



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday, 7 August 2018**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday, 7 August 2018**

**The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock)** took the chair at 12:00.

**The Speaker** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

### *Members*

#### **ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF WAGGA WAGGA**

##### **Resignation**

**The SPEAKER:** For the information of members I advise the House that on Friday 3 August 2018 I received a letter from Daryl Maguire, resigning his seat as member for the electoral district of Wagga Wagga. In accordance with section 33 of the Constitution Act 1902 and section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017, I wrote to the New South Wales Electoral Commissioner, John Schmidt, yesterday to advise of my intention to issue a writ on Friday 17 August 2018 for the by-election to be held in the seat of Wagga Wagga on Saturday 8 September 2018. Mr Schmidt subsequently confirmed receipt of my correspondence via email and I issued a media release on Monday 6 August giving notification of my intention to issue the writ.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery Tony and Valerie Caldersmith, Tracey Stewart, Susan Zgraja and her mother, of the Kangy Angy Residents Action Group, and Di Willard of the Ourimbah Region Residents and Ratepayers Association, guests of the member for The Entrance.

### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE COMMUNITY LEADERS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:12):** It is a pleasure to take this opportunity to recognise some of the local community leaders within the Seven Hills electorate. Community leaders such as Fran Broadbent, Robert Susans, JP, and Mark Pauschmann are vital to the functioning of our schools, volunteer organisations and, in particular, to the community of Seven Hills. Recently, in June, I had the pleasure of attending The Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club's changeover dinner at the Northmead Bowling Club. It was great to reflect on former president Robert Mackay's tenure and to the year ahead, when the club will be led by President Fran Broadbent. The Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club and its many dedicated members are fantastic local community supporters of the Seven Hills area. Recently the club has held events including a young writer's competition this week, eventful jazz nights and, of course, a great Australia Day celebration, an event that I attend every year.

I note the club's efforts in helping others, including raising funds for many projects and supporting a higher education medical research scholarship for FoxG1. In particular, I acknowledge the club's work in funding a breakfast program at Bourke Public School, which runs daily from 8.00 a.m. The school continues to see higher rates of school attendance due to this measure. I wish Fran and her great team a good year ahead in continuing their important work for the Seven Hills community and for those in need abroad. Recently I had the pleasure of sharing a cup of tea and a biscuit with Winston Hills local identity Robert Susans, JP. Robert has recently celebrated 50 years of serving the people of New South Wales as a justice of the peace and I congratulate him on his efforts.

Robert has also served the New South Wales community as a paramedic for many years. He was based at Warragamba and also Drummoyne. During our visit he told me many great stories of his efforts as the only paramedic at Warragamba. He is a regular volunteer at Westmead Hospital. All the volunteers at Westmead Hospital do a tremendous job in aiding the hardworking nurses and I thank them for their dedication to helping the Seven Hills community.

The local branch of the New South Wales Justices Association in my area is the Cumberland branch, which is very active and keen to reach out to those in the community who seek its services. A justice of the peace voluntarily performs such duties as witnessing declarations and certifying official documentation to help the

community. I was delighted to speak at the New South Wales Justices Association conference late last year and I thank the justices of the peace in the Cumberland branch and across the electorate of Seven Hills for their great work.

Recently I had the pleasure of meeting Westmead Parramatta Marist High School's new principal, Mr Mark Pauschmann. Having led Catholic schools in Maroubra and Woolwich, Mr Pauschmann was appointed principal at James Sheahan Catholic High School, Orange, where he worked for seven years prior to accepting the position at Parramatta Marist. I know this fantastic local school will retain its good reputation under the guidance of Mr Pauschmann. Parramatta Marist teaches 1,000 young men who live in and around the electorate of Seven Hills. Mr Pauschmann took me on a tour of the school, which has embraced new teaching pedagogy and classroom management skills to further enhance its educational standards.

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] is a big part of Parramatta Marist and recently senior science students of both Parramatta Marist and Catherine McAuley were able to meet NASA scientists from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California via live stream about the future of robotics and NASA's upcoming Mars mission. I wish year 12 Parramatta Marist students all the best for their upcoming Higher School Certificate exams. I am lucky to represent such extraordinary community leaders, schools and volunteer organisations in the Seven Hills electorate. Again, I thank Fran Broadbent from The Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club, Robert Susans, JP, and the Justices of the Peace Association, Cumberland Branch, and Mark Pauschmann from Parramatta Marist High School in Westmead for their continued efforts in making Seven Hills a great electorate within this great State.

### NEW INTERCITY FLEET MAINTENANCE FACILITY

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:17):** This Government has a genius for rolling out big infrastructure projects in such a way as to put whole communities offside. One big project in my electorate is the new intercity fleet maintenance facility, under construction at Kangy Angy. I have been asked to read a statement prepared by the Kangy Angy Residents Action Group [KARAG]. The group was formed in 2014 after Transport for NSW announced it would investigate the suitability of locating the facility at Kangy Angy. At that time the preferred location was Warnervale on the Central Coast. The statement has been prepared by Susan Zgraja and approved by the residents action group.

Construction of the facility has now commenced and the work of the group has moved from opposing to minimising its impact on the local environment. I want to note my disappointment that more has not been able to be done to oppose this facility in its current location. The community wanted the facility on the Central Coast, but the majority of people wanted it at a different location. I acknowledge the work of KARAG and its prominent members: Michelle Nicholson, Tony and Valerie Caldersmith, Tracey Stewart and Daniel Biancardi. This is the statement: When Premier Berejiklian was transport minister, she shook hands on a deal with the Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council, to site the fleet maintenance facility at Bushells Ridge. For unknown reasons, transport decided not to pursue this avenue. A list of over 20 sites was established, whittled down to eight, with Warnervale being the now preferred site.

Warnervale fitted the criteria laid out for the proposal, Kangy Angy not even appearing on the list. We have documentary evidence that threats were made to transport if they pursued the Warnervale option. We hasten to add the threats were made by the previous council before amalgamations. Instead of continuing down the list of possible sites, transport asked Wyong Shire Council for their recommendations. Wyong proffered the Kangy location, and without any onsite investigations into its suitability, transport purchased what can only be called a lemon in developmental terms. Transport failed to learn the land was valued at \$422,000 and purchased it for \$17 million. Transport, without checking, accepted flood mapping from WSC [Wyong Shire Council] that was blatantly inaccurate and recommendations that this parcel of land did not flood and was fit for purpose.

The usual practice of submissions from residents was solicited and for nearly three years we have been informing Transport that the land is not fit for purpose. Indeed, of the myriad of issues, Transport's arguments have not stood up to scrutiny once. This confirms the lack of expertise in design engineering and technical knowhow within the department. Even now as the protected trees have been cleared there is still only an artist's impression of the plans and the response to other issues is that, "We will deal with them as they arise." To say that the proposals are fluid is an understatement.

Our arguments have been based on a comparison with Warnervale. Our submission shows that Transport massaged the figures to produce the result they wanted. They continually assert that KA [Kangy Angy] was the preferred site over Warnervale. We can prove comprehensively this is not the case. On every single issue Warnervale is a superior site and less than 10 kilometres further North and Council endorsed.

Kangy needs a \$50 million bridge and extensive roadworks to access the site—Warnervale does not.

Kangy floods regularly, causing road closures ... Warnervale does not flood.

Kangy's position means slow moving trains enter and exit a busy 80kph main line endangering workers lives—no such problem exists at Warnervale.



The parameters placed on the site by Josh Frydenberg are onerous. 3,984 Melaleuca Biconvexa, Mahony's toadlet, Wallum froglet, habitat for endangered birds exist on this E2 and E3 zoned land. Warnervale is zoned industrial with no ecological issues.

Do we now have to discover a political reason for Transport's intransigence, because the political fallout from this proposal will be considerable at election time.

At this point the residents concede defeat. The trees are gone. We won all the arguments but that was not enough. We were up against an adversary that didn't play fair. The playing field was never level, and the odds always stacked against us. We the little people had no knock out punch even though we have right on our side. In the battle for KA [Kangy Angy], David has not slain Goliath, the cavalry did not come to the rescue, truth sense and honour bit the dust, or in the case of this wetland drowned in a sea of despond.

We treat you with the contempt you deserve.

### **MACLEAY VALLEY DROUGHT RELIEF DONATIONS**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (12:22):** At sun-up on Sunday morning—which was about 6.30 but most people had gathered from 6 o'clock—eight trucks carrying 276 bales of silage or hay, along with three utilities and two trailers carrying two tonnes of groceries and other gifts were farewelled from the Kempsey Service Centre as the convoy set off for Gundy in the parched Hunter Valley, five hours away. It was uplifting to see the number of people from the Macleay Valley who had come to see off the trucks. It was an indication of the coast's support for the inland communities, particularly in the Hunter, who, in terms of drought, have been doing it so hard for so long.

It was the second-largest shipment of donated fodder and goods leaving the Macleay Valley in the past week bound for drought-affected areas. The previous shipment went over the Great Dividing Range to Attunga near Tamworth. Both shipments were initiated and organised by West Kempsey butcher Josh Ball and his wife, Shelley, with the support of Aussie Helpers. They have had the invaluable help of innumerable other Macleay people, businesses, truck owners and drivers who have donated feed and their time, services and fuel trucks to make this happen.

A simple call to arms by Josh on Facebook two weeks ago was the lightning rod for action for our valleys to support the farmers out west. The incredible people who responded included Ron and Liam Whalen, Luke Moffitt, the Ballards from Macksville and hay contractors such as Ivan Cilito. Of special note are the transporters—which included Ross Welsh Transport, the Huxley boys and Kevin and Natalie Weismantels—who transported 360 bales in one week. Even more impressive were the speed with which all sectors of the community rallied and the volume of hay and goods that were donated. The support came just two weeks after Josh Ball issued a call to arms.

Nestlé at Smithtown donated products and numerous community organisations chipped in. Year 12 agriculture students from St Paul's College at Kempsey collected spare change to buy hay bales. Students from our leading agriculture study group at Kempsey High School also raised money to buy hay. Fundraising activities included a Dress Down Day and disco at Fredo Public School and a Dress Like a Farmer Day at Crescent Head Public School. West Kempsey Hotel publican and community-orientated Tim Smith held trivia nights and the Kempsey Showgirls ran cake stalls. The Kempsey Race Club, Kempsey Stock and Land, Ray White Rural, Kempsey Shire Council and many others made contributions to the cause.

I learnt via Facebook that Kempsey councillor Anna Shields and her husband, Clinton, drove one of their trucks full of hay from their own paddock to Walgett. They did not make any noise about it, but I am making noise about the efforts of these good, solid community citizens. This is an amazing and supportive community with the biggest of hearts. The shipment was warmly received by more than 50 farmers in the Gundy and Moonan Flat areas, who waved and clapped as it arrived at the historic property of Belltrees.

It is not as if the coastal communities do not have their own challenges, and with more to come. A successful farmer and businessman who is spending \$1,000 a day to feed his prize cattle told me that he would not be seeking subsidy support from the New South Wales and Federal governments because he can afford to buy his own hay and will not take money that could go to someone else. Pip Job, a former National Rural Woman of the Year, is doing a great job as drought coordinator. I ask Josh Ball and others to bear with the Government as it puts the processes in place. I know that Josh was a bit frustrated about getting the drought subsidies for the charity run. I am advised by Niall Blair and his team that they have an extra five staff to deal with the applications. Everyone is working hard with their hand to the wheel to make sure that help is provided to those who need it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER [Ms Sonia Hornery]:** I agree with the sentiments of the member for Oxley. After spending a long patch of my working life in Walgett and Kempsey, I understand the struggle for these communities.

## SHOALHAVEN SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (12:27):** The South Coast is one of the fastest-growing regional communities in New South Wales. Our region has always been a desirable place to raise a family, as a retirement destination, or for Sydneysiders to experience a sea change. In the past decade, the South Coast has experienced unprecedented record growth, especially the southern Shoalhaven. It is essential that governments at all levels commit to and continue to deliver the infrastructure and services that are required to keep up with regional growth in this area. Over the past seven years, the Berejiklian Government has undertaken significant work, including massive investments in the Princes Highway; improved freight rail for industry; additional frontline services including police, nurses, doctors and paramedics; additional health services at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital and Milton Ulladulla Hospital; and additional policing and ambulance resources in the Bay and Basin region.

However, there is a desperate need for a new school in the southern Shoalhaven. As a former teacher at Ulladulla High School, I know all too well the educational needs of this community. Ulladulla High School is the only secondary school within a one-hour radius and currently has the largest enrolment of any South Coast school. The school's teachers, teacher aides, support staff and parents and students do an amazing job of providing a supportive, unique educational environment while achieving great outcomes. However, it is clear that the school will be unable to cope with the growing demand of population growth. Although Ulladulla High School received a massive multimillion-dollar upgrade a short time ago, it has already reached the point where additional demountables are needed on a site that is highly constrained and landlocked.

Budawang School currently provides education for students with special needs from K-12. It is truly a success story, with overwhelming support from the school community and generous financial support from local residents and even parents of former students. I always look forward to visiting both Ulladulla High School and Budawang School to meet the students and teachers. I particularly enjoy joining them on Budawang School's amazing presentation days. However, similar to Ulladulla High School, Budawang School is at capacity. There are difficulties in expanding the site, with limited land available to increase its facilities. We must plan now for the future educational needs of our local students.

The former Shoalhaven Anglican School site in Milton is an ideal location for a multi-use education facility to cater for our students well into the future. The former private school closed its doors in 2016 and has been left vacant ever since. It is a world-class facility that is sitting idle while students across southern Shoalhaven are utilising facilities that are reaching capacity. Last year I launched a campaign that called on the State Government to purchase the Shoalhaven Anglican School site as a future educational facility for South Coast students. My campaign received overwhelming community support, with more than 10,000 signatures received on a petition that I intend to table in Parliament this week.

Community support has been received not only from parents and students but also from the region's education community, including the principal of Ulladulla High School. The Ulladulla Community Forum and the Ulladulla High School Parents and Friends have been extremely supportive, with the committee moving a motion calling on the State Government to purchase the site. Shoalhaven City Council has joined the campaign, with a motion moved by Councillor Mitchell Pakes—supported unanimously dare I say—stating that council support the provision of a school and only a school on the site.

The campaign has not been easy—at times it has been complex—and, as the site is highly desirable to developers, other parties have expressed their interest in purchasing it. However, these third parties were not interested in maintaining the site as a school—an outcome that would have been very disappointing to me and to the local community. This has only intensified my resolve to lobby the Government further and to extol the virtues of this site directly to the Minister and the Premier.

I thank the Minister for Education, the Hon. Rob Stokes, for his consideration of my proposal. The Minister is certainly passionate about education and ensuring that we as a Government provide the best environment for our students to learn in. I am aware that the Minister has visited the school on multiple occasions and has seen firsthand the quality facilities, magnificent grounds and beautiful environment surrounding the site, which all support my calls for the site to come into public hands and be utilised as a school for local students. I thank the community for their ongoing support of my campaign. The battle is not over yet and Parliament will continue to hear from me until the Government acts and purchases the former Shoalhaven Anglican School site as a future educational facility for the South Coast.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I welcome to the public gallery Monique and James Bishop, guests of the member for Campbelltown. I hope you enjoy your time in the Parliament.

*Private Members' Statements***CAMPBELLTOWN ARTS CENTRE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:32):** Whenever I visit the Campbelltown Arts Centre I cannot help but admire how far the facility has come in three short decades. In 1982 a gathering of prominent locals, including former lawyer John Marsden, Graeme Dunstan, Ruth Banfield, Greg Rassil and Campbelltown's longest-serving councillor, Meg Oates—a proud Labor Party member—formed a task force to establish an art gallery. The original idea then led to the formation of the Friends of Campbelltown Art Gallery, headed by President Barbara Romalis and Vice President Fred Braat.

In August 1983 the organisation, with the backing of many community members, submitted a formal proposal for the gallery. Five years later, on 1 December 1988, the arts centre—which was originally called Campbelltown Bicentennial Art Gallery—was finally opened. This year marks the thirtieth birthday of what I feel is the cultural capital of Campbelltown. Despite the name, the centre is much more than a building exclusively dedicated to artists and art enthusiasts. Over the past three decades the facility has developed into a community hub that caters for all walks of life. Visitors can have a bite to eat at the cafe while taking in the view of the Japanese gardens before sampling the latest exhibition on display.

The various programs held at the centre are one of the reasons the facility has been so successful. Those at the centre have not been content with simply hanging a painting on the wall; there has been a strong emphasis on engaging the community and inspiring the next generation of budding artists. Some of the upcoming programs at the centre include the Creative Careers Expo, which is designed to encourage students in years 10 to 12 to pursue a career in the arts and creative industries, and a series of dance workshops with hip-hop dancer Feras Shaheen. However, the quality of the works on display at the centre certainly cannot be ignored. Not too long ago the centre hosted an exhibition of works created by the late Myuran Sukumaran—a member of the infamous Bali Nine. It is that willingness to think outside the box that has helped the centre establish itself as a force in the arts community. There is also a strong emphasis on local themes and works. A current exhibition entitled "We Are All Connected to Campbelltown (One Way Or Another)" features a collection of historic images of Campbelltown over the past 30 years. An exhibition by Wedderburn artist David Hawkes has also just concluded at the beautiful gallery.

While the exhibitions may be temporary, those at the centre have also managed to amass an impressive permanent collection of almost 1,500 works worth about \$8.5 million in total. Those works include creations from artists such as Joseph Lycett, James Gleeson, Wei Guan, Fiona Foley, Roy Jackson and Bronwyn Oliver. It is important to note that many of the works have been donated not purchased, which emphasises the centre's standing particularly in the local community. Many of the works in the permanent collection are by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. One of the more famous pieces is Emily Kame Kngwarreye's 1991 piece *Yam Dreaming*. Many people in this House might have seen that painting even though they have never set foot inside Campbelltown Arts Centre as it was recently replicated on a Qantas 787 Dreamliner.

While the centre may own the works, the pieces have not been confined to a dark basement to gather dust. In fact, those at the centre have taken an active role in ensuring that the works are seen by as many people as possible, which is why many have been loaned out to other galleries. As arts centre director Michael Dagostino recently said in a story reported in the *Macarthur Advertiser*, it means "a little bit of Campbelltown was travelling around Australia". The centre has continued to expand over the past three decades. It was actually former New South Wales Premier Bob Carr who officially opened the \$15 million redesign of the centre in 2005.

I take this opportunity to formally congratulate all those who have been involved in the centre since it opened in 1988. I thank the late John Marsden, former Councillor Rudy Volkmann, Campbelltown Deputy Mayor Meg Oates, Ruth Banfield, Michael Dagostino and Campbelltown City Council for their enthusiastic support not only for the arts centre but also for the arts more broadly that encourages our students. There are many exciting times ahead and I look forward to experiencing them with our arts community and the staff of the arts centre. I thank them and I wish the Campbelltown Arts Centre a happy birthday.

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (12:37):** I thank the member for Campbelltown for bringing to the attention of the House the milestone birthday of the Campbelltown Arts Centre. As the arts Minister from 2014 to approximately 2017—when I got sacked—I visited

the very impressive Campbelltown Arts Centre, and I endorse the member's comments. I am proud to have provided funding for what I believe is one of the most magnificent Indigenous exhibitions at Campbelltown celebrating the area's Indigenous connections. The staff are doing wonderful work, which gives the centre enormous potential in the future. Most importantly, I highlight that when I was designing the arts and cultural strategy for New South Wales I specifically devised a Western Sydney arts funding opportunity for institutions, and I was guided by my engagement with the Campbelltown Arts Centre. I thank the staff for their contributions and commend the greater investment across Western Sydney.

### NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS WEEK

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (12:38):**

I bring to the attention of the House a very important initiative that has significant meaning to thousands of families across Australia: National Missing Persons Week. This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of National Missing Persons Week, which runs from 5 to 11 August. It is an extremely concerning statistic that more than 38,000 people are reported missing nationally each and every year. Fortunately, more than 98 per cent of those people are found alive and well within two weeks.

Of the 38,000 people reported missing, some 10,000 people are reported missing in New South Wales alone each year and, like the national trend, many of those missing persons are teenagers. Although most of those missing persons are located, many cases remain unsolved. Every year, National Missing Persons Week is an opportunity to reach out and raise awareness across the community, and try to find the missing answers to why those people are missing. It is hard to fathom the pain and anguish the families and friends of a missing loved one must endure. I cannot imagine being able to put one foot in front of the other if my child or wife went missing, let alone keep up to date with day-to-day life without having the answers as to why. The emotional stress of not knowing what has happened to a loved one can be so overwhelming it can affect every aspect of a person's health and wellbeing, including work responsibilities and even personal relationships.

National Missing Persons Week is so important because it is a chance to publically promote the unsolved cases of Australian men, women and children who have vanished without a trace in the hope that someone somewhere knows something and is encouraged to come forward to help bring those people home or at least provide an answer. Right now, more than 2,600 people are listed as a "long-term missing person", which they qualify for after being missing for more than three months. Many of the families still live in hope that one day their loved one will return. I encourage everyone to visit the website [missingpersons.gov.au](http://missingpersons.gov.au) to look at the many profiles of missing Australians. Regardless of the best efforts of police across all jurisdictions, it is often very hard to locate these people. That is why we are calling on the community for support.

The media play a significant role and we thank them for their support of Missing Persons Week. Importantly, the week seeks to understand why people go missing. Despite some of the media reports, there is often more to the story. It is not necessarily true that all missing people are the victims of crime; there can be a multitude of reasons why they have gone missing, including mental illness—I note the Minister for Mental Health is in the Chamber—domestic violence, miscommunication and even misadventure. Although 50 per cent of those reported missing nationally are aged between 13 and 17 years, adults are in fact more likely to be listed as long-term missing persons. Young people go missing for a lot of reasons. It is often due to a family conflict and their desperate need to be independent. It can be that they have simply forgotten to tell someone where they are going. Drugs and alcohol can be a factor, as well as neglect and child abuse.

Only a small percentage of missing person cases in Australia involves stranger abductions. Most young people and children who go missing disappear for only short periods before being located, but that can create enormous trauma for family, loved ones and, more broadly, the community. It is important for the community to know that they can contact police at any time. They do not have to wait a certain period of time to report someone missing—there is no 24-hour rule or two-day rule. If someone has concerns for someone's welfare, they can call immediately and are encouraged to do so. The waiting rule is a common misconception, and this week gives us the opportunity to change that. The sooner a report is made that someone is missing or that there are concerns for their welfare, the more likely that a good outcome can be achieved.

I can assure those who are struggling to cope with the fact that their spouse, child, parent, relative or friend remains missing that the New South Wales Government is behind them. The Department of Justice has the specialised Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit, which offers trained professional experts who provide free counselling and support to those who are left wondering what on earth has happened to their family member, friend or loved one. This unit is the only service of its kind in Australia and one that I cannot speak more highly of. It has helped numerous people over the years and will continue to do so. I take this opportunity to thank all the dedicated and hardworking police who track down and bring home the thousands of people who have been reported missing each year. I urge all members of this place to raise the awareness of National Missing Persons Week in the hope of finding new leads in unsolved cases.

### CALLAN PARK

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:43):** Callan Park is a magnificent piece of greenspace within my electorate. It is the third-largest open space in Sydney and all 60 hectares of it are listed on the State Heritage Register. Callan Park has many unique features—from its extensive foreshore and fine heritage buildings to its moral heart as a place for providing mental health services. It is a living and breathing monument to our State's heritage and presents many opportunities today. Under the former Government the superb site was under constant attack from that Government's attempts to sell it off, develop it and promote residential development within it. The community and the then Leichhardt council strongly opposed all of those proposals. The opposition came from a broad coalition of people including Liberals in the local community, members of The Greens and many members of the Labor Party who all stood up to fight against the State Government's poor decisions. Our community has also worked to fend off a laundry list of proposals by this Government. I am pleased to say that we now seem to be making some progress, but we must remain vigilant. We have gained a pledge from the Minister to not sell or develop the Callan Park site, and that is a positive step forward.

The campaign to help save Callan Park and to promote mental health services on the site is one of the longest fought campaigns in the inner west. I hold the campaign close to my heart having worked on it as a resident, a councillor, Mayor of Leichhardt and now as the member for Balmain. In that time Callan Park has aged; the greatest risk it now faces is inaction and neglect. Over the years we have clocked up many wins. The absence of apartments at Callan Park is evidence of that. I am proud that through strong campaigning and grassroots action our community achieved the enactment of the Callan Park Act 2002 that restricts future uses of the site to health and education services, and introduces a range of protections.

Last year our community succeeded in ensuring that the site is now under the management of the Office of Environment and Heritage [OEH] rather than Property NSW, which we know would have promptly sought to sell it off. Recently I held a public meeting at Balmain Town Hall to give OEH representatives a chance to speak directly with the local community about the future of Callan Park. Almost 50 people attended that meeting. I am sure they would all agree that we had a productive discussion. At that meeting I was delighted to hear that NSW Health is exploring the possibility of establishing a step-down mental health facility at the site. Along with the proposals from OEH we have some fantastic opportunities. I am hopeful that the vision of OEH for open parkland will ensure that the whole community is able to enjoy the space in the future. I am also hopeful that OEH will protect and conserve the heritage of Callan Park. I am optimistic that the true cultural heart of the site will be restored by the return of mental health services.

It would be remiss of me not to make special mention of the Friends of Callan Park, which is an extraordinary local group that has campaigned for decades to protect and safeguard the park for the future. We know that Sydney boasts a number of breathtaking areas of greenspace, but nothing rivals the splendid rolling beauty of Callan Park. The site is one of the few remaining places in the inner west where people can feel lost in the beauty and serenity of nature. I encourage the Minister to work closely with me and the local community to ensure that Callan Park has a fully funded independent trust. We must protect its landscapes and we must renew and invest in its remaining heritage buildings.

As well as the mental health services that I have mentioned, we must also look at the needs of sporting, arts and other groups. In particular, we need full consultation about the new tenants at Kirkbride Way when the Sydney College of the Arts moves from the site. It is critical that the tenants not only invest in the site but also help to activate Callan Park. We must make sure that we support the community and that the uses of the Kirkbride complex are in line with the Callan Park Act. Finally, must to make sure that we support the non-government drug and alcohol rehabilitation groups and wellness centres, and support the provision of mental health services at the site. Now that OEH is opening a dialogue on the use of the site and the demolition of intrusive buildings it is important that the discussion is had in a positive and proactive way. I look forward to working collaboratively with the community and the Minister. In particular I hope that our goal of establishing a fully funded independent trust is realised as soon as possible.

### NORTH SHORE ROWING CLUB

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (12:48):** This is a yarn about the North Shore Rowing Club, which is situated in the heart of my electorate of Lane Cove and is all about positive results, fitness and a Christmas paddle. Australia has had a long love affair with rowing and rowers. History records how First Fleet settlers rowed ashore at Botany Bay on 26 January all those years ago. The North Shore Rowing Club was established in 1879 and is headquartered on the beautiful Lane Cove River at Longueville. A club that has lasted almost 140 years must be doing a lot of things right. That is certainly the case with the North Shore Rowing Club. The club is a wholly volunteer organisation, comprising around 240 members. Those active members fit all demographics. Members range from school-age juniors, through to senior masters rowers in their mid-eighties.

As this Chamber likes to deal in numbers, let me say that the medium age of North Shore Rowing Club members is the mid-fifties. Among their ranks is an Olympic medallist rower and almost all the adult members are masters rowers. There are currently 40 junior girl members from Roseville College, who—along with their boats and equipment—are based at North Shore Rowing Club. The main objective of the club is the encouragement of the sport of rowing and the advancement of its interests. By achieving this the club has given health and strength to thousands of Australians of all ages.

The club has a fair flotilla of vessels. All up, North Shore Rowing Club owns around 37 boats—single, double and quad sculls—which have seen some competitive action. In the 2016-17 season, the club won the NSW Masters Championships—a truly outstanding achievement. At those championships, rowed at the Sydney International Regatta Centre in Penrith, North Shore Rowing Club members took home 88 gold medals, 28 silver medals and 28 bronze medals. At the National Masters Championships staged on Victoria's Lake Nagambie last June, the club members claimed 75 medals—20 of those being gold.

North Shore Rowing Club boasts an active governing committee that ensures that the club interacts with the Lane Cove Council and within its community, and participates in local activities. The club sponsors an active Learn to Row program, which encourages adults who have not previously rowed to take up the sport. If those too often idle members on the Opposition benches are wondering about the benefits of rowing, let me single out a couple of club stalwarts. John James is an 80-year-old who has rowed for more than 60 years in England and Australia. John won a silver medal in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, rowing for England. Last year this now true-blue Aussie took the gold medal at the World Masters Games in Copenhagen. In a mutually agreeable association with North Shore Rowing Club, John has been club captain, boatmaster and treasurer.

Eighty-five-year-old clubbie Rod Keable is another example. Rod was 74 when he took up rowing at North Shore. In 2009 Rod won a gold medal at the Masters Olympics staged in Sydney. Recently, Lane Cove Council approved a development application for the upgrade of club facilities, including an enlarged deck, a ramp, a pontoon and a new boat storage shed. I was privileged to have played a small part in this fundraising story. On behalf of this House, I feel confident that in the years ahead the North Shore Rowing Club will produce more Olympians, masters, State and national rowing heroes. I commend the club and its members, past and present, to the House.

#### WATERLOO SOCIAL HOUSING ESTATE

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:51):** My residents in social housing at Waterloo are extremely distressed by the New South Wales Liberals' plans to demolish the Waterloo public housing estate and hand it over to property developers to conduct a massive urban renewal on the site. The redevelopment was announced by the former Minister for Social Housing, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, just weeks before Christmas in 2015. Residents were shocked to receive a letter from the Minister saying that he was "very excited to announce" that their homes would be demolished and thousands of them would need to relocate off the estate, beginning in mid-2016—so much for a merry Christmas. We are now in mid-2018 and no residents have moved from the estate, but they have lived with the dark cloud of uncertainty hanging over their head ever since.

So as to prevent any doubt, I make my views clear. It is one thing to renew the housing stock in that area to provide a better standard of living to social housing tenants who deserve it—that I would support. It is another thing to dream up the mass handover of public land to property developers in the frenzy of a rapidly dissipating housing boom. I do not support the project. The Liberals plan to evict thousands of people from their homes, just to let property developers run riot in the inner city. It is plain wrong and I will fight it.

Last Thursday, on 2 August, the Minister for Family and Community Services visited Waterloo to make yet another announcement. The Minister revealed a variety of options being presented to the community regarding the final look of the redevelopment. All of them entail a mass densification of the site, increasing the number of dwellings on the estate from 2,000 to well over 7,000. There will be no net increase in social housing dwellings on the site, and the affordable housing target is a mere 5 per cent.

But the big property developers stand to make billions of dollars. Just next door is the Waterloo Metro Quarter redevelopment, with multiple skyscrapers housing hundreds more units. Further down the road is Green Square, the largest urban renewal project in the country, which will be home to 53,000 new residents within a decade. And a few hundred metres away, the Australian Technology Park will house thousands of new workers, generating just a fraction of the extra 61,000 vehicles streaming out of the WestConnex St Peters interchange into gridlocked streets. The Lord Mayor of Sydney Clover Moore's assessment that all of this is a planning disaster is spot on, and probably an understatement. In of all the options Minister Goward has presented to local residents, the one missing is for things to stay the way they are.

I have lobbied successfully for millions of dollars in funding for upgrades to properties on the Waterloo Estate, and now the Liberal Government wants to tear it down and heartlessly evict thousands of the tenants. Waterloo is far from perfect but I work constantly with local residents, Family and Community Services, Housing NSW and the local police area command to fight the anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and abuse. It is a community that is cherished and adored by its residents. They do not want to go.

This whole project has been conducted in utmost secrecy, to such an outrageous extent that when a member of my staff attended the Minister's announcement so that he could provide me with information relating to this monumental decision affecting thousands of my constituents, he was unceremoniously frogmarched from the press conference. But I now understand that the first "relocations" of tenants will begin in February next year, more than three years after their eviction was first announced. I share the cynicism of residents about their prospects of ever returning, given most are elderly.

Demolishing these buildings and evicting tenants just weeks before an election is simply wrong. The people of New South Wales should be given the opportunity to pass judgement on the New South Wales Liberals' mass handover of public land to rapacious property developers. I am calling on the Minister and the Premier to put a hold on the project until after next year's election. For thousands of residents, Waterloo is not just a social housing estate; it is the place that they call home. The Government should go back to the drawing board and come up with a plan in consultation with those residents, to deliver more social and affordable housing, and to give these residents the dignity they deserve.

#### **NORTHERN TABLELANDS RURAL FIRE SERVICE CONTROL CENTRE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (12:57):** Saturday, 4 August 2018 will go down as a red-letter day for firefighting services and equipment throughout the Northern Tablelands. Along with the Mayor of Glen Innes Severn Council, Steve Toms, I had the great pleasure to attend and officially open the new \$3.4 million Northern Tablelands Rural Fire Service Fire Control Centre last Saturday. The facility is the new location of the Glen Innes Rural Fire Service [RFS] brigade and, for the first time in Glen Innes's history, four new RFS state mitigation service positions have been placed there—brand-new jobs for the community.

It was a brilliant day to celebrate the opening of a new fire control centre, which has state-of-the-art technology allowing RFS personnel to coordinate land or air operations to control fires—small and section 44 fires—within the Northern Tablelands. It is a facility that is able to be utilised by the police, the NSW State Emergency Service and by other enforcement agencies in times of peril, natural disasters and—I hope it never happens!—terror incidents which may occur. It is jam-packed full of equipment and technology which can be used for all sorts of situations. The day was also special because we were able to hand over seven new vehicles—new tankers—to the brigades: a new category 1 tanker for Glen Innes, a new category 7 tanker for Kings Plains, another category 7 tanker for Emmaville, and new category 9 vehicles for Inverell, Reddestone, Steinbrook and Wyaliba brigades. Most importantly, the ceremony concluded with the presentation of 24 RFS volunteers and staff with long service medals and/or clasps, with a combined total of 519 years of voluntary service to the RFS and the community.

Mayor Steve Toms of the Glenn Innes Severn Council, Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons of the NSW Rural Fire Service and Mayor Peter Petty of the Tenterfield Shire Council helped in the celebration of the huge achievements of RFS volunteers throughout the Northern Tablelands. Of all those who received medals that day I pay tribute in particular to Terry Boyd who received his long service medal and fourth clasp for 59 years of dedicated service to the RFS. Terry is still going strong as the captain and permit officer of the Wellingrove Brigade. Indeed, Geoff Mather from Nullamanna is the only person I know on the Northern Tablelands who has more years of service than Terry. Jeff was also to be presented with his fifth clasp on the day but, unfortunately, he could not make the ceremony. John Sharpe received an award for 49 years and Max O'Brien for 41 years.

Other recipients included Brett Miller, 20 years; Trevor Willoughby, 15 years; Brian McDonough, 14 years; Ronald Jones, 13 years; Adam Woods, 11 years; Josh Gorton, 11 years; Ray White, 11 years; Gayle Moyle, 10 years; Hannah Birkinhead, 10 years; Joanne White, 10 years; Mrs Nathan Moss, 10 years; and Malcolm Wehr, 20 years. Other recipients included Carol Sparks, Peter Davis, Errol Heaney, Jane Boyd, Peter Chaffey and David White for 20 to 30 years of service. Each of those recipients deserves our recognition and thanks for their longstanding and continuing dedication to the RFS. They keep us safe and protected in times of emergencies and we salute them. I am delighted that they now also have first class tankers and a first class fire control centre to aid them in keeping us safe.

### LIVERPOOL LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:02):** Today I congratulate all the participants who were recognised in this year's Liverpool Local Business Awards. The awards pay tribute to and reward the local community's best and most innovative businesses. They also aim to grow and strengthen the bonds between businesses and the community and thereby improve the standards of local businesses. They are based within the local community and voting is conducted by local area residents. They give local businesses the opportunity to promote their businesses and their strengths, display their range of products and services and provide in-store displays of their local business awards success. Indeed, they bring together businesses, the local community and award sponsors to celebrate excellence and quality.

The Holsworthy electorate was proudly represented in these awards, with many different businesses winning in their respective categories, including GY Dance, Prestons, which won the dance studio category. This was the second year in the row GY Dance has taken out this category, which is an honour for the studio. The Oliver Brown Café, Casula, won the café category—I enjoyed a coffee at this great café with the Premier on her visit to Casula Mall. Holeshoot Fitness and Personal Training, Prestons, won the fitness service category. This studio provides a supportive environment and encourages local residents to get active. Holeshoot Fitness took out this award in 2015 as well. Passion for Flowers, Chipping Norton, won the florist category. Nick Scali Furniture, Casula, won the home furniture and furnishing award. Abbey Timber, Moorebank, won the service and trade category. This was the first year that Abbey Timber has been nominated and it won, which was a great achievement.

I note that Glen Haddon from Chief Fluid Systems in Chipping Norton won the Business Person of the Year Award. Big congratulations go to Glen. I am delighted for him as Chief Fluid Systems has been the winner of multiple awards over the past couple of years and it is truly a testament to the outstanding customer service, marketing tactics and knowledge and skills that the business embodies. This company embodies community. In 2017 Chief Fluid Systems hosted a World's Greatest Shave event in honour of people the company loves who have battled blood cancer, and we mentioned this in Parliament at the time.

The event brought the local community together—other local businesses, customers, suppliers, families and friends—to raise a staggering \$23,400 to help make a difference by providing funding for research that will help people survive blood cancers. In fact, Chief Fluid Systems ranked 17 out of the top 48 fundraisers in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory for 2017. I know the company is looking at running this event again in 2019 and I sincerely look forward to it. This is a monumental effort and I am glad that this business has been recognised again at this year's business awards. I am happy that Glen is being recognised individually for his hard work at Chief Fluid Systems, and I congratulate him on his amazing business and his success.

I also recognise BP Urbanista Cafe and Convenience in Chipping Norton, which was the winner of Business of the Year. Urbanista Cafe and Convenience is a unique new cafe and convenience and BP fuel store. The business offers freshly made coffee, freshly baked cakes, sandwiches and pies, whilst offering everyday items that local residents need from a local convenience store or a petrol station. I congratulate Urbanista Cafe on its incredible achievement.

In speaking of small business, I recognise the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which continually goes above and beyond in promoting small businesses in our area. The chamber provides networking opportunities and a voice for small business owners across the Liverpool region. I congratulate George Germanos, president of the chamber, and his team on running an important and valued organisation in our community. I cannot wait to catch up with them all again. Due to my parliamentary commitments it has been a little while since I have been to one of their meetings, but I am going to their upcoming lunch, where the Premier will be the keynote speaker. We are all looking forward to hearing from her.

Small business is at the heart of our economy and community and I am proud to be part of a party and a government that supports them. Once again I congratulate the winners and finalists who have been recognised this year in the Liverpool Business Awards, particularly those in the Holsworthy electorate. It is great fun seeing their certificates pop up in their windows and to know that they are one of the businesses that have been recognised for their quality customer service and what they provide. All those businesses should take pride in their achievements and I wish them all the best for their future endeavours.

### SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN METRO

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:07):** Today I draw the attention of the House to the recently released Sydenham to Bankstown metro Preferred Infrastructure Report. Sadly, I must advise the House that the New South Wales Government is insisting on converting the existing T3 Bankstown line into a metro service, permanently denying my community direct City Circle access. South-west Sydney is a rapidly growing area and



I acknowledge the need to look into alternative transport opportunities as well as improvements to existing infrastructure in order to foster regional sustainability and solid economic growth. Despite that, this Preferred Infrastructure Report of the Sydenham to Bankstown metro will offer an inferior, substandard shuttle service compared to what is planned for the city and north-west Sydney.

The Bankstown community is expected to accept this inferior, substandard version of the metro without any significant upgrades to social infrastructure. The 2018-19 New South Wales budget allocated a mere \$25 million to the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital, one of the busiest hospitals within Sydney, which treats approximately 55,000 patients a year. The car park is consistently at capacity and last year Bankstown hospital witnessed a record 1,800-plus births. Bankstown schools are at capacity and the roads are congested. With the expected population growth and the reality of the Government's plans to rampantly overdevelop the corridor, the Government's budget should have adequately addressed the shortfalls in spending across our schools, hospitals and road infrastructure—but it did not.

In October 2013 the then Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, ceased operating the Liverpool via Regents Park train service. Residents of Villawood, Chester Hill, Sefton and Birrong have been left without a direct connection to the central business district [CBD], which has caused significant increases in commute times. Commuters now face up to three additional interchanges at Birrong and Lidcombe, overcrowding, less frequent train services and frequent track work. The implementation of the Sydenham to Bankstown rail link will create a new bottleneck for commuters travelling to the CBD at Sydenham and Bankstown and our commuters will permanently lose direct City Circle access. Furthermore, approximately 19,000 commuters and nine stations—Berala, Regents Park, Sefton, Chester Hill, Leightonfield, Villawood, Carramar, Birrong and Yagoona—will lose direct access to City Circle and endure changes at both Bankstown and Sydenham. This will force additional interchanges that already occur at Lidcombe and Birrong stations.

The implementation of the metro will require a intermittent shutdowns of the current Bankstown line for periods of up to six months for the duration of the conversion, which will inconvenience thousands of commuters. There will be significant community impacts during and after construction. The decision to replace this line without providing station upgrades will also result in potential shutdowns for future major works, adding to delays and closures that will undoubtedly inconvenience commuters across Sydney. There has been significant resistance to and protest about the metro, including from experts such as former State Rail Authority executive John Brew. Mr Brew states:

Metro expansion should supplement heavy rail, not replace it as metro trains are not suited to long distant journeys serviced by the Sydney rail and outer suburban network.

The Sydenham to Bankstown corridor is already well serviced by the existing T3 line and is currently under capacity. Conversion to a metro line would create major disruption and not expand Sydney's existing rail network. I note that Labor has opposed both the Sydenham to Bankstown metro and the extension to Liverpool, with the NSW Labor Leader Luke Foley announcing in April that a future Labor Government would not proceed with the Sydenham to Bankstown metro.

On behalf of the residents of Bankstown my message to the Premier is very simple: Scrap the metro and the plan to rampantly overdevelop Bankstown. This ludicrous proposal should go back to where it belongs, on the scrapheap. Labor will not proceed with the conversion of the T3 line to a metro. Nor will it support the extension from Bankstown to Liverpool, to which the Government has allocated \$4.8 million for planning despite failing to provide a specific route. It has provided a confusingly broad scoping map across the electorates of Bankstown and East Hills. There is considerable concern about the specific route the metro will follow. Labor will invest in local rail infrastructure and reinstate train services. I pay tribute to those organisations that have been fighting against this metro, including the Restore Inner West Line group that has campaigned tirelessly and advised the community of the possible draconian changes. [*Time expired.*]

#### MAMRE ROAD UPGRADE

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:12):** St Clair resident Andrew Fender was only two minutes from home when a motorcyclist came off his bike and collided with Andrew's brand-new car on Mamre Road, St Clair. As a registered nurse he was able to provide first aid to ensure this young motorcyclist received instant care. Over the past year Andrew Fender has witnessed firsthand the devastating accidents that have taken place on Mamre Road. He also cared for the victims of an horrendous accident last year that resulted in two deaths. Andrew Fender is now fighting to see Mamre Road upgraded and is urging the community to sign my online petition. Every day residents of St Clair and Erskine Park must contend with the increasingly unsafe Mamre Road, battling semitrailers, congestion and risky decisions made by impatient motorists.

Numerous concerned St Clair community members, including the St Clair Men's Shed, joined me to call on the Federal Government to work with the State Government to support the upgrade of Mamre Road. For too long St Clair and Erskine Park residents have battled to turn onto Mamre Road, often making risky decisions with grave consequences. Last year alone there were nine casualty crashes, five serious injury crashes and one fatal crash which resulted in the deaths of two people, left 21 people injured and left 12 seriously injured. Principal of Mamre Anglican College Cathie Graydon is also concerned for the families and staff of the college who use Mamre Road to get to school each day. She said:

There is an urgent need for Mamre Road to be upgraded. The increased commercial development along Mamre Road has meant a significant increase in heavy vehicle traffic along a single lane thoroughfare.

... Students and families are at increased risk of traffic accidents each school day. Mamre Anglican School is one stakeholder on Mamre Road. I will list all of the other stakeholders that represent significant populations of people. Old MacDonald's Child Care is located on Mamre Road and hosts approximately 120 families with children at the centre. Fire and Rescue NSW's new training academy was opened last month and will be the site of more than 100 full-time staff and more than 100 trainees at any given time once it is up and running. Erskine Business Park continues to grow and expand.

Yesterday, with the member for Penrith, Stuart Ayres, and the Federal member for Bradfield and Federal Minister for Infrastructure Paul Fletcher, I was at the Sydney Science Park in Luddenham for the first sod turning. Mamre Road is one of the two key access points to the park. Twin Creeks Golf and Country Club can be accessed from Mamre Road and is one of two locations from which to enter the facility. Dogs NSW is on the corner of Luddenham Road and Mamre Road and has more than 4,000 registered members who may attend the facility on any weekend. Mamre Homestead is run by CatholicCare Social Services and hosts St Clair and District Men's Shed, refugee and disability services. Mamre Anglican School and the co-located Little Smarties Early Learning Centre, Trinity Catholic Primary School, Emmaus Catholic College and Emmaus Retirement Village all need to access Mamre Road.

Every day that Mamre Road in St Clair is not upgraded more lives are at risk. Mamre Road is a key transport corridor which passes through the Western Sydney Employment Area and the Western Sydney Priority Growth Area, as well as providing access to the M4 northbound and southbound for St Clair and Erskine Park residents. With the new Western Sydney Airport to soon commence earthworks the traffic will increase, and the pressure placed on the already dangerous Mamre Road will grow. Mamre Road must be upgraded, and quickly. The New South Wales Government has committed more than \$2 million to plan the upgrade of Mamre Road which is currently estimated at half a billion dollars. The proposed upgrade will provide a four-lane divided road from the M4 to Kerrs Road. The Mamre Road upgrade will include two lanes northbound and southbound, upgraded intersections, a shared footpath and wide central median strip to reduce head-on collisions.

I call on the Federal Government to include Mamre Road on the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan and to work with the State Government to provide funding for the upgrade of Mamre Road. The Federal Government acknowledges the need for upgrades to the road network surrounding the Western Sydney Airport and has already joined the State Government to provide a total of \$3.6 billion spent on major roads around the airport. However, Mamre Road has not been included in the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan, but it needs to be. I have launched an online petition calling for the Federal Government to work with the State Government to fast-track the upgrade of Mamre Road. Already hundreds and hundreds of concerned residents in St Clair and Erskine Park have thrown their support behind the petition. I urge the community to sign this petition, available on my website, so that together we can ensure that Mamre Road is upgraded quickly.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **YAGOONA BAPTIST CHURCH SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:17):** Last weekend I was honoured to join in the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Yagoona Baptist Church. It was a pleasure to see such a great turnout from the community. There was a dinner on the Saturday night and a lovely service on Sunday morning. The service was led by Reverend Chris Cullen, who has ministered in the church for the past three years. Congratulations to Reverend Chris Cullen, long-term secretary of the church Barbara Humphrey, the choir, the parishioners and the entire church executive on reaching such an amazing milestone and for always participating to ensure that the services are fully supported and run smoothly every Sunday. It was also lovely to hear Reverend Dr Ross Clifford's sermon celebrating the occasion, which I very much enjoyed. I acknowledge that Councillor Rachelle Harika was also in attendance. I wish the Yagoona Baptist Church many more years of successfully serving our lovely community in Yagoona.

#### **WOMEN WITH ALTITUDE AWARDS**

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:18):** Last month Women with Altitude [WWA] held their annual Altitude Awards at Liverpool

Catholic Club with more than 250 attendees on the night. It was a huge success, with three young singers performing. Nine-year-old Regentville resident Molly Shaw and Glenmore Park residents and cousins Evelyn Shanley, 13, and Annika Svensson, 15, were selected to perform. WWA founder Andrea Turner-Boys makes a point of involving young girls each year to give them an opportunity to showcase their abilities. All three girls gave stunning performances and often sing at other events in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains areas.

I congratulate Holly Austin, an 11-year-old Luddenham local, who was recently selected to travel with the Australian Girls Choir on its national tour. Joining 55 other choristers aged between 10 and 16, Holly will be singing and dancing her way through Canberra, Nowra, Wagga Wagga, the Blue Mountains and Sydney. This will be the forty-first tour the AGC has undertaken, with the girls set to perform at the Australian War Memorial; Parliament House, Canberra; Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub; and Parliament House, Sydney. Congratulations, Holly, on this fantastic achievement and all the best with your performances.

#### **AUSTRALIAN RUGBY LEAGUE JILLAROO ISABELLE KELLY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:19):** Isabelle Kelly is a trailblazer in my electorate who is known to many as a star of female sport in this State and the country. Having relatively normal coastal beginnings, growing up in Chittaway Bay and attending local public schools, Isabelle has been a sporting legend in the eyes of all who have watched her play since she was in school. At only 22, she has already played for the Jillaroos and the NSW Women's State of Origin team, cementing her place in sporting history by scoring the first try in the 2017 Women's Rugby League World Cup final before scoring a second. If this was not enough to be proud of, she also scored the tie-breaking try that delivered the inaugural Origin title to New South Wales. Scores were locked at 10-10 in a nailbiting match until Sam Bremner linked with Isabelle Kelly five minutes from full-time to snatch victory for the Blues. Isabelle went on to win the Nellie Doherty medal for Woman of the Match. Our community is immensely proud of her and I suspect this will not be the last time her name is mentioned in this Chamber.

#### **EDUCATION WEEK**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:20):** During Education Week 2018, I mention two local high schools in my electorate of North Shore: Mosman High School and Cammeraygal High School. When I recently attended both schools to award them with grants, thanks to the Premier, I was reminded of the excellent institutions we are fortunate to enjoy locally. Mosman High School was awarded \$10,000, which will fund the purchase of 10 data loggers for its science department. I thank principal Susan Wyatt and P&C President Evan Predavec for their continued work creating an incredible learning environment for the school's pupils.

Cammeraygal High School received just over \$5,500, which will enable it to install five mental health awareness boards, which are designed to keep the students focused and positive throughout their day. I thank school principal Kathy Melky and P&C President Srma McQuillan for the consideration of their students' mental health while at school. I thank the Premier for her continued leadership and for making these funds available. I acknowledge that the theme for Education Week 2018, "Today's schools—creating tomorrow's world", is living true in Mosman High School and Cammeraygal High School.

#### **SUMMER HILL ELECTORATE LAND REZONING**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:21):** For three long years residents in Marrickville and Dulwich Hill have lived with the threat of mass rezoning of their suburbs as the Government sought to add an extra 100,000 people along the Sydenham-to-Bankstown corridor. Residents have put up with years of uncertainty while developers have been allowed to run loose, treating these suburbs like their own property paradise. Throughout that time, local residents, led by community groups such as Save Dully and Save Marrickville, have stood firm against the plans. These local groups have spent thousands of hours researching, informing neighbours, translating information for non-English speakers, hosting meetings, organising rallies and town hall meetings, lobbying successive Ministers, and even building a Lego model of what our suburbs would look like if the plans went ahead. As a result of their efforts, the planning Minister has finally listened and junked plans for mass rezoning. This decision signals the death of the 35-storey development that Mirvac had planned for Carrington Road, Marrickville. I congratulate Save Dully, Save Marrickville and all those fighting for the future of our suburbs. Because of them, our future looks a lot brighter.

#### **MANLY ELECTORATE RESPITE SERVICES**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:22):** I recognise local hero Katherine Owen, who, for many years, has provided respite for carers from across New South Wales. With her support, the Government has secured three wonderful properties at North Head for ongoing community use. Following the closure of respite services at the properties, Katherine approached me for assistance to develop a solution that would ensure the continued provision of community services. With the support of the Harbour Trust, its Chief Executive Officer, Mary

Darwell, and the Minister for Disability Services, Ray Williams, we have secured funding from the New South Wales Government for the properties whilst a business case and long-term model for the future use of the properties are undertaken. I look forward to working in partnership with the trust, Community Northern Beaches and other community organisations to identify a mix of appropriate uses across the site, as we continue to make North Head Sanctuary accessible to the community. I send a heartfelt thank you to Katherine, who is a true community hero, and the carers who brought this issue to my attention. This one is for her and all the carers.

#### **CABRA-VALE DIGGERS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:23):** I commend and congratulate Cabra-Vale Diggers on the launch on 18 June 2018 of its new and exciting initiative called "Cabra-Diggers Cares". The program is a community-based partnership that has been designed to inspire, support and empower groups within the Fairfield local government area to assist those in need throughout our community. I had the great pleasure of joining local residents, community groups, leaders and, in particular, the women generational leaders who showcased their project which caters to local women aged 15 to 22 years of age to inspire, foster and develop leadership in local women. Well done to everyone at Cabra-Vale Diggers who created this brilliant program, which reaches out and connects to our local community. I wish this program every success now and in the future.

#### **VALLEY INDUSTRIES DISABILITY SERVICES**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:24):** I inform the House about a disability services provider in my electorate, Valley Industries. The Valley Industries team, consisting of Jack Shelton, Robert Schumacher, Mitch Hoppe, Paul Arnold, Matt Williams and Zac Taylor, has jumped to the rescue of 60 students at Chatham High School who require disability support. For some time the school had attempted to create a space for them, but despite all efforts the grass would not grow. The Valley Industries Chief Executive Officer, Mr Trent Jenneson, offered to donate turf and the crew from Complete Grounds Care offered to create the space. On a cold morning last month, the team worked hard to complete the work before students returned to school after their winter break. Teacher Jen Sedgwick said she has 60 very happy support students who are excited that their outdoor play space has doubled, through the generous support of Valley Industries and the Complete Grounds Care crew. This is another example of what can be achieved when our communities work together towards a common goal—in this case, enhancing a learning environment for students. I congratulate Valley Industries, which is a major employer of special needs people in the Myall Lakes electorate.

#### **WOY WOY INAUGURAL PARKRUN**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:25):** I say thank you so much to the community of runners who have very generously brought the Parkrun to Woy Woy. With runs on the Central Coast well established at Mount Penang and San Remo, it was great to join more than 300 people for the inaugural Woy Woy Parkrun. The 8.00 a.m. Saturday start at Woy Woy joins over 30,000 Parkruns across the world. Parkrunners from across New South Wales joined in the fun. Families on holidays on the Central Coast and those from Bathurst, Orange, Bega and Sydney joined us for the inaugural Parkrun before heading home.

We were joined by Parkrun communities from across Sydney, whose team T-shirts were emblazoned with their hometown locations. The largest group was the "Team Nangers", who came all the way from Kariong, and also present were the Turtle Running Team, Berowra Bushrunners and Five30runners, just to name a few. It was great to be joined by a team of deaf runners and an Auslan interpreter. Indeed, they are there every week, thanks to local deaf runners. They enjoyed themselves so much that a few of them popped in for Parkrun number five while en route to wine tasting in the Hunter Valley. I thank Medibank and Athletes Foot for making this a healthy, fun and free event for all of us.

#### **GLENMORE PARK SPORTING CLUBS**

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:26):** The Glenmore Park Cricket Club has had exciting news this season with the first ever girls-only team, the under 13s, competing for the club in the local competition. For many girls, this was an opportunity to play social competition cricket for the first time. The growth of girls cricket is a key initiative of Cricket Australia, with money being invested in increasing participation numbers. It is hoped that this success will increase the number of girl players next season.

The Emu Plains-Glenmore Park Lions Junior AFL Club is roaring into the 2018 season. The season launch kicked off with the NSW Junior Clubs March in April at Spotless Stadium in Sydney. Local players had an exciting opportunity to march around the stadium before the GWS Giants and Brisbane Lions AFL game. The Emu Plains-Glenmore Park Lions Junior AFL Club has 270 players registered this year and the club is looking to build on last season's success, which saw three teams go on to win their grand finals. Go team!

**TRIBUTE TO ALLAN COBBIN**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:27):** On 16 July 2018, family, friends and former colleagues gathered to farewell Allan Cobbin. In a fashion consistent with his life, Allan, before his passing, had planned the details of the ceremony, including the selection of songs and a direction to those who attended to laugh and celebrate his life—and what a varied life it was. Allan was a teacher, scholar, train enthusiast, Labor Party member, administrator, punter, home brewer, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He was most certainly head of his family. I appreciated the support that Allan provided to me and thank him for it. Locally, he pushed all of us, including the member for Keira, to be more compassionate and to pursue policies where the benefits of community achievement were shared between everyone. He was passionate in his policy contributions and pursuit of ideas that would advance the achievement of our common goals. He will be missed most particularly by his wife, Pat, with whom he shared a marriage of nearly 60 years, and by his friends in the Labor Party in the Illawarra.

**UNITED HOSPITAL AUXILIARIES, ARMIDALE BRANCH**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (13:28):** I recognise the wonderful office-bearers and members of the United Hospital Auxiliaries, Armidale Branch, on holding high the lamp of service for the welfare of their local hospital: Robyn Clutterbuck as President, Maxine Mitchell as Vice President and Publicity Officer, Sue Melville as Secretary, Carol Khan as the brilliant Treasurer, Jennie Vaughan as Assistant Treasurer and Gloria Dell as Patron. In the last 12 months the auxiliary has raised \$61,219—\$52,000-odd at their wonderful kiosk—and spent \$40,662 on facilities and services at the hospital to make life more comfortable for patients and staff. I pay tribute to the wonderful service that they give every day manning the kiosk and serving a brilliant cup of coffee, a slice or a homemade sandwich. You cannot beat the tucker at the Armidale hospital kiosk. I say well done to the auxiliary and good luck over the next 12 months.

**TRIBUTE TO ALLAN COBBIN**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (13:29):** I pay tribute to the late Allan Cobbin, as did my colleague and friend the member for Wollongong. Allan was a great Labor man and educator. He had enormous dignity, integrity and, most importantly, great passion for his family, the Labor Party, education and the community in which he lived. The member for Wollongong and I were deeply saddened, as is the Labor Party in the region, when we heard about the loss of Allan Cobbin. I say to his wife, Pat, his family and members of the very famous Mount Kembla Unanderra branch that we are thinking of them during this very difficult time. However, we know that our community, party and local schools are in a better place because of the wonderful work of Allan Cobbin.

**BARELLAN AND DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION UNDER-17S TEAM**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:30):** Barellan is a village of 538 people in the west of the Cootamundra electorate. But true to the sporting spirit of my small towns and villages, they do not let its size get in the way of wins on the court or the field. I am thrilled to celebrate the Barellan under-17s netball team, that recently placed fourth in division two of the State championships. The team had the only win against the Hills District, who went on to win the entire carnival. Stronger Country Communities Fund round one funding included \$269,000 to reinvigorate Barellan Sportsground, and I am so proud that these upgraded courts will be christened by such champions. What a massive win and proud moment for our community. Congratulations girls.

**ASSYRIAN MARTYRS AND GENOCIDE DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:31):** On 5 August 2018 the Assyrian Universal Alliance and the Assyrian Australian National Federation marked the commemoration of the Assyrian Martyrs and Genocide Day at the Assyrian Genocide Monument, Bonnyrigg. On this day we remember those men, women and children who, because of their religious faith and race, were subjected to the most barbaric treatment. They were persecuted and murdered not because of any misdeed or wrong they committed but simply because of their birth, their culture, their faith and their humanity.

We stand here as testimony that these Assyrian families will not be forgotten; that the survivors of the genocide will continue to bear witness to the suffering of their forebears and the Western Sydney community will always stand with the Assyrian peoples—they are our brothers and sisters, our friends and neighbours. We as a Parliament must continue to advocate, build and strengthen our resolve to establish a safe environment for Assyrian Christians that is free from persecution in which they can practise their faith freely and that enables all our children to prosper. May our Lord and the Holy Mother bless those men, women and children whom we remember on this day.

**TRIBUTE TO ROBERT ALISTAIR BEVERIDGE HOLLAND**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:32):** I pay tribute to the late Professor Robert Alastair Beveridge Holland of Roseville, having attended his funeral service last week at St Luke's Presbyterian Church in Roseville. Professor Holland was a huge contributor within the Liberal Party over many decades. His insightful and forthright yet respectful comments at local Liberal Party forums and State Council were driven by a desire to speak the truth and to improve our society. Robert Holland's intellect was undoubted and his integrity valued. He had an esteemed career in medicine and science, including through the University of New South Wales, and was admired by many in the field. Despite the loss of his wife, Elsie, 10 years ago and some physical challenges, he continued to be a loving father to four children and a much-loved grandfather. Robert will be truly missed.

**AUSTRALIAN BEIRUT CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:33):** I take this opportunity to acknowledge the President of the Australian Beirut Charitable Association, Mr Mohamad Chebaro, the President of the Women's Committee of the Australian Beirut Charitable Association, Ms Christine Itani, and the whole committee for their tremendous efforts in the electorate of Bankstown. Last week on Bankstown Aged Day Care the association spent time at the Bankstown Senior Citizens Centre. There was entertainment and a range of activities including exercises and bingo to ensure the elderly are supported and stay active. It is fantastic to have associations such as the Australian Beirut Charitable Association play a dedicated role in volunteering time to assist others.

**JUNIOR CRICKET COACH BRUCE KIMBERLEY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:34):** Today I acknowledge a wonderful community member and all-round good bloke, Bruce Kimberley. "Kimbo", as he is known, has been the Junior Competition Secretary for the Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai & Hills District Cricket Association for 19 years. This is a phenomenal achievement, and Kimbo has shown that he is truly dedicated to the game that he loves. During his 19 years in the role, he has played a pivotal role in ensuring that junior cricket grows and improves. Many of the initiatives he introduced went on to be adopted at both State and national levels. In Kimbo's own words, he would do anything for the juniors.

I take this opportunity to congratulate him publically on his dedication to our community. He will no longer be serving with the district cricket association, but instead will expand his involvement with the Mount Colah Cricket Club, which he has been involved with for more than 50 years. He first started playing in 1971, going straight into the A-grade team. He still sits on the honour roll for wickets taken and runs scored, and holds the record for most games played with the club. On behalf of the thousands of young cricketers and students who have been mentored and encouraged by Kimbo as a coach and a teacher, I say an enormous thank you.

**DISABLED SERVICES AMBASSADOR KURT FEARNLEY**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:35):** I applaud the determination and community spirit of triple gold medallist, recent Medal of the Order of Australia recipient and Novocastrian Kurt Fearnley. Kurt has shown true strength of character in his ambassadorship for the rights of disabled people, providing many examples of perseverance over his illustrious athletic career. I particularly note his achievements of crawling the nearly 100-kilometre long Kokoda Track in 2009 for charity and recently ending his international career by winning a hard-fought gold medal in the Men's T54 Marathon during the XXI Commonwealth Games. The integrity Kurt shows in his racing is reflected off the track in his commitment to fight the marginalisation of disabled people. Kurt should be congratulated on using his platform to create much-needed dialogue about the valuable contributions made by disabled people in our society. I extend commendation to Kurt's wife, Sheridan, and their two children, Harry and Emilia, who steadfastly support his endeavours.

**CRONULLA LIONS CLUB DROUGHT RELIEF**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (13:36):** I congratulate the Cronulla Lions Club, which is partnering with the Lions Club of Gunnedah, on directing disaster relief such as feed and water for livestock to drought-stricken farmers who have been crippled by one of the worst droughts in recorded history. At a recent Cronulla Lions Club meeting it took only five minutes to raise \$20,000 to assist the drought-stricken farmers, which will be used to purchase one truckload of feed. Club President Shaun Cronin said that a call was made to local businesses that members knew, and within five minutes they had managed to get a commitment for \$20,000. A truck has been arranged and will be on its way to Gunnedah this week.

The club is working with the Lions Club of Gunnedah to manage and arrange for the town, on the day when the truck arrives, to hand out the feed to farmers. Donations can be made on the website [cronullalions.org.au](http://cronullalions.org.au). Lions clubs fund 100 per cent of their administrative costs so 100 per cent of donations will go to the front line of this crisis to help farmers who are in need now.

**NEWCASTLE BUSINESS CLUB AWARD RECIPIENT LLOYD VALENTINE**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:37):** I bring to the House's attention the outstanding achievements of Mr Lloyd Valentine from my electorate of Charlestown. Mr Valentine recently received the Youth Award at the forty-third annual Newcastle Business Club awards night in recognition of his passionate advocacy for local people with disabilities. Mr Valentine, who has faced debilitating health issues for some time, founded the Healthy Change Challenge, which is a community program for people living with a disability and/or mental illness. The program takes a holistic approach to health care and seeks to help people make long-term improvements to their eating, lifestyle, cooking skills and shopping habits. The program has already seen outstanding results for participants and is currently running in collaboration with the University of Newcastle. I congratulate Lloyd on his success and look forward to seeing many great things from him in the future.

**XAVIER HIGH SCHOOL SISTER CITY VISIT**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:38):** On Friday 3 August, I attended an unusual event at Xavier High School in Albury. At the invitation of Principal Gavin Dykes, I joined him and Deputy Principal Lorraine Willis for a tea ceremony that was staged with due formality by students visiting from Nanping, Albury's sister city in China. Two school principals and translators were present for the ceremony, which was part of a week-long visit by 43 students to Xavier High School and the Albury area. It was a wonderful ceremony and it was great to see the students from Nanping Number 1 High School and Jianjin Middle School getting to know our region and building lasting, happy experiences, which they will take home with them. Students from Xavier High School will visit China during December this year.

**WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:39):** Today marks the end of World Breastfeeding Week—an international celebration of breastfeeding, and the health of babies and mothers. The health benefits of breastfeeding for both children and mums are clear, including lower instances of respiratory illness, middle ear infections, type 1 diabetes and childhood leukaemia. Breastfeeding is also known to encourage faster birth recovery in mums, and to reduce the risk of ovarian and breast cancers. Despite its many benefits, breastfeeding continues to attract stigma. Let us remember that discrimination on the basis of breastfeeding is explicitly illegal in all areas of public life. World Breastfeeding Week is about increasing awareness of breastfeeding to promote and support breastfeeding mums. It also gives us an opportunity to recognise the many mums and carers who experience complications with breastfeeding and the significant distress and pain that can sometimes cause. I acknowledge the important work of the Australian Breastfeeding Association, the Australian Breastfeeding Association Inner West Sydney and all of their volunteers to support mums, parents and carers.

**MIDCOAST BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:40):** I congratulate Jeff and Jenny Rodick from Lumpy's Nursery and Landscape in Tuncurry. Jeff and Jenny's determination to be the best in the business led them to almost scoop the pool in this year's MidCoast Business Awards. The savvy business couple went from runners-up in the 2017 awards to snatch this year's major award, the MidCoast Business of the Year. At the same time they took home a Highly Commended Award for Customer Service and won the Excellence in Retail Services Award, the People's Choice Award and the Excellence in Small Business Award. Jenny and Jeff have built the business from a small landscaping operation in 2003 to a one-stop shop for both trade and domestic landscapers. Their 22-year-old daughter, Jacquie, is following in her dad's footsteps by studying horticulture at Taree TAFE. I again congratulate two local hardworking and committed businesspeople, Jeff and Jenny Rodick, who provide a valued service to the residents of the Myall Lakes electorate.

**WOY WOY LITTLE THEATRE PRODUCTION**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:41):** Woy Woy Little Theatre had the community audience in fits of laughter once again as we joined in to enjoy Arthur Conan Doyle's murderously funny adventure *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Perfectly English Sherlock Holmes, played by James Charles, and his warm offside Dr Watson, played by Clayton Williamson, were joined by Thomas Unger, Martin Pemberton and Emma Moodie who entertained us throughout the course of the show as they agilely flipped between the costume and character, accent and personality of more than 40 characters between them. It was great to meet people from across the coast and even from Sydney who travelled to Woy Woy as our lovely local theatre company showcased another fine performance. I say hats off to director Andrew Thomson and stage manager Leanne Faulkner, the sound and lighting crew and the team behind the scenes who I know had a tricky job perfectly changing the characters as they bounced on and off set. I give another round of applause to art and culture on the Central Coast for another fine performance at Woy Woy Little Theatre.

### ASSYRIAN MARTYRS AND GENOCIDE DAY

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:42):** Today, 7 August, marks Assyrian Martyrs and Genocide Day. The day is designated to remember the Assyrian lives lost in the genocides of 1914 to 1918 and of 1933. On Sunday 5 August 2018 members of the Assyrian community gathered at the Assyrian memorial at Bonnyrigg to pay their respects to those who were persecuted for their Christian faith and Assyrian culture. Keynote speaker at the commemoration ceremony was Dr Panayiotis Diamadis, who is the Director of the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Leaders from the Jewish, Armenian and Greek communities also attended to pay their respects. I acknowledge the Assyrian Universal Alliance and the Assyrian National Federation for their advocacy in achieving recognition of the Assyrian genocide and the return of the Assyrian people to their ancestral lands on the Nineveh Plains.

### MULGOA ELECTORATE COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUPS

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:42):** Taste of Everything Women's Group was founded in Glenmore Park six years ago to bring together like-minded women to participate in local activities and enjoy each other's company. Linsey Hall and Martha Thornley run the group that meets every Thursday morning. The women get together regularly to build community and try new activities such as crafting, quilting, crocheting and cooking. I congratulate Linsey and Martha on this great initiative and encourage other women in Glenmore Park to get involved.

Glenmore Park resident Debbie O'Connor and her team at the Creative Fringe and people from Penrith and beyond have united to make the lives of the homeless community more comfortable this winter. Since the beginning of the year the Plastic Fantastic Group has been using plastic bags to create waterproof sleeping mats. Seven hundred single-use grocery bags are required to create a single mat. That is 700 fewer grocery bags in landfill and waterways. Although winter is drawing to a close, Debbie and her team will continue to make mats and blankets throughout the year. I encourage people to look up [www.thecreativefringe.com.au](http://www.thecreativefringe.com.au) to see how they can get involved. I congratulate Debbie.

### BRAIN CANCER RESEARCH FUNDING

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:44):** Community stalwart Debbie Daley is rocking a new look in June this week. The owner-operator of June's beautiful Railway Station Cafe has shaved her head to support brain cancer research. Ms Daley's brother passed away from an inoperable tumour on 29 December 2012. He was diagnosed just six days before. Ms Daley raised more than \$10,000 for the Charlie Teo Foundation with the shave. With more events planned leading up to Christmas, she is hoping to double that amount. I say well done to Debbie and the ever-charitable community of June for getting behind this important cause.

### LAKE MACQUARIE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:44):** On Saturday 28 July a gala dinner was held at Belmont 16s to celebrate successful businesses at the 2018 Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards. The aim of the awards is to recognise businesses operating in the City of Lake Macquarie that provide exemplary products and services. From world-class product developers to digital innovators, accounting firms to manufacturers, the award finalists showcased the diversity of businesses thriving within our city. This year's finalists were a true reflection of the diversity and quality of businesses within Lake Macquarie. A significant number of finalists across the 14 categories operate in my electorate of Charlestown. I was extremely proud that Warners Bay accounting firm Precision Taxation Accounting & Management won the Excellence in Digital Technology award as well as Business of the Year. To top the night off, Kelly Eke from Precision Taxation Accounting & Management won the Excellence in Customer Service as an individual award. I congratulate all the finalists on their outstanding performance over the past year and look forward to more success in 2018.

### COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION GALSTON BRANCH

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:45):** I congratulate the Galston branch of the Country Women's Association [CWA] on celebrating its sixtieth anniversary this year. The CWA is an institution for many rural communities. It has not only helped unite families and friends but also built the community and given everyone a voice. It is known for its delicious cooking and for the support that it provides members, which makes it so valuable in our community of Galston. The CWA Galston branch is particularly active and has members ranging from 30 years old to over 90.

The Galston branch runs a range of workshops throughout the year and holds junior cooking competitions as well as members' cooking contests. It is truly a remarkable community organisation helping to support women and giving back to the Hornsby shire. I thank the awesome president Valerie Garner, vice-president Robyn Kidd, secretary Pam Watson, and treasurer Merran Manning for their fabulous work. I also take this opportunity to thank



all the past committee members and volunteers who have been involved over the past 60 years. Their work has ensured the continued success of the CWA in Galston. I wish them all the best for the next 60 years as they continue to serve this important role in our community.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

#### *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome all our guests in the gallery this afternoon. We hope you enjoy question time. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the Whiffenpoofs—an a cappella singing group from Yale University, who are accompanied by the Hon. Michael Yabsley, former member for Vacluse, and Leo Schofield, AM. They are guests of the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the member for Goulburn.

I also welcome to the Chamber members from the Oatley RSL sub-branch, the Penshurst RSL sub-branch and Riverwood Legion RSL sub-branch, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure, the member for Oatley. I also welcome Cliff and Elza Maynard from North Nowra. They are guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and the Illawarra and South Coast, the member for Kiama. I also acknowledge members from the Central Coast Cancer Network Advocacy. They are guests of the member for Terrigal.

I welcome and acknowledge Jody Keal, Adam Tamine, Adrian Boothman, Cathy Hockey, Carmel Malloy and Cathy Griffin, mum of the member for Manly. They are guests of the member for Manly. I also welcome to the Chamber today Pauline and Amanda Willings and Kerry and Shirley Taylor from the Neutral Bay Community Centre. They are guests of the member for North Shore. I welcome all of our other guests.

#### *Commemorations*

### **CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR**

**The SPEAKER (14:20):** At 1.35 a.m. on 3 August 1918 a torpedo fired from the German submarine UC-49 struck the HMAT *Warilda*. The explosion destroyed the ship's starboard propeller and steering gear. Flooding in the engine room prevented the crew from shutting down the port engine. Through calm waters, the stricken vessel slowly circled around and around in the dark. The survivors had to wait for the engine to run out of steam before lifeboats could be lowered. The HMAT *Warilda* had been constructed in Glasgow for the Adelaide Steamship Company just prior to the war. Along with her identical sister ships, the HMAT *Wandilla* and the HMAT *Willochra*, she was a familiar sight along the Australian coast as she carried passengers in unrivalled comfort between Townsville, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

Requisitioned by the Commonwealth in August 1915, HMAT *Warilda* was converted into a troop transport ship and conveyed more than 7,000 Anzacs to Egypt. A year later she began regular crossings of the English Channel under the flag of the Red Cross. Nearly 80,000 wounded soldiers were carried to English hospitals aboard the *Warilda*. On the night she was torpedoed the *Warilda* was carrying 801 people. The engine room crew and all the patients and staff of 'I' ward, on the lowest deck, were either killed in the explosion or drowned in the flooding that rapidly followed. In total, 123 lost their lives, among them 15 Australians. The ship sank by the stern less than three hours after she was struck. The Australian media lambasted the sinking of the HMAT *Warilda* as "a diabolical outrage" and the worst offence committed against the Red Cross during the war. Lest we forget.

#### *Announcements*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY APPOINTMENTS**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that on 2 July 2018 Simon Johnston was appointed Acting Clerk-Assistant, Table; Jonathan Elliott was appointed Director, Table and Chamber Services; and Jenny Whight was appointed Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms. Congratulations to all those appointees.

#### *Members*

### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that today the Attorney General will be answering questions in the absence of the Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veteran Affairs.

*Announcements***DEATH OF LAWRENCE BORTHWICK KELLY, A FORMER SPEAKER AND MEMBER FOR CORRIMAL**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 11 July 2018 of the Hon. Lawrence Borthwick Kelly, a former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, who served as the member for Corrimal from 24 February 1968 to 22 February 1988. On behalf of the House I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained. This will be the subject of a motion of sympathy on a future day. Will members please stand as a mark of respect.

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

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Administrator of the State of New South Wales:

John Basten  
ADMINISTRATOR

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

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

Monday, 25 June 2018

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor of the State of New South Wales:

DAVID HURLEY  
Governor

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

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

Tuesday, 26 June 2018

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report the following message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales:

T. F. BATHURST  
Lieutenant-Governor

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

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

Saturday, 30 June 2018

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report the following message from His Excellency the Governor of the State of New South Wales:

DAVID HURLEY  
Governor

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

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

Sunday, 22 July 2018

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report the following message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales:

T. F. BATHURST  
Lieutenant-Governor

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

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

Sunday, 29 July 2018

### ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

**The SPEAKER:** I report the following message from His Excellency the Governor of the State of New South Wales:

DAVID HURLEY  
Governor

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

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

Tuesday, 31 July 2018

### *Bills*

#### MODERN SLAVERY BILL 2018

#### WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2018

#### CRIMES AMENDMENT (PUBLICLY THREATENING AND INCITING VIOLENCE) BILL 2018

#### CRIMINAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE) BILL 2018

#### VICTIMS RIGHTS AND SUPPORT AMENDMENT (STATUTORY REVIEW) BILL 2018

#### APPROPRIATION BILL 2018

#### APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2018

#### NSW GENERATIONS FUNDS BILL 2018

#### SNOWY HYDRO LEGACY FUND BILL 2018

#### STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

#### FORESTRY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

### Assent

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bills.

### *Members*

#### ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF WAGGA WAGGA

#### Vacant Seat

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that on Friday 3 August 2018 I received a letter from Daryl Williams Maguire resigning his seat as member for the electoral district of Wagga Wagga.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I move:

That in accordance with section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017 the seat of the member for Wagga Wagga be declared vacant by reason of the resignation of Daryl William Maguire.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Question Time*

#### FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:27):** My question is directed to the Premier. Why did the Premier retain Daryl Maguire as a parliamentary secretary even after he arranged for her to meet convicted criminals Gino Scutti and Nicholas Tinning?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27):** I acknowledge the question and say to the Leader of the Opposition that he shared caucus with criminals who are now behind bars.

**The SPEAKER:** I have already warned the member for Keira. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I do not know about the Leader of the Opposition, but when a constituent or a stakeholder wants to meet with me I do not check to see whether they have been done for driving under the influence. I do not check to see what their record is; I take them at face value.

**The SPEAKER:** If there are further interjections members will be called to order or removed from the Chamber. The House will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I turn the question back on the Leader of the Opposition. The Opposition raised with me previously why I met with those constituents. Why did the Leader of the Opposition not call for Mr Maguire's resignation if he thought it was inappropriate? He did not do it then.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I warn Opposition members to cease interjecting or they will be ejected from the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Those opposite are hypocrites. When a member of this place brings any other member into disrepute or does not act in accordance with public expectations he or she must take the right steps. I am pleased and relieved that the former member for Wagga Wagga not only resigned from the position of Parliamentary Secretary when those issues were raised at the Independent Commission Against Corruption but also resigned from the Liberal Party and subsequently resigned from this place, which was the appropriate thing to do. I only wish that those opposite applied the same standards.

### JOB CREATION

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:30):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier inform the House what the Government is doing to boost technology and innovation jobs in New South Wales?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30):** I thank the member for North Shore for the question and acknowledge her interest in job creation in New South Wales. Today I was pleased to announce that the region between Central station and Eveleigh will be the premium technology hub in New South Wales with 10,000 new jobs created in that precinct. As everyone knows, we are the party of the workers. Since coming to office this Government has created half a million jobs and established a primary technology precinct between Central station and Eveleigh.

I was pleased to join key stakeholder Scott Farquhar, co-founder and co-chief executive officer of software company Atlassian, a homegrown Australian company that now employs more than 1,000 people. That global brand has chosen to make Sydney its premium hub and headquarters. The advice of co-founders Scott Farquhar and Mike Cannon-Brookes will be critical to establishing this hub. We have all heard of Silicon Valley in the United States of America and of the tech hubs in Tel Aviv and in other places. There is no reason that such a precinct should not exist in Sydney. It will create opportunities for Australians and those around the world who want to achieve their best. Neither Minister Blair nor I were as eloquent as Scott Farquhar when describing what this Government has done as a result of establishing this technology hub. Scott stated:

It sends a really strong signal to the world that Sydney is open for business for technology, the largest industry on the planet.

...

Fifteen years ago there was no technology precinct or technology industry in Australia.

...

As computer science graduates the best we could hope for was working at a bank or a consultancy organisation...and Mike and I weren't up for that. So, with a healthy dose of naivety we started out on our own.

Fast forward to today, Sydney now as a thriving tech industry. ...we have great universities, we have lots of start-ups, we have tech incubators, and we have co-working spaces, but what we've been missing until today is a home.

I'm really excited we're establishing this tech precinct in Sydney, I think we have finally found a home for technology here in Sydney.

Today we sent a really strong signal to the world that Sydney is open for business for technology, the largest industry on the planet.

I thank Atilla Brungs, Vice-Chancellor, University of Technology for hosting us today. Both the University of Technology and the University of Sydney are part of the task force that is helping to develop this precinct. We were joined by Patricia Forsythe, Executive Director of the Sydney Business Chamber, and by TechSydney and Fishburners—all well-known brands in this area. The aim is to ensure that this hub becomes not only the best in the Southern Hemisphere but also the best in the world at establishing start-ups in the tech industry. There is nothing to stop us from doing that.

Of course I am obsessed with jobs, and of course I am obsessed with attracting investment to New South Wales, but I am also obsessed with putting Sydney and New South Wales on the map when it comes to those jobs for the future. We have a highly skilled, highly educated workforce. We have universities supporting our young people and now we have a precinct which will be able to create and develop those jobs for the future. When I asked the vice-chancellors of the universities and people such as Scott from Atlassian what it takes to have a successful tech hub, they voluntarily identified quite a few things. They identified that the precinct should have

great public transport should be serviced by metro and light rail lines not only today but also in the future. It will be serviced by our two great universities and start-ups that are already finding a home in that precinct. As members know, the Deputy Premier and I are very proud that New South Wales is home to 43 per cent of start-ups in Australia. We want to take that number to 50 per cent. It does not matter if you live in the bush, or indeed or in any part of Australia, if you want to be the world's best at something technology-related then Sydney, New South Wales is the place to be. This morning confirms that. [*Extension of time*]

Today I mentioned to Scott Farquhar that recently when we were in Washington in the United States at the National Governors Association conference, attended by all the State Premiers and the Prime Minister, I happened to sit next to the Governor of North Dakota, a newly elected governor who, coincidentally, was the first chair of Atlassian. Here we have a homegrown Aussie company building networks around the world and now advising the Government and our key stakeholders on how to develop this exciting technology precinct. In addition to having great access to public transport, to universities and tertiary institutions of every description, and to skills, we now have a home for a technology hub in New South Wales. I am extremely proud of that. I thank everybody for being involved.

It is also a good reminder that governments have to be vigilant in enabling job creation. If we sit on our hands and do nothing, the State does not move forward. Since the Coalition has been in government we have created half a million jobs—200 of which are in Western Sydney and 100,000 in regional New South Wales. We are incredibly proud of that. Whether it is in industries that have been around for centuries, in the trades, where we are providing 100,000 free apprenticeships, or in the jobs of the future, such as technology, we are on the ball, in the game and making sure we put New South Wales first, because that is what our citizens expect us to do. Members opposite do not support workers; they support their own interests. If they supported workers, they would support our infrastructure program and all the great things we are doing, but all they do is cancel projects. I believe with every fibre of my being that if there is a job to create, we will create it in New South Wales because we are the party of the workers.

#### FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:37):** My question is directed to the Premier. In 2015 the former member for Wagga Wagga visited Guangzhou and met the Chairman of Aoyuan, the developer of multiple Sydney properties, including luxury apartments in Sydney's central business district. Will the Premier order a full inquiry into this relationship and the visit, and establish what representations the member made to her Ministers and their staff on behalf of this developer on his return?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:38):** If the member has a concern, or if anybody else has a concern, about any of those matters, there is an Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] investigation and the member should refer any issues of concern to that inquiry. That is the appropriate way to deal with these issues.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. I do have a concern. That is why I asked the Premier to look into it. Will she?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Again I say to the member, if he or any other member has any concern about this matter or any other matter in which they feel an inappropriate action has been taken, there is a live inquiry, a current investigation, and he should refer it. He has some hide: He thanked Eddie Obeid and Joe Tripodi in his first speech to the Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Maroubra stood in this Parliament to make his first speech and thanked Eddie Obeid and Joe Tripodi.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time. The Premier has concluded her answer. Order! The House will come to order. I warn those five members who have been called to order for interjections that they will soon be called to order a second and third time and will be removed from the Chamber until tomorrow. Irrespective of functions this afternoon or this evening, they will be removed from the Chamber.

#### DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:40):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What measures are being taken by the Government to assist landholders currently affected by drought conditions in New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time. I had not thought there would be interjections on this issue.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:40):** Especially from a member who represents those in the Hunter region. I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question. Unlike many members in this House across the political aisle, I am sure the issue of drought and the impact it has on our struggling farmers, their families and regional communities is not lost. We know how tough it is for anyone who has travelled to regional New South Wales. It is clear that this drought is biting like we had not expected and I am proud that this Government has responded.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. Standing orders state that members should not be wandering around the Chamber.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I also acknowledge the support we are seeing across the State. People who live in Sydney or a metro city are donating to a range of charities. Many charities are doing wonderful work to ensure we are supporting our farmers as best we can. Fifteen-plus months ago we were dealing with floods in Lismore. That is the State and nation that we live in: We can go from floods to drought. A number of months ago the New South Wales Government announced a drought package to assist farmers. A number of key announcements were made in the drought package, including our investment in Doppler weather radars. Weather data will be important for mapping climate and climate change, particularly rainfall. We have put a streamlined kangaroo management strategy in place. Anyone who has travelled on highways in the regions across New South Wales would see the kangaroo carnage. Kangaroos are coming out of the bush looking for food. The kangaroo management strategy is about their welfare. Even though it is about culling kangaroos—which some people might not like—the reality is that it is a welfare issue for the kangaroos.

The impact of kangaroos and emus coming onto farms across the regions to eat feed has meant that the impact of the drought has been brought forward by four to six months. On Monday 30 July it was great to have the Premier and the Minister for Primary Industries make a further announcement outside of Bathurst about the Government's response to this drought we are enduring. That announcement takes the total package to \$1.1 billion in drought support across regional New South Wales. A key feature of that announcement is drought transport subsidies, which are cutting the cost of farming fees and charges such as Local Land Services rates, waiving fixed water charges in regional areas and waiving class one agricultural vehicle registration. The most important investment in this package was the additional investment of \$10 million in counselling and mental health. The wellbeing of our farmers, their families and communities must be our focus and priority as we continue to endure tough times in the region. Even if it rains today, it will be 18 months to two years before we can recoup what we started with.

All the measures are important, such as the previous announcement to bolster the Farm Innovation Fund. This will enable farmers to futureproof their farms as best as possible against drought by investing in infrastructure that will assist them in managing conditions such as those occurring today. We talk about drought and stock but, as I touched on a minute ago, this is about people. I had an opportunity to visit Jackie and Jason, who run a Simmental beef stud just outside of Scone.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** They are doing it very tough in the Upper Hunter, a region that normally does not experience drought. It is often referred to as "God's country" because of its rainfall throughout the year. Jackie and Jason moved from Crookwell in order to farm in an area where hopefully in the long term they would not have to endure drought. Unfortunately, the Upper Hunter is facing a severe drought and the impact is real. While sitting down and having a chat with Jason, the impact of the drought was made clear to me. But what I love about regional people and our farmers is they always put on a brave face. [*Extension of time*]

They continue to hope and to see opportunities. They do not complain because they know someone else is doing it tough and is worse off than they are. Following the announcement in Bathurst, we travelled to Tamworth and met some dairy farmers up there. We then travelled down and drove through the Upper Hunter where we met with a number of farmers. I note that the wellbeing and mental health issues are real. I left those areas concerned about some of those farmers and individuals. I have asked Minister Blair, through his councils, to get in touch because our communities and our farmers are hurting from the situation they have to endure.

The response by the New South Wales Government, which had the full support of the Premier and the Treasurer, touched every aspect of the farming industry. Like the croppers that the member for Cootamundra spoke about, there is not a lot we can do unless it rains. However, the switching off of Local Land Services [LLS]

rates—not just deferring them but actually waiving these costs—will help a little to get them through these very tough times. We will continue to focus and work on the issues and we have committed to doing so. The Premier, Minister Blair and I have said that if more needs to be done we will be there, hand in hand. We will continue to work with our families on the land as they endure one of the toughest droughts in living memory.

On the flipside, we are praying and hoping for rain. If it does rain, the New South Wales Government is already working on support for the farmers to get back on their feet. I acknowledge the work of organisations such as Drought Angels, Rural Aid, Aussie Helpers, Thirsty Cow, the Salvation Army, Vinnies and the Country Women's Association [CWA], just to name a few. These great organisations are on the ground delivering support, food and finances. They are bringing food and fodder and supporting our farmers. I thank all members of this House from all sides of politics for championing the cause on behalf of our farmers and for reaching into their own pockets. I know that members have participated in many fundraisers and I thank them. We are all in this together; that is the only way we will get through it.

#### **FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:47):** My question is directed to the Premier. In an Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] telephone tap, Daryl Maguire was recorded saying, "I've got another client that has given me orders for three particular properties." What steps has the Premier taken to establish exactly how many developers Mr Maguire was covertly working for?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:48):** I remind the member for Port Stephens that those matters are being dealt with by the people who should deal with them, that is, the Independent Commission Against Corruption. It is not for her or any other member of this place to investigate matters that are being investigated by the ICAC. I say to her and I repeat: If she or any other member of this place has any concerns about this or any other matter, refer them to the correct bodies.

#### **EDUCATION WEEK**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:48):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government securing the future of school students across the State?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:48):** I thank the member for Manly for his excellent question and his interest in matters of education. His community is a young and growing community. It is not surprising therefore that we have a number of school developments underway in the seat of Manly: at Manly Vale; a recently completed school at Harbord, and the Premier and I attended the opening; and the imminent commencement of one at North Curl Curl. There is a lot of exciting work happening in Manly as a consequence of the growth in enrolments we are seeing now and that are being projected into the future. As members across this House are no doubt aware, this week is Education Week. In fact, every week is education week.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Except for school holidays.

**Mr STOKES:** I acknowledge the interjection. I note that schoolteachers are hard at work throughout the year.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr STOKES:** I encourage all members to take the opportunity, this week especially but also throughout the year, to visit our local public schools and acknowledge the incredible work and professionalism of our teachers and the support provided to them by support staff, general assistants, and all those in the school community, including the supportive parents and parents and citizens associations. Schools are perhaps the most important infrastructure that governments provide. Our public education system is foundational to our social contract. Public education is, in so many ways, the incubator of our prosperity and the catalyst for the social cohesion that we enjoy. It is foundational to so much that matters in New South Wales.

The theme of Education Week 2018 is "Today's schools—creating tomorrow's world". That does not just point to the spatial reach of our schools. Together with the member for Murray, I talked to students at Tooleybuc Central School, which is about 10 hours drive from Sydney in the Riverina. I recognise the 2,200 schools across the breadth and length of this great State. The theme also recognises the temporal nature of our schools and that public education has served the people of New South Wales for 170 years. The first public school in New South Wales was opened 170 years ago next month at Kempsey. In January 1849 the next two schools opened were Botany Public School, in the electorate of the member for Maroubra, and Largs Public School, in the electorate of the member for Maitland.

It is worth noting that public education was supported in New South Wales even before we had representative democracy in this State. That is how important it is to the social cohesion we share and the

prosperity we enjoy. It is a wonderful point of bipartisanship in this place that all members recognise and support the centrality of public education to our very being as a parliament. We should look at the way in which our school system has expanded from those early beginnings in the 1840s—as I mentioned, we now have more than 2,200 schools across New South Wales. In 1851 the teaching service consisted of 39 teachers. Today we have more than 65,000 teachers in public education and more than 18,000 support staff working alongside them. That shows the strength of the system that we have inherited and it is our duty to pass it on in even better shape than we received it.

It is also important to recognise the professionalism of our teaching staff. Back in 1851, a person needed to undertake a one-month intensive course at Fort Street to become a schoolteacher. Today we have 18 universities and colleges providing postgraduate degrees and graduate diplomas in education, all the way to a PhD in education, with a focus on the pedagogy that undergirds the great work that is happening in our New South Wales public schools. [*Extension of time*]

As I stated, Education Week is an opportunity for us to celebrate what is going on in schools across the State and in the communities we represent. This Friday the member for Manly and I will be visiting schools in his community. I encourage all members—I know it is a sitting week—to get out to our public schools and say thank you for the incredible work they have done for each of us and the great work they do for the communities we represent.

### REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (14:54):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. How is the New South Wales Government delivering health services for regional New South Wales, and what would residents miss out on under a Labor government?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (14:54):** I thank the member for Albury for his question and pay my respects to him. He is one of a group of amazing Liberal and Nationals members who have represented the regions over the years. From memory, he was elected in 2003, and again in 2007, 2011 and 2015. I have had the honour of serving with him in this Parliament and I acknowledge that he has, in the past week, announced that he will retire at the next election. On behalf of our regional and rural communities, and indeed all of New South Wales, I thank the member for Albury for what he has done. The member for Albury personifies what the Liberal Party and The Nationals do for regional communities. It is disappointing to see the group of people who sit opposite us, who did so little for regional areas when they were in government—

[*Interruption*]

You like it when I rev up? I will work up to revving up.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Kogarah to order for the first time. Members will come to order and will cease interjecting. The member for Maroubra will come to order. The member for Londonderry will come to order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Last week I visited Dubbo, Bourke and everywhere in between. The thing you have to understand if you want to be elected in the regions is that the people are of the earth and they understand when you are not telling the truth.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn members to cease interjecting. Those members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In Wagga Wagga what they understood about Labor in 2009 can be very clearly seen. The *Daily Advertiser* published an article headed, "Trust Us, Trust Us." And it has a picture of—

[*Interruption*]

No. I will tell you what it has a picture of. It has a picture of six Labor Ministers, and it says—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will address her remarks to me, not to the Minister.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** I have to confess I did not listen to the question—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** I know that this is not relevant. He is the health Minister—

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



[Interruption]

Nice try. There is no point of order. If the member did not hear the question she cannot possibly take a point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I say to the folks in the gallery, when a shadow Minister gets up to take a point of order when she has not even listened to the question that is the quality the State will get if those opposite ever get into government—"I didn't know that was happening." Oh Lord!

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield rises on a point of order. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** This is absolutely not relevant. I refer to Standing Order 129. This is not relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** I will continue to listen to the Minister and will take note of the member's point of order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I entirely agree with the shadow Minister: She is not relevant—absolutely not relevant.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: I am not relevant to the question. Madam Speaker, I ask, through you—

[Interruption]

That is not how you should behave as a Minister. Do you really need to do that?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** You excite the—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Have you been drinking? Are you drunk?

**The SPEAKER:** What an accusation to make, member for Strathfield. Run to the media. Off you go.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** That would be the pot calling the kettle black, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I could invoke Churchill on that but it might reflect unkindly on the member. In 2009 the *Daily Advertiser* listed 10 reasons that people cannot trust Labor. Looking back on the example of Wagga Wagga hospital, I would have to say that is exactly true.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The same genetic pool of mealy-mouthed squibs that existed then exists now.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield rises on a point of order. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order is the same one under Standing Order 129. You indicated that you would listen further to the Minister. I wonder whether you have now heard that he is not being relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have refreshed my memory of the question. The Minister is being entirely relevant to the question he was asked.

[Extension of time]

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I invite people to go back to the *Daily Advertiser*. This story tells us that this mealy-mouthed bunch of squibs basically pretended year after year that they would build Wagga Wagga hospital. Did they put any money into the hospital? Never.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In 2015 the current Leader of the Opposition and the current shadow Minister put out a policy document with not a single mention of stage three of Wagga Wagga hospital. There was nothing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Lakemba to order for the first time. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the third time. Members will cease interjecting.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Basically, we can be absolutely certain that—as the *Daily Advertiser* said in 2009—you cannot trust Labor to continue the work that we have started.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** They trusted Daryl Maguire, didn't they?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** What was that?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Liverpool will cease interjecting.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I cannot trust Luke Foley as far as I can throw him, and the community cannot trust Mr Foley as far as they can throw him. He did not even mention Wagga Wagga hospital.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** We are completing \$431 million worth of work on Wagga Wagga hospital and if we are re-elected we will complete the hospital. We will also continue to increase the number of nurses.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease having conversations across the Chamber. The member for Hornsby will come to order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In the past few years we have dramatically increased the number of nursing staff at Wagga Wagga hospital. The acute services building came into operation in 2016. We have increased the staff there from 487 to 568, which is a 16 per cent increase in just the past few years. Labor did not have the money, would not have the money and could not increase the staff at all. Do not believe their lies.

#### **FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:02):** My question is directed to the Minister for Racing. Daryl Maguire has said he spoke to the Minister's office about appointing Michael Hawatt to the post-merger advisory group of Canterbury-Bankstown Council. Why did the Minister agree to the request from the member for Wagga Wagga about appointments to Canterbury-Bankstown Council?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (15:02):** I am not aware of any approach from the former member for Wagga Wagga. Membership of committees was a matter for the administrator of the new council, and administrators were encouraged to appoint former councillors to local advisory committees in order to maintain local representation until elections. There is no doubt that the former member's behaviour was not what is expected from members of this Parliament. It has no place in this Government and the former member let down his community and the people of New South Wales. As members are aware, the Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation is continuing and so it is not appropriate to comment any further. If anyone has allegations to make they should refer them to the appropriate authorities for immediate investigation.

#### **HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:04):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Given the inarguable importance of nurses to our healthcare system, what will the Government do to ensure that nurse-to-patient ratios in New South Wales are increased to support those healthcare professionals to deliver world-class care, particularly in regional areas?

**The SPEAKER:** If members are not interested in the subject matter, they can leave of their own accord rather than have me eject them. I remind members that several of them are on three calls to order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:04):** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. He is a very good local member and is always respectful in his endeavours on behalf of his electorate. I appreciate that and value having worked with him in the health area and other areas.

**Mr Greg Piper:** Kangaroos come to mind.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Kangaroos was one of those areas and we worked well together on that issue, thank you. But we will leave kangaroos aside for the moment. I ask the member for Lake Macquarie to not believe the rubbish coming from the Leader of the Opposition. As I said in my previous answer, the good folk of Wagga Wagga were able to identify 10 serious reasons that one should not trust the Labor Party. As late as November last year, the then President of the Australian Medical Association (NSW), Professor Brad Frankum, said that if the Opposition wanted to work with doctors and the medical fraternity the most important thing was to be trusted, but that association did not trust the shadow Minister. The Leader of the Opposition has kept the shadow Minister in place. It is about trust, but ratios are an important part of the staffing of hospitals.

At the outset, I acknowledge the good work of not only the member for Lake Macquarie but also the nurses and midwives across this State. This Government has appointed nearly 8,000 new nurses in the past few years. I have had the pleasure of working with the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. On behalf of the nurses I acknowledge that the association has been doing a good job and that its general secretary, Brett Holmes, has spoken to me on a regular basis. As he and I have acknowledged, we do not always agree on every issue, as you would expect if you are in government. But he speaks honestly and openly about the issues to do with nursing. To the member for Lake Macquarie I say this: There are ratios. That is a logical way of working across our hospital system. The ratios determine the number of staff in each ward—members would understand that there are differing requirements.

For example, an emergency department is much more flexible. You need to be fleet of foot to work out the staffing, depending on who or how many come through the door. It is different for a general ward or surgical ward. The statistics would indicate more clearly the number of staff needed. I have been working with the association and I share its view that there should be ratios in hospitals—and there are. Its definition of "ratio" is a little different, but our definition, which the Government supports and which the Opposition also supported when it was in government, is one based on nurses linked to patient hours. That is the ratio. That is exactly what it is. It is flexible and works well, according to the advice that I have received from department officials. Having said that, I have asked department officials—as late as yesterday when I was sitting with one of the deputy secretaries—to work through those issues and to make sure that there are appropriate nursing staff ratios across all 15 local health districts.

The nurses association shared that perhaps some local health districts do not necessarily apply what the Government believes should be applied. For example, sometimes local management might find it difficult to get a registered nurse, so it may appoint an assistant nurse when a registered nurse is on leave or is sick. The Government does not support that. I do not find that acceptable as Minister. I have put that in the strongest terms by attending each of the quarterly meetings with the chief executives of the 15 local health districts.

I have also put that very strongly to the chairs of the boards of the local health districts. As late as yesterday afternoon I was asking—again, with the deputy secretary who is involved—about what messages we are hearing back from them as to how they will make sure that that does not continue. I can promise the member that the ratios are well and truly locked in. I say again: I would not trust Mr Foley on this. Mr Foley, in his last policy document, said he would provide for ratios in paediatric wards and emergency departments only. Emergency departments do not need them; they are already staffed appropriately. We are working through issues in paediatric wards, and general medical and surgical areas. I will continue to do that.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY WORKER PROTECTION**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:09):** My question is directed to the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the New South Wales Government standing up for the workers of Western Sydney and is he aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (15:10):** The member for Parramatta asked a great question. He is the most loved member for Parramatta in that electorate's history. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is proud to represent the only party in this place that stands up for middle Australia. We know that when middle Australia is doing well New South Wales and this country are doing well. Every day we are out there fighting for the families across this State. Nowhere is that more evident than in Western Sydney, where we are delivering WestConnex, the largest road project in our nation's history—opposed by those opposite. We are investing record amounts in hospitals such as Nepean Hospital and Westmead Hospital, and that great new health revolution in Liverpool.

The Government has just allocated \$3 billion to fast-track the Sydney Metro West, and we are working with the Federal Government on the north-south rail. We are building the schools, hospitals, roads and rail that Labor failed to build for 16 years. This investment—\$87 billion worth—in infrastructure is not only about facilities that are being provided: it is also about the jobs boom that runs off the back of it. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country—4.7 per cent. It has been the lowest for three years. Importantly, in Western Sydney the unemployment rate is 4.9 per cent, which is the lowest since records began.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask members to come to order. Members will curtail their conversations.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This is what happens. This is what good Liberal-Nationals governments do. They create the environment for businesses and for workers to succeed. On that note, today is Tax Cut Tuesday. The first wave of our budget payroll tax cuts are kicking in today. Members opposite do not like tax cuts. They like increasing taxes on business, just as they did in the lead-up to the last election.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Importantly, this tax cut today means that businesses, particularly businesses in Western Sydney, have more money to hire new staff and to invest in the things that matter—higher wages and the like. In relation to the question, there are other approaches to boosting employment, particularly in Western Sydney. One approach is to hire staff, bully them, sack them and then hire new staff to replace them. It is staff recycling—otherwise known as the Emma Husar approach to job creation. To her credit, Emma Husar has created 20 new jobs all by herself. This is how the so-called party of the workers actually treats its own workers. In the Labor Party—just like in *Animal Farm*—some workers are not equal to other workers.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order is in relation to Standing Order 129. The question was about State initiatives to develop jobs. Given that what the Treasurer is talking about is a Federal issue and that particular person is not in the Chamber to defend herself, it is a pretty weak attack.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer was talking about employment and jobs. At the moment he is being relevant. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It is not a weak attack at all. Here is the protection racket with the Labor Party.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** How many members opposite came out to defend and look after the workers who were bullied in Western Sydney? Did the Leader of the Opposition come out?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. I have already ruled that there is no point of order on relevance. Does the member for Campbelltown have something new?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Yes, I do. I refer to Standing Order 73. Government members diverted attention away from questions about the former member for Wagga Wagga because of an investigation and an investigation is going on in relation to the other matter. I suggest that those opposite take some medicine out of their own cabinet.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. There is a difference—they were questions; this is an answer.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** To the point of order: There is a thing called the Independent Commission Against Corruption and there is a thing called an independent Labor investigation. Who have they got to conduct this independent Labor investigation? A bloke by the name of John Whelan. Who is John Whelan? He was a staffer to Bob Carr, a chief of staff to Michael Costa, a senior staffer to Kevin Rudd and a speech writer for Julia Gillard. That is what Labor means by an independent investigation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cessnock should be careful. This is my final warning. Government members will come to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us get this right. The Labor Party is paying a Labor luminary to conduct a sham investigation and to run a protection racket to clear its guilty members of Parliament.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Stop the clock.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Maybe earlier on there was some relevance—

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member for Lakemba have a point of order?

**Mr Jihad Dib:** It is Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have already ruled on that. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** The rant we have just heard is completely irrelevant to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I am sorry, which language?

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Rant.

**The SPEAKER:** "Rant"? I thought you said poor language. I did not hear that. There is no point of order. The Treasurer has the call.

[Extension of time]

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We know when it comes to these independent Labor investigations that there is only one verdict: not guilty. This is nothing more than cash for clearance.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Gosford will cease shouting. Government members will come to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This is nothing more than an attempt to clear their own members of any misconduct. Earlier today I looked at the Facebook page of the New South Wales Labor Party. What does one see? Emma Husar volunteers and workers all over it. She is the pin-up girl and this is the trophy cabinet of abused Labor workers. When it comes to looking after workers it always stops when it comes to their self-interest. Every day of the week they put politics before principle. Over the past few weeks no-one has spoken out because they were told to be silent. Obviously that memo did not get to the member for Cessnock. Here is the Emma Husar of the State Parliament.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about jobs in Western Sydney. Madam Speaker, I know you have previously ruled on this but I ask you to listen to what the Treasurer is saying.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. I certainly am listening to the Treasurer's answer. The member for Strathfield did not listen to the question beforehand.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The reality is that there is only one party in this place that will always stand up for the workers of New South Wales, particularly the workers of Western Sydney: the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government.

#### *Documents*

### **AUDITOR-GENERAL**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 41D of the Local Government Act 1993, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "Fraud controls in local councils", dated 22 June 2018, received out of session on 22 June 2018 and authorised to be printed.

In accordance with section 63 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following reports of the Auditor-General:

- (1) Special Report entitled "Assessment of the use of a training program", dated 27 June 2018, received out of session on 27 June 2018 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Performance Audit Report entitled "Regulation of water pollution in drinking catchments and illegal disposal of solid waste", dated 28 June 2018, received out of session on 28 June 2018 and authorised to be printed.
- (3) Special Report entitled "Performance audit insights—Key findings from 2014-2018", dated 29 June 2018, received out of session on 29 June 2018 and authorised to be printed.
- (4) Performance Audit Report entitled "Matching skills training with market needs", dated 26 July 2018, received out of session on 26 July 2018 and authorised to be printed.

#### *Committees*

### **JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL**

#### **Government Response: Report on the Eleventh General Meeting with the Valuer-General**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 2/56 of the Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General entitled "Report on the Eleventh General Meeting with the Valuer-General", received out of session on 11 July 2018 and authorised to be printed.

#### *Documents*

### **LAW REFORM COMMISSION**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 13 of the Law Reform Commission Act 1967, I announce receipt of report No. 144 of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission entitled "Laws relating to the beneficiaries of trusts", dated May 2018, received out of session on 31 July 2018 and authorised to be printed.

**INSPECTOR OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 242 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, I announce receipt of the report pursuant to section 242 (3) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission on Covert Search Warrants for the period ending 28 May 2018, dated June 2018, received out of session on 31 July 2018 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 58/56**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 58/56", dated 7 August 2018. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 57/56, dated 19 June 2018.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

**Stockton Beach**

Petition calling on the Government to act urgently to protect the Stockton community and to save Stockton Beach, received from **Mr Tim Crakanthorp**.

**The SPEAKER:** I set down discussion on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: MOTION ACCORDED PRIORITY**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the consideration at this sitting of the notice of motion to be accorded priority given by the member for Upper Hunter, followed by the notice of motion to be accorded priority given by the member for Auburn prior to the commencement of Government business.

**Motion agreed to.***Petitions***PETITIONS**

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

**Wallacia Golf Club Cemetery Development**

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

**Affordable Housing**

Petition requesting legislation mandating a percentage of all new residential developments be set aside for affordable housing received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

**Lightweight Plastic Bags**

Petition requesting the banning of lightweight plastic bags in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Park**

Petition calling on the Government to declare a marine park in the Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion with sanctuary zones to protect the coastal lifestyle, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Sydney Football Stadium**

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

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

### **Jewells Primary School**

Petition requesting that the Government provide a pedestrian crossing and a 40 kilometres per hour school zone with flashing lights between Fencott Drive and Lepton Parade, Jewells, to ensure a safe route to school for Jewells Primary School students, received from **Ms Yasmin Catley**.

## **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

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

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Wallacia Golf Club Cemetery Development—lodged 23 May 2018 (Mrs Tanya Davies)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Newcastle Live Music—lodged 7 June 2018 (Mr Tim Crakanthorp)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—South Coast Rail Line—lodged 22 May 2018 (Mr Jamie Parker)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Edmondson Park Car Parking—lodged 24 May 2018 (Mr Anoulack Chanthivong)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Punch Street, Mosman, Bus Services—lodged 6 June 2018 (Ms Felicity Wilson)

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Eastern Sydney High School—lodged 5 and 6 June 2018 (Mr Jihad Dib)

The Hon. Pru Goward—Tertiary Campus Sexual Assault Reform—lodged 5 June 2018 (Ms Jo Haylen)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Glebe Island Multi-User Facility—lodged 19 June 2018 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

### *Business of the House*

## **BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3), General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills) No. 1 [Crimes and Anti-Discrimination Legislation Amendment (Racial and Other Vilification) Bill] and General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 2697 to 2712 have lapsed.

### *Motions Accorded Priority*

## **DROUGHT**

### **Priority**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:22):** It is with pleasure that I move:

That this House

- (1) Acknowledges that 99 per cent of New South Wales is currently experiencing drought.
- (2) Notes the hardship being felt by farmers and regional communities across the State
- (3) Recognises the Government's extensive emergency drought relief package
- (4) Encourages all members to work collaboratively to ensure appropriate assistance is provided as conditions worsen.

People in rural and regional areas are suffering severely in many, many areas, not the least of which is in my electorate of Upper Hunter. It is good to see the acknowledgement and empathy coming from our city cousins towards the plight of—

**The SPEAKER:** If members are not interested in this subject matter they should leave the Chamber.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** —the farmers and farming families and our farming and rural communities.

**The SPEAKER:** Members should refrain from wandering around the Chamber. Members who are not leaving the Chamber should resume their seat.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** I am happy to continue when you are ready, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I am ready but some people just never will be.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** In rural New South Wales we are ready. Ninety-nine per cent of New South Wales is currently experiencing drought—something we have not seen for many decades. People in villages, valleys and towns in regional New South Wales are in dire straits as a result of the lack of water. They have no fodder, cattle and sheep are dying and they are unable to grow crops. As a former dairy farmer who farmed through a drought in the early 1980s I understand what it is like not to be able to access water to run a dairy. We had to dig a hole in the Hunter River to get enough water to fill the cattle troughs and to wash out the dairy. I know what these farmers are experiencing.

This Government acknowledged the suffering of farmers and rural communities and recently announced additional funding of \$500 million which will increase the assistance package to \$1.1 billion. This will go a long way towards ensuring that farmers, farming families and communities recognise and understand that the New South Wales Government is doing everything it can to assist and alleviate pressure where possible. The drought started in the Upper Hunter and has been ongoing for 18 months which in itself is not such a long time. The drought has been so intense that the groundwater and underground water depletion could not have been imagined. Farmers' inability to grow feed for their stock is depressing.

The Government can do only so much. It is the Government's responsibility to respond to the needs of the community as the drought continues. The Government is responding. The Premier, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Primary Industries have made it clear that the Government will continue to respond if the drought continues. Members representing city and rural electorates need to work together and show empathy and compassion for rural communities. A strong agricultural sector is a necessity. We all need food and water and we all want to wake up in the morning and have hope. At the moment it is difficult. Members of the farming community wake up, walk out on the veranda with a cup of tea, look out over the paddocks and know that today will be just as bad as yesterday and that it will get worse. We need rain, we need hope and we need to work together.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:28):** I am honoured and privileged to have an opportunity to speak in this place about something as serious, severe and challenging as the drought which is affecting 99 per cent of New South Wales. The member for Upper Hunter and I are neighbours in that our electorates include one of the most beautiful parts of the world—the Hunter Valley. Scientists agree that this is one of the most significant droughts in Australia's history. It is important to understand why parliaments and political parties of all persuasions have been resisting this type of drought funding. In 2013 an intergovernmental agreement acknowledged that drought and climate change will be an increasing problem and that any funding—as important and deserved as it is on this occasion—is only a bandaid solution. We need to change farming practices. Climate change has made some once marginal farming land no longer farmable. Farm industries that once were viable are now no longer viable.

These are the issues that we need to understand and that we have to face in the future. These were the conversations that we had leading up to the 2013 Council of Australian Governments [COAG] agreement. We need to continue on that path. As an example, marginal land—not good land—was given to returned servicemen from the First World War in the hope that they could eke out a career and lifestyle, raise a family and play a useful role in society. Fast forward 100 years to today when we no longer have that climate. A few weeks ago I attended an Insurance Council of Australia symposium. The modelling that it has on drought is something every member of this Parliament should see. Simple models and graphs show that over a 150 year period the rain is falling in different parts of the nation—it is disappearing from some regions and it is falling in others. It is no longer business as usual. We cannot keep propping up those industries that no longer have a future. It is difficult, challenging and extremely hard work. I am not suggesting that we do that today or tomorrow; it will take us a number of years to work out and we have to do that together.

Farmers and their families in drought-affected communities are on their knees. There is nothing sadder than seeing images of farmers and reading stories about those who have taken their lives, the lives of their families or who have disposed of their cattle. Because of the drought people believe they have no option other than ending their lives. During this difficult time funding for mental health is extremely important. People in isolated communities do not have the same access to services that people in towns and cities have. They cannot hop on a bus to go to an appointment with the local psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker. Often they are too proud to jump that massive hurdle by raising a hand and asking for help. The mental health aspect of any drought package is always the most important. It will be incredible if we get through this drought without any loss of life.



**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (15:33):** For eight of the 12 years that I have been a member in this place western New South Wales has either been suffering from a drought or has been extremely dry. Most people who understand how the economy and landscapes are managed—I talk about landscapes on a broad scale—recognise that farmers do it well. Drought is something that is endured by those who live in the country. I have always said that city people tend to live day to day and week to week, or pay cheque to pay cheque. Country people and people in rural communities live season to season and year to year. They play the long waiting game.

When it comes to issues to do with weather, climate change and deep dries, people usually make and have become quite good at making provisions over deep and long dries. The 1950s and 1970s were wet years. The 1960s were dry years. The past 10 years since 2007 have been exceedingly dry as well. Rural communities have become used to managing deep dries. We are in an unusual situation at the moment. We are probably back to the weather patterns of the mid-1960s when good farmers in highly productive areas such as the Upper Hunter have not seen a cropping opportunity for the past year or two. There is no doubt that that is unusual. This drought has become widespread and is significantly impacting farmers, so much so that governments have to help support farming in rural communities, which is worth billions and billions of dollars to this State.

The year 2016 was a good year for many farmers. The farmers who planted crops have been able to save a lot of that grain. Graziers who built up their sheep and cattle numbers have experienced good commodity prices for meat as well as wool. Receiving \$100 a fleece is exceptionally good. People are paying their way, but some are starting to fall through the cracks. One lesson I have learnt in this place is that poor mental health leads to poor decision-making, not only for ourselves but also for other people. It is fundamentally important that we provide more than physical and resource help to farmers. I congratulate the communities and not-for-profit charities that are jumping in with support. The Government is making human resources available to ensure that farmers are able to make good decisions not only for today but also for tomorrow and the next generation. I thank the Opposition for supporting this motion accorded priority.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:36):** There is no question that our farmers are doing it tough. As we know, it is not only farmers. I appreciate that those in the electorates of many members on the opposite side of this Chamber are feeling this pain much more than mine. A number of farmers in my community are doing it tough, but I know it is nowhere near as tough as elsewhere, particularly the Upper Hunter, where the drought kicked off early as 2017. Farm-related businesses, workers and entire communities in those areas are also affected. Recently I heard that the town of Murrurundi is now facing the prospect of having no town water within three months. Things are desperate and dire. The solution is not as simple as buying hay and fodder; in saying that, hay prices have gone through the roof.

The drought is ripping the heart out of these communities. I was reminded of how hard it is by Drew Shearman, a fellow from my own community of Medowie. He took time out to help on a mate's farm in the Central West. He asked his mate, "What would you like me to bring out?" The response was, "Five bullets, because I've run out." He went out there with his five bullets and what he found was more desperate than he thought. His mate's farm had changed significantly in the 12 months since he had last been there. He realised the struggle is not only about feeding stock and dealing humanely with clearing stock that had not survived during the night. It is about the hours spent during the night trying to keep feral animals away from failing stock and the business of running a farm, making sure people are still able to eat, sleep and wash clothes. Everyone is starting to appreciate that so much more comes with this devastation in those areas.

I pay tribute to communities everywhere, city and country, that are realising that this is happening to our farmers. The community of Medowie is holding a big fundraiser this weekend to support the Buy a Bale campaign. Everyone knows we must do everything we can to support our farmers. Indeed, concerns have been raised around the delays in support that farmers have received, as it was known for some time that the drought was coming. We must also understand that it will take years to recover from this drought. It is not as simple as rain falling: Farmers are losing breeding stock, stock that they have bred for generations. This is going to be hard yards for years and we must all do what we can.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:39):** By leave: I thank the Opposition for giving me the opportunity to speak on this important motion, and I acknowledge the member for Upper Hunter for bringing this motion to the House. As stated, 99 per cent of New South Wales is presently in drought. I looked at the website of the Department of Primary Industries during question time and noted that as of today 23 per cent of New South Wales is in intense drought. That is almost one-quarter of New South Wales in intense drought conditions. This issue has had a significant impact in my electorate of Orange as well as in many surrounding areas of western New South Wales and the Upper Hunter, and I acknowledge the presence of the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Dubbo and other regional members in the House.

The impact of the drought has been severe on many families in my community. I raised this issue as early as November last year in a series of questions on notice to the Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair. I have

raised the issue ad nauseam in this House to try to bring to its attention the severity of the drought and its impact on farmers in regional New South Wales. I called for freight subsidies months ago when the Deputy Premier responded to a question, saying that it would distort the market. I am glad that now the decision has been reversed. For a long period of time many farmers called for drought assistance through freight subsidies because the freight component has been one of the largest expenses to incur when sourcing fodder from interstate, whether from South Australia or Victoria. Indeed, I hear reports that fodder is now coming from Western Australia by train into Parkes and there are issues with the transport subsidy only being applicable to a 1,500-kilometre distance, presenting problems with that freight.

Earlier today I brought that matter to the attention of Minister Blair's staff, so that matter should be examined. I also have concerns about the \$20,000 cap on freight subsidies. The longer the drought continues the more the money will be eaten up, if it has not been eaten up already. We must ensure also that all eligible farmers are able to access their entitlements. At the end of the day farm security is food security, and food security is national security. We need to look after our farmers. They provide the food and fibre that we eat and wear. When people in the city have to pay \$54 for a T-bone steak at the local pub perhaps then they will realise the plight facing our farmers. I acknowledge and thank the member for Upper Hunter for bringing this important motion to the House and for allowing me to speak. I hope that Government continues to adapt its policies on freight subsidies and drought assistance to custom mould them around the needs of farmers. I ask the Government to take my comments into account.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:42):** By leave: I thank the member for Upper Hunter for bringing this motion to the attention of the House. Communities on the South Coast are also suffering as a result of this drought. This is not something that has been happening for the media cycle, the last week or the last month; it has been happening for many, many years and I commend the response of the Government. It is a shame that we have to be in a position where we have to offer this response but we have done so. I am pleased it has received bipartisan support and I thank all members who have sent messages.

I thank the volunteer efforts in the Illawarra. The Illawarra Rotary clubs have been collecting funds to support farmers. The State Government has responded with its package that supports such things as freight subsidies, which many members for called for, in addition to cutting certain rates through Local Land Services and the provision of mental health support services. I use the time of this House to call on other levels of government. We have seen a response from the Federal Government but local government can also play its part. For those who are familiar with businesses, one of the biggest problems that they confront during this period is cashflow. If local councils are in a position to do so, they could assist by the grant of a rate holiday, a rate freeze or the removal of rates—just as Local Land Services has done to assist farmers who are doing it tough. Some people on the land do not have water. Freight is coming into my electorate from as far afield as Western Australia, just as the member for Orange mentioned it was coming into his electorate. These are very difficult and unique times.

I appreciate that all members of the House have spoken candidly and have supported people on the land up and down the coast. On the South Coast, things look to be fine on the surface but I can say that people are struggling. They have had to sell stock in order to survive and have put stock down. I thank all parties and all levels of government but I believe that local councils can introduce other measures. I certainly thank members who have sent messages of support to regional members in this place, no matter which electorate they represent. This is a matter where all the regions are in it together. It is important to support our farmers. I, like every other member of this House, want to continue to support Australian products and to eat Australian products. I do not want to see more imported goods and the biosecurity risks that come with them. I want to support Australian farmers and Australian farm businesses, particularly businesses in the Illawarra and South Coast, which is a major part of the food bowl of not just our regions but of the whole State. I thank the member for Upper Hunter for bringing this motion before the House.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (15:45):** By leave: I note the fantastic way in which the people of New South Wales generally and especially on the coast have adopted our drought-stricken cousins. On the North Coast, the ex-services clubs are appealing for groceries to be put into baskets and sent across the range to those who are in need. I would suggest that people who want to help regional communities send money rather than groceries. We want to bring cash into the local communities because the local economic communities are suffering as well as the farmers. If groceries are bought in Coffs Harbour and sent to other local communities, that will not help those local economies.

This week I spoke to one of my friends west of the range—Cam, who lives in the Werris Creek area. Last year they had no winter or summer crop and this year they will not have a summer crop because there has been no rain. That means that local grocery shops, coffee shops and other small businesses in these communities also are suffering because no money is being spent in the local economy. When I suggested to Cam that we could

send stockfeed over the range, he said that the problem with sending stockfeed is that they do not know what they are getting or when they do get some rains they do not know what weeds, such as Parramatta grass, will be taken across the border, creating more problems in the future.

I commend the people who want to assist but I ask them to send money to charities that will ensure that the money is distributed to these communities through food and other vouchers so that the money will be spent in the towns in order to keep those economies alive until the dry spell finishes. As Mr Deputy Speaker knows too well, droughts usually end with huge floods. In the not-too-distant future, communities may need disaster assistance when this drought finishes. The heart of everyone in the Coffs Harbour electorate goes out to the farmers and communities that are doing it so tough. I commend the member for Upper Hunter for bringing this motion before the House. I ask all people to consider the families who have worked so well for generations to provide food for the tables in Sydney to ensure that we are fed. It is now our turn to return the favour and make sure they are fed.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:48):** In reply: I thank the member for Cessnock, the member for Barwon, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Orange, the member for Kiama and the member for Coffs Harbour for their contributions to the debate on this motion. Through their contributions, members on both sides of the House have demonstrated the level of support that the farmers, farming families and farming communities deserve during this very tough time. I will refer to a number of issues that were raised. The member for Coffs Harbour talked about donating to charities and providing food vouchers in order to keep the local economies alive while there is no agricultural income coming in.

On a recent visit to the Lions Club and the Need for Feed group in Merriwa, we put together more than 70 hampers and received approximately 16 truckloads of hay. I was pleased to see that the funds that were raised by the Lions clubs around the Hunter were spent predominately in the towns of Merriwa and Denman. The IGA supermarkets—which are the only supermarkets in each of the towns—effectively were bought out of many of their items. As the member for Coffs Harbour said, that injection of money has a significant impact on the shopkeepers and the people who work in those shops and the money continues to generate around the town. The member for Kiama noted that all three tiers of government have a role to play. I was pleased to see on Sunday the Federal Government's announcement of further cash assistance.

The people of the Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Liverpool Plains and other shires in the electoral area of Upper Hunter are doing everything they possibly can, including delivering free water to farmhouses that rely on rainwater. Because it has not rained, these farmers have no water to drink or bathe in. Free water is being delivered to areas where councils know the water is required. All of these measures demonstrate that the Parliament recognises and acknowledges the seriousness of the drought and the impact it is having on our farming families and communities. As a result of this motion, I hope that rural and regional New South Wales understand and recognise that the Parliament of New South Wales is right behind them every step of the way.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **FORMER MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA**

##### **Priority**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:52):** I move:

That this House condemns the former member for Wagga Wagga for his actions as revealed and admitted at the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Daryl Maguire is the eleventh Liberal member of Parliament [MP] to resign after an appearance before the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] since the Liberals and The Nationals came to government. There have been 11 Liberal members of Parliament [MPs] forced to resign after an encounter with ICAC. The Government has tried to stem the bleeding. It has sacked an ICAC commissioner, wound back ICAC's powers and slashed its budget. Yet still Government members continue to fall under the ICAC bus. The Government thought it could change ICAC's conduct; it never thought of changing its own conduct.

A full cricket team of Liberal MPs has been forced to resign. The Liberal Party has had only 70 MPs since 2011, and 11 of them have been forced to resign because of revelations of the ICAC: Chris Hartcher, Chris Spence, Darren Webber, Barry O'Farrell, Mike Gallacher, Tim Owen, Andrew Cornwell, Bart Bassett, Craig Baumann, Garry Edwards and now Daryl Maguire. Following the revelations on 13 July at ICAC, there were only two people in New South Wales who thought Maguire could stay as a member of this Parliament: Maguire himself and the Premier. The Premier did not lift a finger to get Maguire out of Parliament. It fell to the Labor Opposition

to declare that it would move on this day to expel him before there was any action. There was no action from this Premier; Barry O'Farrell had to act. Faced with a revolt by members of The Nationals who were shaping up to join us to expel him, Barry O'Farrell had to intervene. The Premier thought she could skate through to March with Maguire on the crossbench—in the naughty boys corner—without the need for his resignation.

A new standard applies under this Premier. Twice in question time today she said, "If you have any concerns about probity, go to the ICAC." Daryl Maguire is not a term of reference in the inquiry before ICAC. It has specific terms of reference dealing with Canterbury-Bankstown Council. Maguire's other actions on behalf of other clients in other municipalities and with Ministers in this Government are expressly beyond the terms of reference of the inquiry, but butter would not melt in the Premier's mouth. She just says, "It's none of my concern. If you have any concerns go to the ICAC"—knowing full well that the ICAC cannot look at what Maguire got up to, and she herself will do nothing. She sees no evil, hears no evil and speaks no evil.

What a rabble this Government has become. Wherever we look there is infighting inside it. The Nationals leader has done a job on his deputy leader on drought relief and sent members of The Nationals and Cabinet members into the media to white-ant his deputy. When the member for Monaro was a Minister he stabbed his leader in the back. Now that he is leader he has stabbed his deputy in the back. He is addicted to the behaviour. The Deputy Premier must be an Agatha Christie fan. She wrote, "I always think loyalty's such a tiresome virtue." He took that one to heart; he is loyal to nobody.

It is not just bad people like Maguire who are leaving. Good people are leaving too because of what is going on. The member for Dubbo—a good person—is leaving. He does not want a bar of Barilaro's leadership. Today the Deputy Leader of The Nationals—another good man—was asked whether his Cabinet colleague the member for Northern Tablelands is loyal. He did not answer. Laura Jayes said, "I'll take that as a no," and Niall Blair just laughed. That is what this Government has become. There is no honour amongst thieves. They will go all the way to defeat in March.

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:58):** The revelations relating to the member for Wagga Wagga that have been so explicitly laid bare by the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] in fact affect us all. I suggest that in relation to those allegations, Mr Deputy Speaker, you are personally hurt by the disclosures that ICAC has made. Some members have served this House for many years out of a sense of service to their community, of which you are an exemplar and for whom these revelations are particularly shocking.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you entered this House at the same time as the former member for Wagga Wagga and have served this House out of a sense of duty to your community. We should follow the example that you set. When someone comes to this place and seeks to derive benefit from the opportunity that the community has given them by their election, it brings discredit to us all. ICAC has laid bare that great failure in relation to the former member for Wagga Wagga. Every one of us is touched, tarnished and has our reputation smeared in circumstances where someone seeks to benefit themselves by virtue of their election. Whether it is Eddie Obeid, Ian Macdonald or Daryl Maguire, every one of them sought to benefit themselves through the opportunity afforded to them by their election to this place. I join the Premier—

**Ms Kate Washington:** And the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** —and the Leader of the Opposition in condemning the actions of the former member for Wagga Wagga. The Leader of the Opposition is right, because when Daryl Maguire does what he does he reflects on my reputation and that of every member because he is a member of Parliament.

**Mr Troy Grant:** He was.

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I withdraw that comment. He was a member of Parliament. It also allows me to reflect on the role that the ICAC continues to play to ensure that this State has a corruption-free environment. There has been significant reform to the ICAC. There were 39 recommendations relating to its reform, all of which were passed on a bipartisan basis and adopted by this House. They have delivered an ICAC in which we can all have confidence. It gives me the opportunity to congratulate the new commissioner, Peter Hall, on the manner in which the ICAC now operates. It thoroughly investigates complaints and does so in circumstances where it is replete with an armoury of procedural fairness. Every person appearing before the ICAC should have much more confidence that they are being dealt with fairly and the allegations made out against them are being fairly heard.

The Leader of the Opposition made a suggestion that this Government had weakened the ICAC. I reject that out of hand. In fact, we have reinforced the position of the ICAC in the community by appointing a triumvirate of commissioners who meet collegiately to run the ICAC and to ensure that its decisions have the confidence of not only the ICAC itself but also the community generally. Let me talk about the funding of ICAC. When we came to Government in 2011, the budget for the ICAC was \$19.8 million; today it is \$106 million. That shows

this Government's level of commitment to ensuring that the ICAC acts in accordance with the expectation of the community. The revelations relating to the former member for Wagga Wagga provide adequate evidence about the way it continues to operate. This Government is committed to a proactive ICAC. The commissioner himself has made it very clear that he proposes to embark upon a process of proactive commitment to stamping out corruption. While I welcome the motion, I also use it as an opportunity to commend the ICAC.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:04):** Here we are, 25 days since Daryl Maguire, the former for Wagga Wagga admitted to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] that he had done the wrong thing, and the Premier is still missing in action. It is a very simple motion: that the House condemns the former member for Wagga Wagga for his actions as revealed and admitted at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. It is open and shut, simple and easy to digest. It would be even simpler for the Premier to come into this Chamber and show some leadership, but we have a backbencher representing the Government in this debate. I mean no disrespect to the member for Epping, but where is the Premier and the Deputy Premier? The answer is that they are still missing in action.

In a rare move this afternoon the Government agreed to debate this motion, when ordinarily priority for these types of motions are defeated as a matter of course. I thought the Premier and Deputy Premier, in agreeing to debate this motion, would have sent some senior people into the Chamber to do what the motion calls for and to condemn the member for Wagga Wagga. For them this is not an exercise in parliamentary morality; it is an exercise in parliamentary escapism, which has been going on since 13 July, when Daryl Maguire was caught red handed by ICAC. The Premier and the Deputy Premier have been completely and utterly missing in action. I know the Premier was away, but she could have issued a statement. She could have called Daryl Maguire immediately, but instead on Friday 13 July—the day I called on the Premier to sack Mr Maguire immediately—Deputy Premier Barilaro, the man who was happy to call on Malcolm Turnbull to resign because of a few bad news polls, said that it was up to the voters in March to cast judgement on Mr Maguire's conduct. Deputy Premier Barilaro said:

He'll have to face the people of Wagga and Daryl will have to do that in due course and he'll have to earn that trust back.

I am sure that, having spoken to the Premier, who was lying on the Gold Coast or somewhere, the Deputy Premier was contemplating that Daryl Maguire, with the agreement of the Premier, would sit on the crossbenches and draw a parliamentary salary for another nine months. That is the antithesis of leadership. As the Leader of the Opposition said today, the people of Wagga Wagga were immediate in their condemnation of Daryl Maguire. All the people of New South Wales knew he had to go. The only two people in New South Wales who were silent on that were the Premier and Deputy Premier. We are debating this matter carefully today, and the strongest thing the Premier has had to say about Daryl Maguire is that he will have to think carefully about his future, and that she was disappointed. Sometimes matters require leadership. Calling Barry O'Farrell to do her dirty work is not leadership.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I cannot believe the lack of respect shown by members to other members of this House.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:07):** It gives me no pleasure whatsoever to support a motion of this kind condemning a former member of this House because it is such a grave betrayal of trust that brings us to this point. Every one of us who is elected to this place is given an immense privilege by our communities. There are similar numbers in all electorates across the State, but in Riverstone I represent 57,000-odd people on the electoral roll—some 90,000 residents in the community. When I reflect on those numbers, I am humbled by the immensity of that responsibility and of the trust so many people have placed in me to represent them, to work for their interests in this place and to do my best to make their lives better. That is what we are all elected to do; that is the trust that is placed in each one of us: to work for those people, not to work to enrich ourselves. That is why it is such a grave betrayal of trust to have revealed that somebody is not fulfilling that trust, but working for their own benefit. That is why we join in this motion to condemn that kind of behaviour and to reassert that the community should be able to have trust in their elected representatives—those whom they send to this place to work for the betterment of the people of New South Wales collectively and for the betterment of the people of the electorate they represent.

That is what we are here to do. Indeed, that is what all members who come to this place intend to do. We may come with different perspectives on what is for the betterment of the community, with different beliefs and different values, but we are all united in the perspective that we are here to serve those communities. We all want the best for the people of New South Wales and each of us needs to reassert that whenever an incident such as this occurs. Democracy relies on that trust. The system only works when the people of this State have confidence that we will work on the basis of doing what is right for the community.

Democracy succeeds when we can actually achieve things for the betterment of people and make a positive difference. But if that trust is lost, if that confidence is corroded to the point where people no longer

believe in the system, democracy will fail and other ways of government can perhaps rear their ugly head. We must never allow that to occur on our watch. That is why those on this side of the House support this motion, which condemns behaviour that would put personal interest before public interest and so betray the trust of the people of New South Wales who elected us.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (16:10):** In reply: It is one thing to send out a couple of backbenchers to deliver pious homilies about the misconduct of the former member for Wagga Wagga; it is a completely different thing for a Premier to come into this Chamber at question time today, after not once moving to demand the resignation of the former member for Wagga Wagga from the Parliament, and say that if anyone has any concerns about the former member's conduct then they should go to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC]. She squibbed it today as she has squibbed every day since 13 July. I hear the mumblings of the members opposite, "She could not demand that he leave the Parliament." Michael Daley demanded he leave the Parliament. He did the right thing. It fell to the Labor Opposition to drag this bloke out of the Parliament, but to their credit, The Nationals members were telling journalists that if we had moved a motion today to kick him out then they may very well have voted with us.

The Premier thought she could skate through to 23 March with the member sitting on the crossbench to avoid an eleventh resignation from a Liberal at the hands of ICAC. She did nothing to get him out. In the end, when those opposite were worried about the debate today, and about losing it, they had to send Barry O'Farrell in to get the former member for Wagga Wagga's resignation. What does that tell us about this Premier? She is weak and unprincipled. Not once did she act. Even last week when the member was still grasping on, getting a salary every day until the last possible moment, she was not demanding that he go. The Premier has never once said; she never once demanded his exit from the Parliament. But a government is in trouble when its members start to jump ship and hop into the lifeboats.

Let us look at what has happened in this term of government alone: Andrew Gee, gone; Mike Baird, gone; Jillian Skinner, gone; Duncan Gay, gone; Adrian Piccoli, gone; Katrina Hodgkinson, gone; Mike Gallacher, gone; and Greg Pearce, gone. Who will not be shaping up to recontest their seat? The member for Wollondilly, gone; the member for Coffs Harbour, gone; the member for Barwon, gone; the member for Dubbo, gone; the member for Albury, gone; the member for Lismore, gone; the member for Wagga Wagga, gone—no thanks to this Premier; and the member for East Hills, gone. This Premier is going, going, gone!

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (SOCIAL HOUSING) BILL 2018**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 21 June 2018.**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:15):** I lead for the New South Wales Opposition in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Social Housing) Bill 2018 in my capacity as the shadow Minister for Family and Community Services and shadow Minister for Social Housing. The bill proposes various amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and the Housing Act 2001 to effectively allow for a rental bond scheme to be applied retrospectively to existing tenancy agreements under certain conditions, and to terminate existing tenancy agreements in instances of fraud. I make it very clear from the outset that the New South Wales Opposition will not oppose the bill. However, I will give consideration in detail to a number of concerns identified by a number of stakeholders.

It is National Homelessness Week—what a week to announce and debate legislation that could potentially exacerbate homelessness if it is not implemented properly. A number of concerns have been raised and I believe some of them warrant further attention by the Minister. There is no question that homelessness is on the rise in New South Wales, as it is in many other States. Clearly, New South Wales could never be proud of the 37 per cent increase in homelessness that was revealed in the last census data. The impact that this bill may have on vulnerable tenants has not been made clear. There will need to be some considerable amount of oversight and, I believe, a review of this bill down the track, similar to the review that was agreed to in relation to the antisocial behaviour legislation in 2015. It is critical that we do not, in any way, shape or form, legislate in this place in a manner that could potentially exacerbate homelessness and impact unnecessarily on vulnerable tenants who may be third-party victims of this sort of behaviour.

The introduction of this bill comes three years to the date of the introduction of the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Bill. The three-year statutory

review of the 2015 amendments will be handed down shortly by the Auditor General, and the Government is expected to respond to those findings by November 2018. This bill forms part of a broader policy change within Family and Community Services, which will see the introduction of bonds for tenants who have intentionally or negligently caused \$500 worth of damage in a FACS property.

I make it very clear that the New South Wales Opposition does not condone this type of behaviour; we will not condone any tenant wilfully damaging their property in such a manner. The broader policy does not require legislative change. Currently, there is nothing to stop FACS from charging new tenants a bond—all that is required is policy change. It is understood that FACS is intending to introduce that in the latter part of the year in particular circumstances, and the aim of this legislation is to allow FACS to charge a bond for existing tenants who have instigated at least \$500 worth of damage.

At this stage, as I understand it, those rental bond scheme guidelines are yet to be made public. I think it would serve this Parliament, and us as legislators in this place, to have those guidelines made public prior to the bill being finalised in this House or the upper House. Those guidelines should be part of the regulations so there can be parliamentary oversight. Concerns have been raised from within the sector that seeking a bond could potentially place pressure on specialist homelessness service providers as vulnerable tenants may not be able to financially cope with the imposition of a bond. There are concerns that brokerage would potentially be utilised for the purposes of those tenants providing a bond.

I ask the Minister to clarify and rule out that specialist homelessness services will be required to use brokerage in such a way and in instances where a tenant is unable to provide a bond following a course of action that FACS might undertake, including a termination notice should the bond not be paid within 14 days of the notice being issued. I understand that the bill states that the termination notice must state that there is an opportunity for a repayment plan and that repayment plan could be up to 24 months. I have been advised by one of the stakeholders it could potentially be 36 months. I ask the Minister to clarify how the repayment plans will operate and the time frame, whether 24 or 36 months?

**Ms Pru Goward:** It will be 24 to 36 months.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** Thank you, Minister. That clarification is important. The bill should not make life difficult for specialist homelessness service providers in the instance that tenants seek their assistance and at the same time knowing that the maximum market rent will be charged. I understand that will be capped at \$1,400. In reality in Sydney most locations will reach that amount and everybody will be paying the \$1,400. It is important in that instance that there be a proper repayment plan. I turn to schedule 1 in the bill. It refers to amending the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 with respect to incorporating provisions relating to the rental bonds scheme. Specifically, it states:

Proposed section 156D enables the Corporation and the Aboriginal Housing Organisation to require a tenant to pay a rental bond at any time after the agreement has commenced.

Adding proposed section 156D is a retrospective change that will allow the New South Wales Land and Housing Corporation and the Aboriginal Housing Office to require existing tenants who have intentionally or negligently caused more than \$500 worth of property damage to pay a rental bond at any time prior to the end of their tenancy agreement. In addition, proposed section 156C enables landlords to give a termination notice for non-payment of a bond once it is more than 14 days overdue. I understand that the termination notice given for non-payment of the rental bond scheme if the rental bond is 14 days overdue makes clear that on paying the bond or on agreeing to a repayment plan tenants will not be required to vacate the premises.

A collective of stakeholders—including the Tenants' Union, Homeless NSW, Shelter New South Wales, People with Disability Australia, NSW Council of Social Service and the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW—have issued a statement highlighting a range of concerns regarding the rental bonds scheme. I will proceed to place these concerns on record. Homelessness New South Wales Chief Executive Officer Katherine McKernan states: This is not only creating further barriers for people in accessing housing but it will also mean that homelessness services will potentially have to use brokerage funding to cover it. The government may end up paying for these costs itself. Leo Patterson-Ross, Senior Policy Officer of the Tenants' Union of NSW, stated:

The time and money the department will spend on administering the system would be better spent on providing new housing, completing the maintenance backlog or providing more assistance to homeless people.

Dean Price, Senior Policy Officer at People with Disability Australia, identified:

People with disability already face huge barriers in finding an affordable and accessible place to live in. Public housing is one place where many people with disability find a home, and introducing bonds will make this much more difficult to access.

Karen Walsh, Executive Officer of Shelter NSW, stated:

The policy will have a serious impact on those people already doing it tough. There is not adequate protection for people with dementia and other mental health issues, the behaviour of people from outside the household, or decades old damage caused by former occupants which is only recently discovered.

That statement was issued on 21 June, two days after the budget was handed down and on the same day that the Minister read her second reading speech, therefore I do not believe this statement was available to the Minister at the time. I think it is worth the Minister responding to some of the concerns raised in this statement. I am happy to table that statement from the six stakeholders, although I imagine by now the Minister would have seen it. It is important that each of the specific matters raised by the stakeholders is addressed. I am mindful that these stakeholders have an enormous number of members and that they have access to a large number of people who are vulnerable, who would have concerns about this scheme and who might be confused about it.

I reiterate for the purposes of this debate that the guidelines are yet to be made public. That will always raise concerns amongst stakeholders and potentially fear amongst tenants and in this House. It will raise concerns with people when we make a decision on retrospective laws as we are asked to do in this case. It is important that those guidelines are publicly available. Earlier in the year the department had discussions with various stakeholders. I note one of the comments that the Minister made in her second reading speech. I rarely quote the Minister but I will quote her on this occasion. She said:

...safeguards will be put in place to ensure the needs of vulnerable clients are taken into account as well as any extenuating circumstances faced by social housing tenants. For example, no rental bond will be required of a victim of domestic and family violence where the damage is caused by a perpetrator of domestic violence.

I appreciate the Minister's comments. I also appreciate that stakeholders could provide a variety of examples, whether they involve domestic violence or people with disabilities or elderly tenants suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's disease. All members in this House, and particularly members in the lower House, would have many examples of damage that has been caused by tenants—not always intended or wilful damage but damage that is sometimes caused in terrible circumstances. I can think of one example of an elderly lady that I assisted. Sadly, she was suffering from the early stages of dementia, left a pot on the stove and burnt her kitchen. Incidents such as these can happen but there will be some discretion. I imagine the Minister's response will be that there will be some discretion, but it is important for that to be legislated. If we are to legislate for retrospective changes such as these it is important to ensure that we amend this legislation.

In 2015 some amendments were passed in the Residential Tenancies and Housing Legislation Amendment (Public Housing—Antisocial Behaviour) Act. Section 154D allowed for hardship considerations. I suggest that similar amendments need to be made with respect to this legislation. If amendments are not considered in this House, they certainly should be considered in the upper House. I also put on record some of the concerns that Homelessness NSW has raised. It conducted its own consultations about the proposed tenancy bonds with people experiencing homelessness. The result of the consultations demonstrated that the bonds will create a significant barrier for individuals entering the social housing system as well as the strong possibility that an increase in evictions would further escalate the rates of homelessness in New South Wales. I will quote some of the responses of the Homelessness NSW survey:

There are so many set-up costs when you get into housing. You go from nothing and need to get furniture, food, fridges. All of these are a massive expense and to put a bond on top of this is going to be too much. Are the government forgetting people are struggling?

...

I have been in social housing for a few years after a long time being on the streets. I can tell you that Housing had a bond I would not have been able to afford it. I had to fork out so much money when I first got housed and my only income was Centrelink. No way could I have [afforded] this.

...

If people are unable to re-access social housing, then there are often no options left for them. Generally, they are not a preferred candidate in an overcrowded private rental market and often they end in unsafe situations whilst waiting to re-access housing.

Homelessness NSW also raised concerns regarding retrospective penalties for damage that was present prior to the bill being introduced as well as it creating a disincentive for reporting any property damage that may occur. Homelessness NSW also raised concerns about fairness and due process in respect of retrospectivity applying a bond for damage made before the policy was introduced. It stated:

Applying the Bond for existing tenants will also create disincentives for current tenants in terms of reporting property damage. This may lead to properties being left in poor conditions for lengthy periods of time.

This concern also requires an amendment to be made to ensure that a condition report is completed for the property in question so that any existing damage is rectified. If landlords are to fulfil their roles and seek rental bonds it is important they understand that they have a duty to ensure the property is up to scratch before instigating a rental bond scheme. We do not want to set up a system that in any way, shape or form prevents tenants from making



requests for maintenance or repairs for fear that they might be held responsible for the damage, especially in instances of normal wear and tear. A provision should be inserted in this legislation or perhaps the guidelines should be inserted in a regulation to address this issue so that tenants—particularly elderly tenants who wish to make simple repairs—are not prevented from coming forward because they are fearful to announce that they require repairs to their property.

The media has reported a damages figure of \$16 million. I ask the Minister to address in her reply speech the exact bill that her department has for damage to properties that are not related to maintenance issues and to clarify whether that is an annual figure or a cumulative figure. Members have talked about the extensive social housing waiting list many times. The number is sometimes 55,000 and sometimes it is 60,000. However, we know that more than 100,000 people have applied and are waiting for social housing.

Many more people yet to be placed on the waiting list potentially need housing. The minimum average wait time for a two-bedroom or three-bedroom property in metropolitan Sydney, on the Central Coast, in Newcastle, in the Illawarra and on the North Coast is 10 years. Considerable concern has been expressed about some of the property sell-offs that have taken place over the years and the high number of vacant properties in New South Wales. I reiterate that in 2011 there were 99 properties that were vacant; there are now 1,500 properties, if not more. I will be glad to hear from the Minister if the number of vacant properties has changed, but the last time I saw that number it was around 1,500.

The Government should look at how it can amend the bill to ensure that all provisions under schedule 1 [2] relating to rental bonds in corporation or Aboriginal Housing Office [AHO] tenancy agreements apply to premises that have had a property condition inspection subsequent to the commencement of the bill. Consideration should also be given to amendments that allow for a formal means of discretion in collecting bonds with regard to undue hardship such as domestic violence, disability, mental health and elderly tenants. It is important that specific amendments be moved, whether by the Minister in reply or in the upper House.

I suggest that consideration be given to a review of the bill so that we can be confident that it will in no way, shape or form exacerbate any issues surrounding homelessness or make it difficult for tenants to have repairs undertaken, should they fear reprisal or having a bond placed on them. In addition, we need to be confident that the department does not have any further administrative costs. I understand that the budget was handed down a few days before the Minister introduced the bill and I am unsure whether the administrative costs will place some burden on the department in relation to the repayment plans, overseeing the bond scheme itself, undertaking property condition reports and ensuring everything runs smoothly. I imagine there will be some administrative costs and I am keen to hear from the Minister what those foreshadowed costs will be over the next 12 months as the Government initiates this legislation.

I note that funding in the 2018-19 budget for maintenance was significantly reduced by \$34 million from \$217 million in the 2017-18 budget. I note also that specialist homelessness services were underfunded and under immense pressure. In 2016-17 they provided assistance to more than 74,000 clients, despite being contracted to only deliver services to 58,000 clients that year. Schedule 1 to the bill inserts a new section 154F that requires the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to terminate a residential tenancy agreement where the tenant has been found guilty of a fraud offence under section 69 of the Housing Act 2001. Currently there is not a direct method of eviction for this conviction. Instead, tenants are generally convicted for failure to pay the debt created by the actions to which the alleged fraud relates. There have been examples where the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] has also used the section 85 no grounds notice. I appreciate the requirement for this legislative change. Examples in the media of late have been alarming. I can think of one terrible example of wilful fraud that I agree clearly required some sort of action that enabled FACS to terminate the tenancies.

The bill as written allows for these evictions to apply in very minor instances, where the failure to disclose was unintentional, or where a third party has caused the alleged fraud. Stakeholders have explained to me that, as they understand it, FACS will only proceed to conviction in more serious or wilful cases of fraud. Many stakeholders received that briefing from the department and were advised that only in instances of serious or wilful cases of fraud would FACS proceed to evict tenants with those particular convictions. But that is not how the bill reads, and it is imperative that an amendment be moved to ensure that FACS only instigates those terminations in relation to fraud. I suggest that that amendment should be moved in the Legislative Council.

Mandating termination, except in cases of exceptional circumstances, removes the ability of the tribunal to consider all relevant circumstances before terminating a tenancy and may result in unjust outcomes—for example, in cases where domestic violence or elder abuse can be demonstrated to have been a factor in the circumstances in which the fraud occurred. We know that takes place. There are many examples of elder abuse that could potentially result in a tenant being convicted of fraud. In those instances there needs to be some ability for the tribunal to allow for some type of discretion. I am concerned that, as the bill reads, discretion will not be

permitted by the tribunal. It is imperative that the Minister agree, whether in this Chamber or through the Legislative Council, to an amendment that will ensure that discretion is permitted by the tribunal.

An alternative and more appropriate mechanism would be for termination on the basis of conviction of fraud to be added to section 154D of the Residential Tenancies Act. This would still allow appropriate discretionary powers in instances where undue hardship or particular circumstances should be considered, namely those provided for in the current section 154D (b). Schedule 2 proposes a raft of changes to the Housing Act 2001 and extends a provision that enables the Secretary of FACS to terminate the lease of a public housing tenant who is a registrable person within the meaning of the Child Protection Offenders Registrations Act 2000.

Other amendments, about which the Opposition has no concern, include section 58B where residential tenancy agreements may be terminated by a community housing provider, as defined by section 58A, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police—again, in instances of registrable persons—where, should police believe the tenant poses a risk or is at risk themselves, and with the approval of the Secretary of FACS, in the same way that the FACS Secretary is able to terminate a residential tenancy agreement of a public housing tenant who is a registrable person. Obviously the community housing providers agree with this particular change and the Opposition also agrees with it.

Alternative housing will still be made available. This is part of the proposed amendments which will make it simpler and less burdensome on community housing providers in instances where they need to move tenants. The bill proposes amendments to sections 69B, 69C, 73 and 74 (2A) that will empower the FACS Secretary for the purposes of accessing information and documents for the purposes of investigating or preventing fraud and recovery of any payments obtained fraudulently. The New South Wales Opposition does not have any concerns related to those amendments. Again I reiterate that the Opposition does not oppose this bill. I have raised these suggestions and concerns on behalf of stakeholders because I believe the collective statement was issued immediately after the Minister delivered her second reading speech, but I will clarify that.

I could be wrong, but there was no reflection of the stakeholders' concerns in the Minister's second reading speech. I ask the Minister in her speech in reply to address those issues, which have been raised in a very genuine way by the stakeholders. Whilst I appreciate that the vast majority of staff, if not all the staff, who work in the area of housing are doing their best, the legislation should aid and assist staff in the implementation of policy changes that are made by the department. We do not want to make life more difficult for those who work in the area of housing. Housing is a difficult area and a great deal of burden is placed on the many stakeholders that work hand-in-hand with Land and Housing Corporation and community housing providers.

We do not want cost shifting, with the result that tenants turn up at the door of specialist homeless service providers seeking the use of their brokerage funding. That would only exacerbate problems in the sector and the rate of homelessness. If we can assist in any way, shape or form by improving the legislation to ensure that we are targeting the appropriate tenants, then we should do so. We should be targeting those who deliberately and wilfully damage public property and those who fraudulently obtain a benefit at the expense of good tenants and those on the waiting list who are being deprived of the opportunity of a home, which I am sure they would care for. It is important that we get this legislation right. The Opposition will not oppose the bill.

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (16:46):** I welcome the opportunity to address the House in support of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Social Housing) Bill 2018 and thank the Minister for Social Housing, who is present in the Chamber, for introducing these important reforms. Social housing is a resource that the community expects will be provided only to those who truly need it. Regrettably, a few tenants seek to take advantage of the benefit that has been provided to them by significantly damaging the property or by deliberately misrepresenting their circumstances to access support that they do not deserve to receive. In order to address these issues and send a strong message to tenants that the behaviour of those doing the wrong thing will not be tolerated, the bill implements a number of reforms to ensure that tenants are responsible and accountable for their actions.

These provisions include the introduction of a risk-based rental bond for existing tenants and tenants returning to the public housing system; imposing mandatory terminations for those convicted of fraud under the Housing Act 2001, unless exceptional circumstances apply; and empowering the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services to investigate and prosecute private rental subsidy fraud. Additionally, the bill will allow community housing providers to terminate the lease of a registrable offender on the recommendation of the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force and with the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services.

To turn first to the introduction of a rental bond, the bill allows for the creation of a risk-based rental bond scheme, whereby tenants who cause significant damage or have a history of causing significant damage to properties owned by the Land and Housing Corporation or the Aboriginal Housing Office will be required to pay

a rental bond. This risk-based approach was developed in response to stakeholder feedback that the original bond scheme proposed under the Government's Future Directions for Social Housing strategy would unfairly target those unlikely to cause damage in public housing, including the elderly. Instead, the bond scheme will apply only to those doing the wrong thing by significantly damaging their public housing properties. The bill inserts a new section 156D into the Residential Tenancies Act that will allow the Land and Housing Corporation or the Aboriginal Housing Office to impose a bond at any time before the end of a social housing tenancy agreement. The scope and operation of the new rental bond scheme for tenants in public and Aboriginal housing will be set out in guidelines approved by the Minister, which will be publicly available.

In order to ensure that the bond does not inhibit people accessing public housing and place people into rental stress, the tenant can pay the bond in instalments of between 24 and 36 months. The bond will also be capped at a maximum of \$1,400 indexed annually at the rate that Centrelink uses. Further safeguards will be put in place to ensure that the needs of vulnerable clients are taken into account. That includes that no bond will be required where property damage is caused by a perpetrator of domestic violence. Other factors will be taken into account when assessing the damage and determining whether to require a rental bond to be paid, including any health concerns affecting the tenant and their capacity or otherwise to maintain the premises. Where such issues are relevant, FACS has the discretion not to impose a tenant damage charge. Where that is the case, no bond will be imposed.

The vast majority of housing tenants are good and responsible citizens who take pride in taking care of their public housing property. My grandparents were public housing tenants in Kingsford. They looked after their house to within an inch of their lives; you could eat off the floor and the gardens were immaculate. They were very houseproud and they were model tenants. Most people in public housing are just like that. Tenants like my grandparents will not be affected by these changes. The proposed risk-based bond scheme is a fair and measured approach that will send a strong message to tenants that damaging public housing properties is unacceptable whilst ensuring that those who are unlikely to cause damage to public housing are not punished.

The bill addresses another critical issue impacting the achievement of the Government's vision for a fairer and more equitable housing system by targeting those tenants who seek to defraud the government to obtain social housing benefits. The bill aims to ensure that tenants who are convicted of rental rebate fraud cannot continue to benefit from that criminal behaviour and that the benefit can instead be provided to someone in actual need. The bill will do that by amending the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to require the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to terminate a residential tenancy agreement if the tenant has been convicted of an offence under section 69 or section 69A of the Housing Act 2001 unless the tenant proves to the satisfaction of the tribunal that exceptional circumstances exist that justify not making the order.

The changes will stop the perverse situation that despite a tenant being convicted of fraud under the Housing Act by a Local Court or the District Court they are unable to be terminated on those grounds. Instead, the Department of Family and Community Services must use other mechanisms to evict a tenant, which is both time consuming and does not guarantee an eviction. The changes will mean that tenants who choose to defraud the benefit that has been provided to them will be removed sooner and the property that they formerly occupied can be offered to someone who is truly in need.

The bill enables the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services to investigate allegations of private rental subsidy fraud and to take action to prosecute those offences and recover any moneys paid. The bill does this by extending the offence provisions under the Housing Act 2001 so they apply not only to rental rebates provided by the Land and Housing Corporation but also to private rental subsidies and other benefits paid by the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services to tenants who are not in public housing. This includes the Private Rental Subsidy, where tenants pay social housing rents whilst residing in the private rental market. This subsidy is most often paid to those who are in the most urgent need of housing assistance. These amendments will ensure that the benefits are not being improperly received by those who do not deserve them and that private rental support is allocated only to the most vulnerable.

Finally, the bill supports and builds upon this Government's Future Directions strategy. Through Future Directions, this Government is delivering better services to tenants, along with more opportunities for tenants to engage with support services in order to break the cycle of disadvantage once and for all. One of the key initiatives of Future Directions is the Social Housing Management Transfer Program, under which the tenancy management of 14,000 public housing properties will be transferred to the community housing providers in nine sites across New South Wales. This will improve tenancy support options for those tenants and the sustainability of the sector through increased revenue.

To ensure that community housing providers are able to address community and personal safety issues in a timely manner, it is important to empower them to deal with registrable persons using powers similar to those currently available to the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services. The protection is

important not only for the community, but also to protect the tenant from any physical harm or injury. I encourage all members to support these important reforms to make our social housing system fairer and more equitable. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:56):** I contribute to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Social Housing) Bill 2018. By my reckoning, this is the third piece of legislation directed towards social housing and providing housing for all citizens in this State. It is the fourth if we include Sydney Public Reserves (Public Safety) Act, which passed this House last year. They point to this Government's approach in dealing with the housing issue and with people who are in need of housing. I will come to that in a moment but first I will go to some specifics of the bill. As a member of the Legislation Review Committee, it is appropriate that I highlight some comments that the committee made in its digest that was tabled today in the House, which looked at this bill in some detail.

I note that the committee looked at nine bills today, and this was the only bill that elicited a number of comments about how it infringes on the rights and liberties of citizens of the State. First, I will speak about the risk-based bonds scheme, which is the guts of the bill, whereby the Minister—and it is all in the Minister's mind at the moment—will determine how a bond will be applied to someone who is an existing tenant in social housing. The bill does not have any details about how that will be done; it will be left up to the Minister. Those provisions are contained in new section 156D. The Legislation Review Committee noted Article 11 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognises the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing. The digest states: Given the above circumstances, the Committee refers to Parliament whether the requirement for some social housing tenants to pay a rental bond unduly trespasses on their right to housing. In relation to the rental bond guidelines, the committee noted:

The Committee generally prefers that substantive matters are dealt with in principal legislation. Given that the matters deferred to the rental guidelines includes the definition of 'class of tenant'—

to which the bond will apply—

and the amount of the rental bond, the Committee considers these are matters more appropriately addressed in principal legislation and subject to parliamentary scrutiny. The Committee refers this issue to the attention of Parliament.

The committee does not often refer issues to the attention of Parliament. It often comments on issues and usually finishes by saying, "The Committee makes no further comment." The committee has referred matters to the Parliament on two specific occasions in relation to this bill. The committee considered nine bills today and commented on none of them except this one. That is because of the sorts of infringements on the rights—the different rights—that are being applied to social housing tenants and not to other tenants.

We were proceeding down a path in this State where the regulations applying to all tenants—social housing and private rental tenants—were converging. But under this Minister and this Government we are seeing a whole new bunch of regulations—pretty aggressive regulations—directed at tenants housed by the State. It is important for us to review brutally where we are heading and how the State is going with social housing. How are we going with that responsibility? I am sure that everybody in this House would agree that we need to make sure all of our citizens are housed appropriately.

Let us have a look. According to the 2011 Census, in New South Wales the total number of social housing dwellings was 127,024. In 2016 the number was 123,267. That is a decline in real terms but also a decline in percentage terms, from 4.42 per cent to 4.02 per cent. How is the State going with homelessness? Australia wide, homelessness numbers increased by 13.7 per cent between 2011 and 2016. In my own area, the Central Coast, they increased by 35 per cent. In my electorate the number of social housing dwellings have declined. So, for all the rhetoric and—

**Mr John Sidoti:** In one area.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN:** No, Australia wide. Did the member for Drummoyne not hear that? I will say it again. In New South Wales there has been a decline in the number of social housing dwellings in percentage and in real terms. Homelessness has increased in this State. So it is important, when we consider the effects of this legislation in the context of all the policies being applied, to ensure that people in this State—our citizens—are housed appropriately. I do not think we are doing a very good job. I note that the Opposition is not going to oppose the bill but I am happy to say that I do not think it is a very good bill; it needs amendments. We are heading in the wrong direction. We are simply not housing all our citizens adequately. I conclude with that comment.

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:03):** I support the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Social Housing) Bill 2018. The New South Wales Government is committed to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and the Government is well on the way to achieving this. The Government has a

vision under Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW to build more social housing, deliver more opportunities for tenants to break the cycle of disadvantage and provide better services to tenants. Through the Future Directions policy, the Government now has the biggest social housing building program in the country. This includes the Communities Plus Program, which will deliver 23,000 new and replacement social housing dwellings, and the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, which will deliver 3,400 social and affordable housing properties across phases one and two. While this is a great result for vulnerable families across New South Wales, there is also a strong need to ensure that our current social housing system is fair and equitable.

We must ensure that the privilege of social housing is enjoyed by those who respect the opportunity they have been given. We must ensure that people who cause damage in public housing or fraudulently obtain a benefit are held accountable for their actions. We owe this to other tenants in social housing who face resources being diverted to where the damage is caused, and those on the social housing register who are waiting patiently for the opportunity given to someone who does not deserve it or who engages in fraud. We are all aware of stories involving social housing tenants who own investment properties.

People present with a need for social housing and have a long history of residing in such properties, but they fraudulently represent the circumstances that give rise to that need. This bill responds to these challenges by implementing a risk-based rental bond scheme, imposing mandatory termination of public housing tenants by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] when they are convicted of fraud under the Housing Act 2001 and empowering the Secretary of Family and Community Services to investigate and prosecute private rental subsidy fraud. The bill also supports the implementation of the Government's Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW strategy by ensuring that community housing providers can respond quickly to safety risks relating to registrable persons.

I turn now to rental bonds. The bill provides for the introduction of a risk-based rental bond for existing tenants who cause significant damage in public or Aboriginal Housing, or have a history of significant damage in the previous six years. The introduction of a risk-based approach for public housing tenancy bonds responds to stakeholder concerns that the original bonds scheme under Future Directions, in which all new public housing tenants would be required to pay a bond, would unfairly punish those who were unlikely to ever cause damage in public housing, including the elderly. The updated bond scheme strikes a balance between the need to send a strong message to tenants that damage to public housing is unacceptable and the needs of the most vulnerable. At its most basic level, property damage delays a housing outcome for a vulnerable client. It means that the Department of Family and Community Services has to spend money to repair a property that it otherwise could have spent on the rest of the system to deliver better housing. It also means that where the damage is significant, the property may be unavailable for re-letting for a substantial period due to the required restoration work.

One would think that all stakeholders and everyone in this House would support the Government in targeting those causing damage to public housing and that everyone would support holding accountable for their actions those who do the wrong thing. Instead, we see false hysteria from The Greens that the introduction of a risk-based bond scheme is "a recipe for further targeting and marginalising of vulnerable people in our community who are living in public housing." This could not be further from the truth. In her second reading speech the Minister said that the bond will be set at an affordable level—four weeks market rent capped at \$1,400 indexed annually at the rate Centrelink uses—and the tenant can pay the bond in instalments over time so that they are not placed in rental stress. A bond will not have to be paid upfront in full to access social housing. Additionally, further safeguards have been put in place to ensure that the needs of vulnerable clients are taken into account. This includes that no bond will be required when property damage is caused by a perpetrator of domestic violence.

Family and Community Services will also maintain discretion when determining whether a tenancy damage charge will be imposed and a bond applied, including whether ill health or an inability to maintain the premises has contributed to the damage. Details of these and other provisions of the rental bond scheme will be set out in guidelines approved by the Minister and will be made publicly available. Otherwise, the scheme will largely mirror the rental bond scheme currently set out in the Residential Tenancies Act, including the depositing of bonds with the Rental Bond Board, claiming bond money at the end of the tenancy and settling bond disputes in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

I reiterate that the large majority of public housing tenants will have nothing to worry about following these reforms. Simply put, if tenants do not cause significant damage in public housing they will not be charged a bond. Instead, the bond will act as an incentive for tenants to take proper care of their property, while enabling the Government to recoup at least some of the cost of repairs if further damage is caused. I note that I now have limited time; however, I will quickly address the other provisions of the bill.

The bill inserts a new section 154FA into the Residential Tenancies Act that requires the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to terminate the tenancy of a person found guilty of rental rebate fraud under the Housing Act 2001 unless the tenant satisfies the tribunal that exceptional circumstances apply. The bill also amends the

Housing Act 2001 to empower the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services to investigate and prosecute private rental subsidy fraud. These changes will make a real difference in ensuring that the Department of Family and Community Services is able to prevent people from abusing the system and that social housing resources are provided only to those in need.

Finally, the bill amends part 7A of the Housing Act 2001 to allow for certain community housing providers to terminate the lease of a registrable person on the recommendation of the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force and with the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services. This power will assist in the delivery of the Future Directions strategy by enabling community housing providers that will manage properties in transfer districts under the Social Housing Management Transfer program to respond quickly to safety risks to the community posed by a registrable person. This power is similar to the power currently held by the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services.

The changes proposed in the bill will not affect the large majority of tenants who do the right thing in public housing. Instead, these changes promote tenant accountability and foster positive behavioural change for the minority of tenants who seek to take advantage of the benefit they receive. This Government will continue to make reforms that benefit our most vulnerable. I encourage every member of this House to support the changes proposed to build a fairer and more equitable social housing system. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (17:12):** As a member of Parliament who has many thousands of social housing tenants in my electorate, I am compelled to speak in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Social Housing) Bill 2018. A huge part of my job is trying to get better outcomes for the very many social housing tenants in my electorate. This legislation makes amendments to both the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and the Housing Act 2001 that will set conditions under which a tenant becomes subject to the rental bond scheme and will terminate tenancies where the tenant has been convicted of fraud. The remainder of the bill could be characterised as tidying up a range of anomalies and changes in the service system where there are gaps.

It should be noted that most community housing providers already seek a bond payment. The aim of this legislation is to allow Family and Community Services [FACS] to charge existing tenants a bond where those tenants have instigated at least \$500 worth of damage. Concerns have been raised that seeking a bond payment could exacerbate homelessness or place pressure on social housing providers as vulnerable tenants are unable to cope financially with the imposition of a bond. This bill will allow the Land and Housing Corporation and Aboriginal Housing Office to require existing tenants to pay this bond any time before the end of their tenancy agreement if FACS discovers damage. It provides that the landlord can give a termination notice for non-payment of the bond once the bond is more than 14 days overdue. This will create a significant amount of pressure. The bill refers to guidelines that will set the conditions under which the tenant becomes subject to the bond scheme and the amount required.

They will be required to pay a rental bond irrespective of whether they have taken full responsibility for the damage and/or paid for the damage. There are also issues related to fairness and due process in terms of retrospectively applying the bond for damage before the policy was brought in. Applying the bond for existing tenants will create disincentives for current tenants to report property damage. This might lead to properties being left in poor condition for lengthy periods of time and whilst wilful damage will not be tolerated a current property condition report should be required before the provision is permitted to apply.

The rental bond will be set at four weeks market rent up to a maximum of \$1,400 and the tenant will be given the option of paying up-front, potentially a slightly lower amount, or paying in instalments up to 36 months, depending on circumstances. The bill will require NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] to terminate social housing tenancy where the tenant has been convicted of fraud in relation to their housing claim except in exceptional circumstance. Mandating termination except in these circumstances removes the tribunal's ability to consider all relevant circumstances before terminating the tenancy, this may also result in an unjust outcome—for example, in cases where domestic violence and/or elder abuse can be demonstrated to be a factor in the circumstances in which the fraud occurred.

An alternative and more appropriate mechanism would be for termination on the basis of conviction on fraud to be added to section 154D of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. This would still allow for appropriate discretionary powers in instances where undue hardship or particular circumstances could be considered. Namely, those provided for in the current section 154D (b). Labor will be seeking amendments to this legislation that will allow for a formal means of discretion in collecting bonds with regards to the undue hardship I just mentioned and will look to amend the sections of the Housing Act to make clear convictions will be sought only in more serious or wilful cases of fraud. I have outlined my concerns. There are many people in social housing in my electorate, which is of grave concern to me and something I keep a close eye on. This bill requires quite a few changes.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:17):** Social housing exists to keep vulnerable people safe, to give them support and security to get back on their feet, and to prevent homelessness. Almost 40,000 people in this State are experiencing homelessness and the rate of people becoming homeless has increased by 37 per cent since this Government came to office. This week is Homelessness Week, a time when we should focus on strengthening the housing safety net and getting more people safely housed. But the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Social Housing) Bill 2018 will create hardship, homelessness and significant stress for tenants, many of whom are already experiencing disadvantage, poverty, and social and health challenges.

Provisions to make it mandatory to evict a tenant convicted of rental rebate fraud could have devastating impacts. It is likely that these people will be evicted to homelessness as many will have no other option. Fairness can be guaranteed only if the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal retains its discretion. The tribunal should be able to make a decision after considering all the relevant factors and merits of a case. We cannot predict all the circumstances surrounding fraud-related offences and there will be situations when it would be unfair or unsafe to evict a tenant. A victim of domestic violence or elder abuse could be held responsible for fraud caused by their persecutor, for example.

Fraud could be the result of someone's mental health condition or from an unintentional mistake in disclosing income, which can change from week to week for tenants due to variable working hours. Without tribunal discretion, there is no safeguard to protect vulnerable tenants or to ensure evictions are fair. If a housing provider is unhappy with a decision by the tribunal, it can apply to the appeal panel which has the power to evict a tenant if the tribunal has chosen not to. Tenants with debts arising from fraud can also be evicted for failure to pay off the debt.

The bill would allow Family and Community Services [FACS] to charge a bond to an existing tenant and evict them when the bond is more than 14 days overdue. I understand that the bond will be calculated at four weeks of rent to a maximum of \$1,400; however, it is unclear whether this will be based on the tenant's subsidised rent or market rent values. The bond will be payable even if a tenant has taken responsibility and paid for the damage. The aim is to charge the bond to a tenant who has caused \$500 worth of damage to a housing property at any stage of their tenancy. There is no evidence that charging existing tenants a bond will be an effective measure in protecting social housing property. However, it will likely cause significant hardship to already vulnerable people.

Tenants could be subject to a bond because an inspection of their home identifies damage caused long ago by a previous tenant. There is no provision to limit the bond to tenants who have caused damage intentionally. Tenants may have to pay a bond because of damage they caused under psychosis for a mental health condition that they now have under control or for damage they accidentally caused due to a condition such as blindness. Tenants who suffer from hoarding disorder may have to pay a bond for their psychologically diagnosed mental illness. If the maximum \$1,400 is charged and tenants are permitted to repay it in instalments, the bond will add \$26.90 to fortnightly payments for two years. This is a considerable impost for someone on a very low income.

Most people on the Newstart Allowance earn under \$550 a fortnight and pay around 30 per cent of their income on rent. Paying more than 30 per cent of income will put tenants in extreme cases of housing stress. The pressure could impact on their mental health and wellbeing and some will forgo spending on essentials such as food and energy. The bond risks becoming a disincentive for reporting damage which could be quicker and easier to fix if reported immediately. The bond will only compound the challenges many tenants face in accessing and keeping social housing.

The Minister says that guidelines will be developed to provide safeguards to protect vulnerable people, including victims of domestic violence. It is unlikely that guidelines will be able to protect all vulnerable people or cover all victims of domestic violence. The Redfern Legal Centre reports that victims of domestic violence have often been made liable for damage to their social housing homes caused by a violent partner. With the increasing concentration of tenants with complex and longstanding health and welfare concerns and high level needs, it is unlikely that many tenants will ever leave their social housing homes and get the opportunity to have their bond refunded. We are also not building enough social or affordable housing in New South Wales, meaning the likelihood of them being able to get the bond back by moving into private housing is further reduced. This policy will only make poor people poorer.

Tenants have few options to raise revenue and it is unclear where the Government expects them to come up with the bond. One option would be to obtain it from a local homelessness or other community service, which would have to take it from existing brokerage funds that come from FACS anyway. This is just cost shifting and diverts funding away from better investments from the sector. Tenants already cover the cost of damage that they are responsible for and have to pay any outstanding debts incurred from damage before they can return to social housing if they have left. The bond is just another pathway to eviction and homelessness. The overwhelming majority of social housing tenants are law abiding, good tenants, who care about their home and their community.

While a small minority of tenants present challenges, the Government should not respond with policies that create unfair and unsafe outcomes for tenants. Increasing evictions and costs for tenants with complex needs undermines the core purpose of the social housing system.

The bill will ultimately result in more people becoming homeless. Rather than trying to reduce the social housing waiting list through eviction, the Government should seriously expand social housing stocks across the State, including the inner city where there are jobs, transport and services. We need to build 5,000 new social homes every year until 2026 just to keep up with the need and all major redevelopments should provide at least 15 per cent social and affordable housing. In Homelessness Week, we should be dealing with legislation and government initiatives to reduce homelessness, not legislation which could mean that people become homeless in a State which has more than twice the growth rate of homelessness than the national average and nearly 40,000 homeless people. The focus of the bill is wrong and the outcomes will be devastating. I oppose the bill.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:25):** I make a contribution to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Social Housing) Bill 2018. The bill has three main aspects. First, it extends rental bonds to be payable by certain existing Land and Housing or Aboriginal Housing tenants. I note that this requirement applies to certain new tenants. It also provides for the termination of a tenancy when this bond is required to be paid but has not, in fact, been paid. Secondly, the bill allows for the termination of a Land and Housing or Aboriginal Housing tenancy when the claim for that tenancy has been shown to be fraudulent.

The bill makes various other miscellaneous changes. In particular, it is worth noting that the bill provides for the termination of a lease of a registrable person—that is, a person who has committed a sexual and/or violent offence against young people under the age of 18 years. While the intentions of the bill are good, and I agree with the need to address antisocial behaviour, wilful damage and fraud, I have concerns about the use of the guidelines in this area. The bill requires payment of a bond when the tenant belongs to a class of tenant specified in the rental guidelines. In her second reading speech, the Minister said:

A rental bond will only be required if a tenant has caused significant damage to his or her property in accordance with these ministerial guidelines.

Unfortunately, as outlined by the Legislation Review Committee report on this bill, the guidelines are unclear and, without further clarity, this leaves the potential for inconsistency in the application of the rental bond scheme. For example, it is unclear how a class of tenant will be determined or how long a person will remain classified in this class of tenants. It is also unclear how the cause of damage is to be determined. The issues raised by the Legislation Review Committee are particularly concerning, given that five of the eight members of the committee are members of the Government that has introduced the bill in this place. It is evident that those aspects of the scheme must be clarified prior to the assent of the bill.

My concern in this regard is for the tenants who have no intention of doing the wrong thing. Those tenants should not be consigned to homelessness or the rigours of the private rental market. My concern is also about the potential financial impost that will be placed on social housing clients—the majority of whom do the right thing—by requiring the payment of a rental bond up to \$1,400. Again, the Minister said in her second reading speech that this would apply only when a tenant has wilfully damaged a property. Statements have been made that the amount of damages would total more than \$500. If that is the case I have no problem with the provision. However, that is not what the bill says. This provision will be included in the guidelines which are not considered by this Parliament. The legislation is silent on the detail of who would have to pay such a bond.

The bill represents a part of the major strategic framework for the future directions of social housing in New South Wales. Introduced by former Minister Hazzard in 2015, the strategy included three priorities—more social housing; more opportunities, support and incentives to avoid or leave social housing; and a better social housing experience. I have looked to my electorate of Charlestown to form a judgement about the effectiveness of this policy to date. There is a long way to go. What is being made available for new tenants? In my entire electorate of Charlestown, two unit blocks are currently under construction and due for completion in 2019. That is a total of 18 one- and two-bedroom units with an estimated construction cost of \$7.3 million, which is an average of just over \$400,000 per unit. That is rather expensive in my view.

Just like every electorate in New South Wales, in Charlestown there is a backlog of maintenance requests and the planned refurbishment of vacant dwellings. We have transitional living arrangements for those whose homes are unlivable that includes motels, caravan parks and pub accommodation. A large number of properties remain vacant for a considerable time and are not available to create new tenancies. The Land and Housing Corporation is slow to refurbish vacant properties for re-letting and I am often asked the question by my constituents waiting patiently on extended housing waiting lists, "Why can't they fix these houses up so we can move in?"



A quick drive around the streets of Windale and Gateshead to see the vacant and degenerating properties proves the point; the streets are peppered with them. At a time when there is no real increase in housing availability and maintenance is an ever-increasing issue not being effectively addressed—certainly in my electorate—the Minister wants to place a major new imposition on tenants. It is under the heading of "safe stable communities" that the Minister proposes to enable the Land and Housing Corporation and the Aboriginal Housing Office to require a tenant to pay a rental bond at any time after a tenancy has commenced if a bond has not already been paid.

Critically, it will be the Minister who sets the guidelines for the classes of tenants who will be required to pay the bond. The bill places no restrictions on the Minister in setting these guidelines. There is no guarantee that a Minister in the future could not seek to extend the requirement for a bond to all tenants. The vast majority of social housing tenants are good people, on fixed incomes, usually Centrelink payments and usually living below the poverty line. They cannot afford this additional cost, whether it be in a lump sum or in instalments. They just do not have a spare \$1,400 lying around. It is difficult indeed to pull an additional \$25 per fortnight from an already strained budget.

I cannot see how the "big stick" of an increased burden on those already struggling financially will help them avoid rental arrears or prepare them for the private rental market. The legislation has to be tightened to protect them. Equally important to this initiative is that the payment of the bond will be mandatory, with non-payment leading to termination of the tenancy. Mandatory termination is punitive and most likely counterproductive. It can only lead to further disadvantage and no doubt in many cases homelessness. It is essential that there be firm guarantees that rental bonds will not apply across the board to existing Land and Housing Corporation and Aboriginal Housing Office tenants for this very reason.

The bill also raises a number of practical implications that require the Minister's attention and I hope she can provide a response to these questions in her reply. The rental bond remains the property of the tenant, although being held by the Rental Bond Board. Will the tenant be entitled to the interest accrued during the bond period? How does FACS Housing assess the cause of property damage and determine who is responsible for repair costs? Tenants are often charged for repairs that result from fair wear and tear or from vandalism occurring after the tenancy has been completed. The need for repairs and cleaning are often overstated. Former tenants usually do not find out about these charges until they make their application for their next tenancy, a time when they are least able to dispute the charges raised. Who is paying the administrative costs for the rental bond scheme? Has an allocation been made in the current State budget for it?

To address these concerns in particular ensuring that tenants are not penalised for damage by previous tenants or lack of maintenance by Land and Housing, as the shadow Minister and member for Bankstown has said, Labor will be moving amendments in the Legislative Council to ensure that rental bonds in Land and Housing Corporation and Aboriginal Housing Office tenancy agreements apply to premises which have had a property condition inspection prior to the commencement of the bill, as well as allowing a formal means of discretion rather than an arbitrary means in collecting bonds with regard to undue hardship by tenants experiencing domestic violence, disability, mental health issues or the aged, and to make clear that the fraud provisions relate only to wilful or serious fraud. In closing, I reiterate that I agree with the need to address antisocial behaviour, wilful damage and fraud. Everybody wants and deserves good neighbours, whether they are in private or public housing. I do not want to see good people penalised as a result of the bad actions of a few, and I would like further comfort from the Government that this will not be the case in relation to this bill.

**Debate adjourned.**

### *Budget*

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2018-2019**

**Debate resumed from 21 June 2018.**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:35):** I make a contribution on the take note debate on the budget estimates and related papers 2018-2019. I refer to the recent fantastic budget delivered for the people of New South Wales. As the Treasurer said in his budget speech, New South Wales is the gold standard in financial management. This budget delivers so much for today and for the future for the people of New South Wales. It is a budget that Labor could only dream of. At no time in the history of Labor, and in no time in its future, could it possibly deliver a budget as good as this one. The budget result: a \$3.9 billion surplus; a net debt, in other words, money in the bank credit, of \$9.8 billion; a record high capital expenditure of \$87.2 billion; net worth is \$261 billion, an increase from about \$160 billion; a triple-A credit rating; the highest gross State product [GSP] growth of 2.9 per cent; the best business conditions in Australia; 506,000 jobs created since this Government was elected in 2011; and the lowest unemployment rate in Australia.

I will compare that to Labor. Labor had an undisclosed \$5.2 billion hole in the budget forward estimates and a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog. New South Wales was on track to lose its triple-A credit rating due to out-of-control expenses. Its out-of-control wages growth cost the budget an extra \$900 million in its last four years. The New South Wales unemployment rate was above the national average for 62 of Labor's last 68 months. For a decade under Labor New South Wales had the lowest jobs growth of any mainland State. In Labor's last two terms it created just 21 per cent of new jobs in Australia. Let us not forget that only four years ago, for the first time in more than 12 years, the revenue of New South Wales was greater than its expenditure.

As I said, New South Wales is the gold standard and the engine room of the national economy. The contribution of New South Wales to national growth is 48 per cent. New South Wales had the fastest GSP growth per capita among the States, which is about 50 per cent higher than Victoria in second place. Our strong economy provides opportunities, with 506,000 jobs having been created since this Government came to office. In my electorate of Myall Lakes unemployment is lower than the national average but admittedly we have to do more for the youth in Myall Lakes. Last week two youth forums were held in Taree to look at strategies for youth, part of which is employment. It is not only about numbers and dollars but also about having the economy and budget right so we can deliver for families.

Every family has a car and the compulsory third party [CTP] green slip refunds average at \$124 per year. Energy rebates have increased by 20 per cent. The Active Kids program gives \$100 to every schoolchild in each family. We are now introducing the Creative Kids vouchers, which give each schoolchild \$100 to help them get into the creative arts, information technology [IT] and computers. Last Friday I was very pleased to launch the Service NSW cost of living advisory in Taree. It will be one of five sites across New South Wales where we are trialling the program—Lismore is one of the other sites. Two people had already been to see one of the experts at Service NSW to look at the cost of living and what they were paying. One family—the Jenners of Taree—gained a \$763 saving. Another couple who went through the service gained a \$190 saving.

We have reduced caravan registration costs. Many people, particularly seniors, own caravans and go caravanning. We have reduced caravan registration costs by 40 per cent. We also have the energy switch service, which helps families and households find the best energy provider for them. Many families in the Myall Lakes electorate have taken advantage of the Active Kids program. Their children are playing sport because of that \$100 voucher. Many families, including some at the Wingham Junior Rugby League, are saying, "We've got more than one child; not all of them would have been able to play sport this year but for this voucher." Many sports, whether it be rugby league, netball or others, have had an increase in enrolments because of the Active Kids voucher. Now we are introducing the Creative Kids voucher, which will help get children into creative activities, including music, drama, performing arts, language classes and—interestingly—coding and computers.

The Active Kids vouchers are removing the cost barrier to families sending their children off to sport. There is an obesity problem in children in Australia and New South Wales, and the Active Kids voucher is helping to alleviate that and to bring all of the other benefits that children get from being involved in sports. Involvement in team sports is good for all children. We are also helping young people to get ahead. We have the "parents package", we have introduced a second home visit for new mums, and we have extended preschool subsidies to three-year-olds. That is fantastic. The experts and the studies show that getting children into education from the age of three has fantastic benefits later in life and with their overall education. We also have 100,000 free apprenticeships available. We are able to deliver these benefits for families, children and young workers because we have been able to get the economy right through previous budgets and this budget.

These things can only be delivered when the budget is right, and Labor was never able to do that during its 16 shameful years in government. We are doing things to make New South Wales the best place to do business. One of the initiatives in this budget is the lifting of the payroll tax threshold to \$850,000, going up to \$1 million over the next three years. That \$1 million threshold will mean 5,000 small businesses will no longer have to pay payroll tax. That will allow those businesses to expand and employ more people, driving growth, jobs and opportunities in our State. As I said—and I keep coming back to it—because we have got the budget under control and the economy is growing, we can deliver initiatives such as the Clontarf Foundation academies. The Clontarf Foundation focuses on getting young Aboriginal men or boys re-engaged with education through rugby league. It has been tried and proven. I think it started with Australian rules football in Western Australia. It is now run in Chatham High School in my electorate.

More than 70 per cent of the general population but less than 30 per cent of the Aboriginal population completes their Higher School Certificate. In my area the statistics are even more alarming. The Government has boosted the money for Clontarf Academies, Aboriginal languages, the Youth Koori Court, a social impact expert advisory group and the formulation of an Aboriginal housing strategy to try to alleviate some of the issues the Aboriginal community is facing. We are also helping others who are most in need, allocating more than \$59 million for more than 100 additional child protection caseworkers and budgeting for an additional

\$44.1 million to support domestic violence victims and reduce reoffending rates. We have allocated an extra \$61.7 million to reduce homelessness. We are also investing in the National Disability Insurance Scheme and PCYCs and providing funding for a number of social organisations that run programs to help the most needy and vulnerable in our communities.

The Government is able to provide extra benefits and programs for our communities because it has been able to turn the economy around. As I said, our level of infrastructure investment has hit another record. The Government will invest \$87.2 billion in infrastructure over the next four years, which is absolutely phenomenal. No matter where people go in metropolitan Sydney or in regional areas they see more cranes in the sky. We know that infrastructure means jobs. There are 10,000 workers on the Pacific Highway and people are working on new buildings in Forster and 85 per cent of those working on the stage one redevelopment of Manning Base Hospital are locals.

The Government has increased the Education budget by 190 per cent and will deliver on its plan for more than 170 upgraded and new schools. Tenders are out for a seven-classroom building at Old Bar Public School in my electorate, which will lead to the removal of demountables. The project will cost in the vicinity of \$7 million to \$9 million; we are just waiting for the contracts. It will be fantastic. The Government has recently spent \$2.9 million on school maintenance, including \$1.4 million at Great Lakes College. At Taree High School a building has been upgraded. In addition, the budget will deliver air conditioning for up to 1,000 schools.

Let us compare our education spending with that of Labor. During its time in government the Labor Party closed more than 90 schools, including the fantastic Macquarie Boys Technology High School, at which some of the greatest people ever to come into society were students. One example straight off the top of my head is Ray Hadley. Labor closed Beacon Hill High School, Maroubra High School and Redfern Public School. Labor was closing schools when there was a huge need for more of them. Labor had a secret proposal—I am about to out it; it will not be a secret anymore—for \$1 billion in cuts. They proposed to close more than 100 schools and axe 7,500 teachers because they could not get their budget under control. Year in and year out their revenue was less than their expenditure and their debt was skyrocketing, which led to a \$5.2 billion black hole in the forward estimates. The former Labor Government had to do something, so it closed some schools and secretly intended to close more.

This budget delivers a 34 per cent increase in health spending and provides for 40 new and upgraded hospitals. The \$20-million stage one redevelopment of Manning Base Hospital will be completed in November this year and another \$20 million has been provided to further enhance that facility. There is also a \$700 million allocation for the statewide mental health infrastructure program.

Let us compare that to the Labor Party's record in the health sector. When it was in power, Labor closed more than 2,000 hospital beds, whilst the New South Wales population grew by more than one million people. In 1995 Labor promised to halve public hospital waiting lists. When it left office, waiting lists had grown by more than 50 per cent and wait times had doubled. Promised hospital upgrades at Wagga Wagga, Parkes, northern beaches and Tamworth were never delivered. Labor closed 37 maternity units across regional New South Wales. That is Labor's record.

In comparison, in this budget the Government is delivering on top of its previous budgets. As I said at the start of my contribution, this Government was able to turn the economy around. It is delivering for New South Wales not only for today but also for the future. The Government has started the first intergenerational equity with a \$3 billion investment, which will grow over time, to establish a fund to manage debt and sustainability. That is another first that this Government is delivering. The budget is delivering for regional New South Wales and for the Myall Lakes electorate.

I will refer to some of the highlights of the budget, the first being the stage one redevelopment of the Manning Base Hospital. Towards the end of 2013, the clinical services plan and the master redevelopment plan were completed. There was budgetary funding for the detailed planning of stage one. Construction commenced and the first part of stage one will be completed in November this year. That includes a new oncology unit and a new renal dialysis unit. The ribbon has been cut on a new multistorey car park. That is \$20 million that has been and will be delivered, and there is another \$20 million in this budget for the next floor. The medical imaging department and probably the pharmacy will move there and the current medical imaging space will be rejigged and reused.

That is not the end of it. As I said that this funding is for stage one of redevelopment of the hospital, we know that there must be a stage two. I have talked to the health Minister, the Deputy Premier and the Premier about the need to start planning on stage two of the redevelopment of the hospital and they are listening. There has been a call for funds right across the State. Because of the great work of its local member, Coffs Harbour Hospital

has received \$156 million, and there is more funding on top of that. I do not know where that funding will go but I hope that any money left over comes to the Manning Base Hospital.

It is not only about bricks and mortar at Manning Base Hospital. Since coming to office, the Government has increased recurrent funding by 28 per cent and the number of permanent staff by 26. That is 26 more people working there today than in 2011, when we came to power. Last week, I had the pleasure of meeting six new doctors at the hospital: two intensive care specialists, a new head of accident emergency, a new rehabilitation specialist, a new psychiatrist and the acting head of medicine at the hospital. It is not just about the bricks and mortar; it is about employing the specialists so that people can access the services and expertise they need. *[Extension of time]*

With the Government investing in bricks and mortar and increasing funding and services, the doctors, nurses and ancillary staff are doing such a fantastic job that over the last two to three years they are meeting and exceeding key performance indicators, including the national emergency access target [NEAT]. It is the best performing hospital in the Hunter New England Health District. That is something people can be proud of. People should be confident that if they need to go to hospital they will get the very best service at Manning Base Hospital.

I was very pleased to see in the budget funding for the new Taree police station. It is a \$16 million build—demolishing the existing police station, which is at the rear of the Taree Court House, and replacing it with a new police station. If the previous Government had been smart—and it certainly was not—it would have incorporated a new police station with the new court house. That was done in Coffs Harbour, no doubt because of the great work by the local member. We are going to get a new, twenty-first century police station, where the police will be able to work in safety. A number of steps and trip hazards in the existing police station will be eradicated. It will be a great place to work and a great place for the community.

This is not just about bricks and mortar. The officers are doing a phenomenal job and are very well led by Superintendent Shane Cribb and, before him, by Superintended Peter Thurtell. The achievements of the police have led to crime rates that are either static or falling. We should be thankful to our police, who do a dangerous job. I understand that last night there was an incident in Taree, where police had to resort to using capsicum spray. Amongst other things, a police officer was attacked by a dog. As I said, the officers in Taree do a fantastic job. I mentioned Old Bar Public School earlier. A new seven- or eight-classroom building will be erected there at a cost of between \$7 million and \$9 million. There has also been work at other schools.

Painting work is ongoing on the Martin Bridge over the Manning River. The Martin Bridge is the gateway to Taree. It was constructed during the 1930s, using steel girders very similar to those used on the Sydney Harbour Bridge or the old bridge over the Clarence River. It is a long bridge—something like 11 spans over 800 metres—which replaced a punt. Over the past couple of years the Government has probably spent close to \$7 million to ensure the structural integrity and safety of the bridge. The most recent work to replace overhead girders, cross braces and those sorts of things has been completed in readiness for the painting of the bridge. There is \$3 million in this budget towards those works, which is absolutely fantastic.

The bridge is structurally sound but one of the safety rails was at the height of side mirrors on trucks and buses. Many side mirrors were being broken so the rail has been removed, resulting in a win for the community. There had been a lot of complaints about that. Members will have heard of Vivid in Sydney. I inform them that after the bridge has been painted we will have Vivid Taree! There will be coloured light-emitting diode [LED] lighting on the bridge. Can you imagine it? There will be blue, red and then green LED lights flashing across the spans of the bridge, which will be an absolutely fantastic attraction in itself. Some people said that there was no money in the budget for the painting of the Martin Bridge. But, hello! I can show them the line item in the budget. There is also funding for repairs and work on the twin towns Forster-Tuncurry bridge.

Regional grant funding was included in Stronger Country Communities Fund, round one, for revitalisation of the Manning Regional Art Gallery. There was also funding for the design of a new studio theatre space at the Manning Entertainment Centre, as well as \$1.5 million to build the new theatre space when the design work is completed. That had been on the wish list of the Manning Valley community, the council and the local arts society for many years but they had never been able to afford it. This Government will deliver it through the Stronger Country Communities Fund. Funding has been allocated to refurbish the film society's projector to meet industry-mandated specifications, as well as funding to upgrade the public address system at the Manning Entertainment Centre. A regional community like ours could never afford those projects without assistance from the Government. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is delivering for regional New South Wales.

Cundletown Soldiers Memorial Hall received funding of \$108,000 to upgrade its storeroom and a skillion covered area off the side of the recently erected shed. Dairying is vital to the Manning Valley and to Taree, and the shed is used to house a lot of dairy equipment. Last week I joined President Margaret Love and other committee members at the sod turning. Work will start this week. There is funding of \$239,000 for an equal access

playground at Fotheringhams Park. It is important that children of all abilities can get outside and enjoy playground equipment et cetera, so I was pleased that we were able to assist the council in delivering it. Funding of \$200,000 has been allocated to improve the Forster main beach precinct—the southern end where the ocean baths are located.

There is \$120,000 to upgrade the Great Lakes Aquatic Centre and \$200,000 for the Manning Aquatic Leisure Centre, where they have lots of problems with water getting under the tiles. At Wingham Riverside Reserve, on the mighty Manning River, there is a jetty and a pontoon. There is also a park with toilets and a picnic area where many people stay overnight in recreational vehicles [RVs]. Funding has been allocated to improve those facilities. If visitors in the RVs go shopping they are encouraged to put their docket into a box. It has been estimated from the dockets in the box that more than \$70,000 per annum is being spent locally. Now not all visitors would be bothered to put their dockets into the box, so one can only imagine what the real amount would be. Finally, Wingham Rugby League Football Club has received funding of \$511,00 to upgrade its undercover seating.

Other funding included \$200,000 for the Coastal Infrastructure Program and \$1.25 million for social housing upgrades. Funding has also been allocated to connect a pedestrian path from the local Aboriginal community to the bus stop on the Old Pacific Highway at Purfleet. That funding will help to improve the facilities for the Purfleet community. Funding of \$109,000 has been allocated to upgrade the boat ramps at Andrews Reserve at Taree. There is \$205,000 to improve parking at Bohnock boat ramp, and \$183,000 to improve parking and signage at Cundletown boat ramp and to assist the MidCoast Council to upgrade the Tuncurry vessel repair facility. The slipway is to be removed and the ground underneath taken away. In the old days when they cleaned ships they used chemicals that were not good for the environment so the area needs to be rehabilitated.

There is no point in their spending a whole lot of money doing that if there is no funding to replace the slipway. It is the only public large vessel slipway between Newcastle and the Queensland border. There are private slipways, but it is the only public one that fishing vessels and locals can use also, so it is important that we keep it. There is also funding to expand the fishing platform and place trawlers at Darawank park and cycleways at Black Head and Diamond Beach. There are so many things in this budget—too many to go through in this take-note debate. This Government is delivering for New South Wales and for regional New South Wales. It is delivering a budget that Labor could only dream of. Labor could never deliver such a budget—it never did and it never will. That is why it is so important that people remember that and ensure that the Liberal Party and The Nationals remain in government.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Private Members' Statements*

**TAMIL AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY LEADER DR JAYAMOHAN**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (18:06):** I bring to the attention of the House an extraordinary leader in the Tamil Australian community who was honoured at the 2018 Kamban Kazhagam Australia Literary Festival. Dr Jayamohan, fondly known as Dr JJ, was honoured for his service to the war-affected Tamil community in Sri Lanka. Dr JJ was born in Jaffna in Sri Lanka, moved to the United Kingdom after the 1983 ethnic violence and then migrated to Australia in 1999. He is now a senior oncologist working at Westmead Hospital, where he is also involved in training radiation oncologists.

Earlier this year, the member for Granville and I visited Sri Lanka, and in particular Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka. As members of Parliament, we both represent significant Tamil Australian communities, so it was important to us to better understand the impact of the civil war and the work being done by Australians to support the Sri Lankan people, and to further celebrate the Tamil culture and language. It was while we were there that we saw the work of Dr JJ and the very real impact it is having on the lives of women and children in particular. As I mentioned, Dr JJ is well respected in Australia for his support of the Tamil people in northern Sri Lanka, who were badly impacted by the civil war. In fact, his passion for social uplifting led him to start a charitable organisation, Sivan Arul Illam.

The member for Granville and I had the privilege of visiting Sivan Arul Vocational Training Centre and factory, which is run by Sivan Arul Illam. This business venture uses a social enterprise model to provide the most vulnerable women who are victims of war with job opportunities so they can become financially independent. These women are empowered with skills that enable them to rebuild their lives and create a better future for themselves and their families. It was heartwarming to meet these women who are gaining new skills and building a new life after such traumatic circumstances. Many of them still carry the very terrible physical scars from the war, which also limit their ability to work.

At Sivan Arul Illam they are well supported. The organisation's work is incredibly important in reaching out to women and families who would otherwise have struggled to make a living and as a result become isolated from the community. We watched them make curry powders and other spices, which are readily available in Australia. The work of Dr JJ is never ending. To provide support to these Sri Lankan women he must raise funds and this is where the generosity of the Australian community comes in. Just this week, the member for Granville and I attended an event where the Tamil Women's Development Group was raising money for Siva Arul Illam.

Many in my community left Sri Lanka during the civil war and have prosperous lives here in Sydney. They are generous with their giving and their time. I look forward to telling their stories in this House. For those who do not know, Sri Lanka was embroiled in a bloody civil war for more than 25 years, which escalated from ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority. The war ended in May 2009 and was estimated to have killed around 70,000 people. However, almost 10 years later Sri Lanka continues to suffer from the effects of the war, with many people living without the basic necessities that we take for granted.

During our visit to Sri Lanka we visited the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, which is desperately short of resources. I acknowledge the work of the Australian Medical Aid Foundation in supporting the hospital with medical equipment. It is true there is still significant inequality in Sri Lanka that expatriates such as Dr JJ are seeking to address. As well as the women's factory, Sivan Arul Illam also operates a children's home in Mannar, in the north of Sri Lanka. It houses the orphaned and destitute children of war and provides education to help them achieve their potential. The home is run by dedicated staff and is overseen by Dr JJ and the committee of Sivan Arul Illam. With the Australian Tamil community's contributions Sivan Arul Illam is providing crucial opportunities to the most vulnerable to escape the poverty cycle and improve their lives. I applaud the Tamil community in Australia and Dr JJ for his tireless contributions and assistance to the war-affected community in Sri Lanka. I commend their work, and the work of Kamban Kazhagam Australia to the House.

#### **DROUGHT ASSISTANCE**

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (18:11):** I support the farmers of Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands, New South Wales, and all of Australia. Six weeks ago in this place I spoke about the plight of our farmers and called for the New South Wales Government to see what it could do to fund further support for the farmers. I am pleased that the Government has listened to my and other community calls for assistance and provided an additional \$500 million to support farmers. A key issue was to provide transport subsidies that will enable farmers to transport fodder, which is costly if it is coming from interstate. The total investment by the New South Wales Government towards drought assistance is now more than \$1 billion. This problem is bigger than that but it is an historic investment by any State Government across Australia.

The Federal Government has recently committed \$190 million to drought relief, but as this drought worsens and as I travel throughout my electorate and community spending time with farmers, whether cattle, sheep, places such as Cedar Creek orchard, or cropping farmers, they are doing it tough. There is no rain on the horizon, which means there will be no summer crop and at least another 12 months before we see better times. I call on all levels of government, local, State and Federal, to do more. Local councils could provide council rate waivers. The Federal Government could follow the lead of the State Government and commit more money. I will quickly read a letter that I received from somebody I went to school with, which defines the issues being experienced by our farmers. Her niece is part of the farming family. This letter is from her niece, who is desperate to help save her family and their dairy farm. They are campaigning to get that help. She writes:

Mr Rowell, I have emailed your office and just want to let you know of the issues that we are having. I am a dairy farmer's daughter writing this letter at some crazy hour in the morning because I am trying to figure out a way to help my parents before it is too late and one of them takes their own life from not being able to feed our cattle, pay the bills or even put a meal on the table. Farmers are trying to reach out to the government to pull a generous heart string and we hope they have. Farmers are the toughest people you will meet, they never ask for help because they always want to find a way to keep battling on.

That is certainly true. She continues:

It has come to a stage that we can no longer survive without help. My parents work long, 14- and 16-hour days seven days a week. I couldn't tell you the last time they had a day off. My dad is a fourth generation dairy farmer and they have never struggled as much as they are right now. My grandparents were getting paid more for milk in 1999 before deregulation came in, compared to my parents who are being paid less for their milk in 2018. With the increasing cost of feed, fertiliser, electricity and other farm expenses it is impossible to pay the farm bills or at least break even, and the current milk price isn't helping. The love and passion my dad has for dairy farming and his cows inspires myself, my two younger sisters and my younger brother. If the milk price does not improve and the drought remains, whilst the cost to produce milk continues to rise, we will not have a future generation to supply Australia with fresh, quality milk. Animals are starving to death and our farmers have no other option but to put them down. Our country needs help.

I will paraphrase because I only have a minute left. The letter continues:

My dad's phone constantly rings with people asking when the bills will be paid. To see my dad get off the phone and hang his head and say, "I can't promise anyone anything right now" makes me feel awful. The last few years I don't think there has been a day goes by where my parents haven't talked about their financial issues or how they are going to pay for the next load of hay or grain.

The letter goes on for a number of pages. Our farmers are doing it incredibly tough. I am pleased that the State Government has come to the party. As this issue worsens, I call on the Government to do more in the future, and I know we will. The Wollondilly and Southern Highlands community has been fantastic in supporting our local farmers with organisations such as the Dilly Drought Drive. I know that Charles Alder, the CEO of Rural Aid, has had a meeting with them to see what support they can offer. I acknowledge the Lions Club of Tahmoor, our Rotary clubs and the Southern Highlands Drought Relief—I could go on and on about the different groups in my electorate that have put together ways to help our farmers. We need to do more. I thank the community for the help that they have provided.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:16):** I thank the member for Wollondilly for raising these issues in the House today. As we know, we live in one of the driest countries on the planet. There will always be farmers—if not in New South Wales, then in Queensland or other parts of Australia—who will need assistance. Over the past two years the Government has delivered \$1 billion in drought assistance, money that is used to feed animals and to help and assist families on the farms. This funding has been backed up by the Federal Government's announcement. Last Friday it announced where much-needed funding will go to families throughout Australia. The provision of our transport, water and food subsidies will make a big difference. I thank John Morgan, the President of the Oatley Lions Club in my electorate, who today is doing bucket collections to raise much-needed funding for families in need of help

### DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (18:18):** I know that many members in this House are feeling the impact of drought in their local areas. Today I too come to the House to talk about the impact that the drought is having on my community. We are looking at a drought that is widespread, with 99 per cent of the State affected. We have not had the rainfall, crops are not coming out of the ground and our farming families are doing it tough. Our farmers are very resilient and the New South Wales Government has been out there on the ground listening to their concerns and the different views that have been put forward about what needs to happen to support them during these very difficult times.

I grew up on the land and our family farm is in the Bathurst district. I have seen tough times in the past. I know what it is like to get up early in the morning to feed stock. I have seen my parents work tirelessly, even when they were receiving little income. I have seen the sacrifices that they made for me to continue to go to school and be fed. That lifestyle is indicative of many farming families not only across my area but also across New South Wales.

This Government has responded to farming families. One week ago the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Primary Industries were in my electorate on a farm outside of Bathurst to announce an additional \$500 million to support farming families. The money is going towards transport subsidies, waiving Local Land Services rates, water charges and vehicle registrations for class A vehicles. It is an important initiative that is supporting our farming families on the ground. The drought impacts many people in the rural sector. Mental health issues also impact on our farming families and their children. The New South Wales Government has increased the amount of funding to support mental health.

When communities are suffering tough times, they get together to help one another. That Aussie spirit has been shown in my Bathurst community. People are looking at ways in which they can help individual farmers or the farming sector as a whole. We should not forget that our farms provide the food that we eat and, in many instances, the materials for the clothes that we wear. Whilst we are facing the worst drought on record, it is the human spirit and care and empathy of others that shines through. People have walked into my office wanting to make a donation. Others have been involved in the Buy a Bale program so they can make a donation. Kids have wanted to use the savings in their moneyboxes to provide support.

I congratulate Grant and Chezzi Denyer, who are two locals, who will be hosting the Black Tie and Boots Ball this Saturday night, which is already fully booked with 650 people attending. Guy Sebastian will be the main entertainment for the night. This is an opportunity for the locals to come together to raise funds. Grant, a local Bathurstian, and his wife Chezzi have been ambassadors for the great organisation Rural Aid. Half an hour ago I had the opportunity to meet with Charles Alder from Rural Aid and I congratulated him for the work he is doing for people in the rural sector. Rural Aid supports the communities that suffer from drought, floods and natural disasters from time to time. I congratulate the Bathurst community. I look forward to the ball on Saturday night and to supporting my community, which is supporting our farmers.

**TRIBUTE TO BROTHER BERNARD NOEL BULFIN, FSP**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:23):** I pay tribute to a truly remarkable man, the late Brother Bernard Noel Bulfin, FSP. Brother Bernard was born in the little village of Ballinure in the county of Tipperary, Ireland, in 1936. Bernard became a Brother of St Patrick at the age of 17 before emigrating to Sydney years later in 1956. Shortly after arriving in Sydney, Brother Bernard began his service at the Blacktown community when he started his career as a teacher at Patrician Brothers' College, Blacktown. Brother Bernard spent the following 10 years at Blacktown and at the Holy Cross College, Ryde, until at the young age of 29 he was appointed as the Principal of Patrician Brothers' College, Blacktown, where he would continue to diligently serve for 23 consecutive years before entering into what I will refer to as his first attempt to retire.

Two years after attempting to retire Brother Bernard Bulfin was called to duty once again and he took up the mantle as Principal of Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, for a further 10 years, from 1991 to 2001. It was during this time that my wife, Melissa, and I had the tremendous honour to work alongside Brother Bernard during our tenure at Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield. He was a great principal, teacher and mentor to so many teachers, staff and students during his time at Fairfield. Brother Bernard was always known to be the life of the party. Not a single gathering would go by where he would not ensure that he spoke with every person in attendance and made sure he caught up with how the family was doing. I am sure his larger-than-life smile will be etched into the memory of every person he ever met.

Brother Bernard was also known to many as Bernie. He was a journeyman his entire life and could never stop giving and caring for those around him. He was a kind, nurturing and genuine soul. Indeed, once people got to know him, he became invested in their life and cared deeply for them and their family. Brother Bernard was incredibly proud of his Patrician background and took great pride in routinely visiting the Patrician schools to catch up with old mates and to help the schools and students in any way he could. Brother Bernard was able to connect with anyone he encountered and build a strong rapport, no matter the circumstances. He was down to earth, grounded in his faith and loved by one and all. He had a great interest in people and dedicated his life to helping others around him better their lives. Brother Bernard had an insatiable curiosity for everything in life, which kept him busy as he was always enthusiastic about his next adventure.

I will always cherish Brother Bernard's friendship. He was a kind and gentle man who only ever saw the good in all people. Given Brother Bernard spent most of his adult life in Western Sydney, it will come as no surprise that he was an enormous fan of the Parramatta Eels and loved them as much as the institution of Patrician Brothers itself. Following Brother Bernard's tenure at Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield, he unsuccessfully retired once again as he was called to serve the Lord once more. Brother Bernard served his last post as a minister in Parklea prison where he had the opportunity to spread the good word to inmates. I can proudly say that until the very end Brother Bernard remained committed to his community and to everyone around him. Recently when asked what inspired Brother Bernard to his vocation as a Patrician Brother, his answer was, "To work my way to heaven and also to help others work their way to heaven".

His faith was unwavering and his dedication to helping others never faltered. Brother Bernard was a true legend of the Catholic community and was a role model to the countless individuals he inspired and helped over the years. On behalf of the Patrician community, our local community, my family and me, we are deeply saddened by the passing of Brother Bernard. I pass on our heartfelt condolences to his brothers, Father Austin and Brother Gerard, and the entire Bulfin family in Ireland. Bernie, you are all in our thoughts; we will never forget the life lessons, guidance and kindness you have shown to us over the years. Western Sydney was blessed to have had Brother Bernard touch the lives of so many in our community. I am incredibly proud to have called Brother Bernard a friend and to have had the opportunity to acknowledge his tremendous contributions to society and the lasting impact he has had on so many lives throughout his long-lasting career. Brother Bernard will be sorely missed by all. Vale, Bernard Noel Bulfin, FSP.

**RICHMOND RIVER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:28):** I join my colleagues today in acknowledging and reaching out to all those farming families and those affected by this drought in my electorate and the Northern Rivers region. My family started farming in the region in the 1860s. However, today I speak about Richmond River, which is the central focus of the catchment area. Sadly, we are not seeing the long-term strategic planning that is required to meet extreme weather events and droughts in the future. The poor condition of the Richmond River is not being resolved. The catchment area of the river is estimated at more than 6,800 square kilometres which makes it the sixth largest catchment in New South Wales. In 2014 its condition was rated as "D", or "Poor", in a report by the University of New England Richmond Ecohealth Project, but this seemed to be news to the Premier on her visit to the northern rivers region in 2017. It is certainly news to The Nationals who suddenly decided to mention the report and the state of the river two weeks ago.



The health of the Richmond River has been left to volunteer groups and citizen scientists, such as Landcare and OzFish and Richmond Rivers Rescue to try to sort out, with help from local councils, which are crying out for State and Federal funding to get a joint approach to manage the river. There is no silver bullet to turn around the "D" health rating. It is an incredibly large catchment area. Sadly, governments abandoned the management of water some time ago and it is hard to turn it around. Research funded by the Australian Research Council found that many farmers near the Richmond River would be willing to participate in a 20-year incentive scheme to support river health by monitoring drains and reducing stock access to stream beds that flow into the river.

Rous County Council has been approached by many groups and nearby councils for assistance to manage drains that regularly discharge water discoloured and choked by vegetation after heavy rains or king tides. The black water events and issues with the drains are quite complex. Rous County Council has a plan but, sadly, it does not have responsibility for it. Rous County Council has responsibility for bulk water supply, weed biosecurity and flood mitigation but not as a drainage authority. Under the Local Government Act 1993 Rous County Council needs a proclamation by the Minister for Local Government—which I will be calling for in the next six months—to be given the powers to become a drainage authority so that it can coordinate efforts to maintain drains on public and private lands. But that will not be enough.

When the Liberal-led Government abolished the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority in January 2014 it basically abandoned the water catchments financially. Management responsibilities were divided amongst various bodies and little additional funding has been given to them. The Richmond Rivers Rescue group reviewed existing resource management plans for the Richmond River catchment a year ago and found that there were three significant themes to do with ecohealth: First, erosion and sediment control; secondly, riparian rehabilitation; and, thirdly, farmer incentive schemes to care for riverbanks, floodgates and drains. We have a plan but we need State and Federal government support. We need money, the authority and education on the ground for farmers in particular.

I have been advocating for action on the Richmond River since before my election. I have written to the Premier and to the Minister for the Environment. I have called on the New South Wales Government to fund the Richmond River Ecohealth Program. I set up the Richmond River Working Group and then supported OzFish in its efforts to research the Tuckean wetlands. I have supported recreational fishing and community groups to plant native species on riverbanks to prevent erosion. I have funded citizen scientists to conduct their own water testing programs. I have met with University of New England scientists and reported on their work to this House and I have called on the Government to fund their work.

I have also advocated for the Bio-Bridges project in this place to establish planting projects throughout the northern rivers region using Landcare groups. I have met with Rous County Council representatives and listened to what they need, which is the same as others—State and Federal government funding. We need to remove the barriers to action and the barriers to making improvements to the health of the Richmond River. We need a non-partisan approach from this Government, recognising the work that people on the ground are doing but working together to rehabilitate our river treasure.

## 5 LANDS WALK

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:33):** Each year in June the communities of Macmasters Beach, Copacabana, Avoca Beach, North Avoca and Terrigal play host to thousands of locals and visitors for the 5 Lands Walk. This walk spans 10 kilometres from the beautiful Macmasters Beach in the south to gorgeous Terrigal in the north. Since first beginning in 2006, the 5 Lands Walk is a weekend of cultural celebrations, art exhibits, band performances, and other displays and activities at each of the five lands.

This year, a record 23,000 people participated in the walk. Approximately 99 per cent of participants rated the event as either "good" or "excellent". Events such as the 5 Lands Walk have a hugely positive impact on our local tourist-based economy, which is especially important during the less busy winter months. Indeed, conservative calculations from Destination NSW indicate that the 5 Lands Walk weekend alone injected \$2.116 million into the Central Coast economy. This year, of the 23,000 participants, 5,750 were classified as "out-of-region" visitors. For several years now, the 5 Lands Walk committee and Central Coast Council have worked collaboratively to design improvements to the track so that it can be enjoyed by everyone all year round.

That is why I was so pleased to welcome Premier Gladys Berejiklian to the Central Coast in June to announce a commitment of \$4.6 million from the Government for stage 2 of the Winney Bay track improvement. The improvement will include a clifftop walk and viewing platform and will achieve our community's aspiration of the 5 Lands track becoming a permanent and more accessible pathway. As Con Ryan, the 5 Lands Walk President, has said, this will mean that everyone can enjoy the clifftop section of the 5 Lands Walk, including people with disabilities, every day of the year. The project is also culturally sensitive and incorporates the elements

of the Yango dreaming creation story, which is symbolic for the Darkinjung Land Council and local Aboriginal elders in linking the land to whales and the ocean.

Another important aspect of this project is its environmental sensitivities. Over the years, areas of bushland around Winney Bay have been affected by weeds, building waste and household rubbish. That is why this project will incorporate native replanting to replace bitou bush, which is actually classified as a Weed of National Significance. As 5 Lands Walk Vice-President Pauline Wright said, the planned removal of weeds along the pathway and replanting with native species will enhance both the environment and the experience of connecting with the natural bush along this spectacular stretch of coast. Given the obvious benefits of the project, it is disappointing that there are some people who are actually against this infrastructure project and who want the funding rescinded. It is a handful of card-carrying members of the Labor Party who are opposed to council, the 5 Lands Walk Committee, and the State Coalition Government working together to deliver this project for the benefit of our entire community.

It is only as a result of this Government's strong financial management that we can make investments in local infrastructure such as this new clifftop walk and viewing platform at Winney Bay. I reiterate that this funding has been delivered on the basis of council's grant request, which has been reinforced by its consultation over several years and its work with Regional Development Australia and me. Any significant changes to this could potentially risk the funding. That is simply how grant applications and funding work. We know that the only threat to this project's success is the people who may choose to obfuscate and delay the project for political reasons, rather than working to ensure our region gets its fair share of funding. This is the thirteenth consecutive year that this event is being held. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the army of volunteers who have worked to provide such a fantastic experience for all, which truly does demonstrate everything our coastline and local suburbs have to offer.

I thank the following committee members for their countless hours of work: Con Ryan, Pauline Wright, Lindsay Cunningham, Steve Jelfs, Phil Bligh, Suzy Miller, Adam Richards, Yantra de Vilder, Chris King, Sue Lewis, Michael Sharpe, Debra Wales, Indigo Neville, Christian Gregory, Jon Fleetwood, Dan Czura, Paul Haggith and Helen Polkinghorne. I also thank the 700 volunteers who were involved in organising and running the weekend's events. Once again, I congratulate the outstanding 5 Lands Walk committee and Central Coast Council on working with me as the State member to help secure this State funding. I look forward to the council beginning work on the fantastic 5 Lands Walk project for our community and the wider community of New South Wales to be able to enjoy.

## REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:38):** It was with much fanfare that the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, the Central Coast and the Hunter stood alongside the Premier and her deputy as they announced *A 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW*. The "vision"—to use its grandiose shorter name—was trumpeted by the Parliamentary Secretary as, "a twenty-year vision for a thriving Hunter region." The Hunter functional economic region was defined in the vision as encompassing the Cessnock, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Port Stephens, Singleton and Upper Hunter shire local government areas [LGAs]. The Newcastle local government area—the economic and population centre of the Hunter—is conspicuously missing from the list. This latest snub has only confirmed what many in Newcastle already knew: This Government's approach to addressing regional issues has been scattergun at best and its attitude towards major population centres outside of Sydney could be generously described as contemptuous. In a *Newcastle Herald* op-ed Hunter Business Chamber Chief Executive Officer Bob Hawes said of the Government's vision:

Questions remain whether the Hunter is hamstrung ... when the Newcastle local government area is effectively partitioned from its hinterland.

The Chamber believes the latest vision underscores the need for government and business to identify and understand the linking piece between the significance of regional capitals like Newcastle and Wollongong and how these centres best work in their regions to generate the best outcome, and not be separated from them.

The exclusion of Newcastle from surrounding suburbs is not a one-off oversight. When the CEO of the Hunter Business Chamber is going against the Government's definition and backing ours, I suggest the Premier needs to take a close look. Another example is the Premier's announcement in April that \$100 million would be made available to sporting groups across the LGAs that comprise Greater Sydney. The funding would be made available on top of the \$100 million Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund that was made available to the 94 councils outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. Newcastle City Council and Wollongong have effectively been excluded from both funding streams.

The Government can make the argument that the city of Newcastle is no longer regional, but the facts on the ground make that suggestion laughable. Under its plans, parts of the suburb of Elmore Vale are eligible for

grants while others are not. Kotara has been excluded but Kotara South has not. In my electorate, Stockton is not eligible but Fern Bay and Fullerton Cove just up the road are, simply because Stockton is in the Newcastle LGA and its neighbours in Fern Bay and Fullerton Cove are in the Port Stephens LGA. What makes Stockton more metro or less regional than Fern Bay or Fullerton Cove? What makes one end of Jubilee Road in Elmore Vale more or less deserving than the other end?

The Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter said, "Businesses tell us the key to them investing in our regions is certainty," but in its own policies this Government cannot make up its mind about whether Newcastle is regional or metro. At the same time as the Newcastle LGA is being excluded from the Hunter Functional Economic Region and the Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund it is eligible for funding under the Government's Resources for Regions program and the Regional Road Block Grants and REPAIR program. What is more, Newcastle City Council can apply for grants under the Commonwealth Building Better Regions Fund. It is so contradictory. This Government is all over the place on the issue.

In early July a motion I took to the floor of Labor's State conference, which was passed. It called on the Australian Labor Party to adopt a consistent definition of what constitutes regional and metro for the purposes of grant funding. The aim is to create a clear definition of different funding categories for areas outside Greater Sydney. That will give communities a fair chance at accessing and securing government funding and will ensure the certainty that the Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter insists businesses so crave. In the interim, Newcastle residents, businesses and community groups need the Government to step up and clarify our city's status.

Of course, it is not just regional funding that Newcastle is missing out on. The confusion means that major local projects are missing out on metro funding too. That has had negative impacts on the development of the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport, both of which are key to developing our future. I join Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes in calling for the Premier to address these concerns. She said, "These big infrastructure projects remain largely unfunded, stifling economic growth for Newcastle and the broader region." She is right. Newcastle cannot remain in limbo. It is up to the Government to do something about it, otherwise its "vision" may prove to be very short sighted.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:43):** No-one is doing more for the Hunter than is this Government. That is our focus. It took a Coalition government to deliver the infrastructure and services that Newcastle had missed out on for generations under Labor. What does that look like? It looks like the \$450 million being pumped into Maitland Hospital, the \$45 million being pumped into Hunter Sports High School and the \$650 million finally being injected into the Newcastle central business district to deliver the public transport that the community deserves but missed out on for generations under Labor, led by the member for Newcastle.

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The member for Newcastle does not want investment and the creation of jobs in Newcastle. He wants Newcastle to be a rust bucket area under his watch. That will not happen under us.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:45 until  
Wednesday 8 August 2018 at 10:00.**