



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 14 August 2018

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 14 August 2018

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Private Members' Statements

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:10): I speak about the significant infrastructure investments in my local community of North Shore and the work I am doing to ensure that those projects are the best ones to deliver for our community. As members are aware, the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link, B-Line and Sydney Metro projects are significant to the North Shore community and will only be delivered by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government because of its strong economic management. To deliver those projects requires good management, including a record \$3.9 billion surplus in 2017-18 after we sadly inherited a \$5.2 billion deficit from Labor. We have no net debt and have protected the triple-A credit rating, all while delivering more than 30,000 new weekly train, bus, ferry and light rail services; the Opal card introduction; 47 train station upgrades, with 10 more underway including the light rail; the Sydney Metro project; WestConnex; and NorthConnex. That is just to name a few.

I applaud the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Treasurer and the Premier for their vision and commitment to public transport, in particular for our community. Despite opposition from the Labor Party, the Berejiklian Government is getting on with the job of building the Sydney of tomorrow. I thank the community of North Shore, who have proven their desire and ability to come together and provide constructive feedback on this Government's major infrastructure projects so that it can get them right. That consultation has been key to delivering the best possible outcome for all residents, and I am proud of our record in ensuring that the best ideas from the community make their way into project designs. Recently, the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link passed a milestone achievement for North Shore residents with the release of the detailed design of the project for further community consultation. The tunnel will end the traffic gridlock along Military Road and Spit Road and rat-running in our local streets, giving them back to our community. I was pleased to celebrate the release of the project design alongside many local residents.

I acknowledge the work of a number of community organisations and stakeholders who have participated in ensuring that we shape the design appropriately. I acknowledge the Waverton Precinct, including Chair Iain Bartholomew and Ian Grey, who worked significantly with me on the Berrys Bay area of the project design. Through their advocacy they have achieved a commitment from this Government and the realisation of the lease licence, which the former Labor Government offered and which stalled community use of Berrys Bay for about a decade. That lease licence has now been torn up and that land will be returned to the community. With a commitment to public open space and amenity, the community will have a say in determining what happens once the construction is completed.

I acknowledge local school representatives who have been very involved in consulting. They include Wenona School Principal Briony Scott, who is a strong advocate for air quality on behalf of her students, and a number of other headmasters including Marist College Headmaster Tony Duncan, whom I met with recently. One change that we made in the design of the tunnel was to put the ventilation stacks within the existing Warringah Freeway corridor, making sure that we move them away from schools. With the addition of Environment Protection Authority requirements for the tunnel approval, we are reflecting the need to get best-practice air quality and health outcomes for our community. I applaud Roads and Maritime Services and the team for that.

I have also worked closely with my local councils—North Sydney Council and Mosman Council. I thank North Sydney General Manager Ken Gouldthorp and Mayor Jilly Gibson, and Mosman General Manager Dominic Johnson and Mayor Carolyn Corrigan for engaging constructively on the project. They have been advocates for the project and its benefits, and for the community's needs—as local council representatives always should be. I look forward to hearing from as many members of the community as possible during this consultation process, which is open until November. I personally met with dozens of members of our community to consult on this project, and have made contributions and representations to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight on behalf of many of them.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: That's me.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I thank the Minister. I am also working with the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure on the Sydney Metro project regarding Victoria Cross station at North Sydney and Crows Nest. I acknowledge that the above station design consultations are underway and will ensure that they reflect the views of our community. We have also made a number of changes by engaging with our community, including Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College and North Sydney Boys High School. For instance, a second entry for the Sydney Metro tunnel has been introduced at McLaren Street, North Sydney, and we have ensured that construction spoil will be removed from Blues Point by barge rather than by truck. I thank the Government for its investment.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:15): As a Minister who has been involved in the transport cluster, I put on record the passionate advocacy of the member for North Shore, who understands exactly the needs of her community, which has been damaged by traffic congestion for a considerable time. The member's advocacy for improved connectivity across the northern beaches is also about recognising that we need to improve not only roads capacity but also public transport across the northern beaches and into the central business district. This will also have a demonstrable impact on the way that people travel across Western Sydney and elsewhere around Sydney. In her short time in this House the member for North Shore has been a constant champion for her local community, particularly for improving transport connectivity across her electorate and the northern part of Sydney.

NEWCASTLE REGION PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:16): In this place we often talk about the need to strengthen transport options between Wollongong, Sydney and Newcastle in order to create long-term social and economic dynamism. Strengthening the transport links between these cities, particularly by rail, would greatly benefit my constituents, most notably due to our reliance on the train line for the Central to Sydney airport connection, which ultimately connects my electorate of Charlestown to the rest of the world. But right now this journey is far more difficult than it should be. Due to our slow rail line, the Newcastle region is virtually isolated from its neighbouring metropolis.

This leads me to recount the experience of two Charlestown constituents and their journey from Denpasar to Charlestown on Sunday 29 July 2018. The couple arrived at Sydney International Airport on an overnight flight from Denpasar at 6.30 a.m. on 29 July 2018. Sleep deprived, they landed to the news that there were no trains running from the airport to Central station, and were shuffled onto a bus. When they arrived at a very chaotic Central station they discovered that there were no trains from Central to Strathfield, and were shuffled onto yet another bus. When the couple arrived at an even more crowded and chaotic Strathfield, they realised that there was only one working platform. Commuters were running around frantically, up and down stairs, to get to platforms that had no trains. All the monitors displayed misinformation.

Staff at the station were unable to indicate to the couple when, or if, there would be a train to Newcastle. Reading from the Transport for NSW app for commuters, the staff suggested there might be a bus in another location outside Strathfield station that would travel to Newcastle. The couple expressed particular concern to me that the staff were relying on an app used by the public for information, indicating that they had no more information than the general public about the running of the trains and buses. On their way to find this mysterious bus, the couple heard over the loudspeaker that there was a train travelling to Wyong so they decided to cut their losses and board the train. Unsurprisingly, there was standing room only on the train, and many people had large pieces of luggage. But the train did not make it to Wyong; it terminated at Gosford.

Left very confused and carrying large suitcases, the couple were left stranded more than an hour away from home. Eventually it was announced that a train would travel from Gosford to Newcastle. They then boarded the heavily packed train and eventually arrived at Broadmeadow, where they had to wait 40 minutes for a connecting bus to take them to home. Shockingly, the buses were not running late; they were timetabled this way. Finally, at 2.00 p.m., after 6½ hours, the couple arrived at their front door. In total, it took my constituents an hour longer to travel the 180 kilometres from Sydney to Newcastle than it did to travel the 4,620 kilometres from Denpasar to Sydney. Unfortunately this is not an isolated occurrence. The journey from Charlestown to Sydney Airport is a simple 2½ hours, and it is no wonder that people from my electorate are getting back in their cars.

This story highlights four major transport issues for my constituents: First, our trains are in dire need of an upgrade. Secondly, better planning is needed for smooth transitions during system upgrades. I am aware that on this particular date, the switch over from analog to digital systems was taking place, but as the shadow Minister for Transport and member for Strathfield has pointed out, Transport had well over a year to plan for the replacement of the analog system with the digital one; however, it was not completed in time, and this further highlights the inadequacy of a Minister for Transport who has seen repeated pandemonium under his watch. Thirdly, staff are either misinformed or providing inaccurate information, and need to be better equipped to assist

commuters. Fourthly, despite being assured that Newcastle's "integrated transport network" would be far more efficient than the prior routes and timetabling, people are still being left waiting at major interchanges for long periods, highlighted by the fact that my constituents were waiting at Broadmeadow station for 40 minutes for a bus.

An efficient journey between Sydney and Charlestown is critical for the functional flow of people, capital and goods in our region. This is not the "integrated transport system" we were promised. Even a moderately fast rail network of 200 kilometres per hour could connect Newcastle with Sydney in 60 minutes or less, which would lead to improved housing affordability and accessibility to jobs for both cities, and the regions in between. We know that Sydney is experiencing growing pains and, like the Newcastle region, traffic congestion is getting worse. The Minister needs to pull up his socks and ensure that people can seamlessly travel by public transport between the cities.

MACKSVILLE COURTHOUSE

OXLEY ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (12:21): As all good members from regional New South Wales know all too well, the local courthouse is one of those relatively low-profile but nevertheless essential community services that government provides; it has been this way for more than a century. All our larger towns have their courthouse, mostly located in an historic building in the middle of town; it is the central facility for our law and order system. One can readily imagine the concern when the local courthouse goes back to reduced opening hours—so much so that it was opening only on court sitting days. This was the recent situation with the Macksville Courthouse, in the Nambucca Valley, in the midst of the Oxley electorate.

Valley residents who needed help with legal issues at the Macksville Local Court were turning up to be mostly met with a "closed" sign on a closed door. This was mainly due to inadequate levels of building security being provided for the registrar on the premises. Given the range of issues that can be and are being brought by some community members to court staff, one can understand that concern. The courthouse's reduced opening hours is more than an inconvenience for locals, and the disadvantages are clear for those who work, have transport difficulties or need the services of a justice of the peace, or have other urgent matters. People attend the courthouse for a wide variety of reasons. These range from dealing with apprehended violence orders, to legal applications, to certifying documents and registering births and deaths. While it may not be feasible to have the courthouse open every day of the week, only opening on sitting days was, frankly, inadequate.

With the support of the community, I spoke with the Attorney General, Mark Speakman, seeking adequate staffing of the Macksville Local Court office and I am happy to report that the Attorney General listened and the community has had a win. The Attorney General advised that the Sheriff's Office has resumed delivering normal, full-time face-to-face services at Macksville. The opening hours for the registry are Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. Local Court sittings at Macksville continue to be held each Thursday. This means that people can now access all the services they require at their local courthouse. I thank community members for their support and for speaking to me about their frustrations with the limited opening hours. I acknowledge the role played by Rhonda Hoban, Mayor of Nambucca shire. I also thank the community members who have fought every day for community services that they deserve for bringing this matter to my attention.

I am pleased to report that the New South Wales Government, the Attorney General and his department quickly recognised the situation and promptly responded so those valued services can continue. I can only imagine what would have happened if we had been in opposition and not in government. In a very real way, we are heard in our regional communities. Being on the Treasury benches, sitting in Cabinet with the Attorney General, being able to understand what country communities need—that is why we can get these responses. Under our Government not only infrastructure is being provided throughout my electorate but also services, TAFE, schools and hospitals.

Our Government is attentive to and provides strong support for our communities. There is always more that we can do. It is our job to do our best to get as many services and as much infrastructure for our communities as possible, as well as good government policy. Statistics show that 90 per cent of Local Court civil and 76 per cent of Local Court crime forms are now filled in online rather than in person at registries. Even so, there is no replacement for face-to-face services. My community spoke and our Government has listened. I have been proud to facilitate that.

As we approach the end of winter, we are also approaching the finals seasons for local football clubs. I represent a community with great athletes and sportspeople. I give a big call-out to the Kempsey Cannonballs

under-18 rugby team, which has not won a premiership since 2012. I am delighted that they beat the Southern Cross University Marlins from up the coastline in a very strong victory—32-5. I give a big shout-out to James Lancaster, the coach. To coach a good group of young fellows like that takes a lot of dedication, work and energy. I also highlight the captain, Jacob Nelson, as well as Harry Mainey and brothers, Tyler and Caedan Allan. They performed incredibly well on the day and throughout the season. I also give a big shout-out to the Macleay Valley. Another 13 trucks are expected to go to Gunnedah this weekend with donated hay from our valley. I thank them for responding to help our farmers when they need more help than they are currently receiving.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (12:26): The Deputy Premier's project to consult with young people across New South Wales is a fine example of how government can listen to youth and what can emerge from an engaging process. As the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales has said:

The NSW Government has long prioritised opportunities for young people, having established the NSW Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People in 2014. The NSW Government is focused on outcomes for our regional communities and for our young people.

One does not have to look far to see important policy initiatives for youth, backed by proper funding. This year the Government introduced 100,000 free apprenticeships for young people. In April it committed an extra \$13.9 million to provide crisis beds and support for homeless youth. The Youth Employment Innovation Challenge will provide \$10 million in funding towards innovative programs to help young people to find employment in New South Wales; again, the focus will be on regional areas.

Last month I was pleased to take part in the Albury Youth Forum, which was one of around 30 similar consultation sessions held across the State by the New South Wales Government in collaboration with the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People. Information gathered from these forums will be used by the advocate to inform policy development to support young people in regional New South Wales. The Government is seeking feedback directly from young people about their experiences with matters such as jobs, homelessness, mental health, drugs and alcohol. Two class groups of year 9 students attended the Albury forum, which was facilitated by the youth advocate. The group I sat in with talked of what they liked about living in a regional area: things such as good sports facilities, the cinema, skate parks and going fishing. They wanted more options for entertainment and better public transport.

What came as a surprise, the day after the forum, was meeting Dale. Dale, who grew up in Albury, is a young convicted ice dealer. He was moved to contact the office of the Deputy Premier when he heard about the youth forums. Dale believed he had a story to tell: a story about becoming an ice user and dealer, getting caught by police, sent to court, then to rehab and back out. He talked to me of his deep sense of shame, particularly how it affected his mother, his family and friends. Using ice helped him lose weight and made him feel better about himself—initially. He slid into daily use and eventually dealing to fund his addiction. Dale was arrested by Albury police at 7.00 a.m., playing poker machines in a pub. In his pocket was some ice and on his phone were 50,000 text messages. He faced 122 charges.

Dale's story is also one of recovery and the long, slow, hard pathway out of his emotional and physical hell. When I met him, Dale made no attempt to make light of his past. He went to the Calvary Riverina Drug and Alcohol Centre for rehabilitation and came through. He was, in his own words, one of the lucky ones. All along, Dale said, he kept two rules: first, he would only sell drugs to adults, not children; and, secondly, he would only sell to those who had used the drug before. Somehow, Dale hung onto fragments of his moral compass in the midst of what became a consuming business and addiction.

Others saw something good in Dale. His former employer took him back and local schools asked Dale to speak to their students about his experiences and how he fought his way out. He now has a partner, a job and a quiet life. Dale Nicholls is not a qualified expert on drugs nor on the complex issues of self-esteem that hit young people hard and which can draw them down dark pathways. Yet his message—indeed, many messages—connects with youth because it resonates with the voice of experience and comes from a young person. I thank Dale for his courage and honesty and wish him and his partner all the best for the future. I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the young people I met at the Albury school where the youth forum was held. They have questions for government and are pretty good at letting adults know what works and does not work for young people living and studying in a regional centre.

In conclusion, I thank the Deputy Premier for initiating the youth forums across the State. I thank also those who helped make the Albury forum a success, including the facilitator from the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, Kate Munro; the Riverina Murray Director, Department of Premier and Cabinet, James Bolton; the Coordination Officer, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Kim Stone; the NSW Cross Border Commissioner, James McTavish; and the Principal of James Fallon High School, Jenny Parrett. The actor Helen

Mirren once said, "When you're young, you wonder what all these old people are droning on about, trying to impart their wisdom. It's not relevant to you because being young is such a specific thing." A difficulty facing young people is to find their voice; for older people it is to stop talking and listen. The youth forums have provided regional New South Wales with a fresh opportunity to do both.

CAMPBELLTOWN CATHOLIC CLUB

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:31): The Campbelltown Catholic Club's evolution over the past 50 years has been nothing short of amazing. It is incredible that the small dream of a few passionate locals has developed into the enormous club that now stands on the corner of Narellan Road and Hurley Street in the heart of our great city. The idea of the club was first raised at a 1964 working bee at St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School. The following year the inaugural board was formed, with number one member Bill Meehan appointed as the foundation president. He was joined by the likes of Ron and Bruce McDonald. It was not until 1966 that the board purchased the land where the club now stands. While the idea of the club was welcomed by many Campbelltown residents, not everyone in the community was supportive. Several pubs in Campbelltown opposed the concept. However, their resistance was short-lived, as the club was eventually granted a liquor licence in 1967. It took another year before the club was open for trading in December 1968.

Not content with the original clubhouse, the board quickly turned its attention to expansion. That has been a common theme over the past five decades. By 1978 the small original club had been transformed into a thriving community hub which included a swimming pool and children's playground and extensions to the dining room and administration building. After 10 years of trading, the most impressive feat was arguably the board's ability to build a membership base of 5,000 people, and in another 10 years the membership had doubled once again. As history had already demonstrated, those in charge were always striving to be bigger and better.

In 1985, the club officially registered the name the "King of Clubs" with the then Corporate Affairs Commission. Determined to live up to the name, the club's empire expanded once again just three years later. The auditorium was relocated to the first floor while the old auditorium was converted into a bistro. Function rooms were built and the bar's expansion was well received by patrons. Despite the club's rapidly expanding footprint, the board refused to slow down and continued to press ahead with change. The club's expeditious evolution was reflected in its membership which reached the magical 15,000 mark in 1992. A year later a \$15 million redevelopment began, with the new premises officially opened the following year. It took almost 20 years for the club to reach the \$1 million mark from community donations. That same amount was donated in the year 2000 alone.

In 2002 stage one of a major redevelopment, which included the underground car park and leisure lounge, was complete. That same year stage two of the redevelopment—the construction of the Aquafit fitness and leisure centre—also began. The project was completed two years later. In 2003 another significant milestone was reached when Mary Ellen Bland became the first woman to be appointed to the club's board. The date 1 August 2007 was one of the most significant days in the club's history. The opening of the adjoining Rydges Hotel gave those attending functions at the club a place to stay overnight. Rydges was particularly useful once the club's CUBE entertainment centre opened the following year. Since its opening night, the CUBE has hosted an array of big name artists and has helped put Campbelltown on the entertainment map. But those at the club were still not content and in 2010 a second major redevelopment commenced to provide major makeovers to the foyers, gaming room and lounge areas.

Today's Campbelltown Catholic Club is a far cry from the original building in 1968. Dining has become a major focus with the Kyubi Modern Asian Dining on par with some of Sydney's best restaurants. Rydges is also in the midst of a 154-room expansion. I doubt the founding board members would have envisaged such a transformation at their 1964 working bee. One can only imagine what the club will look like in another 50 years but one thing is for sure: Campbelltown Catholic Club will always remain the King of Clubs and it will always remain dear to everyone in our great city as a beacon of community and a flagship of entertainment in the region. I congratulate everyone involved over the past 50 fantastic years and I wish the club the very best for the next 50 years to come and another 50 after that.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:36): I echo the positive words of the member for Campbelltown about the contribution of the Campbelltown Catholic Club over the past 50 years. Any organisation that operates for 50 years with a strong focus on giving back to its community should be commended in this place. This is a fantastic opportunity for me to recognise this Government's working relationship with ClubsNSW and the ability of clubs to support activities in their local communities, particularly in my portfolio area of sport. Clubs continue to be strong supporters and there is no doubt that includes the Campbelltown Catholic Club. The member for Campbelltown is absolutely right about the star-studded line-up at the CUBE. A quick look at the website shows that some fantastic Australian artists will be playing there over the next few weeks. Pete Murray will be performing on

24 August and Daryl Braithwaite will be belting out *The Horses* on 22 September. It does not get much better than that.

MUNGINDI SHOW

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (12:37): I speak about the true resilience of the bush and one of the many amazing communities it is my great privilege to represent in this place. Mungindi is a town on the western edge of the Northern Tablelands electorate, right on the Queensland border. With a tailwind it is about a 4½ hour drive from my home base in Armidale. Around 700 people live there, many of them on farms and some in town. It is pretty safe to say that every one of them is personally impacted by the current drought—it is everywhere, clearly etched in every vista. But you will not hear tales of doom and gloom from that direction. Mungindi is a cracker of a community and its isolation seems to precipitate resilience and optimism in all things.

The House should be reminded of the wonderful people and communities we are helping out during this terrible crippling drought. An example is the 120th annual Mungindi Show which was held last weekend. I was honoured to be one of the 1,200 or so people through the gates of the historical Mungindi Racecourse and Showground for two days of flat out fun, loads of laughs, heaps of hope and many memorable moments. Like many country shows, the Mungindi Show relies on a team of volunteers to plan, fund, lift, load, clean, cook and basically work damn hard for months leading up to show time—when they begin to work a hell of a lot harder. The numbers involved are extraordinary.

Leading the main show committee is a wonderful executive: President Stacey Garsed, who is in her first year in the role; Vice President Mick Brosnan; Secretary Deidre Heagney and Treasurer Bec Ellison. They guide a volunteer committee of about 40 people. In addition to that small army of committee volunteers is the pavilion auxiliary. That committee boasts about 35 additional members, led by President Rebecca Longworth, Vice President Sally Prosser and Secretary Laraine Nolan. The Mungindi Show has the support of the surrounding business community through sponsorship and in-kind support. There are almost 100 official sponsors as well as many more unofficial supporters who all step forward to ensure that the show goes on.

The Mungindi Show goes on like no other. This year the organisers were faced with a tough decision. The drought and the terrible conditions meant the usual big drawcards for the show, and all country shows, such as the camp draft, the tent-pegging and the yard dog trials—all dependent on livestock being available—had to be cancelled. Should the show even go on this year? Stacey and her committee made the decision that it should because the drought should not mean that people cannot get together to have some fun. This was a time when, more than ever, the community needed to come together, get off the farm for a while, have a break and recharge their batteries.

So it was all systems go; and the show went on. The program was jam-packed with activities from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, pavilions full of local produce and artwork, stalls, the woodchop, the demolition derby, the ute show, ute barrel race, face painting, motorbike stunt riders, wool pavilion, horse riding events, all of the sideshow alley antics, the cross-saw challenge—which was very popular this year—showgirl and showboy competitions for the kids, poet's breakfast, children's cooking club, the tractor versus man pull, grain shovelling, fireworks, dog high jumps, pet show and even an appearance by Fireman Sam and Peppa Pig.

A highlight for the sweet tooth every year was the precision aerial flyover and lolly drop. It is like seagulls flying for the last chip. It was outstanding. The Mungindi Show and the hardworking community members that make it happen should be on the front pages of all our metropolitan papers. We should shout out that in spite of the drought, in spite of the terrible conditions, country communities thrive and the worst really does bring out the best in us all. I salute Stacey Garsed, her committee, all the sponsors, and importantly the Mungindi community. That weekend put a smile on the face of everyone who has shown and known too much gloom in recent months. It lifted up those who were down and demonstrated the meaning of resilience. I share Stacey's own words:

I think we are a fitting example of what a community can achieve despite setbacks and I am very thankful to be a part of such an enthusiastic committee and wonderful community. We are pushing on ahead despite recent and ongoing challenges and we are extremely proud to still be able to provide a fun filled weekend for families and people within our region.

I could not say it better myself.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:42): On behalf of the Government I echo the words spoken by the member for Northern Tablelands about the resilience of country people that is being demonstrated across regional New South Wales right now. The Government has announced more than \$1 billion in drought relief assistance to ensure that we help communities across regional New South Wales that are impacted by it. This does not mean that these communities

are helpless. It is the exact opposite. The Mungindi Show committee and the community of Mungindi are classic examples of putting on a fantastic weekend that lifts the spirits of their community. It is just another example of how tough and resilient people across regional New South Wales are. I have no doubt that the member for Northern Tablelands would have been a star at the poet's breakfast.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:43): Homelessness has reached epidemic levels. New South Wales has the highest proportion of homeless people in Australia—approximately 38,000 people do not have a home. Since 2011 the number of homeless people in this State has increased by 37 per cent, which is more than double the national average. Some 7 per cent of those people are sleeping rough, 16 per cent are in crisis services, 18 per cent are in boarding houses, 14 per cent are couch surfing, 9 per cent are in temporary lodgings and 45 per cent are in severely overcrowded dwellings. All of these scenarios pose significant threats to life, safety, health and wellbeing. Without secure housing, medical issues, including mental health conditions, cannot be treated, they degenerate and new health problems emerge. People are at risk of violence and intimidation and are more likely to enter the criminal justice system. Getting and keeping a job also becomes almost impossible.

I was a participant in the *Filthy Rich and Homeless* reality series, which airs tonight on SBS. I experienced firsthand what it was like to be homeless. I stayed in boarding houses and crisis accommodation where facilities were run-down, security was low and costs were high. I heard from couch surfers who were forced to trade sex for a roof over their head. People do not choose to be homeless; the causes of homelessness are out of their control—domestic and family violence, health and mental health issues, trauma, job loss and poverty. Sadly, almost one-third of people accessing homelessness services are women and children escaping domestic violence. Those who experience homelessness are like the rest of us, except that they have had a streak of bad luck. They simply have no safe housing options because the social housing waiting list is so long—60,000 tenancies long—and fewer than 1 per cent of private rentals are affordable for people on low incomes. Unless we take urgent action, homelessness will escalate further.

A disaster that threatens life on a large scale is often declared a state of emergency, which initiates urgent action to make people safe and help them recover. Homelessness is putting tens of thousands of lives at risk; there is no reason not to invoke a similar response. Just like a bushfire, homelessness can burn through a person's entire life, and just like a flood, it can wash away all hope. This year Los Angeles declared a "shelter crisis" and put in place emergency measures to house its 28,000 homeless city residents, and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern committed to getting rough sleepers off the street before winter with a \$100 million emergency housing package. If we give homelessness the priority it deserves we can solve the problem. The Everybody's Home campaign has identified immediate and long-term measures to solve this crisis, including providing emergency housing in empty and unused government properties such as the Sirius building in The Rocks, which has sat largely empty for more than a year.

When homeless people are housed they should be given access to drug, alcohol and mental health services so they can get any help they need early on. Homelessness services should be available in prisons to prevent homelessness on release. Charges for government services such as getting identification cards should be waived and incomplete housing applications should be permitted for people who are homeless. Most importantly, we must expand social and affordable housing stock. We must build 5,000 new social housing properties each year until 2026 to meet need and we must mandate for at least 15 per cent of housing in major redevelopment projects to be social and affordable rental housing. In my electorate I have seen the success that Family and Community Services and non-government organisations have had with the assertive housing outreach initiative, as well as the Homelessness Strategy, which includes a much-needed focus on whole-of-government coordination, but we are still only tinkering around the edges.

If we want to end homelessness by 2030—as the Premier said in response to a question from me—we must build many more new social and affordable houses. The policy of selling off inner-city public housing to build more homes on the city fringes is a proven failure. Not only did it cause significant distress and loss of social support for former Millers Point tenants but also, as data from the University of New South Wales's City Futures Research Centre shows, sales are having little impact on the social housing waiting list because most homes built are only replacement stock. If we do not provide homes for the people who need them, homelessness will continue to surge and we will have bigger social and economic problems to deal with. New South Wales is Australia's largest economy; we do not want it to become the country's most morally bankrupt State. New South Wales has the resources, a committed sector and the need. I call on the Government to treat homelessness as a state of emergency. The Government should take immediate action to get everyone safely housed and to end homelessness in this State.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:48): I thank the member for Sydney for his contribution and his ongoing advocacy for

social housing, and particularly tackling homelessness in this State. I also advise him and other members that this year's budget committed more than \$1 billion over the next four years to the Government's NSW Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023, which included \$61 million in new funding. It also included \$20 million for homelessness social impact investments, \$10.6 million for sustaining tenancy support, \$9.1 million for additional transitional accommodation, \$6.9 million for collocated homelessness and health services, \$6.2 million for expanded Staying Home Leaving Violence programs, \$4.7 million for universal risk screening to respond early to young people at risk of homelessness, and \$3.8 million for assertive outreach and proactive support for rough sleepers, to which the member for Sydney referred in his speech.

OSBORNE PARK PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (12:49): I will impart some of the history of a great Lane Cove organisation, the Osborne Park Progress Association, which was formed in 1926. At first it lobbied hard to improve access to the area, which at the time was frustratingly cut off from Lane Cove. Back then association members—all volunteers—worked to provide recreational facilities for local residents, and in so doing successfully built an active, vibrant community. In 1953, the volunteers completed a tennis court. At the time, the tennis shed was a wooden packing case donated by a local resident. The volunteers—along with some newly recruited blood—had the progress hall operational by 1956. The original progress hall is now a kindergarten and a scout hall was added later. Today those facilities are owned by Lane Cove Council, but the Osborne Park Progress Association still manages and maintains the tennis court.

I was pleased last year to announce a grant, made available by the Government through the Community Building Partnership program, to provide for an upgraded home for the tennis club. I acknowledge the additional financial support provided by Lane Cove Council that has allowed the community-run tennis court and clubhouse to be available for permanent bookings. It is located in a leafy, peaceful setting off Richardson Street East, which also has a children's play area and a barbeque. I suspect that Roger Federer would be happy to put down a couple of sets at the Osborne Park court.

As members know only too well, groups such as Osborne Park Progress Association operate because of the dedication and expertise of many people. I pay tribute to President Peter Bennett, Vice-President Rod Tudge, Secretary Ross Noone, Public Officer Peter Hackforth and Treasurer Rodney Geddes. The fantastic tennis court manager is Ralph Bertinetti. Of course, many others—too many to mention now—make a contribution, and I thank them on behalf of a grateful community. The input of members of the association's committee is wideranging. Among other duties, they manage and maintain the tennis court and clubhouse and liaise with the council to ensure that the Osborne Park Recreation Area is maintained. They also work to improve the amenity of the local area. That includes distributing an annual calendar, an information sheet and regular newsletters to more than 350 local homes.

That effort is why I felt privileged to give the Osborne Park Progress group a Community Building Partnership grant. I also pay tribute to the work and commitment of Tennis Court Shed Subcommittee members Lynne Bennett, Lynne Eggleston and Margaret Heathers. The new tennis clubhouse has been described as "frankly fabulous", which is an apt description. Frankly speaking, in the late 1940s many young families built their first home in and moved to Osborne Park. At the time it was an area served by dirty, rough roads and the new settlers had only limited and difficult access to Lane Cove. It was through fundraising, community events, much volunteering and council support that they created the thriving community that Osborne Park is today. As the local member, I know that Osborne Park is a vibrant and dynamic community and an essential part of my electorate. The Osborne Park Progress Association is, and has been since its inception, an amazing bunch of achievers.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:53): I congratulate the member for Lane Cove and Minister for Planning on his efforts through the Community Building Partnership program and the Lane Cove Council to fund the much-needed upgrade of the tennis clubhouse at Osborne Park. The local community will benefit from this upgrade of an important local facility. It is wonderful to see yet another project funded by this Government under the Community Building Partnership program. It is also wonderful to see the success of the hard work done by the Osborne Park Progress Association in finally achieving the upgrade.

MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE OVERDEVELOPMENT

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:54): I recently spoke about my constituents experiencing the fear of missing out, or FOMO as it is known in social media language. They are missing out on their fair allocation of budget resources and missing out on the infrastructure we urgently need. One thing we are not missing out on in south-west Sydney is overdevelopment and we have had enough. For years the south-west has had to bear the brunt of this Liberal Government's unfair planning agenda. Once green fields

are now covered in rooftops. Our commuter car parks are full by 7.00 a.m. Our trains are packed. Our roads are clogged. Our classrooms are overcrowded. We have had enough.

I began the fight against overdevelopment in my electorate in 2015. It started because of this Government's blatant greedy land cash grab decision to sell Hurlstone Agricultural High School's valuable educational farmland to developers, which was a sneaky decision announced on the second last sitting day in 2015. That decision was in spite of previous parliamentary and public statements that not a blade of the school's land would be sold. A Coalition member even introduced a bill to prevent any sale. It was a community betrayal without comparison. When I introduced an identical bill to save Hurlstone's farm from sale, how quickly they all ran.

Developers and the Government are this State's Siamese twins. Selling Hurlstone's educational farm was not about education; it was a greedy land grab to please developers—plain and simple. I have spent years fighting this Government's appalling decision on development. Residents have backed my Hands off Hurlstone campaign. They know that the farmland at Hurlstone is invaluable and this green space is a crucial buffer. It is part of our environmental heritage and educational future, and the only thing preventing the ever-encroaching urban sprawl and splatter. But this Government does not care. It does not care that the quality of life for my constituents is under threat by overdevelopment. It does not care that green open space is a disappearing commodity in south-west Sydney. It only adds to the problem.

Another example is the vital natural asset of Scenic Hills—the lungs of Campbelltown—and another green buffer. Generations, politicians of all persuasions and the general public have fought, protected and preserved Scenic Hills from development but now the area is under threat. There is a development application to build a cemetery with 136,000 plots on Scenic Hills. Like many of my constituents, I reject this development application and the attempts to spin it as environmental preservation. If approved, the cemetery proposal would unlock a tidal wave of new development applications across Scenic Hills. First to be approved would be the cemetery plots, then incrementally the development would expand. The green rolling hills will be further swallowed up by an extensive road network, a function centre and even a cafe. This cemetery proposal could very well be the beginning of the end for Scenic Hills.

The fight to protect Scenic Hills has been long and hard but I will not give up and nor will my community. When it comes to overdevelopment, my views are consistent and clear. It is no secret that I believe south-west Sydney is drowning from congestion and overdevelopment. For years this Government has failed to listen. Nearly a year ago I launched my Stop the Squeeze survey because I wanted to give people in my community a voice and to listen to their thoughts about development in our area. Thousands of people responded and their message is loud and clear—development is out of control, infrastructure investment is inadequate and we are not getting our fair share.

My constituents have watched helplessly as development destroys our green open space. They have condemned the Government's "planned precincts" that will forever change the face of their suburbs and turn their neighbourhoods into a developer's dumping zone. They lament the fact that this Government favours developers over residents, but their concerns have fallen on deaf ears. Time and again I have called out this Government for its out-of-touch planning regime. I have made speeches, written letters, delivered petitions and asked questions on notice. Still this Government steams ahead with its plan for high-rise monstrosities and increasing densities. My electorate has had enough. We are fed up and we will not be silent. I am proud to be my community's voice in this Parliament. It is time to stop the squeeze!

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:59): Over the 16 years of the former Labor Government there was inaction, with cuts to education, health and transport—in fact, over the 16 years of the former Labor Government overdevelopment was out of control. Under Frank Sartor and Labor, overdevelopment was a major problem. Under Frank Sartor and Labor, there was no proper planning and no proper consultation: The biggest winners were the developers. This Government is allowing communities to have a bigger say about the future of their neighbourhoods. We are seeing proper planning under a Coalition Government, unlike in those 16 years under Labor.

BATHURST ELECTORATE INVESTMENT

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (13:00): Today I speak about the incredible investment that continues to be rolled out across the Bathurst electorate. This Government is developing for regional and rural communities, and this Government is making the investment that is impacting upon people's lives. Whether it is in the larger towns or in the villages, people in my electorate are receiving their fair share of funding. This Government has done the hard work to ensure that, whether people live in the city or live in the bush, they are getting their fair share of funding.

Today I take this opportunity to talk about a number of important projects being undertaken in my area. Last week the Government opened the \$3 million upgrade of the Mid Western Highway at Blayney, a section of road known as Martha and Adelaide streets. This section of road had a very sharp bend, which meant that in the past a number of heavy vehicles rolled over. Members can imagine the carnage caused by the rolling of trucks that may be going to the saleyards or moving produce or freight. Approximately 4,000 vehicles use that section of road each and every day, and 10 per cent of those are heavy vehicles. This \$3 million investment is part of the New South Wales Government's Safer Roads Program to make roads safer for the motorists who use those roads.

Another fantastic project I will mention is the Bathurst Base Hospital car park. An \$800,000 investment will provide more than 70 parking spaces for residents who use Bathurst hospital. This will make a big difference for all users, be it the elderly, people with disabilities or people with young families. In the past they had to park a couple of blocks away from the hospital entrance and by the time they reached the hospital they were worn out. The Government is ensuring that this investment will assist people to use the hospital services all the time.

Millthorpe, another great little community just down the road from Blayney, has just received \$45,000 from the New South Wales Government as part of the digitisation program. That funding will go to the Millthorpe and District Historical Society, which has more than 14,000 items in its museum collection. Over the next two years all the machinery and different items will be digitised to ensure that we capture the history of the region. The items will be photographed and then made available to those wanting to know the history of the Millthorpe community. Its extensive collection includes local Aboriginal and European arts, artefacts and historical family records that will all become part of the digitisation program that the Government is delivering. The electorate has a rich history, and this investment will ensure that this will be preserved not only for today's generation but also for future generations.

Last Friday I had the opportunity to visit the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, which has received a \$100,000 investment from the New South Wales Government. The museum is run by a bunch of hardworking volunteers, and this grant will enable improvements to be made to the 1923 general machine shop building. It is currently not in use and, due to its state of disrepair, improvements will be made to the flooring, roofing, gutters and lighting, and offices will be demolished, retrofitted and generally cleaned up. Also in the electorate are the Lithgow Rifle Range, the Bathurst Pistol Club and the Bathurst Clay Target Club, all of which are receiving funding from the Government. Last week was a busy week, and I cannot wait to get back out there at the end of this week and see more investments that the Government is making.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:05): I thank the member for Bathurst for his great work in regional and rural New South Wales. I acknowledge the level of investment that this side of the House is providing to rural and regional New South Wales, including the recent announcement by the Premier and the Minister for Regional New South Wales of the emergency drought relief package of \$500 million, which takes the total package to more than \$1 billion over the past two years. We are seeing transport subsidies and the cutting of farming costs with the waiving of fees and charges, including local land service rates and fixed water charges. Counselling and mental health funding is being provided for those in rural and regional New South Wales, as well as funding for animal welfare and stock disposal and for critical services, including road infrastructure improvements. It shows that it is this side of the House that really cares when it comes to the people of rural and regional New South Wales.

GOULBURN AUSTRALIA BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (13:06): On Saturday 11 August I had the privilege of attending the sold-out 2018 Goulburn Australia Business Excellence Awards presented by the Goulburn Chamber of Commerce. The gala dinner at the Mercure Goulburn was emceed by Deputy Police Commissioner Gary Worboys, who could possibly have a second career in emceeing events. I, along with the Mayor of Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Councillor Bob Kirk, had the privilege of announcing the winners of these prestigious awards. It was clear to me that businesses in Goulburn and in the wider region are booming. Goulburn is thriving as a result of good local, State and Federal government and very strong State Government investment, coupled with amazing local talent and our strong and skilled local workforce.

Some of the winners included Diana Cheetham from Diana Cheetham Hair and Makeup Artist, who was awarded Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Warrigal, which employed 200 people locally, was awarded Employer of Choice. The Excellence in Social Enterprise award went to BDCU Alliance Bank. Excellence in Customer Service went to Corrine McElligott from the Goulburn Physiotherapy Centre. Excellence in Small Business went to Dean Seeley from Goulburn Transfers and Tours. The Startup Superstar award went to Tennille Skelly from Dream Admin Services. Excellence in Sustainability went to Goulburn Solar Brokers. The Business Leader award went to Goulburn Physiotherapy Centre.

I commend each of those businesses for their hard work and dedication to their customers and to the wider community. Whilst I do not wish to take anything away from these outstanding businesses, they do not stand alone. The Liberal-Nationals Government has set the tone for a strong business economy with unprecedented infrastructure development, investments in TAFE facilities to provide that skilled workforce, and much, much more. The New South Wales unemployment rate is 4.7 per cent, the lowest of any State for the thirty-seventh consecutive month. It was obvious from my conversations on Saturday night that Goulburn is certainly reaping these benefits and has a very strong workforce—the number of businesses attracted to the area is testament to that. In fact, employers complain that it is hard to find workers because employment is so tight.

A prime example of Goulburn's attractiveness to business is the development of a new brewery, on track to open early next year. Company chief executive officer Anton Szpitalak met with me onsite to show me his vision, which will create up to 100 local jobs. The operation will be a beverage manufacturing facility with huge long-term growth potential. Goulburn's location on the Federal Hume Highway between Canberra and Sydney makes it a great place to live and do business and, obviously, to be able to move beer around the State.

As with all businesses, telecommunications play a vital role. The establishment of phone towers at Binalong, Wee Jasper and Golspie has also contributed to our success. Tarlo was the latest community to join the twenty-first century, with a Telstra blackspot tower now functioning—all courtesy of the Federal Government and State Government working together with Telstra to deliver for our people. The Black Spot Program did not exist before we came to government, the lack of which resulted in the loss of growth potential for regional communities.

My recent business visits throughout Boorowa, Moss Vale, Robertson, Yass and Gunning also confirm our strong local economies. As a citizen of Goulburn, like my constituents I support local businesses wherever possible—Zantis Jewellers, Cut n Curl, RJ's Dry Cleaning, the local Woolworths, and local stock and station supplies. I am a client of all of them. I recently introduced Crookwell potatoes to the Parliament kitchen and they were a huge hit. I hope this continues. We already have Robertson potatoes in the parliamentary dining room. I assure members that once they have tried a real potato—a Kadwell Crookwell potato, a Robertson Gourmet potato or Hill's family potatoes—they will never go back to the watery spuds that people get from the supermarkets. I am very proud to be part of a government that supports local businesses and one that understands the particular importance of small business in regional New South Wales. If only we could make it rain for the farmers as well, but meanwhile we have very strong drought support initiatives that I know our farmers are grateful for.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:10): I commend the member for Goulburn for her outstanding achievements and work in her electorate. I also commend the many small, medium and large businesses that are doing a wonderful job in the electorate of Goulburn and throughout regional New South Wales in manufacturing and farming. I welcome the many success stories that we heard from the member for Goulburn in the small, medium and large businesses sectors—businesses that are employing more people and seeing a major boom in the seat of Goulburn. I thank the member for Goulburn for all her hard work in her electorate.

SUMMER HILL ELECTORATE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND BENEFIT CORPORATIONS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:11): Today I speak about social enterprises and benefit corporations. I am proud that the inner west is home to countless social enterprises that are redefining the notions of corporate responsibility. They are at the forefront of a movement that puts social good on an equal footing with private profit. People are rapidly losing faith in institutions, including businesses. The Edelman Trust Barometer, which measures social trust, now puts Australia's overall trust index in the bottom third of all countries globally. Stories of mismanagement, greed and fraud, salary scandals, corporate collapses and environmental sabotage have all contributed to an ever-expanding cynicism about corporate Australia. Sixty per cent of respondents to the barometer agree that chief executive officers [CEOs] are more driven by greed than by a desire to make a positive difference in the world, and 64 per cent believe CEOs need to take a positive lead rather than waiting for government to deliver it.

Social enterprises share a common goal built on the same premise of triple bottom line accounting, which weighs people and planet equally with private profit. The Bread and Butter Project in Marrickville, for example, is a social enterprise that emerged from the world-renowned Bourke Street Bakery. Paul and David started the Bread and Butter Project in 2011 as a public company with charitable deductible gift recipient status. One hundred per cent of their profits go towards training refugees and asylum seekers. Baker trainers work with asylum seekers from all over the world, sharing their skills and expertise and helping create vital employment opportunities for these vulnerable communities. Just down the road is Auntie Ginger's Tonic, set up by Yarrie Bangura, a refugee from Sierra Leone who made Australia home at eight years of age. Auntie Ginger's Tonic is made from a special recipe Yarrie inherited from her grandmother and is a bridge between her past and her future. Yarrie's aim is to give back to Australia by drawing on her heritage. She reinvests money into building capacity for other refugees

who are looking to make a start. These are wonderful examples of social enterprises that are changing the face of business in the inner west.

While social enterprises are growing in number, their ability to thrive is determined by the legislative framework that lawmakers provide. One important framework for social enterprises is B Corporation certification—an independent tick of approval that signals to consumers the company's willingness to be valued for the good they do in the world and not just the profit they turn. B Corp certification officially designates a company as a benefit corporation. There are now more than 2,100 companies from approximately 50 countries with B Corp certification, and 193 of them are in Australia and New Zealand. They include: Patagonia, Method, Etsy, Ben and Jerry's Ice-cream and Kickstarter. B Lab Australia and New Zealand has been advocating strongly for local reform. Australian Ethical Super, Stone and Wood Brewers and Who Gives a Crap are all local B-certified companies. To quote B Lab Australia and New Zealand:

Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose.

By definition, a benefit corporation is a legal structure that enables directors of a corporation to consider the benefit of that corporation's operations to stakeholders in addition to shareholders. However, currently there are insufficient protections in the legal system to allow company directors to think beyond their fiduciary and legal responsibility to company shareholders. While companies have attained B certification and are establishing new parameters for social responsibility in Australia, they are doing so in the absence of legislative and legal oversight.

More than 34 American states have allowed for benefit corporations to be established as a classification of corporate entity. So, too, have the United Kingdom and Italy, with many other countries investigating following suit. These jurisdictions have all passed legislation that allows social enterprises to file articles of incorporation as a benefit corporation with distinct by-laws that have a general public benefit requirement, stakeholder centric business model and additional transparency requirements. The model legislation requires that a benefit corporation be able to identify a general public benefit, or material positive impact from its operation, from an established list. That benefit must then be able to be evaluated against a standard set by an independent third party such as B Lab Australia and New Zealand, which is then reported by company directors each year.

This report card on social and environmental factors adds an additional layer of transparency and fortifies public confidence and trust. Success is gauged by their ability to deliver not just for shareholders, but for all their stakeholders including employees, supply chain providers, customers, local community, and the environment on the whole. It is simply a new form of corporate classification through which social enterprise can thrive. As I have detailed, many local corporations are already seeking and obtaining B Corp certification, so we need reform to capitalise on the economic and community potential for all benefit corporations.

Ministerial Statement

YORK CIVIL CONTRACTORS

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (13:17): By leave: I had every intention of giving a private members' statement in relation to the important issue that is affecting Narooma at this time. As transport Minister, it is important that I speak of and thank the roads Minister for her actions following major contractor York Civil ceasing to trade during the past fortnight. On 6 August the contractors on a \$45 million Princes Highway road project, York Civil, were placed into administration and all work at the site stopped. The subcontractors associated with that project have suffered a lot of stress in relation to uncertainty about whether they would receive the moneys owed to them. I am pleased to confirm that the 29 subcontractors, 10 of whom are based locally in the Bega electorate, have had their entitlements recognised immediately, which is important. I thank those local subcontractors for their patience and understanding over the past week, and I reaffirm in the House that no subcontractors to York Civil will be out of pocket.

As transport and infrastructure Minister, I confirm that Fulton Hogan has been selected and will take up the head contract and complete delivery of the Dignams Creek, Princes Highway, project. This section of road was the subject of a coronial inquest more than 10 years ago and has been 70 per cent completed—it is critical to complete the project. Fulton Hogan will complete the work—hopefully to time, which is remarkable. I recognise it and Roads and Maritime Services for their work, together with the roads Minister. During the next three months work will shift to road surface and drainage upgrades along the new alignment. The head contractor will hopefully return quickly to continue work on this critical upgrade to the Princes Highway. I thank the House for its time.

*Community Recognition Statements***THIRROUL PUBLIC SCHOOL GAME CHANGER CHALLENGE**

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (13:19): I congratulate the out-of-the-box thinkers from Thirroul Public School, the Sci-Force team. The team of Michael McCann, Gabriel Hanich, Mitchell Fagerstrom, Anderson Moller, Shay O'Day, Liam Barclay and Grace Williamson—or, as they are better known, Captain Cognito, Crazy Creator, the Forward Thinker, the Quirky Coordinator, the Supreme Strategist and Reggie the Risk Taker—participated in the Game Changer Challenge during Education Week.

The students from Thirroul Public School believe that books and libraries will possibly be a thing of the past, with augmented reality taking over, and they also believe virtual and augmented reality will allow students to read, write, research and experience excursions using all five senses. Sci-Force was among 16 finalists participating in the challenge—eight teams each from New South Wales primary and secondary schools—and was selected from 100 video entries that outlined each school's idea for the school of the future. I congratulate the team, including the teachers Mitchell Fagerstrom and Shay O'Day, on their efforts and this wonderful achievement.

SCHOOL SPORTS AUSTRALIA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:20): I pay tribute to Talea Fernance from Chatham High School. Talea won a bronze medal at the School Sports Australia 10 to 19 years swimming championships. Talea competed for New South Wales in the 17-year-old multi-class four by 50-metre medley relay. She also competed in the 50-metre backstroke for her team. She took part in three other events at the championships, taking fourth in the four by 50-metre freestyle relay, fifth in the 50-metre backstroke and fifth in the 100-metre backstroke. Talea also achieved a personal best time. The championships were held at Queens Domain in Tasmania from 25 to 31 July. All the States were represented at the championships. I congratulate Talea from Chatham High School.

FIX NSW TRANSPORT CITY LANTERN WALK

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:21): People across New South Wales know that public transport under this Liberal Government is a nightmare. Hundreds of people marched through Sydney this past weekend in the Fix NSW Transport City Lantern Walk. The march was endorsed by local groups including the WestConnex Action Group, No WestConnex: Public Transport not motorways, EcoTransit Sydney, Sydenham to Bankstown Alliance, Bike Sydney, the Australian Rail, Train and Bus Industry Union, and Better Planning Network.

Participants brought their passion and creativity to the march, crafting elaborate and stunningly beautiful lanterns that lit up the city streets. Participants came with many concerns, including the botched rollout of the CBD and South East Light Rail; the reckless sell-off of inner-west bus services and the disastrous changes to the train timetable; the privatisation of our rail lines; the need for fare equity for international students; the decision by this Government to put politics before the upgrades of our train stations; and the disaster that is WestConnex. I congratulate the organisers of the lantern walk and everyone who took part.

THE MEADOWS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:22): The Meadows Public School is located in Seven Hills and consists of 10 classrooms of eager-to-learn students. The Meadows Public School is led by Principal Scott Staveley, who is supported by bright and dedicated classroom teachers, including specialist English language teachers. The school's students are lucky to have a productive parents and citizens association, including Soraya Goodchild, Aly Giordano, Kathryn Brennan, Abigail Bunyi and Ronaldo Bunyi. Along with the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services the Hon. Ray Williams, it was my pleasure to award The Meadows Public School Parents and Citizens Association with a grant of \$2,500 for equipment, including tables for volunteers to effectively convene group work to help educate students with reading challenges and disabilities, such as dyslexia. This will greatly support the learning outcomes of students from The Meadows Public School.

GREECE BUSHFIRE DISASTER

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:23): I express my grief and deep sympathy to the Greek people and the Greek community of Heffron in the wake of last month's devastating wildfires in the Attica region near Athens, Greece. The fires began in Kineta, west of Athens on 23 July, and rapidly spread across the region. The tragic death toll currently stands at 95, with hundreds displaced or hospitalised. Australia has a long and deep connection to the people of Greece, and we know too well the horrors of fire. I commend the Federal Government's offer of aid to the Greek Government. I express my deep sadness to the people of Greece and to Heffron's Greek community. I offer my prayers and wishes for safety, and a swift and strong recovery for the people of Attica.

MOSMAN STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:24): Recently I joined the Mosman State Emergency Service [SES] unit for its awards night on behalf of the Hon. Troy Grant, MP. The Mosman SES unit consists of 47 active volunteer members who are ordinary people doing extraordinary things for our community. The volunteers include retirees, information technology specialists, lawyers, a mortgage broker and a police officer. Despite coming from different backgrounds their common interest is an unwavering commitment to give back to the Mosman community in its hours of need, which is mostly when storms and floods occur. Janet Fish, Vanden Helby and Melissa Lee received their 15-year long service medals; Catherine Cooney, Chad Shepherd, Harriet Virgona, Holly Butler, Ian Ernst, Maaïke Blakely, Pragash Santi, Phillip Titterton and Yoko Tsunoda received their 10-year long service medals; and Carolyn Kirby, Jamie Scott, Nichola Cassar, Phillip Cleary, Peter Ballantyne and Ron Gallagher received their five-year long service medals. I thank and congratulate all of our State Emergency Service volunteers.

BRISBANE WATER POLICE DISTRICT AWARD CEREMONY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:25): It is always wonderful to recognise the great work of our police who run towards danger as part of their day-to-day duties to protect us. The Brisbane Water Police District award ceremony was a celebration of excellence in policing. We thank and respect police every day. We also thank their families who support them every day as they leave home to undertake risky business. The champions of our police force from across the Central Coast gathered at Davistown RSL Club to celebrate the performance of those dedicated police who have gone above and beyond the call of duty and who have been keeping our community safe for extended periods of service. There are too many awardees to name today, although I draw attention to Sergeant Sean Lewis who received an award for 23 years of service, Senior Constable Peter Hughes who received an award for 26 years of service, and Sergeant Anne De Vere Bertles who received a Regional Commanders Award. Members of New South Wales Parliament thank them for their ongoing work and stand beside them with respect to support the work they are doing on the coast and across New South Wales.

HORNSBY TAILORS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:26): I congratulate local Hornsby business, Hornsby Tailors, which has celebrated its fiftieth birthday. Owners Tony and Mary Macri are two special people who are greatly loved by the entire community. Located on the west side of Hornsby on Peats Ferry Road, their shop shares the strip with a number of longstanding businesses that have stood the test of time. Hornsby Tailors has a number of loyal customers who know they will receive great service and beautiful clothes when they go there. These days few retail stores are around for 50 years. It is a great achievement and a local Hornsby success story. Tony's motto is "Service with a smile", which is what customers always get. I congratulate Tony, Mary and their family on providing 50 years of great service to the Hornsby community and beyond.

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN CLUBGRANTS FUNDING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:27): Last week I had the pleasure of attending the annual presentation of the Canterbury Bankstown Local ClubGRANTS Committee, which was hosted at Revesby Workers' Club. I acknowledge committee chair, Dennis Hayward, and council representative, Tony Smith, who assists in deciphering the many applications for ClubGRANTS. I also acknowledge vice-president of the Revesby Workers' Club, John Rodwell, who was master of ceremonies on the night. I thank the many other clubs—Bankstown Sports Club, Bankstown RSL, Chester Hill RSL, Bass Hill RSL Club, Club Condell Park, Panania Diggers, Padstow RSL, and Club Mount Lewis—and all the organisations that will channel the much-needed funds through many different programs throughout Bankstown. It is a delight to see our clubs continuing to support our community, sharing \$1.5 million in funding.

MOLLYMOOK VOICE, INTERESTS AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN CLUB

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (13:28): I congratulate the members of the Mollymook Voice, Interests and Education of Women [VIEW] Club on its recent celebration of the club's thirty-seventh birthday. Yesterday I had the pleasure of joining members, including president Faye Kastelein, not only to celebrate this milestone but also to help raise funds for the Smith Family's Learning for Life program, which is approaching 430 scholarships in my area and will reach 500 by the end of the next financial year. It was far from the club's first charitable endeavour.

Since 1981 the Mollymook VIEW Club has raised much-needed funds to assist and support the vulnerable in the South Coast community. Stalwarts Mary Lamb and Mary Campey who started the club in 1981 were present at the celebration and it is always wonderful to see them. The club serves to support and empower women, providing its members with the opportunity to meet with women from all walks of life, establish

friendships, help the disadvantaged and have their voices heard on important issues. As a proud VIEW supporter for many years, I have seen firsthand the valuable contribution that the club makes to our local community. I sincerely congratulate the Mollymook VIEW Club and other VIEW clubs in the South Coast electorate on the invaluable role they play and the difference they make in the community.

YERIN ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:29): Aboriginal medical services are vital in addressing the specific needs of members of our community. Since 1993 Yerin has been providing comprehensive primary health care to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community on the Central Coast. Yerin has operated out of the Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Centre, with the organisation incorporating the centre into its name in 2017 to become the Yerin Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Centre. When someone goes to Yerin, the staff work with them to address their physical, spiritual, emotional, social, economic and cultural needs. That is what makes the service unique in my community. I recognise Chief Executive Officer Belinda Field and Operations Manager Paul Hussein for the work that they do. Several groups run under the Yerin banner and focus on the provision of care in areas such as wellbeing and mothers and babies. There is also an integrated team for chronic care. I am extremely grateful for all the work that Yerin Aboriginal Health Services does.

LIONS CLUB OF ST GEORGE JEANS FOR GENES CAMPAIGN

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:30): I acknowledge the outstanding contribution of the Lions Club of St George in my electorate. Recently, I had the privilege of attending its Jeans for Genes breakfast fundraiser. This year commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the iconic Jeans for Genes campaign. During the past 25 years more than 12,000 schools, 20,000 individuals and 41,000 workplaces have taken part in Jeans for Genes and have raised more than \$60 million for vital medical research. One in 20 children worldwide are born with a birth defect or genetic disease.

The Children's Medical Research Institute is dedicated to advancing the treatment and prevention of childhood diseases, so every child has the opportunity for a healthy start in life. I thank everyone who wore denim last Friday to help those one in 20 kids. This year more than 40 people attended the breakfast in support of the Lions Club of St George and the Children's Medical Research Institute. We raised more than \$1,500 at the fundraiser and a couple of local businesses donated generous raffle prizes. I thank Tina Harrison and everyone involved at St George Lions for bringing attention to this research and raising funds in the community.

YOUTH PARLIAMENT PARTICIPANT HANNAH HEAD

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:31): I bring to the attention of the House the performance of Hannah Head, who represented the electorate of Charlestown at the recent Youth Parliament in Parliament House. Hannah, who is a year 11 student at Merewether High School, proudly represented her community at the event. She presented a bill in the Chamber on the subject of domestic violence, bringing lots of emotion to the discussion. It is heartening to see young female talent within the Charlestown community. I congratulate her on her fantastic achievement at the event. I know her parents are extremely proud of her hard work. I wish Hannah all the best for her upcoming Higher School Certificate year at Merewether and look forward to hearing about her many successes in the years to come. I hope she continues with her passion to combat domestic violence. I know that Hannah has a long and successful career ahead of her.

MANLY WARRINGAH TOUCH ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE KATE RYAN

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:32): I congratulate Kate Ryan and her teammates from the Manly Warringah Touch Association on representing Australia at the recent Youth Touch World Cup in Malaysia. The hard work and commitment of Aaliyah Paki, Faith Nathan, Maddison Higgins-Ashby, Lucy McDonald, Sariah Paki, Sam Kelly and Conor Hickey were on display as they won gold medals in four divisions, including the Girls 18, Boys 18, Mixed 18 and Women's 20. I congratulate also Mr Jason Martin, who coached the Mixed 18 team. I take great pleasure in informing the House that Kate Ryan was the top try scorer for her team and age group. I congratulate Kate and all the Manly Warringah Touch players.

NEWY FARMERS AID GROUP DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:33): I recognise Michael Daley and his team from the Newy Farmers Aid Group, who managed to bring together 10 tonnes of goods for our struggling farmers in the Hunter. The generosity shown to our farmers during this crippling drought has been extraordinary. Michael and his team have been overwhelmed by the community's support for the cause. I am proud to represent a city with such generous, thoughtful citizens and I am glad to see these values represented in our Newcastle community. To Michael, I say well done. He is a huge asset to the city of Newcastle and I thank him.

PORT MACQUARIE FIRE FIGHTERS CLIMB FOR MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:33): I take this opportunity to congratulate our hardworking and dedicated Port Macquarie firefighters for taking time from their active service by participating in a climb of Sydney's Tower Eye to raise money for motor neurone disease [MND] research. The annual Sydney's Tower Eye Fire Fighters Climb for MND will take place on 20 October, with our local fires setting a goal to raise a grand total of \$10,000 towards MND research. Last year the firefighters climbed a massive 98 storeys, or an accumulative 1,504 stairs, in full firefighting uniform to raise awareness and to generate funding for treatments and finding a cure for MND.

Coordinating this amazing fundraiser, Seth Vagg from the Port Macquarie fire service is aiming for another successful year of fundraising by placing 25 donation buckets around the Hastings and organising a host of events around Port Macquarie, such as barbecues, raffles and money boards, to achieve their set goal. This year the local Port Macquarie firefighting team will consist of Seth Vagg, Pat Levitzke, Emma Parke, Andrew Fullerton, Michael Newton, Sonia Nash and Gavin Lisk. Motor neurone disease causes the nerve cells that enable us to move, breathe and swallow to fail, resulting in a weakness in the muscles which degrade as neurones degenerate and die. Unfortunately, the disease is fatal. Currently, more than 2,000 people in Australia are diagnosed with the disease, 60 per cent of whom are male and 40 per cent female. Sadly, the average life expectancy of a person diagnosed with MND is 2½ years.

ESCHOL PARK FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (13:35): Healthy kids are happy kids, and our junior community soccer clubs produce both of these things in ample supply. I take this opportunity to recognise Mr Greg Brown, the President of Eschol Park Football Club—the mighty Wolves—his executive team and all the volunteers for their commitment and efforts in promoting junior soccer in our local community. The mighty Wolves, which were established in 1983, is a well-known and most respected soccer club. Parents who once played for the club are now enrolling their children.

I am impressed by the club's commitment to fair play by all its players and the promotion and enforcement of good behaviour by spectators. This is important to ensure that kids play soccer in the true spirit of the game and have fun without spectators misbehaving and causing altercations. The club also promotes breast and prostate cancer research through the sale of specially designed shirts. Mr Darcy Lound, Chairman of the Macarthur Football Association, and I recently met with Greg and we were impressed with his commitment and dedication to not only producing happy soccer players but also good young citizens. I wish the club every success.

FRED WILLIAMS BOATIES AND SKIERS REUNION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:36): I inform the House that my electorate recently had the pleasure and opportunity to host the Fred Williams Boaties and Skiers Reunion. The weekend of activities was held in perfect weather and water conditions. The giant offshore racer *Team Australia* created the most interest. The massive 4½ tonne boat with twin 750 horsepower race engines was a spectacular sight and was enjoyed by the large crowd, which was estimated at more than 3,000, as it rumbled around the course. Team owner and driver Brett Luhrmann—brother to Baz Luhrmann—was full of praise for the event. He is one of the proponents for an offshore race to be held in 2019 at Forster-Tuncurry.

Excellent crowds on both days saw a mix of high-powered inboard boats, unlimited outboards, classic nostalgia craft and ski boats and skiers. I congratulate the organisers of the event, particularly Graham Guille and Rhonda Wojcikewycz, who worked diligently over the weekend to ensure the success of the event. I also thank the Minister for Tourism and Major Events for his support of the project by providing funding to the organising committee to promote the event. I look forward to next year's event being bigger and better. The planning of the offshore racing event is already underway.

ST LUKE'S UNITING CHURCH BELMONT ACTIVITY CENTRE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:37): The best thing about the Swansea electorate is the people who live in it. This week I joined members of St Luke's Uniting Church in Belmont to see the great work they do in our community. In addition to hosting mind-challenging games and providing an opportunity to socialise over a cuppa, St Luke's Activity Centre acts as a hub for volunteers to contribute back to the community both locally and across the globe. Marilyn Barrett, for example, knits mittens for the homeless in Newcastle and makes bandages for leprosy patients in India. Peggy Harman, Mary Phillips and Win Clifton make welcome packs for the new residents of Narla Village, a retirement village in Belmont North. Stephanie Tate knits woollen singlets for babies in Kabul, Afghanistan, who are born in refugee camps and suffer from HIV-AIDS. It was a real pleasure to see the incredible work that St Luke's does, and I thank Jean Thirkettle for the warm invitation to come along.

TOONGABBIE WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:38): Toongabbie West Public School, located in Seven Hills, consists of 14 classrooms of hardworking and inspiring students. Toongabbie West is led by Principal Brian Firth, who is supported by an outstanding group of dedicated classroom teachers. The school's students are lucky to have a very successful parents and citizens association, with members including Matt Chalmers, Shylee Green, Alison Wall and Julia Leahy. Together with the Minister for Disability Services and Multiculturalism, it was my pleasure to award Toongabbie West Public School Parents and Citizens Association a grant of \$2,500 for library resources, including reading materials and books to aid young students with reading challenges and disabilities.

Toongabbie West includes three hearing support classes, which are lucky to have fantastic teachers who provide care and support throughout their pupils' learning journey. The parents and citizens association does a great job for the school and the community and I am proud that the New South Wales Government continues to support Toongabbie West Public School with grants to help the education of students in the Seven Hills electorate.

MEDOWIE BALE OUT THE DROUGHT FUNDRAISER

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:39): I thank my big-hearted community of Medowie. I was one of thousands who turned out on Sunday for Medowie's Bale Out The Drought fundraiser. The month long fundraiser, which culminated in Sunday's event, is expected to raise an astonishing \$70,000, which will be donated to the charity Rural Aid—all this from a town of just 10,000 people. Congratulations to organisers Chris Doohan and Ben Niland on bringing our community together for this important event.

Local businesses also showed their support through cash donations or by donating raffle prizes to the tune of more than \$18,000. Thanks to the Bull 'N Bush Hotel, Jen's Flowers, Health In Abundance, Noah's Ark Vets, Headz Up Hairdressing, Silks On Osprey, Medowie Thrifty-Link Hardware, Supercheap Auto Raymond Terrace, Tendon Loving Care Physiotherapy, Williams Pet Produce, Medowie Family and Sports Physio, Medowie Dowling Real Estate and many, many others. Generous support and donations also came from Medowie RSL Sub Branch, Medowie Rural Fire Service, Medowie Garden Club, Medowie Seniors and a number of local sporting groups, including my own, the Medowie Netball Club and the Port Stephens Netball Association. Take a bow, Medowie.

NORTH SYDNEY INNOVATION NETWORK

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:40): I congratulate the North Sydney Innovation Network and its Chair, Jono Herrman, which recently held a discussion panel that I was pleased to participate in alongside fellow panellists Director and Founder of Sound Scouts Carolyn Mee, Chief Executive of Hear For You David Brady, and Chief Software Architect at Cochlear Victor Rodrigues. The night highlighted the number of people impacted both nationally and globally by hearing issues, and how untreated or unmanaged hearing issues impact an individual and our society, both children and adults.

David Brady provided a clear insight into the challenges faced by those with a hearing impairment and how innovation is making a difference for those affected. I congratulate Carolyn Mee on her work with Sound Scouts in addressing hearing challenges for children. Later this year David Brady will address members of this place over breakfast, as part of the Parliamentary Friends of Hearing Health and Deafness. I encourage all members to attend so they can engage with the issues faced by those with a hearing difficulty and its broader community impacts.

TENPIN BOWLING REPRESENTATIVE KYLE FARRELL

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:41): On Saturday it was my pleasure to present local tenpin bowler Kyle Farrell with his State Representative Award to recognise his selection in the New South Wales Cole Cup tenpin bowling team. Kyle represented New South Wales in the Cole Cup National Disability Championships at Woodville, South Australia, in June 2018. This was the thirtieth National Tenpin Bowling Championship for persons with a disability, and the New South Wales team came in sixth. Kyle acknowledged the support he has received from Autism Central Coast, which does fantastic work on the Central Coast. I acknowledge Rosa Trigg, its chief executive officer. I also recognise the organisers of Central Coast challengers disability bowling leagues, which organise a weekly tournament for disabled bowlers and their families. I particularly acknowledge Bev McGill, the league's secretary. I thank all these volunteers for their role in helping our community.

BEROWRA HEIGHTS OXFAM FUNDRAISING

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:42): I pay tribute to four amazing Berowra Heights mums who are competing in a 50-kilometre trail run to raise much-needed funds for Oxfam. The Friday Firecrackers—Vicky Huyskens, Stephanie McLean, Sue Willmott and Nicole Jan—will run the Oxfam's 50-kilometre Trailwalker event at Bobbin Head on 25 August. They hope to complete the course

in less than 10 hours. The friends, members of the Berowra Bush Runners, are motivated by knowing the funds they raise will help fight poverty around the world. They have been training in the bushland around Hornsby, which boasts some of the most beautiful parts of our shire. In conjunction with the run they held a pizza night in June, with the help of local pizzeria Bambinos Too, where they raised \$4,170. Amazing work, Vicky, Stephanie, Sue and Nicole and I wish you all the best as you tackle the 50-kilometre run later this month.

BLOOD DONOR BARBARA STREET

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:43): I bring to the attention of the House the incredible dedication and generosity of Ms Barbara Street of Albion Park Rail. On Saturday 28 July 2018, Barbara recorded her 500th blood donation. Ms Street made her first blood donation 40 years ago in a tin-lined hall in Oak Flats. Today, she attends the slick and modern Wollongong Donor Centre once every fortnight to donate plasma, and she hopes to continue doing so until she turns 80. When praised for her incredible work in the *Illawarra Mercury*, Barbara responded simply, "Five hundred is an achievement, but it still is only a number ... every donation is important ... because someone has made the time to come in and give that blood." On behalf of my entire community, I say a huge congratulations and thank you to Barbara. Her work over the past four decades has saved countless lives and we are all incredibly grateful.

COASTAL WATERS RETIREMENT VILLAGE SENIORS SCAMS

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (13:43): I thank the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, Matt Kean, for recently visiting Coastal Waters Retirement Village, with Fair Trading NSW, to raise awareness of scams among local South Coast seniors. Unfortunately, older people are more likely to be targeted by unscrupulous people trying to take advantage of them. Last year alone, there were 25,000 reports of scams and a loss of \$17.5 million from people aged 65 and over, which is eight times higher than their younger counterparts. It was therefore a great opportunity to speak directly with seniors and provide them with the best tips and tricks to avoid scams. Thank you to all the residents and staff at Coastal Waters for hosting that day, especially Denis Chugg. Lastly, thank you to the Minister for making the journey down to the beautiful South Coast and taking the time to meet some of the amazing members of the South Coast community.

TRIBUTE TO ARCHBISHOP PAUL SALIBA

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:44): Last Friday, I had the honour of attending a religious gathering to pay tribute to His Eminence, the late Metropolitan Archbishop Paul Saliba, who was the primate of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines between 1999 and his passing in 2017. There is no question that the late Metropolitan Archbishop was an amazing figure and a visionary for not only the Antiochian community but also many communities of faith in New South Wales and Australia. The occasion was organised by Dr Bahia Abou-Hamad and attended by a number of guests, including His Eminence, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Basilios Kodseie of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines; His Eminence Mor Malatius Malki, Primate of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Australia and New Zealand; and a number of other guests to pay tribute to an amazing individual.

OATLEY FOOTBALL CLUB GALA DINNER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:45): Last Saturday evening, I attended Oatley Football Club's gala dinner at the Coral Bay Bowls Club. More than 100 Oatley Football Club [FC] members and guests dressed up for the night to enjoy good food, good company, great prizes and purchases, and a wonderful DJ who kept the dancers going. The event was hosted by renowned canteen extraordinaire and barbecue boss John Stanton. It was a great success with many highlights, including speeches from Federal and State members of Parliament who are great supporters. In fact, many years ago, I was a player with Oatley FC. Guests also included many others who continue to generously assist Oatley FC. Club President Peter Jones spoke on the football club and the advancement of the club-wide facilities, encouraging Oatley FC to look forward with a focus on the development of coaches and players within the club. I thank everyone who has been involved with Oatley FC over the years. The club was established in 1975 and is a wonderful football and soccer club in our local community.

ILLAWARRA HEALTH INDUSTRY WORKER KERRIE LEWIS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:46): I bring to the attention of the House the work of the recently retired Mrs Kerrie Lewis, who has had an incredible career in the Illawarra health industry for the past 34 years. She first started working in the kiosk at Bulli Hospital before moving to the hospital's switchboard. She later graduated to administration, working within the maintenance department, and then became a manager. From there, she moved into cancer care services before finally venturing into mental health services at Shellharbour in 2002, where she has worked for the past 16 years. Mrs Lewis's story is one of dedication and self-development. On behalf of my community, I thank Mrs Lewis for her years of service and longstanding contribution to our community.

A FIVER FOR A FARMER INITIATIVE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:47): Today I recognise a very special young man, Jack Berne of Freshwater, and his initiative A Fiver for a Farmer, which was held yesterday in Manly and around New South Wales. In schools across the State, students raised money for drought relief for our friends in regional and rural New South Wales. As a result of Jack's initiative, A Fiver for a Farmer had already raised \$150,000 before yesterday's donation drive at schools around the State. This is an incredible feat and provides two important lessons about us as a society: what we can accomplish when we work together and the values our children place on helping those in need. I thank Jack for his efforts. I look forward to meeting him and the children of St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School in Freshwater soon to continue supporting the Fiver for a Farmer campaign, which runs until 31 August.

NEW SOUTH WALES WOMEN'S STATE OF ORIGIN PLAYER REBECCA YOUNG

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:48): I congratulate the New South Wales Women's State of Origin side, who stormed home for a third consecutive win against Queensland. Significantly, for the first time it is called State of Origin. I single out a resident of my electorate, Rebecca Young, for her involvement. In 2012 Bec and her husband, Nick, started the North Newcastle Rugby League Football Club after she got involved in the Sydney competition in 2011 following years of involvement in the Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout. In 2011 Bec debuted for the Harvey Norman Jillaroos and has since competed in two World Cup campaigns. Bec has two kids and says she wants to teach them that, "If you set goals, make sacrifices and work really hard, you can achieve anything." I congratulate Bec and the rest of this awesome New South Wales team.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I welcome our audience in the public gallery. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to the students and teachers from Rollands Plains Upper Public School, who are guests of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and member for Oxley. I welcome Roger Tilley from the Shoalhaven Heads arboretum project, who is a guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama. I acknowledge and welcome members of the Terrigal Probus Club, who are guests of the member for Terrigal. I welcome members of the Korean Friends of the Liberal Party, who are guests of the member for Epping. I welcome the Australasian Union of Jewish Students, who are hosted by Parliamentary Education. I welcome also Jay Bacik, who is the former Chief Executive Officer of Life Education.

Commemorations

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The SPEAKER (14:18): In August 1918, the Allied forces launched the Hundred Days Offensive, a series of advances across the Somme that ultimately led to the end of the war. Critical to the success of the campaign was the assault on Mont Saint-Quentin, a German stronghold near the village of Péronne controlling a section of the Somme River from an elevated position. Outnumbered and attacking uphill across open ground, the Australian 2nd Division captured the crest of the hill and forced the Germans back to their main trench line. The two sides fought for two days, often hand-to-hand. The top of Mont Saint-Quentin was regained by the Germans, only to be recaptured and secured by the Australians the following day. One British commander described the victory at Mont Saint-Quentin, in which over 3,000 Australians were killed or wounded, as the greatest of the war.

While the attack was planned by General Monash, it was led by Major-General Charles Rosenthal. According to Monash, his leadership of the 2nd Division, "contributed in no small measure to the fame which it has won". Wounded four times during the war and mentioned in despatches seven times, Rosenthal was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his service. After returning to Australia, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly for a three-year term as the Nationalist member for Bathurst. In the mid-1930s, he served briefly in the Legislative Council prior to his appointment as Administrator of Norfolk Island. Major-General Rosenthal was the highest-ranking veteran of the First World War to serve in this Parliament. Lest we forget.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I advise the House that in the absence of the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing, the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research will answer questions on her behalf.

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

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

T. F. BATHURST
Lieutenant-Governor

Government House
Sydney, 9 August 2018

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

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

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

DAVID HURLEY
Governor

Government House
Sydney, 9 August 2018

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

*Question Time***ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES TENDERING PROCESS**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23): My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Given the Minister's repeated assertions that she is not mandating offshoring in Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] information technology [IT] contracts, why will she not release all the requests for proposal documents that were sent to companies bidding for tender WS1165586964?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:24): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. It is very interesting that the same contract that has gone out to tender by RMS went out by the Opposition in 2004 and a Japanese-owned company was very successful in that tender process. I point out that the Opposition had no rules or obligations for that company to outline how much of their work would be done offshore. There were no rules and it went mainly to a Japanese company. There are some very important guidelines in this tendering process so that we can get a good line of sight about how much work will be done in the back office, such as IT, to assess how much offshore work might be included in the tenders. I give an absolute guarantee that there are 175 jobs in IT in RMS and at the end of this process there will be 175 jobs in IT in RMS. I will also tell the Leader of the Opposition, who is lazy and has no plans, that when we came to government my agency spent \$1—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. That is bolshy stuff, Mel. Why don't you fork out the documents and table the contracts?

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I am pleased to point out that our government has created half a million jobs across New South Wales since coming to office. All those opposite are concerned about is their jobs. The Leader of the Opposition might be interested to know that when this Government took office we spent \$1 running the RMS and \$1 building new roads. We are now spending \$1 running the agency and \$4 building new roads. We have doubled the roads budget. We are getting value for the taxpayer. The Opposition is lazy, lazy, lazy. It has no plans for the future of this State, while we have created half a million jobs across this State.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (14:27): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government building the infrastructure for the future and fixing the mistakes of the past?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27): What an appropriate question from the member for Oatley. I thank him for being such a strong advocate for his community and appreciating that we are building the infrastructure of the future to ensure that our citizens do not have to spend too much time in traffic. I echo the comments by the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight: our Government is not just building the roads of today but the roads of tomorrow. We are creating jobs as we do it. This morning I was pleased to be with the Minister for Western Sydney and also the member for Oatley outside the M5 widening project at St Peters.

This is the extension between Kingsgrove and St Peters, which will reduce travel time from Liverpool. I know the member for Holsworthy is interested in this and I hope the member for Liverpool is as well. It will

reduce travel times for their constituents by at least half an hour every time they use the new motorway. It gives us a good reminder of what the Opposition failed to do in government. When it built the existing M5 tunnel it was already full to capacity from day one. Unfortunately, any of us who use that tunnel today know the air quality in there is extremely poor because of Labor's poor efforts.

Mr Michael Daley: Guess what! It goes to Port Botany and the airport.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I was reminded today that in November 2009 the then Minister for Transport, Mr David Campbell—

Mr Ryan Park: Good man.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Keira says he was a good man, appropriately. He promised in 2009—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —that of course they had identified the M5 corridor expansion as necessary, they would need to widen the M5 South-West Motorway, they would need to duplicate the M5 East tunnel, but of course they never did it. Who was his chief of staff at the time who failed to deliver this? Of course, it was the member for Keira.

The SPEAKER: If this noise continues I will stop the clock so the Premier gets her allocated time. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I note those opposite do not care about jobs. We care about the workers on this side of the House. We are the party of the workers. On the M5 project alone there are currently 2,000 workers on site. Of those, approximately 150 are apprentices. During the life of this one project alone—which will be completed in 2020—there will be 4,000 workers. If that is multiplied across all of the road and transport projects we have, it is little wonder we have created half a million jobs since we have been in government. Today was a special milestone on this major infrastructure project: three-quarters of the twin nine-kilometre tunnels have now been dug. The St Peters interchange can be seen coming to light above ground. I say to those members representing communities in the inner west, not only will this reduce traffic on their local roads, but also in areas such as Alexandria and other places, where previously there were landfill tips and light industrial areas, they are being converted to open green space.

Not only will this project deliver reduced travel times, less congestion, less traffic on roads above ground, less pollution and better air quality, but also green space to communities. There is a site in Alexandria of which we are particularly proud that will be going back to the community in green space. This is how major projects are built, and how to get on with the job of delivering what is required. Of course, alongside this major investment in road infrastructure we also have major investment in public transport. We know it is important to have mass transport opportunities for people to get access to public transport. We also need to improve and expand our road network. The Opposition promised a lot in Government but did not deliver. I heard that the Leader of the Opposition had a bit to say about the concession time on tolls on one of the projects we are building. What he failed to mention was the longest concession period—Labor still holds the record—is for the Eastern Distributor for 49 years, which is at least five years longer than WestConnex. That is their record which they want us to forget. *[Extension of time]*

In reaching this milestone today—and before I quote a very highly regarded person who comments from the other side of the House—what is happening at the St Peters interchange is truly remarkable from an engineering perspective. The tunnelling is complex and remarkable. I thank every one of the thousands of workers on that project. Without their efforts we would not be able to do what we are doing. I commend the apprenticeships earned through that project because they will continue to deliver major infrastructure for the people of New South Wales. I refer again to Mr Carl Scully, the former Minister for Roads for those opposite. On Page 458 of *Setting the Record Straight*—and at least a few Labor Party people are—he said:

When I asked a post lemma senior Minister why that government had no plans for future motorway development, the reply was withering, "Because it will upset too many people. "No motorways were planned or delivered during the whole six years of the lemma, Rees, Keneally period. In an almost complete mockery of the excuse provided to me, the Liberal State Government ...

The Liberal and National Party State Government, I should say.

... is now building more motorways than I could ever have imagined. And yes, unsurprisingly, some people are upset by it but many tens of thousands will benefit every day of their motoring lives.

ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES TENDERING PROCESS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:34): I direct my question to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Does section 8.45 of the Roads and Maritime Services IT tender state, "The proponent will outline its proposed offshore strategy for the services commencing with a minimum 20 per cent offshore utilisation in year one, with an increase in offshore utilisation over the term", and why does the Minister deny that in the Government's policy?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:35): I appreciate that question from the member for Cessnock, because it gives me the opportunity to greet students from Rollands Plains Upper Primary School, and I thank them for being here. This is democracy in action. Unlike members opposite, members on this side of the House want to give them and their parents the best value for the taxpayer dollar. Members opposite do not want to build roads, public transport or new hospitals. They do not want to do what we need to do in this State.

The *Daily Telegraph* did the Opposition's work two weeks ago. Well done, Luke! The Leader of the Opposition is letting everyone do his work for him. Lazy, lazy, lazy. It is important to remember that the official tender document did not contain the words "mandatory" or "minimum". It is also important to acknowledge that this Government wants a line of sight and information when tenders come in so that it does not simply choose the cheapest tender and that it understands what international offshoring they contain. Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] has 175 IT jobs, and it is intended that they will be retained.

This is about a new tender arrangement. As I said, in 2004 members opposite put out a tender containing no requirements and it largely went to an internationally based company. This Government is ensuring that it gets the best value for taxpayers by understanding whether the tenders have offshore components, and it stands by that approach. This is a live tender and RMS will be making an important decision. We need to know what is involved in the tender before we make any announcements or decisions. The Government will ensure that those agency jobs are protected and it will continue to work to get the best value for taxpayers.

We are living in an international economy, especially when it comes to IT. That is why the Labor Government gave the contract to an international company in 2004. However, this Government is ensuring that it gets the best value for the taxpayers and that it understands what outsourcing will be involved. It will also ensure that all data stays in Australia. As I said, we live in an international economy whether or not members of the Opposition like it. They play the race card or the China card when it suits them and they should hang their heads in shame for doing so. Like you, Madam Speaker, I want to ensure that we spend as much money as possible on roads, on bitumen and on making roads safer and more efficient.

REGIONAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (14:38): I address my question to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How is the New South Wales Government supporting non-government organisations in delivering health and education services in regional and remote areas?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:38): I thank the member for Barwon for his question. Members on this side of the House understand the issues involved in delivering education and health services in regional New South Wales. The member represents an electorate the size of Germany that covers about 330,000 square kilometres. The tyranny of distance is the obstacle that challenges his community and we must be innovative in delivering services across regional New South Wales.

Last Friday I had the pleasure of joining the member for Manly in announcing a \$5.1 million investment grant for the Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme, which is based in Manly. That is in addition to a \$10 million grant provided by the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government to support a fantastic institution that is well known across regional New South Wales. It delivers support services not only to young people going through a tough time in education and health but also to their families. Members on this side of the House are proud of the scheme and we believe it should be supported.

Royal Far West connects rural and regional New South Wales with important services for the development of children across the State. I will provide the House with the case study of 12-year-old Jason Cassie from Dubbo. His grandmother, Helen Cassie, told us that Jason would stutter whenever he was nervous and that he relied on sign language from when he started kindergarten. He took part in a year-long program run by Royal Far West that changed everything for him. His grandmother said she noticed a change after four or five months and that he became much more confident. After a couple of weeks of the program Jason said:

A couple of weeks into the program I just wasn't stuck anymore, I could actually stand up in front of people and talk. I feel really happy in myself.

That is the sort of change that happens when we invest in non-government organisations that have the wellbeing of our regional communities at their heart. It is easy for the Government to partner with Royal Far West because of the services it is delivering to communities, families and children in regional areas. Jason's grandmother went on to say, "Speaking in front of a crowd was once out of the question but, by the end, Jason, as the Buninyong Public School captain, was able to stand up in front of the whole school to give the end-of-year speech without a single stutter."

That is why this Government values investments that ensure regional areas have access to services. We must be innovative and acknowledge that the tyranny of distance makes it difficult to reach the remote corners of regional New South Wales. The Government is always looking at new ways to deliver. Because of the investment in technology there are ways to do it. The Government acknowledges that it cannot reach every corner, but that can be achieved by working in partnership with organisations like Royal Far West.

While talking about healthy communities, I advise the House that the Government has announced an investment in Life Education. Members all know about Life Education, and particularly the iconic Healthy Harold and his important message. For more than 40 years he has been delivering health messages in our schools. Last week, the Government made the fantastic announcement that it will partner with Life Education and provide almost \$200,000 to replace the bulky caravan that has been used in spreading Harold's healthy message. It is difficult for the caravan to get to some parts of the State, and after extensive research Life Education has developed inflatable dome classrooms that retain Harold's magic. The domes can be set up in a classroom in a few minutes, and I had an opportunity to inspect one when we made the partnership announcement at La Perouse last week. We saw kids engaging with Life Education and Healthy Harold's message.

As I said, Life Education and Healthy Harold have been around for 40 years teaching healthy habits, including teeth brushing and following a healthy diet. We know that obesity is a significant problem and that if we want healthy adults we must have healthy children. That is why it is important that the Government continues to partner with organisations that deliver that healthy message on the ground. *[Extension of time]*

Many members of this House on both sides would be able to point to a time where they had the visit from Life Education and Healthy Harold—none more than the member for Cootamundra. I spoke to her earlier today. She was then an impressionable young woman who, growing up in the State's Central West, looked forward to her time with the Life Education crew—and of course her favourite health mascot was Healthy Harold. With the sound advice and guidance of Healthy Harold, she has grown up to be arguably the healthiest member of the New South Wales Parliament: no alcohol, no cigarettes—she should not be a member of The Nationals at this rate—and a little bit of chocolate, which I know is her weakness, but all things in moderation. She has a passion, of course, for sport and exercise. I am joking, but the reality is that we all have had the opportunity of seeing the Life Education van and its healthy message for young people. Hopefully when that message is started very early in a young person's life, in their learning and life journey, they continue on to live a healthy lifestyle.

We all know that substance abuse is a real issue, obesity is a real issue and bullying in our school system is a real issue, something we are very aware of. There is so much that governments can do, and sometimes it is important to look for novel ways to reach young people. I believe the Life Education organisation, an institution that has been part of the healthy education landscape for 45 years, has been the type of organisation that has cut through. With the new investment, inflatable classrooms, modern technology and the engagement that I saw firsthand, those young people at that school clearly were engaged. Of course, we are not losing sight of the fact that we do still have a very Healthy Harold.

M4 TOLL CASHBACK PROGRAM

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (14:46): My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister expand the cashback program to include the M4, given that her new toll will have covered the cost of the upgrade by the end of next year but motorists will have to pay the toll for another 40 years?

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: Your constituents love free rego; they love free rego. You can make Transurban richer; we'll give them free rego.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:46): I would be delighted for the Premier to answer this question because she is right. We are about delivering roads, delivering public transport and ridding Sydney of the congestion and the legacies that Labor left us to fix; being able to build roads like the M4, with a toll, but also providing that if people spend more than \$25 a week on tolls, they will get rego back—we will support them through that. As to our road delivery and infrastructure program in relation to north west rail, south west rail and the metro, we are delivering public transport at the same time as roads. Labor's

legacy was that it failed the people of New South Wales. It failed to build roads and to deliver public transport. This Government is now doing both. The user-pays system is the process by which that can happen.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. Just answer: Will you extend the cashback?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant. The member for Keira will resume his seat. The Minister has the call.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We are responsibly managing the economy. We are keeping our triple-A credit rating. We are in surplus. We are providing public transport solutions at the same time as providing an improved connectivity and an orbital road system across this city.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We are also offering relief to motorists with a \$25 a week, on average, registration.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: They speak with forked tongues. They built the majority of the toll roads in Sydney that we now travel on. What we are doing is extending and continuing our delivery. We have record low unemployment in Western Sydney.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: As the Premier just said, 150 apprentices are working on the M5 project. We are delivering record infrastructure across roads and across public transport. The user-pays system that we have in relation to tolls ensures that 90 per cent of the taxpayer dollar is actually being invested in public transport—the way that most of Sydney gets around. As the Premier has said, the only people that Labor is planning to line the pockets of are the companies, because we are staying with our user-pays system that this is the proper way to process. I have finished.

SOCIAL COHESION

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (14:49): My question is addressed to the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services. How is the New South Wales Government supporting social cohesion, and is the Minister aware of any threats to those goals?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (14:50): I thank the member for Coogee for his question and say what a great advocate he is for harmony across his community. It has often been said that the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is the party of the worker—one can never deny that—through its commitment of \$3.2 billion to the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. We are seen now as the party of social reform. More importantly, it can be clearly seen that we are the only true parties that support cultural diversity across New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: As I have said many, many times, our population is indeed the sum total of every nationality around the world—indeed, we are the most culturally diverse State in this country, the most culturally diverse nation on earth and, importantly, the most socially cohesive. Every person who comes to this country, works hard and makes a positive contribution to society deserves to be valued and I can state for the record that the Liberal-Nationals Government certainly values those people. Last week we celebrated Indian Independence Day. Prior to that we celebrated the holy month of Ramadan, in the near future we will celebrate Diwali, and later in the year we will celebrate Hanukkah. To all in the Jewish community about to celebrate Jewish New Year: Shanah Tovah.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot see why Opposition members find this subject matter frivolous and a source of laughter, derision and conversation. That is a disgrace.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I place on the record my great appreciation to Vic Alhadeff, the Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, for the leadership role he has played in encouraging the New South Wales Government—

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: —to change section 20D of the Anti-Discrimination Act to punish anyone who incites violence through hateful and racist speech. The role that Vic Alhadeff has played over many years of working together with the religious leaders across our cultural communities has been tireless. He has helped us

achieve an outcome, which no-one could deny, that punishes anyone who seeks to impose harm through their own vindictive comments. So today, like you, Madam Speaker, and many people across our cultural communities, I was shocked and appalled to hear that such a fine outstanding defender of social cohesion, a strong supporter of peace and harmony across our communities, was refused entry to what has been described as a multicultural event being held by the Labor Party. I am advised that after receiving an invitation from the Labor Party to this event, the Labor Party Whip in the other House, Shaoquett Moselmane—

Mr David Elliott: What a grub!

The SPEAKER: I advise the Minister for Corrections that that is inappropriate.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: —confronted Mr Alhadeff at the front door and advised him that he was not welcome at this event. Mr Alhadeff said today it is unfortunate that Mr Moselmane would defy his Labor Party leadership, who had invited him to this event, and deny entry to a leader of the Jewish community. When it comes to supporting our diverse communities leadership must come from the top. The question today for the Leader of the Opposition, otherwise known as "Low Standards Luke", is: Does he stand by these appalling comments by Shaoquett Moselmane, or does he indeed support the comments of Walt Secord in talking down these divisive and vindictive comments? Not a word has been said by this appalling leader. The standards a person walks past are the standards they accept, so the question must be targeted firmly at the Leader of the Opposition, who himself in the last few weeks has insinuated that people are leaving their homes because of the nationality of their neighbours—the "white flight" comments, which are appalling. [*Extension of time*]

The comments are indeed divisive and appalling and only back in what Shaoquett Moselmane has done at this particular event by refusing an invitation to a leading member of the Jewish community.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I like Vic Alhadeff too, but that does not mean that Standing Order 73 does not apply to the Minister's comments.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: Is that the best you've got?

Mr Michael Daley: Yes. That is right. Because you know, Madam Speaker, that personal reflections on members of either place are disorderly.

The SPEAKER: Indeed. I warn the Minister against doing that except by way of a substantive motion.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: The member for Maroubra is still worrying how he is going to deal with those illegal donations from his developers, but let us come back to the question today.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will stop shouting.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: All he has to do is step up and say he never took them.

The SPEAKER: I ask members to stop shouting.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: But the question today is for the Labor Party: Are members going to stand by the comments of Shaoquett Moselmane? Are they going to stand by the "white flight" comments of their leader?

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Is that what it is going to accept? Because it is the most divisive party in New South Wales at the moment.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: There are only two parties that support our cultural diversity and they are the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! Several members were called to order who did not hear it. When they are asked to leave the Chamber and they ask, "How did that happen?" the answer will be that they continued to interject after I had asked them several times to cease.

WESTERN SYDNEY TOLL ROADS

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:57): I have a question that everyone wants to know the answer to.

The SPEAKER: All Government members want to answer it. Members will cease interjecting so that we can hear the golden question.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. The \$700 million Northern Beaches Hospital roads upgrade is being delivered toll free but the \$500 million M4 widening has come with a 40-year toll. Why is Western Sydney being punished when other parts of Sydney have their roads upgraded without a toll? And we know why you are putting gates on the Parliament corridors: You probably want to charge us entry.

The SPEAKER: Order! I again warn members that some of them are on three calls to order and they do not even know it. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. The Minister will not commence her answer until all interjections and comments cease.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:59): I thank the member for Mount Druitt for asking that question—nice to see him stand up and ask a question. It was very good. But I just wondered if, in asking the question, the member had any self-reflection on the fact that Labor built four toll roads and two of those in Western Sydney—M7 and M2. That may be a relevant point.

Mr Chris Minns: Why are you giving the free one to the northern beaches?

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not an argument. The member for Kogarah will stop shouting. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We have seven weeks left of Parliament before the next election, and this is what it comes down to.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. There is too much noise and too many interjections. The Minister is entitled to answer the question in the time allocation, not to have that time taken away by interjections and conversation.

Mr Stephen Kamper: She doesn't want more time.

The SPEAKER: Who said that? Since the member for Rockdale is admitting to it, I will not call him to order for a third time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We have a plan for congestion in this city: We are building roads and we are building public transport. It is worth pointing out that our costings on the M4 cashback show that over 10 years it is likely to cost the State economy around \$3 billion, given that we are giving a rebate to motorists who are spending more than \$25 a week on tolls. We understand there are concerns around those issues and we are responding in a way that is affordable to the State.

Mr Ryan Park: Careful criticising the costings—that's all I'll say.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I do envy the Leader of the Opposition on one thing. It is not having the member for Keira as the shadow Treasurer; it is actually that suntan. What a great colour he has got while he was away when he should have actually been working on policies—working on the fact that we have seven weeks left of Parliament.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. That is completely irrelevant to the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is, but I am sure that the Minister strayed momentarily.

Mr Stephen Kamper: It's a spray tan.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Rockdale who said it is a spray tan. But the important thing to remember is that the concession on the Eastern Distributor is 49 years—a concession that those opposite developed. The point is with our user-pays system on roads we give motorists an option. They can go on a toll-free alternative.

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Cessnock that he will soon be called to order for the third time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We are investing in public transport in this city in a way that we have never done before. We are also investing in roads around this State in a way that we have never done before: 81 per cent complete now on the Pacific Highway, \$1 billion under construction on the Princes Highway, billions on the Newell Highway and the Great Western Highway. We are fixing roads all around the State. We are building an orbital road network in Sydney, but at the same time we are delivering a record complement of public transport that is going to improve this city and make it easier for people to get around to get to their jobs and at the same time as creating 500,000 jobs. My point is that there are seven question times until the election and this is all we

get from those opposite—criticism without any plans, without any policy and without any vision for this State. The vision rests on this side, the jobs rest here and the good economic management rests here.

COST OF LIVING

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:03): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. How is the New South Wales Government making it easier to access more than 40 rebates and savings available to families and households and put more money back in their pockets?

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to refrain from making personal comments.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (15:04): I thank the member for Heathcote for the question. He is an absolute champion when it comes to looking after his electorate. He knows better than most that the cost of living is a real issue in New South Wales. There are a lot of pressure points in the family budget and we are doing our absolute best to make sure—

The SPEAKER: I cannot hear the Minister because of the conversations being had by some Labor Opposition members. I remind them to come to order or leave the Chamber. The member for Rockdale will come to order.

Mr Stephen Kamper: He has a soft voice.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: We are doing our absolute best as a Government to assist families—people right throughout New South Wales—when it comes to the cost of living. We have some initiatives to try and help them along the way. The Premier gave us \$19.5 million in the budget this year for Cost of Living Officers in Service NSW. There are 91 Service NSW offices right across our great State, and what a great success they are. As a result of the money we got from the Treasurer—advocated by the Premier and Deputy Premier—we are now rolling out Cost of Living Officers right across our State. What do these Cost of Living Officers do? To borrow a line from the Treasurer, they are transforming Service NSW into "Savings NSW".

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. She is continually interjecting and being noisy.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: It is really simple. I was at Wetherill Park Service NSW yesterday with the Premier. We spoke to Carol and her daughter Joanne. They were being served by Tracy Grace of Service NSW. They spent an hour with Tracy. After spending an hour with Tracy, who was telling them about the utility bills and motor vehicle expenses, they saved real money like many other people right across New South Wales who are accessing this service. How do you access the service? All you need to do is to call Service NSW on 13 77 88, call into one of the 91 service centres across the State or log on online—because we are encouraging digital access to Service NSW—and make an appointment. Once you make an appointment somebody will see you within a week or two weeks. Right now people are getting seen within two or three days. If you spend an hour of your time there you will be shown, across 40 different programs, the various refunds and rebates that you are entitled to.

We started this program a handful of weeks ago but so far about 260 people have gone through and there are about 450 appointments on the books. The 260 people who have gone through the program have realised in total about \$60,000 in actual savings and another \$70,000 of anticipated savings. By "actual savings" I mean that people are shown that they can get access to a refund. For example, they go online and get a compulsory third party [CTP] insurance refund. I think Carol said yesterday that she got about \$110 in refunds. There is other money available that the service centre officers can help with. The "anticipated savings" come from using apps like Fuel Check or perhaps getting concession rates in the national parks over the Christmas period. I am talking about serious money—not \$10, \$20 or \$30.

What I love most about what the officers at Service NSW do is that—unlike those opposite—they provide a first-grade level of service. At the end of the process they ask the citizens, "What did you think?" Most governments around the world would be too scared to ask citizens, "What do you think of the service we provide?" Not us: The Government encourages citizens to give us feedback. In relation to the Cost of Living service, about 320 people from that small cohort have given us feedback so far. The result was a 98.7 per cent thumbs up—let us call it 99 per cent thumbs up between friends. If one was to hear of a company in the corporate world that had a client satisfaction rating of 99 per cent, one would invest in that company. This is a government that is getting feedback at that level of satisfaction from its citizens, and it is something that I am very proud of. *[Extension of time]*

I am happy to provide more information to the member for Heathcote. This is a service that the Government is progressively rolling out right across the 91 Service NSW centres in New South Wales. To date

we have 10 up and running—Wetherill Park, Wynyard, Parramatta, Lismore, Taree, Kempsey and Inverell. Most importantly, and topically, the Premier and the Treasurer were at Wagga Wagga on Monday, launching the Cost of Living service there. We have an outstanding candidate there—Julia Ham. Julia is a councillor in Wagga Wagga.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Critically, being a councillor in that electorate, she understands the needs of the community. More importantly, she is also a farmer specialising in merino sheep. She understands that community and she understands that the cost of living is an issue. That is why Julia was there with the Premier, saying exactly what the Government is doing to help the community. In Wagga Wagga the people's main points of concern and their main refunds have been with respect to green slips, Active Kids and Fuel Check—the typical things that we see.

Mr John Barilaro: Creative Kids.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Yes, the Creative Kids program is coming online early next year. People are really grateful. When you look at what the Wagga Wagga Labor candidate has posted you see, "Only Labor has a plan for a fairer New South Wales and an investment in our regions." When I looked at the Labor candidate's Facebook page I saw that the number one thing he talked about in terms of a fairer New South Wales and investment in our regions was cashback for the M4. I thought Wagga Wagga and the M4 were about 500 kilometres apart, but he is onto it.

SYDNEY LIGHT RAIL ELECTROCUTION INVESTIGATION

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:12): My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. The investigator's report into the George Street electrocution says that it was "unable to validate maintenance obligations" and that no assessment of safety management items was conducted because of the non-cooperation from the Roads and Maritime Services' maintenance contractor. Will the Minister end the cover-up and re-open the investigation so that a complete report can be conducted?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (15:12): This was a terrible incident. It was an incident for which I have apologised but which I will never politicise. To have raised this issue, the member has clearly not read the independent report into this incident.

Mr Luke Foley: Yes, I have.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition did not ask the question. He has no right to comment.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Don't you dare talk to me about cover-ups.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: So far the Minister has been relevant. Does the member for Charlestown have a point of order?

Ms Jodie Harrison: I ask that the member address her comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. I ask the Minister to direct her comments through the Chair.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I was just reading about all the cover-ups in relation to the Federal member for Lindsay, and how the Labor Party have treated all the witnesses—the 20 workers. I was just reminded about Gillian Sneddon.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is being irrelevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is very early on in the answer. There is no point of order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: It is important to acknowledge that there was an incident and it had a full, independent investigation. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Andrew Constance, ensured that happened and the Government released that report, as it should. Immediately after the investigation, 153 of the electrical pits along George Street were investigated as to their safety outcomes. We do not cover up or play the game like Labor plays the game. We will not politicise an incident. I beg the member for Strathfield to read the report and have a proper understanding.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: She doesn't read reports.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: She does not read her reports and she does not do her homework. We were concerned about that incident because, as it turns out, what caused it was the fact that it was built in the year 2000

and it was half the size of all the other pits. Who was in government then? Frank Sartor was mayor and Bob Carr was the Premier of New South Wales. It was part of a rushed infrastructure build in the lead-up to the 2000 Sydney Olympics. I ask the member for Strathfield to read that report. Our agency was quite right to call out the fact that our contractor was initially not participating as we would have liked in the independent investigation. We do not cover up those facts. We call them out and ask for better. We have nothing to hide. We have apologised to the girl and to the mother.

Ms Jodi McKay: "The girl"? What's her name?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: She is a 15-year-old girl. Why did you say that? Why are you so cynical?

The SPEAKER: The member for Strathfield has had her chance. She will cease heckling and interjecting.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: All I ask is that the member for Strathfield read the report and do her homework. We want a better outcome. We do not want this to happen again. We are prepared to look at ourselves; not cover things up like members opposite.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:16): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. How is the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government making it easier for farmers and transport operators to access and transport hay during the drought?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (15:17): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for the question. On Sunday we were together in the town of Gundy, where it was absolutely freezing. Luckily, the local publican opened his beautiful pub, got a wood fire going and offered us some magnificent cheese and bacon scones. We had the opportunity to have a great conversation with 20 or so farmers and their families who had arrived to hear our announcement. During the conversation we could see the pain and desperation of those Upper Hunter farmers.

It was the member for Upper Hunter who more than a year ago in our party room highlighted how difficult things were in his district. It was the first to go into severe drought and he was calling that out constantly. It was a pleasure to head to Gundy to be with the people who he has been so passionately representing and to make an announcement because the State is 100 per cent in drought and we have listened to farmers. Deputy Premier John Barilaro has also told me about issues he has come across during many of his drought tours and people's concerns about transporting hay.

On Sunday we announced that from tomorrow the NSW Class 3 Drought Assistance Dimension Exemption Notice 2018 will come into effect. It will ensure that rigid trucks, 19-metre articulated trucks and B-doubles up to 26 metres transporting hay can operate without a permit to a maximum of 2.83 metres wide and 4.6 metres high on the 4.6-metre network. That is a significant announcement because it will allow for bales to be loaded three high and two wide. Transporters and farmers raised concerns with us that we were not being considerate enough of their needs. We sat down with our teams from Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] to ensure that we were not compromising on safety. We listened to what they had to say and we are pleased that the change will take effect from tomorrow. It is an important and real change.

We are also ensuring that big trucks such as articulated trucks and B-triples are able to access parts of the road network that they have not been able to access before. We will give prompt consideration to that. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator has a special portal dealing with drought through which people will be able to apply to access parts of the network to which they have not had access before. The Government has also streamlined the application process for vehicles that do not meet the conditions under the notice and require access under permit as well as the opening up of new routes for hay trucks to travel along. Subject to assessment, access under permit with the appropriate conditions may be approved for road trains on and east of the Newell Highway using tandem or bogey axle dollies rather than a tri-axle dolly, which is the standard requirement. RMS and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator are prioritising drought applications to get them out the door and to farmers. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is also refunding the cost of the drought application permit.

As well as reducing red tape and regulation for farmers, the Government is accommodating and involving councils in increased freight movements through increased road maintenance funding. We have set aside \$15 million out of the RMS budget for local councils. If the opening of access causes any damage to roads that were not built for it, we will in the short term help return those roads to the standard they once were. That is a \$15 million commitment for local councils. I encourage councils to understand our arrangements and changes within the permit system. I ask them to come on board so that we stand alongside our farmers in every practical way. I acknowledge my community around the Macleay Valley and Kempsey. I understand that on the weekend

another 700 donated bales will be transported to Gunnedah and given to farmers in need. I thank Josh Ball and his wife, Shelley, for creating an environment of giving. It goes to the heart of who and what we are as country people. [*Extension of time*]

The support that we are getting from the city throughout the drought is overwhelming. It has been heart-warming for country people to feel that our city cousins are alongside us. The Government is responding in every way it can to see communities through. Until it rains and our farming practices return to normal we will stand beside our farmers as best we can.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63 (C) of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "Managing antisocial behaviour in public housing", dated 10 August 2018, received out of session on 10 August 2018 and authorised to be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 59/56

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 59/56", dated 14 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. 58/56 dated 7 August 2018.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Drought Assistance

Petition requesting drought assistance in the form of fodder freight subsidies, water carting and water subsidies, livestock genetics storage, low-interest loans and fee relief, received from **Mr Geoff Provest**.

Pet Shops

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

Affordable Housing

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

Inner-city Ferry Services

Petition calling on the Government to fast-track project work for ferry wharves and services at Glebe Point; Johnstons Bay, Pyrmont; Woolloomooloo; and Elizabeth Bay, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

Petition calling on the Government to recognise bisexual, gender diverse and intersex people in the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and to address clauses in the Act that unfairly penalise gay, lesbian and transgender citizens, 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**.

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**.

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3), general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 2754 to 2770 have lapsed.

Motions Accorded Priority

REGIONAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Consideration

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:25): My motion should be accorded priority because this House and people right across regional New South Wales need to be reminded about what Labor did during its 16 years in office when it came to health infrastructure.

Mr Troy Grant: That won't take you long.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: I acknowledge the interjection of the Minister, because the fact of the matter is that what the Minister for Police said is true. Labor in government did nothing for regional New South Wales when it came to health—in fact, health infrastructure went backwards, including in my electorate and in Wagga Wagga. I remind constituents in all regional communities that Labor simply did not deliver when it came to health. Importantly, we compare the record of Labor in health during its 16 years in government with our record since we have been in government for almost eight years. Labor did not deliver on health infrastructure, did not improve surgery waiting times, did not improve emergency treatment times and certainly did not increase staff numbers—in fact, Labor decreased staffing levels in health right across the regions.

From 2004-05 to 2010-11, Labor spent almost nothing when it came to health infrastructure—in fact, some \$4.7 billion was spent across the entire State, compared to this side of the House that has already delivered \$8.5 billion in health spending since 2011-12. Not only Wagga Wagga missed out on health spending under the Labor administration; this was the case for other regional areas—Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Tamworth and Bega. Labor simply did not deliver when it came to hospital infrastructure. The then Minister for Health, John Hatzistergos, said three days before the 2007 election that a \$260 million redevelopment of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital would start in the next term of the re-elected Iemma Government. Labor said it would deliver the hospital in the next term of government, but it simply did not deliver. The people of regional New South Wales have learned that a Labor government simply cannot be trusted.

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

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: The Labor Government said one thing but delivered nothing. The health record of Labor in this State, compared with the health record of this Coalition Government, is starkly different. It is obvious who can deliver and who cannot deliver when it comes to health infrastructure.

M4 TOLL CASHBACK PROGRAM

Consideration

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:29): My motion should be accorded priority because it is a simple motion calling on the Berejiklian Government to include the widened M4 in the cashback program. The Premier should support this motion, as should every Western Sydney member of Parliament, especially the Minister for Western Sydney and the member for Penrith, who is not in the Chamber. The toll affects every person in his electorate and the electorates of all the members of Parliament representing the electorates of Western Sydney. We must restore the M4 cashback and return more than \$2,000 a year to the motorists and their families paying the M4 toll.

In July last year the State Liberal Government introduced a toll on the M4, a road for which the people of Western Sydney have already paid. Nearly three out of four families in my electorate of Prospect use a car to get to work. Under this State Liberal Government those families are now paying more on tolls per year than they are spending on petrol. The Liberals can find \$2.2 billion for their stadium splurge in the eastern suburbs, but have refused to stop the M4 toll. This toll is an unfair tax on Western Sydney families and it will cost motorists thousands of dollars for the next 43 years.

The road will be paid off next year, but our grandchildren will be paying this tax. The Liberals are putting profit before people, and that is wrong. We must act; it is a matter of priority for families of Western Sydney. New South Wales Labor believes it is unfair to slug hardworking Western Sydney motorists thousands of dollars for 43 years for a road that is not new and has already been paid for. For eight long years, the Liberals have had wrong priorities for the people of Western Sydney. Western Sydney families cannot afford to pay this outrageous toll.

I call on the Berejiklian Government to extend the cashback program for the M5 to the M4. It is pretty simple: It will operate on the same rules as the M5 cashback, which was introduced by the New South Wales Labor Government in 1997. Western Sydney has paid for this road under the Liberals, and tolls have become a cash cow for road projects such as the Premier's northern beaches mega tunnel. The Premier does not have to slug Western Sydney families for her privatisation of WestConnex, which will lock us in for even longer and put money into the pockets of large corporations. This Government must put the families of New South Wales first. The fact that this Government is slugging families with tolls costing thousands of dollars shows that this Government is not putting the families of New South Wales first. These families can least afford these tolls. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Port Macquarie be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes47

Noes36

Majority..... 11

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr A.W.
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Cooke, Ms S
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L.J.
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Foley, Mr L
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T.F.
Washington, Ms K

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Tesch, Ms L (teller)
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G
Davies, Mrs T
Provest, Mr G

Aitchison, Ms J
Cotsis, Ms S
Lalich, Mr N

Motion agreed to.**REGIONAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE****Priority**

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:37): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the conga line of Labor Premiers and Ministers who promised to redevelop Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, including:
 - (a) Bob Carr;
 - (b) John Hatzistergos;
 - (c) Morris Iemma;
 - (d) Reba Meagher;
 - (e) Nathan Rees; and
 - (f) John Della Bosca.
- (2) Condemns Labor for repeatedly misleading the people of Wagga Wagga and never upgrading the base hospital.
- (3) Acknowledges the current Government began work to redevelop Wagga Wagga Base Hospital within months of being elected.
- (4) Recognises the Government has delivered on its promise, with stages one and two complete and stage three underway.

I will talk further about the improvements that have been made to the hospital since the Coalition has been in government, but it is important to remind the House of the failure of the Labor Government to deliver for the community of Wagga Wagga. Earlier I referred to a commitment that was made by the Iemma Government. Only three days before the 2011 State election, former Minister John Hatzistergos said that in the next term of the re-elected Iemma Government, it would begin the \$260 million redevelopment of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. Like so many other hospital projects and health projects across the State, we did not see that happen. But he was not the only one making promises on which Labor did not deliver. In February 2008 former Minister for Health Reba Meagher said, "If the redevelopment proceeds under conventional State government funding, work will commence in the 2010-11 financial year."

On the same day she said, "Proceeding with the development as a public-private partnership could bring forward the commencement of the project by six to 18 months, but it is important that both procurement options are fully explored." Also on the same day she said, "A decision on the procurement option is expected by the middle of the year." She continued to tell tales to the people of Wagga Wagga but never delivered. But she was not the only one. In 2008 former Minister for Health John Della Bosca said, "There is a mini budget on 11 November and yes, we're looking at capital works spending. We are looking at all health activities to see how we can deliver the most cost-effective provision of services." Later that year in Parliament he said, "The Wagga redevelopment project planning is continuing. NSW Health is well advanced in negotiations to purchase properties...the procurement strategy report is nearing completion and is scheduled for submission later this year." As we have come to expect from Labor, the backtracking then started.

Mr Mark Coure: The backflips.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: Yes, the backflips and the backtracking. In March 2009, ahead of the budget, Mr Della Bosca said, "Things are going to be tough. I'm not going to raise expectations; we will have to wait and see." Of course, soon after the budget was released he said, "Tamworth Hospital is at a more advanced planning stage than Wagga Base Hospital and the Government has given a commitment that Tamworth will begin this term." The poor people of Wagga Wagga missed out yet again. But it did not take long for the people of Wagga Wagga to work out that they could not trust Labor—in fact, the *Daily Advertiser* reported on it and that was put to the test in 2011 when they elected a Liberal candidate as the member for Wagga Wagga.

It is not only health infrastructure on which Labor did not deliver; it was also treatment times. Under Labor, only 58.9 per cent of patients were treated and left the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital emergency department

in under four hours. Now, under this Government, nearly 70 per cent of patients leave the emergency department in less than four hours. Under Labor, only 70 per cent of people received elective surgery on time; now it is 93 per cent. In addition to delivering the \$430 million redevelopment of the base hospital, the Liberal-Nationals Government has also boosted staffing numbers, something that Labor never did. Between 2012 and 2018 the Murrumbidgee Local Health District received funding for an additional 374 staff, including more doctors and nurses. [*Time expired.*]

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:43): Mr Deputy Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Today the member for Port Macquarie moved a motion about Wagga Wagga. She talked about trust and integrity. Why is the member for Port Macquarie moving a motion about Wagga Wagga?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: She is the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The member for Wagga Wagga was missing from this Chamber when the motion was moved. That is not something that anybody in this place can deny—Dodgy Daryl, Mr Megabucks himself, Daryl Dolittle I have heard locally.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Point of order: I ask that the member for Port Stephens be directed to refer to the member by his correct title.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is no longer the member.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: He is no longer the member.

Mrs Leslie Williams: The former member.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I do not mean to make light of the member for Wagga Wagga's shortcomings.

Mr Troy Grant: He is not a member.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The former member for Wagga Wagga—I know that corruption impacts on communities. When personal interests are put before the interests of communities the community loses.

Mr Troy Grant: Point of order—

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Don't want to hear it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is already on calls to order. I will not tolerate that type of behaviour.

Mr Troy Grant: My point of order is that the speaker should be redirected to the motion. She has drifted off and is making personal character references about an individual. The leave of the motion is about the lack of infrastructure built in the locality of Wagga Wagga, which was replicated across regional New South Wales, including in the electorate of Dubbo.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sure the member for Port Stephens will refer to the motion about health, as moved by the member for Port Macquarie.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: It is about health and it is about the electorate of Wagga Wagga, which is what I am talking about. The electorate has had 61 years of Liberal representation. I suggest it might be time to look elsewhere.

Mr Troy Grant: Point of order—

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: This is ridiculous.

Mr Troy Grant: The speaker is flouting the ruling that she return to the leave of the motion, not the history of the Wagga Wagga electorate. The motion speaks to the lack of investment in health infrastructure in the Wagga Wagga electorate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. The motion is about the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The electorate of Wagga Wagga.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not about the electorate. Where does the motion say "the electorate"?

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: We are talking about infrastructure in the electorate of Wagga Wagga.

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Returning to the electorate of Wagga Wagga, where I understand the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital is, there are some important statistics that the member for Port Macquarie has overlooked about what is happening there. In the past year 2,538 patients have been waiting for elective surgery at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. That is up 12 per cent from the same period last year. The number of patients who have left without any treatment or before their treatment has been completed in the emergency ward at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital has jumped from 31 per cent to 357 for the past quarter compared to this time last year. These are real statistics and they represent what has happened on her watch over the past eight years.

These statistics are a sign of significant stress and overwork of the nurses at the hospital. We know what makes a difference and that is resourcing nursing numbers. Labor has committed to restoring nurses to relieve the enormous pressure our health and hospital system is under. That is why a Foley Labor government has committed to bringing nurse numbers up to the ratios that are needed to match their city cousins. People in rural and regional areas such as Wagga Wagga deserve the same access to the quality and level of health services as their city cousins. Currently, under this Government they are not. A Foley Labor government will provide the specific ratios. On 8 September I suggest the good people of Wagga Wagga make a change. [Time expired.]

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:48): I support the motion. During the Labor years from Albury we could see the impacts on neighbouring Wagga Wagga of a remote government in Sydney. Only now is Wagga Wagga catching up and it is due to the Coalition Government. Albury was fortunate to have its 1930s-style hospital replaced as part of a Coalition Government project that predated the Labor years. Wagga Wagga, unfortunately, was completely caught by the change of government to Labor and remained isolated from so much modernisation until 2011—not just for its hospital. With a new government, finally planning could begin and the people of Wagga Wagga are now getting a wonderful, new hospital: the hospital they should have had almost a quarter of a century ago.

The sad impact on regional health and Wagga Wagga from the Labor years was also felt in the north of my electorate of Albury where people in towns such as Henty would naturally go to Wagga Wagga for hospital treatment. I express my thanks to the Government for the new Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and its benefits to the citizens of the Albury electorate. Just last weekend this Government had to step in to resolve a crisis at the Albury Base Hospital—an episode that is instructive for today's debate. The sanitation unit of the hydrotherapy pool, which is used every week by hundreds of residents of Albury and Wodonga, failed and Albury Wodonga Health had to close the pool. Under the interstate agreement that directs Albury Wodonga Health, the principal hospital is on New South Wales land while management comes from Victoria's Minister for Health and her department. Management told the media and the users of the hydrotherapy pool that its budget had higher priorities than fixing the pool. There would be a new one in Wodonga, possibly in three, or maybe five years, provided the Victorian Government came up with half, or perhaps part, of the funding.

Strangely, this news did not satisfy residents on either side of the border. The local Labor figure, who sits on Albury City Council, was quick to place the entire blame on the New South Wales Government. A classic own goal from Labor, who either knew or remained ignorant of the nine years of Victoria's management of our combined health service. Would there be money for the much-needed pool? Would sick people have to wait three or five years for more therapy? Fortunately, the New South Wales Minister for Health responded quickly to my approach and committed 100 per cent of the necessary funding, \$80,000, which comes on top of the health services budget. My colleague across the border, Bill Tilley, raised the matter in Victoria's Parliament a week ago, and has heard nothing from the Labor Government—no funding, no help.

Mr Troy Grant: No surprise.

Mr GREG APLIN: No surprise, as Minister Grant says. Once again, a Coalition Government has acted swiftly to address a health need. Labor ducks, it weaves, it sends out to Planning or, as we have heard today, utters the same announcements over and over again, but it fails to commit funding to a regional hospital in urgent need. The message is that the Labor story does not change in regional New South Wales, or for that matter in the north-east of Victoria. If we cannot rely on State Labor to honour the health commitments its premiers make to the regions, how can anyone trust them on anything?

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:52): I speak to this motion to put an alternate opinion to that of the member for Port Macquarie, which will come as no surprise. However, I draw the Deputy Speaker's attention to some of the language used in the motion itself. I refer to terms such as "the conga line" or "repeatedly misleading". I might describe those as emotive, judgemental adjectives. And for that reason I make no apology

for the emotive, judgemental adjectives I am about to use to describe Megabucks Maguire, who stood up in the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC]—

Mr Troy Grant: Point of order: The member for Cessnock knows I respect him greatly, but I ask that he be directed to return to the leave of the motion, which makes no mention of Mr Maguire, his name or the electorate specific to him. The motion is about health infrastructure. The member should return to the leave of the motion.

The SPEAKER: I note that these debates become wideranging. The motion is about health and the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: It is also about the form of words used in the motion and the wording that will be accepted. To suggest that my wording from the lectern is not going to be accepted is to—

The SPEAKER: The Opposition voted against this motion, which was carried by the House. No concerns about the wording of the motion were raised in that debate. It is a bit late to raise that matter now.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The reason the motion was not moved by the disgraced and removed former member for Wagga Wagga today is that that he is unable to be here because of evidence he gave to the ICAC about megabuck deals for developers. Instead, the motion was moved by the member for Port Macquarie. We must understand the position put this afternoon by the member for Port Macquarie. She was critical of the New South Wales Labor Party for making commitments in 2007 and 2008. I did the maths, and that covers roughly three to four years.

Here we are seven years into the Coalition's term in government, yet it still has not honoured its commitments to the people of Wagga Wagga. Seven years down the track members opposite have not fulfilled the commitments they made despite criticising the Labor Government for doing what it did during the global financial crisis. Of course, that is an inconvenient truth. The member for Albury talked about the importance of a hydrotherapy pool. Guess what has gone missing from the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital redevelopment? It is the hydrotherapy pool. It has been relocated to a private facility that people might or might not be able to access. That is another inconvenient truth. [*Time expired.*]

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:55): In reply: I thank the members who contributed to this debate. I do not know why Opposition members did not simply agree with the motion. I take issue with the member for Port Stephens in particular, who wanted to talk about real statistics. That is fantastic, because that is exactly what I intend to do. If she wants to talk about real statistics, we can talk about what this Government has delivered for the regional health sector since coming to government in 2011. The Government has had to deliver for the State because members opposite failed to do so. If they had, members on this side of the House would not have had so much work to do. Over the past seven years, 70 hospital projects have been undertaken across the State. Either new hospitals have been built or hospitals have been significantly upgraded. Those 70 projects were not delivered by Opposition members when they were in government. No-one is arguing about whose money it is; this Government is delivering hospitals.

I will provide the House with specific statistics relating to the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. The Murrumbidgee Local Health District received more than \$606 million in this year's budget, which is an increase of \$24.5 million on last year's budget. The hospital experienced an 8.8 per cent increase in the number of emergency presentations from January to March, with nearly 10,000 patients presenting to the emergency department. I will specifically mention nursing numbers because the member for Port Stephens highlighted them. Between mid-2012 and mid-2018 the Murrumbidgee Local Health District increased its workforce by 374 full-time equivalent staff, which is a 13.7 per cent increase. That included 31 more doctors and 222 more nurses. Between 2015 and 2018, the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital increased its full-time nursing staff by 82, which is a 17 per cent increase. That reminds me of what members opposite did to the health sector on the North Coast when they were in government. The member for Coffs Harbour, who is in the Chamber, will recall what happened.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: The member for Port Macquarie is now talking about other regions of the State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. There is no point of order.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS: Members opposite reduced the number of nurses across the State, including in the Murrumbidgee area. I am reminding them about the 400 nurses they cut from the North Coast Area Health Service in 2010. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Port Macquarie be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes47
 Noes32
 Majority.....15

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Constance, Mr A
 Crouch, Mr A
 Evans, Mr A.W.
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Griffin, Mr J
 Henskens, Mr A
 Kean, Mr M
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Piper, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
 Brookes, Mr G
 Cooke, Ms S
 Dominello, Mr V
 Evans, Mr L.J.
 Goward, Ms P
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Humphries, Mr K
 Lee, Dr G
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
 Conolly, Mr K
 Coure, Mr M
 Elliott, Mr D
 Fraser, Mr A
 Grant, Mr T
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

NOES

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

Bali, Mr S
 Catley, Ms Y
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Scully, Mr P
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dib, Mr J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Park, Mr R
 Smith, Ms T.F.
 Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Davies, Mrs T
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Provest, Mr G

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

Motion agreed to.

Condolences

DEATH OF THE HON. JOSEPH JOHN SCHIPP, A FORMER MINISTER OF THE CROWN

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery this afternoon son Daryl, daughter-in-law Trish, son Glenn, daughter-in-law Karen Johnson, grand-daughter Lauren Schipp, grandson Adam Schipp, grand-daughter Zoe Schipp, grandson Riley Schipp, grand-daughter Erin, and sister-in-law and wife of Lloyd Lange, former Deputy Leader in the Legislative Council, Pam Lange. I welcome you to the Parliament this afternoon. It is an honour to have you here to mark the life of Joseph John Schipp.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (16:06): I move:

That this House extends to the family the deep sympathy of members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained by the death on 23 November 2017 of the Hon. Joseph John Schipp, a former Minister of the Crown.

"Member member for Wagga Wagga", that is how it was reported the late Joe Schipp once introduced himself to the Prince of Wales, amusing and intriguing the young prince on a royal visit—such was Mr Schipp's characteristic humour and approach to life, a serious man who exhibited that great country Australian larrikinism in spades. Mr Joe Schipp was many things—a teacher, a small business owner, a Government Minister and, of course, an outstanding member for the electorate of Wagga Wagga. Mr Schipp represented the core ideals and values of the Liberal Party and it is with a heavy heart but a great sense of pride that we welcome today Mr Schipp's family to the gallery.

He dedicated nearly a quarter of a century to public service, serving as the State member for Wagga Wagga for more than 23 years between 1975 and 1999. His parliamentary career was marked with distinction and dedication to the progress of his community and of our great State. As the member for Wagga Wagga Mr Schipp campaigned for the construction, for example, of the Gobba Bridge. The realisation of his vision has allowed Wagga Wagga to continue to grow and prosper. Today Estella, a suburb made possible only because of this important infrastructure, is one of Wagga Wagga's fastest-growing regions; so much so that we are now building a new school there. But this would not have happened were it not for the vision of Mr Schipp.

These achievements, and so many others, would not have been possible without Mr Schipp's tenacity, dedication, foresight and passion for his community. A number of my colleagues who had the honour of serving with him will outline that as well. Mr Schipp's quality saw him promoted to the front bench where he served as the Minister for Housing from 1988 until 1992 in the Greiner Government and in 1993 he was appointed as the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing in the Fahey Government. I am told that Mr Joe Schipp, former sports store owner and local tennis champion once defeated Tony Roche—mind you, I hear there was a bit of an age difference; he was a bit older than Mr Roche, but nonetheless he did defeat him. While he was a local tennis champion he rose through the ranks to become the chief sports administrator in the State; not a bad achievement.

Mr Schipp had also been a teacher, an experience that meant he deeply and profoundly understood the value of education. This teaching experience informed his parliamentary career, most notably when Mr Schipp, along with his predecessor and close friend Wal Fife, fought tirelessly to conquer the tyranny of distance and deliver teacher education in regional New South Wales. The establishment of Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, now one of our State's finest educational institutions, remains in large part a credit to Mr Schipp's tireless advocacy and determination. This was demonstrated in 1999 when Charles Sturt University awarded him a doctorate.

Wal Fife and Joe Schipp remained close throughout their post-parliamentary career, proud country boys who dedicated their adult lives to the advancement of the Riverina. Both men were determined to ensure that those who toiled away in our nation's food bowl to provide for the country had the same access to services and opportunities as those in the cities. Their friendship took one final, incredibly sad turn when Mr Schipp, dressed in his finest, passed away on the very day he was to deliver the eulogy at Mr Fife's funeral.

At home Mr Schipp and his late wife, Rhonda, were a tenacious team. Together they raised two sons, Daryl and Glenn, who are both here in the gallery with their partners and children. Rhonda Schipp was Joe's rock and closest adviser and when she passed away in March last year we know it was a huge blow for Mr Schipp personally. Today we also remember her. As quoted in the *Daily Advertiser* following his father's death, his son Daryl remembered his father as a builder. He said:

A builder of self-worth for those who battled; a builder of communities, particularly Wagga. A builder who built many things around the state. A builder of friendships. A builder of family.

I say to Mr Schipp's family in the gallery today—to Daryl, Trish, Glenn, Karen, Lauren, Adam, Zoe, Riley, Erin and Pamela—we know that no-one can be prouder of Mr Schipp than all of you were. On behalf of the people of New South Wales and all members of the New South Wales Parliament, thank you for sharing your dad, grandad, relative and friend with us. Please accept our condolences and deepest sympathies on your loss. His legacy will always be remembered.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:11): I first met Joe Schipp in 1975 whilst I was living in Wagga Wagga-Lockhart. I had just joined the Labor Party following the dismissal of the Whitlam Government. In the midst of a Federal election campaign that created a fair bit of hostility there was a by-election for the State seat of Wagga Wagga, the first political campaign that I was engaged in. The Labor Party had recruited the then mayor of Wagga Wagga as the candidate and Joe Schipp was selected to replace Wal Fife, who had resigned to contest a Federal parliamentary seat. It was at that by-election campaign that I had the privilege of meeting Neville Wran, the then State Opposition leader, who was in Wagga Wagga to campaign.

During that campaign some other famous people attended because it was interspersed with what was occurring federally. Don Dunstan attended to address a huge rally at the Wagga Wagga Leagues Club. It was during that by-election campaign that I met Joe Schipp for the first time. I could best describe him as a real gentleman who really cared about people. While I was relatively young and relatively aggressive in the aftermath of the dismissal of the Whitlam Government, Joe was calm and polite to the young man who attended every campaign rally, not just Labor's but also those of the Liberal Party.

I spent nearly two years in Wagga, and Joe Schipp was the member for Wagga Wagga for the period that I was there. I would meet him from time to time, because I was associated with the Wagga tennis community and used to participate in a number of tennis events. Joe had been integrally involved in the tennis community. He was a former teacher. He was extremely popular with the local community. He was, as I said, a real gentleman. Having departed Wagga in 1977 to return to Sydney, I know he continued to serve this House with distinction. He held the offices of a Minister of the Crown both in Housing and in Racing.

Nobody serves in this House without making a sacrifice, and it is not just the member who makes the sacrifice—it is their entire family who make the sacrifice. It would be extremely difficult to represent a regional area as Mr Schipp did and be away from home for that period. An old friend of mine, Gary Punch, who used to be a Federal Minister, always said to me that the worst job in politics is being the mayor because you have to go to work first, the second worst job is being a Federal member because you have to be away for six months of the year and the best is being a State member because Parliament House is only around the corner. But that only applies to those of us in metropolitan Sydney who live in the eastern suburbs, the inner west or nearby in the south-east of Sydney. It does not apply to regional members.

I do not need to know the detail of Joe Schipp's family to know that the family of somebody who served as a Minister in the State of New South Wales from an area like Wagga has had to make huge sacrifices because of his absence. He served this House for more than two decades with great distinction. He was popular with all members who served with him. His loss is a sad loss, not just to his family but also to the party he represented in this House with distinction and to the people of New South Wales. On behalf of the Labor Opposition and on behalf of the people of New South Wales, I extend to Joe's family and friends our deepest sympathy for Joe's loss.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research)
(16:17): I wish to say a few words about Joseph John Schipp, OAM, and to say to his family that their dad and grandfather was an incredible person. I worked with him in this place. He was more experienced than I was and he gave me a lot of insights into how to survive in this place. When I came here in 1991 he was already a Minister and he had been a local member of Parliament [MP] for some years. He was a man who really understood his community—I am sure his family knows that—but he also loved his family, and I will say more about that shortly. He was a person who loved his community. He was of the bush and he was very much for the battlers of the bush. On many occasions he was a very wise counsel to me, but I will tell you a little more about that in a moment.

More formally, I note that Joe was born on 21 March 1932 in Mudgee. He was certainly a man of the bush. He died on 23 November 2017 in Wagga Wagga. He came into this place, this very Chamber, on 6 December 1975, and here he spent 23 years and three months. That is a lot of public service by anyone's standard. He retired from this place on 5 November 1999, which meant he had been elected nine times. My recollection of the discussions I had with him at the time was that there was not much competition for Joe. He was pretty well in command of his seat, and his community knew that he was fighting for those battlers and fighting for everybody in his regional community and indeed right across the State.

He and I worked together for eight years. He sat on the very seats the Government front bench sits on now. He was a Minister appointed, of course, by the then Premier, Nicholas Frank Hugo Greiner. He stayed a Minister through Housing and then Sport and Recreation, from memory. He had a tough time in Housing. He was doing a very good job. He set up what I thought was a very good fund, HomeFund. A lot of things in politics can creep up behind a person, grab them by the ankle and cause them grief. Unfortunately, HomeFund caused him a degree of grief and in the end he stepped down as a Minister but he still hung in there as an MP for another whole term and a bit. He was still in there representing his community.

Joe was educated at Mudgee St Michaels and then he had a change to Temora primary and then to Wagga Wagga primary school. Then he became a teacher, as I did. He was a teacher trainee in the two-year course at Wagga Wagga and became a teacher. I know from talking to him over the years that he was passionate about education. I remember reading many years ago his inaugural speech, in which he talked a lot about the land—also a passion—and a lot about education. I will come to some details about his family in a moment. He had a farm with Poll Herefords, I think, but I could be wrong about that. At one stage he also had the Schipp's Sports Store. He was able to show his business acumen and skills—it did not matter whether he was on a farm or in his sports store. As the Premier has already observed, he had a real passion for a range of sports but tennis particularly—he was very good at that.

On 13 November 1954 he married Rhonda Daisy Lange. Some of my colleagues in this place may not know this, but Rhonda was the sister of Lloyd Lange, who served in the Legislative Council and was well respected by the community. Political issues surround us, and we all have issues from time to time. Whilst Daryl Maguire is currently facing some issues, I have to say Daryl was very supportive of Joe. I remember being in their company. They had their differences, as did Wal Fife and Joe. Joe never took a backward step—he always let people know exactly where he stood. Daryl told me that Rhonda used to work at Huthwaites in town which, in those days, to use Daryl Maguire's words, was the bee's knees of local shops. It was where everyone went, long before the big multinationals came in. I think theirs was a match made in heaven, because they became a team—a team that really did work together and had that love and passion not only for their family but also for the community.

As I said, when I first met Joe he was already serving as the Minister for Housing. He was well and truly someone whom we all knew we could look to for advice. Housing is a challenge at the best of times. I also recollect that in his inaugural speech he talked a lot about the need to get more housing for people. I know when he became the Minister for Housing he was quite passionate and had had that passion for a long while. He was an incredible fighter for many things—much more than what some members would consider needed to be done in the local community. He fought on many fronts. He and Wal Fife were the driving forces behind bringing Charles Sturt University to Wagga Wagga. In his time in office he talked about getting money from almost anywhere to support local causes—for example, the local schools or the local hospital. He quite often talked about the history of the local hospital. The renewal of that hospital is one of the great successes of this Government. He was the driver of those sorts of things.

I saw Joe a number of times after he left the Parliament. It seemed to me that he was still a *de facto* member. He was still out there doing so much. I thought that when he finally finished up after 23 or 24 years he might go for a bit of a rest, but not Joe. Joe was out there pushing for all sorts of things. One of the things he was particularly interested in was the new radiotherapy centre. He was chair of the trust and pushed very hard for that centre. He and Daryl Maguire partnered in that, because Daryl was the chair of the fundraising committee. In the end they raised more than \$4 million. They were blessed to have our most fantastic former Governor Marie Bashir do the opening of that centre. That centre stands as a beacon because often those sorts of services are not available in regional areas, but he was able to achieve that.

Joe got involved in a lot of things post politics. He put a lot of energy into organising some new tennis courts and getting the funding for them. He organised funding for raising the water levels in Lake Albert. He did so much. He was a man who truly had, in his soul, a sense of public giving, whether he was in this place or not. I also know that he was involved in the funding of the Gobba Bridge. That is the short name; I will not try to pronounce the full name. He was the driver behind getting that bridge built. That was worth over \$50 million. If one was to tally up all of his efforts in terms of the money—let alone his personal efforts in helping individuals—that came into Wagga Wagga as a result of his being the local Liberal member one would think it was unbelievable. He was a stand-out.

He had other achievements in addition to the Bolton Park tennis courts and a few other sporting things. It is tough in this place and, as I said earlier, one's destiny is often not in one's own hands. Because of particular political issues he resigned as the Minister for Sport and Recreation and as the Minister for Housing, but he stayed on as a member. He became a founding member of something called—perhaps I should not be putting this on the record, but I will—the Feather Dusters Club. It was a very interesting club. It had limited membership at the time—at least of members who were still in this Parliament.

One of the main co-conspirators in the establishment of that club was Gerald Beresford Ponsonby Peacocke, the former National Party member for Dubbo. My younger colleagues would not have a clue about this, but in those days the House would sometimes sit until 3.00 a.m., 4.00 a.m. or 5.00 a.m. In fact I remember that once we finished at about 7.00 a.m. and I had to be back in there by 9.00 a.m. Those were different days—there were long hours and there were lots of times to yarn. There were lots of times to tell the Premier, at least from your own office—I am glad she is not here!—exactly what a premier should be doing.

Joe was very much into that, as was Gerry. They had reasons to be providing that advice. Their meetings usually occurred over the odd ale or two. I do not recollect Joe drinking that much but he certainly liked a beer. There was a corner table—it is still there in the dining room—and I said to some of my colleagues only a few weeks ago, "This used to be the table where Gerry Peacocke and Joe Schipp would spend hours telling the most outrageous jokes." I do not intend to say very much about those jokes, but I can still remember some of them. Those were different times: Political correctness was not exactly high on the agenda. Although there was a lot of fun and mirth in those incredible years, both of those members had the same burning desire as they had when they first came into this place to contribute to the community.

I recognise all those in the gallery this afternoon. I know that Daryl and Glenn Shipp and their partners Trish and Karen are here. I also recognise the grandchildren: Karen, Lauren, Adam, Zoe, Riley and Erin. I also understand that Mrs Pamela Lange, the wife of Lloyd Lange, is here. I thank all of them for sharing Joe with us. Personally, I love the fact that he was here. I loved the fact that when I went to his electorate he seemed to know everybody in Wagga Wagga. Everybody seemed to get on with him no matter how forceful he was in his views. About an hour ago I had a look at his valedictory speech on 25 November 1998. It was fascinating to me because it was about an issue that he and I had in common because my grandfather was of a similar ilk. Joe was talking about his dad and he said:

My father was a true blue, or perhaps a true red—

There was an interjection from Peter Anderson:

A true believer.

Joe said:

Yes, a true believer. As young blokes, my brother and I thought that my father may have been a commo. In fact he was an old-style Labor man. On the occasion of my preselection—in the wrong camp, as my late father saw it—my father said, "I always knew he'd get on. He always had to be on top of everything. In organisations he joined or in sport he wasn't happy until he was right at the top. He'll make a heck of a good member. If he does something, he does it well."

Joe did it well. His father, whatever he was, knew that. We knew that. I thank his family for sharing him with the people of New South Wales. It is not easy. As I said, Rhonda and he had an incredible partnership. The entire State of New South Wales shared them, with their passion and belief in community. So I thank each and every one of his family members for the time that he spent here and for the time that they gave him. I thank his grandchildren for loving him in his retirement.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (16:32): It gives me great pleasure to speak on this condolence motion for Joe Schipp. I was elected on 3 November 1990. I first remember Joe and his good mate Gerry Peacocke in October 1990 coming to Coffs Harbour as Ministers of the Crown to doorknock. Both of them complained—Gerry probably a bit louder—about all of the hills and hollows we had in the Coffs Harbour electorate in comparison to their electorates. I know that Wagga Wagga has some hills—definitely more than Dubbo. They had hard work, doorknocking in the beginning of a summer, especially in areas like Urunga, which has some fairly steep hills.

From that moment, Joe Schipp and Gerry Peacocke became firm friends of mine. As has been mentioned today, Joe was a great mentor to new members. I came into this place expecting that I could just go and knock on the door of the Minister for Health—it was then Ron Phillips—and say, "Look, I need a new hospital," and it would be duly delivered! At one stage I was trying to get to see David Hay, the member for Manly and Minister for Planning. Although we were in government David Hay did not agree with the development that I wanted to talk to him about, so it was impossible to get to see him. One day I was walking on level 8 after a division and I said, "David, how the hell do I get in to see you?" Joe happened to overhear my question. David ignored me, as was his wont, and about an hour later Joe arrived at my office and said, "Andrew, I've arranged an appointment with David Hay for you." That was the kind of bloke he was. If you had an issue, you would tell Joe about it and he would react. I did not win that argument, but at the end of the day at least I was given an audience by David Hay, and it is because of Joe that that audience was granted.

I also sat on the committee that investigated the HomeFund. It was not Joe Schipp's scheme; it was Frank Walker's scheme. Frank Walker introduced the scheme, and it was a fantastic scheme as long as the interest rates were high. When Joe was Minister, he decided that there was a dearth of housing with people not having the ability to buy their own homes, especially in regional New South Wales, and so he expanded the scheme. Unfortunately, interest rates dropped. I sat on that committee month in, month out with Deirdre Grusovin from the other side. Everyone sheeted the blame home to Joe Schipp and the Coalition Government, although Joe was in fact just trying to help underprivileged people in regional New South Wales.

When the report came down I said that there were two more "victims of HomeFund", as they were referred to in those days: One was John Fahey and the other one was Joe Schipp. Joe had set out to do the right thing by people, especially those in regional New South Wales, to enable them to own their own homes and yet he was portrayed as a villain in the scheme, which was set up by Labor. Frank Walker, who set it up, was a Sawtell boy, from my electorate, and yet he got away "unscathed", because the finger-pointing was basically a political witch-hunt. Even Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, from the other place, said at the time that the HomeFund scheme was a good scheme when interest rates were high, but unfortunately the falling interest rates started to hurt the people it had been set up to help.

Joe was a founding member of the Feather Dusters Club, along with Gerry Peacocke. I sat with them many a night, along with Russell Smith, the then member for Bega, Tony Windsor and others who had been

invited—you could not just turn up. As the Minister for Health and member for Wakehurst said, at times we would sit there until three in the morning. One night we were joined by two of the editors from one of the magazines—I think it was the *Australasian Post*—and we sat until about 3.00 a.m. telling joke after joke. Joe never repeated a joke all that time, and the blokes from the magazine wrote down Joe's jokes, which were published in the magazine. Joe was a real character.

We used to have arguments with David Draper, who was in charge of the Members' Dining Room, because it was described as a dining room and not a restaurant. One day I got a message from Joe and Gerry saying, "Come down for lunch." They had organised tomato sauce, salt and pepper and some Worcestershire sauce for the centre table in the dining room, but there was no food. David Draper asked us what we wanted to eat and we were told to behave. The staff from Joe's and Gerry's offices duly arrived with a couple of boxes full of pies, peas and potato mash from Harry's Café de Wheels. That sent a message to David and his catering staff that we wanted home-cooked meals. After that incident, we started to get the meals we wanted, which was unreal.

I mentioned Joe's sense of humour, and I am sure the family has heard many stories about him, including this one. When he was Minister for Housing—and I have to say he did a great job as Minister for Housing and as Minister for Sport and Recreation—Joe got off a plane somewhere in regional New South Wales, to face a hostile media. One young woman said to him, "Mr Schipp, is your name spelt with one t or two?" Joe reckoned that was the way he was regarded in those parts. Joe was always exceedingly proud of Wagga and his electorate, and he and Rhonda, who I met over the years, were a great team.

I leased a unit in Cathedral Street, and Joe owned a unit there. In those days I used to go for a walk every morning, but Joe was not renowned for exercising. One morning I got up and Joe was out there in a pair of shorts and a T-shirt collecting dead pigeons from the footpath. We had a problem with pigeons in Cathedral Street: They were a damn nuisance because they would crap on everyone's car, the windowsills, you name it. Joe decided he would bring in a bit of pesticide from the farm, lace a bit of wheat with it and put it on his window sill. He got up the next morning and there were literally dozens of dead pigeons on the footpath. He picked them all up and put them in a plastic bag to dump them into a garbage bin, and I do not think there is a pigeon in Cathedral Street to this day. I am sure Joe's family knows that is a true story, and I chuckled for days over it. Joe said, "Under the pain of death, don't tell anyone it was me." I have told the story, but he cannot be prosecuted now. He did the people of Woolloomooloo a great favour by getting rid of the pigeons.

I really enjoyed my years serving with Joe. He was indeed a true friend. He and Gerry were the best of mates. They had a sign made for the Feather Dusters Club, and I think Ian Armstrong would send staff members to take the sign off the doors of everyone who was a de facto member. Those signs would reappear: If they were taken down at 9 o'clock they would be back by 9:30. He was a great mate and a great member of Parliament. He had a fantastic sense of humour, and his family should be very proud of his legacy for New South Wales and especially for Wagga Wagga. Vale, Joe Schipp.

Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (16:41): I add my condolences on the passing of Joseph John Schipp. I am the member for Murray, an electorate far to the west of Wagga Wagga, but I consider Wagga to be my city. We lived between Mandalong and Grong Grong and used to go to Wagga for shopping. Even though we did not live in his electorate, we spent a lot of time there. My father, a keen member of the Country Party, always spoke very highly of Joe, and I was briefly one of his constituents when I spent a bit of time in Wagga in the 1980s. When I was a young person I did not take a lot of interest in politics; it is something I have grown to embrace later in life. At the time I probably could not have told you the name of the Prime Minister or the Premier but, testament to Joe's contribution to the community, I knew who Joe Schipp was. Joe did so much for Wagga and, by extension, for the region. I offer my condolences to his family.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (16:43): I first met the Hon. Joe Schipp when I was a consumer. I was involved in the stock and station and real estate industry and at the same time I was the deputy president of the association in New South Wales. The member for Heffron referred to the election of the Labor Party candidate running at that time, and I think he was Dick Gorman, who was also a stock and station agent. He ran for the Labor Party, much to my dismay. Putting all that aside, I used to represent the industry and I had a lot to do with Joe as the Minister, with Deirdre Grusovin as the shadow Minister. This was in the 1980s, and later I became president of the stock and station agents association when there was discussion about changing the Act. The Auctioneers, Stock and Station and Real Estate Agents Act was to be amended because of the establishment of the Real Estate Services Council.

It was one of those situations in life when the old brigade did not want to change over to the new. I was a young president trying to deal with the older agents and work with the Hon. Joe Schipp to introduce the bill, because all the younger agents wanted the change. I did a lot of work with Joe to introduce the Real Estate Services Council. I do not know whether he was impressed with me, but he did appoint me to the council to represent the stock and station agents industry. Despite differences of opinion, he earned the respect of the association. At the

time, we had approximately 500 agency members across the State that employed close to 4,000 people. He could understand our passion because he came from the land. At the time, he had a stud as well, and he was devoting a fair bit of his time to his love of cattle.

Thinking back to the 1980s, I never would have thought I would be in the Speaker's chair contributing to the condolence motion for the late Joe Schipp. I never thought I would be in politics, but the difficult times I went through as an agent for the association help me when things get tough and I have carried Joe's advice with me. I am honoured to be in the Chair this afternoon for this condolence motion. As I said, Joe earned respect. He had great passion for his cattle and the land, but more than that, he had great passion and love for his family. His family was always prominent in any discussion that he had. I join other members in thanking Joe's family for sharing their mum and dad with us—us being New South Wales and the community of Wagga Wagga—and I thank Joe for his contribution. I am sure his family looks back with great pride for both their mum and dad. Vale, Joseph John Schipp.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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

Bills

UNEXPLAINED WEALTH (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL 2018

Returned

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill without amendment.

FAIR TRADING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CONSUMER GUARANTEE DIRECTIONS) BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 8 August 2018.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:48): I am pleased to lead for the Opposition in debate on the Fair Trading Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018. Fair Trading NSW has a mandate and responsibility to ensure consumers in New South Wales have confidence that our markets are both safe and fair. It ensures fair and safe markets by balancing consumer education programs with an appropriate regulatory approach. However, there are times when our system does not adequately protect consumers and the Government needs to step in and amend our laws to ensure that consumers are always protected.

The Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 seeks to make our markets safer and fairer, which is why the Opposition supports the intent of the bill. The bill proposes four key changes to the legislation: First, the introduction of a determinations power for Fair Trading NSW; secondly, improving Fair Trading's ability to protect consumers from unsafe goods; thirdly, amending the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011 to improve Fair Trading's ability to effectively regulate the sector; and, lastly, amending the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 to expand the powers of entry for Fair Trading inspectors.

The Opposition acknowledges that consumer advocacy groups have given their support to the changes proposed in the bill and that these changes will ensure a fairer market for millions of consumers in New South Wales. A Fair Trading dispute resolution service will go a long way towards protecting consumers who experience a problem with a business. Many consumers wonder how they will navigate the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal when something goes wrong. The tribunal can be timely and costly and, most importantly, some consumers worry that they may wind up being liable for costs if they take on a business at the tribunal. For small claims from \$25 to \$3,000, many consumers will find the proposed dispute resolution service to be less time consuming and less intimidating than attending the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to resolve their complaints.

This first-step resolution service will take away some of the worry for New South Wales consumers. It may even encourage more consumers to seek resolutions to their problems, where they may have previously given up. The service will also increase consumer confidence, as it will act as another way for Fair Trading to hold businesses to account. When businesses know there is effective enforcement from our regulator, they are less likely to take advantage of their customers or skirt the law. While this measure will see fairer markets for consumers, the Opposition notes that Fair Trading should be adequately resourced in order to take on any of the new functions proposed in the bill.

Dispute resolution is a time-intensive service. Meeting with consumers and businesses and mediating between the two parties is a worthwhile service, but a labour-intensive one. Fair Trading NSW deals with a vast number of complaints every year. In 2016-17, Fair Trading received more than 780,000 phone inquiries. It also handled more than 45,000 complaints. More than 90 per cent of the complaints were resolved, leaving one in 10 complainants without a resolution to their problem. I hope the new service can adequately address many of the concerns of consumers who were unable to resolve their problem through their initial contact with Fair Trading. It is vital that the Government allocates adequate resources to Fair Trading to ensure that the new service is a success, particularly guaranteeing enough staff to handle the number of incoming complaints.

When we consider the reform introduced in schedule 2, we should also be cognisant of Fair Trading's scope to exercise these new powers. The schedule enhances the powers of Fair Trading investigators to enforce the law and protect consumers from unsafe and dangerous goods. The bill arms the regulator with the power to enter premises on reasonable grounds. The bill also includes the power to seize goods that may be subject to recall notices, banned goods, goods that do not comply with safety standards, or where an investigator believes that goods are not safe. In the past few years, we have seen some of the biggest product recalls in history, including faulty Takata airbags, which have killed drivers; washing machines and smart phones that have caught on fire; and many everyday products on our shelves, such as frozen foods and baby products.

Consumers need to trust that they are buying products that are safe. They need to have confidence in the market, in our safety standards and in Fair Trading's ability to enforce the law. We cannot compromise on the safety and wellbeing of consumers in New South Wales. If investigators at Fair Trading NSW believe on reasonable grounds that a product is unsafe, these new powers will allow them to remove or embargo the goods. This section of the amendment has the ability to save lives. Again, Fair Trading can only operate efficiently and in the interest of consumers if it is resourced properly. A good regulator should have teeth, not just in the legislation but also in its ability to put boots on the ground. Enforcing the law is no easy task. It requires inspectors to go out and visit stores, factories and warehouses and to take time and care inspecting goods. It is important work that should be appropriately resourced so Fair Trading can function as efficiently as possible with a high level of consumer confidence in the process.

Finally, I address the last two amendments. First, the amendment to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011 and the Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2017 will expand Fair Trading's existing powers to allow the regulator to issue written directions to plumbers for a number of reasons, including to disconnect new plumbing and drainage work from non-compliant work, and to uncover plumbing or drainage installed by a person who failed to give notice of works. Giving Fair Trading the option to issue written notices may offer more flexibility; however we must ensure that our regulator does not become a toothless tiger. Fair Trading should not shy away from issuing penalties where it believes that those penalties are warranted.

Secondly, amendments to the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 should give consumers more confidence in the residential housing market. Real estate agents are already prohibited from underquoting; however, in practice we know that many properties sell above their price guidelines. The bill gives Fair Trading investigators the ability to enter houses during open house inspections, both overtly and covertly. This will enable them to discuss property prices with agents, obtain marketing materials and listen to conversations between agents and buyers. As all members know, the heated New South Wales housing market is a stressful market for buyers. Many spend weeks or months attending auctions only to be disappointed by the eventual property price—much higher than they anticipated. Consumers should be able reasonably to trust the professionals' guidelines. These measures will assist in ensuring guidelines are truthful and as accurate as possible.

We commend the bill to the House. An efficient and fair market needs good regulation that acts in the interest of consumers. But for a fair and safe market we must also have effective regulators. The Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 increases Fair Trading's ability to undertake important enforcement work, thereby ensuring fair and safe markets for consumers in New South Wales. It is vital that with any introduction of new regulatory powers we consider Fair Trading's resourcing. I urge the Minister to consider the funding arrangements of Fair Trading within the scope of these new powers. I also congratulate the Minister and his team on bringing this bill to the House. Reviews of these new powers should be conducted on a regular basis and funding should be appropriately allocated if the new dispute resolution service and other enforcement work continue to grow in coming years.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:58): I also speak in support of the Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018. I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for bringing this bill to the House. I also thank the shadow Minister for her kind comments and commend her for the cooperative and collaborative way in which she and Opposition members have dealt with the bill. As has been acknowledged, it is a positive initiative for both consumers and New South Wales as a whole. New South Wales consumers spend millions of hard-earned dollars on retail goods every day and strong consumer

confidence in retail spending continues to contribute to New South Wales' outstanding economic performance, particularly relative to the rest of Australia. However, too many people still experience problems with the retail goods that they purchase. According to a 2016 Australian Consumer Survey that costs consumers more than \$16 billion annually, not just in New South Wales but across Australia.

Feedback from an additional survey revealed that six in 10 consumers had experienced a problem related to a purchase in the past two years. A 2012 Law and Justice Foundation survey found that 20 per cent of all consumers do nothing about their problems when they are identified, with about half of all consumers reporting that they failed to achieve a satisfactory outcome when a problem was identified. Consumers using NSW Fair Trading services have often rated the staff of Fair Trading highly on customer service. However, they have raised concerns that Fair Trading does not have sufficient power, or it has little power, to compel traders to participate in a complaint or to deliver consumers their rightful statutory remedies. That is clearly an unmet need for consumers who purchase faulty goods.

The Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 will enhance the consumer experience by increasing options for redress in disputes that involve low-value or low-cost goods, as well as reinforce NSW Fair Trading compliance and enforcement powers in the Fair Trading Act 1987, the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011. Under Australian Consumer Law guarantees, consumers rightly expect to purchase goods that are of acceptable quality and fit for their disclosed purposes. If the goods are supplied by description or by demonstration model consumers also expect that the goods will correspond to that description or demonstration model. When things go wrong within the first six months of purchase and goods fail these guarantees, consumers will now have a new way to resolve their disputes with the supplying business. The Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill aims to better regulate the market by offering consumers a more efficient, effective and inexpensive method of resolving consumer disputes for retail goods that are valued between \$25 and \$3,000 inclusive, excluding GST.

Currently, if consumers and traders are not able to settle their dispute with each other, or through the NSW Fair Trading complaints handling process, the consumer has to appeal to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] or to the court. Bringing a case before NCAT or the courts—as has already been said—can be a lengthy and costly process. Fair Trading currently cannot make an enforceable decision about a customer or consumer complaint, or legally require businesses to offer redress to consumers, even when it is clear that businesses fail to comply with their obligations under the consumer law. The existing dispute resolution service relies on the goodwill of businesses and their voluntary agreement to help an aggrieved consumer. While in many cases this process achieves a satisfactory outcome for consumers, it becomes problematic when a business refuses to engage in the dispute resolution process. It is at that point that many consumers give up and choose not to take their complaint further because they find it too stressful or time consuming to pursue the matter through the tribunal or the court. The Government has identified this shortcoming in the State's consumer law and is doing something about it.

Under this bill, the Commissioner for Fair Trading, Rose Webb, will have the power to issue consumer guarantee directions to the business to repair, to replace or to refund the value of the goods to the consumer if it is fair and reasonable to do so, and generally within 28 to 90 days. Such a binding resolution of a complaint obviates time-consuming and unnecessary NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal involvement, and indeed the involvement of the court. Providing an alternative to excessively burdensome hurdles to address a problem will make it easier to do business in New South Wales and will instil confidence in purchasers. Those are some of the Government's priorities in continuing to promote this State's solid economic position.

I note that the commissioner may decline to accept or to otherwise address an application or to make a direction if the application is frivolous, vexatious, misconceived or without substance, if the trader is bankrupt, in liquidation or under administration, or the complexity of the subject matter is better suited to the tribunal. I also note that under schedule 1, section 14 of the bill the commission can publish information about consumer guarantee directions identifying the supplier but not the buyer, and particularly suppliers who have failed to comply with consumer guarantee directions. This is a significant and admirable transparency measure that will set an example for consumers and businesses to follow. It will also incentivise businesses to be proactive in providing solutions and to do the right thing in the first place.

Having precedents in specific complaint resolution contexts will help to educate consumers and businesses in the market about their rights and what they can reasonably expect under the law. This bill introduces an innovation to the consumer dispute resolution system in New South Wales and contributes to the continued success of the State's economy by encouraging a fair and equitable marketplace. It also encourages business compliance and effective NSW Fair Trading enforcement through amendments to the Fair Trading Act 1987, the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002, and the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011. Through this bill, the

Government seeks to strengthen consumer protections against unfair business practices such as residential real estate underquoting, the issuing of unsafe products and unsatisfactory delivery of plumbing works.

To further legislate on the public expectation that dangerous goods should be immediately removed from store shelves, the bill will allow NSW Fair Trading investigators either to seize what they reasonably expect to be unsafe goods without obtaining a search warrant or to issue an embargo notice preventing the sale of the goods pending further product safety testing. This amendment could save lives and livelihoods by quickly preventing the public from accessing products that are known to be unsafe.

The Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 amendment expands NSW Fair Trading inspectors' powers of entry to a property before auctions are held. Allowing inspectors to attend open homes and property inspections provides greater opportunities for gaining comprehensive information about price quoting in the residential real estate market such as discussions between potential buyers and real estate agents and marketing material. Better targeting of underquoting practices will improve the likelihood that property purchasers can accurately assess the forecast value of residential properties for sale, augmenting the Premier's priority of making housing more affordable in New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

In addition, the bill makes amendments to the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011 to better regulate the industry and to provide optimal solutions for consumers. NSW Fair Trading must now be notified of plumbing and drainage work involving a proposed performance solution at least 20 business days before the work is carried out, bringing the pre-notification period in line with existing industry practice. Suppliers will also need to provide landowners and NSW Fair Trading with a plan of works before they start and a certificate of compliance when the works are completed. These amendments will give NSW Fair Trading more time and resources to review key site details, including the level of risk and whether a physical inspection is needed.

We have all heard anecdotes and some of us have experienced plumbing and drainage works going awry. It is therefore fitting for this bill to give NSW Fair Trading the ability to issue written directions if works are not compliant, cannot be inspected, or if NSW Fair Trading was not satisfactorily notified. Plumbing and drainage suppliers may be directed to uncover all or part of the works, to disconnect any new plumbing and drainage work from non-compliant older work, to reschedule a NSW Fair Trading inspection or to provide appropriate documentation. If the responsible person does not comply with the direction in the specified time frame without reasonable excuse, he or she may be fined up to \$1,100, and in the case of a continuing offence up to a further \$550 for each day the offence continues. The Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 is a good, proactive piece of legislation that will ultimately enrich the way we do business in New South Wales and will ensure that consumers can have confidence. I commend the Minister for introducing this valuable reform package in the interests of everyone in this State, and I commend it to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:11): The member for Swansea has commended the Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 to the House, and I take no issue with that. In fact, as I have observed when commenting on various amendments relating to consumer protection over the years, NSW Fair Trading has made a number of valuable suggestions to the House to effect changes in legislation. I think I observed to the Minister's predecessor that I thought he was implementing changes to the legislation in the best tradition of the great Labor Minister for Consumer Affairs, Syd Einfeld. I acknowledge that the current Minister seems to be continuing on that path.

This is a fine piece of legislation. The history of sale of goods and consumer protection has been grappled with in this House since the nineteenth century. I think this Parliament has sought to implement sale-of-goods legislation in an effort to protect consumers in 1896, in 1924 or 1926 and again in 1969. In 1969 the Parliament sought to implement implied conditions and warranties for the protection of consumers. However, the Parliament's legislative remit extended only to private individuals or businesses that were not corporations. Another problem was also highlighted—that is, the ability of consumers to enforce those implied conditions and warranties. Those implied conditions or warranties were that the goods had to be of merchantable quality and fit for purpose.

In 1975 the Commonwealth Parliament enacted the Trade Practices Act, which in effect mirrored many of the provisions of the Sale of Goods Act 1923 and provided a Federal power binding corporations to a variety of implied conditions and warranties in respect of the sale of goods. In addition, for the first time it included implied conditions and warranties in respect of the provision of services. However, the problems with enforcement continued for consumers who maintained that the goods they purchased were not of merchantable quality or fit for purpose. In other words, if consumers rely upon the advice of sellers and the product does not meet the representation made by the seller, there is an implied breach in the condition of that contract of sale. Where is a consumer able to obtain remedy? Remedies are expensive when people have to access the court system. The former Department of Consumer Affairs sought to remedy the problem by providing legal aid through the former Public Solicitor's Office under the Consumer Protection.

A tribunal was established in various forms, which is now the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT], designed to give a relatively quick or cheap way of resolving these sorts of disputes. However, even that has become expensive, time consuming and of no benefit to the small consumer. That is why this bill is so significant: any consumer of a product with a purchase price of between \$25 and \$3,000 can access the Office of Fair Trading if there has been a specific breach of a contract for sale of goods. If I buy something and I am provided with the goods, after paying for them, that is a contract for sale. It is no different from any purchase. It is a binding contract. By law those contracts contain conditions or warranties of contract that the goods are of merchantable quality, fit for purpose or rely on the representation of the seller.

This bill proposes something particularly clever. It has adopted something that I remember arguing about 20 or 25 years ago—that is, the bill has adopted the wording of the conditions and warranties that exist in what was the Trade Practices Act, now the Australian Consumer Law. The bill adopts section 54 to section 57 of the consumer protection legislation, which, for purchases of between \$25 and \$3,000, standardises the applied warranties that are contained in Federal law. Section 54 (1) of the Commonwealth law, which requires a guarantee to acceptable quality, states:

- (1) If
 - (a) a person supplies, in trade or commerce, goods to a consumer; and
 - (b) the supply does not occur by way of auction; there is a guarantee that the goods are of acceptable quality.
- (2) Goods are of acceptable quality if they are as:
 - (a) fit for all the purposes for which goods of that kind are commonly supplied;
 - (b) acceptable in appearance and finish;
 - (c) free from defects; and
 - (d) safe; and
 - (e) durable;

It matters not what anybody might say—whether it says it or does not say it—when a consumer purchases goods. By virtue of the adoption of section 54 of the Australian Consumer Law, those provisions apply to every purchase by a consumer as a part of that purchase. If Parliament enacts this legislation every consumer in this State will have a level of protection consumers have never had before. It is with some reluctance that I commend this left-wing Liberal Minister. However, where this bill is particularly successful is that the Minister is not just proposing the enactment of a law that protects the consumer—beating his chest and saying, "Look what I am doing." He is actually setting up a framework that enables the consumer to go to Fair Trading to have the matter resolved and to have orders made about that product. That is a terrific thing.

Most people do not have the ability to access legal advice about relatively small purchases nor do they have the resources to go to the tribunal. All members would have dealt with people who are not affluent. This bill provides that anybody who is duded—even a pensioner in social housing who is duded by a door-to-door salesman—by buying something that is not fit for purpose and therefore breaches sections 54 to 57 of the Australian Consumer Law may make an application directly to the department to have those issues resolved. That is a huge step for this State to take to protect consumers. The Office of Fair Trading may be inundated, but that will probably drop off as sellers realise that a government organisation will hold them to account if they do the wrong thing. The member for Swansea referred to the need to ensure that the Office of Fair Trading is properly resourced to deal with these issues. [*Extension of time*]

As much as I like the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, I am sure he has no idea what I am talking about. The other issue, which is a novel situation, is the legislative intervention to control the function of plumbers, and by that I do not mean the Watergate plumbers. Obviously the Office of Fair Trading has been dealing with an excessive range of disputes relating to the quality of work in that industry. I draw that inference because it is apparent that that industry has been singled out in this legislation while others have not. I imagine a lot has been occurring in the sewers around Sydney that needs some sort of legislative intervention. We all hear stories about the activities, but I accept that if the Office of Fair Trading regards this industry as requiring special legislative control, then there is a need for it.

The Office of Fair Trading has a very good track record over a number of years representing consumers. On the whole, this is a groundbreaking bill that benefits consumers. It is extraordinary that a party that generally protects businesses and sellers is providing consumers with protection. If one looks at the history of the Trade Practices Act in New South Wales or the Commonwealth legislation, these sorts of provisions are usually enacted by Labor governments, not by Tories. Obviously this left-wing Minister is in a position to persuade his colleagues about the importance of consumer protection. The bill is a good one. It will need constant review to make sure it is successful and, as the member for Swansea said, the Office of Fair Trading will need adequate resourcing. It is

probably one of the best consumer protection measures to provide accessibility to the sort of people that my party usually represents. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:24): I speak in support of the Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 and I commend the Minister for bringing this bill to the House. This is a particularly important bill for the electorate of Myall Lakes due to the large number of vulnerable people residing in the electorate. The bill delivers on the Government's commitment to put consumers first, including vulnerable consumers. The Australian Consumer Law protects all consumers in New South Wales through consumer guarantees, which provide consumers with rights and remedies for goods they purchase.

NSW Fair Trading ensures that all consumers are able to exercise their rights under the Australian Consumer Law when a good fails to meet one or more of the consumer guarantees. When there is a dispute over a consumer good, consumers are encouraged to contact the business and attempt resolve their problem directly with the trader. However, vulnerable consumers can experience disadvantages in negotiations with businesses as they may not have the understanding, time or money to negotiate effectively. Vulnerable consumers, including the elderly, people with low literacy skills, people with a disability, Indigenous people and people from a non-English speaking background, can struggle with understanding and enforcing their consumer rights. NSW Fair Trading is committed to ensuring that all consumers understand their rights and are able to seek a remedy when something goes wrong.

This bill introduces consumer guarantee directions, which form part of a larger suite of programs and policies NSW Fair Trading offers to assist and protect consumers in New South Wales. For example, under the National Indigenous Consumer Strategy, Fair Trading has been working to better support Indigenous consumers by reshaping the way consumer agencies go about their business with this consumer group. The National Indigenous Consumer Strategy provides a framework for consumer protection agencies across Australia to share information and education materials to assist Indigenous consumers. The 2017-19 action plan for this strategy is aimed at finding ways to better address consumer issues faced by Indigenous communities, such as scam practices, and build better agency capacity specific to Indigenous consumer issues.

NSW Fair Trading has also developed specific initiatives aimed at empowering and better protecting vulnerable consumers in the marketplace. Fair Trading's Think Smart program is an ongoing initiative aimed at protecting and assisting vulnerable consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, educating them to know what to look out for and what to do when things go wrong. Through this program, Fair Trading partners with community organisations and multilingual media to raise awareness on consumer rights within these communities. Fair Trading assists these organisations to communicate, educate and provide guidance materials in multiple formats and languages to those communities.

These initiatives ensure that vulnerable consumers are better informed and, when they experience a problem with a good, that they understand their rights and their options. However, consumers will continue to face issues when negotiating with businesses over faulty goods. Currently, when negotiation between the parties is unsuccessful, the only options are to either give up or begin proceedings in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Unfortunately, a large proportion of consumers simply do nothing. Take for example a newly arrived immigrant from a non-English speaking background. This immigrant is expected to set up a new home and life by engaging sellers of goods to ensure that they have the essentials to live—a fridge, a bed and somewhere to sit. If there is an issue with their newly purchased goods, it can be intimidating to enter the tribunal system.

Consumers have told us that navigating the tribunal process is stressful, confusing, time consuming and a relatively expensive experience. One submission to the Productivity Commission's 2016 report on the consumer protection framework indicated that a consumer required a "certain level of sophistication" to work out if they had a claim and what tribunal or court to pursue it in. In practice, consumers often have little or no legal experience to do this assessment. The ability for the commissioner to issue a consumer guarantee direction will give the commissioner another important option to assist the most vulnerable in our community. When a consumer guarantee direction is issued, it will provide an avenue between mediation and formal tribunal proceedings for resolving consumer disputes.

Our publicly funded courts and tribunal services are a fundamental pillar of a just and fair society. However, the idea of navigating these systems can present an unintended barrier to a vulnerable person that prevents justice being accessed by all New South Wales citizens. As the Productivity Commission noted in 2016, the root of consumers' concerns are access and fairness. Consumer guarantee directions will add to the existing powers of the commissioner, ensuring a fair and equitable justice system that addresses the needs of the community.

The existing initiatives by Fair Trading, along with the commissioner's ability to issue consumer guarantee directions, are helping to improve access to justice for vulnerable consumers. After all, access to justice is a basic principle of the rule of law. In the absence of access to justice, people are unable to have their voice heard, exercise their rights, challenge discrimination or hold decision-makers accountable. Sometimes there are also financial barriers to accessing justice. In a 2014 report the Productivity Commission estimated that only 8 per cent of households would likely meet the income and asset test for legal aid, leaving the majority of low- and middle-income earners with limited capacity for managing large and unexpected legal costs. What we do to improve consumer protection is not just a social role of helping people achieve fair outcomes. It also has vital economic implications.

Consumer guarantee directions will help resolve disputes in a way that is cost effective and minimises the paperwork required of the consumer and business, saving time, effort and money for both parties to reach a fair outcome. The commissioner's directions will also provide important clarity to other businesses about how the consumer guarantees contained in the Australia Consumer Law apply in practice. This will give vulnerable consumers the confidence to participate fully in the economy, creating a fairer market with better conditions to encourage competition, growth, investment and jobs. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:32): I speak on behalf of The Greens on the Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 and offer The Greens' support for this bill. As others have mentioned, and I will not go over the details again, the bill makes a number of changes that will assist consumers dealing with faulty or problematic goods and will enable them to avoid the sometimes intimidating, sometimes stressful and sometimes inaccessible processes of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] to resolve small claim disputes by issuing a consumer guarantee direction. It will apply to goods with a value over \$25 and less than \$3,000, and there are a number of other requirements.

I also note that the bill will introduce new powers for an investigator to seize and remove goods that are noncompliant with safety standards, subject to a recall or ban, or otherwise deemed unsafe by the investigator. That is a particularly welcome change and is something that has been raised in a number of different forums. The consumption of various goods that may or may not have safety warnings is a regular and hot topic of discussion by the Inner West Mums group. I angst for a long time over which pram to buy and eventually let CHOICE make the decision for me because I did not trust any of the corporate communications about the pram that I bought for my daughter. I note that this legislation and its improvements for consumers have the support of CHOICE. The multi-partisan support and the support of CHOICE—the leading consumer advocacy organisation which is consulted and provides support for consumers—for this legislation demonstrates that this is a change that is in the interests of the people who live in this State.

I share the surprise of the member for Heffron that legislation has been introduced into this Chamber that appears to be in the interests of the people rather than—as we usually see—legislation that supports corporate vested interests, which are usually favoured by the Liberals and The Nationals. It is rare that that occurs, but all credit to them for the fact that we are standing up for those vulnerable people. The Greens acknowledge that giving the commissioner the power to introduce consumer guarantee directions is a positive and efficient method to enhance consumer protection. Hopefully, suppliers and corporations will be held to account and, as a result, they will not try to get away with providing dodgy goods in the first place.

That leads us to consider the challenges that our community faces with consumer waste when people who buy cheap goods that are faulty get rid of them because of their low cost. The cost to the environment and to our society is huge. Hopefully, we will see changes that will improve the quality of goods so that, over time, consumers will not need to use the legislation. I acknowledge that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] is, in many cases, a barrier for consumers and others who have to engage in that process. NCAT has been notoriously neglected and under-resourced by successive governments that have ignored its role in ensuring justice for a broad range of issues from consumer protection to anti-discrimination, employment, equal opportunity, tenancy, guardianship, gaming and liquor, health, child protection and water—the list goes on.

The Greens recognise that NCAT plays a crucial role in providing the community with access to justice, and we will continue to advocate for increased investment in NCAT in recognition of its role in administering civil justice. I highlight two important issues with NCAT. The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation has identified that the NCAT process can be hugely intimidating for a range of reasons. We have heard Government speakers talk about the risks to people from diverse communities where English might not be the first language. There may be a range of other reasons that NCAT is a very intimidating and challenging process.

I urge the Minister and his department to recognise that public housing tenants often have to go through the NCAT process to deal with maintenance requests and other issues. Vulnerable renters are also required to go through the NCAT process to stand up to dodgy landlords. They face the same issues. The NCAT process is very intimidating. It can be quite stressful and confronting for people to have to stand up for their own rights through

that process. Anything that can be done to recognise that some of the most vulnerable people in our community—public housing tenants—have to engage with this process on a regular basis would be very welcome.

Similarly, people who try to request information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act and freedom of information laws have to go to NCAT. The resourcing of NCAT is crucial. Although I appreciate that this bill is trying to make it easier for some people to not have to engage in that process, the reasons for supporting this bill are similar to those for supporting public housing tenants, and those who are facing unfair evictions and rent increases. A range of people are still vulnerable under these processes. Part of the solution lies in strengthening the resources and providing support within the NCAT system to make it more efficient—to make it work for people. Part of the solution is in recognising that some individuals need support, recognition and assistance from the Government to enable them to resolve their complaints outside of that tribunal process.

The Greens support the bill. I hope that the intimidatory nature of NCAT is considered when dealing with the many public housing tenants who have to use NCAT to have basic maintenance done on their properties because the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, and her department have failed in their responsibilities to public housing tenants. The introduction of this bill has shown the willingness of the Minister and his department to stand up in the interests of the community against what would be loud opposition from certain interest groups. Many renters in this State would love it if the Minister and his department were to show the same strength, courage and commitment to reform the Residential Tenancies Act to end no-grounds evictions in this State. I urge them to take the enthusiasm with which they have dealt with consumer protections and to do the same for renters in this State. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (17:40): In reply: As members have heard, the Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 will give a low-cost, efficient and fair option to consumers and businesses when they have disputes about low-cost goods. The 2016 Australian Consumer Survey revealed that a large proportion of problems are experienced with low-cost goods and that these problems usually emerge within six months of purchase. These low-cost goods are things that we use every day—clothing, footwear, small electrical goods or furniture. These goods are high-volume purchases and are part of our everyday lives. That is why it can be such a nuisance when things go wrong.

The Australian consumer guarantees were designed to allow consumers and businesses to resolve their own disputes. The bill addresses some of the challenges consumers face when they cannot directly resolve an issue with a business and the cost of the good does not warrant a hearing in a tribunal or a court. The bill introduces a power to deal with disputes about low-cost goods in a fast, affordable and effective way. It gives consumers and businesses a resolution that is proportionate to the problem.

Currently, a consumer tries to resolve a dispute directly with the trader first. If they are unsuccessful the consumer can make a complaint to Fair Trading, which will contact the business and provide education about the consumer guarantees. At this point, Fair Trading attempts to assist the business and consumer to come to a mutually agreeable resolution. Consumers can feel let down when contact with Fair Trading does not resolve the issue. Fair Trading may feel equally frustrated because it does not have the power to resolve the problem. If the issue is not resolved through Fair Trading negotiations, the consumer can lodge an application with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. If a business does not comply with an order of the tribunal the consumer may need to register the judgement in the Local Court for enforcement.

Unfortunately, a large proportion of consumers simply do nothing if Fair Trading cannot negotiate a resolution. Sometimes the stress, time or cost associated with lodging with the tribunal can be too much for the consumer. Consumer guarantee directions will provide a resolution in a timely and cost-effective manner, giving confidence to consumers and businesses. Eligible consumers may be referred for a consumer guarantee direction, and this new direction power is intended to reduce the number of unsuccessful complaints that would otherwise end up before NCAT or with the consumer giving up. The best consumer dispute resolution systems are as much about supporting competition in the market as they are about resolving disputes.

Businesses may gain an unfair advantage if they engage in unchecked, uncompetitive behaviour such as ignoring the rules of the market or by refusing to spend the time and money to help their customer resolve problems. The latter may be especially true if the goods in question do not cost a lot and the consumers do not feel that complaining or taking steps to resolve the dispute will be worth the effort. The bill will inject greater fairness into the marketplace by levelling the playing field in two key ways. First, there will now be a new incentive in place for business to smarten up its behaviour in responding to consumer complaints, especially once Fair Trading has become involved. Second, further guidance about the practical application of the consumer guarantees by the regulator will create more efficiencies in complaints handling.

A major aim of this bill is to help educate businesses about their Australian Consumer Law [ACL] obligations so that if faced with similar circumstances in the future they will know and understand how to handle the dispute without the need of an independent adjudicator. A report by the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Australia found that the return on investment of good complaint handling can be as high as 1,000 per cent. Every dollar invested in a good complaint process can have a return on investment of \$10 per dollar spent—a significant payback in market reputation and repeat business. This directions power is a new approach in Australia to resolving consumer disputes. To test its potential, it will be deployed as a pilot. This will give Fair Trading time to test and prove the concept and to bed down procedures and processes. Its impact will be evaluated periodically, beginning after 12 months of operation.

It is expected that the vast majority of disputes will continue to be resolved by mutual agreement between the parties or through Fair Trading's existing dispute resolution service. In the small number of cases where a resolution cannot be agreed, this new power may provide a way for the dispute to be resolved by the commissioner. It is my sincere hope that this new power will be a driving force to changing market behaviours that are not desirable. It will also provide parties who genuinely disagree about their issues with a quick, fair and independent assessment of their dispute. This will lead to a fairer and more competitive marketplace.

I will now comment on issues raised during the debate including Fair Trading resourcing, why Fair Trading needs this power and how it reduces red tape, and I will explain the powers of entry under real estate laws. I thank the member for Swansea for her interest in this issue and for working closely with me to get the bill to where it is. I appreciate her commitment to consumers. It was a great pleasure working with her. It is expected that the vast majority of disputes will continue to be resolved by mutual agreement between the parties or through Fair Trading's existing dispute resolution service. In the small number of cases where a resolution cannot be agreed, this new power may provide an alternative option for the dispute to be resolved by the commissioner.

For the benefit of the member for Swansea, we expect that the majority of disputes will continue to be resolved through mediation, particularly now that we have the big stick approach at the end of the process. If mediation does not work, then a small number of complaints will go through to Fair Trading which will then issue the directions power, if appropriate. The Government wants to make sure that this works and that it is resourced appropriately. The consumer guarantee directions power does not impose any additional regulatory burdens on businesses. A direction will be issued in accordance with existing law and only when the commissioner is satisfied that a mutually agreed outcome could not be reached between the consumer and business as part of Fair Trading's existing complaints service.

The Australian Consumer Survey 2016 identified that it costs Australian businesses \$18 billion each year to deal with unresolved consumer problems. The reform is intended to encourage businesses to resolve more problems with their customers directly, based on a better understanding of their obligations under the Australian Consumer Law and through using good complaint handling processes. This will help businesses to grow and build a loyal customer base. At the same time, the reforms are aimed at educating consumers about their rights under the Australian Consumer Law so that they understand what they are entitled to the next time they face a problem and so that they do not have unrealistic expectations.

An issue raised during the debate related to expanding the powers of entry under the real estate laws. Enhanced underquoting laws commenced on 1 January 2016 to help make sure that buyers and sellers are provided with accurate information regarding estimated selling prices for residential properties. However, as I have already explained, underquoting remains an ongoing concern in the residential real estate market. Over the course of 2017-18, Fair Trading received 107 reports of underquoting and issued 55 penalty infringement notices to the value of \$121,000 for underquoting offences. Since the start of 2018, Fair Trading has conducted three compliance programs targeting underquoting in northern New South Wales and in Sydney's northern beaches and inner west. During the northern New South Wales program, Fair Trading inspected 16 agents and found all to be noncompliant. Fair Trading issued 34 penalty infringement notices for underquoting offences and other breaches totalling \$55,000.

During the northern beaches program, Fair Trading inspected 17 agents and found 14 to be noncompliant. Fair Trading issued 12 penalty infringement notices for underquoting offences and other breaches totalling \$25,300. During the inner west program, Fair Trading inspected 37 agents and found 27 to be noncompliant. Fair Trading issued 34 penalty infringement notices for underquoting offences and other breaches totalling \$64,900. The existing powers of entry under section 205 of the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 have some limits that impact on the effectiveness of compliance activity for underquoting and other misleading behaviour. Allowing inspectors to enter a property before an auction is conducted will facilitate compliance and enforcement, which could help drive higher industry standards and save prospective home buyers from incurring unnecessary costs.

I thank all members who participated in the debate for their generous support of this important reform. I acknowledge the member for Swansea. It is a pleasure having a shadow counterpart who is genuinely committed to putting consumers first and getting great outcomes for them. It is great to work constructively to achieve that outcome with her and I thank her for her commitment. I acknowledge the member for Davidson, the member for Myall Lakes, and the member for Heffron for his generous praise of these reforms. I also acknowledge the member for Newtown for her commitment to this important legislation. These reforms did not happen by accident. They took a lot of work behind the scenes by many dedicated people in my department. I acknowledge Maggie Phang, Marcel Savary, Tim Richardson, Anita Prasad, Janet Bailey and Pauline Lynn.

In addition, I thank Ellen Choulman, Mitchell Harris, Gabrielle Mangos, Adam Heydon, Katerina Pavlidis, Daniel Harwood, Lubna Al-Zadjali and Lachlan Malloch, who is in the gallery today. I know that former Commissioner for Fair Trading, the great Rod Stowe, was passionate about this matter. If he is watching, I hope it puts a smile on his face to see that we have delivered something that he championed for a long time. I acknowledge the efforts of my ministerial team, in particular my brilliant chief of staff, Ben Coles. We would not be delivering this reform without him driving it the whole way. I thank him very much. I also thank his partner in crime, my head of policy, Julia Stewart. I thank Julia for what she has done to get us here and I acknowledge the praise that she has received from many members of the House. I also acknowledge and congratulate our indefatigable Parliamentary Liaison Officer Richard Hodge.

This is an important reform to enable people to have their consumer rights protected in the marketplace, without them having to go to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a small claim. It will revolutionise consumer law in New South Wales. Like other important pieces of consumer legislation that we have introduced, it will be followed by other States and Territories. The Government puts consumers first and works to reduce the time and cost for businesses that take a dispute to a court or tribunal. The bill aims to reduce future disputes by educating consumers and businesses about what to do when faced with an issue about a consumer guarantee. It is hoped that the commissioner's new power will also persuade those businesses that otherwise choose to ignore an initial complaint to Fair Trading to engage meaningfully with the consumer. The Fair Trading Legislation Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill 2018 aims to create a fairer market that competes on excellent customer service. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MATT KEAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

PAINTBALL BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 8 August 2018.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:53): I am pleased to lead for the Opposition in debate on the Paintball Bill 2018. Good regulation must be commensurate with what is being regulated, and the responsibility for oversight must be placed with the most appropriate regulator. The Paintball Bill 2018 achieves this. As a result, the Opposition supports the general intent of the bill. The bill acknowledges that paintball guns, known as paintball markers, are not firearms and therefore do not need to be regulated under the Firearms Act 1996. The Opposition understands that the various bodies associated with paintball have been pushing for these reforms. Given that tens of thousands of people take part in paintball activities and competitions, these changes are welcome and bring New South Wales into line with other jurisdictions at home and abroad. The bill's new regulatory framework will establish a range of offences for a range of illegal activities, with a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment or \$55,000, or both. These activities include use outside of an authorised venue, purchase without a permit, operation of a venue without approval, supply of a paintball marker without authorisation, as well as disposal of a paintball marker.

The bill also provides for permits to authorise paintball venues, paintball markers, international paintball competitions and grounds for a person unsuitable for holding a permit. It provides for the way in which applications for permits occur, as well as suspensions and cancellations of permits. Importantly, the bill establishes conditions under which a paintball venue permit can operate, and the Opposition notes with support that matters such as public liability and the training of employees are included within these conditions. The public needs the confidence that paintball activities are not just well regulated but there are also safety nets within the industry.

The bill also establishes authorised officers and provides them with information gathering powers and power to enter into premises and provides for the carrying out of disciplinary action against permit holders. On this matter, the Opposition seeks a guarantee from the Minister that Fair Trading will be adequately resourced to undertake this work. There were efficiencies in having regulation under the auspices of one body in the State, notwithstanding the fact that paintball markers are non-lethal. To maintain the community's confidence in the regulatory framework, Fair Trading needs the resources to be able to oversee and intervene in any operation if necessary. I would appreciate the Minister's further advice on this aspect, as the effectiveness of Fair Trading as a regulator is only as good as its resourcing—a concern the Opposition also raised in the Fair Trading Amendment (Consumer Guarantee Directions) Bill debated earlier today.

The Opposition notes that clause 38 of the bill reduces the minimum age for a person to enter into a paintball venue or game area from 16 to 12 years, with under 18s only allowed to participate, enter a venue or possess a marker with parental or guardian consent. While the Opposition does not oppose this, it notes that paintball activities can be quite tense and mimic conditions of armed engagement. This may not be appropriate for all persons, regardless of their age. However, pitting participants as young as 12 against people, say, twice their age needs to be carefully monitored, and I would appreciate the advice of the Minister on whether he or his department have considered the potential downside of mixing children with adults in this type of activity. Again, the Opposition expects the industry to behave appropriately and responsibly, and the potential negative impacts—physical or psychological—of such scenarios need to be closely monitored.

The bill also requires the secretary, for all intents and purposes the Commissioner for Fair Trading, to compile and maintain a register of paintball markers. Again, this is supported by the Opposition. The bill also includes a number of miscellaneous provisions, such as recognising an authorisation that is equivalent to a New South Wales permit that was issued by another Australian jurisdiction, as well as a number of savings, transitional and other provisions. Finally, the Opposition has spoken to the Police Association, which has raised concerns about a new product that is on the market and looks similar to the paintball marker but is a militarised high-power weapon. The association wants to make sure that this type of equipment does not fall into the new regulatory framework, which is designed solely for paintball markers. Again, I seek the Minister's advice on this matter.

As I said at the beginning of my contribution, this bill puts in place a regulatory framework commensurate with and appropriate to the activity being regulated, and takes oversight for the operation of paintball venues and all other associated activities and regulatory requirements from the Firearms Act 1996, and places responsibility with the Office of Fair Trading. I commend the Minister for bringing forward this legislation, another sensible piece of legislation. Besides the issue of adequate resourcing, the Opposition does note some of the practical aspects that need to be carefully considered when lowering the age of participation from 16 to 12, and would appreciate the Minister's advice on these matters. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:00): I speak in support of the Paintball Bill 2018 and I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for bringing the bill before the House. The object of the bill is to recognise that paintball markers are not firearms, to remove the regulation of paintball markers from the Firearms Act 1996 and instead to establish a separate system of permits for the regulation of paintball markers and of paintball venues. This bill provides for the appropriate regulation of paintball as a recreational activity and ensures the safety of players, workers and the community.

Paintball is a popular leisure activity for individuals, corporate organisations, families and social groups in New South Wales. Paintball has been regulated under the firearms legislation, placing significant red tape on an industry where very few injuries have occurred. This bill strikes the necessary balance between modernising the paintball industry and maintaining robust safety controls. This revised regime is more proportionate to the low risk profile of the industry, yet maintains strict licencing, training, storage, transport and restricted use requirements. Consumer protection and community safety are central to these reforms. This bill gives the paintball industry guidance on its responsibilities to ensure the safety of players and the community.

Current requirements including the fit and proper person test for venue operators, which will include criminal record checks for applicants, will not change. To ensure the safety of players, all participants are required to be provided with appropriate training, supervision and age-appropriate personal protection equipment when engaging in paintball activities. I understand that this bill will also allow for Department of Finance, Services and Innovation officers to physically inspect paintball venues and, if necessary, revoke permits or remove paintball markers where safety requirements are not being complied with. The safety and security of both participants and community members is a key priority of these reforms and adequate provisions, some existing and some new, have been included in this bill to guarantee this.

A key protection included in this bill is that the use of a paintball marker outside of an authorised venue will be an offence under the Crimes Act 1900, with civil and criminal penalties prescribed for any improper or

unauthorised use of a paintball marker, deterring unauthorised use of paintball markers. This bill ensures individual owners of paintball markers will be able to enjoy their recreational activity in a safe and secure environment. Owners of paintball markers will have to adhere to strict conditions; however, the new laws will provide them with streamlined systems, and rules that are more commensurate with the limited risks posed. Individual owners will remain the subject of integrity checks and new specific paintball marker safety training will be introduced to ensure that marker owners understand and comply with their responsibilities. In his second reading speech, the Minister said: Tens of thousands of paintball games are played in our State each year by thousands of people. The New South Wales Government recognises that the current regulation of paintball imposes unnecessary regulatory burdens on the industry, stifling its growth and prosperity. The reduction in age of permissible participation from 16 years to 12 years of age brings things in line with the Firearms Act, where people as young as 12 can use a firearm on the shooting range and have a firearms licence. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (18:04): I speak on behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party on the Paintball Bill 2018. Following the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party's continuous lobbying of two previous Premiers and four Ministers, I am pleased the Government has finally seen common sense on this issue and realised that paintball markers are not firearms and do not share the characteristics of prohibited firearms, which, in this State, paintball markers were unfortunately classified as. Paintball activities are enjoyed nationwide by a vast number of Australians across the entire spectrum of our modern, educated, intelligent and sociable community. Use of protective equipment—as with most sports—and some instruction is all that is necessary for participants to enjoy the interactive and safe sporting activity that paintball is. No reasonable risk is presented to public safety. I suggest that more danger exists for people walking within the range of a wayward golf ball from a golf course than for those who undertake paintball at designated locations with the use of suitable protective wear and instruction.

Unfortunately, fear, ignorance and a lack of understanding or willingness to understand often triggers poor decision-making, which leads to outcomes that affect law-abiding citizens, who suffer the consequences for no good reason. Despite the length of time it has taken to convince the Government to right the wrongs of those that made such poor and ill-considered decisions, I appreciate this outcome is a result of this Government realising that the poor decisions of former governments resulted in an irrational response and avoidable over-regulation. I congratulate the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, the member for Hornsby, on supporting our community, the vast majority of which is comprised of law-abiding individuals who wish to have the freedom to participate in whatever sport or recreational activity they like, including paintball.

The amendments finally bring New South Wales into line with the rest of the developed world and into the twenty-first century. They represent a good start to the reduction of red tape. I encourage the Government to continue to reduce red tape and unnecessary regulation that erodes our freedoms. As most in this place would know, I am a former police officer, a member of a profession which enforces the laws passed in this place and other places. We place our faith in police officers to make serious and life-altering or life-ending decisions and to possess the integrity to do what is right. So it was that a former commander within the NSW Police Force tasked police to engage in a team bonding exercise within scheduled training. On one such occasion, I recall the team bonding exercise was paintball. The activity was determined to be a safe and lawful activity, which I know it to be. The benefits of paintball are numerous, including participant enjoyment, social interaction, team building and physical fitness.

Paintball is an inclusive team- and family-orientated sport, and I was pleased to see the sensible reduction in the age of permissible participation from 16 to 12 years. I am pleased also that this sporting activity will now transition from being regulated within the Firearms Act to the regulatory responsibility of the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation. Paintball should never have been required to be regulated and managed with firearms, because at the end of the day a paintball marker is not a firearm. No reasonable risk is presented to public safety and I suggest that more danger exists in one walking within the range of a golf course or crossing a busy street. There will now be business opportunities that will provide and encourage further sporting activity, which keeps communities active and engaged while providing employment. I hope this recreational activity flourishes and I invite those present here to partake in a friendly game of paintball. Who knows, cooperation might come as a result—perhaps it could be the genesis of the Parliamentary Friends of Paintball. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:09): In reply: The Paintball Bill 2018 supports a previous Government decision to transfer the regulation of paintball activities and markers from the NSW Police Force to the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation [DFSI]. The bill introduces regulatory requirements that are more proportionate to risk, streamlines government services, reduces red tape and provides greater opportunities for industry prosperity. At the same time, the bill contains rigorous licensing, compliance and enforcement provisions to ensure that community protection remains paramount. The

bill was developed through a process that involved significant consultation with industry representatives, paintball venue operators and government agencies, including the NSW Police Force. The bill addresses longstanding issues that have impacted on the paintball industry and strikes the right balance between easing regulatory burden and ensuring the safety and security of the community and the people who participate in paintball activities.

It will ensure that people who operate a paintball venue and those who wish to possess a paintball marker are fit and proper persons, and provides the DFSI and police with appropriate powers if people do the wrong thing. The bill will remove the "prohibited firearm" classification of paintball markers, which has inappropriately grouped them with machine guns, flamethrowers and cannons, while retaining robust safety provisions around their use, transport and storage, including that their use is restricted to authorised venues only. The playing age of participants will be reduced from 16 to 12 years and over, with persons aged under 18 requiring prior written parental consent from a parent or guardian.

This will allow the industry to broaden its customer base and cater more to families who wish to enjoy this safe activity. I note the concerns of the member for Swansea with regard to mixing children with adults at paintball ranges, and I put on the record that the regulation will be developed in consultation with the relevant agencies and will provide further information and address the concerns raised today. Our number one priority is community safety. Paintball is extremely popular as a recreational activity for individuals, corporate organisations, families and social groups. In New South Wales, tens of thousands of paintball games are played each year by thousands of adults and young people 16 years and older.

Paintball markers are currently classified as prohibited firearms under the firearms laws. This classification places markers in the same category as some of the most dangerous of weapons, such as machine guns and cannons. Paintball markers do not present the same level of risk as other prohibited firearms. A review commissioned in 2013, entitled "Review of the NSW Police Force's Firearms Registry", assessed that there was overall agreement that paintball regulation should no longer be administered by the police. The proposed regulatory regime was designed based upon the principle that the paintball industry in New South Wales should be regulated in a way that is proportionate to its true lower risk profile, with clear sanctions for those who do the wrong thing.

The overall objective is to ensure that paintball activity and markers are not regulated more restrictively than, or as restrictively as, genuine firearms. Administration by the police is not appropriate for an activity that does not pose the same risk to players and the community as prohibited firearms do. The industry is currently operating to high standards in New South Wales, with very few safety, consumer or criminal law issues, despite the tens of thousands of games enjoyed by the community each year. The new and refined permit system will provide industry with an enhanced customer experience and will remove slow and inconsistent practices and replace them with streamlined and digital services. At the same time, the bill contains rigorous licensing, compliance and enforcement provisions to ensure that community protection remains paramount.

The bill will provide the industry with a range of benefits and secure the safety of players, while at the same time ease regulatory burden and make it easier to start and run a business in New South Wales. Research identifies that very few injuries occur when participating in paintball activities. To maintain this positive safety record, the new regulatory model contains robust safety provisions which will be enforced by a highly skilled inspectorate within NSW Fair Trading. Venue operators must pass a fit and proper person test, which includes criminal record checks. If they do not pass these assessments, a permit to operate a paintball venue will not be issued.

In developing the model, the Government found that the paintball industry has repeatedly shown its willingness to continue ensuring the integrity of the industry and to seek high corporate responsibility. In fact, the industry asserts that playing paintball is statistically safer than playing many popular sports, such as rugby league, soccer and even golf. If, however, a rogue operator deliberately bypasses safety rules, there are tough sanctions and penalties, including criminal charges, that can be applied under the legislation. This bill includes penalties of imprisonment of up to two years and fines of up to \$110,000 to send a strong message of deterrence against breaching the strong safety controls imposed.

I note the concerns of the member for Swansea about why NSW Fair Trading is determined to be the most appropriate regulator. The reason is the transferring of regulatory responsibilities for paintball to NSW Fair Trading aligns with the role and services of that agency, which has built a strong reputation for protecting the community from shonky business operators. Fair Trading has a large inspectorate with risk management and compliance enforcement experience as well as jurisdiction over most New South Wales businesses, including paintball venues. Fair Trading has expertise and systems that regulate a number of industries and activities with the ability to provide enhanced customer experience to industry, including experience with fit and proper person tests within its licensing regimes. This includes administering permits and licences for property agents, motor

dealers and tattoo parlours and therefore Fair Trading has the appropriate infrastructure and systems to regulate efficiently the paintball industry.

The member for Swansea also asked whether there would be an issue lowering the age limit which may place children at risk. While the minimum age for paintball participants in New South Wales is being lowered from 16 years to 12 years and over, the current requirement that all players under the age of 18 have prior written consent from a parent or guardian is maintained. Authorised paintball venue permit holders will be required to ensure all staff have passed a Working With Children Check if persons under the age of 18 are permitted to play paintball at their venue. In addition, the permit holder for the authorised venue will be required to pass a specific fit and proper person test. Authorised venues are also required to ensure appropriate supervision and all players are required to be trained and provided with age-appropriate protective equipment and clothing prior to engaging in paintball activities.

To put this age reduction into further context, the Firearms Regulation 2017 currently provides for a minimum age of 12 to hold a normal firearms permit, whereas a person must be 18 and over to hold a permit to possess a paintball marker, despite the fact that paintball markers do not pose the same level of lethality or threat as other firearms that children 12 years and older currently and regularly use to shoot in New South Wales. Reducing the age to 12 years will also bring New South Wales in line with other States and Territories and international jurisdictions which allow participation in paintball games from 12 years or older. These include Western Australia, South Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom.

This bill specifically provides that if young people under 18 years of age are permitted to enter a venue's paintball game area that venue must have a public liability insurance policy which covers those young persons. For the benefit of the member for Swansea, any concerns about how children might mix with adults at paintball venues will be addressed in the regulations. Those regulations will be developed in specific consultation with the appropriate agencies. The member for Swansea also raised the issue of firearm markers. Maintaining public safety is a key objective of this bill. While the industry has demonstrated its maturity and is operating well, the bill still provides significant consequences for those who choose to do the wrong thing.

A key component of this new regulatory model is that existing offences under the Crimes Act 1900 are retained, so that the use of a paintball marker in the commission of a crime will continue to attract significant criminal penalties. This bill amends the Crimes Act 1900 so that references to a firearm or a dangerous weapon in the Crimes Act will continue to include a paintball marker. These amendments maintain existing offences related to the illegal use of a paintball marker, including when it is used as an element of an offence, an aggravating factor in an offence or otherwise poses a risk to public safety. If someone decides to do the wrong thing and commit crimes with a paintball marker, or place the public in danger, the community can be confident that the police will be able to take appropriate action against the offender.

If a person is charged by the police for illegal use of a paintball marker the regulator will be able to suspend a paintball marker permit and, if the person is convicted, then cancel that permit. In the event that a permit is suspended or revoked, the regulator will be able to require surrender of any paintball markers held by the permit holder. If a paintball marker is adapted for offensive purposes, is used, intended for use or threatened to be used for offensive purposes it will be considered an offensive weapon or instrument under the Crimes Act 1900. For example, the penalty for using an offensive weapon or instrument for robbery under section 97 of the Crimes Act is up to 25 years imprisonment. The police will have the appropriate powers to prosecute offenders, who can expect the full force of the law to come down on them.

In addition, the new laws will ensure the safety and security of the players. People who participate in paintball games will be protected by a robust regulatory model that balances the level of risk with regulatory burden. Many existing safety controls will be retained in the new model and a lot of similar yet more proportionate controls will be introduced. This bill requires authorised venues to provide players with training and supervision that are commensurate with the levels of risk posed. Adequate safety equipment must be provided, and now that we have appropriately lowered the playing age, age-appropriate safety equipment must also be supplied by authorised venues. Players with active paintball markers will be separated from communal areas of a venue so that those who are not participating will be protected. Clear signage must also be provided to warn people not to enter certain areas unless they are wearing the right safety equipment. Paintball supervisors will also monitor activities and take corrective action where required. NSW Fair Trading will also conduct education, compliance and enforcement activities to make sure paintball players are adequately protected and venues provide the correct safety equipment.

I also inform the member for Swansea that the impact of the new regulatory model will be closely monitored by the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, which will consult regularly with key stakeholders to ensure any potential issues or unintended consequences are quickly identified and addressed. The department will consult with agencies, including the NSW Police Force, the Office of the Children's Guardian

and the Office of Sport. The Government will carefully review, assess and analyse issues and feedback raised, with the option to amend the regulations if deemed the most appropriate course of action. The bill also mandates that a statutory review of the Act after the first two years of operation will be conducted, which will include a review of the Act's impact on other related legislation.

I thank the members representing the electorates of Swansea, Myall Lakes and Orange for their contributions to the debate. It is great working with the member for Swansea, who is committed to putting consumers first and delivering great outcomes for citizens in New South Wales. I particularly acknowledge from the department Robert Stobo, Marcel Savary, Mark O'Brien, Megan Batchelor and Jacqui Green for their hard work in getting us to this place. I also thank everyone involved in the consultation process for their constructive approach and their focus on reducing red tape and ensuring that the new regulatory model maintains appropriate safety and security protections. This Government is committed to making New South Wales the easiest State in which to start and operate a business, ensuring consumer and public safety and increasing the competitiveness and confidence of industry. This bill is a demonstration of that commitment. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MATT KEAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

STRATHFIELD ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENT

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (18:22): I speak on behalf of the dedicated and committed parents and staff of Burwood Public School, who for the past year have been fighting against the construction of a massive block of apartments right next to their school. When completed these apartments will tower over their playground forfeiting the school's privacy as well as casting a shadow over the grassed area where the children play on a daily basis. I want to tell their story because, sadly, it is not unique. My community is not opposed to development, but we want development that takes into consideration the character of the local area. We want development that involves genuine consultation with residents and is in the best interests of the community, not developers.

The complete opposite is occurring. Developments are approved quickly and with little consideration, and more often than not community opposition falls on deaf ears. This is what is happening in my area and this is what happened last Monday night when the parents, friends and even students of Burwood Public School gathered in the Burwood Council chambers to voice their concerns to the Sydney Eastern City Planning Panel. Many parents, including parents and citizens association representative Sally, argued that when this development is completed it will cast an ominous shadow over the playground's only grassed area. When the children go out to play at lunchtime, their playground—a place where they usually play in the sun—will be partially covered in shadow. Without adequate sun exposure, the playground will eventually dry up and turn into a dust bowl. As many parents stated, a connection to the natural environment and daily sun exposure, particularly in the winter months, has enormous benefits for childhood development.

Another parents and citizens association representative, Cynthia, made the case to the panel that there are some things in life that must be safeguarded and protected and said, "... protecting a suitable environment for our children is one of the vital ones". Not only will their playground be dark and cold in the winter months but also the school will be constantly reminded of how constrained it is. This towering development will now limit opportunities to expand the school to create new classrooms, new facilities or even a new playground.

Other points were raised throughout the consultation process by parents such as Angelina, who raised concerns about children's privacy and also argued that traffic congestion around the school will be exacerbated by the development. The points raised by all parents were eloquent, properly thought out and evidence based, and they deserved proper recognition and consideration. Despite their legitimate concerns and their garnering a petition of some 600 signatures, the planning panel unanimously approved a development consisting of six storeys next to the playground and 10 storeys on the northern side.

These parents made a significant effort to present evidence-based information to the panel. Yet their views were ignored and, in fact, they were treated poorly. It is clear that the voice of the community has been lost in this State's planning regime. It is fair to say there was an air of arrogance and fait accompli about the whole situation. The story of Burwood Public School highlights that under our current system not even our children's

playgrounds are sacred. This story serves as a broader metaphor for the frustration many communities across Sydney are feeling. Even when the name of the suburb is changed, the story remains the same. Communities are feeling powerless and developers seem to have free rein.

In Enfield, the developer of the former Vision Australia site is seeking to increase the maximum permissible height of buildings from 8.5 metres to 18 metres. Why? It has been said that the developer paid too much for the site and cannot make money based on the current height limit. That is unreasonable, selfish and unacceptable. Just 50 metres down the road is a site owned by Flower Power. It has capitalised on rezoning and although its development was initially three storeys with 239 apartments it now wants to build six storeys with 323 apartments. This is another developer seeking to maximise its profit in an area that has been zoned single dwelling residential.

More than 100 Enfield residents literally took to the streets to protest outside the Flower Power site two weeks ago. I congratulate them on their refusal to sit back and accept a planning system that is geared to the interests of developers and not communities. I encourage all communities to engage with the planning process with as much passion and drive as the residents of Enfield and the parents of Burwood Public School. It is by telling their stories that we are reminded it is not the buildings but the people who give our communities value and strength.

SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE PUBLIC FACILITIES

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (18:27): This week I am commencing a campaign calling on the New South Wales Government to assist Shoalhaven City Council in upgrading local public reserves, parks and playgrounds across the South Coast. The South Coast electorate is home to some of the most magnificent nature reserves and parklands that are utilised by communities across the 49 towns and villages of the Shoalhaven local government area. As one of the most visited regions outside of Sydney in New South Wales, the Shoalhaven's parklands, reserves and playgrounds are also enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of tourists who visit the region from across Australia and overseas. Locals and visitors to the region enjoy the South Coast's natural wonders, pristine beaches and lack of overdevelopment, with reserves, parklands and playgrounds central in family activities, utilised for special events such as birthdays or anniversaries, or simply for a weekend outing.

The lack of suitable equipment, furniture and facilities within our parklands is apparent. Residents and visitors are often unable to enjoy a day out at the local park due to a lack of seating, tables, barbeque facilities, bathroom amenities and shade structures. Shoalhaven City Council has been proactive recently in installing playground equipment at several parks. However, no shade structures have been installed, making it difficult for children to use the equipment on hot days. My campaign is also calling for government funding to ensure our parks, reserves and playgrounds are inclusive environments that are able to be enjoyed by all. Often residents and visitors in wheelchairs are unable to utilise public facilities, or they find difficulty in the simplest of tasks such as using a fixed picnic table. That is completely unacceptable. Wheelchair-accessible facilities within these public reserves are essential and governments, both State and local, should ensure that all residents are able to enjoy reserves and parklands.

My focus is on our most popular parks and reserves, including Dolphin Point Reserve at Dolphin Point, Cunjurong Reserve at Cunjurong Point, Seamans Beach at Hyams Beach, Plantation Point, Vincentia, Twin Waters Park at South Nowra, Greys Beach Reserve, North Nowra, and Dolphin Reserve at Currarong, where new facilities such as barbeques, playgrounds, shade structures and improved amenities would encourage more visitation by locals and tourists. Additionally, John Williams Reserve at Sanctuary Point and Crookhaven Park at Crookhaven Heads are often-visited parks that would benefit from additional investment, including new facilities to encourage greater use. My campaign also extends to ensuring we have appropriate bathroom amenities at our most popular tourist spots, such as Hyams Beach.

The New South Wales Government has been extremely supportive of improving community facilities across the South Coast. Since its election in 2011, millions of dollars have been invested in pathways, community halls, men's sheds and neighbourhood facilities, to name just a few. The Round the Bay Walk is just one fantastic facility that has received significant financial support from the Berejiklian Government. The Moona Moona Creek pedestrian bridge, a vital piece in the bay walk, has recently been completed. The Berejiklian Government provided more than \$1 million for its construction. The 50-metre shared pathway bridge, including viewing platforms, has greatly improved the amenity of the region while encouraging more residents and visitors to enjoy the local reserve between Huskisson and Vincentia. I look forward to attending the official opening of the project next week. I congratulate Huskisson Woollamia Community Voice, and particularly Garry Kelson, who has continued to lobby for improved facilities across the bay and the basin, including improved shared user pathways.

The Callala Bay Community Association was recently successful in obtaining more than \$55,000 to extend the Round the Bay Walk at Callala Bay, while the Callala Beach Progress Association received \$30,000 to

extend the Callala Beach to Myola Shared Pathway. The Red Head Villages Association received \$50,000 to connect communities around Manyana, Bendalong, Berringer and Cunjurong. The Inyadda to Bendalong shared pathway is now complete with the final concrete pour undertaken in June. I congratulate Glenn North, President Kevin Millar, Secretary Robyn Ralph and Mick Cvetkovic and Lexie Meyer. Work to extend the shared user pathway along Matron Porter Drive, Mollymook, continues to go from strength to strength. The New South Wales Government provided Shoalhaven City Council with more than \$200,000 to extend the pathway from the Princes Highway to Garside Avenue, and I am pleased to see the project progressing well.

It is essential that the New South Wales Government assists local communities to improve facilities. We as a government have undertaken a significant amount of work on the South Coast assisting the council and local community groups to upgrade facilities and pathways to ensure that residents and visitors can maximise their use at all times. However, we need to do more. There is no doubt the South Coast has a unique and beautiful natural environment. We as a government should be doing everything we can to ensure that residents and visitors are able to experience and to enjoy what the South Coast has to offer. I call on the State Government to provide the necessary funding to improve accessibility to our parks, reserves and playgrounds and additional community facilities such as tables, seating, playground equipment, barbeques and bathroom amenities to ensure that residents and visitors to the South Coast are able to continue to enjoy our beautiful natural environment in the best way possible.

MONARO ELECTORATE MOBILE PHONE BLACKSPOT PROGRAM

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (18:32): I acknowledge a fantastic local community at Gundillion, which is in my electorate. Gundillion is a locality rather than a village and it is about 40 kilometres outside of Braidwood. Like people in many regional areas, the people of Gundillion have had to deal with a lack of mobile phone coverage. In fact, mobile phone coverage is a real issue for many country communities. Having that coverage is the difference between knowing whether or not the children are safely home from school and being able to get assistance during crises. It is a particular issue, given the looming summer bushfire season. There has already been a bushfire in the Gundillion area in the past few days. State Emergency Service personnel must be able to use the phone to communicate with people in bushfire-prone areas. People in the city take mobile phone coverage for granted, but in regional areas it is a luxury.

I acknowledge Di Izzard, a Gundillion local, who has championed the campaign to get mobile phone coverage along with Mandy O'Brien, Paul Scammell and Claire Scerbanenco. Instead of waiting to see what the Government could do, they started lobbying it and Telstra. As members know, the Commonwealth Government implemented a mobile phone blackspot program and the New South Wales Government piggybacked on that initiative. That allowed the Government to leverage about \$38 million into \$120 million. As a result, 188 towers have been built across regional New South Wales covering 14,000 square kilometres. Those towers have been built, are being built or are about to be built.

Many would argue that the cost of installing a mobile phone tower in Gundillion, which is a small community, would never be justified and the business case behind it, rightly so, probably does not justify it. However, that small community raised \$10,000 locally through fundraising events. In return the Braidwood Community Bank, a fantastic model that returns millions of dollars back to the community, put in \$50,000, while the New South Wales Government, through its Stronger Country Communities Fund and its Stronger Communities Fund, being money from the amalgamation of councils, was able to provide another \$100,000-odd towards the tower. I acknowledge Telstra, which came to the party with the balance of the funds. In real terms these towers can cost anywhere between \$500,000 and \$1 million. Telstra will pay for the ongoing upkeep of the towers and I acknowledge Chris Taylor, Telstra Area General Manager representing the Australian Capital Territory and southern New South Wales, who on the day provided a fantastic afternoon tea to celebrate the switching on of the mobile tower in Gundillion.

Of course, 60-plus residents turned up. For many the switching on of a tower may be something mundane but for this community it meant being connected to family and friends, while also providing a sense of security in times of crisis. It is often acknowledged that people in regional New South Wales rarely whinge and they ask for very little. However, we are prepared to put our money where our mouths are. It was difficult for such a small community to raise \$10,000 but it was able to achieve this because it was a community goal; it was the number one issue. Indeed, the community started lobbying for this tower in 2015 and a couple of weeks ago, on a road out the back of Braidwood, heading out to Cooma, this small community was given connectivity; the tower has been switched on. That is important and has been made possible only through community support.

I acknowledge Di Izzard, who on the day spoke about her journey in 2015 when someone said, "We think you can get there. We believe you will eventually get there, but it may be a three-year journey." Coincidentally, it was a three-year journey. I acknowledge Councillor Trevor Hicks, Deputy Mayor of Queanbeyan-Palerang

Shire Council, and Craig Pettit, Bendigo Bank Manager, the community bank in the region, who were present for this fantastic celebratory afternoon tea and, more importantly, a celebration of a community that achieved what it set out to do. Connectivity is a big issue in regional New South Wales and I know that my focus as Minister for Regional New South Wales is to continue to ensure that there is investment. Right now we have about \$50 million. We are going through a process of expressions of interest and we are looking for new companies, local businesses and new information technology companies, including the big guys like Telstra, Optus and Vodafone to again look at more investment in mobile phone towers but, more importantly, more broadband connectivity. I encourage those communities to look at that fund which is up for grabs at the moment. Tonight I congratulate the Gundullion community.

CANCER COUNCIL FUNDRAISING EVENT

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:38): Fairfield put on its dancing shoes on Friday 10 August 2018 to raise money for the Cancer Council with the inaugural Stars of South West—Dance for Cancer event held at the Grand Paradiso Fairfield. As a proud patron of Fairfield Relay for Life I was delighted to support this worthy cause and to cheer on the nine local stars and their dance partners who gave up much of their time and effort in the lead-up to the night. I acknowledge the Stars of Sydney South West Organising Committee, who played a pivotal role in the success of the evening—Ms Denise Daynes, Cancer Council NSW Community Relations Coordinator, and Mrs Sinilia Radivojevic, Stars of Sydney South West Ambassador and Cancer Council New South Wales volunteer.

We were also honoured to have Mr Jeff Mitchell, the Chief Executive Officer of the Cancer Council, with us on the evening. Without the hard work of this amazing team, the success of the night would not have been possible. I acknowledge also the efforts of our nine local stars: Adam Anderson, Director of Minuteman Press Liverpool; Elizabeth Harlow from Braeside Hospital volunteers; Michael Judge from Canley Heights RSL; Charishma Kaliyanda, Liverpool City Councillor and Labor candidate for Holsworthy; Dai Le, Fairfield City Councillor; Vince Movizio, President of the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce and owner of Ray White Fairfield; Myrian Fernandez, Manager at Elias Pharmacy Fairfield; Cassandra Mammoud from Physical Culture at Club Marconi; and Debbie Hilder, Group Marketing and Entertainment Manager at St Johns Park Bowling Club.

I commend also the creative efforts of their dance partners and local dance teachers Katrina Vella, Stephanie Mansueto and Jayden Rodrigues from Nadia's Performance Studio; Marcelo Duran and Marcone Eveda from The Latin Stars Dance Academy; Stefania Olivieri and Nicholas Mountain from Dance XS; Faramarz Shakibaei from Los Urbanos; and Stephanie Oliveri from Shae Mowen of School of Dance. In the 12 weeks before the event, our stars and their dance partners faced a series of challenges. They had to work together to learn a dance routine and to raise funds at the same time. Much time, patience and courage were needed for the dance stars to step out of their comfort zones and into the spotlight for the night. I am proud to say they danced beautifully and contributed substantially to the success of the evening.

The event raised \$121,374.45 in total, a phenomenal effort from all involved. I acknowledge all those who donated time, raffle prizes, auction items or funds to enable this night to be such a success. During the evening we were touched and inspired by Mr Koert Musters, ambassador for the EnRICH program at Liverpool Hospital, as he related his own experiences with cancer. I wish him all the very best in his journey towards a cancer-free future. In fact, many of us who attended the evening have been touched by cancer in some way, whether personally or through a loved one or close friend. It was this common experience that brought us all together on the evening with one goal in mind—to raise as much money as possible for Cancer Council NSW to continue its marvellous work in advocacy and awareness. The fight against cancer is a very common and real challenge faced by many Australians every day. The Cancer Council offers information, advocacy and support services for all people affected by cancer on their journey. I am proud to say that last Friday Fairfield rose to the challenge and contributed significantly to the goal of a cancer-free future.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:42): I commend the member for Fairfield for supporting such a great initiative. I participated in the Cancer Council's Stars of the North and it is not something anyone would ever want to see again. I congratulate the member for Fairfield on getting behind such a great cause. I reiterate the great work of the Cancer Council. Every dollar from the Cancer Council dancing with the stars initiatives right across New South Wales goes directly towards finding a cure for cancer. No matter our political persuasion, we should do all we can to support this worthy cause. I again congratulate the member for Fairfield and thank him for supporting such a great initiative.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE ROAD SAFETY

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:43): In Lake Macquarie we have a problem but it is one we are trying to take ownership of before more precious lives are lost. Too many people are being killed or seriously injured on our roads and with the fatality rate in our area 1½ times the State average it is not something we can

continue to ignore. Some people are quick to blame the roads but in my opinion that is not the main factor. In the four years from 2012 to 2016, 21 people were killed on our local roads and 307 were seriously injured. In 2017 a further eight people lost their lives. In the five months to May this year, another four people were killed and a further 50 people were seriously injured in road crashes.

People are expected to drive to the conditions, and with modern vehicle safety now a feature on most cars, along with the fact that most accidents are not happening at blackspots, we have to ask ourselves: What is the cause of these accidents? Clearly, a large part of the answer is poor driver behaviour and attitude, combined with in-car distractions. The most obvious of these is mobile phones but there are plenty of stories of other outrageous behaviour while driving that adds to that list.

People do not have to travel too far in the electorate to see roadside memorials to lost loved ones. Sometimes the memorials are to people who made bad choices, who took silly risks, rolled the dice and lost. Some are simply memorials to innocent victims, but all of them are to people who were loved by their families and friends, and who lost their lives all too early. I recently posted a video on Facebook that I produced with the assistance of our local area commander, Superintendent Danny Sullivan. It received a huge response with more than 4,000 views recorded in the first few days of publishing.

Danny Sullivan and his officers are in the front line when it comes to picking up the pieces after road crashes and I know they dread getting the calls that require their assistance at road crashes. Superintendent Sullivan would also say that there are four things that underline most of these horrible statistics: drinking and driving, speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, and being distracted by mobile phones. These are all choices that people make. That is where the conversation in our community must start and why this conversation is so important.

At the moment, Lake Macquarie is sadly leading the area in the number of fatal collisions, but when we look closer at the reasons behind those collisions we find that most of the time they were caused by very poor attitudes to road safety. These choices are across all demographics and are not limited to a younger generation as some would think, but the use of mobile phones has been a factor in way too many collisions. People trivialise that so easily. Superintendent Sullivan says that every time his officers pull someone over for using a mobile phone, their first words are "I was just". "I was just looking at the map." "I was just reading a message." "I was just updating my Facebook."

As he says in the video, "Do you realise in the few seconds 'you were just' that your car travelled 30 metres with your eyes off the road?" A lot can happen in that 30 metres. A son or daughter could be killed, a mother or father lost, a child run over, an innocent person taken out—a friend, relative or loved one lost forever in the blink of an eye. On 6 April this year we lost one more life senselessly on our roads when Andrew Titmarsh of Wangi Wangi died after being hit by a car at Morisset. Andrew's family has been devastated. His grieving wife, Jackie, wants to try to prevent other families going through what they have experienced. In writing to me, Jackie said:

Andrew was just riding his motorbike on his way to work, like any normal day. We need awareness created for drivers of all ages, to wait, be patient, don't be in such a hurry. Please let me help in this. Kind regards Jackie Titmarsh—a grieving widow.

What started as just a normal day became the worst of days for that family. I wish there was something more meaningful that I could do for those such as Jackie and her family, confronted with such a tragic loss, but their grief is intensely personal; little I could do or say would change that pain. We can, however, try to stop one more person dying senselessly by getting the message out and by owning the problem as a community. Changing attitudes is not easy, but it is essential if we are to continue lowering the road toll in New South Wales. My thanks go to the police and all first responders for their keeping us safe on our roads. I particularly acknowledge what they do when they unfortunately have to respond to one more tragedy on our roads to pick up the pieces so tragically left there.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin): I thank the member for Lake Macquarie. As chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, I commend his observations and his very wise advice.

MILPERRA PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Mr GLENN BROOKES (East Hills) (18:48): As we mark 100 years since our soldiers landed in Gallipoli and our involvement in the First World War, I remind the House that I have previously released booklets informing our local residents of the strong connections our community has with the men and women who have served our country. They contained the history of the many street names in the electorate with connections to World War I, World War II and Victoria Cross recipients, such as Bullecourt, Amiens, Dernancourt, Armentieres and Sinai—just some of the street names in my electorate of East Hills but also names of battles fought by our Anzacs in World War I. This history became more apparent recently when celebrating another centenary: 100 years of Milperra Public School.

Milperra Public School has a unique history. It was established in 1918 as a soldier settlement school for the children of returned servicemen. Across these 100 years Milperra Public School has always delivered the highest standard of education to its students. Last week a number of events were held to celebrate Milperra Public School's centenary and to mark this memorable occasion. To kick off celebrations, together with Minister for Veterans Affairs, David Elliott, I attended the school's memorial march and fete on Sunday 5 August 2018. The march celebrated the school's rich history and commemorated our soldiers who settled in Milperra as part of the Bankstown soldier settlement in 1917.

The march began at Milperra Public School's original location, the Western Sydney University Milperra Campus, where it opened in 1918 with Mr Smith as the headmaster. Along the way, everyone marched through local streets that were named after significant World War I events and soldiers, finally completing the march at the school's current location in Pozieres Avenue. We stopped in locations to lay wreaths as a sign of respect for the events that occurred in our nation's past and to honour our servicemen and servicewomen such as Sir John Monash and Captain James Newland. All these locations have significant connections to our history and to those who first attended this school.

Last Wednesday the school held a formal assembly, which brought together past and present students, teachers and principals. What stood out most during the assembly was the whole school performing the Australian classic, *Waltzing Matilda*. This was followed by a presentation by historian Paul Martin and, on Friday, Milperra Public School's bush dance, at which each student took part in a performance. I am proud to recognise the many years of achievement of Milperra Public School, the many students who have gone through those gates, and the many teachers and support staff who have given their time to the kids. As someone who left school unable to read and write, I do understand that education is the most powerful tool that we can pass on to our children.

NEWCASTLE BUS SERVICES

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:51): At the end of last month, Newcastle Transport finally implemented a new timetable after it and the Government were dragged kicking and screaming to the table and forced to look at the mess they had created. In my community some of those changes made a great deal of difference to the lives of people who rely on public transport. But let us be clear: These changes were implemented after thousands of people rallied, campaigned, petitioned and fought hard to be heard. They faced an unapologetic and arrogant Minister for Transport and Infrastructure representing a hostile Government with a history of botched transport projects. They faced a private operator that turned out to be one of the worst corporate citizens in Newcastle.

Collectively we faced all of this and managed to secure some wins: one bus from Swansea Heads to Newcastle central business district via Charlestown with no more changing at Belmont or Charlestown, and one bus from Valentine and Croudace Bay to Charlestown with no more 50-minute waits for a connecting service. Compared to the dog's breakfast that was implemented in January, these are welcome changes, but there are still glaring problems with Newcastle Transport, and these problems affect some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Those people with disabilities who rely exclusively on public transport continue to face significant disadvantage as a result of the timetable changes that were implemented in January. Members should know that it is simply not enough for Newcastle Transport to put on more buses to House With No Steps in Lambton and think that it has ticked the disability box. It is just not enough. Workers with a disability travelling to Access Industries, the largest disability employment provider in the Hunter, are still being left behind. Last week I was contacted by Access Industries about the ongoing issues their workers are experiencing. A number of employees had tried to get the 26 from Tudor Street, Hamilton, to Kotara to connect with the 14 to travel to Belmont. The 26 was late and those employees decided to get the 28. Because the 26 was late they missed their connection at Kotara.

One employee was so anxious about missing the 14 that the employee decided to walk from Charlestown to Gateshead. The next day, this employee decided to change their working hours so they could finish earlier and hopefully avoid a repeat of Monday's events. That Wednesday, the same employee finished work early, and waited for the 26. Again, it never arrived. While another employee was able to call their parents to come to collect them, the employee who had to wait eventually caught the 28 to Charlestown and again walked home to Gateshead after waiting 20 minutes for the connecting 14 service. A recent email from Access Industries outlined exactly what the timetable changes have meant for their employees. It says:

These bus changes have caused so much distress to our employees that they are making rash decisions, choosing to walk home instead of waiting for the next bus, especially as some are not able to read the timetables to see when the next one is coming.

They need ONE bus for the trip from Hamilton to Belmont.

Some of our employees will never be able to cope with catching two buses, especially when they aren't running on time and their connecting bus has left before they arrive.

They don't have the capability of problem solving when this happens, and no amount of education or concierge assistance will change this.

A concierge would be needed for life for these employees, but it shouldn't need to be an option as it takes away their independence.

These employees with disabilities had independence when it was one bus to Belmont from Hamilton, and changing it so they must catch two buses has removed their confidence and caused extreme levels of stress. It has put them in unsafe situations as they are making rash decisions when they are anxious about the buses.

Keolis Downer seems to think that offering a concierge is a solution.

A concierge will assist them, yes. However it takes away the independence they once had when there was one bus.

That is the crux of it. These changes have created unnecessary challenges for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. People who already face unimaginable challenges in their day-to-day lives have now been forced to take a wage cut, have been robbed of what little independence they had, and now live their lives plagued with anxiety over the transport system. The 350 bus service was the second most patronised bus service under the old Newcastle Buses and Ferries network. It is time to bring it back.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:57): I bring to the attention of the House an issue raised with me recently by a Quakers Hill pet owner and which I find has been the passion of an experienced veterinarian from north-western Sydney for many years. I am pleased that the member for Liverpool is in the House because he spoke about this issue many years ago. I will refer to that shortly. The issue begins with identifying what is the most appropriate, healthy diet for dogs and cats, and extends to the influence wielded by large corporations that control the pet food industry. Disturbingly, it brings into question the integrity and ethics of the veterinary profession in New South Wales; of the government and non-government bodies that should be the watchdogs of animal welfare in the State, including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals [RSPCA]; and of the tertiary institutions that oversee the education of those in New South Wales aspiring to be veterinarians.

The catalyst for bringing the issue to the fore this year was the decision of an Australian Senate committee to hold an inquiry into regulatory approaches to ensure the safety of pet food. The basic premise drawn to my attention by the local pet owner and by the veterinarian of whom I will speak more in a moment, is that dogs and cats should be fed raw meat on the bone rather than processed and packaged pet foods. The vet's contention is that this natural diet will give our pets a much greater chance of a healthy life, while a diet based on processed and packaged pet foods will almost inevitably lead to them experiencing chronic ill health, and possibly significant suffering, which of course they are unable to complain about to their owners.

The vet of whom I speak is Dr Tom Lonsdale, who for a number of years ran a veterinary practice at Riverstone but in more recent times has practised in nearby Bligh Park. In 2001 he wrote a book entitled *Raw Meaty Bones*, in which he both detailed his reasons for supporting a natural diet for dogs and cats and made the criticisms to which I have referred about the stance adopted by those professionals, institutions and authorities to whom we naturally look for direction in the field of animal welfare. It is his contention that these bodies have been hopelessly compromised by their various relationships—often pecuniary relationships—with the pet food industry. Consequently, he asserts, they have not acted to protect the welfare of animals in relation to diet.

It is not a common occurrence for me to refer approvingly to a speech given in this place by the member for Liverpool, but on this occasion it is appropriate to do so. In 2004 that member delivered a private member's statement highlighting the manner in which Dr Lonsdale was effectively expelled from the New South Wales Division of the Australian Veterinary Association in the wake of publishing his book. It appeared to me, in reading that private member's statement today, that the implications so properly identified by the member for Liverpool remain unrefuted and unaddressed in the 14 years since.

But my purpose in speaking today is to focus on the core issue. Are companion animals in New South Wales being forced to endure chronic abuse because of the unwillingness of the veterinary profession, the RSPCA, the regulators and academics to consider seriously the relatively simple questions posed by Dr Lonsdale? Can the lives of our pet animals be made happier and healthier by a change of direction in relation to what they are fed? Can they be spared illness and pain through a simple change of diet? Dr Lonsdale hopes that the Senate committee inquiry, which he tells me has received submissions from all over the world, will lift the lid on this issue at long last. It is my hope that the Department of Primary Industries in New South Wales will undertake the necessary research and investigations to determine whether or not Dr Lonsdale is right and, if he is, will act responsibly to address the issues that he has raised.

HORNSBY BEROWRA EAGLES AFL CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (19:01): Reaching your twenty-first birthday usually brings on a big celebration, and today I acknowledge a local sporting group celebrating reaching this impressive milestone. The Hornsby Berowra Eagles AFL Club is turning 21, and I joined the club over the weekend to celebrate this wonderful occasion. Today I take this opportunity to say thank you to this growing club and its dedicated group of volunteers. Over the past 20 years, the sport of AFL has enjoyed increasing popularity. I am certain many want to follow in the footsteps of the ever popular Swannies. Back in 1997 it was decided that there was enough support locally to form a club that was then called the Hornsby Hornets.

The club started with very little funding and only a handful of volunteers. This dedicated committee faced quite a few obstacles, but did not let that stop members. They love the sport of AFL and they were focused on ensuring locals had a place to play their footy. These humble beginnings still shape the ethos of the club today. It does not focus on winning; it is about having a great time on the field. The club wants its players, parents and volunteers to have the best experience possible at every single game. Footy Sundays should be the highlight of the week for all those who play for the Hornsby Berowra Eagles. Rather than teams existing on their own, when you join the Hornsby Eagles you are joining a family, not just a sporting club. It is clubs such as the Hornsby Berowra Eagles that give kids the best introduction to sport and, no matter what your skills are, all players feel welcome.

The club has not been without its ups and downs. In the mid-2000s numbers at the club dipped and the outlook was not good. The club decided to focus on developing talent from the bottom. Members worked hard to boost numbers in the successful Auskick program. In 2005 the club had only 10 Auskick participants, but just two years later, thanks to the hard work of volunteers and committee members, the club had 75 Auskick participants. Members were able to expand the clubs area, which is when they changed the name to the Hornsby Berowra Eagles. Now, 21 years later, the club is a serious force with more than 200 players, both girls and boys. One of the initiatives the club is very proud of is the development of an all-girls teams. Working with local clubs Westbrook and Pennant Hills, the clubs have been able to start an all-girls league. Currently six all-girls teams participate under the North West Lightning banner. The girls love their AFL, and I thank Hornsby Berowra Eagles, Pennant Hills and Westbrook for giving everyone in Hornsby a chance to play footy.

The Hornsby Berowra Eagles has turned around those humble beginnings and kicked some serious goals in the local competition. Being named the AFL North West Club of the Year for the past four out of five years is an amazing achievement. The club has also been named overall Sydney AFL Club of the year for two years running, which is an awesome achievement. The Hornsby Berowra Eagles club is a stand-out, and the club others want to be. This is because of the dedicated volunteers who make up the committee and continue to work hard for our club.

I take this opportunity to thank particularly the current President and my mate, the great Paul Stafford-Gaffney, who is assisted on the committee by David Livy, Greg Howard, Steve Lasker, Simon Granville, the amazing Leanne Coopman, Brent Livy, Jenny Clarke, Robyn Cullen, Barry Hain, Jenni Stafford-Gaffney and Greg Clarke. Many of these amazing volunteers do multiple jobs for the club, and I thank them for their dedication to not only the sport but our entire community.

Awarded life memberships were Stewart Woodward, Anthony Woodward, Greg Clarke, Jenny Clarke, Oliver Browne, Jeremy Browne, Benjamin Ellicott, Brent Frankish, Robert Rawson, Mitchell Frankish, Matthew Hall and Brendan Fitzgerald. They have all been volunteers, committee members or played more than 150 games for the club. I particularly acknowledge past presidents and life members—and two of the best blokes we could ever find, Mark Smith and Adrian Browne. They have been the backbone of this club for many years, and I thank them for all they have done for the club and our community. On a personal note, I also thank them for their friendship. David Burgess, Adrian Browne and Todd Williams have also been named life members of the AFL Sydney Juniors club.

One Eagles life member I would like to make special mention of is Paul Hine. Sadly, Paul passed away last year, but as a previous club president and life member he was the heart and soul of our footy club. In the early years he worked exceptionally hard to ensure the success of the club. He is greatly missed. It is hoped his legacy will continue to inspire future volunteers to keep giving their all to the club we love. I have been proud to do my bit to assist the Hornsby Berowra Eagles with a sporting grant of \$12,394 for the construction of an electronic scoreboard at its home ground of Rofe Park. I hope that the club will rack up some massive scores against our opponents that will be displayed on the new scoreboard for all to see. Congratulations to the Hornsby Berowra Eagles family. You have had an impressive 21 years and I am certain you will have a great 21 years ahead of you.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:07 until
Wednesday 15 August 2018 at 10:00.**