the Government established the Sydney Motorway Corporation as a private company, limited by shares under the Corporations Act 2001. This legal structure means that the Sydney Motorway Corporation is not subject to the same accountability measures as is every other Government agency that is tasked with spending taxpayers' dollars. That means by extension that the WestConnex project also operates outside the usual accountability and transparency mechanisms that apply to every other New South Wales Government project.

It is an extraordinary situation; it is a shocking and deliberate attempt to shut down long-established and respected principles of public oversight and parliamentary scrutiny. The creation of the Sydney Motorway Corporation remains a deceitful decision that this Parliament must address urgently through this bill, which is why I seek to garner the support of all members. The actions of this Government have set what I believe is a dangerous precedent with the establishment of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. By shielding the Sydney Motorway Corporation from scrutiny and effectively limiting information to glossy brochures and media releases, the Government is refusing to answer the most basic of questions. They are critical questions that need to be answered.

The Government is sending a clear message to the community that the Westminster traditions that the oldest Parliament in Australia has so far practised no longer matter and do not need to be followed. That is of great concern, particularly when talking about the largest infrastructure project in the history of New South Wales. The bill unequivocally says enough is enough. It seeks to enshrine in law that the Sydney Motorway Corporation and its subsidiaries will be subject to the same public accountability measures as is every other New South Wales Government agency. Under the bill transparency and accountability will again be at the cornerstone of the construction of major infrastructure projects in this State.

The bill amends the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 to ensure that the Government must answer freedom of information requests about the project and the operation of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. Those requests are currently not answered. We cannot access even the most basic information through a freedom of information request to the corporation. That means that information critical to understanding the decisions that the Sydney Motorway Corporation board is making are completely shielded from scrutiny. This Government is not just hiding behind commercial- and Cabinet-in-confidence mechanisms. It is tampering with freedom of information requests. That is of serious concern to the community.

Every request that the community, the media and I as shadow Minister have made to the Sydney Motorway Corporation or other Government agencies that deal with it have been denied. That has to stop, and this bill seeks to do that. Never before has a Government agency been shielded from the Government Information (Public Access) Act. Never before has a multibillion dollar project not been subject to our freedom of information laws. That is what is extraordinary about the establishment of the Sydney Motorway Corporation and the way it has been constituted.

One only has to look at the extraordinary flow of information leaking from Government agencies about WestConnex and other major infrastructure projects to understand the precarious situation that this Government is creating through its addiction to secrecy. One could ask why this unprecedented volume of reports and documents are being handed to the Opposition and the media. The answer is very simple and it is at the heart of why this bill is so desperately needed. Public servants—that is, those people who are loyal to the public—see the cover-ups and secrecy that surround these projects. They are motivated not by personal advantage but by their duty to the public at large. They are motivated by their desire to shed light on the shocking mismanagement of projects. I will deal with that shortly.

The bill will amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 to allow the commission to investigate allegations of complaints related to the Sydney Motorway Corporation and its employees. How can we have a Government project that is not subject to the Independent Commission Against Corruption? That is extraordinary. The bill will amend the Ombudsman Act 1974 to enable complaints to be made to the Ombudsman about the conduct of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. It will amend the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 to allow the Auditor-General to inspect and audit the Sydney Motorway Corporation financial reports and transactions. Finally, the bill will amend the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 to extend protections under the

Act to employees of the Sydney Motorway Corporation who in the public interest make disclosures about any wrongdoing.

The bill seeks to bring under the important accountability mechanisms not only the Sydney Motorway Corporation but also its 10 subsidiaries that are listed in the bill. That is important. Accountability, transparency, openness and truthfulness are not radical principles. They are fundamental principles that should underpin every decision that government makes. Under the Government of Gladys Berejiklian those principles have been stripped away and trashed. They have been abandoned and wilfully ignored. This bill aims to restore and enshrine those principles so that we will have accountability, transparency, openness and truthfulness in the delivery of the WestConnex project and the operation of the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

To fully appreciate the Government's blatant attempt to trash parliamentary tradition we must look at the history of WestConnex and the shambles it is. I will not go through every issue with the project because I simply do not have enough time, but I will try to give a true sense of the problems that continue to plague WestConnex and that show why members must support the bill. Let us start with the cost of the project, which is always brought up in conversation with me. It has gone up and up. When the project was first announced by Barry O'Farrell—three Premiers and I think four Treasurers ago—the Government said that it would cost \$10 billion. Then it was \$11 billion and then \$12 billion. It has finally reached \$16.8 billion, but even that cannot be believed because so much about the project is being fudged. For instance, the cost of local road changes have not been included in the figure. The cost of the Sydney Gateway—which is the link to the airport and the justification the Government gave for building WestConnex—has been mysteriously removed from the total cost.

We were originally told that the Sydney Gateway and link to the airport part of the project would cost about \$800 million. The Government now says that was an allocation only and that the Sydney Gateway was never part of WestConnex. Every piece of documentation—including the business case, the website and the media releases—all have the Sydney Gateway as part of WestConnex. Of course, the Government removed that because it did not suit its narrative. That is grossly deceitful. What the Government will not say is the total cost of the project. It will not release a business case that is accurate and updated or say how it is going to be funded. Even now, some eight years after the Government first said it would build WestConnex, it still does not know how the road will get to the airport. That is of serious concern.

It is only through leaked documents that we now know that the airport link could cost about \$1.8 billion, which will push WestConnex way beyond the \$18 billion mark. Then there are the contractor claims that we believe amount to more than \$1 billion. Where will this end? Why do the community and Opposition members not have an accurate assessment of the cost of the project? Unfortunately, it is not possible to answer that question because the Sydney Motorway Corporation is not subject to accountability and transparency mechanisms that would reveal the cost of the project. That is what this bill aims to fix.

Let us not forget the many changes that have been made to the project. As I have said from the beginning and several times since, this Government's members are making it up as they go. Even now, eight years later, they are still making it up as they go. The Rozelle interchange provides a good example of how the project is failing. Just two weeks ago the project was approved as part of the approval that the planning Minister gave for the M4-M5 Link. It was approved without any consultation and without a design. How could anyone possibly approve a massive interchange at Rozelle without even seeing a design? We know that Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] has had to take back the Rozelle interchange because the Sydney Motorway Corporation has mismanaged the project so much that it is on its second tender exercise for it. It is of great concern that we cannot make a request under the Government Information (Public Access) Act for information from the Sydney Motorway Corporation or RMS because correspondence is in fact to the Sydney Motorway Corporation and it says it does not have to abide by freedom of information laws.

The Rozelle interchange is a good example of what is wrong with this project. A week ago the Supreme Court made a decision in the case of Desane, which took on the Government over its land. Effectively, the court found that the Government tried to steal that land because it needed it for some mysterious purpose associated with WestConnex. The only problem is that the Government could not tell us what that was. That is why this bill is so desperately needed. Issues like that need to be known by the community. I say to every member in this place that they have a duty to support their communities and they have a duty to support this bill.

We talk about the responsibilities that members of Parliament have to their communities but we also need to mention those Sydney families whose houses and businesses have been acquired to make way for this project. The Parliament will remember that Labor forced the Government to change the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 and Labor forced it to respond to the Russell report, which the Government did its best to keep hidden. The Russell report was supposed to fix the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act, but the Government did everything in its power to shut it down. Labor sided with the families to get a better deal for them.

When the Government sells the Sydney Motorway Corporation in the coming months it will also sell the tolling agreements. Again, an unfair tax is being imposed on families in Western Sydney. The Government will also sell the construction contract for the M4-M5 Link. I have said many times in this place that Labor does not oppose tolls on new roads, but the introduction of a toll on the widened M4 that rises above the consumer price index [CPI] by at least 4 per cent is not appropriate. It is not a new road and we will not support a toll. We also do not support the inclusion of the M5 South-West Motorway in the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. The road is not, nor will it ever be, part of WestConnex. To fatten the pig for market, the Government has thrown in the tolling agreement on that motorway as well to entice the private sector to bid. This is another reason why this bill is needed now—so we can shed light on the deals being done and the decisions being made as part of the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation, which will culminate in coming months.

At this point it is also worth mentioning that the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation was never included in the business case for WestConnex—it goes against all the advice given in the business case. The business case says—I have quoted this before in the Parliament—"the approach of selling a controlling equity stake in stage 2 prior to construction commencement was identified as potentially a sub-optimal strategy". According to its own business case, this is not the proper way to approach the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. Why has the Government not provided an updated business case? Again, we do not know.

Let me be clear: The decision to sell part, or all, of the Sydney Motorway Corporation and its subsidiaries to change the entire financing of WestConnex has given urgency to the bill. That is why I am bringing the issue to the attention of the House today. The Government regularly hides behind Cabinet- and commercial-in-confidence provisions to refuse freedom of information requests—that occurs regularly across agencies and projects—but its refusal to release even the most basic of information highlights how necessary this bill is to shed light on the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

The House may remember the battle Labor had to have to get the remuneration of the chief executive officer of the Sydney Motorway Corporation released. The Government refused to release how much he was paid. He declined to appear before the parliamentary inquiry into tolling. He believed he had no responsibility to face that inquiry. Under this bill there will be nowhere for people like him to hide. He and others associated with the Sydney Motorway Corporation will be required to answer questions, just like every other public servant. There is incompetence, dishonesty and downright deceit everywhere in this project. That is why this bill is urgently needed. Those opposite are meant to believe in the rules and institutions of parliamentary democracy. They are meant to believe that the Westminster traditions mean something; yet they have trashed everything they say they believe in.

Under this bill there is a role for parliamentary accountability and scrutiny, but there is no role for a Government that does not provide answers to the community. Time and again we have seen that the arrogance of this Government knows no bounds when it comes to WestConnex. Shame on the Government. Shame on all those backbenchers who represent communities impacted by WestConnex and those tolls, but who do not have the courage to go to their party room and say, "Enough is enough." The Sydney Motorway Corporation and WestConnex must be subject to the same accountability measures as any other significant infrastructure project in this State. This bill will restore accountability and transparency to that agency and to the WestConnex project—mechanisms that should never have been taken away in the first place.

If those opposite have nothing to hide they will back this bill, they will back Labor and, importantly, they will back their communities because in supporting this bill they will finally end the shameful secrecy that has characterised this project from the beginning and continues to characterise it. I plead with those opposite to support Labor in its bid to restore accountability and transparency to the Sydney Motorway Corporation. There will never be a more important time to do that, with the sale of 51 per cent of the Sydney Motorway Corporation in the coming months. I ask those opposite today to stand for their communities and to walk into their party room, seek the support of Government and support Labor.

Debate adjourned.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (CONTRACTS OF CARRIAGE) BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 17 May 2018.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:05): When I was interrupted last Thursday I had been addressing the Commonwealth provisions relating to sham contracting—provisions which exist to protect employees. I note that I had about three minutes left to speak in the debate. But I will probably require four or five minutes to conclude my contribution. [*Extension of time*]

I was addressing the sham contracting provisions under Commonwealth law, which exist to protect employees. An alternative protection that is also available under Commonwealth law in the event that a driver is found not to be an employee but rather engaged in a services contract is the Independent Contractors Act 2006, which provides that a party to a services contract has the right to seek relief by making an application to the Federal Court or to the Federal Circuit Court to review the contract because it is harsh and/or unfair. The Independent Contractors Act sets out the criteria to which a court may have regard when conducting a review of the contract. This includes whether the contract provides total remuneration that is, or is likely to be, less than that of an employee performing similar work; the relative strengths of the bargaining positions of the parties to the contract and, if applicable, any persons acting on behalf of the parties; and whether any undue influence or pressure was exerted on, or any unfair tactics were used against, a party to the contract.

Should a court form the opinion that all or part of the contract is harsh or unfair, it may order that the terms of the contract be changed, that parts of the contract will have no effect or that the contract itself be set aside. It is also possible that a court could vary a contract, even after its termination, to provide for the payment of moneys to the applicant. I am also advised that in most cases applicants will not be required to pay the court costs of the other party, even if they lose the case in these sorts of situations. Unfortunately, however, the Government is not in a position to support the bill. This in no way indicates that the New South Wales Government is abrogating its responsibilities for the workers of New South Wales—quite the contrary.

As the House has heard, the Government is clearly of the view that expanding the categories of contracts covered by chapter 6 to include bread, milk and cream delivery owner drivers after the enactment of the Independent Contractors Act would be inconsistent with the overall intention of the Commonwealth legislation to cover the field. The fact that the Commonwealth made it explicit in presenting this legislation that it did have the intent to cover this field invokes the constitutional power whereby the Federal legislation would override that of this State. Therefore, the clear implication is that the State is not in a position to second-guess that intention of the Commonwealth. Expanding the jurisdiction of chapter 6 is exactly what the private member's bill intends to do. Therefore, it appears it could be found to be constitutionally invalid and to have no effect.

If the bill was enacted by this Parliament the Government believes it would be void, but the New South Wales Government continues to do everything it can to help the workers of New South Wales and its efforts have reaped dividends. New South Wales has retained its number one position as Australia's top performing State economy in CommSec's State of the States report for the fifteenth straight quarter. Many indicators show New South Wales is leading the field in economic activity, housing approvals, housing construction and completions and low unemployment levels. New South Wales has out-performed other States on five of the eight economic indicators measured by the report, including low levels of unemployment, retail trade, dwelling starts, equipment spending and construction work.

With the trending unemployment rate at 4.9 per cent, New South Wales' strong job market sits well below the decade average of 5.3 per cent. Dwelling starts were up 47 per cent and construction work is up 27.1 per cent from the decade averages. Meanwhile, importantly to people such as the member for Campbelltown and me, Western Sydney's unemployment rate has fallen to its lowest level in almost two decades. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that Western Sydney's unemployment rate fell to 5 per cent over the 12 months to March, its lowest reading since records began in 1999. Over the year to March 2018 unemployment across regional New South Wales stood at 5.4 per cent, which is below the national regional rate of 5.6 per cent.

In the last year alone the number of jobs in Western Sydney grew by 5.3 per cent with over 67,000 people securing new jobs. That is a wonderful thing for the people of the Western Sydney region that I have the honour to represent and it is a wonderful thing for the future of families, who now have the security of earning their own way. They can build a future and follow their dreams because of the opportunity that earning an income gives them. I support the Treasurer's remarks that any reform the Government considers in the field raised by the member for Campbelltown will be reform in the broader context of the Government's plan to improve the regulatory framework in New South Wales.

The Government understands the historical circumstances that have led to this situation. The State's regulatory framework is not something that any Government, whether this side of the House or the other, would have designed with intent, but it has occurred and it has now been locked in by Federal legislation. We will need to address reform of the issue in the future holistically. The Government recognises the intent of the member for Campbelltown, but unfortunately the solution he has proposed will not work. A solution within the context of broader reform of industrial and business regulation in New South Wales is needed, and that is what the Government will pursue.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:11): I support the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018. I take this opportunity to commend the very hard work of my colleague the very good member for Campbelltown. I state at the outset that this is a commonsense bill and I am disappointed

that Government members cannot see that. Whilst short on words, it will close an enormous gap in this legislation and deliver basic industrial rights and protections to a group of workers who, until now, have been overlooked for no rational reason. The object of this bill is to:

Amend the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to include contracts for the transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under that Act. As a result, any such contract will be subject to the provisions of Chapter 6 of that Act, including enabling the Industrial Relations Commission to make determinations with respect to the remuneration of the carrier, and any conditions, under the contract and to exercise dispute resolution powers in relation to the contract.

Chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act currently covers the majority of owner-drivers in this State. It also empowers the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission to make and approve contract determinations and contract agreements for those workers, and allows the commission to resolve disputes in the transport industry. This amending bill does not seek to bring any of those protections into question. It seeks only to extend those protections to a number of owner-drivers who are currently not covered. It is common sense. One of these exceptions is owner-drivers engaged in a contract "for the carriage of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale". Apparently this outdated exception can be traced back to the 1950s when the delivery of bread, milk and cream was considered an essential community service. We certainly have come a long way since then.

Sadly, thanks to this oversight, a truck driver transporting bread, milk or cream is afforded different rights than those transporting fruit, vegetables, meat or other groceries. They have no legal framework through which to dispute conditions relating to their work. In the eyes of the law they are independent contractors running their own businesses and it is therefore up to each individual driver to negotiate their contract. If they have an issue with the hours they are working or their pay agreement, they are forced to go directly to their contractor. They have no other avenues of appeal. It is within the rights of the contractor to deny the driver's request and then cut their shifts to the point that they are out of a job.

Much like my colleague, I believe this exception to be both cruel and arbitrary. Every worker in our State deserves to be afforded the same basic industrial rights. The fact that two contracted owner-drivers could be afforded different industrial rights based solely on what is in the back of their truck, or what they are delivering, is just wrong. Those opposite, who claim to be friends of the worker, should hang their heads in shame. They are all pastry and no pie. All people, all citizens and all workers in our society are equal, and therefore they should be afforded equal rights. This is basic stuff. This bill is clearly brief, but it does exactly what it sets out to do. It closes a gap that previously left a portion of our State's workers more vulnerable than their colleagues. It will deliver basic industrial rights and protections to the workers involved in the delivery of bread, cream and milk—rights they have seemingly been without for no reason for far too long.

This is an antiquated provision that today only serves the purpose of disadvantaging a portion of the workforce through unregulated work agreements. It is a provision that has left a portion of our State's workers vulnerable and with absolutely no recourse if someone takes advantage. It is unacceptable. The lack of regulation has allowed major safety issues to develop in the industry. Profits and bottom lines are getting tighter as companies maintain a stranglehold on subcontractors. As the financial strain grows, truck drivers are forced to take additional risks, work extra shifts and drive poorly-maintained or unroadworthy vehicles—and still they cannot make ends meet.

Late last year, a delivery driver working for Tip Top Bakeries reported working 15 hours in a row with just two days off during a three-week period. I could not imagine the stress and tiredness felt under those conditions. I firmly believe it is something no-one should ever have to experience. It is also something that should strike fear in anyone and everyone who is using or travelling on our State's roads. It is the gap in legislation that forces workers to suffer such long and relentless hours. Another bread delivery driver reports that after being diagnosed with lung cancer he was forced to employ a relief driver whilst undergoing chemotherapy. This arrangement meant passing on his full wage packet to the replacement driver. Anyone with a shred of compassion would say this is unacceptable.

These drivers are technically independent contractors and the onus falls on the individual to manage their own fatigue and employ relief drivers if they cannot manage the ever-increasing workload. The loophole that has existed since 1950 must be closed in order to protect the safety of these workers: It is that simple. The safety of the wider public on our roads also is an issue. This must be done as a priority. I urge each member to vote in favour of this bill. Our bread, cream and milk delivery truck drivers must be allowed to access the Industrial Relations Commission. It should outrage every member of this House that they cannot. They deserve the same rights and conditions as every other truck driver delivering different products.

If those opposite want to support our State's workers, then this bill is a great place to start. These workers both need and deserve the same job security, safety nets and work conditions as the rest of our State's hardworking truckies. I take this opportunity to thank the members of this House who have worked hard and assisted the member for Campbelltown with formulating this bill, as well as the representatives from the Transport Workers

Union who helped to bring this glaring flaw in legislation to our attention. I take this opportunity to call on those opposite to support this bill and support our State's bread, cream and milk delivery drivers.

I urge Government members to support a fair go for our State's workers. This bill will support the inclusion of the transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale, or delivery for sale, as contracts of carriage. This is a bill that should not be politicised. This is a bill to right a wrong that currently exists for no rational reason in a piece of our State's legislation. I stand alongside the member for Campbelltown and call on each and every member in this House to support this bill. The member for Riverstone spoke about the overriding Federal laws in this case. He has not done his homework because his statement was not accurate. I quote Mark Gibian from HB Higgins Chambers, who said:

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

Therefore, any Government members claiming that they are protected under the Federal jurisdiction are not telling the truth and are misleading this House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (11:20): The object of the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 is as follows:

... to amend the *Industrial Relations Act 1996* to include contracts for the transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under that Act. As a result, any such contract will be subject to the provisions of Chapter 6 of that Act, including enabling the Industrial Relations Commission to make determinations with respect to the remuneration of the carrier, and any conditions, under the contract and to exercise dispute resolution powers relating to the contract.

The bill purports to give the Industrial Relations Commission the jurisdiction to make and approve contract determinations and contract agreements for the transportation of bread, milk and cream for sale or delivery. This includes determinations about remuneration and any such condition under the contract. The member for Shellharbour said that this is a matter of common sense, which is not very common. The bill has a number of glaring issues that make it void. The bill seeks to create State legislation that is in clear conflict with the Commonwealth legislation that already covers the field. Even if it was enacted by this Parliament it would be void. The Solicitor General has advised that the bill would likely be inconsistent with Commonwealth law as the Independent Contractors Act 2006 currently applies. The Crown Solicitor and Solicitor General advise that the bill would be inconsistent with the intention of the Independent Contractors Act and encroach on its operation. As such, the bill is likely to be constitutionally invalid.

Under the Federal Constitution, Federal law is paramount; it takes precedence and priority over State law. Therefore, when there is inconsistency between State and Federal laws, the Federal law prevails. Any part of a State Act that is inconsistent with the Federal law is void. The Solicitor General and the Crown Solicitor, two of the foremost legal minds advising the Government, said that the legislation would be invalid because it is inconsistent with the Commonwealth Act, and a Commonwealth Act takes precedence over a State Act. As a result of that advice from those peak legal advisers, it is the Government's view that expanding the categories of contracts covered by chapter 6 as proposed in this bill would be constitutionally invalid and have no effect.

I turn to the bill and to what motivated the member for Campbelltown to introduce it. The bill is a piecemeal approach to regulation. It is not strategic and does not consider contractors and other industries in a holistic way. It opens the door to re-regulating a whole industry and it would have an impact on the community. For example, it may increase the cost of living by increasing supply chain costs of basic foods, such as bread and milk. Even if the Government wanted to pass the bill, it is inconsistent with Federal law; therefore, it is invalid. It is a reflection of the 16 shameful years that members opposite were in office and the legislation they brought before the House. It was neither properly thought out nor strategic; it was piecemeal. Again, that is the approach Labor has taken with this bill.

In 2006 the Commonwealth Government passed the Independent Contractors Act. That Act came into effect in 2011 after a transitional phase. The purpose of the Commonwealth Act was to create a consistent national framework for the regulation of independent contracts for service in New South Wales. The principal effect of the Commonwealth legislation on our State laws was to change the way the Industrial Relations Act 1996 operated with respect to independent contractors. The Industrial Relations Act contained provisions that deemed specific types of contractors to be employees, including bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers.

The effect of the Commonwealth Independent Contractors Act was to override the provisions, changing those employees deemed previously to be in the New South Wales legislation to contractors under the Independent Contractors Act, including bread, milk and cream delivery owner-drivers. Chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act provides a quasi-industrial framework for the regulation of the remuneration and conditions of certain owner-drivers who are not employees. It gives the Industrial Relations Commission jurisdiction to make contract

determinations or contract agreements for particular sectors in the transport industry, if such assistance is sought by those contractors. However, as members are aware, chapter 6 expressly does not apply to bread, milk or cream delivery owner-drivers. They are expressly excluded from the operation of chapter 6, but they are not alone.

This Government remains committed to regulatory reform that lifts the fortunes of our growing economy and that improves the lives of people who live, work and operate productive businesses in New South Wales. Since coming to office, this Government has worked to improve living standards and create new and better opportunities for the people of this State. In fact, our record was broken last week. Since we first came to office in 2011, we have created more than 500,000 jobs in New South Wales. New South Wales had the lowest unemployment rate of any State for almost three years. This Government has been doing everything it can to help small business in New South Wales. The Liberals and The Nationals know that small business is the backbone of our economy.

Small business is a major employer in this State. We support people who take the risk to borrow money on their home to go into small business. It enables them to provide for their family and create jobs because small business creates the substance of most economies in regional towns in New South Wales. Mr Assistant Speaker, I know you would agree that small business can further drive employment and the social welfare of people in regional New South Wales as well as the economy of this State. This Government takes small business seriously. That is why we created the Office of the Small Business Commissioner. Some people think it was a waste of time. There are numerous examples of the Small Business Commissioner having stepped in to help small businesses over the past few years. One example is the timber mill in my electorate, which mostly recycles timber. It sells the majority of its products from a showroom in Sydney, which was in jeopardy because of a decision made by a government authority.

The Small Business Commissioner stepped in and negotiated with the small business. The commissioner had Government authority and was able to overturn that decision, which saved 35 jobs. The business was overwhelmed with the assistance given by the Small Business Commissioner. That is one example of what has been done to help small business. The Government has also reduced red tape in a number of ways. A new grant has been introduced that gives employers \$2,000 to engage a new employee. Funding availability has been increased. The Regional Growth Fund has \$500 million to remove the impediments to businesses getting started or expanding in regional New South Wales. The MidCoast Council has been given \$28 million to improve business and employ more staff. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (11:30): That was an interesting and surprising conclusion to the member for Myall Lakes' contribution. He likes to keep us all on our toes. I make a brief contribution to the Industrial Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018, which my good mate the member for Campbelltown, who is one of the hardest workers in this place, introduced. He is in touch with not only his community but also all issues in New South Wales—this is but one example. The member for Myall Lakes remarked that some matters that are brought before this Chamber may not be strategic or thought out. Those comments cannot relate to the bill, which proposes a very simple law. It is about righting a wrong and affording the same rights to owner-drivers that exist for most drivers, except drivers who carry bread, milk and cream. It is ludicrous to think this loophole still exists.

The object of the bill is to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to include contracts for the transportation of bread, milk or cream for sale or delivery as contracts of carriage under the Act. The object is achieved by the removal from the Industrial Relations Act of section 309 (4) (d), which provides that such a contract is not a contract of carriage for the purposes of the Act. It can be gleaned from contributions of Opposition members that this omission comes from a time when drivers transported bread and milk, in particular, to people's front doors. The industry has changed. Through the Transport Workers Union I have been involved in a raging national debate that owner-drivers work in a dangerous workplace. Owner-drivers are contractors who are heavily dependent on regular contracts, are subject to serious fatigue on the roads and are often placed in dangerous situations. They are entitled to a legal framework to protect their rights at work, regardless of the goods they are carrying.

If the theatre is stripped away, fundamentally what we aim to achieve in this place is improving people's lives. Since I have been in this place, I have not seen much legislation that will do that; but I am confident this brief bill will make a big difference. Owner-drivers will be able to go to work and know there is a legal framework protecting their rights. I am proud to represent owner-drivers in my electorate. People should be able to go to work safely, earn money and return home to their families. Everyone deserves the same rights, regardless of what they are transporting. I am proud to support the member for Campbelltown's bill, which tidies up a loophole. It is about fairness at work. Any member who does not support this important and sensible bill, introduced by a sensible member of Parliament who is in touch with his community, should be ashamed of themselves. I am proud not

only to make a brief contribution to debate on the bill, but also to have my name in *Hansard* supporting the bill. I urge all members to do the same.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (11:35): Sometimes in this place we are faced with what I would call "no-brainers". The member for Campbelltown introduced a bill to effect a sensible change through the Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018. The importance of the bill was brought home to me by a letter I received from one of my constituents. When I have read this letter onto the record, I challenge any member of this place to not support these changes. My constituent, who does a bread run for Tip Top Bakeries, wrote to me and stated:

David

We are on an agreement that was implemented in 2009. There is no contract period only a review which is conducted every 12 months to look at the rate per unit (or loaf of bread) we are paid. We are told that the unit price is calculated based on kilometres travelled, hours worked and age and size of your truck. In the unit price is to cover all wages, insurances, penalty rates, truck running and servicing costs are calculated in this price. None of the costing model pricing is available to us to question. When we ask for this information they say its confidential. Here lies one of the main issue.

One of the big concerns that I personally have at the moment is the replacement of trucks. In our agreement there is a clause that we need to replace our trucks every 5 years. In 2014, when my truck was due for replacement, I emailed the company to request permission for the purchase of a new truck, which is the practice, but the reply was no. I responded that it was in my agreement with Tip Top that the truck be replaced and they did not respond.

This now being the case they reduced the cents per unit rate and only pay me the minimum for our trucks which are now depreciated down to residual value only. I contacted the TWU for advice. They agreed that Tip Top were in breach of their own agreement. They offered to follow up but advised—

This is the part that members should note—

that we had no opportunity of arbitration because of the current legislation and there would be a possibility they could terminate the agreement with me so I did not proceed. There is much secrecy within the way that the individual runs are costed. We have to sign a confidentiality agreement not to share with others what we are being paid or our cents per unit rate. All other distributors on the central coast are in a similar position. They have said to me that If I don't like what is being offered—

This is Tip Top Bakeries—

to hand in my notice to leave.

Mr Jamie Parker: Terrible.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Absolutely disgraceful. The letter continued:

The main issues in dot point are,

1. No transparency of how they come to the cents per unit rate.
2. No recourse or arbitration for us to turn to.
3. With the rising cost of running the business, wages, servicing costs, fuel costs, wages, insurances, many drivers are having to not have time off or cut truck servicing to save money.
4. With an ageing fleet of trucks and without adequate compensation to purchase new trucks its only a matter of time until there is an accident.

I strongly believe that the current legislation from the 1950's need to be amended to include bread delivery contractors this will at least give us a voice and we can have our union, the TWU, look at ways to have a fairer rate of pay.

Kind Regards Mick It is absolutely outrageous that any member could agree that these people should not be included. These are small business people who are trying to survive in circumstances in which there is such secrecy and no opportunity to negotiate higher rates for their work. They have an agreement that this company is not honouring, but they cannot go to arbitration and risk losing their business and their livelihood. It is also a safety issue because they are being forced to drive older vehicles on our roads. That is unsafe not only for them but also for other road users. It is beyond my comprehension why the Government will not support a simple change that will provide fairness for work practices, safety and rates of pay.

I know Mick. He and I are in the surf club together. He has had to put off one of his drivers and he is now driving full-time himself. This is costing jobs because these people are being held to ransom. For example, what if Mick said it was all too hard and walked away? The next person to come along would have to sign an agreement. We are seeing a downward trend to the lowest common denominator where people are basically being screwed over to accept this or quit. That is just not good enough. I find it hard to believe that a single member in this place could continue to support this. When Mick first told me, I did not believe him. I said, "Surely that can't be right." I then rang the union and spoke to a few other people, who said, "No. That's absolutely right."

I ask the Minister and those on the other side to explain how I am supposed to tell Mick that members in this Parliament did not support the very simple amendment that has been suggested by the member for Campbelltown. Why are they doing this? It is absolutely outrageous. I have been a member of Parliament for a little over two terms now, so not much surprises me anymore, but I am really surprised that those opposite will

not support this. This is a matter of basic fairness for people who are trying to do the right things by their families yet they are being held to ransom by big companies that want to make the most they can for as little as possible. That is just not on.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (11:42): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Industrial Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018. I commend the member for Campbelltown for introducing this legislation. Generally people become politicians because they want to achieve things; often they forget that when they are elected. Members of Parliament tend to get spoonfed and drink the Kool-Aid, and many forget why they are here. The member for Campbelltown is not one of those people. He believes in the things that are important to working men and women. Most importantly, he believes in the fundamental right of every Australian to be protected while they go about their daily work, life and activities. I congratulate the member for Campbelltown on continuing to show that he is a committed politician. Indeed, his actions speak much louder than his words.

Those on this side of the House fully support this bill and many of us have had discussions with the Transport Workers Union. Nowadays the word "union" tends to be used by those opposite as some sort of slight, but we are very proud to be associated members and to work with the trade unions in this State. Unions play a very important role in protecting the conditions and working lives of our men and women. Those on this side will always be proud to stand up for working men and women, alongside our union leaders, members and those who continue to support working people. The amendment proposed to the Industrial Relations Act is fairly conservative. It is a straightforward legislative solution to an ongoing industrial issue for bread carters in New South Wales. The exclusion of these individuals from the protections of chapter 6, as my colleague has outlined, is an historical anomaly that is not practically justified in today's context and the way in which we receive these goods.

The object of this bill is to bring bread carters under the purview of chapter 6. That will have no significant industry-wide impact. In fact, it will simply allow drivers to access chapter 6. Importantly, it will also allow them to access the Industrial Relations Commission. The Industrial Relations Commission has had more than 50 years' experience in dealing with owner-drivers and it is the most appropriate body to handle disputes for these drivers. This is important legislation. It goes to the heart of protecting men and women in this industry and it should be supported by all members. I again commend the member for Campbelltown for his ongoing fight to ensure that the concerns and issues raised by working people are addressed in this Parliament and, where possible, legislative change is achieved. I urge those opposite to support this sensible and important change to enhance the lives of working men and women.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I welcome to the gallery school leaders from high schools in New South Wales who are attending the Parliament Leadership Program conducted by our Parliamentary Education Unit.

Bills

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (CONTRACTS OF CARRIAGE) BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:49): On behalf of The Greens I make a contribution to debate on the Industrial relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018 and state that The Greens support this legislation. Currently we have strong protections for owner-drivers in New South Wales and that is in no short part due to chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act. Chapter 6 covers the overwhelming majority of owner-drivers but it specifically excludes—a rather quaint term—the transportation of bread, milk or cream for the sale or delivery for sale as contracts of carriage under the Industrial Relations Act. The exclusion of this category of owner-drivers is significant.

As previous speakers have said, bread carters, drivers for Tip Top Bakeries and a number of other drivers are impacted significantly by this because they are excluded from chapter 6. That means they do not have the benefit of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission in several important ways, which is important to working people because some large companies will go right to the edge of the law when it comes to how they pay their workers. For example, in what many of us now term the "gig economy" or the "on-demand economy" we have seen drivers for companies such as Uber, Deliveroo and Foodora paid under the minimum wage. I note that Federal legislation can help with this, but at the very least those workers should be paid basic minimum wages.

In the example currently before the House we can see the same type of powerful companies that, without being governed by legislation, will do their utmost to extract the maximum value out of these workers. Previous speakers have given examples of workers having to use older, unsafe vehicles. The owners of these companies are acting in a very egregious way against their workers because those workers are not protected by the provisions of chapter 6 of the Act. In particular, I acknowledge the role of the Transport Workers Union, which has a challenging job in this State and federally in defending the drivers and the workers they cover. So many employers decide their delivery drivers and riders are independent contractors to avoid paying penalty rates, minimum wages and so on, so that they can underpay them. The Greens believe that this legislation is fair. We think it includes a category of owner-drivers who have been unnecessarily excluded from the protections of the Industrial Relations Act.

It is always concerning that when workers do not have that protection the company will go to the nth degree to ensure that it maximises profit from these workers. One would think that respectable companies would treat workers in the best possible way and not try to maximise every cent they can get from them. Unfortunately, that is not the case. We see the same companies use their power to exploit the environment. We see the same companies exploit workers who are not protected by the types of laws that Parliament should enact. I acknowledge the work of the member for Campbelltown. I thank him for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I thank the Transport Workers Union and its members for their work to protect workers. I hope that members support this bill today.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:50): In reply: I thank the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations, and members representing the electorates of Macquarie Fields, Terrigal, Wollongong, Parramatta, The Entrance, Riverstone, Shellharbour, Myall Lakes, Londonderry, Keira and Balmain. The basic purpose of members of Parliament is to put laws in place—legislate—to change peoples' lives. Our communities watch the charades in this Chamber, which are not seen in a good light. This bill is an opportunity for all members to remind themselves of why we are here. It aims to fix a loophole in the legislation. I will go into more detail about the remarks about inconsistencies in the Independent Contractors Act. It is not a luxury that workers seek to have a fair, just and safe workplace; it is a right. Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the United States of America Declaration of Independence, said:

The care of human life and happiness, not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government—

When I say "government", there are Government members in this Chamber, but all members of this place are responsible to do everything we can to make the lives of those whom we are privileged to serve and seek to represent a little bit better tomorrow than it is today. I am delighted that student leaders are in the public gallery. I thank them for their attendance and welcome them to the Parliament. This bill will fill a gap to provide a legal framework of protection for bread delivery drivers, but it is far broader than that. Why? Because in the past bread, milk and cream were delivered straight to the front door of consumers. Since Federation those workers have been exempt from the Act for their own reasons, which were accepted. However, the industry has changed.

We now have subcontractors and workers who buy bread runs around the metropolitan area and out in the regions. They employ people who enjoy no industrial framework of protection. There is nothing for them to come back to. I spoke to bread delivery drivers, some of whom had worked every day for six weeks straight. Some of them cannot afford to fix their vehicles: They are driving in an unsafe vehicle. These are the ramifications of not having a legal framework of protection in place. I note that the bill is not an ideological pursuit. Tip Top Bakeries and other companies are fantastic organisations, and they do everything they can. But this is about us as legislators filling a void within a New South Wales Act.

I thank my colleagues who have commended me for introducing this legislation. But this is not about me: this is about the issue. I introduced the bill with goodwill. I met with officers of the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. I spoke briefly with the Minister about this matter and note that he gave me an undertaking to make further representations to his Federal counterpart on the Independent Contractors Act. I sought and received legal advice from Mr Mark Gibian of HB Higgins Chambers in Elizabeth Street, which addresses what have been called "inconsistencies". I am happy to provide his advice to any member who would like to see it. His advice states:

By operation of s7 (2) (b) (i) of the IC Act, no inconsistency arises between the IC Act and Chapter 6 of the IR Act as amended from time to time. For these reasons, I do not believe that the proposed amendment to Chapter 6—

which is ultimately this bill—

of the IR Act contained in the *Industrial Relations Amendment (Contracts of Carriage) Bill 2018* gives rise to an inconsistency with the IR Act for the purpose of s109 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

I reiterate that I am very happy to table that advice. I accept that some people will have alternative views, but what I do not accept is misrepresentation of fact. All too often in this place colleagues call each other all sorts of names

that brings their credibility and integrity into question. One of the deepest insults one man or woman can direct to another is to bring their integrity and credibility into question. I will not do that, but nor will I have a misrepresentation of fact. I note that the member for Myall Lakes has entered the Chamber. He referred to my introducing this bill and my second reading speech as being piecemeal. I will give that remark the response it deserves.

We often hear Government members talking about being the friend of the worker, which I welcome. I would like to think that everyone is a friend of the worker. The backbone of our economy is good, hardworking people who earn an honest day's living ultimately to support their families. Regulatory chaos and any reference to it is nothing more than rhetoric. It is very simple: There is a gap in legislation that does not provide the legal framework for the protection of people at work. I urge all Government members, including my Nationals colleagues—this practice is prevalent in the regions—to support this bill because there are serious consequences for these workers. Many members know I am originally a Dubbo boy and I remain well connected in the regions. If members support this bill they will fill that void. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes33
Noes47
Majority..... 14

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J	Atalla, Mr E	Bali, Mr S
Barr, Mr C	Car, Ms P	Catley, Ms Y
Chanthivong, Mr A	Crakanthorp, Mr T	Daley, Mr M
Dib, Mr J	Doyle, Ms T	Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D	Harrison, Ms J	Hoenig, Mr R
Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S	Leong, Ms J
McDermott, Dr H	McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Mihailuk, Ms T	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
Washington, Ms K	Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G

NOES

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	Davies, Mrs T
Dominello, Mr V	Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr A.W.
Evans, Mr L.J.	Fraser, Mr A	George, Mr T
Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T	Griffin, Mr J
Gulaptis, Mr C	Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A
Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M
Lee, Dr G	Maguire, Mr D	Marshall, Mr A
Notley-Smith, Mr B	O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Pavey, Mrs M	Perrottet, Mr D	Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G	Roberts, Mr A	Rowell, Mr J
Sidoti, Mr J	Speakman, Mr M	Stokes, Mr R
Taylor, Mr M	Toole, Mr P	Tudehope, Mr D
Upton, Ms G	Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R
Williams, Mrs L	Wilson, Ms F	

PAIRS

Cotsis, Ms S	Barilaro, Mr J
Foley, Mr L	Berejiklian, Ms G
Haylen, Ms J	Constance, Mr A

PAIRS

Lalich, Mr N
Lynch, Mr P

Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S

Motion negatived.

*Motions***NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK**

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:05): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government on increasing palliative care funding to record levels.
- (2) Acknowledges it is National Palliative Care Week from 20 to 26 May 2018.
- (3) Notes that the theme for National Palliative Care Week 2018 is What matters most?
- (4) Recognises the importance of National Palliative Care Week in raising public awareness about palliative care.

The New South Wales Government is really proud to recognise National Palliative Care Week, which commenced on Sunday 20 May. The purpose of National Palliative Care Week is to raise awareness and understanding about palliative care in our communities. The theme this year is: What matters most? This theme addresses the need for Australians to plan ahead for their end-of-life care and, importantly, discuss it with their loved ones and their health professionals. Talking about dying is challenging. It is not something we like to think about or acknowledge. The discomfort can be felt by patients and our health professionals, who may feel uncomfortable starting a discussion about this. But at this critical time, one conversation can make such a huge difference. Talking about our own death or the death of a loved one is difficult. However, it is important because death is an unavoidable part of our lives.

Many Australians feel that it is important to talk about their death and their dying wishes, yet most people never have that conversation. End-of-life conversations are opportunities to discuss end-of-life care wishes with our loved ones and with our health professionals. The Australian Centre for Health Research reported in 2016 that patients are more likely to receive care that is consistent with their choices when they have discussed their choices of end-of-life care with their loved ones and their health professionals. Palliative care helps people live their life as fully and as comfortably as possible when they have a life-limiting or terminal illness. Palliative care may include relief of pain and other symptoms, providing emotional, social and spiritual support, and assistance for families.

The New South Wales Government has a very strong commitment to palliative care and already has made significant investments in palliative care. The Government's record investment in palliative care of \$100 million over four years, announced in the last budget, is in addition to the \$210 million that is spent each year for services right across New South Wales. The 2017-18 State budget, which provided this funding, was to increase the workforce by an additional nine palliative care specialists in regional and rural areas, two specialist positions to provide relief to other specialists in rural and regional areas and for an additional 30 palliative care nurses providing care in hospitals, in homes and in nursing homes. The 2017-18 State budget also provided funding for training and development: palliative care training for 300 nurses and allied health staff and 300 scholarships specifically for rural and regional nurses and allied health staff to enhance their palliative care skills. The Government also invested in a community pharmacy initiative to improve medication management for palliative care patients.

A few weeks ago I was pleased to attend the first part of that community pharmacy initiative to talk with pharmacists on behalf of the Minister to hear their views about how we can better improve the integration and opportunities for community pharmacies to be involved with palliative care. This initiative, led by the Clinical Excellence Commission, aims to improve the awareness and skills of community pharmacists. These people play a key role in making sure that palliative care patients receive appropriate medication. The New South Wales Government also has significantly increased funding for palliative care and expanded choices for people at the end of life by delivering community-based palliative care services that support people to remain at home, if that is their wish.

The New South Wales palliative care home support service has provided more than 10,000 packages of support across New South Wales since December 2013. A statewide network of paediatric palliative care services supports the establishment of a pop-up care model that mobilises specialist supports around the child who is dying and their family, particularly in rural and regional areas. It provides access to after-hours advice for medical

professionals. During National Palliative Care Week local health districts right across New South Wales have been, and will be, conducting activities to promote discussion about palliative care and to raise awareness of issues around death and dying.

I shall refer to some of those fantastic activities: in the South East Sydney Local Health District, a palliative care information booth at the wonderful new St George Hospital, which is part of the Government's recent \$277 million redevelopment of the hospital, opened last year; and a palliative care study day at the Sutherland Hospital; in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, the introduction of new palliative care clinical nurse specialists at the Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital in Nowra and the Milton Ulladulla Hospital, delivered through this Government's additional \$100 million investment in palliative care in the 2017-18 budget; and in the Far West Local Health District, visitors, patients and carers at Broken Hill Base Hospital are contributing to a large campus used to address the question: What matters most? I am looking forward to the completion of the Government's \$30 million redevelopment of the hospital in the second half of this year.

The Sydney Local Health District at the Concord hospital is hosting a two-day resilience workshop for outstanding palliative care staff. This will be facilitated by Liese Groot-Alberts. Nursing staff are also benefiting from a "What matters most?" training education day. The Concord Centre for Palliative Care has organised a barbecue for its palliative care volunteers, and I will talk about volunteers at my next opportunity. I acknowledge the tremendous advocacy of the member for Drummoyne and the Minister for Health, who helped to deliver the \$340 million commitment to redevelop and build a new clinical services building at Concord. It is important to recognise that palliative care services are accessed not only by people at a later stage at their life but also children and young people. One of the Government's priorities is to provide palliative services to support people in their final stage of life—services and comforts that alleviate pain and suffering, enabling people to live their last days, importantly, with dignity and grace.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:12): I participate in debate on the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie. The member and I co-chair the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia Group. We also share the pleasure of representing areas where many people like to retire. Issues facing older communities are of high importance to us both, as they are for many members in this place. As the acting shadow Minister for Ageing and the representative in this place of the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon Walt Secord, and as the member representing the area recognised as having the highest proportion of older residents of any place in Australia—the "oldest area" in Australia—the availability of palliative care is an issue of great concern to me.

Approximately 12 months ago I had the opportunity to attend a palliative care roundtable in Newcastle. It was a very informative event that produced a good quality summary of the needs in the sector. At the event I had the opportunity to speak with a number of medical staff, families and advocates who are working in the sector. I discussed with them what they see on a day-to-day basis. The workshop heard from a palliative care specialist who spoke of the desire of patients for a "good death" and what that can mean for different patients. They spoke also about care being an ecosystem that encompasses a cultural, religious and social context as well as a health context. The importance of making care decisions in advance was stressed as well.

Another speaker was an advocate who lost her young son in 2004. What could only be the most traumatic event in anyone's life was made worse by being in an acute care setting for her son's final weeks. Through her advocacy, a child and adolescent palliative care service is now available at the John Hunter Hospital. This is a very different model of palliative care to that experienced or needed by older people at the end of their lives. Another speaker was a palliative care nurse, who spoke about her work collecting data on how people choose to die. One disturbing point she mentioned was the huge turnover in palliative care staff over the last 12 months and the impact this has when teams lose those advanced and experienced skills. Throughout that palliative care roundtable there were discussions on the workforce, the importance of communication, the role of volunteer assistance, the need for service flexibility, the focus on patient-centred care, the work to integrate palliative care into other parts of the health system, and recognition of the need for palliative care links outside its common focus with oncology.

I am pleased the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health has raised this issue today because in August last year the New South Wales Auditor-General issued a report into palliative care that highlighted the significant disparity in access to services across New South Wales as well as the overall lack of planning to ensure that there are adequate palliative care specialist health professionals across New South Wales. I have spoken before about the desperate need for increased palliative care in my community, both in the home setting and the hospital setting. Nowhere is that demand felt more clearly than in regional electorates such as mine. The Auditor-General's report was in stark contrast to some of the glowing language used in this place about palliative care. The report found:

NSW Health's approach to planning and evaluating palliative care is not effectively coordinated. There is no overall policy framework for palliative and end-of-life care, nor is there comprehensive monitoring and reporting on services and outcomes.

NSW Health has a limited understanding of the quantity and quality of palliative care services across the state, which reduces its ability to plan for future demand and the workforce needed to deliver it. At the district level, planning is sometimes ad hoc and accountability for performance is unclear.

The capacity of LHDs to use accurate and complete data to plan and deliver services is hindered by multiple disjointed information systems and manual data collections. Further, a data collection on patient outcomes, for benchmarking and quality improvement, is not used universally. This limits the ability of districts to plan, benchmark and improve services based on outcomes data.

NSW Health's engagement with stakeholders is not systematic. The lack of an overall stakeholder engagement strategy puts at risk the sustainability and value of stakeholder input in planning and limits transparency.

I dwell on this report because it confirms much of what I was seeing and hearing within my community and other communities. The report further stated:

While NSW Health has identified significant gaps in the specialist palliative care workforce (especially in regional and remote areas) and it previously made workforce capacity one of its priorities, limited work has been undertaken in producing a statewide strategy to reduce these gaps.

Mrs Leslie Williams: That is not true.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: These are not my words. I am reading from the Auditor-General's report. The final section of the Auditor-General's report states:

Under the NSW Government Plan, LHDs could access a flexible fund to enhance their palliative care services through an expression of interest model. However, this 'bidding' approach may not support equitable service delivery, particularly for regional and remote populations.

Again the Government is taking a commercial approach to service delivery of something that is critically important. I have spoken of the high turnover in palliative care nurses overall, but in Port Stephens three-quarters of our local palliative care nurses are approaching their seventieth birthdays. The lack of workforce planning identified by the Auditor-General is being played out in Port Stephens and, I have no doubt, across many areas of New South Wales. Succession planning is desperately needed. I am told that the Tomaree Hospital has dedicated palliative care beds but no palliative care nurses. I hope that the New South Wales Government will allocate one of the 30 palliative care nurses it announced in last year's budget to Port Stephens.

Towards the end of last year I had the pleasure of meeting with the Port Stephens Palliative Care Committee and its ever-diligent president, Rosemary Toscano. It is telling that this area of the health sector requires a dedicated fundraising committee. Dedicated fundraising committees have been established across rural and regional areas of New South Wales. Those committees raise funds to purchase items such as pressure-relieving mattresses, oxygen concentrators, hospital beds and Roho pressure cushions. They are basic but expensive items that are critical to the delivery of in-home palliative care. It beggars belief that fundraising is still needed to purchase that type of equipment in New South Wales. In National Palliative Care Week it is important to note that what matters most is allowing people to live with dignity until the very end of their life. I trust that the Government will support our communities so that people can do that. [*Time expired.*]

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:19): It is with pleasure that I contribute to debate on the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie. This year the theme of Palliative Care Week is: What matters most? The Liberal-Nationals Government recognises that the end of life is a time when every moment is incredibly precious for the patient and their families. The Government wants people to have confidence that they will receive the highest quality care and have their wishes respected during their most vulnerable time. I congratulate the Government on increasing palliative care funding to record levels. The Government not only has prioritised increasing funding but also has undertaken unprecedented levels of consultation with the community to achieve even greater palliative care outcomes.

The community consultation process started last year. From April to October the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary held 12 roundtable meetings and workshops with the community and health professionals across the State. In November 2017, NSW Health released the Palliative Care Roundtables Consultation Paper, which outlined the key themes for palliative care identified at the roundtables. The survey included in the roundtable papers showed the opinions and priorities of the wider community. People were invited to provide comment and suggest strategies to deliver on them. This week, during Palliative Care Week, I am pleased to advise the House of the release of the Palliative Care Survey Summary Report.

I thank the many people who provided feedback on the Government's consultation paper. We received 2,000 responses from a wide range of people who make palliative care services work, or who have experienced them directly or indirectly. The responses have been analysed and are now ready to be released through the survey summary report. There was overwhelming support for the priorities identified through the roundtable meetings and workshops. Those priorities include improving access to services, ensuring a skilled workforce is linked with integrated care and support, and making palliative care more patient centred. The Government will be bringing in

new initiatives that directly respond to feedback that community and health professionals provided during the roundtables, workshops and surveys.

As our population ages the demand for palliative and end-of-life care grows. In response, the Government has significantly increased its investment in palliative care by putting in more money over the past few years than ever before. In 2017-18 the Government committed an additional \$100 million over four years to improve palliative care services across New South Wales on top of the approximately \$210 million spent on palliative care each year. The 2018-19 State budget will include new initiatives to make sure our services are integrated with the broader health system, enhance our allied health services and address the needs of specific communities and carers. We are using the funding to respond to community feedback so we can provide better services and produce better outcomes for patients and their families.

Last weekend my wife and I enjoyed a beautiful Sunday morning at Bohnock Riverside with the Manning Valley Push for Palliative Care. It was a perfect day with Devonshire teas and market stalls. There was a great opportunity to inspect the beautiful property and gardens of hosts Marie and Eugene O'Neill. I acknowledge Mrs Mary Stevens and her family, who made a very generous donation to Push for Palliative in honour of her late husband, Dr Pat Stevens. Since 2015 the Manning Valley Push for Palliative Care group has raised close to \$100,000. I congratulate Judy and Michael Hollingworth in particular on all their hard work. In my area there are 54 palliative care on-the-job training positions and 50 palliative care scholarships available for staff at the Manning Hospital. I commend the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie to the House.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:24): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for bringing National Palliative Care Week to the attention of the House. It is a very important week and I am honoured to speak in the oldest Parliament in Australia on a topic that is very dear to my heart. Palliative care is something we do not usually participate in until it reaches us personally. My mum was an aged-care worker and a palliative care volunteer. As kids we shared her passion and commitment in caring for those in their palliative stages of life in and around the Blackalls Park community.

Mum would cook for, take flowers to, pray with, clean for, massage and generally spend time with the dying. She also supported their families in those precious and tender times. Mum knew and instilled in my sister and me that gentle support in the sunset stages of life means so much not only to the patients but also to their families. I thank all volunteers and palliative care workers across New South Wales for their incredible efforts. They do a fabulous and extremely important job and I thank them for making such a difference in people's lives. They are symbolic of all of the people who cared for my beautiful mum in her sunset months as bone cancer took over her body. They gave us the best of our mum, right up until the very end. The same cannot be said for the New South Wales Government, which has had eight long years to get on with this. We have been through eight years of privatising public assets and selling off what belongs to the people. We know what that feels like on the Central Coast.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Point of order: I ask you to direct the member for Gosford to confine her remarks to the leave of the motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! I uphold the point of order. The member will return to the leave of the motion.

Ms LIESL TESCH: Absolutely. I am speaking about my community. Today I say hats off to my community, who fought very hard to save our hospital from privatisation. That hospital still has no palliative care beds. Central Coast residents look forward to the Government spending some money on palliative care in our community. More palliative care support is needed in every community in this State, except maybe in a few model electorates around the north shore that conveniently have the resources we would like to have on the Central Coast. We have been calling for palliative care beds in our hospital for eight years but nothing has changed. We need support on the coast. As the member for Terrigal knows, our outreach program is only open from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. five days a week. Often when people ring to ask for support for a dying friend or relative there is nothing available. Sometimes they are called back, in time, to be told there is support available.

Doctors in our community have to admit people to hospital for a range of conditions because there are no palliative care beds. It is tragic when someone is admitted for a heart condition but our community doctors know that they are going to hospital to die. We hope we will get palliative care beds in our new Gosford Hospital. We look really forward to that announcement. At the moment we have no palliative care beds at our two major hospitals and there are only a couple in Woy Woy. We will see what the Government's announcement delivers for our community. I thank the member for Terrigal for organising a roundtable in our area when the Government had not scheduled one there.

I commend the people who work for Elsie's Retreat, which is named in honour of a lady called Elsie who died in horrific circumstances because there were no palliative care beds available on the coast. Elsie's Retreat is campaigning for a standalone hospice based on models in Government-held electorates. During National Palliative Care Week I bring to the attention of the Berejiklian Government that providing resources for the people of rural and regional New South Wales, especially those in need of palliative care, is what matters most.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:27): I commend the member for Port Macquarie and Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health for moving her motion calling on this House to recognise National Palliative Care Week. The member has been a strong advocate for palliative care. She has significant experience in this type of care through her previous work as a nurse. The member for Port Macquarie was heavily involved in roundtables that were held across New South Wales to inform the Government's position on palliative care. Across all regional locations the member worked with general practitioners, allied health workers, community nurses, aged-care nurses and community support services staff. She was instrumental in securing the Government's record \$100 million funding for palliative care in the community. I am proud to be a member of this Government that is working to address the needs of the most vulnerable people in our community who need palliative care. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her work.

I am personally very supportive of this investment in palliative care because it gives people at the end of life's journey the peace, comfort and support they deserve. A year ago today I spoke in this place about palliative care. The Cancer Council's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, which was held at Parliament House on that day and again today, gives all of us an opportunity to think about the many different areas of our society that have been advocating and working hard to support the needs of people at the end of life, who need the utmost care.

I thank the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker for once again hosting the morning tea. I thank also the Cancer Council for the work it did last year with "You matter, your care matters" and the work it is continuing to do in this space. The theme this year is: What matters most? What matters most in the community is ensuring that our loved ones receive high-quality care in the last days of their life and that their wishes are respected. That is why the Government has increased palliative care funding to record levels: to increase access and choice for those people who are in need of palliative care and their family members.

Our Government has made end-of-life care a State priority for a number of years. It has been working hard to support people and families during this distressing time. Advance care planning enables people to share with their loved ones the way they want to live at the end of their lives. It is a tough conversation to have, and that is why support through advance care planning is so vital. The member for Port Macquarie spoke earlier about how important it is for us to speak with our loved ones about our wishes for our end of life. That conversation should be around the kitchen table rather than in the intensive care unit. Advance care planning encourages people to talk with their loved ones about their wishes for the care they would like to receive at the end of their lives and to document those wishes. End-of-life care can then be improved by ensuring that a patient's wishes are embedded in the care they receive.

Various groups are involved in advance care planning. NSW Health has made a range of tools available to assist patients, families, carers and health professionals with this process. NSW Health has been working with the aged care sector on advance care planning through its End of Life Advisory Committee. It also has been collaborating with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to promote and provide training to general practitioners so they can help their patients with advance care planning and advance care directives, and has released an information book on advance care directives that will assist residents in aged care. I am proud of the work NSW Health has been doing to support people with end-of-life care planning, particularly the work of the practitioners within NSW Health who are delivering day-to-day care to the people in our community who need it the most. New South Wales has a growing population and an ageing population. That is why it is so crucial that we plan for the end stage of life. Talking about death and dying is challenging. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for allowing us to have this conversation today.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:32): I speak on this important motion brought forward by the member for Port Macquarie. It would be difficult to say anything that was not positive about this motion, which congratulates the Government on increasing palliative care funding to record levels. That fact is inarguable, and I congratulate the Government on its funding for palliative care, particularly the last major investment of \$100 million. Today, on the day of the Cancer Council's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, it should be remembered how big a role the Cancer Council has played in raising issues and championing that investment. But it is never just the involvement of one group; we do this as a community and as a team.

During National Palliative Care Week, we recognise the importance of this event for raising public awareness of palliative care. The theme for National Palliative Care Week this year is: What matters most? I commend the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie for raising those issues. Every member would have stories from their electorates about issues and problems in relation to palliative care. I have raised such

matters in the House previously and I have fought for my community. In my electorate, we want our palliative care services extended. I recognise the excellent palliative care services that are delivered by Calvary Mater through Hunter New England Health but we want the services extended. I am sure that all members want more palliative care services. Our end-of-life journey is one that each of us and every member of the community will take, but services are particularly important for those who are approaching their end of life and have a need for palliative care.

The member for Port Macquarie has had experience in palliative care during her career as a nurse. I also have had experience being with people when they die. As I have said in the House previously, I am not particularly proud of the palliative care services that were delivered to people during my time nursing—not because of anything I did but because the system did not allow for a good death. As a society, we have to address that issue. As individuals, we have to face up to the fact sooner rather than later that we are all on this path. We have seen the passage of family and friends as they move on. We can make it easier for our family and friends as we move on through programs such as advance care directives, which can ease the burden on families in their end-of-life considerations. We have to improve the services bit by bit. As has been mentioned, the Auditor-General in his report into palliative care was somewhat critical. However, I refer to the report where it states:

Over the last two years, NSW Health has taken steps to improve its planning and support for Local Health Districts. The NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation has produced an online resource which will assist districts construct their own, localised models of care.

Things are improving. No government gets this right all the time, but this Government has stepped up to the plate. I thank the Government for its initiatives in palliative care.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:36): By leave: Today, during National Palliative Care Week, I add my support to the wonderful job that everybody associated with palliative care does across our State. As previous speakers have said, it is an extremely sad time for families when a loved one needs palliative care. The support, professionalism and love shown by those who are employed to look after palliative care patients is remarkable. On a number of occasions, families have told me that however traumatic the experience, the nurses and doctors in the palliative care wards were able to soften the ordeal and helped family and friends through the process.

I acknowledge the nurses who work in the palliative care wards and thank them for everything they do. I acknowledge the member for Port Macquarie who, as a former nurse who worked in a palliative care ward, is passionate about this issue. The member has been responsible for 12 roundtables, one of which was held in metropolitan Sydney with the Minister for Health in attendance. The member for Port Macquarie made sure that every regional local health district participated in a roundtable and gave us their input. I commend the member for organising the roundtables, the purpose of which was to listen and learn in order to improve the system, for the patients and for their families.

I acknowledge Bryan and Lynn Long and Bryan's much-loved mother, Peggy, who has passed away. Bryan and Lynn came to see me last week, together with Emma from the Minister for Health's office. Emma was wonderful. Speaking with Bryan and Lynn about their experience with palliative care gave us really good insight into how things could be handled better and how, as a Government, we could work together. Emma, from the Minister's office, was wonderful. She showed Bryan and Lynn a number of pathways to for them to add input to the process. Hopefully, we can learn from Bryan's and Lynn's experience and improve the process. Finally, I acknowledge the Camden Hospital's palliative care unit. A few years ago my brother-in-law was in that unit. The staff do a wonderful job. I thank each and every person associated with the Camden Hospital and the palliative care ward. Thank you for your efforts, day in and day out, which make the world of difference.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:40): By leave: I acknowledge and thank the member for Port Macquarie for moving the motion and for drawing this issue to the attention of the House. Palliative care is an important issue across New South Wales and Australia. I previously raised the issue of a dedicated palliative care facility in Orange in the House. The last occasion was as recently as last night in a private member's statement. Orange is in desperate need of a dedicated palliative care facility. The old Orange Base Hospital did provide palliative care, but the new hospital, although a fantastic facility opened in 2011, does not have a dedicated palliative care facility.

The Orange branch of Push for Palliative Care is working to establish a dedicated facility in Orange. Shortly after I was elected to this House I tabled a petition of more than 10,000 signatures on behalf of the Orange community calling for a dedicated palliative care facility. We are making progress. I chair a local committee involving a number of relevant stakeholders in Orange, including general practitioners, the Cancer Council, the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service, members of Push for Palliative Care, local council members, and other stakeholders who have a vested interest in establishing a dedicated palliative care facility in Orange.

As recently as a few weeks ago the Dudley Private Hospital in Orange submitted a proposal for a public-private partnership, which is similar to what is available in Wagga Wagga. The member for Wagga Wagga is present in the Chamber. The Dudley Private Hospital has proposed to make available four beds in four individual rooms and to work out a partnership funding model with the local health district that will result in a dedicated space available for palliative care patients. The acting chief executive officer of the Dudley Private Hospital, Pru Buist, is a passionate advocate for the proposal. She was involved in the Murrumbidgee model and therefore has prior experience of what is required to establish this model. When we talk about palliative care, everyone in the House understands that it will affect us directly or indirectly at some point in our lives.

It is important to take into account, especially in regional communities, the role of culturally significant places and spaces available for Indigenous families to spend time and to grieve. Often there are large groups of family members who may attend a facility. Presently the fantastic Orange Base Hospital is a very busy facility, and finding that space is often difficult to achieve. I acknowledge the fantastic work of the Orange Push for Palliative Care team, and Jenny Hazleton, who is president of that group. I understand Minister Hazzard may be meeting the Orange Push for Palliative Care team on 4 June. I thank the Minister for that. I know they are looking forward to discussing this proposal with him. In conclusion, I thank the member for Port Macquarie for bringing the motion to the House. It is a very important motion. I commend it to the House.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (12:44): By leave: Palliative Care Week is an important time for members of Parliament and people with influence to talk about palliative care, the success that we have had and our plans and aspirations for our communities to achieve a full palliative care plan. One example is the palliative care plan to achieve the goal, which was implemented after 20 years of work by the Murrumbidgee Riverina region. The plan was devised with cooperation from providers, doctors and both public and private health facilities. That model is now being implemented in other places. As a community we have been helping other towns, such as Orange and Nowra, with the establishment of a radiotherapy centre.

I am aware of what is happening in Orange. The Hon. Rick Colless in the other place has been keeping me informed on the progress that that community is making. There will be others that are making progress. I commend to members who preceded the member for Orange in the debate to not come into this place and complain. Instead, come into this place and explain the problems, seek meetings with the Ministers, and get the community together to generate cooperation. Our plan did not come easily: It took almost 20 years to achieve. It started with the need for radiotherapy in the regions. Previously everyone went to the Colvin Cancer Centre in Sydney for treatment. Often they were away from their families for six to eight weeks, or months, at a time.

As a community we joined in fundraising and developed a public-private partnership with the St Vincent's Cancer Centre, as it was then called. The community raised \$4 million to build a radiotherapy centre. St Vincent's oncology put in equipment such as linear accelerators, and we had a service that delivers chemotherapy to all patients, both public and private. The next step was to build accommodation. The community formed committees that included members of Parliament, active community members, representatives from the Cancer Care Centre and representatives from Can Assist to raise \$2 million. Those funds built Lilier Lodge, which has 20 units where people can stay while they seek treatment.

The next step was Ronald McDonald House, which provides accommodation in Wagga Wagga for families while their children receive treatment. The step after that was to achieve the palliative care plan. When this Government came into office it immediately invested \$83 million in medical facilities. Our region acquired \$34 million of that amount, which allowed us to immediately acquire 10 acute care beds within the Calvary Hospital. We then set ourselves a task of providing another eight beds, with funding provided by the Federal Government. Slow stream beds are available for people who choose to end their days in a hospice environment. The acute beds are available to get the condition under control so that the patient is able to go home, with assistance from a palliative care team.

That service is delivered across the Riverina-Murrumbidgee region. No one person can take credit for the achievement of a model that is available for other communities to emulate. It was done through cooperation between Federal, State, local government, health providers, Calvary Health Care, Murrumbidgee locals and others to deliver that outcome. I suggest to members they should formulate a plan and then go back to their communities to do the work. Do not come into this House and complain about less than optimal facilities, as the member for Gosford did. Go home and do something about it.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:48): By leave: I congratulate the member for Port Macquarie on bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. I congratulate many people in my electorate of Upper Hunter on the launch of the palliative campaign that the Cancer Council NSW ran last year. I was one of the active participants. The campaign was very successful. Feedback suggests that the Government's announcement of investing \$100 million in palliative care over the next four years, beginning this financial year,

is most welcome. I receive regular feedback in the Upper Hunter electorate that confirms the money is rolling out and services are being provided as a result of that additional funding.

We can talk about how good the policy and the announcements are but, at the end of the day, what is the end result? I am sure all of us have personal stories about the experience of people we know who have required palliative care services. Those stories would be not only about the patients but their immediate family and support networks as well. We have all seen people who are going through a traumatic experience when, unfortunately, they need palliative care services. During those times, the extraordinary humanity of their friends, family and support networks of their local communities come to the fore.

As a result of this Government's policies and funding, people will be able to receive palliative care and retain, most importantly, their dignity. That is a major requirement and expectation of patients as well as their family and friends. Yes, the money is wonderful and, yes, the policy is great; but let us not forget why we are doing this. It is all about humanity and the person who unfortunately requires palliative care. The Government is providing funding for the sake of their dignity and humanity and so that their friends and families remember them in the future with nothing but love, care and admiration.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (12:52): By leave: I commend the member for Port Macquarie for moving this excellent motion. It is a great opportunity for us to talk about something that is very important to all of our communities. British poet John Oxenham famously and elegantly wrote, "For death begins with life's first breath. And life begins at touch of death." That poem powerfully reminds us of our obligation to look after the most vulnerable people in our community. A mark of any civilisation is how it looks after its most vulnerable citizens. It is difficult to imagine any group who is more vulnerable in the frailty of humanity than those facing a life-limiting illness and their families. It is a time of great emotion and need. For those families it can also be a time of great discovery, healing and coming together. That is why it is important that we provide the resources and develop our human capacity to meet not only the physical needs of people with life-limiting illnesses, through specialised areas of palliative care and nursing, but also meet the emotional, mental and spiritual needs of those we love.

I am grateful to be part of a government that is contributing to a long-held community vision in my electorate for inpatient palliative care to be provided at the Mona Vale Hospital. Members might be aware of a longstanding discussion about the future of the Mona Vale Hospital. This Government is able to guarantee that the hospital will continue to operate as a vital piece of health infrastructure that will continue to serve the people of the northern beaches. It is wonderful that the entire site will remain in public ownership; but moreover the facilities of the hospital will be developed, in concert with the facilities at the new northern beaches hospital, to provide specialisation, particularly in subacute medicine. Those on-site facilities will include 56 public beds for rehabilitation, 10 new beds for the geriatric evaluation and maintenance unit, a new urgent care centre, a community health centre, and other surgical facilities.

I am excited about this Government's commitment to provide a publicly accessible and operated inpatient palliative care unit on the eastern side of the northern beaches hospital, which will command incredible views of the South Pacific Ocean. It is wonderful that those multimillion-dollar views will be enjoyed by those who need them most. People receiving palliative care must be looked after with dignity, care and compassion. I thank the wonderful people of HammondCare and the auxiliary who currently participate in providing outpatient services at the Mona Vale Hospital. The palliative care unit will be a critical part of the future of health services on the Mona Vale campus and a new addition to the services currently provided at the Mona Vale Hospital.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:56): By leave: I commend the member for Port Macquarie for moving this motion on National Palliative Care Week. The motion commences by congratulating the New South Wales Government for increasing palliative care funding to record levels. In last year's budget an additional \$100 million over four years was delivered for health, specifically for palliative care. The delivery of that funding highlights the humanity of this Government and its priorities in acknowledging the important role that palliative care plays in the quality of end-of-life options that are available to the people of this State.

The motion acknowledges that it is National Palliative Care Week. The motion also notes the theme for National Palliative Care Week is: What matters most? The Cancer Council has lobbied for a long time for end-of-life options. Wendy Watson is the Cancer Council representative in my electorate. She regularly visits my office to lobby on issues relating to cancer. Today members participated in the Biggest Morning Tea in the Speaker's Garden, which was a huge success. We heard Angela's story about her struggle with cancer and the manner in which the Cancer Council contributed to looking after her. Her story is compelling and moving and highlights the obligation that we have to look after people when they become seriously ill and are facing end-of-life options.

Beanies 4 Brain Cancer are also being sold today. I saw a photograph of Mr Temporary Speaker wearing a beanie, which was probably not the best photograph I have seen of him. He was with Mark Hughes, who is lobbying on behalf of people with brain cancer to raise money for the Mark Hughes Foundation. The foundation ensures that the quality of life for people with brain cancer is adequately addressed. Those causes are wonderfully acknowledged by this Parliament. To think both those events were celebrated today, in Palliative Care Week, says something about how genuinely members' approach their obligations.

An important element of palliative care is to acknowledge the care that is given to people who, as much as possible, wish to spend their last days in their own homes. We must acknowledge the role of carers and those in the community who support those carers to ensure people can spend the last hours of their life with their family and loved ones. I congratulate the member for Port Macquarie. She has brought to the House an important issue and a motion that is worth supporting.

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:00): By leave: I am pleased to contribute to this important debate in National Palliative Care Week. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for giving this matter the attention it deserves. I was overjoyed to hear the announcement that the Government intended to invest a record \$100 million over four years in palliative care. That is a significant boost to the \$210 million the Government spends each year on this important area of health and emotional care for the citizens of New South Wales. Talking about end of life is difficult for everyone, but it is essential. I was incredibly pleased to stand with the Premier and the member for Penrith, who is the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport, when the announcement was made that the Government would fund the stage two Nepean Hospital rebuild. There will be a continuous rebuild of the hospital and part of that funding is allocated for palliative care, in recognition of our ageing population.

I also highlight the amazing staff who deliver palliative care services to the community every day. Regrettably, my family recently experienced the significant support, compassion, empathy and professionalism of those nursing and home-care staff. My father-in-law did not have long to live, having received a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. His wish was to pass away in his own home. Within the space of two or three days, he was confined to bed and no longer able to care for himself. But because of the support offered by the palliative care team and the New South Wales health system, we made one phone call and a whole army of support was instantly wrapped around my family. The three visits staff made per day were unbelievable. Our family stepped into 24-hour care mode for my father-in-law, Roy Davies, in the last week of his life. We will always derive comfort from the fact that we were able to grant his final wish. We know that he was pain free and comfortable, and that is attributed completely to the support of the State's palliative care system.

On behalf of my family, and representing many families across the State in a similar situation, I thank staff in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District for their professionalism and their empathy. In fact, three weeks after my father-in-law's funeral, a staff member reached out in her own time and contacted my mother-in-law, Roy's wife. She visited her for a cup of tea to check how she was going. Such is the kindness, the compassion and the deep empathy that staff in this sector have for members of our community. They are heroes. As part of this Government and in National Palliative Care Week, I am proud to stand alongside other members and fully support the additional funding provided.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:04): By leave: I acknowledge the member for Port Macquarie for bringing this motion to the House today, in National Palliative Care Week—which, coincidentally, is also National Volunteer Week. I note the comments of the member for Lake Macquarie regarding advanced care directives. I am proud to be part of a government that is investing record funding in palliative care; but it is not only about the funding. Advanced care directives are very important. More than 75 per cent of people who are diagnosed with a terminal illness wish to end their days at home. Part of that good ending—if it can be called that—is having an advanced care directive so that family and loved ones know the person's wishes.

The words "palliative care" often strike fear into the hearts of people. There needs to be greater understanding of palliative care. Palliative care is not always about end of life; it is about the quality of life of an individual through their journey to end of life. I pay full credit to the member for Port Macquarie. She and I organised a palliative care round table for the Central Coast Local Health District. There was a meeting of minds between the health district and palliative care specialists from the Central Coast and the Hunter. I note the member for Wagga Wagga mentioned that the member for Gosford complained about palliative care. The member for Wagga Wagga is correct: There is no point complaining about the need for extra money; it is about getting together and having a plan. That plan begins with a good local health district.

I pay full credit to Dr Andrew Montague and his team at the Central Coast Local Health District, who are embracing palliative care at a local area level. I also pay tribute to the great work of Dr Sally Carr, a palliative care specialist—who, coincidentally, is my wife's palliative care specialist. As I said previously, palliative care is not necessarily about end of life; it is about managing the quality of life of the person affected by whatever illness.

When my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer, we had those honest, open and frank discussions about what she wanted to do with her life. While I might not necessarily always agree, I have to respect her decisions. We have a very good understanding of what we will go through, which makes that journey much easier. If it is left to the last minute, often palliative care outcomes are not good. I have seen this firsthand with people in my electorate. In contrast, people who have an advanced care directive and who have had the discussion with their specialist and worked through the process have a better outcome.

As the member for Mulgoa said, the palliative care team are the most amazing people who do an outstanding job. They need to be given full credit for the excellent way in which they conduct themselves with people during the most difficult of times. The Government is delivering record funding to allow those specialist nurses and doctors to provide advice and direction and deliver the best possible outcomes for the individuals living through this process. Again, I congratulate the member for Port Macquarie on this motion. I also acknowledge the contribution of the member for Lake Macquarie—both Macquaries are in the Chamber. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:09): By leave: I support the motion introduced by the member for Port Macquarie and make a brief contribution on this important occasion that is National Palliative Care Week. I bring to the attention of the House the good work that happens in the electorate of Manly at Bear Cottage, which is the only children's hospice in New South Wales. It is one of only two children's hospices in Australia and is the only one in the world to be affiliated with a children's hospital. The work that goes on at Bear Cottage at North Head in Manly is truly amazing. The hospice provides 24-hour palliative care support to children with life-limiting illnesses and diseases. It gives children up to the age of 18 the opportunity to stay at Bear Cottage, with or without their carers or parents, and does amazing work providing support, compassion and care for young people who are facing the toughest of challenges.

The challenge, not only for the electorate of Manly but also across New South Wales, is that with improvements in medicine, children and young people with life-limiting illnesses are living longer. They have the opportunity to stay at Bear Cottage only until they are 18 years of age. But there is a wonderful opportunity on the horizon for a hospice for young adults near Bear Cottage, at the old Manly Hospital site. I am incredibly proud to be part of a Government that has already committed to providing \$2 million in recurrent funding for a hospice for young adults if the community can work together to raise the funds needed to get the project off the ground.

The Manly Hospital community group has put a lot of work and effort into the vision of what the Manly Hospital site will look like. I look forward to working with it and with the Minister for Health to make the concept of a hospice for young adults a reality. What happens at Bear Cottage is absolutely amazing, but the challenge is what will happen when people turn 18 and need to move on, which is a terrible circumstance facing many of the young adults. I commend the motion to the House.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:11): In reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate. Normally a speech in reply would acknowledge all contributions, but there were far too many today. In fact, I am humbled by the number of members who stood in the Chamber and highlighted the importance of palliative care for each of their communities. Further, I sincerely thank those members who attended one of the dozen workshops that the Minister and I hosted across the State. As has been acknowledged, it is a difficult discussion to have. That is why it is critical that we stand beside our communities, sit with people and talk to them about these very difficult decisions, but also learn from what they tell us about where we can do better.

I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Myall Lakes, who talked about the palliative care survey that was put onto the Health website this week—National Palliative Care Week. I will refer to some of his main points. As he said, there were more than 2,000 submissions, which again indicates the importance of this issue to local communities. The main points that came out of the survey were that care should be patient centred—we have had some discussion about that this morning—service delivery should be flexible; care should be integrated and well coordinated; additional resources and training are required; palliative care should be clearly defined and recognised; and the role of carers and support services should also be recognised.

Members can take from those findings that, while we have invested significant funding in palliative care, it is not perfect and there is more to do. Delivery of palliative care services is a complex issue because every one of us, as individuals, has a different idea about our end-of-life care. We must acknowledge that in every single community across the State, palliative care will look different because it will have to recognise and address the different needs of local communities. That is exactly why the Minister and I visited every local health district across regional New South Wales to listen to what those communities had to say. I certainly realised very quickly that they were all different in terms of the delivery of palliative care services and they all had different needs. Hopefully we can address those needs now and into the future.

It was also pointed out that the theme for this year's National Palliative Care Week is: What matters most? To summarise, what really matters most is that we do not play politics with this issue and that we all work together in this House and in our communities to ensure we make palliative care the very best it can be. We want a world-class palliative care system, and we have more work to do. Let us work together to make sure that happens. It was disappointing that yesterday some members—including the member for Orange—voted against giving this motion priority. I acknowledge that he told me it was probably the wrong thing to do. I am pleased that he came to the House today to make a contribution, as it is an important issue.

I acknowledge the tremendous work of the many hundreds of palliative care staff across the State. When I was a nurse, I worked in a palliative care team at Port Macquarie Base Hospital. I know that other former nurses in this place probably often get asked, "Do you ever miss nursing?" It is not the work that I miss the most; it is those amazing teams of people that I worked with. They are absolutely incredible. When dealing with palliative care, it is so critical that staff are there not only for families, patients and carers, but also for each other. That is what palliative care nurses do so well. Finally, I acknowledge the amazing volunteers across our State. In particular, I acknowledge Palliative Care NSW and Linda Hansen. I thank Linda for her counsel while I have been Parliamentary Secretary and look forward to working closely with her so that we continue to make palliative care in New South Wales the best it can be.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SCHOOL MAINTENANCE FUNDING

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:17): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government on the record \$747 million investment in school maintenance planned for the next four years.
- (2) Acknowledges that over the school holiday period (December 2017 to January 2018) \$110 million of maintenance work was carried out in public schools across New South Wales.
- (3) Notes that in the Myall Lakes electorate, work totalling \$2.9 million was carried out at 24 schools, including \$1.45 million at the Great Lakes College Forster campus.

This is a great news story. This Government is delivering in education and ensuring that the places where teachers work and students learn are the best they can possibly be. We all know how important education is to our children. It can transform a person's life and change the path they are on. It is a way for people in lower socioeconomic areas to raise themselves up and build a better life. Education is so important, and the bricks-and-mortar places where education is provided are extremely important also. In my electorate, maintenance work worth \$2.9 million was carried out at 24 schools over the school holiday period.

This motion is important because when we came to government we faced an almost \$1 billion maintenance backlog left by the previous Labor Government. During those 16 shameful years the Labor Government turned its back on education and on schools. It closed schools across the metropolitan area and in regional New South Wales. Demountables popped up like mushrooms under Labor, and we are addressing that issue now. For example, the Old Bar Public School in my electorate is about to go to contract for new classrooms to replace demountables. Old Bar is a fantastic seaside location. The new building will have seven classrooms—but hopefully during the tendering phase it may become eight classrooms. That is the type of thing this Government is doing. It is building new schools and schools for people with learning disabilities and other disadvantages.

The Bobin Public School is a great little school in my electorate. Some years ago it was in danger of having fewer than 10 students. Now it has more than 10 students and has received over \$71,000 in maintenance. The Bulahdelah Central School has received more than \$140,000, the Chatham High School has received more than \$243,000 and the Chatham Public School has received more than \$78,000. The Coolongolook Public School, a little school on the highway, has received more than \$10,000. I am sure Mr Temporary Speaker, the member for Tweed, has passed through Coolongolook. The cherry pie shop on the side of the highway is a great place to pull up. The Cundletown Public School has received more than \$11,000.

The Elands Public School is a little school at the top of the mountains. Elands is home to the Ellenborough Falls, one of the top 10 destinations identified by Destination NSW. It is the longest single-drop waterfall in the Southern Hemisphere. The Elands Public School received more than \$39,000. The Forster Public School received more than \$16,000 and the Great Lakes College Campus received \$1.45 million. I have visited that school a number of times and spoken with its principal, staff and school captains, who are excited and appreciative of the

work that is happening there. The school looks an absolute picture as a result of the works that have been carried out. The Hallidays Point Public School is in another great location and it has received \$30,000.

At the Krambach Public School, I presented the school captains with the Myall Lakes Medallion. I gave out three medallions because there were three captains—the entire year six class. What a great school. The Manning Gardens Public School received more than \$12,000. The school, located in a challenging area of Taree, has a great and important role educating students with disabilities. There is also a preschool in the school grounds. The little Mitchells Island School received \$18,000. The Mount George Public School received more than \$19,000 and the Old Bar Public School received \$32,000 for maintenance works. I have already spoken about the new classrooms that will also be delivered to that school.

The Pacific Palms Public School received more than \$77,000, the Taree High School received more than \$120,000, the Taree West Public School received more than \$87,000, the Tinonee Public School received more than \$90,000, the Tuncurry Public School received more than \$13,000, the Wingham Brush Public School received more than \$24,000, the Wingham High School received more than \$150,000, and the Wingham Public School received \$15,600. That is just a sample of what is going on when it comes to bricks and mortar. We have fabulous teachers. I should mention that the capital works at the Taree High School will be finished very shortly. There is some controversy because of the big, bright and beautiful yellow entrance to the school. Some people in the community are concerned that it looks like a Commonwealth Bank, but I assure everybody that the Taree High School is doing a lot better than the Commonwealth Bank! I commend the motion to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (13:24): Yesterday was my birthday, but my birthday gift has come today. This motion is almost like a motion accorded priority because it allows me to speak about school maintenance. I thank the member for Myall Lakes for bringing the issue to the House. It is important to talk about the school maintenance backlog. I will acknowledge a few related issues. The member claimed that \$110 million was spent on school maintenance in the school holidays. I made a request under the Government Information (Public Access) Act—the GIPA Act—asking for a list of the schools that were worked on, the cost and scope of the work, and whether the work was completed.

Ms Prue Car: What did you get back?

Mr JIHAD DIB: I received a bill for nearly \$4,000 for that information.

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order: That is because the work was so onerous. There was so much information that it was very costly to provide it. There are reams of paper documenting months of work.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Order! There is no point of order. The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Good try, Minister. But the question is: What kind of organisation could not just click a few buttons and provide a list of what it is doing? There is no way in the world a task like that would take 130 hours. But I digress. The major point is that Government members' claims are not true. Those opposite say they were left a \$1 billion maintenance backlog, but that is a crock. It is not true. I have tabled a press release from the former Minister that referred to a \$147 million maintenance backlog, but the rest of the backlog was infrastructure. Unfortunately, those opposite want to believe otherwise.

The Forster High School is a lovely school in a beautiful area. It is sad that, even though a significant amount of money was spent there, the school maintenance backlog still totals more than \$1 million. That is an enormous amount. The member for Myall Lakes talked about bricks and mortar, and I agree with him 100 per cent: Bricks and mortar are important. The school maintenance backlog totalled around \$800 million this time last year but the Government, which is swimming in money, wants to spend money building stadiums. How can that be? There are kids sitting in classrooms with roofs that would leak if it rained. When it does rain and the roofs leak, those kids will say, "I think the Government has the right priorities; it is a good idea to build the stadiums instead of fixing this place." When they trip over something in the playground because maintenance issues have not been sorted out, they will understand that we need a couple of stadiums. This Government has the right priorities: It wants to take care of stadiums. But, again, I digress.

I worked in a classroom so I can speak from experience on this issue, as can a number of my colleagues in this Chamber. A well-maintained classroom and school environment says everything we need to say to young people, "You are valued." It says everything we need to say to the community, "You are valued, you are important, you are special; we want to invest in our education system." Like the member for Myall Lakes, I agree that public school should be the best option for people who have no other option. Students must be educated in the best possible environment. Those opposite will say, "We spent \$110 million." I would like to see that information tabled. I ask the Government to fulfil my request under the GIPA Act. There is no way that it takes 130 hours to get those details. It tells me that the Government wants to hide the truth. Opposition members often sit in this

Chamber and hear Government members say, "You cannot handle the truth." But Government members cannot tell the truth. That is the problem. We could handle the truth if they would tell us what it is.

So what are we talking about in this motion? We are not talking about major work; we are talking about broken windows, fans that keep whirling and look like they are about to fall over, and toilets that do not flush. The member for Myall Lakes should work in a school where the toilets get blocked regularly and do not flush and so staff have to deal with it. Government members speak about Local Schools, Local Decisions, but schools cannot spend the money where they need to. If it costs a certain amount, they are not allowed to spend the money. If we are talking about school maintenance backlogs, I would suggest that we are sincere in what we say. Those opposite should drop the facade that they believe that the former Labor Government left them a \$1 billion school maintenance backlog. I have spoken twice in this House on this issue and said that the claim of those opposite is not true. I therefore suggest that those opposite stop making the claim.

I finally did get the information I sought under the Government Information (Public Access) Act and now I know the extent of the school maintenance backlog as of December 2017. However, those opposite are tricky when it comes to complying with a request for information, and I will share my experience. We know that when we put in a freedom of information request, those opposite ask for an extension of time and say that complying with the request will cost X dollars. I scrimped and saved and raided my piggybank—I even asked the kids if I could borrow the money from them. Then I was told that a further extension of time was required, and guess what happened? [*Extension of time*]

I did the right thing and the extension was granted. But the school maintenance backlog information was given to the media before it was given to me so that those opposite could put their own spin on the information, and give the media a narrative. I am happy to listen to genuine claims about school maintenance and how schools are going to be improved once the maintenance backlog is cleared up because that means that money is being spent on school maintenance. But we must not kid ourselves and believe that those opposite are ensuring that the Government is funding a great service. This State is rolling in cash for a number of reasons: \$50 billion worth of assets are being sold; TAFE has been gutted and that saves a bit of money; and we have been saving money here and there.

This State is swimming in money from stamp duty, but we have not spent that money where we need to spend it. We need to spend that money on schools. I will support wholeheartedly the Government spending as much as possible on public schools. The member for Myall Lakes talked about demountable classrooms. Mate, don't go there. The number of demountable classrooms has increased under this Government, and now there is talk of there being close to 6,000 demountable classrooms in the State, with 80 per cent of the demountables in schools in the State being more than 20 years old. Those opposite should not tell us that about demountables.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: You shouldn't have closed all those schools and sold them.

Mr JIHAD DIB: It is in the data that we finally got under GIPA and that the Government tried to drop. There is an increase in the number of demountables, an increase in the school maintenance backlog and a decrease in spending on schools under this Government.

Debate interrupted.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to the students and teacher from the Melville School, guests of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and member for Oxley. I also welcome to the gallery James Chaffey, the Mayor of Gunnedah Shire Council, Eric Groth and Col Forman, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads, Maritime and Transport, and member for Tamworth. I welcome Lorraine Rodder and Delores Gonzales, guests of the member for Heathcote. I welcome parents and citizens executives from schools in the electorate of Manly, guests of the member for Manly.

I acknowledge in the Chamber Moira Etheridge and Helen Jessup, members of the Cancer Council's MP Liaison Cancer Action Network, guests of the member for Shellharbour. I acknowledge students and teachers from St Mary and St Mina's Coptic Orthodox College, secondary campus, guests of the member for Rockdale. I also acknowledge the teacher and students from St Peter's Catholic College, guests of the member for Wyong. I extend a warm welcome to a delegation from the Seoul Metropolitan Council. We welcome all of you to the Chamber.

*Announcements***AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: On behalf of Madam Speaker, I thank all the volunteers, bakers, members and staff for their support for and participation in Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, which was held this morning in the Speaker's Garden. I acknowledge the support that the Speaker's staff have given me over the past few weeks. I refer to Jane Boag, Brigid O'Bryan and Sikora. They do a tremendous job in this place. I am pleased to announce that the winner of the bake-off in the amateur category was Ian Dewar from the Department of the Legislative Assembly. The winner in the professional category was the parliamentary catering sous-chef Khaled Alarab.

In the raffle, the lucky first prize winner was Susan Connelly from the Penrith electorate office. The second prize winner was the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, who generously donated his prize to today's special guest speaker and Cancer Council NSW CanAct advocate Angela Lonergan. Angela was an inspiration to all of us. The third prize winner was Delores Gonzales from the Heathcote electorate office. I am pleased also to inform the House that we reached our target of \$2,000. I thank everyone who donated for their support and, in particular, I thank Angela for bravely sharing her story with us. Well done and my thanks to everyone in the Parliament.

MARK HUGHES FOUNDATION BRAIN CANCER AWARENESS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The NRL Round 12: Beanie for Brain Cancer Round starts today and will run until Sunday 27 May 2018. This year Channel Nine, the National Rugby League, Fox League and the Mark Hughes Foundation have united and for the first time they will be joined by the NSW Police Force and New South Wales emergency services to promote this important initiative. The Mark Hughes Foundation is a charity that was formed in Newcastle by Mark and Kirralee Hughes following Mark's diagnosis with brain cancer in 2014. The mission of the Mark Hughes Foundation is to raise much-needed funds for research, to create awareness, and to support brain cancer patients and their families.

Anyone heading to a game during round 12 can purchase a Mark Hughes Foundation beanie at the ground, or they can wear their favourite beanie to show their support for the Mark Hughes Foundation's Beanie for Brain Cancer. For those who cannot make it to the store, they can order their Mark Hughes Foundation beanie from the online shop. My congratulations to the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. Beanies are available. In fact, the Minister asked me to put on the beanie. If members behave themselves in question time I will put one on later.

*Question Time***CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23): My question is directed to the Premier. Will she confirm that Ausgrid advised in mid-2014 that the cost of moving powerlines in George Street for the CBD and South East Light Rail would be \$700 million, and that this information was concealed from Acciona?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:23): As I said when news first came out about these claims, this Government will not be bullied or intimidated by a contractor who has a contract with it. Anyone who is asked to deliver a contract should deliver the contract on time and on budget. Our responsibility as a government is to deliver infrastructure for the people of New South Wales and that is what we will continue to do. I will not stand in this Chamber and address claims made by third parties. I ask all those parties to adhere to the contract that they signed. That is what good governments do and that is what I am asking all contractors on our projects to do. Why do Opposition members not support any of our infrastructure projects? Why do they not build the projects that we are building because what matters to people are jobs and infrastructure? Opposition members should back the citizen and the taxpayer, and not outlandish claims.

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

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:24): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government delivering record employment and supporting local communities?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25): I thank the member for North Shore for her question. I know that the member for North Shore—and I am sure every member in this Chamber—cares about jobs, infrastructure and local communities.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When we came to government we made a commitment to create jobs. Last week I was pleased to announce that half a million jobs have been created. Often there is follow-up on what is happening in different regions. Whether it is Western Sydney, southern Sydney or any other part of regional New South Wales, there is a jobs boom. In large part this jobs boom is because of our infrastructure spend. That is why it is disappointing when those opposite do not support projects such as WestConnex, the South West Metro, the Powerhouse, sporting infrastructure, and institutions such as the Industrial Relations Commission moving to Western Sydney. Some Opposition members do not even support the second airport, the Western Sydney Airport, and they have failed to back our schools and hospitals projects across the region, but especially in Western Sydney. While I am talking about Labor's record on Western Sydney I will address the comments made today by the Leader of the Opposition. They were deeply divisive, dangerous—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr John Barilaro: Don't you dare jump up on a point of order.

Ms Jodi McKay: Don't tell me what to do. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about jobs in Western Sydney. If the Premier wants to make a statement, she should make a ministerial statement.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: As the Premier, she has every opportunity to do that. She should be asked to return to the subject matter of this question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not know what the Premier said or what she is going to say.

Ms Jodi McKay: You were not listening?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was listening. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Point of order—

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

Mr Andrew Fraser: I ask that the Premier's time be reinstated.

Mr Clayton Barr: There is no point of order, Mr Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Cessnock on three calls to order. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: To the point of order: I find it extraordinary that the member for Coffs Harbour asked you to reinstate the Premier's time because someone took a point of order under Standing Order 129.

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

Mr Michael Daley: I was speaking to the point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not surprised that Opposition members do not want me to address the comments made today by the Leader of the Opposition. I am talking about jobs and infrastructure in Western Sydney, but I emphasise that the comments of the Leader of the Opposition were deeply divisive, dangerous and nasty.

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

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Standing Order 73 provides a mechanism to ensure that comments such as this, which are completely out of context and which relate to another member, are not made other than by way of substantive motion.

Mr Anthony Roberts: We might do that too.

Mr Michael Daley: If the Premier wants to do that, it is fine; we can do that. The question did not refer to the comments made this morning by the Leader of the Opposition.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have heard enough on the point of order. I will let the Premier progress. Members from all parties are attempting to take over the running of the House by not seeking the call or directing their comments through the Chair, which is not acceptable from any member. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The comments of the Leader of the Opposition were deeply divisive, dangerous and nasty. Today he crossed the line. The language he used was desperate and inflammatory. It goes to the heart of the type of person he really is.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. If the member for Strathfield is taking the same point of order I will reinstate the Premier's time and there will be no more interruptions.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to the substantive motion that the Premier can move. The Premier should be brought back to the question that was asked.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier has not decided to do that.

Ms Jodi McKay: You know your responsibility as Chair and you know the standing orders of this House. The Premier has every opportunity—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier has not decided to do that and I cannot direct the Premier to do so. This is question time.

Ms Jodi McKay: She has every opportunity—

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

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Standing Order 73, which is clear in its language, states:

... personal reflections on Members of either House are disorderly other than by substantive motion.

It is not our opinion; it is disorderly if a member makes a personal reflection on another member. That is not open to interpretation or debate. The clear, ordinary meaning of the language is there for you to rule on and there are plenty of precedents to that effect.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Kogarah on two calls to order. Earlier I informed members that I would not tolerate it if members called out across the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I find it curious—

Ms Jodi McKay: Mr Deputy Speaker, you need to make a ruling. You have not yet ruled on the previous point of order.

Mr Andrew Constance: He told you to sit down; that was the ruling.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. Has the member for Shellharbour been listening to what I said? I place the member for Shellharbour on three calls to order. I said that I will not tolerate people making statements without seeking the call. Members have referred to Standing Order 73, but from what I have heard, these statements have already been made. I will allow the Premier to continue.

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If this is another spurious point of order I will reinstate the Premier's time.

Mr David Harris: We have to be able to do this.

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

Mr David Harris: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Premier specifically reflected on a member on this side of the Chamber.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: On a statement that was made.

Mr David Harris: No, no, no. It was not. It was on the previous issue, therefore it should be upheld.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It involved statements.

Mr Ryan Park: We have called 73. Let's have the debate.

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

Mr Ryan Park: We'll talk about your support for One Nation.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I find it both curious and disappointing that those opposite do not expect me to respond to those comments that he made today.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Kogarah to order for the third time. I direct the member for Kogarah to leave the Chamber for a period of one hour under the sessional orders.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Kogarah left the Chamber at 14:35.]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, it is extremely disappointing that those opposite would not expect me to respond to those comments made today by the Leader of the Opposition—a man who purports to be the alternative Premier of the State.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: We are very happy for the Premier to address any comments, but her comments must be by way of a substantive motion because it is a reflection on a member in this House. You know the standing rules better than I do, Mr Deputy Speaker, and you know that what I am saying, and what the Leader of the House on our side has said, is correct.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have allowed the Premier to continue her answer.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I cannot even look on that side of the House today. We will now talk about jobs and infrastructure because that is what they want us to talk about today. We will talk about all the jobs that we are creating in Western Sydney and all the infrastructure we are building. Why do members opposite not get behind us and support us? It is very interesting when we get the regional job numbers and compare them to what those opposite did when they were in government. In the area of Blacktown, which incorporates the electorates of Riverstone, Blacktown, Mount Druitt and parts of Seven Hills, Prospect and Londonderry, we have added 35,800 jobs since we have been in government. *[Extension of time]*

In the Parramatta area, which includes the electorates of Parramatta, Granville, Auburn and parts of Seven Hills, Prospect, Fairfield and Bankstown, we have added 38,900 jobs since we came to office. In the outer west and Blue Mountains, we have added 15,200 jobs in the past three years—more than all the jobs created by Labor in its last decade in office. In the south-west, which includes the electorates of Liverpool, Cabramatta, Holsworthy and parts of Fairfield, Prospect, Mulgoa and Camden, we have added 41,900 jobs since we came to office compared with just 12,600 in Labor's last decade. In 10 years, Labor delivered 12,000 jobs in the south-west. We have delivered nearly 42,000 jobs. We know that what matters to communities are jobs and job security. That is why we are the party of the worker. We know that what matters to people are infrastructure and services, and that is why we are delivering. We will compare our record with theirs any day of the week.

Why do members opposite not support the WestConnex? Why do they not support the metro to Bankstown? Why do the members for Blacktown and Blue Mountains not support the Western Sydney Airport, which will be the biggest jobs generator this State has ever seen? Why do members opposite not support light rail? Why will they not support improving infrastructure? Why will members opposite not support improving sporting and cultural infrastructure as well? Why should Western Sydney not have cultural icons like the Powerhouse Museum? Why should Western Sydney not have the Industrial Relations Commission, which the Opposition opposed? It is not good enough for them to have to move to Western Sydney. While they make those types of ugly comments that we have heard today, we will continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Ms JODI MCKAY (Strathfield) (14:38): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Did Acciona provide advice in 2015 that the completion of the CBD light rail project would be delayed by more than 800 days, and why did he conceal this information from the small businesses that would be—and are—so badly affected?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:39): Again, we have a question that demonstrates that the Labor Party does not understand how to build infrastructure. There have been program reports along the way on light rail. If members opposite had been paying attention, they would know there have been some pretty significant commercial discussions. As we know, program reports form part of any commercial discussions. We will continue to build this project, because we are transforming the city and the State, and we will continue to do so. We will keep a real focus on making sure that we deliver a world-class infrastructure program of \$80 billion over the next four years. We have already delivered more than \$110 billion. Part of that are great projects like the light rail. It is a matter of public record that we expect Acciona to hurry up and build the project, and to deliver it in 2019. We will continue to put pressure on the equity partners in the ALTRAC consortium and on their builder, Acciona, to deliver for the people of New South Wales.

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

COMMUNITY HARMONY AND DIVERSITY

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (14:41): I address my question to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government working with communities to create harmony and to acknowledge diversity? And is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:41): I thank the member for his question. He is a fantastic member who has come into this House as the son of a migrant Italian family, who chose to come to a new nation, to work hard and to contribute. What a fantastic legacy for his family that John Sidoti, the member for Drummoyne, is in this House as a first or second generation Australian Italian, and is able to represent his community and justify the sacrifice his family made and the courage they showed to come to this nation. Just like my family and the Premier's family, his family made sacrifices and had the courage to come to this nation, to contribute to it and to be a part of it, and to be part of the great migrant story that every member of the House should be proud of.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We know that migrants worked shoulder to shoulder to build the Snowy Hydro scheme—one of the largest engineering feats of all time. Today we continue to benefit not only from the infrastructure of the Snowy Hydro scheme but also from the multicultural community that grew up around it and that I am a part of. The story of the Snowy Hydro scheme is a story of courage and sacrifice. It is a strong migrant story that we recognise across the State. It is important to remember that the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is led by the descendants of two migrant families. No-one will ever meet two people who are in better positions to lead on migration, aspiration and opportunity. Today the Leader of the Opposition has sunk to the lowest of all lows in a desperate attempt to grab a headline.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I dare you to take a point of order. If you do that, you endorse his comments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is Standing Order 73. Mr Deputy Speaker, I come back to the same point of order raised with you earlier. I am very happy to talk about harmony, and particularly to acknowledge the migrant background, but if there is to be an attack on a member in this House, it must be done by way of substantive motion. We will keep getting up on this.

Mr Anthony Roberts: To the point of order: Mr Deputy Speaker, it is very clear that you have ruled on this. The member for Strathfield has canvassed your ruling numerous times.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Further to the point of order: Mr Deputy Speaker, I refer you to Standing Order 73, which refers to imputations of improper motives and personal reflections. Neither an improper motive nor a personal reflection was made by the Deputy Premier.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Cessnock that he is already on three calls to order.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Therefore, the point of order relating to Standing Order 73 is out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. It does not provide the opportunity for Standing Order 73 to be invoked.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am referring to a comment made by the Leader of the Opposition in the public domain where he used the term "white flight" and singled out two communities, Iraq and Syria, and for some reason in the electorate of Fairfield, using racism—

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

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: Standing Order 73 is very clear. We are happy to debate a substantive motion about this.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Keira of my previous ruling. The member for Keira will resume his seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: He cannot just throw a line out in the public domain and not come into this place to defend those comments. Every member who jumps up and takes a point of order is defending the

indefensible: the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. If they want a conversation about migrant levels and population—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I will keep stopping the clock until we can hear the member speaking. The member addressing the issue or the Minister answering the question will be heard in silence.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If they want a conversation about population, about immigration, about the lack of infrastructure that actually supports communities, or about asylum seekers and refugees, let us have it, but let us not do it in the framework of racism. What Opposition members did today—

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: Point of order—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: You dare stand up and defend the indefensible.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! All members who are on calls to order are now on three calls to order. I cannot find words to describe what has just taken place in this House. The behaviour of every member who took part in that outrageous display is unacceptable. I am very disappointed in the comments I heard and the behaviour of a number of members.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: My point of order is under Standing Order 73. This sort of nonsense and the reflections on the Leader of the Opposition are false. Members should—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have ruled on Standing Order 73.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: I get up to take a point of order and I get shouted down by those opposite. What does that say about them?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Everyone is shouting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: They have been shouting me down for the whole five minutes.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: That's the point, isn't it? So I get stared down for taking a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will resume his seat.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: What we have observed this afternoon—

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

Mr Alister Henskens: While the—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will remove himself from the Chamber for half an hour. Members' behaviour this afternoon has been disgraceful.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Cessnock left the Chamber at 14:50.]

Mr Alister Henskens: What we have seen is a naked attempt by Opposition members to take time away from Government speakers by raising the same points of order.

Mr Greg Warren: To the point of order: That is the exact reason this should be done by way of substantive motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already ruled on Standing Order 73.

Mr Greg Warren: Those incompetent populist opportunists opposite are simply abusing the standing orders and dragging this place to an all new low.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: Mr Deputy Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the member speaking to the point of order?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: No. Mr Deputy Speaker, my point of order relates to Standing Order 74. You may intervene when offensive or disorderly words are used by a member or to prevent a quarrel between members arising out of debates or proceedings in the House. My understanding is that several members from this side of the House have asked you to rule on the basis of Standing Order 73.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Which I have done.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: But I would say that in terms of Standing Order 74 you should look at your ruling because it is not doing anything to prevent quarrelling between the members.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have heard enough.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I do not believe this House will be in order until you make these people comply.

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

Mr Andrew Fraser: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 131 (4), which says, "The Speaker has discretion at any time during a Minister's answer to order that the timing clock be paused." I ask that you have the clock paused until such time as the Deputy Premier has completed his answer.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: This afternoon is a clear example of those opposite wanting to incite the public with a whole heap of issues, but they are not prepared to come into this House and answer those questions. I am absolutely shocked that anyone would get up to defend the indefensible comments made today by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Point of order—

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

Mr Stephen Kamper: My point of order relates to Standing Order 59—tedious repetition.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will resume his seat.

[Extension of time]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I do not know what got into the head of the Leader of the Opposition today when one looks at his electorate, because 68 per cent of the constituents he is meant to represent are from foreign lands; they have come from other countries. I do not understand how the member for Fairfield can sit there today and defend that when 50 per cent of his electorate come from migrant families, including his own family.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order—

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fairfield will resume his seat.

Mr Guy Zangari: I am taking a point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your Whip has already taken a point of order, and has the call. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Anna Watson: Mr Deputy Speaker, you have been in this place for a long time and we have suffered for eight long years under this lot. You are running a protection racket for that lot.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will leave the Chamber for a period of two hours.

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

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. I also have a point of order under Standing Order 73. The Deputy Premier must be confused. There is a big difference between migrants and the support of refugees who, under this Government and the Federal Government, have been dumped in Western Sydney without proper support in education, housing, mental health services, jobs and TAFE.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fairfield will resume his seat. I will not remove him from the Chamber; he can stay here. He should not try to tell me about migrants.

Mr Guy Zangari: There is a big difference between migrants and refugees.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: No, there is not a difference.

Mr Guy Zangari: Yes, there is.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The migrants who have come to this country—

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: Speaker Murray ruled in 1999 that members must direct their comments through the Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I was here at the time. You were not.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: The Deputy Premier must direct his statements through the Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle will stand in his place and seek the call before he takes a point of order.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Point of order: The Deputy Premier must direct his statements through the Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am happy to direct my comments and my answer through the Chair. He is a fantastic local member of Lebanese descent and his community has contributed to this nation. When he and I grew up here we were ridiculed for the food we ate. We were called "salami breath", "dago" or "wog". I thought we were beyond that sort of racism. The Leader of the Opposition using the words "white flight" and picking out two particular communities is a disgrace. That is what he is, and I am happy to say it in this House. In his inaugural speech he said, "I am Labor, committed to equality, solidarity and social justice," and, "Political power is a means to an end ..."

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order.

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order is under Standing Order 73.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have ruled on that point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: Was it a blanket ruling for the whole of question time? No matter what is said by anyone about any other person, and regardless of what is in the standing orders, you will not invoke Standing Order 73 under any circumstances today. Is that what we can understand from your ruling?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will handle each situation, but I have already ruled on Standing Order 73. I am confident in the way I have ruled.

Mr Michael Daley: But that ruling was two minutes ago and new comments have been made since.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can assure you this will not be the last time a member on your side takes a point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: Not if we continue to see the standing orders being flouted, which is what is happening today.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In December last year the Leader of the Opposition said, "I will not accept the status quo, which licenses incitement to hatred and violence against ethnic minorities." Those were his words.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order—

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

Ms Jodie Harrison: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The major part of the question was about what the Government is doing to encourage diversity and harmony.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have no ability to direct a Minister to answer in any way.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We are creating jobs and we are building infrastructure, schools and hospitals in Western Sydney to make sure that the Government can match the community's needs with the infrastructure it provides. I am shocked today, but I am even more shocked that the member for Lakemba can sit here and accept the comments made by the member for Auburn.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: How can the member for Lakemba not tell the Leader of the Opposition that it is unacceptable and that he must apologise to the people of New South Wales?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has completed his answer.

Mr Jihad Dib: I have been waiting for 15 seconds.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are other means through which you can make a statement if you wish to.

Mr Jihad Dib: I would ask the Deputy Premier to withdraw his comments about me and what I believe.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have made your request. It is up to the Deputy Premier.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF OUT OF HOME CARE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (14:59): My question is directed to the Minister for Family and Community Services. Given that the Minister offered Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile a private briefing and viewing of the Tune report, why is she refusing a request from 16 community welfare groups for the same access to the report?

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (15:00): This is the second question the member for Bankstown has asked me since March. I congratulate her on doing so after having waited so long. I am really looking forward to another question from whoever the shadow Minister is this time next year. We all know that in recent weeks the member for Charlestown has taken a particularly keen interest in the Family and Community Services portfolio. She has put lots of questions on notice and given many notices of motions. All the noise is coming from Labor's left star in the Hunter, Jodie Harrison.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. I ask that the Minister return to the leave of the question. It is about the Tune report, which the Government has not released despite many requests.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is only 30 or 40 seconds into her answer.

Ms PRU GOWARD: I will not discuss the conversations I have with my colleagues. I think that would be entirely inappropriate. This is a cheap political stunt that is completely linked to activities in the upper House.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order—

Ms PRU GOWARD: The question does not deserve an answer and it is not going to get one.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has completed her answer.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:03): My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How has the New South Wales Government's asset recycling scheme helped to deliver infrastructure that is easing congestion, and are there any alternative proposals?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (15:04): I thank the member for Epping for his great leadership in this place and for everything he does. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is committed to transforming New South Wales into the freest and fairest State in this country. Our reforms have delivered record levels of growth and opportunities for businesses and families. In 2016-17 the New South Wales economy outperformed expectations, with gross State product growing at 2.9 per cent. That is well above the national average of 2.1 per cent. The New South Wales economy is forecast to grow above trend at 3 per cent in 2017-18 and 2.75 per cent in 2018-19. Importantly, this growth has been fuelled by growing small businesses and is supported by the Government's infrastructure investment, which will add around a half a percentage point to our economic growth each year for the next two years. Importantly, this infrastructure investment is easing congestion across Sydney.

As we know, when Labor left office in 2011 its parting gift was a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog. That is \$30 billion of infrastructure projects that needed to be built but that Labor failed to build. In contrast, our Government is investing \$80.1 billion over the next four years in infrastructure. Never before has New South Wales seen so much infrastructure built in such a short period. Importantly, the money to invest in these projects did not suddenly appear; it came about because of our asset recycling initiatives, which Labor opposed every step of the way. Labor opposed the Endeavour transaction, it opposed the Ausgrid transaction, it opposed the TransGrid transaction and it opposed the Land and Property Information transaction. Not only did Labor obstruct the funding but it also obstructed the projects that we are building across the State and in Greater Sydney to alleviate congestion.

Labor opposed WestConnex, NorthConnex and the Sydney Metro Southwest. Labor opposed every single infrastructure project that this Government is building to ease the congestion that Labor caused when it was in office. The congestion issues did not happen overnight; they happened because Labor built nothing. It is clear that Labor is a party in denial that has learnt nothing. Instead of sitting idle on the Opposition benches over the past seven years, reflecting, learning, and admitting the past errors Labor members made, the Leader of the Opposition is today blaming refugees and immigrants for the congestion that he and his party created.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have already ruled on that.

Ms Jodi McKay: I bring you back to the comments made by the Leader of the House on our side: I am entitled to take that point of order, if the situation changes. A different Minister is answering this question and I request that you consider Standing Order 73 as a substantive motion that the Government should move.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The answer is completely relevant. The Leader of the Opposition is now blaming the Syrians and the Iraqis for the congestion across Sydney. He singled out the immigrants of Western Sydney and blames them for the congestion that Labor caused.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order—

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

Ms Tania Mihailuk: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73.

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

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Am I not entitled to take a point of order?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am simply reminding the member for Bankstown that she is on three calls to order.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: I am saying, as many others on this side of the House have said today—

Mr John Barilaro: What's your point of order?

Ms Tania Mihailuk: It relates to Standing Order 73. Those opposite should move a substantive motion and have a debate. Labor has called for a debate.

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

Ms Tania Mihailuk: No-one is using the race card more than Government members do. They are the kings of it.

Mr John Sidoti: Are you defending Luke today?

Ms Tania Mihailuk: I will defend Luke today. I will defend the Leader of the Opposition today. Look at what you have done to our communities and these poor people, who have no access to housing, no access to jobs, and no access to opportunities.

Mr John Sidoti: Throw her out.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am not throwing out the member for Bankstown. She can stay here because that is where she is supposed to be.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Labor members, in the comments made today by the Leader of the Opposition, are singling out the people of Western Sydney and telling them that "Anglo families" are fleeing the suburbs of Sydney because of them. After those comments, the only thing the people of Western Sydney are fleeing from is Luke Foley and the Labor Party.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Again, it is under Standing Order 73.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It will become spurious in a minute.

Ms Jodi McKay: It is not spurious at all. This is serious.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have ruled on that and I am ruling again.

Ms Jodi McKay: I will keep raising it because it is a genuine point of order that you are ignoring.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We will be here until 6 o'clock.

Ms Jodi McKay: I am very happy to do that.

Mr Michael Daley: To the point of order: This afternoon the House has descended into high farce. What we are all now suffering from is a situation where, regardless of the 10 questions asked by members on either side

of the House, the answer will be the same, and your ruling will be the same. In my time in this House over 12 years, I have not seen that previously. This is absolutely and completely farcical and beneath the dignity of this House.

Mr John Sidoti: Can I ask the Leader of the Opposition to apologise and we can move on?

Ms Kate Washington: So he can stay in the House and he can do that?

Ms Tania Mihailuk: If that was us, we would be thrown out. It is outrageous.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am not throwing out the member for Drummoyne, who is now on three calls to order. For the member for Maroubra to try to hold the whole of the House responsible for this behaviour—

Mr Michael Daley: I'm not. I'm holding you responsible.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are holding me responsible?

Mr Michael Daley: Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Am I the one who is making all these comments? I stood up and put everyone on three calls to order, but did that stop it? The member for Maroubra has a lot of advice for everyone else, but he needs to look at himself. The Opposition needs to look at itself.

Mr Michael Daley: You are meant to referee both sides of the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: And I am refereeing both sides of the House.

Mr Michael Daley: You're not. You're being unfair and partisan.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Maroubra can keep abusing me, but I will not be asking him to leave the House. If he is trying to make an issue of it because he wants to be able to say, "I got thrown out", I can assure him that that will not happen. I remind the member for Hornsby that he is on three calls to order.

Mr Michael Daley: You should be fair in the chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am very fair. The member for Maroubra has told me that twice in the three weeks.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Further to the point of order: I appeal to all members to listen not only to the questions but also the answers. We have visitors in the House from overseas and interstate. Mr Deputy Speaker, it causes me and those who are here great distress to listen to the questions and the answers when members call into question your decisions and your rulings. I ask all members to cooperate with the Deputy Speaker to ensure good carriage of the questions in the House this afternoon.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I will continue. Let us not forget that it was the unions that spawned the White Australia policy. It was the Labor Party that opposed its repeal, and today the Labor Party is bringing it back.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: We will continue also because of the rot that has infested the other side of the House today. Because of the questions that they are closing down and the statements they are making, they should be ashamed of themselves.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. Why are the statements being made? I ask the House: Are they factual?

Government members: No.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I make no apologies.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: I fully understand that this has been a very difficult afternoon, but that is precisely the reason for Standing Order 73. In this forum Government members can make accusations that Opposition members cannot defend.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: It was on the front page of the paper.

Mr David Harris: If it were the subject of a substantive motion, the Leader of the Opposition would have a chance to defend himself against the accusation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has other means to defend himself. Those opportunities are available. If anyone is offended, they have that opportunity later.

Mr David Harris: I understand that. But former Speakers, including you—and I can read all the rulings—have all ruled that attacks such as this should be made under Standing Order 73.

Mr John Barilaro: It is about the comments that he made.

Mr David Harris: Which are attacked. The Deputy Premier knows that.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Further to the point of order: Comments made by the Treasurer were quotations from the Leader of the Opposition

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is exactly what I was about to say.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Comments in relation to unions and the White Australia policy are factual. They do not come under Standing Order 73. It is not a personal reflection.

Mr Ryan Park: We will talk about what you did in Lindsay. They are factual too. Let us bring on the Lindsay issue.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Keira has the means of doing that. It can be done this afternoon. But, no, the member for Keira wants to get away.

[Extension of time]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You come into this place and you talk about preference deals with One Nation. You have become One Nation.

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

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: The Treasurer cannot continue to do what he is doing over the table. He is not speaking through the Chair and he is seeking to impugn the reputation of members of the Opposition. It cannot continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We can't listen to him. He has still got Ben Chifley rocking up at his branch meetings.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I say to those members opposite: Whether you are the member for Granville, the member for Lakemba, or the member for Fairfield, the standard you walk past is the standard you accept.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. I remind the member for Drummoyne that he is on three calls to order. The member for Lakemba has the call.

Mr Jihad Dib: I am happy to cop a lecture, but not from these guys in the Government. I will stand by somebody who has ruled out a deal with One Nation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr Jihad Dib: I am asking: Will Government members rule out a deal with One Nation? I ask because they are carrying on like they actually care. Rule it out.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Myall Lakes has the call.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: I draw the attention of the Chair to Standing Order 250 (1), which relates to persons consistently and persistently obstructing the business of the House. It is my submission that a number of the objections and points of order have been for the purpose of obstructing the business of the House. Under that standing order, the Chair can name the person and that person can be removed for two sitting days. If they continue, the Chair can increase the number of sitting days.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Mr Deputy Speaker, he is telling you how to do your job.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have had plenty of advice today, and it has not come from just one person.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I will conclude my answer with this: The Government side of the House has a Premier with vision and leadership. The Labor Opposition side of the House has dog whistling and division. Therein lies the difference in leadership between the Government side of the House and the Opposition side of the House.

NEWCASTLE TRANSPORT

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:19): I direct my question to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The contract with the Newcastle buses operator includes a per passenger patronage incentive payment. Will the Minister inform the House if this is an incentive to make the route shorter, forcing commuters to change buses, therefore increasing the patronage statistics and the patronage incentive payment?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:19): Guess what? When those opposite were in government for 16 years they put in place performance-based contracts for the private sector. Guess what I have done? The same! Wakey-wakey! What the Government has done is incentivise a private sector operator to grow patronage and get people onto public transport in Newcastle. That is mind blowing. The reality is that from January 2017 to January 2018 we have seen an increase in patronage on Newcastle public transport. I am happy to incentivise the private sector to operate the State's bus network as 80 per cent of buses in this State are delivered by the private sector. They do a fantastic job. The benchmarking shows that, and that is because we can incentivise. It is a wonderful thing. The best thing is that it gets people out of their cars and onto public transport, and the road network in Newcastle operates better.

MULTICULTURALISM

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:21): I address a question to the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister inform the House what the Government is doing to support our culturally diverse communities throughout New South Wales?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (15:22): I thank the member for Miranda for her question—a member of proud Greek ancestry who is doing a wonderful job supporting the multicultural communities in the electorate of Miranda. I place on record how lucky we are to live in a culturally diverse and—most importantly—socially cohesive country, as well as the most culturally cohesive State in the world. That is reflected by the fact that both the Premier and Deputy Premier are the proud children of migrant parents who came to Australia, worked hard and gave the next generation as many opportunities as possible. The greatest asset of this State and nation is our people. I am proud that in New South Wales people come from more than 307 ancestries, speak 215 languages and freely practice 146 religions. The food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the sports we play are a reflection of each and every one of us.

Every person who comes to this country, who works hard and makes a positive contribution to society deserves to be valued. This Government's commitment to cultural diversity can be seen in its positive actions, such as the Premier's Harmony Dinner, which more than 1,400 people attend each year. The Government has invested more than \$23 million in multicultural programs, including the Community in Partnership program, interpreter services and local community grants. Following the crisis in Syria and Iraq, it was this Government that committed more than \$146 million across four years to ensure the right services and supports were in place to assist new arrivals to settle. The investment targets employment, health, education, legal support, community and, importantly, youth services.

The refugee employment program is a \$22 million program that is being delivered over four years in Western Sydney and the Illawarra. It is designed to support refugees and asylum seekers as they seek employment. An additional \$6.1 million is being invested in the South Western Sydney Local Heath District, which will focus on the key settlement locations of Fairfield and Liverpool. Further, \$93 million is being invested to support providing English language tuition to more than 3,300 refugee students. Four new community hubs established in the Fairfield local government area will support 18 existing hubs in Fairfield, Parramatta, Blacktown, Bankstown and Cumberland.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: In 2017 those community hubs ran activities for approximately 4,000 families, leading in some cases to real jobs for those attempting to gain important skills. I praise the wonderful leadership of Charles Borg, the principal of Fairfield High School, who works closely with all community groups and new arrivals to ensure there are better opportunities for students and their families. I place on the record of this House that both of last year's school captains at Fairfield High School were children of refugee families. Those programs are benefiting not only new refugee arrivals but also Western Sydney in terms of jobs, better health and educational facilities. More importantly, they are promoting social cohesion and community participation. The Syrian and Iraqi crisis has been called the worst humanitarian disaster of our time and has resulted in more than 15 million people being forced to flee their homes. An estimated 470,000 people have been killed—some through the use of chemical weapons—or tortured, including almost 80,000 civilians.

A total of six million people have been displaced, five million of whom are seeking refuge overseas. I had the great pleasure of meeting hundreds of Syrian and Iraqi refugee families in Fairfield. Those families have witnessed the most appalling horrors. Their families were slaughtered, their possessions were stolen and they were forced to leave the land they once loved. This country and New South Wales extended a hand of friendship to those people in their greatest hour of need. Those people are now working and their children are attending our schools. They are making a proud and valued contribution to this State. This Government supports major festivals, including Parramasala, Chinese New Year, Diwali and soon we will host the Premier's Iftar Dinner. I attend many of those events with the Leader of the Opposition. Last Sunday we stood together with thousands of Chinese migrants, supporting 200 years of Chinese migration to this country. [*Extension of time*]

At that event at Town Hall, in front of 1,000 Chinese people, the Leader of the Opposition spoke out against Pauline Hanson's comments about the need to stop Asian migration. Yet today Pauline Hanson personally endorsed the comments of the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. If you want to denounce Pauline Hanson, walk over here now and say you won't take her preferences. You mentioned Pauline Hanson. Why are you going to take her preferences?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Strathfield to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of one hour. The Minister has the call.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Strathfield left the Chamber at 15:28.*]

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Sadly, the comments today from the Leader of the Opposition have shone a light directly on Iraqi and Syrian refugee families.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Point of order: The question was specific. The Minister is being irrelevant.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Sadly, the Leader of the Opposition has shone a light directly on those struggling families of Syrian refugee background to whom this Government and this State extended a hand of friendship. The comments of the Leader of the Opposition were cruel, insensitive and unnecessary.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: The Leader of the Opposition has failed the leadership test by dividing our communities.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 128. There has not been a worse demonstration than Government members' Liberal counterparts in Canberra when it comes to Syrian and Iranian refugees. Liberal members have an appalling record. For coming into this House and using that, Government members should be ashamed of themselves.

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

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Swansea left the Chamber at 15:29.*]

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: The comments of the Leader of the Opposition insinuated that people in Fairfield are leaving that suburb because of the background and nationality of their community members. This leader has failed the leadership test, but I am proud to say that the Liberal-Nationals Government will always stand up for our communities, regardless of how diverse they are. [*Time expired.*]

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

HUNTER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:30): If I can give some advice, questions should have gone to the crossbench earlier. It would have helped.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Lake Macquarie did not seek the call. He might have received a nice surprise if he had.

Mr GREG PIPER: I thought we would have got a nod and a wink. My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Noting that the Government allocated \$11.8 million towards planning for the Fassifern to Hexham rail bypass in last year's budget, will the Minister update the House on progress, including when we might see pressure taken off the Sydney to Newcastle passenger line by delivering that infrastructure?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I appreciate the question asked by the member for Lake Macquarie. He does not know how much I appreciate his question.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (15:31): I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. I know he is a proud resident of the Hunter and he represents the Hunter incredibly well. The Hunter is made up of great people—a lot of migrant people who came there post-World War II. They worked at BHP Steel and Commonwealth Steel. I know the member for Lake Macquarie is a good man and we are grateful that in April he announced that he is recontesting his seat at the next election. We wish him well.

Mr Greg Piper: Point of order: Is there a mercy clause in the standing orders?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister is proceeding with her answer.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: In last year's budget we committed \$11 million to investigate the separation of the passenger and freight lines into Newcastle. We made that important decision because a lot of work is involved in dealing with local government, council, Roads and Maritime Services and Transport for NSW to identify the corridors. That investment is a signal that we are determined to continue improving infrastructure in the Hunter, even light rail. When I was walking along Hunter Street recently, I felt a great vibe. The people of the Hunter are excited that this Government is investing in the Hunter like it has never been invested in before.

It is important that we do the groundwork on the freight line. I am pleased that it is progressing well. We will have a one-on-one briefing with the member for Lake Macquarie soon to bring him up to date. It is important for him to see how the money is being spent on behalf of the region. It is an important project for the future. The best way to ensure that that project starts as soon as possible is for the member for Lake Macquarie to keep Coalition members on the Treasury benches. We will ensure that we manage the money well so that we can continue our record infrastructure building program in New South Wales.

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:34): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the Government building to accommodate growth in Western Sydney and across New South Wales, and are there any threats or matters related to this infrastructure program?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:35): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question about the growth in Western Sydney. He understands the importance of infrastructure, services and economic growth that the Government is delivering to the people of Western Sydney and what it means to them. Jobs give people opportunities to earn money and to deliver for their families.

It is very rarely that I agree with the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union [AMWU], but I am sure even the Treasurer would agree. In a tweet today, the AMWU said that workers from other countries who come here bring new skills, different experiences and a wealth of cultural diversity. The tweet goes on to say, "We stand against divisive dog-whistle politics that serves only to perpetuate inequality." I would hope that all members in this House would agree with that, but I am not sure they do.

In Western Sydney the Government is catering for growth by delivering great projects like the Sydney Metro Southwest, WestConnex and the Western Harbour Tunnel. These projects are designed to build the motorways and rail lines of the future. Anyone who was fair dinkum about Western Sydney would back those projects wholeheartedly. They would back them to ensure that those communities can grow and that the people in Western Sydney can enjoy a quality of life that they so richly deserve. If only those projects were supported by both sides of politics, the community could go forward with confidence. Therein lies the threat and the risk: the next election.

In relation to the next election, for a couple of years those opposite have come in here and have asked questions of the Premier about Pauline Hanson's One Nation preferences. Today we had a play for Pauline Hanson's One Nation primaries and it was with the use of the words "white flight". When I saw Pauline Hanson on the *Today* program saying, "Good for you, Luke Foley," I wondered why certain members opposite have sat by with that statement out there and have not sought to distance themselves.

Mr Jihad Dib: You can run any spin you like.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I particularly look at you, Jihad Dib, because you have led the Pauline Hanson's One Nation preference charge.

Mr Jihad Dib: Put your glasses on.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will refer to all members by their correct titles.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: I want to hear the Minister say it to my face. I want him to look me in the face and say it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am prepared to say that as a member of this place I am ashamed that Pauline Hanson was on *Today* saying to a member of this place, "Good for you."

Mr Jihad Dib: You will pick up her preferences.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am prepared to say that. A number of members opposite need to say it because their communities are very concerned about Pauline Hanson's One Nation.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: I do not think there is a member of this House or a member of the public who would not understand my feeling towards Pauline Hanson.

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

Mr Jihad Dib: Yes, I too am ashamed, but at least I said that we would rule it out. Rule it out and join us.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will have the opportunity to speak on that matter.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I resent the questions to our side of the House about Pauline Hanson's One Nation preferences given the comments around white flight. It is interesting that a few other members, like the member for Prospect and the member for Granville, also have been very quiet today. The Syrian community might have a say about the prospect of the member for Prospect's re-election prospects. How might they feel?

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: When the Treasurer of this State took the poles and wires issue to the people, guess who opposed foreigners leasing poles and wires? The Opposition did.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order relates to standing orders 49, 73 and 128.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Which standing order is the member speaking to?

Mr Clayton Barr: I can speak to them individually or I can speak about all of them. Standing Order 49 relates to controlling the House and Standing Order 73 relates to imputations and motives, which have already been dealt with today. Standing Order 128 is about the structure of the question. The question was structured in such a way that the Minister was asked to offer an opinion, which makes that part of the question disorderly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Cessnock should look at the way he frames his questions. The member will resume his seat.

[Extension of time]

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: At the last election the Liberals and The Nationals took a plan to the people about leasing the poles and wires. Those opposite campaigned on the basis that it would be sold to foreigners.

Ms Prue Car: Why don't we talk about what you did to Ed Husic in 2004 in Greenway? Why don't we talk about that?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The point I make in relation to that revolting xenophobic campaign is that we now have a situation where the infrastructure program of this State has been delivered, particularly for the people of Western Sydney, as a result of the headroom created in the budget to be able to deliver that infrastructure—opposed by those opposite. The Opposition has singled out major projects in Western Sydney to oppose. The House has exploded this afternoon over the use of the words "white flight" and the fact that those opposite have crossed the line. The Government is happy to have a debate about population, but we are not going to play divisive politics in communities across Western Sydney. That is the key point.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock has crossed the line often enough.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: To suggest that Anglo-Saxons are packing up and moving en masse to an enclave to avoid it is also disgusting.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Those opposite stand condemned for failing to denounce what the Leader of the Opposition said this morning.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Just because it is question No. 10 does not mean Standing Order 73 does not apply. This is the tenth answer and it is the same as every answer that has been given today. It is a suspension of reality.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can the member point out to me the parts of the answers that have not been factual?

Mr Michael Daley: That is not the test in Standing Order 73. Standing Order 73 applies whether it is factual, opinion, contrived, out of a book or conjured in one's head; it does not matter. It is the nature of the speech that matters.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I accept the answers because I believe they are all fact.

Mr Michael Daley: Mr Deputy Speaker, are you rewriting standing orders today?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No.

Mr Michael Daley: I know you have riding instructions from the Premier's department to let it rip today, but you have really demeaned the Chair. They know it is true.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: They should not be doing it back to Thomas.

Mr Michael Daley: He is a good man and the Government has put him in a shocking situation today.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: He is a good man and what they have done to him is a disgrace.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The last comment by the member for Maroubra does not make up for what he said earlier. I direct the member for Maroubra to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maroubra left the Chamber at 15:44.]

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If I used the words "many Anglo families have been forgotten about" and "immigration was a huge burden" how would those opposite react? Infrastructure in New South Wales has been built by great immigrant families—from the Snowy scheme to the projects in Western Sydney today—and those multicultural communities are being invited to participate in the job opportunities around that infrastructure. We will take the words of the Leader of the Opposition to those people and make sure that every person in this State knows that he should not be in Parliament.

Mr Ryan Park: Go and talk to Ed Husic about it.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am happy to read Sabrina's quote about the Leader of the Opposition.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Keira from the Chamber under Standing Order 249. The member for Keira will leave the House for the remainder of the day.

[The member for Keira left the Chamber at 15:45 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Documents

VARIATIONS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2017-18

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In accordance with section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I table the Variations of the Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2017-18, flowing from the transfer of functions from the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation to Treasury, dated 22 May 2018.

In accordance with section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I table the Variations of the Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2017-18, flowing from the transfer of functions from the Department of Planning and Environment to the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, dated 22 May 2018.

In accordance with section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I table the Variations of the Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2017-18, flowing from the transfer of functions from the Department of Planning and Environment to the Department of Industry, dated 22 May 2018.

Committees

STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)

Report: Heavy Vehicle Safety and Use of Technology to Improve Road Safety

Mr GREG APLIN: As Chair: I table the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (Staysafe) entitled "Heavy Vehicle Safety and Use of Technology to Improve Safety", dated May 2018.

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Membership

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That

- (1) Paul Scully be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in place of Anna Watson, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

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**.

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

Edmondson Park Car Parking

Petition calling on the Government to provide additional commuter car parking at Edmondson Park, received from **Mr Anoulack Chanthivong**.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Report: Commuter Car Parking in New South Wales

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:48): As Chair of the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure, I speak to the committee's report titled "Commuter car parking in New South Wales", which was tabled on 22 May 2018. Commuter car parking has long been a part of the overarching public transport strategy of the New South Wales Government. It is an effective way to connect people to public transport hubs and ultimately to their final destination. Due to the importance of commuter car parking to the daily lives of people in New South Wales, the committee examined the current policies on commuter car parking and recent developments in this area. The committee received nearly 100 submissions to its inquiry from a wide range of stakeholders, including industry

associations and businesses, point to point and other transport service providers, the New South Wales Government and members of the public who were largely interested in their local train stations.

A number of issues were raised in these submissions but the central theme was the importance of having an effective and efficient commuter car parking system in place. From the evidence we gathered, it is fair to note that commuter car parking remains in demand and is a relevant service in helping people access public transport hubs. Of the nearly 100 submissions the committee received, more than half came from members of the public across the Greater Sydney region who use commuter car parks to access public transport. The committee identified three major themes throughout the course of this inquiry: strategies to manage the demand for commuter car parking; the need for clearer guidelines; and further research around commuter parking to help future planning. A significant new development in this area is the trial of Park&Ride car parks. The committee recognises and congratulates the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Hon. Andrew Constance, MP, and Transport for NSW for this initiative. These trials use Opal cards to ensure that only genuine commuters receive free commuter parking.

The committee heard strong evidence that commuter car parking is in high demand during week days, with many car parks filling up in advance of peak hour. It was noted that commuter car parks located in or around commercial hubs were being used by commuters and non-commuters alike. Many submissions expressed frustration that non-commuters were taking up parking spaces. The Park&Ride car parks are an innovative way to combat this problem and the committee has recommended expanding the trial as soon as it is feasible. The committee has also recommended several other improvements to help manage the demand for commuter parking spaces. There have been a number of technological and regulatory developments recently that have led to a rise in the use of on-demand transport, point to point transport and carpooling. The committee has made recommendations aimed at encouraging the use of these alternative means of transport in order to reduce the demand for commuter car parking. Importantly, this will help to ensure that car parking spaces are available for those who are less mobile and people with a disability.

Another major theme arising throughout this inquiry was the need for clearer commuter car parking guidelines. The committee has recommended that commuter car parking be included as part of the Greater Sydney parking guidelines. This will lead to greater consistency across the State. The committee also heard about the development of mobility-as-a-service apps. These will allow commuters to select a destination and find the most efficient route regardless of the mode of transport. The committee understands that these services are likely to become more popular, particularly with young people, and have recommended that information on commuter car parking is also made available for them. This is an area that the committee will monitor with interest. In arriving at our recommendations, the committee was greatly aided by those who provided submissions to the inquiry and those who appeared to give evidence during the public hearing. I take this opportunity to thank them for taking the time to assist us in our work.

I thank also my fellow committee members for their dedication and contributions. It has been my pleasure to chair our meetings and to work with them to complete this report. For completeness, I note that the committee comprised Mr Bruce Notley-Smith, Deputy Chair, and member for Coogee; Mr Greg Warren, the member for Campbelltown; Mr Glenn Brookes, the member for member for East Hills; and Ms Jodi McKay, the member for Strathfield. Finally, I thank the Legislative Assembly committee staff for the expertise and professionalism they applied to assisting the committee in its work. On behalf of all committee members, I acknowledge the following individuals from the committee secretariat and thank them for their hard work: Acting Committee Manager Leon Last and committee officers Jacqueline Linnane and Abigail Turingan. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 55/56

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:53): As Chair of the Legislation Review Committee, I thank the House for the opportunity to speak to the Legislation Review Committee's digest. Today I will speak to the fifty-fifth digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. This was a particularly busy and productive week for the committee. We reviewed eight bills on diverse subjects, including electoral funding, forestry regulation, road transport and health. We reviewed also a number of private members' bills, including one on safe access to reproductive clinics. I will now draw the attention of the House to some of the issues raised in this week's digest.

The Electoral Funding Bill 2018 raised a number of issues in relation to the implied freedom of political communication. The bill preserves the existing caps on electoral expenditure for political parties and candidates in election campaigns but reduces the current cap for third party campaigners by half. Generally, burdens on the

implied freedom of political communication may be justified if there is a legitimate purpose and if the burden is reasonable and proportionate. Although the committee noted recommendations made by the 2014 expert panel and the 2016 inquiry of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, the committee still referred to Parliament the question of whether the expenditure cap for third party campaigners is reasonable and proportionate.

The Electoral Funding Bill preserves the existing ban on certain political donations from property developers. However, the second issue raised by the bill pertains to a new provision which enables the State to recover donations from any persons who made a donation in the 12 months before becoming a property developer. While the committee noted the burden this placed on the implied freedom of political communication, it found it to be justified in the circumstances, in part because the provisions are designed to prevent corruption and promote the actual and perceived integrity of government. The third issue raised by the committee related to the proposed \$2,500 cap on third party electoral expenditure for local government elections.

The committee acknowledged that such a cap may burden the implied freedom of political communication and again referred to Parliament the question of whether this burden was reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. I note that the Public Health Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill 2018 raised issues in relation to the implied freedom of political communication. However, the committee found that the proposed restrictions on the freedom of political communication in certain safe access zones surrounding reproductive health clinics was reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances, given the legitimate purpose of protecting women from harassment. The committee therefore made no further comment.

The digest raised a number of issues in relation to the Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The main provisions addressed by the committee concerned changes to consultation requirements. For instance, under the Forestry Act 2012, the community currently receives six months notice of a five-yearly review of a forest agreement relating to a public forest. The amendments to the Act propose that this notice period is abridged to 28 days. While the community can still make submissions in relation to the terms of reference and any proposed changes to an agreement, the committee was concerned that shortening the notice period may make it more difficult for the community to be aware of and participate in the review process. For this reason, the committee drew this issue to the attention of Parliament.

A similar issue was raised in relation to the public's right to be consulted in relation to proposed codes of practice applying to private native forestry under the Local Land Services Act 2013. While the Minister must consult with the public in relation to proposed amendments to these codes, the Minister may also dispense with the requirement for public consultation if the matter is of a minor nature or has urgency. The terms "minor nature" and "urgency" do not appear to be defined in the bill. Because it is insufficiently defined, this provision may therefore trespass on the right of the public to be consulted. For this reason, the committee drew this issue to the attention of Parliament.

The last bill I will discuss is the Health Legislation Amendment Bill (No 2) 2018. That bill was introduced in part because of a review by the Ministry of Health into the regulation of cosmetic procedures. It proposes to amend the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 to provide that the regulations may prescribe requirements relating to the possession, use, prescription, and disposal, among other things, of certain substances and goods. The bill then proposes to make it an offence to contravene these new requirements, with penalties ranging between \$5,500 and six months' imprisonment. In addition, the bill proposes to make it an offence for a person to perform a service or treatment at a private health facility in contravention of the regulations. The maximum penalty for this would be \$55,000.

The committee drew Parliament's attention to the above provisions because, where significant penalties could be imposed, especially time in jail, the elements of an offence should be set out in principal legislation. Allowing these elements to instead be set out in the regulations may amount to an inappropriate delegation of legislative power. That concludes my remarks on the fifty-fifth digest of this Parliament. As always, I encourage everyone to read the full digest, which is available on the committee's website. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions, especially in what was a particularly busy week for the committee. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:58): I speak to Legislation Review Digest No. 55/56, dated 22 May 2018. The committee considered seven bills, five of which it commented on in relation to its obligation to consider bills under section 8A of the Act. When the committee comments on bills it writes to the relevant Minister. In the previous month the committee sent four letters to different Ministers that highlighted issues in relation to bills that are being presented to this House. The committee sometimes receives responses from the Minister or a private member who has moved the bill but this month it received no responses to justify the structure of the bill and the comments of the committee.

In that regard, I note that on Monday 21 May as part of the committee's inquiry into its operation and that of the Act, the committee heard from a number of people who had made submissions. They indicated that in their view the work of the committee has not directly resulted in any change to the drafting of bills before this House to bring them in line to reduce transgressions on personal rights and liberties. I look forward to the further deliberations of the inquiry to determine how the committee can better support the quality of legislation before the Parliament and improve the quality of the bills so that we reduce the impact on the rights and liberties of the people of this State. I encourage all members to continue to refer to the digest in their deliberations before the House. I thank all my committee members and the secretariat that supports us. I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

Matter of Public Importance

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION WEEK

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I am amazed that the member for Swansea has been allowed back in the Chamber. In my opinion, once a member is removed for a period they should remain outside the Chamber for that time. I do not agree with the actions of the Deputy Speaker in this regard. However, as the Deputy Speaker has allowed the member to return, I call the member for Swansea to discuss her matter of public importance.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:01): It is with great pleasure that I speak about Library and Information Week, a week to celebrate a vital public resource for all people across New South Wales, regardless of whether they live in the city or the bush. The theme this year is "Find yourself in a library". That is what I did; I have spent most of my working life working in libraries. It is for that reason I feel very proud to be able to acknowledge in the Parliament of New South Wales the significance of libraries in our communities and applaud those who work in them.

Library week provides opportunities for libraries and those who work in them to showcase the resources, facilities, events and services that are available to their communities. Libraries are at the heart of our communities. They are places to connect, places that promote lifelong learning, places that provides free access to information, and places that provide community hubs for people to meet and engage with one another. Most importantly, in an increasingly digital world, libraries are places to help bridge the digital divide.

I see that bridge over the digital divide being provided in the Swansea electorate, where one-third of the community is over the age of 65. I often have constituents visit my office frustrated and upset that they cannot access information and services in the way that they used to. They feel shut out and isolated, but I let them know that just a few doors down from my office is the local Swansea library where they can access those vital services through all of the online material that is available there. My own experience of libraries has been one of thorough enjoyment. Libraries are no longer just old places with books. When I worked in libraries we had story time. We introduced children at a very young age to books and to libraries and it was an opportunity for them to have ongoing learning.

The mobile library goes out to remote areas around Lake Macquarie. Certainly the same applies at Gosford City Council with the mobile library going to remote areas in the mountains. There is the book club where people share their thoughts and ideas, and the homework club that encourages kids to visit libraries to help them with their homework. Public libraries play a key role in making sure everyone can participate and access important community and government services. It is for these reasons, and many more, that I am proud to say that the recent Labor policy announcement about increased funding for local libraries has been so warmly received from communities across New South Wales.

Labor loves local libraries and understands the importance of libraries to communities. If Labor wins government in 2019, in its first term it will double the per capita subsidy that New South Wales councils receive for library funding. Labor will not just talk about it; it will do it because it values the role that local libraries play in our communities. When I look at the amount of funding that this Government provides to local libraries, it saddens me that New South Wales is at the bottom of the library funding table. State government funding for libraries has been frozen at 2011 levels since the Liberal-Nationals Government came to office.

Our councils do a lot of the heavy lifting when it comes to library funding and I know the residents in my community are grateful for this. It is time for the State Government to step up. Our colleagues in Queensland and Victoria provide funding to their local libraries that is more than double our funding. Available information shows that there are more than 34 million physical visits to libraries across New South Wales—way more than the visits to the stadia in Sydney. If Labor is elected in March 2019 it will double the per capita funding and create a new \$25 million fund for improved facilities and new equipment.

Labor has the right priorities—schools, hospitals and libraries before stadiums in Sydney. It would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to thank the staff who work in the Parliamentary Library in Parliament House. They do an amazing job. We all rely heavily on Parliamentary Library staff to provide us with up-to-date research and information, and they perform an invaluable service that makes our lives easier and makes us all look good. I thank them for their hard work. They will definitely continue to get my support and the support of the Labor Opposition.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:07): I contribute to this matter of public importance on Library and Information Week and thank the member for Swansea for raising this matter and for allowing me to speak about the work of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government and its investment in public libraries across New South Wales. Just last year the \$4 million Public Library Infrastructure Grants program was announced for funding for public libraries across the State. I congratulate the Minister for the Arts, Don Harwin, on his work in introducing this initiative. Just a couple of weeks ago Mosman Library was the recipient of a \$185,000 grant under the New South Wales Government's Public Library Infrastructure Grants program for the construction of the Barry O'Keefe Library Indoor Garden Reading Zone. I thank the Manager of Library Services, Linda Horswell. Construction will commence shortly following the Higher School Certificate [HSC], as it is an important area for local students who access the library, the quiet zones and wi-fi while they are studying. This will be an amazing piece of local infrastructure.

This is just one of the examples of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government's infrastructure investments across New South Wales. We hear about the \$80-plus billion that is being invested. This \$400 million from the infrastructure grants program will make a real difference to local communities. It is being allocated this year to councils across the State for projects particularly focused on rural and regional councils. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the significant investment by the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government and the Minister for the Arts. We have a strong commitment to cultural institutions across the State and in our local communities.

I am fortunate in that I spend most of my cultural time in local institutions such as the Mosman Art Gallery, which received a grant in the last couple of weeks, and the Ensemble Theatre at Kirribilli, which is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary and also received grants recently from the Government for accessible bathrooms and to enable productions to tour throughout New South Wales. These are the kinds of investments that the Government is making. I turn now to the importance of libraries to schools and school students in light of current participation in the Premier's Reading Challenge. All my local primary schools are involved in the Premier's Reading Challenge. I enjoy reading with students in their local libraries. I had a great time last year with class 4S of Middle Harbour Public School. Although they were probably more excited by the bird that flew into the classroom, I enjoyed reading with them.

This is an important investment in the next generation, whether it is young children in public school or high school students using local libraries for study leading into the HSC. I spoke earlier about the Government's investment in the infrastructure grants program and its pride in infrastructure across New South Wales, and I mentioned rural and regional investments. The member for Wagga Wagga is particularly proud of an investment in Batlow, which last week was given \$1 million for a new library—a significant investment. The member for Swansea reflected on the importance of libraries for local communities not just for students but also for older members trying to access information and maintain connectivity. This kind of investment will make such a difference to the people of Batlow. I congratulate the Government on delivering that significant investment for a new library in Batlow.

We all agree that libraries are significant cultural institutions. Those who work in our libraries are predominantly volunteers. They facilitate activities and initiatives in our libraries, which in turn create a connection in our local communities that is so magnificent it is worthy of being acknowledged as a matter of public importance. I congratulate and thank all those dedicated people who work in our libraries, including in our Parliamentary Library, for their significant skills and talents. I thank our councils—including North Sydney Council for Stanton Library and Mosman Council for Mosman Library—for everything they do to invest in local communities through libraries.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:11): I contribute to this matter of public importance as this week is Library and Information Week. I thank the member for Swansea for bringing such an important matter to our attention. We have heard already about the importance and significance of libraries in local communities. I am enthusiastic about public libraries both as a learning and education resource and as a social hub in communities. People use local libraries to connect with our histories, with the world and with friends and colleagues. For many older people, local libraries are places where they can most easily access the internet to stay in touch with families and friends out of town, interstate or overseas.

Library patronage statistics reveal the importance of libraries in our communities. Some 35 million physical visits occur each year to our public libraries, making them a vital community asset that deserves adequate

funding and support to continue that important work. Labor is getting behind local community libraries by promising to double the per capita funding of public libraries in New South Wales. In recent years the funding of our public libraries has been allowed to stagnate under the Government. This puts at risk the services and resources they offer and devalues their important role. As a consequence, New South Wales now has the lowest per capita investment by a State government in local libraries, trailing smaller economies such as Tasmania and South Australia, which lead the nation.

On top of the recurring per capita funding, Labor will also set aside \$25 million for a public library infrastructure fund to upgrade local facilities and purchase new equipment. This announcement has been received warmly by communities across the State but especially in the Blue Mountains. Labor loves local libraries. Labor will put its money where its mouth is to ensure that libraries are provided with adequate resources to flourish and thrive. Unfortunately, our enthusiasm is unmatched by the New South Wales Liberals. When I announced the \$25 million public library infrastructure fund that Labor will introduce, the dreary member of the Legislative Council Shayne Mallard complained that we stole the idea from them.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I refer the member for Blue Mountains to Standing Order 72 and Standing Order 73. Members are not to make disparaging remarks about members of this House or those in the other place.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: We have not stolen their idea because, once again, the best idea they can come up with is a cut. They will cut Labor's funding pledge by \$21 million. Labor loves local libraries. We think libraries are important. We will put our money where our mouths are and fund them properly. I offer my many thanks to all local librarians for gathering and sharing information with dedication and innovation. I particularly thank the Hon. Peter Primrose and his staff for their hard work across the State.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:15): In reply: I thank the member for North Sydney and the member for Blue Mountains for their contributions to the discussion recognising the importance of public libraries in our communities. I was pleased to hear the member for North Sydney talk about her enthusiasm for public libraries. I note that the member talked up the Government's investment in infrastructure. I ask the Government to think about spending a bit of that money on public libraries. Rather than only acknowledging how important libraries are we must also fund them. Quite frankly, it is a bit rich for members to say one thing in the Chamber and to do another thing outside it.

The member for Blue Mountains has a sincere and deep respect for libraries. As a schoolteacher, she implicitly understands their importance. She knows that librarians are role models to young, learning minds. Librarians can lay a foundation for continued learning by encouraging children to utilise libraries. I congratulate the member for Blue Mountains on her wonderful work over the years in educating children and promoting libraries to young and inquisitive minds. Some former colleagues whom I still see have been working in libraries for decades. Libraries are unique workplaces in that people stay in their roles for a very long time. Librarians love their working environment because they are always helping people and doing incredibly interesting research.

When I worked at the Refugee Review Tribunal I was fascinated by the research I undertook and the knowledge I gained in my occupation. Librarians are in one of the few occupations that allow people to learn all the time and impart their knowledge to others. Libraries are highly regarded in our communities because people know that they are safe places where they can be with those who genuinely care about the community, about learning and about assisting others in their pursuit of more knowledge. Unfortunately, libraries are often subject to budget cuts. When a cut needs to be made, libraries can be the first place to which governments turn. I experienced that throughout my career working in libraries. Every member on the Opposition side of the House—and I include the member for Balmain because I know he agrees—is totally committed to public libraries. We show it by putting our money where our mouths are.

Community Recognition Statements

WILL TO WALK FUNDRAISER WILLIAM BOAG

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:18): In 2009 a special resident of Balmain named William Boag was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. William chose to use it as a platform for change. Right now he and his wife, Corrie, are travelling the 900 kilometres between Canterbury and Pontarlier in France by foot. He is calling it the Will to Walk. It is just the latest in a string of pilgrimages that William and his wife have embarked upon to raise funds and awareness for Parkinson's disease. Since 2014 William has done many walks throughout Europe. Once this leg is completed, he will have walked 3,950 kilometres in total—the equivalent of the width of Australia. Of course, the quest has its challenges and William has begun to feel the impact of his disease. Despite that, he is persevering for the cause. His walk will raise money for the Shake It Up Australia Foundation to find a cure. I encourage everyone to donate to the foundation and visit the willtowalk.com.au website. William is leading by

example to show that life is not over with Parkinson's disease. A diagnosis can be used to enrich life instead of limit it. I wish him well on his journey.

SUNSUPER

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:19): Sunsuper is one of the nation's biggest and fastest growing superannuation funds. It has more than 1.3 million members and is among Australia's most highly rated funds. This year Sunsuper has become the first super fund ever to win the five best super fund manager awards offered in the financial services industry in a single year, winning awards from *Money Magazine*, Conexus Financial, Chant West, Super Review and SuperRatings. Over the past two years Sunsuper has won 18 awards, which is more than any other super fund. Importantly, Sunsuper has won the Customer Service Institute of Australia Service Excellence in a Large Business Award for the past four years. The award category covers not just financial services and superannuation funds but all companies in Australia. I congratulate not-for-profit organisation Sunsuper.

BLUE MOUNTAINS FOOD SERVICES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:20): I acknowledge the wonderful and life-changing work of the many volunteers in my community who give of their time and energy through Blue Mountains Food Services. On Monday it was my great privilege to attend the 2018 volunteer awards in Springwood and be part of a special day to thank a group of selfless and giving people who engage with their community. Blue Mountains Food Services provides meals on wheels, lunches at restaurants, multicultural group lunches, social support, and healing through creativity programs. I thank the Blue Mountains businesses that generously donated prizes for the awards for their invaluable support. I also thank Celia, Karen and Fran—the most fabulous staff, who are inspiring and fun loving. I thank Blue Mountains Food Services volunteers for their work.

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY HONORARY DOCTORATE RECIPIENT JOHN SHANAHAN

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:21): I recognise Seaforth Resident Dr John Shanahan, who is in the gallery and who on 5 May was awarded an honorary doctorate by Southern Cross University. It is the highest honour the university can confer and is held by two former Governors General and a former Governor of Queensland. John was a member of the Council of Southern Cross University for 13 years and deputy chancellor for three years. John was formerly a senior technical partner in a major international accounting firm and the auditor of several Australian and internationally listed companies. John is a recognised expert on financial reporting issues and for five years was a member of the NSW Treasurer's Accounting Advisory Panel.

Since establishing his home on the peninsula he has taken an active role in the community. Not only do I count John as a friend; I also know him well through his interest in the Rotary Club of Manly and the community of Manly. John has put his truly exceptional technical mind to good use to make the community better. He has always had a love of learning as well as a love of teaching. Receiving the highest honour from Southern Cross University is worthy recognition of his contribution to the Southern Cross community and the community of the place in which he lives and which he loves—Manly.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I also congratulate Dr Shanahan. It is great to see him here. I know that Southern Cross is a very fine university. I wish him well.

NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (16:22): During National Palliative Care Week I salute the palliative care workforce in my electorate. Palliative care helps people with life-limiting or terminal illnesses to live their lives as fully and comfortably as possible. Palliative care is based on individual needs. It may include relief from pain and other symptoms; support for emotional, social and spiritual concerns; counselling and grief support, and assistance for families. Wherever possible, palliative care is provided where the person and their family wants it. Many people prefer to die at home and palliative care makes that possible for many. Palliative care is for anyone of any age who has been told that they have a serious illness that cannot be cured. It is not just the care provided to people in the final stages of life; it also helps people with a terminal illness to live well. Only one in 10 Australians have nominated a person to make healthcare decisions for them if they are too sick to speak for themselves. An important message this week is that we encourage everyone to plan ahead for their end-of-life care.

MIRANDA ELECTORATE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:23): I acknowledge the outstanding effort of three justices of the peace who were recently honoured for 50 years service to the New South Wales community. Over the past half a century, George Parry, Carlo Pascale and Terrence Bowie have played an important role in the legal system by helping hundreds of people at key moments in their lives, such as when they buy a house, access superannuation

or go to court. George, Carlo and Terrence's commitment to provide this invaluable service embodies the spirit of volunteering, which has always been at the heart of our shire. I take this time to highlight George Parry who, at 89 years of age, was the oldest person to be honoured for his service. George is an inspiration to us all, and a constant reminder that we can all provide a valuable service to the community at any age. I congratulate and thank George, Carlo and Terrence on their dedication to our community and I extend my best wishes for the future.

STEP BACK INTO KING STREET HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:24): Raymond Terrace came alive last weekend at the Step Back into King Street Heritage Festival. In its fourth year, it was bigger and better than ever, with many of us dressed up in vintage clothing in celebration of what was once the main street of Raymond Terrace. Congratulations go to the irrepressible organiser, Kaye Newtown, and her hardworking team including Peter Robinson, Adam Nicholas, Liz Stephens, Beryl and Peter Boyles, Laura Taylor and Angel Nicholas. As always, their hard work was backed up by local groups—Raymond Terrace Lions; Raymond Terrace Rotary; Raymond Terrace Historical Society; Karuah Local History Group. Raymond Terrace Senior Citizens; Raymond Terrace Scouts; Irrawang High School Drum Corps; Hope Community Choir; Dance Extreme; Voyage of Irish Dance; Raymond Terrace Men's Shed and Band; Maitland Embroiderers; Sanjex Seratti, who brought his penny-farthings; and the Good Samaritan Donkey Sanctuary. Performances from Wallalong Boys, Black Joak Morris Dancers and the Hunter School of the Performing Arts marching band took us back in time. I thank the sponsors: Port Stephens Council, MarketPlace Raymond Terrace and Storage King Raymond Terrace. I cannot wait for next year's festival.

SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS WEEK

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:25): I acknowledge that today is World Schizophrenia Awareness Day and I pay tribute to my local North Shore One Door organisation that supports people living with schizophrenia and their carers. Schizophrenia Awareness Week commenced in 1986. The national theme for 2018 is "Do What You Can Do". People with schizophrenia are among the most highly stigmatised and socially marginalised people in our community. Throughout this week we are seeking to reduce that stigma, bust myths about schizophrenia and promote help-seeking by people affected by schizophrenia and their carers. The needs of people with schizophrenia have been so marginalised that they die on average up to 19 years younger than the broader population and, sadly, premature mortality is often the result of suicide and physical illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension. Mental illnesses are very common, which is why we need to focus on days like today and this week to ensure we reduce the stigma and encourage people to seek help, because one in seven people with schizophrenia can fully recover, with some studies saying that it could be as high as one in three.

MAITLAND CROQUET TEAM AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:26): I congratulate the Maitland croquet team of Ron King, Robert Armstrong and Bruce Gawn on receiving a NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Award. The award celebrates active engagement in local life and rewards community contribution. This recognition is richly deserved and it is a just reward for their tireless commitment to maintaining the Telarah croquet green. Without the dedication of Ron, Robert and Bruce to this endeavour it is very likely that the club would not even have a croquet green. The preservation of both the green and the club has brought tremendous benefits to the local community, especially among senior citizens, with a great avenue now provided for active recreation and social engagement. The award is proof of the deeply felt impact Ron King, Robert Armstrong and Bruce Gawn have had on community life in Maitland. I congratulate them very heartily on their achievements and wish them and the club all the best in the future.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE SPECIAL OLYMPICS TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:27): I recognise the Special Olympics team from my electorate for their unwavering passion and tenacious drive to compete in the national championships in Adelaide held just recently on 16 to 20 April 2018. I congratulate this extraordinary team of enthusiastic athletes who have displayed true sportsmanship qualities and fierce determination to compete against more than 2,000 entrants who travelled to Adelaide to contest and defend their titles. Among those outstanding competitors in my electorate of Port Macquarie, nine gold, six silver and seven bronze medals were won in the doubles, team and singles events.

Competing were husband and wife duo, Kris and Haley Brown, who competed in golf and tenpin bowls; Cameron Skinner, who competed in basketball; Gavin Andersen, Kylie Barefoot, Jennifer-Ann Davis, Aaron Fox, Jason Holley, Chelsea Kelly, Renee Lewin, Grant Percival, Victoria Thompson and Darren Wallis, who all competed in bowling; and Jasmine Chamberlain, who competed in equestrian. I take this opportunity to

congratulate these remarkable competitors, who have risen above their challenges to participate in the 2018 Special Olympics Australia and I wish them all the best in their future sporting endeavours.

CENTRAL COAST RURAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DAY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:28): On Sunday 20 May I had the honour of attending the volunteer appreciation day for Central Coast Rural Fire Service brigades. I commend the people from my electorate whose service was recognised. Jason Clunas, Christopher Dawes and Byron Dossett each received the National Medal. Jason Clunas joined Kurnell Brigade in 2001 and transferred to Berkeley Vale in 2009. He has been Deputy Captain since 2015. Christopher Dawes joined Awaba brigade in 1997 and rejoined the Chittaway brigade in 2003. He has been with the Charmhaven brigade since 2007, where he now holds the position of Deputy Group Captain. Byron Dossett joined Hornsby Heights brigade in 1994 and is now a member at the Wadalba brigade, where he currently holds the position of Deputy Captain. In addition to these three, Leslie Smith, who has been a member of the Berkeley Vale brigade since 1977, was honoured with the Long Service Medal 3rd Clasp. I congratulate these fantastic people who serve our community.

PATISSIER OF THE YEAR NOMINEE MICHAEL OKSINSKI

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:29): Du Plessy Pralin in West Pymble has been one of Ku-ring-gai's best-loved businesses since Martha and Marcel Adam opened the store in 1961 and pioneered handmade chocolates. The creations of Du Plessy's pastry chef, Michael Oksinski, are not only popular with the locals but have seen him included as one of the nominees for the Savour Patisserie of the Year for three consecutive years. The 2018 competition will take place at the end of this month in Sydney and 30 entrants will be judged by a panel of acclaimed pastry chefs.

For Michael, making desserts was initially just a hobby to take his mind off his Higher School Certificate exams, but a diploma cooking course at TAFE followed by an apprenticeship has led to a successful career, including almost four years at Du Plessy. The Patisserie of the Year competition has four categories: tarts, eclairs, entremets and desserts. Michael's strength is in his entremets, which are multi-layered desserts using different textures, each chosen to give a perfect balance of flavours. Michael's specialties include a salted caramel cake and a chocolate and raspberry mousse cake. His entremet was voted the People's Choice best entremet in 2017 after placing third in the category in 2016. Michael will be aiming for a top-10 placing this year. I wish him well.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:30): I congratulate Sara and Aya Al Arnoos on being awarded Friends of Zainab Senior Secondary Scholarships from the Public Education Foundation. The Friends of Zainab scholarship helps support students with a refugee background through their Higher School Certificate. Sara and Aya arrived in Australia around four years ago, six years after they left war-torn Syria. They spent two years in Lebanon before they and their family moved to Wollongong. Both sisters are so dedicated to their studies that they did not even take time out to accept their award in person as they were attending parent-teacher interviews so that they could get feedback on their progress firsthand.

Sara and Aya are both incredibly impressive young women with bright futures. Sara has her sights set on becoming a Federal member of Parliament, while Aya is looking to a career in finance. I wish them both every success. I also congratulate Emerald Clay and Cody Symonds from Coniston Public School and Ella Webber from Smiths Hill High School, who were also awarded scholarships at the Celebrating Excellence in Public Schools awards night.

ABORIGINAL ACCORD

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:32): On Monday 14 May, after four years of careful negotiation and planning, I was pleased to join the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, in announcing a historical landmark agreement between the Aboriginal people in the Illawarra-Wingecarribee region and the New South Wales Government. This accord is the latest milestone to be achieved through the New South Wales Government's Local Decision Making initiative, elevating and promoting opportunities that Aboriginal people have in designing a plethora of solutions to meet the local communities' needs in areas such as education, housing and homelessness, economic development, health and policing. It is another step forward in closing the gap in the Illawarra and I look forward to ongoing consultation with our community to ensure that the accord is successful. I particularly thank Anthony Body from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, who was critical in negotiating this agreement. I was pleased that this agreement has been struck. Our Aboriginal people, our traditional owners of the land, are so important to our community's past and its future, and this landmark agreement for the people in the Illawarra is one positive step in the right direction.

*Members***PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that on 24 May 2018 Christopher Stewart Patterson was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Youth Employment in Western Sydney.

*Petitions***SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT COALMINING****Discussion**

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (16:33): I speak in discussion on this petition and the critical issue of the proposed Hume coalmine in the Southern Highlands, more specifically in the Sutton Forest region, with a mine head nudging the historic Georgian village of Berrima. The concerns of the local community extend well beyond the impact of this mining proposal on their own community. They include the impact of past and future coalmining on the precious Sydney drinking water catchment.

I think the one thing that we can all agree upon is that this natural asset—the Southern Highlands aquifer running through the sandstone layers immediately above a coal seam—is a wonderful water supply and supports the marvellous farming region that is the Southern Highlands and its surrounding conservation areas, forests and national parks. It simply cannot be replaced. There is only one catchment, and as the 13,500 petitioners humbly state: If it is irreversibly damaged by coalmining, then it is not just the tens of thousands of people and animals in the Southern Highlands, but also the millions of people in Greater Sydney who rely upon it for water who will be placed at serious risk. There is no catchment B.

This is the third petition that I have had the honour of presenting to the House on behalf of my community, and the second organised by the Battle for Berrima group, which is made up of passionate advocates and supporters of their local Southern Highlands community. We have much to be thankful for. They are committed local residents who are able to give so much of their time, their energy and their skills to participate in this democratic process and who stand up for the interests of the region. I recognise each person who has signed the petition—more than 13,500 people who were concerned enough to put their name to it. They too are to be congratulated on using the democratic process available to them to bring their concerns the attention of this House and all of its elected representatives.

The Southern Highlands community is deeply concerned about this issue. I am advised that an independent survey conducted by respected firm Galaxy Research of residents in the Wingecarribee council area found that nearly six in 10 Wingecarribee shire residents opposed the Hume Coal proposal, including almost five in 10 who strongly opposed it. Fewer than one in five shire residents support the proposal. More than seven in 10 Wingecarribee shire residents—76 per cent—are worried about the impact of the mine on groundwater; and 73 per cent are worried about catchment water supply and purity. More than two-thirds of shire residents are worried about the impact of the mine on flora and fauna in the Southern Highlands.

More than six in 10 Wingecarribee shire residents are worried about the airborne dust levels in the Southern Highlands, and two-thirds of residents are worried about the impact of the mine on existing local industries such as agriculture, equine tourism and food production. More than half of our residents are worried about the impact of the mine on the culture and lifestyle of Southern Highland communities. Nearly two-thirds of its residents believe that if the Hume Coal mine is approved, it will make it more likely that similar coalmines will be approved in the Southern Highlands. Those results demonstrate a very real level of alarm in the Southern Highlands community about this proposal. That level of concern has grown since it was first mooted nearly nine years ago; nine years that communities in the Highlands—farmers, families, small businesses, villages and towns—have worried about the impacts on their water, their wellbeing and their future if this proposal goes ahead.

During those years I have met with many people who are concerned about this mine, and I feel deeply for these residents. I can see that it takes a great personal toll. The petition seeks the following: a Parliamentary enquiry into the risks posed to the future quality, supply and safety of water supply from the Sydney Water catchment; an immediate moratorium on an expansion of the existing coalmining operations and coalmining exploration within the water catchment; and an immediate audit of any and all discharges into the Sydney Water catchment. Millions of litres of highly polluted water containing elevated levels of various metals—zinc at 120 times the normal baseline level, and extremely high levels of nickel and manganese—have already been

established to have been flowing into the Wingecarribee River as a result of the Medway Colliery, which will be closed down. This has had a devastating effect on the local ecology.

I say this to the people of Sydney who enjoy a pretty weekend in Bowral, a drive through our lovely villages, or a walk through our many conservation areas and national parks: If we lose our groundwater as a result of mining, all that prettiness and loveliness will be gone. The fat cattle grazing in the fields will be gone, the vineyards glowing in that autumn sunlight that we love so much will be gone, and the tall trees will be gone to be replaced by barren desolation. You will no longer want to grace our golf courses and our pleasant hotels. It will have been stolen from you as it will be stolen from those of us who live there.

The request of these petitioners for an inquiry into the impact of coalmining on the Sydney catchment, and therefore on the water supply for Australia's most populous city, is long overdue. It is not unreasonable. Although an audit may be alarming, it would give us a very good baseline for any necessary remediation. It would enable us to plan for a future with or without safe water for the Sydney Basin, with or without green fields and fat cattle in the highlands. We owe it to our children and our children's children to protect our most precious resource.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:40): I support this petition. Some of the people in the gallery have heard me speak previously. I am the member for Wyong, and since 2006 I have been fighting against underground longwall coalmining in our area. Some people have been fighting for longer than that. What I say to members of the Government is: Be honest. This process is badly broken. In 2010 the then planning Minister Tony Kelly knocked back the mining application using the precautionary principle. At that time, Barry O'Farrell and the Liberal Party promised to introduce legislation to protect our water catchment. As soon as the Liberal Party got into government, it backflipped and the community had to start the fight again. We went through the Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] process. Both the council and the local water authority, as well as many other experts, produced evidence to say that this would damage the water catchment. The PAC acknowledged that, and included a condition that the mining company had to replace the amount of water that is lost from the system into the water supply.

So how did the company calculate that? I will tell you how it calculated it. It tried to buy all the water licences to mitigate it. The company was not allowed to do that, instead it used the megalitre value of the water licenses, and said that is how much it would return to the catchment. There is no scientific baseline evidence for that; there is no proper process. The company will return the water by treating it and putting it back into the water supply. Every day between two and three megalitres of water will be put into Wallaroo Creek, our local creek, and into Tuggerah Lakes. Do not be duped by these promises. This mine will go ahead. The Government will put a million conditions on it, but the mining companies will meet very few of them. If they come up against a condition they cannot meet, as they did in the Blue Mountains, they run to the Government and the Government will come into this place to change the legislation to make sure they can keep doing what they were doing.

You cannot trust the mining companies. This process is wrong. Mining companies should be able to put their arguments—I have no problem with that at all. The community continually defeats them, yet they are allowed to come back again and again. My community is fundraising to go to court to fight this. Local people have to put their hands into their own pockets and hold fundraisers to fight to protect their water supply. What sort of system supports that? The Government should be fair dinkum. If an application is knocked back then that should be the end of it. You should not have to keep fighting and fighting. Across the State we have seen communities win, but they are defeated in court because mining companies have deeper pockets. I support the member for Goulburn looking after her community. The problem is that only the Government has the power to do that. I fought my people on this, which is how it was overturned in 2010. I thought we were over the line, because the Liberals promised to introduce legislation.

I have twice brought legislation to this House and the Government has voted against it. There is presently legislation in the upper House and I am waiting to see if it is supported. Labor is doing what the Coalition promised to do, not for political reasons but because it is the right thing to do for my community. The water catchment in my electorate, like the Berrima community's water, is sacred. Without that water we will not have an economy or safe community, and our children will be left with that legacy. There is report after report stating that in most cases the chemicals leaking out of the mine water cannot be treated. It is still there.

The member for Goulburn spoke of the closed Blue Mountains mine, it is not operating but the chemicals are still leaking into the water supply and it is affecting the fish and microorganisms in the catchment. It is time for Parliament, without political affiliation, to declare water catchments out of bounds. It should be as simple as that. We can talk about conditions and independent processes, but at the end of the day communities cannot win because we do not have the resources of mining companies and that is simply unfair.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I understand that this is an emotive and upsetting issue, but I ask those in the gallery to respect the House and not applaud or make any noise while the discussion is in progress.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:46): I thank the petitioners for being here today and participating in the democratic process. Underground mining has been carried out in the catchment for more than 160 years with no evidence of any major impacts on water quality or quantity. I have the benefit of experience as the member for Upper Hunter, an electorate that is mining central in New South Wales. Australia's oldest working underground coalmine, Muswellbrook Coal, has been in operation for 108 years with no impact on the water around Muswellbrook. The Sydney drinking water catchment covers a vast area from Shoalhaven to north of Lithgow and west of Goulburn. Underground mining historically occurred in two coalfields within the catchment, the southern coalfields and western coalfields.

For a number of generations, coalmining has had a high economic impact and a social significance within the communities of the southern and western coalfields. To this day coalmining and related industries continue to be significant economic drivers for the local community, the State and the nation through expenditure, jobs, taxes, receipts and royalties. New South Wales is widely regarded as a global leader in the regulation and management of underground coalmining. There is no evidence of major impact on water quality or water quantity from mining-related activities in the catchment over 160 years of historical mining. All mining activities in the catchment are closely regulated under strict planning approvals that include stringent environmental performance conditions.

Ms Jenny Leong: They are leaving in disgust.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Perhaps you should leave, because you are disgusting. The environmental performance conditions require the protection of water quality and quantity in the catchment, especially within the special areas near stored waters.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Newtown will take her seat. There is no provision for a member to take a point of order during discussion on a petition.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: There are no points of order during petitions.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member will resume her seat.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: These conditions have been extremely effective in ensuring there are no significant impacts from mining on Sydney's drinking water supply. Mines must seek additional approval from the Department of Planning and Environment for Subsidence Management Plans. I will not go through all the detail. However, I reiterate my experience over 30 years of living in the Upper Hunter, the mining centre of New South Wales. In many cases the potential impacts of mining on water have been grossly overstated. Let us deal with the facts.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Newtown will take her seat and cease interjecting. The member does not have the call.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:49): On behalf of The Greens, with my colleague the member for Newtown, I give absolute support to this petition and the 13,500 people who call on this House. The Greens are the only party in the House to support an immediate moratorium on approvals of new coalmines or the expansion of existing coalmines within the Sydney water catchment. I thank the Battle for Berrima group and other communities that have put so much effort into getting signatures for this petition to have it discussed today. It is incredibly important that we ventilate the issue and press the Government. We have seen the signs in communities throughout the Southern Highlands and support you in standing up for Sydney's drinking water catchment, and in the campaign to stop the crazy greenfield Berrima coalmine.

The Greens support you in your campaign to stop a huge multinational company that is prepared to trample over communities and trash the land for short-term profits. The Greens know the only way to stop this mine is through a monumental community campaign that puts the old parties on notice and tells them that our planning system is broken. There are no red lights: Project after project is allowed to come back despite it being environmentally, socially and economically irresponsible. The Government says it is at "arms length", but do not let them fool you. The Government and the local member, if serious about stopping the Berrima coalmine, could walk into the House tomorrow and pass legislation in the next sitting to kill the mine for good.

They did it with coal seam gas, the Shenhua mine and the Western Sydney incinerator, sending a clear message that they did not support the projects. We do not need further inquiries; we need a Government that has

the guts to stand up to the mining industry and say no, and support its communities and the environment. Take heart from the victories and know you are not alone in your struggle. With persistence and passion you can beat the coalmine and a system that is stacked comprehensively against the community. The Greens stand with you in your campaign.

To the Government and Labor Party I say: We can no longer pretend that it is okay to approve massive new coalmines and expansion of existing coal. If this State is serious about taking part in tackling global warming, the first step should be taking the lead and banning all new fossil fuel projects in New South Wales. Communities must not be left in limbo, as massive projects that probably will never proceed are left hanging over communities because government does not have the courage to say no to the big mining companies. Communities of the Southern Highlands, across Australia and across the world deserve better, and the people of New South Wales deserve better. I congratulate you on your tenacity. The Greens will continue to stand side by side with you.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): There is no provision for members to take points of order during discussion on a petition.

Ms Jenny Leong: I have sought advice from the clerks and I have been advised that there is the ability to seek to take a point of order at any stage of the discussion.

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

Ms Jenny Leong: I ask the Chair to request the member for Upper Hunter to withdraw the statement that I am disgusting. It is unparliamentary and unacceptable. I tried to take a point of order to ask him to withdraw the statement. The ruling that there was no point of order during discussion on petitions was not a correct ruling. I ask that the Chair ask the member for Upper Hunter to return to the Chamber and withdraw the statement.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I did not hear the comment.

[Interruption from gallery]

Ms Liesl Tesch: They did.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I did not hear it. If you are elected, you can then sit in this chair.

Ms Liesl Tesch: The Government does not listen.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Gosford will cease interjecting.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Did you hear that?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Are you listening?

Ms Liesl Tesch: I cannot hear you.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Gosford under Standing Order 249.

[The member for Gosford left the Chamber at 16:53 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I will look at the *Hansard*. I did not hear the comment. If the comment was made I will ask the member to withdraw it.

Community Recognition Statements

LUNG DONOR RECIPIENT ROD MARSHDALE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:54): I acknowledge Rod Marshdale, who is an inspirational man. Rod was born with cystic fibrosis, which was passed on by his parents who, unbeknownst to them, were carriers of the condition. Rod has spent much of his 46 years in and out of hospitals. In 2015 his life changed when Rod, after a couple of false starts, received new lungs and a new lease on life. Since then, he has challenged himself and life. Eighteen months after his transplant, Rod competed in the biennial Australian Transplant Games. He is an inspiration to all who know him. I congratulate him on all he has achieved. He intends to compete in more sporting events. I implore and encourage everybody to register for organ donation through Centrelink.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DAY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:55): On Sunday 20 May I had the pleasure of attending Volunteer Appreciation Day on behalf of the people of The Entrance to present members of the Rural Fire Service Central Coast brigades with awards for long service. I particularly mention the recipients who reside in The Entrance electorate. Jason Clunas received the National Medal for 16 years of service. He joined Kurnell in 2001 and is now deputy captain of the Berkeley Vale brigade. Anthony Wieckowski received the Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 23 years of service at the Narara brigade and Leslee Smith received the Long Service Medal 3rd Clasp for 41 years of service at the Berkeley Vale brigade. I thank them all for their efforts.

ENVIRONMENTALIST MARGARET MAKIN

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (16:56): I recognise and pay tribute to Church Point resident Margaret Makin for her dedicated service to the Pittwater community. For more than 40 years, Margaret has been a passionate and tireless advocate for our local residents, the preservation of Pittwater's character and the protection of our natural environment. Margaret and her husband, Frank, have been key members of the Bayview Church Point Residents Association, for which Margaret served as secretary for more than 25 years. She has been a valuable member of the Pittwater Natural Environment Reference Group and has played important roles in Probus and the Northern Beaches Garden Club. Margaret has given her time and boundless energy to a number of local community organisations and causes. On behalf of the people of Pittwater, I thank Margaret and her husband, Frank, and their amazing family for their outstanding contribution to our local community. I pass on the best wishes of the Pittwater community to Margaret.

EAST MAITLAND LIONS CLUB

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:57): I recognise and commend the Lions Club of East Maitland for its continued work and support in the Maitland electorate. The East Maitland branch has become a staple in the community, from designing and raffling off a cubbyhouse at Green Hills every Christmas to hosting the Driver Reviver site at the start of the M1 motorway. Apparently the night shift is the most coveted shift because that is when they meet the most interesting people. Its members provide great examples of leadership and community mindedness through the Leo Club.

More than 50 students from the Hunter Valley Grammar School are involved with the club, which aims to encourage the development of leadership and community skills in each student. I often see the students around Maitland, particularly on Australia Day, when they are serving the community. When they are not collecting glasses for the eyeglass recycling program they are probably hosting a barbecue to raise money for local schools or community groups. I congratulate Lions Club East Maitland on being outstanding contributors to the local community.

WINGHAM BEEF WEEK

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:58): Last week was Wingham Beef Week. This year Wingham High School student Emily Brood was the recipient of the Tom Woolard Memorial Award, winning herself a judging course at Tocal College. Keely Dyer from Chatham High School received the Paul van Weerdemburg Memorial Shield, which is presented each year to a Chatham High School student who has excelled at Wingham Beef Week. A special appreciation award was presented to Nola Pereira and her volunteers in the canteen. Wingham Exports general manager Grant Coleman was also presented with a special award of appreciation. I commend John Hawkins from Wingham High School and principal Paul Ivers for the outstanding young students of Wingham High School.

KRISTEN KEEGAN FUTURE LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT TEGAN BELL

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:59): I extend my congratulations to Teegan Bell who was recently awarded the Kristen Keegan Future Leaders Scholarship. The scholarship is funded jointly by HunterNet and Hunter Business Chamber to honour the memory of Kristen Keegan. It recognises those with outstanding leadership qualities. Ms Bell outshone many high-calibre applicants by emphasising the importance of nurturing working relationships with members of the local community. Her outstanding work at the Newcastle Airport and community participation in coaching sporting groups placed Ms Bell ahead of the competition, which included many outstanding young people from the region. The assessment panel included Anita Hugo of Hunter Business Chamber and Tony Cade of HunterNet, who are eager to see the benefits that the scholarship will bring to Teegan's future development. It is always great to see passionate young people who are excellent contributors in the world of business. Ms Bell is studying a Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice through Open Universities while working at the airport. She will have a fine future. Congratulations.

WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:00): Yesterday was Wear Orange Wednesday. I was proud to don the orange State Emergency Service tie to acknowledge the great work that SES members do across New South Wales. I pay tribute to the Wyong and Gosford SES units on the Central Coast. The Gosford unit is based at Erina, which is a few minutes down the road from my office. I extend a huge thanks to Ralph and the team. The Gosford unit gets together every week for training come rain, hail or shine. They are an outstanding team who are never afraid to jump in when times are tough. This Saturday, if people are out and about, they can drop in to the Gosford SES unit at Erina to check out how it all works. It is an opportunity for the community to say thanks to the team and also to see what they do to keep our community safe.

MISS GRAND AUSTRALIA BEAUTY PAGEANT ENTRANT KRYSTA HEATH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:01): I recognise Krysta Heath who has been selected to represent Maitland at the Miss Grand Australia pageant in June. This year Miss Grand Australia has chosen to campaign to stop violence against women by raising funds for UN Women. Violence against women in Maitland has risen to terrifying heights. This year's statistics show that Maitland has experienced the highest growth in apprehended violence order applications in this State. In recognition of this epidemic, Ms Heath has chosen to support Carrie's Place, a refuge in East Maitland. As shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I am intimately familiar with the crucial support that Carrie's Place provides to women and children fleeing violence. Recognising the magnitude of the problem in her local community, Ms Heath has decided to make good use of a new platform and lend her strength to overcoming it. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Ms Heath for her display of leadership and compassion, and I wish her every success in June.

VOLUNTEER SPORTING SPIRIT AWARD RECIPIENT ANDREA FINCH

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (17:02): I recognise the valuable work of Andrea Finch, who has been honoured for her incredible commitment to junior tennis in the village of Rankins Springs. I had the pleasure of meeting Andrea when I presented her with the Volunteer Sporting Spirit Award for the southern region of New South Wales. She is recognised for her dedication to the junior tennis club, where she has volunteered her time for the past 35 years. Without a doubt, Andrea has made an impact on the children of Rankins Springs. She has not only taught them tennis skills but also instilled in them to have respect for others, which is a moral decency that will take them through life. A further display of Andrea's community spirit is that she collects a small amount of money from each child, which goes back into upgrading equipment and an end-of-year party for the children. Andrea should be proud of this award. She has been selected from a large area of New South Wales consisting of 29 local government areas stretching from the South Coast of New South Wales along the Victorian border and across to South Australia. I congratulate Andrea.

MAITLAND TENAMBIT BMX CLUB

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:03): I congratulate the Maitland Tenambit BMX Club on its tremendous efforts at the Australian National Championships held at the end of March. Seventeen riders from the club travelled to Bunbury, Western Australia, to compete against the best riders from across the country. The BMX Club brought home nine national titles as well as representing strongly across all age groups in their various heats. Particular mention needs to be made of the title winners: Lachlan Moore, Matt Moore, Harrison Davis, Porschea Longbottom, Virginia Longbottom, Zalia Monkley, and Adam Thomsen. Well done and congratulations to all members and participants of the Maitland Tenambit BMX Club. What a wonderful representation of the Maitland community at a national level. The amount of community goodwill that goes on in that club has to be observed to be believed. Every Friday night there are great family activities at the club—great, great, great.

WALLIS LAKE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:04): There has been a \$4.5 million boost for Wallis Lake infrastructure. Works are underway. There are cranes across the sky. It is absolutely fantastic to see. This work will support a thriving tourism industry and a commercial fishing fleet that supplies approximately 600 tonnes of seafood every year to the Sydney market. Upgrading these facilities will improve access for all users, and support a range of businesses offering fishing charters, whale watching tours and dive cruises. The investment will also support the region's fishing and oyster industry, particularly the Wallis Lake Fishermen's Co-Op that dates back to 1947. The investment means that dilapidated and damaged infrastructure can be repaired or replaced. New moorings at Point Road will house up to 51 commercial fishing vessels, and there will also be works at the fishermen's co-op. In Tuncurry a new, mixed-use unloading wharf will include a new public dining area and an accessible fishing space, which will support commercial and recreational users. It is great to see that.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE CHARITY FUNDRAISER RHONDA NYQUIST

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:05): I recognise Ms Rhonda Nyquist of Maitland for her ongoing support of the Maitland community through her business and community work. Ms Nyquist has become a woman with strong business acumen with a passion for supporting charity organisations and the local community. Through her business, she has supported and made possible the Maitland New Year's Eve fireworks, which for some years has resulted in a major tourism opportunity for the city and outshone the city of Newcastle in its celebrations. In addition, Ms Nyquist has supported numerous charity organisations, including Ovarian Cancer Australia through her donation of good and services for local fundraising groups. Ms Nyquist continues to use the success of her business to bring about benefit and change to individuals who otherwise would not have the opportunity. It is lovely to see a successful small business person giving back to the community. Ms Nyquist also finds time to be a member of the Black & White Committee and the Country Matrons. We thank Ms Nyquist for her many years of service to Maitland.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:06): Tomorrow is Fatality Free Friday. I have taken the pledge and encourage all people on the Central Coast on our roads to ensure that they take the same pledge for tomorrow. Let us work together to beat road trauma by promising to only drive when we are fit to do so, stay focused on our roads, scan the road ahead, keep a safe distance, drive to the conditions and please, please stay off your mobile phone when you are driving. I encourage all our young drivers, especially learner drivers and P-platers, to take time and slow down. Driving is a right and drivers should do the best they possibly can to keep their own safety in mind, as well as that of others. Go to www.fatalityfreefriday.com to find out what is involved in keeping our roads safe across the Central Coast.

MAITLAND HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL PAULA GRAHAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:07): I acknowledge Ms Paula Graham, the Principal of Maitland High School, for her recent canine initiative. In efforts to further develop the support the school is able to provide for struggling students, Ms Graham recently introduced two education support labradoodles to the faculty at the start of term. The puppies attend school four days a week and are under constant supervision by trained handlers. Ms Graham introduced the initiative after studying both empirical evidence showing education support dogs' ability to enhance children's psychological development, improve social skills and increase self-esteem. The aim of the program is to specifically help re-engage children who have been anxious, upset or disruptive in class and assist them in improving focus and learning outcomes. I commend Ms Graham for her brave and out-of-the-box attempt to address an increasing global educational issue of disengaged students by re-engaging them and caring for their mental wellbeing.

UNITED STATES OPEN QUALIFIER SARAH KEMP

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:08): I congratulate Sarah Kemp, the Tuncurry golfer who is doing fantastic things and has qualified for this year's United States Women's Open Championship, which tees off later this month. In the lead-up to the Ladies Professional Golf Association event, the 33-year-old came second in the United States open qualifier in Florida ahead of 79 women from around the globe. She has been playing for 12 years and this is her best qualifier. She calls Tuncurry home and often comes back. I congratulate her on her achievement and wish her well.

MAITLAND HOSPITAL SPECIAL CARE NURSERY MULTIPLEX DONATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:09): I congratulate Mark Kelly of Multiplex and his team on an outstanding donation to the community of Maitland. The kind donation of \$109,000 to the Maitland Hospital special care nursery has funded three incubator cribs that will provide vital assistance to premature and sick babies across the Maitland electorate. This generous achievement is the product of a community-minded approach by Multiplex that has raised the funds through raffles, a golf day and other donations. The Maitland community appreciates the work of Multiplex and all its workers. I congratulate the whole team and commend the community-minded approach of Mr Jeff Wall, who is a project manager, and the work of Kim Simpson, who is a Hunter New England Health volunteer and community participation coordinator, in bringing this great outcome to our community.

TOP 100 SHORT FILMS COMPETITION WINNER ADRIAN TYSON

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (17:10): I congratulate Adrian Tyson on having his short film *The Decision* accepted into the 2018 Australia's Top 100 Short Films competition. Mr Tyson's short film highlights the ethical dilemmas surrounding end-of-life decisions. Mr Tyson has showcased our local area in his short film and I wish him every success with his filmmaking endeavour—in particular at the St Kilda Film Festival.

NEW SOUTH WALES ALL SCHOOL TITLES MEDAL WINNER MATILDA KING

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:10): I recognise the monumental efforts of Matilda King for claiming gold in the 50-metre breaststroke at the New South Wales All School Titles held in Sydney. Port Macquarie's "superfish" Matilda clocked a win at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre by beating her personal best time of 35.43 seconds to secure gold in the breaststroke, with a new time of 35.3 seconds. This amazing competitor was said to hold onto the lead just shy of second place by only 0.17 seconds to clinch victory. Our gold-winning gal is no novice when it comes to claiming victories in the swimming pool.

Matilda's recent success in New South Wales Combined Independent Schools final four weeks ago saw her progress up the ranks and secure gold in an impressive race said to have highlighted her as one of the major threats in her category. Matilda is hoping to take out another well-deserved victory at the national titles in June for 12- to 14-year-olds to better her third place position last year. It is surprising she is yet to claim gold at this championship, but going on her current form and previous gold, I would not rule her out securing another gold medal in the pool. I wish Matilda all the best at the next national swimming titles in June.

HUNTER SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS STUDENT JOE DUFTY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:12): I recognise Joe Dufty of Gillieston Heights and student of the Hunter School of Performing Arts for his recent achievement in the field of performing arts. Joe has been cast in Opera Australia's production of *Carmen* at the Sydney Opera House and at the age of 12 has been performing in sold-out shows several nights a week. This involved him having to leave school at three o'clock on performance days before travelling down to Sydney in time for show prep at 6.30 p.m. He then performs, before bundling back in the car, usually arriving back in Gillieston Heights at close to 1.00 a.m. It is something that every mother would be proud to see their child doing. It is wonderful to see our regional youth securing such opportunities and representing the talent coming out of regional Australia. In addition, Joe dreams of living in a world of inclusion stripped of gender stereotypes, as he is a dancer. It is refreshing to see a passionate young man paving the way for his peers and generations to come. Congratulations to Joe on his achievement and I look forward to following his success well into the future.

Private Members' Statements

MID NORTH COAST RURAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:13): I recognise and acknowledge the outstanding contribution and dedication displayed by the Mid North Coast Rural Fire Service volunteers from the Port Macquarie electorate. On Thursday 5 April, I was joined by the Mayor for Port Macquarie-Hastings, Peta Pinson, and the member for Lyne, Dr David Gillespie, as well as Rural Fire Service officials to congratulate those RFS members for their long service to their communities in times of danger and distress.

Nathan Thorburn of Colo Heights and Lake Innes Brigades received a Long Service Medal for 10 years of service and the following volunteers were acknowledged for 11 years of service: Robert Armstrong of Bonny Hills brigade, John Blackmore of Lake Cathie brigade, Scott Collyer of Lorne brigade, Graham Nosworthy of Lorne brigade, Ben Stevenson of Sancrox/Thrumster and Lorne brigades, Bryan Archer and Keith Reichenback both of Lake Innes brigade, and Warwick Griffiths and Bruce Smail of the Lake Cathie brigade were recognised for 12 years of service. Nathan Clarke of the Lake Cathie brigade and Thomas Patrick of the Camden Haven brigade have both devoted 14 years of volunteer service to the Rural Fire Service. For that we say thank you.

Murray Gowled, of Camden Haven brigade, and Kyll Goodsell and Gary Simpson, who are both of the Lake Innes brigade, were recognised for 15 years of service. Raymond Goodear, of the Camden Haven brigade, and Robert Small, of the Lake Cathie brigade, have both contributed a massive 20 years of service to their respective communities. The following volunteers are celebrating 21 years of service, and on behalf of the community I thank them for this incredible contribution: Anthony Hill of the Lake Cathie brigade; Kathleen Mangan of Lorne brigade; Allen Ryan of Sancrox/Thrumster brigade; and Nigel Sherrard of Bonny Hills brigade. I also acknowledge Phillip Hammill of the Camden Haven brigade for his 22 years of service; William Webster of Bonny Hills brigade, for 23 years of service; and George McKerrow, also of Camden Haven brigade, for 28 years of service.

There are also a number of local RFS personnel who have given an incredible 30 years of service to protect communities throughout the State. I know I speak on behalf of all members in expressing our genuine gratitude for their contribution. Guy Duckworth has served in a number of New South Wales rural fire brigades, including the Davidson bush fire brigade in the Warringah/Pittwater district from 1984; in the Belrose brigade in 1987; in the Byron Shire Council in 1998; and the Port Macquarie-Hastings rural fire district in 2000, which was then renamed the Mid Coast District. Many communities have reaped the benefits of the commitment of Angus Meldrum, including Springside Rural Fire Brigade, where he served from 1986; the Hastings

communications brigade in 2010; the Lake Cathie brigade, where he was secretary for three years; and he is currently secretary/treasurer of the Mid Coast North training brigade. Brett McMillen served 30 years as a Rural Fire Service volunteer with the Eglinton bush fire brigade.

For 31 years of service, I recognise Rodney Howard of Silverdale brigade in 1986 and of Camden Haven brigade in 2015, as well as Robert Sullivan who is receiving 1st and 2nd clasps from both the Bonny Hills brigade in 1987 and the Hastings communication brigade in 1997. For 32 years of service, I congratulate and thank Donald Dixon of the Orangeville/Werombi brigade in 1985 and of the Camden Haven brigade in 2010. Celebrating 33 years of service is Andrew Knox, who is receiving a 2nd clasp. He has served with the Blue Mountains and the Lake Innes brigades. For 34 years of service Peter Davison, who has been with the NSW Rural Fire Service since 1983, was acknowledged. For 42 years of service, I commend Terence Hill, who was formerly with the Hornsby Heights Rural Fire Brigade in 1975 and now the Pembroke brigade since June 1980. For 45 years of service, I am pleased to acknowledge the incredible contribution of Joy Walker of the Blue Mountains communications group from 1972 and the Mid Coast District since 1997.

Last, but certainly in no way least, I ask all members of this House to join me in acknowledging one very special, dedicated and selfless rural fire service volunteer, Alan Hagney. Allan has given a lifetime to the Rural Fire Service. He started in the mid-1950s at the Terrey Hills brigade and then he went to the Hornsby Heights brigade from 1969 to 1996. Allan remains a serving member in his role as the deputy captain of the Camden Haven brigade, where he has been since 1996. There was rightly a standing ovation for Allan when he was recognised at the awards ceremony for his 60 years of service. For 60 years he has been there for others and protected them in times of need when fire threatened their homes, their properties and often their lives. On behalf of all the volunteer firefighters who are a part of our Rural Fire Services across the State, I sincerely thank those who support them and those who allow them the opportunity to serve for us—their partners, their children and their families. I reiterate my thanks to all our Mid North Coast Rural Fire Service volunteers and personnel from the Port Macquarie electorate. I again acknowledge their tireless efforts in keeping our community safe.

BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE MULTICULTURALISM

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (17:17): I had intended to inform the House about education in my electorate and particularly highlight the wonderful student leaders of my electorate. However, with the indulgence of the House, I must now speak on behalf of the many people in my electorate who feel insulted and offended by the front page of today's *Daily Telegraph*. I speak on behalf of those people who migrated to this great country and, in my opinion, have become much better members of my community than Luke Foley ever would be. I speak on behalf of Reena and Raoul Jethi.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Minister is going to attack another member he should do so by way of a substantive motion. It should not be done in a private member's statement.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I am advised that points of orders can be taken at any time. That is a bit of information I have missed for seven years. I suggest the member for Maitland has cited the incorrect standing order. The member should refer to the standing orders. The Minister is following the rules.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I speak on behalf of Reena and Raoul Jethi, who migrated from India. They run a fantastic business in my electorate. Reena recently was elected to the council. I speak on behalf of Thomas Verghese. He and his wife also migrated from India with nothing but a bag. He is a fantastic constituent of mine. He has paid more tax than the Leader of the Opposition will ever dream to pay. I speak on behalf of Peter Gangemi whose family came from Italy.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the issue?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order is under the standing order that states a private member's statements must be about the member's constituents. The Minister is now referring to the tax details of the Leader of the Opposition, who I am sure does not live in the Minister's electorate. The Minister should confine his remarks to his electorate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Maitland will cease making spurious accusations. The Minister is quite rightly relating his speech to his electorate. At this stage, I have not heard the Minister say anything that would insult anyone.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I speak on behalf of Liz and Joseph Russo, who run a fantastic childcare centre in my electorate. They have come from Italy. I speak on behalf of Aron Mola, who is a young law student in my

electorate. His family fled Iran and they have made a magnificent contribution to small business in my electorate. Of course, Aaron is studying law. I speak on behalf of Helen Kelava, who runs a fantastic chemist shop in my electorate. She and her family migrated from Croatia with nothing. They have suitably ensconced themselves in my electorate. Indeed, a couple of years ago Helen was The Hills Woman of the Year.

I speak on behalf of Antonella Tesoriero, who volunteers at St Angela's Primary School. I speak on behalf of Frank and Clare De Masi, who employ a number of young people in post offices in my electorate. I speak on behalf of Rossella Garofano, who is the Assistant Principal of Oakhill College. Her family fled post-war Italy. I speak on behalf of Doug Zurkic whose family also fled Europe after the war. His family came from Serbia. Doug now has a sensational small business and his wife makes a significant contribution to our local economy.

I speak on behalf of Samuel Uno. His family came from Italy and he is now on the local council. I speak on behalf of Jeff Wang whose family came from China. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, Jeff Wang ran for public office and actually went through a democratically elected preselection process. I speak on behalf of Shuhba Kumar from West Pennant Hills, who runs the India Club and who assists young women coming from India to know their rights against domestic violence in this country. I speak on behalf of Mike Lee, who is a veteran of the Australian Army. His family came from South Korea.

I speak on behalf of King Lee, OAM, from West Pennant Hills whose work led him to be decorated not only by the NSW Police Force but also by the Australian Chinese community. His work is beyond reproach. I speak on behalf of Marcello Colosimo whose family also came from Italy. He runs one of the most successful hospitality venues in my electorate. I speak on behalf of Maria Kovacic whose family came from Croatia. She is a senior banker in my electorate. She has helped so many migrant families to get their own home. I speak on behalf of Anthony Calabria, the Principal of St Angela's Primary School, whose family also came from war-torn Italy. He has now risen to the senior ranks within the Catholic Education Office.

I speak of Nadeem Ali who came from the subcontinent. He is a Muslim. He has settled in with a degree in accounting. He is also making a magnificent contribution to my electorate by running a registered club. I speak on behalf of Georgia Mitrokas whose family came from Greece. She too has made a fantastic contribution to my local community. I apologise on behalf of this Parliament to every single one of those people, and more, who have all migrated to The Hills district. They did not cause a white flight. They did not cause my constituents to run away because the colour of their skin did not suit others. I speak on behalf of those constituents who have made a massive contribution to my community. They have fought for their country and paid tax—attributes that the Leader of the Opposition has never done. Yet the Leader of the Opposition is quite happy to appear on the front page of the *Daily Telegraph* and dog whistle to Pauline Hanson and court the racist tendencies of the One Nation party.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 73. I have listened carefully. The Minister was very general, but he is now specifically attacking another member of this House, which is not allowed under that standing order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am not attacking the Leader of the Opposition. I am highlighting that he has brought this place into disrepute by using race politics.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr David Harris: Read Standing Order 73 carefully.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The effect of Standing Order 73 is that members cannot use offensive words against the House, a member, or a member of the judiciary, or a statute unless moving for its repeal. If a member wishes to criticise other members in the House it must be done by way of a substantive motion. Members cannot take points of order claiming that the member's statement is inaccurate or misleading, as such alleged offences do not necessarily constitute a breach of the standing orders and an abuse of the forms of the House. If members take spurious points of order they may be placed on calls to order for interrupting debate. It is a matter for the Speaker to determine. There are provisions under Standing Order 95 for dissent from the House.

Mr Mark Coure: Take that.

Mr David Harris: It is only spurious if it is not true.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): But it is true, is it not?

Mr David Harris: No. The Minister was making implications about the Opposition leader's character, which he cannot do under the standing orders.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Point of order: I have not said anything that is not in the public domain today. I have not misled the House.

Mr David Mehan: To the point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for The Entrance will resume his seat. The member cannot wander up to the microphone and take a point of order when I am speaking.

Mr David Mehan: I am trying to do the right thing; I sought the call.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I did not give the member the call. The member for The Entrance will resume his seat. As far as I am aware, all this is in the public domain.

Mr David Harris: Is it?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Are Labor members saying it is not in the public domain?

Ms Anna Watson: No. It is.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Did the member for Wyong not read the *Daily Telegraph*? I will get him a copy. The matter is in the public domain. At this stage the Minister has not said anything about the Leader of the Opposition that is not already in the public domain.

Mr David Harris: To the point of order—

Mr Mark Coure: Oh, come on!

Mr David Harris: This is important because it affects us all.

Mr Mark Coure: What is the applicable standing order?

Mr David Harris: I said, "To the point of order." I listened and did not interrupt because the Minister's comments were in order. However, his last two statements made accusations against the character of the Leader of the Opposition, which is very different from saying things that are in the public domain. Earlier the Minister was in order, but he cannot make aspersions against the character of the Leader of the Opposition, which is why we have Standing Order 73; it protects all of us. If we tunnel down to the absolute bottom and continue to allow this sort of behaviour, we could all get exactly the same treatment. That is why we have Standing Order 73.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Wyong will resume his seat. If I were to hold everyone to account under the standing orders, not one member would be left in this House. The member for Wyong will resume his seat. The Minister will resume his seat. I am gobsmacked by the disrespect shown in this House today, as referred to by Mr Deputy Speaker. Members are wandering around the Chamber. I suggest that members read the standing orders. In relation to the spurious points of order that have been taken today, I have not heard the Minister say anything that is not in the public domain—on the radio, on the television or in the print media.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Point of order: I did not cast aspersions upon the Leader of the Opposition. It was a statement of fact. He never served in the military and he did not pay as much tax as one of my constituents who runs a successful small business. I am happy to back that up.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: How do you know?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I can look at the Opposition leader's record and I can table that of my constituent.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! That exchange across the Chamber is exactly what I am talking about. The member for Macquarie Fields is arguing with the Minister across the Chamber. The member for Macquarie Fields should not put up his hand and look like Mr Innocent. Under Standing Order 49, I can clear the House and close it. Is that what members who wish to make a private member's statement want me to do? I have had it with this disorderly behaviour. If Opposition members continue arguing, they will be removed from the Chamber. They will not be called to order; they will be named. Another convention is that members do not speak while the Chair is speaking.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: It appears that anything in the public domain will be allowed to be used in any private member's statement. Is that what we are setting ourselves up for? I would like some clarification on that matter and a ruling. From now on, it is open slather for any member to refer to anything in the public domain in a private member's statement.

Mr Daryl Maguire: To the point of order: I have listened very carefully to the discussion so far. Private members' statements must relate to issues that are raised by constituents. As I understand it, the Minister has referred to that. Some issues have been referred to the Minister and he is now conveying those to the House. Based on my understanding, he is entitled to do so under the standing orders. Mr Temporary Speaker, I ask you to direct

that the Minister's time be reinstated so that he can finish his statement. All members have the opportunity to speak in this place. From time to time, members may not like what they hear. But if constituents have raised concerns in their local area, if there is an offence or an issue to be raised by a member, the member has the right to bring it to the House. They should be heard in silence.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat.

Ms Anna Watson: Mr Temporary Speaker, what is your ruling?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Under Standing Order 49, there will be no more interruptions of the Minister.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: On behalf of the residents of The Hills, from a variety of backgrounds and from a variety of walks of life, I apologise to them for the way that a member of this House treated them. Members of any race are always welcome in my electorate.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:32): I pay tribute to the thousands of people in my electorate who volunteer their time to make our community a better place. Right now, communities across the country are marking National Volunteer Week. I will take a few minutes today to join the chorus of praise for our volunteers. As I speak here, it is a certainty that in my electorate of Macquarie Fields plenty of people are freely giving up their time to help others. They are the parents who are volunteers working in the school canteen, helping with a reading program in class or preparing for the next parents and citizens meeting. They are grassroots coaches and managers who are preparing for this weekend's training and games to make sure that the kids in their sides get the most out of their sporting activities. They are visitors having a cup of tea and chat with people in aged-care homes to make sure they retain vital social connections.

Members of the local Lions and Rotary clubs are planning their invaluable charitable activities for the coming year. There is a team of volunteers giving up their time to drive the elderly and people with a disability to appointments and social outings. I could go on and on. Many volunteers do not give up their time for accolades or public recognition. In fact, their humility and strong sense of community service means they are often embarrassed when someone takes the time to say thank you or publicly recognise them for their volunteering efforts. This was certainly the case when recently I presented Seniors Local Achievement Awards to four amazing people in my electorate. Ena Marshall has been a volunteer with Girl Guides Australia for more than 35 years. She was also a volunteer at Curran Public School for eight years and at Glenfield Public School for 32 years, helping children with behaviour and learning disabilities. Throughout her years of volunteering she has displayed kindness, patience and a willingness to share with young people her many virtues.

Jean Smirthwaite served as president of the Ingleburn and District Pensioners Benefit Club for 13 years and has been treasurer for the past two years. She has also been volunteering with the local non-profit organisation Break the Cycle for 19 years. Jean certainly is dedicated in everything she does and helps those in need. Jan Nicholl is a well-known and well-respected community elder who advocates for people without a voice. She volunteers her time at the Adventist Development and Relief Agency Community Centre in Macquarie Fields, attending the Grandparents Support Group and Addiction Support Group. Jan is a community shaker and is admired and appreciated by many families and elderly people in the community.

Clive Black is one of the newest volunteers at South West Community Transport but he has already clocked up more than 350,000 kilometres over 1,200 trips since joining the service in March 2016. Clive is also a State Emergency Service volunteer and recently enrolled in TAFE to undertake further training in transporting people with a disability. When I visited Ena, Jean, Jan and Clive to present them with their awards, what struck me about all these incredible volunteers was their humility. Week in and week out they go about their business quietly and without hesitation. They are happy to help others and being helpful makes them happy. The latest census shows that more than 9,000 people do voluntary work in Macquarie Fields. I am proud to report that all age groups are represented by those volunteers. Some of the youngest in our community, school kids, donate their time to raise money or collect donated items for local charities and some volunteers are young at heart.

I know of people in their eighties who donate their creative talents to knit or crochet teddy bears and blankets for premature babies or people in aged-care homes. These volunteers make our community great. It is astounding how many hours these people spend volunteering. I want to share with the House a few examples. I was amazed to learn that the 17 volunteers at the Rotary Club of Ingleburn contributed 6,200 volunteering hours last year. The 32 volunteers at the Campbelltown and Districts Lapidary Club contributed nearly 5,000 volunteering hours while the 17 volunteers at Eschol Park Little Athletics Club contributed 3,000 volunteering hours last year. These are incredible numbers. The volunteers do not expect a pat on the back;

they give of their time freely and happily because they have a generous spirit. It is only fitting that every year we recognise these volunteers as part of National Volunteer Week.

Volunteering truly is a noble endeavour that contributes to the fabric, welfare and wellbeing of our society. I take this opportunity to thank each and every volunteer in my electorate and those around the State and nation for the great work they do to make our community a better place.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:37): I thank the member for Macquarie Fields for his contribution on volunteers, who play a huge role in his community, my community and across Australia. This year I am hosting yet again the St George Community Awards. I have hosted the awards every year since my election. The award categories are Volunteer Achievement Award, Community Group Achievement Award, Sporting Achievement Award, Environmental Achievement Award, Business Achievement Award, Youth Achievement Award and Senior Volunteer Achievement Award. We receive more than 100 nominations for this great awards program which, as I said, I have hosted every year since becoming a member of Parliament. It is my opportunity to say thank you to the unsung heroes who do a wonderful job in the community—from the parents and citizens association president to the person who manages the canteen for the local soccer, football or netball group. It is a wonderful opportunity to thank all those in our local community. They do a wonderful job. They not do it for thanks; they do it because they have a big heart.

GLENMORE PARK BRUMBIES SAMOAN TOUR

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (17:38): In September this year the under 13's Rugby League team from the Glenmore Park Brumbies will be travelling to Samoa. The tour will incorporate three games against some of the best Samoan junior rugby league teams. As part of the trip, the team will take part in a cultural tour of Samoa. The boys will witness firsthand the Samoan way of life and experience the different living standards, culture and lifestyle. During their tour, the team will visit a local Samoan school where the boys will help local students with their schoolwork, assist with planting trees and paint classrooms within the school grounds.

This tour is a great opportunity for the young players to gain invaluable experience playing internationally but there is an even more important message underpinning the team's tour. The team has partnered with the suicide prevention charity R U OK? to shed light on the devastating issue and its prevalence in the Pacific Islands. As they tour and meet with young Samoan boys, they will spread the message that a simple conversation can save a life. As a region, the Pacific Islands have some of the highest youth suicide rates in the world—double the global average. During the tour the Brumbies boys will coach with experts and have discussions amongst their peers so that they can draw on what they learn to take beyond the team and tour.

Western Sydney has a very high Pacific Islander population, which is heavily involved in the junior league community. This tour not only will seek to raise greater awareness when the Brumbies boys are in Samoa but also will give the boys the tools and ability to talk to and reach out to the wider circle of their life and community back home in Western Sydney. In order to send the team off to Samoa, the Glenmore Park Brumbies have been busy hosting multiple fundraising events, including a sportsmen's luncheon, a Samoan dinner night, raffles, barbecues and car washes. The Brumbies boys have been working hard to raise the funds for the tour.

I thank tour manager Gillian Ewer and club president Dean Williams for their outstanding efforts in organising this terrific initiative for the young players. The Brumbies boys taking part in this trip are Jack Ewer, Jack Achurch, Zaid Lehan, Samir Sammak, Ryan Gibbons, Jett Cleary, Ewan Xuereb, Mitchell Shanahan, Kaleb Ah-Colt, Ben Minney, Sunny Riley, Harrison Burgess, Noah Tavares, Ryan Campbell, Judah Galuvao, Braydon Faiiai, Kalan Turvey, Brandon Kopp, and Ryder May. I urge the community to consider supporting this worthwhile tour and help the Brumbies boys get to Samoa. I wish Gillian, Dean and the Brumbies boys all the best as they continue to prepare for this tour of Samoa.

I state in closing, as this is National Volunteer Week, that the Glenmore Park Brumbies have an amazing array of volunteers to help run their phenomenal club in Glenmore Park. Many of the volunteers are parents who have full-time jobs within Western Sydney and beyond. They are balancing family commitments and giving their time to support this local rugby league team. They are just one community group within my electorate that is sustained and flourishing through the immense contribution of volunteers. Volunteers give their time on match day behind the scenes organising and planning; they may be part of the management committees or set up fields. The community is so much richer for the volunteers who support so many organisations not just in Mulgoa but across New South Wales. I proudly pay tribute to every volunteer who gives so much of their time to support their community.

On Monday this week I stood with volunteers from the Nepean Food Services to highlight the Government's commitment of \$55,000 to build new freezer facilities that will enable Nepean Food Services to

expand its scope and go further afield and provide much-needed food for those who are unable to leave their homes due to frailty or illness. Close to 100 volunteers distribute food across the region. This is another example of the richness of the community: people like president Dean Williams and tour manager Gillian, who are passionate and give so much of their time to support our community, are giving these young boys the opportunity to have a this life-changing experience. I thank all our volunteers.

RUTHERFORD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE CONTAMINATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:43): I bring to the attention of the House the concerns of my constituents who live in the vicinity of the former True Grain or Australian Waste Oil Refineries treatment plant in Kyle Street, Rutherford, which had its licence for the discharge of trade waste into the sewer system suspended in March 2016 due to the detection of wastewater containing perfluorinated compounds—perfluorooctanesulfonic acid/perfluorooctanoic acid [PFOS/PFOA] or per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances [PFAS]—in its discharge. On Wednesday 23 May this year, via media release, the Minister for the Environment advised that she had directed the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] to oversee the clean-up using a contractor due to waste oil, other chemicals and high-level PFAS contamination in liquid waste being on site. The selective tender process that is being undertaken closes on 14 June 2018.

In the Minister's media release the Acting Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Environment Protection Authority is quoted as having said that the EPA is also investigating other sources of PFAS contamination within the Stony Creek catchment, including a number of premises within the Rutherford Industrial Estate. I ask: Why has the Minister not consulted with me on this issue? As the elected local representative, I should not have to read in the newspaper or a media release about potential contamination and clean-up operations in my area. I have no faith that the EPA has contacted the people it says it has contacted.

I am aware that livestock is grazing near both Stony and Swamp creeks near Telarah. Can the Minister assure me that the owners have been notified of the risks? I am concerned by EPA advice that residents downstream of Rutherford Industrial Estate should avoid using water from Stony Creek and Swamp Creek for livestock or domestic purposes. Cattle are grazing in that area even now. What guarantee is there that a Minister who cannot inform the local member has given the proper notifications and made residents and farmers aware? What action has the EPA taken to consult with communities, including farmers, if cows are still grazing at the junction of the creeks?

As the Labor candidate and then as the member for Maitland, I campaigned hard to stop the so-called "Rutherford stink". This Government has a bad history of dragging its feet on environmental disasters. From 2008 to 2015 some 700 complaints were made about the Rutherford stink. Many of the people who were affected required medical assistance for sore throats and irritated eyes and noses. It was not until Hunter Water found evidence of PFAS at the Kyle Street plant and then suspended the company's trade waste licence and disconnected the business from the sewer system that we managed to stop the stink. In that case the EPA was a toothless tiger.

After the revelations of Hunter Water in 2015, the factory was closed and the business was placed in the hands of liquidators. Reports of the Rutherford stink reduced dramatically in the wake of the closure. Why then has it taken two years for this environment Minister to clean up the site? The flood-prone area around the site is used mostly for agricultural purposes, including cattle grazing, so why has it taken two years for the Government to act? I challenge the Minister to explain what information her department has provided to downstream residents and graziers about the presence of PFAS in the waterways and why it did not inform my office about such a serious issue. I want to know what information was disseminated to which residents and when.

I have spoken to members of the local media who reported on the issue in 2016. Neither they nor I can remember anyone in our community being told about the potential for contamination. It is time for the Minister to show what notification she has made other than the media release that was put out today. I have raised issues repeatedly with not only this Minister but also the previous Minister, including the death of 16 cattle in Farley in January 2016 around the time of the discovery of PFAS at the factory. Why has this environment Minister not returned the courtesy of advising me of her action to remediate the site—as late as it is—two years after the event? I have spoken again to the farmer who contacted me about his dead cattle in January 2016. He is concerned that the contamination may have had something to do with the deaths. As a result of my interventions there were some talks with Hunter Water and the EPA, but to this day that farmer is still looking for answers. Why is the Minister not being clear with our community? It is sneaky, sneaky, sneaky.

CURL CURL LAGOON REMEDIATION

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:48): Nearly a year ago today I gave my second private member's statement in this House on a matter that is important to my electorate of Manly and to me as the local member. That is the protection, rehabilitation and promotion of Curl Curl Lagoon, a vital ecosystem stretching from

Greendale Creek in the west and east towards North Curl Curl Beach and out to the ocean. It is a great shame that what were originally lush wetlands became landfill in the 1950s. Thankfully, we have come a long way since those days. Governments and councils are for the most part smarter. They show respect for our local environments and do their best to protect and promote them. Locally, we owe things in large part to a very active community group that cares for the lagoon. I place on record my support and thanks to the Curl Curl Lagoon Friends.

A year ago I noted two things in this House. First, I recognised the great work of the Curl Curl Lagoon Friends, who since the 1980s have been at the forefront of repairing and protecting the lagoon. Secondly, I called on the New South Wales Government to come to the table and provide further funding along with Northern Beaches Council for remediation work at the lagoon. Since I spoke about the lagoon last year I have worked alongside the Curl Curl Lagoon Friends and nearby residents to successfully oppose a 25-metre telecommunications tower that was to be installed in Adams Street Reserve on the southern side of the lagoon. After a successful campaign that led many members of the community to come out against the construction of the tower, I engaged with the experts at Northern Beaches Council to understand what work still needs to be done to bring the lagoon up to scratch.

Late last year the council presented its plan to me. Named "Restoring Pride in Curl Curl Lagoon", the plan aims to improve the Curl Curl environment and engage the community in an education program for businesses and residents upstream in Brookvale, Curl Curl and along Greendale Creek. The first component of the project includes creating better foreshore areas around the lagoon for bird and fish habitat, removing weeds to improve views and access between Griffin Road and Curl Curl Beach, and installing better access points to the lagoon and beach. The second component of the project involves an education program for businesses and residents upstream, the installation of interpretive signage with community information and support of our local volunteers and bush regenerators, such as the Curl Curl Lagoon Friends who protect the vital waterway.

The work outlined by the council will make a significant improvement to the look and most importantly the health of the eastern portion of the lagoon, which did not have substantial work done to it like the western portions did during the Curl Curl rehabilitation project. The work includes the staged removal of weeds—mostly *lantana*—followed by the planting of native vegetation to provide a better habitat and corridor for our native fauna. Portions of the vegetation on the western side of Griffin Road will be fenced off to protect both the vegetation and wildlife. I have sought community support for this plan and collected hundreds of signatures from the local community to strengthen my call for funding to rehabilitate this very important waterway. I have also written a letter of support for the council as it seeks funding through the Government's Restoration and Rehabilitation Grant Program for a particular portion of the plan that will rehabilitate the northern shoreline of the lagoon.

I thank the Minister for the Environment, who has taken a keen interest in this work over the past year. I look forward to meeting with her soon to present the wishes of my community and to work together to find out whether the New South Wales Government can provide, alongside Northern Beaches Council, the necessary funding for the rehabilitation project to go ahead either in stages or all at once. I hope in the coming months and years that I will be able to continue to report back to the House on the health of Curl Curl Lagoon. I thank members for the opportunity to speak on this matter.

CENTRAL COAST SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:52): On the eastern border of the Central Coast region lies the beautiful Pacific Ocean. Given the proximity of my local area to the coastline, it is no surprise that a beachside culture is deeply ingrained in our community. I speak in tribute of every single lifesaver who patrolled our beaches to keep the community safe over the 2017 to 2018 summer season. Across the Central Coast region lie 15 surf life saving clubs. From south to north, they are at Umina, Ocean Beach, Killcare, Macmasters Beach, Copacabana, Avoca Beach, North Avoca, Terrigal, Wamberal, Shelly Beach, Toowoona Bay, The Entrance, North Entrance, Soldiers Beach and The Lakes. I am proud that seven of those clubs are located in the Terrigal electorate. As I have said before, I have more surf life saving clubs in my electorate than any other member. I note the Minister for Education is looking at me quizzically. Does he have more than seven clubs in his electorate?

Mr Rob Stokes: I do.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I have been usurped by the Minister. As we reflect on the 2017-18 surf lifesaving season, I pay tribute to every surf lifesaver who gave up their time on beach patrol over the summer. Over the span of the surf lifesaving season, which stretched from October to 29 April, more than 100,000 volunteer hours were clocked up. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of Central Coast surf life saving clubs there were zero drownings on patrolled beaches during the season. That is absolutely remarkable and speaks to the professionalism, commitment and effort exerted by our volunteer lifesavers as well as our paid council lifeguards. Statistics from the season also show that surf club members performed a total of 17,459 preventative actions, as well as 1,646 first-aid actions and 1,100 rescues. Given that an estimated 1.3 million people visited Central Coast

beaches over summer, it is remarkable that there were zero drownings on patrolled beaches. As I have said, this is an absolute credit and testament to the skill of all our local surf club members.

It is particularly timely that I speak about the service of local lifesavers today, given that this week is National Volunteer Week. National Volunteer Week is an opportunity for us all to collectively thank volunteers for their contributions to their respective communities. There are an estimated six million volunteers across the nation, with more than 2.1 million volunteers in New South Wales. It is estimated that volunteers in New South Wales contribute an estimated \$5 billion of value to local communities every single year. Some of these 2.1 million volunteers are, of course, local lifesavers on the Central Coast who patrol our beaches and keep the community safe.

I acknowledge Oscar Crowe, from MacMasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club in my electorate of Terrigal, who has been announced as the male winner of the 2018 Surf Life Saving NSW Junior Lifesaver of the Year. He was one of a field of 22 finalists from across New South Wales, all of whom were vying for this prestigious recognition award. I congratulate Oscar and pay tribute to him, his family and his surf club on this achievement. Indeed, there are many Central Coast locals who often represent our region and our State on the national and international stage.

Keeley Booth from Avoca Beach was recently named in the 2018 Australian Youth Life Saving Team to compete at world championships later in the year. Rachel Wood and Jemma Smith from Umina, as well as Brad Woodward from Shelly Beach, have recently been named as representatives of Surf Life Saving Australia in upcoming international competitions. I also note that Brad represented our nation at the recent Commonwealth Games and was hugely successful in receiving one gold and two silver medals. These young champions reflect a strong competitive spirit and a high level of performance that is a result of our amazing local surf clubs.

Finally, I pay tribute to the staff from Surf Life Saving Central Coast, who do an amazing job supporting the local clubs through logistics and administration. In particular, I thank President Stuart Harvey, Chief Executive Officer Chris Parker and the Communications and Support officer, the amazing Mel Ives. Once again, I congratulate the hundreds of volunteers across all 15 surf life saving clubs on the Central Coast on their professionalism, commitment, dedication and effort over the 2017-2018 summer season. I look forward to the 2018-19 summer season on the Central Coast.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (17:57): I commend the member for Terrigal for his support for the amazing surf lifesavers in his community. As a member with 11 surf clubs in my community—I note that the member for Myall Lakes has six surf clubs in his community—I know that there is a lot of support for our volunteer lifesavers and the incredible work they do. I know Stuart Harvey and Chris Parker well. They do an amazing job and they are certainly fortunate to have the support of such an energetic, enthusiastic and wonderful local member in the member for Terrigal.

SHORT-TERM HOLIDAY LETTING

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:57): Tonight I speak about this Government's failure to reach a decision on short-term accommodation—an issue that is affecting many of my constituents and the broader community of New South Wales. Despite three long years of inquiries, option papers, Cabinet meetings, committees, widespread public debate and now a botched Liberal Party room meeting, still no action has been taken on this important public policy issue. People on the streets of Rockdale are asking me why this Government, which was happy to wipe out the taxi industry, thousands of taxi drivers and taxi plate owners overnight through the introduction of Uber, has been entirely unwilling to make a decision on home sharing.

When small investors and retirees stand to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars each—often from their only investment—which they thought was backed by the Government, there was no hesitation from those opposite to wipe out an existing industry. I cannot imagine what the difference is between the small investors who make up the taxi industry and the massive hotel industry and its lobby, but I have a feeling that the NSW Taxi Council should have been employing PremierState as its lobbyist, as the hotel lobby does. Those opposite are happy to walk down the pitch and bash the little guy in the taxi industry out of the park, but they are conceding the ball against the hotel lobby.

Change is inevitable, but when technology is progressing at such a rapid pace, it is the responsibility of good governments to manage its introduction appropriately in the interests of the people. We are once again seeing this Government's failure to take action, and the people of New South Wales are suffering as a result. On the one hand, we have ordinary people who are seeing an opportunity to open up their homes to visitors and make some extra money on the side to pay off the mortgage and support their families. In an age of out-of-control housing prices and a rising cost of living it is no surprise that so many people are seeking to use vacant rooms in their properties to make a little extra income.

I would think those opposite would take the rights of people to use their own properties as they see fit fairly seriously, considering it is a significant part of their so-called liberal ideology. On the other hand, there are many people in strata properties, large apartment blocks and so on who are concerned about the impact that short-term accommodation will have on the amenity and atmosphere of their homes. As I am sure those opposite are aware, responsible operators within the home sharing industry, such as Airbnb, already provide their own oversight and will remove irresponsible home sharers who receive a certain number of substantiated complaints from their neighbours.

In regulating home sharing, it is important that body corporates have a right to reasonably exclude irresponsible operators, whether that be under an industry regulator or through a government administrative process. However, I strongly believe we should only be stamping out bad behaviour, not interfering with the right of people to use their homes as they see fit, particularly when this involves small operators seeking to take a very tiny slice of the massive accommodation industry. Those opposite are happy to smash apart the mums and dads and low-paid workers of the taxi industry, but there is a different rule when it comes to their mates in the big end of town. It is very clear that the New South Wales Liberal Party has been captured by the hotel lobby and is all too happy to disregard—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): Order! I interrupt the member for Rockdale to remind him that private members' statements should not be used to attack the Government on general State issues. Private members' statements should relate to issues in the member's electorate. The member has mentioned his constituents once so far.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I refer to a ruling by Mr Temporary Speaker, the member for Heathcote, relating to issues in the public domain on 24 May 2018.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): Order! The member mentioned it once.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This is a real issue within my electorate. Many constituents are coming to me on a regular basis to speak about this issue. It is very clear that the New South Wales Liberal Party has been captured by the hotel lobby and is all too happy to disregard the small home sharers, who are making a few thousand dollars a year by sharing their residence, in favour of major hotel chains who are crying poor and hold an irrational fear of any sort of disruptive competition.

As the residential development industry contracts, historically we have seen more stock devoted to serviced apartments. Is this Government going to look after major serviced apartment operators, or after the mums and dads sharing their homes? I am sure that The Nationals members opposite are well aware of the importance of home sharing to their communities, as it has had a huge uptake across coastal and country New South Wales and is bolstering our regional economy. This is yet another case where the senior Coalition partner is looking after its big city hotel mates while the Nats stand by and let the regions suffer.

The Government does not understand innovation, it does not understand industry, and it is incapable of making a decision. The Government has botched the rollout of ridesharing, it botched White Bay, we have lost Google yet again, and now the Government is unwilling to take action on home sharing. While those opposite remain beholden to old-world oligopolies, we will never be able to move forward on these issues in a way that benefits our society as a whole.

RACISM

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:02): I acknowledge the member for Myall Lakes. I speak on behalf of the community in the Newtown electorate. We know in the electorate of Newtown that racism does not score political points and it does not in any way benefit our community. It should not be used in this Chamber or anywhere in the community as an attempt to whip up fear to gain an electoral advantage. I was completely appalled to see today the front-page article of the *Daily Telegraph* that said "Stop White Flight", not because I believe the many people in the Labor Party who sit in this Chamber would be supportive of that message at all but because it is a sign of where we are at risk of heading as we go to the next State election.

People in the Newtown electorate are worried about racism. Whipping up fear about refugees and asylum seekers is not okay. What happened as a result of the article in today's *Daily Telegraph* was more than offensive. It was suggested in the article that anyone Australian born was white and that anyone who was not Australian born was not white. That conflation of ideas is not correct. We need to realise that those sorts of comments will be taken out of context. I understand why the Leader of the Opposition expressed concern about the people who are living in Fairfield. The Liberals and The Nationals have not listened to the community or delivered on community needs—public education, public hospitals, integrated planning and development and transport infrastructure. When I posted this article on Facebook people living in those communities expressed concern about this Government's lack of support and investment.

When we feed this sort of information to a newspaper such as the *Daily Telegraph* it does not take much to whip it into racist fear or to turn it into something that it is not. I urge people to be cautious. Earlier this month another article in the *Daily Telegraph* revealed that record migration was driving up rents in popular commuter suburbs, and not the failure of this Liberal-Nationals Government to provide infrastructure for two million people who are renting in this State. My community in Newtown has a clear choice about who should be governing New South Wales. This Liberal-Nationals Government is doing nothing to address the needs of the communities that we represent. This is not about the vested interests of the Liberal-Nationals Government. It should respect the community and not whip up fear. It should prosecute an argument that highlights its arrogance and its privatisation agenda.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): Order! The member for Newtown will refer to matters pertaining to her electorate.

Ms JENNY LEONG: I am confident that people in my electorate do not like this arrogant Government. They would like to see a leadership change in this State, but not as a result of a campaign of racism and fear.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (18:07): I do not accept the partisan political comments of the member for Newtown, but I accept and strongly endorse her defence of inclusivity and cohesion in the communities we represent. While the Government disagrees with the member on a variety of issues, it strongly endorses her defence of the wide variety of cultural groups that members represent and that are reflected in the Australian community. Racism has no place in our Parliament or in our State. The Government endorses the member's defence of multiculturalism and her condemnation of the comments of the Leader of the Opposition.

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:08): Tonight I call on the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government to fund a number of cultural sites in the Myall Lakes electorate. Living in the country is fantastic but we need resources to improve the amenity and cultural aspects of our areas. I call on the Government to fund a number of projects in my area. Those projects include: the Manning Regional Art Gallery revitalisation; the upgrade of the public-address [PA] system at the Manning Entertainment Centre; the refurbishment of the Manning Valley Visitors Information Centre for Taree Film Society productions; the renovation of the Lake Street Art Gallery at Forster; funding to design a new studio space at the Manning Entertainment Centre; and a new studio at the Manning Entertainment Centre.

The first project is the Manning Regional Art Gallery revitalisation, which will better serve the communities of the mid coast region by improving access and facilities, and creating artist-in-residence studio space and new exhibition space to support emerging and local artists. This project, which has the support of the community, will enable the gallery to connect and engage with its audience. The gallery is seeking \$80,000 for that revitalisation—a huge amount of money for a regional area. The second project is the upgrade of the PA system at Manning Entertainment Centre, which will cost \$58,393.37. New sound equipment—including speakers and amplifiers—will be installed, which will meet the needs of that entertainment centre. The entertainment centre, which is in Taree, is the only performing arts centre in the region. It hosts 95 performances each year and has audiences in the tens of thousands.

The next project involves a refurbished projector for the Taree Film Society to meet industry-mandated specifications. The sum sought for that project is \$58,802. I congratulate Dr Phillip Walkom, the applicant in this matter. The installation of a digital cinema initiatives projector at the Manning Valley Visitors Information Centre would utilise the current seating, sound system and screen. This will ensure its continued operation and ability to increase the frequency of the screening program, allow collaboration with community partners and facilitate a film festival for the Manning Valley. The next project is stage two of the Lake Street Gallery renovation. I congratulate local applicant Ross Williamson on his work in the community. Funding for this project will enable the Great Lakes Art Society to renovate the interior storage and the kitchen and office area of the gallery to create additional exhibition space, including sculpture stands; the installation of a contemporary lighting system; and the construction of a reception desk and other facilities.

Funding for the design of the new studio theatre space at the Manning Entertainment Centre in Taree will enable MidCoast Council to commission architect plans, construction drawings and theatre consultant plans for a versatile flat-floor performance and rehearsal space. The new studio theatre space at Manning Entertainment Centre will cost \$1.55 million. This will provide affordable rehearsal space as well as an intimate and versatile performance space for local performers, professional tour productions such as cabaret, comedy and film screenings. These projects, which will cost about \$1.8 million, will provide cultural opportunities in the mid coast region and in the Myall Lakes electorate.

Why should people living in regional areas have to travel to the city to see productions such as these? A number of touring companies travel to regional areas in New South Wales but they require appropriate venues for their performances. I call on the Government to fund these projects—something that the region needs and for which the community has been fighting. Last year the Hon. Don Harwin toured the area and saw the need for these projects. Now we need the money to start the projects and provide for the community.

COUNTRY HOPE SUPPORT GROUP

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (18:13): Tonight I highlight the achievements of a born and bred Wagga Wagga organisation named Country Hope. It is important during National Palliative Care Week to acknowledge local community organisations that provide cancer support. The Country Hope Trust provides family-centred support programs to country children diagnosed with cancer and other chronic life-threatening diseases. Country Hope is dedicated to developing support programs and services in response to the needs of country families. This organisation previously participated in providing regular camps around the Riverina for children with cancer and their families to get away from their problems and give families respite. From those camps Country Hope was born. Last week the organisation celebrated 15 years of service to the community.

Country Hope was created as a result of the efforts of a number of individuals, some of whom were at the celebration that I attended last week, who recognised the need to supply local families with food and finances to enable them to travel to Sydney or Melbourne for treatment. It was recognised that families needed help immediately, not after having gone through a red-tape process of filling in application forms to apply for funds. At the function last week I was told that Country Hope received an inquiry from a family in need and within one hour funds were transferred into that family's account to enable them to buy fuel and food. It is not only a sick child who is affected by cancer. Families who live in the country need to travel to the city for their child to receive medical treatment.

Although accommodation is needed in the city, those families still have to maintain their homes in the country, which is costly. Research is important and I support funding for research. However, when a child has cancer it is not possible for parents to pour a bowl of research for breakfast. Parents still need to pay for food, petrol, vehicle registration and council rates while caring for a sick child. Country Hope was formed after a \$20,000 contribution by Brian and Joy Kahlefeldt, who are its patrons. Country Hope occupies its current premises due to the generosity of an unnamed donor who continues to pay the mortgage. Indeed, before the purchase of the current site, the donor also paid rent for the property that housed Country Hope.

A number of people are fantastic supporters. In 2003 when Country Hope was incorporated, Alan Lean was chairman and Babs Donaldson, OAM, Yvonne Braid, OAM, Ged Madden, Steve Dwyer, Rod Dunlop, Peter Welsh, Dr Lee Jeffrey and Kirstie Cole were inaugural members. John Studdert was elected chairman of the board and its members continue to embrace and nurture Country Hope. From humble beginnings, this organisation continues to deliver hope to families across the region, including the city of Albury and Griffith. I understand that up to 200 families from across the region receive services from Country Hope that continue to support and nurture them. Many happy returns on 15 fabulous years of service to our community. It is a great example of what happens when communities put politics aside and work together: The outcome is there for all to see.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): I join the member for Wagga Wagga in commending the work of Country Hope over the past 15 years and all that it does for our joint communities. I wish it well for the future.

WEST RYDE ROVERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (18:19): The West Ryde Rovers began life as a sporting club in 1956, when it was founded by local resident Mr Lester Harry Waud. Harry decided it was high time that the children of West Ryde were provided with some form of organised sport and, together with Perce Rouse, they founded the West Ryde Rovers Football Club. It was not until 1958 that the West Ryde Rovers Football Club saw its first two teams compete in the local Hornsby-Epping Soccer Association competition with under-12 and under-14 teams. From there, the West Ryde Rovers Social Club was formed. Now, 62 years later, it is arguably the largest sporting club in the City of Ryde, with more than 1,500 members.

I recognise the current President of the West Ryde Rovers Football Club, Karen Waud, and her executive: Chris Goodard, Michelle Heffernan, David Saba, Craig Black, Catherine Blaine, David Cooper and Nable Rahme. The volunteer committee is dedicated to providing the community's young and old with the opportunity to play football while being part of a dynamic group of people. The football teams play in the Gladesville-Hornsby Football Association competition. The club's strong leadership executive is assisted by an army of volunteer

committees, each with their own role to play. Tom Emeleus is the competition's director and David Cooper is the sponsorship and fundraising officer. He is often assisted by Angelo Tetto, the marketing and social media officer.

On game days, Glenn Zanolla takes on the role of grounds coordinator with great efficiency that enables Jayson Blaine to manage the equipment in the same efficient manner. Every club must have hands-on coordinators, paperwork jockeys and people managers who can work together. West Ryde Rovers Football Club is a great example of this. Shane Bisset is the protections officer and Russell Field is a grading coordinator. Peter Taing coordinates the 9-year-olds to 17-year-olds and Michelle Downs coordinates the Mini Roos. Matt Hanchard, Vanessa Little and Prama Murugasu are the go-to extras who are often called upon. I can go no further without mentioning the wonderful canteen managers, Belinda Jamieson and Cassandra Lowe. This club is amazing and the volunteers behind the club are set to do more. West Ryde Rovers Football Club is continually developing and promoting grassroots football within our community and exhibits a caring dedication to its work with football stakeholders to provide a secure, family-orientated football environment free from any form of abuse, intolerance or racism. West Ryde Rovers recently received a Premier's grant to buy equipment.

The club makes football inclusive and it is fielding a wonderful new team. West Ryde Rovers Netball has an inclusive team playing in the Eastwood Ryde Netball Association in the day competition this year. Inclusive football is a project that West Ryde Rovers Football has been working toward for many years. Amid all the executive's goals and aspirations, the option of inclusive football is one that the club and its members are truly excited to deliver. It will take many volunteer hours to train coaches, set up ovals and encourage families and their children to join in the game. However, it is a determined group that gets things done and I am looking forward to visiting the group on a training night to see how it is progressing.

West Ryde Rovers has a great history in the Ryde area. It has a volunteer army of leaders and workers of which I am very proud. A few years ago I witnessed the inclusive work that the club was promoting. It does it with dignity and respect. It literally gave me goosebumps because I was proud to have a club of this standing and stature in our community. The way it brings people together shows that greater angels exist amongst us. I cannot speak highly enough of West Ryde Rovers. We have many clubs and schools that are exemplars when it comes to inclusivity and Truscott Street Public School will always have a special place in my heart because year after year I am always super impressed by its inclusiveness.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE FLEET REPLACEMENT

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:24): Tonight I refer to the impact on my electorate of the consistent failure by the Liberal-Nationals Government to adequately fund and resource the Blue Mountains State Emergency Service [SES]. Yesterday the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services and his lackeys have been traipsing around the building celebrating Wear Orange Wednesday and this afternoon they hosted SES top brass on level 9. I often accuse the Liberals and The Nationals of saying one thing in their electorates and of doing another thing in Parliament. This is an example of them saying one thing in this place at an afternoon tea for hardworking volunteers, but doing another thing in the very same building by refusing to fund the Blue Mountains SES fleet replacement. The Government has brought its hypocrisy to Macquarie Street and it is on display for all to see.

In the Blue Mountains local SES rescue vehicles are pushing 15 years of age. They are literally falling apart after a tough life of serving and protecting the local community. One of the vehicles has gaffer tape holding in the rubber seals around the fixed windows. Another vehicle periodically loses all electrical power for a short time while being driven, effectively rendering it useless. The same vehicle also has random electrical gremlins that cause the red and blue emergency lights to activate while the engine is off and the doors are locked. If people cannot trust the vehicle to operate reliably they cannot use it. When the vehicle was sent from the Blue Mountains to Revesby for repairs, the volunteers were expected to make their way home on public transport, making it a day-long exercise just to drop off the vehicle at the workshop. This is not what people who volunteer for the SES signed up for—running errands for the State Government because SES vehicle electrics are chronically stuffed.

In another case of electrical gremlins, yet another large rescue vehicle was taken out of service recently. It had to be push-started by volunteers outside Katoomba police station after the SES team had assisted police with a search for a missing person. What an embarrassment for the organisation to be seen trying to push-start a government-owned rescue vehicle in front of tourists and visitors on the main street of the biggest tourist destination in the Blue Mountains. With that vehicle out of action, it means five fewer volunteers available to respond to emergencies. As my constituents who are volunteers at the Blue Mountains SES highlight to me, our region has the highest bushfire risk levels in the country. They are terrified of the potential outcomes should these vehicles suffer a failure while on deployment during an emergency.

The volunteers are concerned for their safety and, as a consequence, the Minister should be ashamed of himself for failing to respond to their calls for adequate funding. The Minister should be doubly ashamed for

getting around this place this week celebrating the SES and Wear Orange Wednesday but refusing to do his job by funding their vital work. I have written repeatedly to the Minister to outline these concerns. At 4.18 p.m. I received replies from the Hon. David Clark, MLC, the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary. The Parliamentary Secretary's replies boast of the many millions of dollars spent renewing the SES fleet elsewhere in the State. These pathetic replies enrage SES volunteers in the Blue Mountains. In the rollout of many millions of dollars of funding for new SES vehicles the Blue Mountains did not have its decrepit, tired vehicles replaced, which prompted volunteers to contact me and request that I make representations to the Minister.

I can only conclude that millions of dollars have been allocated to electorates where The Nationals receive more votes. This is a genuine need for these new vehicles and a large pot of money has been allocated for that purpose, yet the Blue Mountains has received nothing, which is pathetic. This Wear Orange Wednesday I joined a delegation of SES volunteers to Parliament House and once again committed myself to supporting them. That is why I say to the Minister that he should put his money where his mouth is and replace our tired and unreliable SES rescue vehicles in the Blue Mountains. He should do that sooner rather than later because these hardworking volunteers deserve the best we can provide for them.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES MENAI UNIT HEADQUARTERS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (18:29): On 5 May I had the honour of representing the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services at the opening of the State Emergency Service [SES] Menai unit headquarters. Peter Carrigan, the unit manager, was as proud as punch to show me around the renovated facilities. The site was handed over to the SES from the Rural Fire Service [RFS], which had moved into its new station at Barden Ridge. I was extremely impressed with the new facility and I feel at ease that the residents of Sutherland shire will now feel a whole lot safer. John Gonzalaz introduced Commissioner Mark Smedhurst, who explained the great work the unit did in the recent Menai fires. To have a shakedown of a facility facing a potential disaster is probably not the ideal way of moving into a new facility. True to form, these men and women, in bright volunteer overalls, not only moved into the facility but also staged an emergency situation at the new Menai unit during the fire.

The new headquarters has 50 SES volunteers who will use the facility for training and as a base for responding to emergencies. The Menai responds to emergencies, participates in community engagement activities and supports other SES units across the State in emergency response operations. The new home of the headquarters will improve emergency response times and place our SES volunteers closer to the community that they support, enabling them to build stronger connections at a local level. The members of this extremely active unit do a terrific job protecting our local community. Our community appreciates all the hard work they do and is forever in debt to them.

It is extremely fitting that on Wednesday 22 May the community had an opportunity to thank NSW State Emergency Service volunteers for their outstanding service by wearing orange—the colour of the overalls of SES volunteers. Wear Orange Wednesday, which is also known as WOW Day, is a day to show appreciation for our SES volunteers and a time to say thanks to these selfless men and women who dedicate their time to responding to emergencies. It was a chance to recognise their hard work in the community. I commend all those who reached out to an SES volunteer to say thank you and to show their support.

More than 9,000 SES volunteers in New South Wales play an incredibly important part in responding to emergencies and natural disasters. Their roles include rescuing people caught in rising water, providing assistance to people whose homes have been damaged in times of flood, repairing leaking roofs, searching for missing people, attending to road crashes, communicating key safety information to the public, and educating people on how to best prepare for floods and storms. They regularly make great sacrifices in our community and we owe them a debt of gratitude by wearing a touch of orange. With the recent bushfires in my electorate, I am extremely grateful to all those SES volunteers who played a crucial role in keeping my community safe.

As this week is National Volunteer Week, we remember our volunteers. They are the backbone of our community. With more than six million volunteers in Australia, this is a perfect opportunity to thank them for their wonderful contributions. This year the theme for National Volunteer Week is "Give a little. Change a lot", which highlights the important work undertaken by volunteers in our communities. The State of Volunteering in Australia report found that 93 per cent of people saw positive changes as a result of their volunteering efforts, which is a great reason for anyone with a slight interest in volunteering to become involved.

I applaud all volunteers for their generous contributions that improve our communities. Volunteers make a real difference by giving back to their communities. Units in the Heathcote electorate received replacement trucks from the Labor Government. I agree with the member for Blue Mountains who said that those trucks were a disgrace. Units in my electorate now have state-of-the-art trucks that cost more than \$375,000. I hope that the units in the Blue Mountains receive help soon.

CASINO BEEF WEEK

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (18:34): I reaffirm that Casino is the beef capital of Australia. Beef Week started last Saturday with a dinner and a crowning of the queen. As I said to the crowd at the dinner, I love coming to Beef Week and I love the dinner because the alternate plate is not chicken or fish. Beef Week runs for 11 days, with a whole range of festival activities. As I said, the crowning of the queen happened on Saturday night and I congratulate the 2017 Queen, Ashleigh Little, on being such a great ambassador for Casino and for Beef Week. I also congratulate the 2018 queen, Madeleine Barrett, and the two other candidates, Holly Cameron and Steph Darragh. The girls are very proud to represent Casino in Beef Week and they do a wonderful job.

On Sunday it was Beef Meets Reef at Evans Head. There was a street parade, markets and a stack of games for the kids and adults, including a tug of war, with teams often coming down from Brisbane to participate. Over the 11 days there is a whole range of activities, including farm tours, free breakfast with the butchers, live music, a fashion show, cattle sales, saleyard and meat processing plant tours, luncheon and a high tea, an art exhibition, bush poetry and cow pat lotto—I am sure that some of the members from question time would have done well in cow pat lotto. There are also scenic coach tours, a dress-up competition, Beef Week Cup horseraces, a cow-milking competition, live music, cattle competitions, a street parade, car show and shine, a pie-eating competition, a woodchop competition, Westlawn Rodeo, Mr Beef—for those guys who are game—Beef Week Fitness Challenge, senior coach tour and the Northern Co-operative Meat Company beef industry day.

Congratulations to Stuart George and the rest of the Beef Week committee on their hard and dedicated effort to host another Beef Week festival. I acknowledge committee members Frank McKey, Belinda Dockrill, Grant Shedden, Sam Rixon, Jenna Bailey, Brody Lisha and coordinators Lena Magner, Kaela McRae and Sophie Lynch. The committee owes Stuart George a great debt of thanks for 10 years as chair of the committee. The inaugural Beef Week, which took place 36 years ago, was chaired by the Deputy Speaker of the New South Wales Parliament, the Hon. Thomas George. The George family is well entrenched in the Casino community. We must acknowledge Stuart's wife, Margy, who has stood by Stuart and supported him for the past 10 years to ensure that Beef Week has always been a great success.

Beef Week is a celebration that brings the whole community together—the committee, sponsors, volunteers, council, the community and visitors from far and wide. It celebrates everything great about living in the Richmond Valley. I understand that the Governor of New South Wales, the Hon. David Hurley, will be at the street parade this Saturday. This is the second time the Governor has visited Beef Week. He had so much fun the first time that he had to come back. The Deputy Premier is also scheduled to attend the street parade, along with between 10,000 and 15,000 revellers. This is one of the signature events in the Northern Rivers, and I am thrilled that the New South Wales Government, through Destination NSW, was able to provide a \$30,000 grant for the next three years. The Federal Government has provided \$1 million in funding over four years to ensure that Beef Week continues as strong as ever.

Beef Week supports the beef industry, the major industry in Casino. The New South Wales and Federal governments are supportive of the beef industry. The Federal Government provided Richmond Valley Council with \$3.5 million to upgrade the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, and the New South Wales Government provided a \$7 million grant and a \$3.5 million low-interest loan. Casino is the beef capital of Australia and Beef Week is a celebration of this fact. I will be there on Saturday and I will have a great time. I thank everyone involved for making Beef Week such a great event.

GOULBURN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (18:39): I celebrate today with the entire Goulburn community—and undoubtedly the Bungonia and Windellama communities also—the demolition of the old Lansdowne Bridge over the Mulwaree Ponds on the outskirts of Goulburn. It is not without some sadness in Goulburn that this more than a century old bridge has to go. It is owed a great debt for its lengthy, sturdy service to our region. Heritage is precious. But there is also no doubt that with our booming region, its proximity to Canberra, increased freight movements on our roads and a noticeable increase in caravan-based touring, this wonderful old bridge has outlived its usefulness. Now we are about to build—after far too many years of preparation—a new bridge.

The Commonwealth has contributed \$3.25 million to this project, but as the project design became more complex and the scope of works was extended to meet Goulburn Mulwaree Council's concerns, the cost has soared. The New South Wales Government has ensured that, despite this, the work will proceed with a contribution of \$15.35 million under its bridge rebuilding program. This means that the bridge will be future-proofed and able to serve the needs of the Goulburn region for at least as long as its original counterpart. Early

works began last November and this week the bridge is finally coming down. The investment the Liberal-Nationals Government has made in regional roads over the past seven years is one of the most significant made by any government. We have already spent \$27 billion on roads and bridges across country New South Wales, and the Goulburn electorate has most certainly received a good share. And so it should—stock and crops move from the Central West on country highways to meet the Hume Highway and travel onwards to Australia's major centres.

Growing tourism, growing food markets in Asia, and growing demand for gravel and aggregate to feed Sydney's infrastructure boom have all taken a heavy toll on our roads—to say nothing of growing regional populations commuting to Canberra from as far away as Boorowa, Gunning, Goulburn and Yass, and all needing safe and strong roads to carry them to and from work. We have needed to make up for a shocking lack of investment under a Sydney-centric Labor Government that absolutely failed to see the link between improving roads and improving the efficiency of the agricultural and resources sectors that power the New South Wales economy.

But it is more than the duplication of the Pacific and Hume highways. Let us look at country bridges in the Goulburn electorate. Yass Valley Council received \$2.48 million to upgrade 11 of its wooden bridges, recognising the increased traffic along the shire's many back roads. Then there was the \$1.4 million Dicks Creek Bridge replacement project near Murrumbateman—another example of the Government getting on with the job of improving regional infrastructure. The upgrade of Nadgigomar Bridge in the Goulburn Mulwaree shire was also a much-needed upgrade that improves the functionality of this B-double route. The list goes on.

Improving road connectivity has been critical to my communities. With the completion of the \$10 million sealing of Main Road 54 at Tuena, the last 10 kilometres of gravel road on this 260-kilometre road connecting Goulburn and Bathurst via Crookwell has been replaced with proper safety railings and a bituminised surface that is up to the task. I say well done to the Upper Lachlan shire for showing how it is done. Similarly, the Taralga to Crookwell Road is now fully bituminised, and we have certainly seen an enormous increase in traffic along this road since word got around. Moving further west to Boorowa, a beautiful regional centre in the middle of canola crops and fat lambs, there has also been major construction work. The Tarengo Bridge upgrade has transformed freight movement, although Boorowa is more than an agricultural centre. It is already a popular stop on the tourist route, and young families are increasingly moving to Boorowa and commuting to Canberra and Yass.

The urgency of further overtaking lanes on Lachlan Valley Way, connecting Boorowa to the Hume Highway and thus to Canberra, has become a critical safety as well as efficiency concern for this community. The New South Wales Government has provided \$6.9 million to build overtaking lanes in both directions on what has become a key commuter road. I was out there last week and the work is very impressive. Once completed, this safety work will remove the current 80 kilometres per hour restricted speed limit in the northbound overtaking lane project area and return to the original 100 kilometres per hour. The southbound overtaking lane, costing \$2.5 million, is also underway. I am sure Steph Cooke, the member for Cootamundra, and I will be delighted to watch the ribbons being cut. It makes our communities safer and encourages relocation to our towns.

I thank the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Melinda Pavey, for her determination to improve the lives of people who live and travel the Barton Highway, connecting our border towns to work and services in Canberra. After years of angry community wrangling with the State Government over whether to duplicate or simply upgrade this national road, Minister Pavey made the decision to go for duplication. Our \$50 million for this national route, in combination with the Federal Government's \$100 million, will be a great start on providing a safer pathway for the thousands of travellers who use this highway every day. The Barton has a terrible record for road deaths and, on that basis alone, this commitment is both warmly welcomed and long overdue. Finally I can look the incredibly determined Sophie Wade, convenor of the Barton Highway Duplication lobby group, in the eye.

MURRAY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (18:45): I am a passionate Australian Football League [AFL] supporter. Many of the communities in my electorate have strong AFL affiliations due to their proximity to Victoria and South Australia. Tonight I inform the House about local clubs in my electorate: Balranald Football and Netball Club and Wentworth District Football Netball Club. Both clubs are not only passionate about football and netball, but also passionate about social inclusion and improving community infrastructure—the very essence of a rural community. Both clubs are located in the western part of my electorate. Indeed, they are in the most westerly shires in my electorate. Both have small, close-knit communities. The clubs play in different leagues—Balranald in the Murray league and Wentworth in the Sunraysia league.

I had the pleasure of announcing \$6,000 in funding through the Community Building Partnership program for the Balranald Football and Netball Club to upgrade its kitchen facilities, which are crucial for the

club not only to cater on game days but also to raise vital funds. There are also plans to upgrade the club facilities, including air conditioning—there is none at the moment—and also lighting for the oval. Clubs such as these come up with some very innovative ways to raise money, and they include the community at the same time. For example, the fourth annual Billy Goat Cup was held on Easter Saturday at the Balranald racecourse, which surrounds the football ground. This great family fun day raised \$20,000 for the club. The highlight of the day was the billy goat races where people buy a billy goat and then compete in heats. The winner of each heat contests the final. The races are held on a 100-metre straight at the racecourse. This year the Billy Goat Cup was won by the Jolliffe family. Other events included the old-fashioned favourites—the three-legged race, egg-and-spoon race and, similar to the event described by the member for Clarence, cow pat lotto, which was won by a visitor from Adelaide. Planning is already underway for next year's event, which is held annually on Easter Saturday.

The Wentworth District Football Netball Club also received funding in the last round of the Community Building Partnership program. The club received \$10,000 towards constructing a new sporting complex at Dareton. The George Gordon Sporting Complex, which comprises a new oval and netball courts, was officially opened a few weeks ago. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the opening. I acknowledge that the \$10,000 in funding made up only a small part of the huge amount of money the local community raised for this facility. The complex was named in memory of George Gordon. He was an incredibly devoted community member who maintained the oval for years. George was also a returned soldier, a citrus grower and keen cricketer who played well into his 60s. I dropped in a few weeks ago to take a look, and it was absolutely magnificent.

Early last year I called in when they were in the planning stage and at that time it was pretty much a cleared paddock. It is now a beautiful oval. It is a credit to the hard work and commitment of the club that it was ready for the opening round of the footy and netball seasons. By all accounts it was a highly successful opening and the contribution of the whole community was recognised, including the Bendigo Bank and the Coomealla Memorial Sporting Club. The opening coincided with the first round of the season and family day. It was a balmy autumn day of 30 degrees and more than 2,000 people were in attendance. The seniors game was played under lights. I am told it was a great atmosphere. I congratulate both clubs on their continued dedication to sport and the community. Sport is one of the most binding threads of rural life. It not only contributes to good health but also helps to improve community infrastructure. Sport gives the community a sense of place and identity and an outlet for social interaction.

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION WEEK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:48): This week is Library and Information Week, and I take a moment to reflect on this month, which has seemed to be almost filled with libraries and information. First, we had the fiftieth anniversary of the Maitland City Library in the central business district of our town. I was very impressed to meet the new State Librarian, Dr John Vallance, at the ceremony to mark the anniversary that was held by the Maitland City Council. The event was attended by our chief librarian, Keryl Collard. The building in which the library is housed has an interesting history. It was designed by the architect responsible for designing the National Library of Australia. I was born and grew up in Canberra, and now I feel that my hometown has a strong link to the city in which I live today that is centred on books and reading.

Earlier this week I hosted the twenty-seventh Annual Jean Arnot Memorial Luncheon in this place. Jean Arnot was one of our great librarians, who during her career struggled for equal pay for women and other equity issues at her workplace. The Jean Arnot Memorial Fellowship is worth \$1,000 and is awarded to a female librarian or student of librarianship for an outstanding paper of no more than 5,000 words on any aspect of librarianship. Libraries in Maitland are booming. Libraries run popular programs such as Look Who's Talking. For this program, Keryl and her team invite a range of speakers, including authors and thought leaders, to address people in our city and boost our town's literary richness. The diverse group of recent speakers includes Tracey Spicer, AM; former Premier Bob Carr; esteemed journalist Kerry O'Brien; and former leader of the Australian Democrats and later member of the Australian Labor Party Cheryl Kernot.

During the Sydney Writers Festival the Maitland City Library used the Maitland Town Hall facilities to livestream some of the sessions to the people of Maitland who were not able to attend the events in Sydney. The library is an important part of our community. The Maitland library takes great pride in its storytelling competitions and it hosts poetry in the cafe sessions. It has partnerships with the university to encourage children to read and write. As we know, libraries are not just about books these days. Library visitation is up because, along with books, patrons can access resources like magazines, DVDs and audiobooks. Libraries also run events such as morning teas where languages other than English are spoken to encourage people with diverse linguistic backgrounds to share the experience. Libraries conduct readings in elder care homes. My husband is on the Friends of Maitland City Library Committee of Maitland City Council, and he is involved in these events.

Maitland has a higher than State average percentage of Aboriginal children, and we know that it is important that Aboriginal kids are encouraged in literacy. Only about 25 per cent of Aboriginal kids can read by

the age of five, whereas 90 per cent of kids who are not from Aboriginal homes can read by the same age. Indigenous Literacy Day is on 5 September, and I know that Maitland City Library will work very hard to ensure that it is involved in marking this important day. Labor is very committed to libraries because it is aware of their value. Libraries are one of the most cost-effective ways of bringing people together and increasing knowledge through the use of libraries' databases.

Libraries encourage people to explore the wealth of resources they house to expand people's horizons. That is why Labor has committed \$50 million in additional funds to suburban and regional New South Wales public libraries. As a member of the Labor Party, I am very proud of this commitment. In celebrating National Volunteer Week, I acknowledge that our libraries survive, thrive and flourish because of the enormous contribution of many volunteers. We love our Maitland librarians and we also love our Friends of Maitland City Library, a strong and vibrant group. I pay homage to members of this group and to all librarians around the State.

WENTWORTHVILLE TOWN CENTRE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:53): Wentworthville is a suburb in transition, and at the moment the town centre is really struggling. Every week I receive complaints about the rapid decline in the shopping centres since the supermarket in Wentworth—or Wenty—Mall closed, as well as dumped rubbish and antisocial behaviour. However, the suburb is not dead. Enrolments at the Wentworthville Public School are up by approximately 60 per cent over the past five years. The suburb's population grew by more than 700 people from 2011 to 2016. However, Wenty Mall is close to death. An 18-storey, mixed-use development was recently approved on the site. One by one, the developer is getting rid of the shopkeepers in the mall. This has accelerated since the supermarket closed last year and the foot traffic dried up.

There are holes in the ceiling and the place is a mess. There are now only six shops left. Much of the town centre is being redeveloped and, instead of facilitating or supporting this process, being identified as a Priority Precinct has slowed down the process significantly at a crucial point in this transition. People whose homes have been rezoned have sold to developers and moved out. In many cases the developers are sitting on these sites—which are falling into disrepair—waiting for a second, bigger upzoning from the vague and mysterious Priority Precinct process.

It was already slow. The former bowling club is being redeveloped into a massive unit complex. It has taken years to be rezoned and redeveloped and it still is not complete. Since mid-2017 I have repeatedly asked the Minister for Planning for a briefing on the Priority Precincts in Westmead and Wentworthville, but to no avail. The only information I have had is the same vague information and consultation that the community has had, which is a weird repeat of the consultation they participated in for the Wentworthville Town Centre Revitalisation strategy only a few years ago. The town centre strategy has not even been bedded down yet, so local residents wonder what the Priority Precinct is all about. Are not the large numbers of units allowed under the strategy enough?

The strategy, which has been a three-year process so far, identifies the need for a 4,000 square metre supermarket to anchor the redevelopment, residential towers, a series of public plazas, mid-block pedestrian through-links, commercial car parking and new community facilities. This may or may not be great when it is finally built, but in the meantime local families are struggling and so are the shopkeepers. Those without cars, including many elderly residents, cannot easily get to Woolworths on the Great Western Highway to buy their groceries. The loss of foot traffic is killing Dunmore Street. Station Street is doing a bit better but mainly because the clothes shops have reopened and it is being revitalised by the Indian and Sri Lankan businesses moving in, lured by the cheap rent more so than abundant foot traffic.

As for the dumped rubbish, after the council amalgamations the new Cumberland Council completely changed the way that bulk waste is collected. This is a problem across my electorate. The changes have been poorly communicated and there is a lot of mess everywhere. The people in Wentworthville see it as somehow related to the decline of the shopping centre. I also hear about problems with antisocial behaviour that is new to the suburb and seemingly taking hold as the town centre becomes less busy and inviting. Wentworthville needs action now—well before the town centre strategy or the Priority Precinct or any other high-rise development led solution needs to be built to fix things.

Given that public transport is not great and only slow trains stop at Wentworthville station, I am concerned that an 18-storey tower will create traffic congestion and bring more problems than it solves. The community facilities are not great either, especially for youth. Aside from the pool, there is not a lot for them. Both the pool and the Redgum Centre really need a makeover. What Wentworthville does have in abundance is great people and by working with them now, not later, we can start to solve some of those problems by building capacity in this great community. Councillor Lisa Lake has been lobbying for this to happen for a long time. I commend her for that.

It is not all bad news in Wenty. Despite council and conservative councillors trying to close it three times, the community successfully fought to keep Wentworthville pool open. Every time they tried, the community rallied together and had petitions signed to keep their beloved pool—led by the committed and energetic Grant Hanson. As soon as the administrator had word of another campaign to save the pool, he called for a referendum on all of the pools at last year's council election. Even with a loaded question about supporting funding for Cumberland's five pools, the community responded by supporting their pools.

The Wentworthville Community Garden is another great success story. It has won first prize in the community garden category at the Sydney Royal Easter Show every year since 2011. Run entirely by volunteers and organised by their amazing secretary, Robyn Main, the community garden has a massive open day every year, attended by at least 1,000 people. The garden also breaks down cultural barriers. Their members constantly share gardening knowledge and food. They have members from all around the world and grow vegetables from many different culinary traditions, which they readily share. It is a great place and one I love visiting—even if it does make my own vegetable garden look underwhelming. Wentworthville is a great place and a great community. Instead of wasting everyone's time with a Priority Precinct that only developers want, I call on the Government and council to work together to revitalise Wentworthville now, instead of hoping high-rise development will fix all the problems. It will not.

INGLESIDE ADAPTIVE HOUSING PROPOSAL

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (18:58): I want to tell the story of Ian and Corrie of Mona Vale, who recently came to see me to discuss the need for a greater variety of housing in our community. Ian and Corrie are an active and community-minded retired couple who have a beautiful home near Mona Vale Beach, and are eager to stay on their beautiful piece of paradise as they get older. Yet their home is increasingly unsuitable for their needs. It is on a large, traditional suburban allotment of approximately 720 square metres, and involves significant upkeep, including bedrooms that are simply not used.

Ian and Corrie are keen to redevelop their home into two or three terraces, providing a more appropriate, smaller home for them, as well as a similar housing choice for one or two other families who might also enjoy the amenity of the incredible neighbourhood in which their existing home is situated. Not only would such a redevelopment provide more house and more choice, but also it would provide a retirement income for Ian and Corrie, either in rental or capital revenue. A local architect, local builders and tradies also would benefit from the opportunity to provide more housing in the local community, reducing their need to travel to growth precincts on transport corridors or on the city's ever-extending outskirts.

Increasing the diversity of housing would also increase choices for a range of families. Housing on the northern beaches of Sydney is increasingly unaffordable, with 15 suburbs now having median house prices above \$2 million. A consequence is a community that is becoming at risk of being less inclusive, locking out younger families and in danger of becoming Australia's version of the retirement estates of Florida. Such a community would deprive younger people of a fabulous place in which to live and raise children, and older people of having their children nearby to look after them, let alone having a local workforce to fill local jobs and provide local essential services.

Yet, bizarrely, Ian and Corrie, and thousands of local retiree homeowners like them, are prohibited from turning a large home into two or three smaller terraces, despite the fact that such terraces might have a similar floor space ratio, height and bulk, as the existing dwelling, and might have a far higher standard of design and environmental performance. Old, rigid, bureaucratic Euclidean land use zoning is locking in an urban form that does not make people's lives better. In fact, it can lock older people into homes that do not meet their needs, and deprive young people of the opportunity to purchase a home at all.

To make matters worse, Ian and Corrie could negotiate with their neighbours, also retirees, and lodge an application for a unit block under State environmental planning policies promoting housing built exclusively for the aged or infirm, or, alternatively, exclusively for certain designated classes of renters. But they do not want either of those rigid categories of housing that would permit a far larger development than they want. They just want the flexibility to build a couple of smaller homes on a site that currently permits a single large one.

The example of Ian and Corrie provides a powerful human story to explain why it is so important to provide a missing middle of housing choice to homeowners and homebuyers alike. If we do not meet the need for lower-density attached housing, we will inevitably create a city that is divided—spatially and socially—between those with land and those without, those with resources and those without, and those with access to private open space and those without. The city I envisage is a just city, with opportunities for all sorts of housing to cater for all sorts of families in all sorts of areas—not a two-tone city split between unit towers and endless sprawl.

The answer is not the utopian radiant city of Le Corbusier, characterised by legions of soulless residential towers built by foreign-listed companies, or the broadacre city of Lloyd Wright, providing a monoculture of housing to match an idealised model of what families should look like. Instead, we need a transect model, where housing matches its environment and gradually increases in density of built form as it gets closer to centres. We know that our existing housing stock does not match the housing needs of contemporary families, with research indicating that more than a third of our homes have two or more spare bedrooms, and with a third of older residents indicating a preference for terrace homes, which make up less than 10 per cent of current building activity.

We need to facilitate housing development that matches housing demand, and consciously create a beautiful, complex, layered and vibrant city, not facilitate the prevention of unsustainable human-scale development, limiting development only to spreading clusters of high rise, and leaving a city of extremes. That is why I am excited by the opportunity to create a new town at Ingleside in my community of Pittwater as an exemplar of sustainable urbanism, characterised by a human scale of residential development that offers choice and flexibility for all families, and celebrates and reinvents the humble Aussie terrace house for the next generation.

GLENDENNING FOODBANK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:04): In March this year I had the pleasure of volunteering at Foodbank in its Glendenning warehouse with my staff. When Foodbank came into being in 1992, the overriding aim was to ensure that good food did not go to waste. In the 25 years since its foundation, Foodbank has evolved and matured into the largest hunger relief organisation in Australia. Foodbank provides food for 183,000 meals a day to more than 2,400 charities nationally. It also provides regular breakfasts to more than 116,000 students in 1,750 schools around the country. Foodbank's purpose is to fight hunger by providing quality food to people in need. It was very interesting to gain an insight into Foodbank's operations and processes. We hear about the incredible work of charities, churches and not-for-profits in the community but often we are not aware of what goes on behind the scenes for them to get their resources and food to begin with.

Visiting the Foodbank warehouse showed us how food gets from A to B—from supermarkets to soup kitchens. The Foodbank model is simple and effective. Surplus food is donated by farmers, manufacturers and retailers. Foodbank collects, sorts and stores the food. Agency partnerships and schools receive and distribute the food. People and communities are fed in times of crisis. This process saves millions of kilos of edible food from landfill. What people do not realise is that hunger is often not just a food problem but also a logistics problem. Each year millions of kilograms of food go to waste in Australia, while 3.6 million Australians have experienced food insecurity in the past 12 months. Foodbanking captures surplus food and delivers it to the people who need it most. Without Foodbank's food sourcing and distribution work, many hungry individuals and families across the State would miss out on food that would otherwise just go to landfill.

In addition to food storage and distribution, Foodbank also has a school breakfast program that delivers healthy breakfasts to some of the most disadvantaged schools across the State. More than one in five Australian children have experienced food insecurity in the past 12 months. It is more likely for a child in Australia to experience food insecurity than it is for an adult to experience food insecurity. This is why such a program is so important. I am grateful that Foodbank is providing practical solutions to combat the issue of hunger in our communities.

The school breakfast program has provided breakfast to more than 40 schools in New South Wales and has delivered fresh produce and pantry staples to low socioeconomic schools for their students to take home. With the help of Kellogg's, the program provided more than 35,000 healthy breakfasts to Sydney students last year. The results of this program are outstanding. Parents reported the following improvements in their children as a result of receiving food assistance: 34 per cent felt less hungry, 33 per cent were happier, 20 per cent had more energy, and 20 per cent improved their behaviour. Programs such as the school breakfast program are only possible because of the volunteers who commit their time and energy to ensuring these kids are fed properly.

I thank the regular volunteers, staff and directors for their dedication and support as, without their combined efforts, Foodbank could not possibly operate. A special thankyou must also be extended to chief executive officer and company secretary Gerry Andersen, chairman Peter Kelly, executive general manager John Robertson—a former member of this place—and volunteer coordinator Luke Chesworth. I also thank the New South Wales Government Department of Family and Community Services, as well as the Environment Protection Authority for its support and sponsorship over several years.

I ask that this Liberal-Nationals Government does what it can to ensure that the support and sponsorship of this outstanding operation continues far into the future. I conclude by congratulating Foodbank on 25 excellent years. The organisation is putting dignity back into the lives of many individuals who could feel ashamed or

embarrassed because of their inability to provide for their families. For that, I congratulate and honour the members of Foodbank today.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I thank the member for Oatley for his private member's statement about Foodbank. I also commend the outstanding work that Foodbank does across New South Wales.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:09
until Tuesday 5 June 2018 at 12:00.**