



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 27 September 2018**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 27 September 2018**

*Presiding Officers*

## ABSENCE OF THE SPEAKER

**The Clerk** announced the absence of the Speaker.

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

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

*Documents*

## AUDITOR-GENERAL

### Reports

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the report of the Auditor-General entitled "Members' Additional Entitlements 2017", dated 27 September 2018, received this day and authorised to be printed.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

*Bills*

## ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PENALTIES AND OTHER SANCTIONS) BILL 2018

### Consideration in Detail

#### Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 25 September 2018*

No. 1 **GRN No. 1 [c2018-097C]**

Page 3, Schedule 1 [2], line 12. Omit "may". Insert instead "is reasonably likely to".

No. 2 **CDP No. 1 [c2018-115A]**

Page 5, Schedule 1. Insert before line 1:

#### **[14] Section 212 Interlock exemption orders**

Insert at the end of section 212 (3) (b):

, or

(c) if the offender is convicted of an offence against section 110 (4) (a), (b) or (c) that is a first offence:

(i) that the making of a mandatory interlock order would cause severe hardship to the offender, and

(ii) that the making of an interlock exemption order is more appropriate in all the circumstances than the making of a mandatory interlock order.

#### **[15] Section 212 (5)**

Insert "(except in relation to a conviction for an offence against section 110 (4) (a), (b) or (c) that is a first offence)" after "must not be made".

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (10:14):** I move:

That the House agree with the Legislative Council amendments.

The reforms in this bill—introducing penalty notices coupled with licence suspension for lower range drink-driving and drug presence first offences, expanding the alcohol interlock program, extending vehicle sanctions to include drink-drivers, and moving towards mandating education courses for drink-driving and drug-driving offenders—are all intended to contribute to preventing risky behaviour and reducing road trauma in New South Wales. There is sound and consistent evidence that removing a driver's right to drive is an effective strategy to prevent drink-driving. Currently, this is not happening for lower range offenders with as much certainty

as it could. More than 50 per cent of low range offenders are being dealt with in the Magistrates Court under section 10 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999.

With this reform, our message to all lower range drink and drug presence first-time offenders is simple: you can expect to spend at least three months off the road. Because a licence is a privilege, not a right, it carries with it responsibilities to other road users. If drivers fail to take personal responsibility, it stands to reason that their driving privilege should be removed. The true message of this package to the community is simple and powerful: have a plan B because if you drink-drive or take illegal drugs and drive you will be caught and you will lose your licence.

I now turn to the amendments. As outlined in the other place, the Government supports amendment No. 1, which amends the new element of the definition of "drug" proposed by the Government in the bill. The Government acknowledges that the proposed definition of "drug" in the bill was discussed by legal and road safety stakeholders in the Standing Committee on Law and Justice's hearing on Monday. The amendment intends to clarify the drafting of the new provision so that a substance will be considered a drug if, when taken by an ordinary person, it is reasonably likely to, rather than may, deprive the person of, or impair, his or her normal mental or physical faculties. This minor drafting amendment is consistent with the Government's policy intent, which is to support effective prosecution of driving under the influence offences when the offender is under the influence of a new type of substance. On balance, the Government considers that amendment No. 1 is fair, and should be supported.

As noted in the other place, the Government supports amendment No. 2. This amendment introduces into the Act an additional circumstance in which the court could issue an interlock exemption order instead of an interlock order. This would be available only in the case of middle range prescribed concentration of alcohol first offences. The New South Wales Government acknowledges that hardship concerns were raised by witnesses during the inquiry by the Standing Committee on Law and Justice into the bill, particularly as interlocks are applied to all offenders, including those who may be severely disadvantaged, and in relation to Aboriginal offenders. In introducing the change, measures that seek to reduce unintended consequences for the most disadvantaged are worth close review and reconsideration. This amendment would enable the court to make an interlock exemption order only if satisfied of two factors. The first is that the making of a mandatory interlock order would cause severe hardship to the offender. In determining whether severe hardship would result, the court can consider the ability of the offender to meet the cost of interlock services and the effect the order may have on driving a vehicle in the course of employment.

The second requirement of which the court must be satisfied is that the interlock exemption order is more appropriate in all the circumstances than is the making of a mandatory interlock order. The second element is important. If an interlock exemption order is made, a disqualification period consistent with section 205 of the Act applies. For a middle range first offence, the automatic disqualification is 12 months, with a six-month minimum. Roads and Maritime Services also may require the offender to complete a drink-driving education program. In many circumstances, exempting an offender who has responsibilities may be more disadvantageous than is the making of an interlock order as a middle range offender who receives an interlock order serves a shorter up-front period off the road than under current disqualification periods. The Government supports this change on the basis that it provides an option to the court only when those two clear requirements are satisfied. This aspect of the reform will continue to be closely monitored to ensure it is applied appropriately and is consistent with the intent of providing an exemption in limited cases only. The Government supports the amendments.

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:19):** Labor supports the amendments made in the Legislative Council to the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Penalties and Other Sanctions) Bill 2018, and I thank the Minister for considering them. The Minister outlined the purposes of the bill, stating that first-time drink-driving offences will be dealt with by way of penalty rather than by court proceedings. The Opposition fought that battle and lost; however, an important amendment relating to interlock devices is being considered now. It has always been Labor's view that interlock devices play an important role, as I said in my contribution to the second reading debate. However, it is important to consider their ramifications on people who are most disadvantaged.

As the Minister stated, the court has a discretion when it comes to hardship and cost. We know that there are people who would face hardship and find it difficult to meet the cost of an interlock order. The Opposition considers it is important for the court to have a discretion and note the Minister's advice to the House that the Government will keep a close eye on the ramifications. The Opposition considers that both amendments are important and supports them. I again thank the Minister for her support of the amendments that have come from the Legislative Council.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the House agree with the Legislative Council amendments.



**Motion agreed to.****NATIONAL PARK ESTATE (RESERVATIONS) BILL 2018****First Reading****Bill introduced on motion by Ms Gabrielle Upton, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading Speech****Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (10:22):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The National Park Estate (Reservations) Bill 2018 will transfer more than 4,500 hectares of State forest to the national park estate. It is another win for the environment. The bill reaffirms the Government's commitment to biodiversity conservation in New South Wales, including the iconic koala. Reserving land in the national park estate is a cornerstone of our efforts to conserve public land for future generations. The national parks system in New South Wales is the proud legacy of 139 years of collaborative involvement by governments, volunteer groups and individuals across our State. More than seven million hectares of New South Wales is now managed and protected for conservation by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS]. I commend the NPWS for the incredibly important work it does across our State in keeping our native flora and fauna as something that we preserve and value. I also commend its work in protecting our communities from fire and its efforts internationally to use its expertise to help other communities.

The network of some 870 parks covers close to 9 per cent of the State. Our national parks and other protected areas reflect the biological and geological diversity of the State. They also protect our heritage and our wilderness and wild rivers and save for future generations some of the most stunning scenery and landscapes on this earth. The New South Wales Government continues working to progressively build a national parks system that is comprehensive and representative. It is committed to investing in national parks for environmental outcomes, including conserving threatened species such as the koala, the brush-tailed rock wallaby, the powerful owl, the gang-gang cockatoo and the spotted-tailed quoll.

Additions to the national park estate not only contribute practical conservation benefits but also provide recreational opportunities for our community. Through the bill, the Government is proud to announce the addition of new areas to New South Wales' conservation network. They include important koala habitat, an upland swamp-threatened ecological community in Upper Kangaroo Valley, significant areas of rainforest in the Upper Hunter and sites of significant cultural heritage. The bill proposes that the transfer of around 4,505 hectares of unproductive State forest lands to the national park estate take place on 1 January next year. The areas being transferred through this bill have been selected for their conservation and connectivity values. They will contribute to the long-term viability of the national park estate. Each of them is of enormous value.

Five separate transfers are covered by this bill, which I will introduce in turn. The first is an addition to the Willi Willi National Park. Approximately 2,080 hectares of Carrai State forest north-west of Kempsey will be added to the Willi Willi National Park. This land contains portions of a high-quality koala habitat and its reservation delivers on an important commitment in the New South Wales Government's Koala Strategy, which the Premier and I introduced in May this year. The centrepiece of the NSW Koala Strategy is to set aside land where koalas can live and travel through and to secure lands where we know new koala colonies may exist in the future. This parcel of land adjoins the existing Castles Nature Reserve and the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Its addition to the national park estate will profoundly improve the connectivity of koala corridors in the landscape.

The second transfer relates to additions to the Budderoo National Park. The bill proposes to add around 120 hectares of Yarrowa State Forest near Robertson to Budderoo National Park. This land forms part of a scenic vista from Belmore Falls and Belmore lookout in Morton National Park and enhances the connectivity between existing reserves and that park. Also included are important habitat for threatened species, including the potoroo and Deane's Boronia, which is a native shrub endemic to New South Wales. This parcel of land also has in it the endangered Blue Mountains shale cap forest ecological community and significant intact vegetation on the plateau of the Upper Kangaroo Valley, including the upland swamp-threatened ecological community that I mentioned previously.

The third addition is the Curracabundi State Conservation Area. The bill proposes to add around 1,144 hectares of Mernot State Forest to Curracabundi State Conservation Area, including areas of rainforest in the Upper Hunter. The new park addition also contains unique spinifex grassland and rare plants that are endemic to New South Wales. This site will link Watchimbark Nature Reserve and Curracabundi Wilderness Area to provide an important corridor for the brush-tailed rock wallaby and the New Holland mouse. It is also an area

with known habitat for many threatened species, including the sooty owl and spotted-tailed quoll. It contains significant areas of forest habitat that are under-represented in the current park estate, including the Stringybark apple, Barrington wet New England Blackbutt blue gum and central mid elevation Sydney blue gum.

The fourth addition to the estate will be to the new Yengo State Conservation Area. As well as conserving important biodiversity, the bill will protect sites of significant cultural heritage. Around 647.5 hectares of Yengo State Forest in the central region will become Yengo State Conservation Area. The area has been identified as containing significant cultural heritage and the whole landscape is important to the local Aboriginal community. It forms part of two regional corridors from Yengo National Park to Corrabare State Forest, which provide vital habitat for the yellow-bellied glider and the brush-tailed rock wallaby. In addition, the area provides important linkages to the Greater Blue Mountains key biodiversity area.

The fifth and final addition is to the Muldiva State Forest. This bill will transfer critical habitat corridors that connect disparate sections of the Bagul Waajaarr Nature Reserve to the national park estate. More than 500 hectares of Muldiva State Forest, west of Dorrigo, will be vested in the Minister for the Environment under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. This land contains approximately five kilometres of frontage to the Nymboida River and contains important forest ecosystems. It also forms part of the north-south regional habitat corridors between New England National Park, Nymboi-Binderay National Park and Hyland State Forest. This corridor provides important habitat for threatened species such as the koala, the masked owl, the Hastings River mouse, the glossy black cockatoo and the spotted-tail quoll.

The transfer of these areas to the New South Wales national park estate form part of a recent government announcement that will see more than 43,000 hectares of land managed for conservation outcomes. This includes: 24,000 hectares of new koala parks and reserves as part of the NSW Koala Strategy; 5,400 hectares of new additions to the national park estate; and 14,200 hectares of state forest to be dedicated as flora reserves and transferred to the care of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. We are already delivering on this commitment. On 21 September we added nearly 2,000 hectares of koala habitat to the park estate, 589 hectares of the Oakes State Forest was added to Gumbaynggirr National Park, and 1,382 hectares of the Mount Boss State Forest near Wauchope was transferred to the national park estate as the newly created Kindee Creek State Conservation Area.

As part of the \$45 million NSW Koala Strategy, the Government has also committed \$20 million for purchasing land with prime koala habitat that can be permanently reserved as national parks. In December 2017, the Government purchased the first property under this koala land acquisition program. It was a 402-hectare property located on the Wollondilly River in the Southern Highlands. The property connects the Blue Mountains to the wilderness areas of Morton National Park, creating a habitat link for more than 1,000 koalas known to inhabit that region. In July this year, the Government announced the second highly significant land purchase with the acquisition of a property containing 43 hectares of prime koala habitat in Pottsville. This land purchase was to secure the survival of the Tweed coast's koala population. The purchase will also improve the ecological viability of the existing 60-hectare Cudgera Creek Nature Reserve by increasing its size by almost 72 per cent. This is a proud achievement for the koala colony and their future in the Tweed.

The New South Wales Government recognises that adding land to the national parks system is only one of many conservation options and things that we need to be doing to achieve our environmental goals. We recognise that private landholders are committed conservationists in their own right. The Government is committed to supporting these landholders to protect conservation values on their land. A key initiative that was unique, a national first in improving biodiversity conservation in New South Wales, was the creation last year through the new Biodiversity Conservation Act of the Biodiversity Conservation Trust, which is responsible for directing the historic Government investment of \$240 million over five years in private land conservation.

I thank the inaugural chair of the trust, the Hon. Robert Hill, AC, a former Minister for the Environment and Heritage, and Minister for Defence in the Federal Government. He is doing a wonderful job leading that innovative, groundbreaking trust. I also thank the trustees for their important work. It is an important initiative, it is an innovative initiative to help landholders, who are indeed conservationists, as I said, in their own right, to be paid to conserve their land that has not been cleared. I have visited many of those landholders who have taken advantage of this opportunity to conserve their land and to do something at the same time as looking after their land to contribute to the conservation values across the State. I congratulate them on their efforts. There will be more of this as we roll out that \$240 million investment into private land conservation over the next five years.

The Government is proud of its commitment to biodiversity conservation: we do it smartly and we do it uniquely. Of course, the benefits of the new parks and reserves that I have brought to the House today do not stop with the native fauna and flora that reside within them. Not only is there a bounty of biodiversity in the parks and in the flora and fauna, but also our national parks are areas of recreation for millions of people from our State and from across Australia, as well as for international visitors. Parks present opportunities for regional growth and development for tourism.

Research has shown that visiting a park, wherever it is, for recreation and relaxation can have innumerable benefits for individuals' health and their sense of wellbeing, including lowering stress levels and blood pressure, taking a break, improving mental wellbeing and generally enhancing our perception of quality of life around us. We are blessed not to be too far away from the Domain and the Royal Botanic Garden, which are havens of relaxation, of recreation and of wellbeing for all of us here in Parliament House. The New South Wales Government is committed to enhancing local community participation in land management, and to capitalising on the interest we have from international visitors and other tourism opportunities associated with the establishment of the new parks before the House today.

Increasingly, our national parks are places to celebrate and to support the culture of Aboriginal peoples, maintaining or re-establishing their connection with the land and with cultural sites within them. Over a quarter of the national parks system is jointly managed with Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal joint management has significant benefits, including Aboriginal employment, support for Aboriginal organisations and businesses, opportunities to practise and to pass on important Aboriginal culture, improved management and interpretation of Aboriginal cultural heritage, better experiences for our visitors in the parks so that they understand the traditional heritage that is in the national parks and reserves, and improved knowledge and expertise that is made available to the park managers across the State. With regard to the provisions in this bill, the area to become the Yango State Conservation Area contains very significant cultural heritage, and the importance of the involvement of the Aboriginal community in the management of this heritage is recognised and is valued.

The Office of Environment and Heritage and the Forestry Corporation of NSW have worked collaboratively on this project. I thank my counterpart, the Minister for Lands and Forestry, Paul Toole, in working with me on this to identify the areas that were suitable as unproductive State forests for transfer to the national park estate so that it would have minimal impact on local communities and maximum benefit for our national park estate. In conclusion, the areas to be transferred through this bill have significant biodiversity conservation benefits. Their addition to the national park estate will not impact timber production or supply. They are unproductive State forests. They do add significant value to the conservation network in New South Wales. The National Park Estate (Reservations) Bill 2018 will enable the transfer of five important areas to the New South Wales national park estate. The passage of this bill through this House will show a strong commitment to biodiversity conservation in New South Wales, and help to continue the legacy of our world-class national parks and reserves system. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Visitors*

#### VISITORS

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I welcome to the public gallery members of the Fire Brigade Employees Union, who are here to listen to the debate this morning.

*Budget*

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

**Debate resumed from 20 September 2018.**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (10:40):** Last week I spoke in a take-note debate and addressed some of the recent State budget announcements that will benefit and already have benefited the people of New South Wales and, more importantly, the people of my electorate. Our State's record investment in health means that the people of my electorate and surrounding electorates will benefit from the state-of-the-art facilities at St George Hospital. The Liberal-Nationals Government has announced \$11.5 million to update the birthing and delivery suite, which is a great win for our community.

I will also briefly touch on our Government's impressive investment in education to identify the most urgent needs of the education sector and to meet them with record expenditure. With many people choosing the St George region to raise their families, population growth in our local community has been rapid. Not surprisingly, school enrolments are growing steadily, as they are across the State. Many regions in Greater Sydney are experiencing similar challenges and they need to build infrastructure and to increase services to keep up with the growing demand. Recognising this challenge, the New South Wales Government is committed to building new schools.

Penshurst Public School will reap the benefits of this impressive announcement. The existing Penshurst Public School will be knocked down and completely rebuilt to respond to population growth in the local government area. This new school plan will include the removal of all buildings, the construction of 47 new future-focused teaching spaces, a new library, new staff facilities, a new administration block, a new covered

outdoor learning area and a new hall. It will also maximise the rooftop open play space area. Students of Penshurst Public School will temporarily be relocated to Peakhurst West Public School from the beginning of term 1 2019 until the building works are completed in mid 2020. I am incredibly proud of this side of the Chamber, which recognises the need to future-focus in our planning for the next generation. Penshurst Public School currently has 439 students enrolled. Following the school's redevelopment, it will have the capacity to more than double, having the ability to cater for more than 1,000 enrolled students.

Peakhurst West Public School will also reap the benefits of this Government's record expenditure on education. The library will be refurbished, with new paint, carpets, books and bookshelves, and it will benefit from an interactive whiteboard. The toilet block at the school will also be refurbished and all classrooms will be refreshed with new paint and new carpet. Moreover, the school will receive new playground equipment, which will be installed in the main playground area. I am pleased to say that in the electorate of Oatley we have some of the best schools in the community and some of the most capable and distinguished teachers and principals. Being married to a high school teacher, I see first-hand how much work goes into educating the next generation and raising students to be responsible citizens. Being able to teach in new facilities with the necessary resources is the bare minimum that the Government can provide.

Public school education in New South Wales is thriving and will only be further encouraged with the funding injection that this financial year's State budget offers. My son James will be part of the public school education system next year when he starts kindergarten at Mortdale Public School. The Liberal-Nationals Government wants young children to have the best possible start to life. That is why \$474.3 million of Start Strong funding will go towards subsidising all three-year-olds in community preschools in 2019. This will ensure universal access to two years of early childhood education, making New South Wales the first State in Australia to do so.

**Business interrupted.**

#### *Bills*

### **PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS (PROHIBITION ON SUPPLY BY RETAILERS) BILL 2018**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Michael Daley, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (10:44):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The fact that we are debating this again, with the first bill having lapsed, is an absolute disgrace. This Government behaves or misbehaves in the best traditions of Tory governments with its complete and utter disregard for the environment in all of its forms across New South Wales, from coast to coast and from corner to corner—starting with the 10/50 legislation, which was a complete riot, its do-nothing approach on biodiversity, its disgraceful land clearing, even the destruction of the environment in the cities. I point to the 800 trees, including century-old fig trees, on Anzac Parade knocked down for the light rail, the degradation of koala habitat, the degradation of wetlands and the issue of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in the Port Stephens electorate, about which the Government is doing nothing.

The issue of plastic bags pervades the environment along the coast and in the river systems across the State. Countries that have done something about plastic bags include Denmark, Italy, Scotland, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Antigua, Bhutan, Papua New Guinea, Nepal, Bangladesh, Kenya, Mozambique, Mauritania, Morocco, Tanzania, Egypt, Mali, Senegal—the list goes on. But in Gladys Berejiklian's New South Wales, it is apparently too hard to look after the environment and to show some leadership on plastic bags. Consumers understand why a ban on plastic bags is needed. They know that the bags do not degrade for decades. They travel deep into natural ecosystems because of their light weight. A ban will do more than simply reduce litter; it will reduce harm to wildlife. I will be as brief as I can. The fact that we are even debating this today is ridiculous.

In 2016 when Labor introduced a bill to ban plastic bags, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria had no ban in place and no plans to implement a ban. Queensland and Western Australia have now legislated bans and Victoria has announced plans to ban the bag, leaving New South Wales the sole jurisdiction without a ban in place or in planning. In June, Victoria announced that from 8,000 submissions received on the proposed bag ban in that State, 96 per cent of respondents supported the move. This bill is modelled on the successful Australian Capital Territory [ACT] bag ban, under which retailers cannot provide single-use lightweight polyurethane bags. As in the ACT, retailers can charge customers for alternative reusable bags. There is a range of reusable bags that will be unaffected by this bill, including "barrier" bags dispensed from a roll to hold loose items such as fruit and

vegetables, heavier reusable plastic bags commonly used in department stores, paper bags, biodegradable bags and bin liners for purchase.

In July 2017, Coles and Woolworths announced that they would voluntarily stop supplying single-use plastic bags. Premier Gladys Berejiklian claimed that the Government did not need to take action to put a ban in place because "80 per cent of plastic bags are already banned by Coles and Woolworths". But in July 2018 when the self-imposed ban began, one supermarket chain reneged and went back to handing out free bags, owing to what it said was customer backlash. That is weak and a prime example of why a lack of leadership and buck-passing from the Premier and Government will not solve this issue.

It is a large issue. It might seem insignificant, but this is the scale of the problem. In New South Wales, up to 61 million bags are littered annually, while the national number of littered plastic bags can be 180 million. Every second, 159 single-use plastic bags are used across Australia. It is estimated that up to five billion plastic bags are used in Australia every year. Lightweight plastic bags are made from oil and do not degrade for decades, and their light weight means they can travel deep into natural ecosystems. According to Clean Up Australia, a 2002 study found that just 8.7 plastic checkout bags contain enough embodied petroleum energy to drive a car one kilometre.

The environmental impacts are enormous. Plastic bags enter the environment via runoff and wind. The CSIRO survey of marine debris found that three-quarters of all rubbish along the Australian coast is plastic. I do not need to go on with these statistics. The issue has been well canvassed and the damage has been well documented. By refusing to take action on this issue the Premier and the Minister have exposed themselves as environmental do-nothings at best and vandals at worst. They are neo-liberal ideologues who believe the free market can solve everything, which explains why the environmental policies they come up with are ineffective or bungled, or both. The container deposit scheme, which is a debacle, is a good example of that.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery students from the Al Noori Muslim School in the electorate of Lakemba. Welcome to the oldest Parliament in Australia. I trust the students will enjoy their morning.

*Bills*

#### **WORKERS COMPENSATION (FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS TO COMPENSATION) BILL 2018**

##### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Guy Zangari, read a first time and printed.**

##### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (10:50):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I invite bipartisan support for this bill by members of the Berejiklian Government to ensure that our State's firefighters receive the support they deserve. I acknowledge the presence of members of the Fire Brigade Employees Union [FBEU] in the gallery today. I assure them that New South Wales Labor will be backing them 100 per cent. I thank the FBEU and the Rural Fire Service Association for their consultation on this legislation over the past year. The Government has now announced its intention to move on this issue after the Opposition gave notice of the introduction of this bill. The Government claimed today that it has consulted with the stakeholders. I put on the record that that is not the case. Unlike the Labor Opposition, it has not consulted widely about presumptive legislation. No-one has seen the Government's phantom bill. The Opposition has a bill on the table today and that is how it is backing in the firefighters.

I will commence by providing a brief history of the legislation and its importance not only in New South Wales but also throughout Australia. In June 2011, the Commonwealth Parliament introduced the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill for the Australian Capital Territory and aviation professional firefighters. That legislation ensured firefighters diagnosed with one or more of the listed cancers who had met the requisite years of service would then have their cancer presumed to be an occupational disease and as a result they would have requisite grounds to claim compensation. Following the introduction of the legislation, a Senate inquiry report was handed down recommending the passage of the bill

and the expansion of the list of possible occupational cancers from seven to 12. In addition, the report recommended that similar legislation be implemented in every Australian State and Territory. The report stated:

The committee has conducted its analysis in the hope that similar legislation will be introduced across state jurisdictions in future as part of the harmonisation of workers' compensation laws. If this Bill is passed, the committee encourages state jurisdictions to engage in a dialogue which will eventually see a positive, and fair, outcome for firefighters across Australia.

New South Wales Labor has done that with the stakeholders—the FBEU, the Rural Fire Service Association and firefighters throughout New South Wales. The precedent for presumptive occupational diseases for firefighters was then accepted and the bill was passed on 24 November 2011 with the support of all major political parties. I emphasise that: All major political parties supported the legislation. Following the passage of that bill in the Australian Capital Territory in 2011, the Tasmanian Parliament unanimously passed a bill on 29 September 2013 recognising the same 12 cancers and the qualifying periods. Tasmania's legislation provides protection for career firefighters while extending the presumption to volunteer firefighters who could demonstrate 150 exposures over 10 years. The Western Australian Parliament followed suit and unanimously passed a bill on 29 October 2013 replicating the Commonwealth legislation covering career firefighters. In 2016, it extended the presumption to volunteer firefighters who had attended at least five hazardous fires during that year.

On 10 March 2014, the South Australian Parliament unanimously passed legislation based on the Tasmanian model. That legislation was subsequently amended in 2015 to remove the requirement for volunteers to have attended at least 150 exposure events. Then, in March 2015, the Northern Territory Parliament passed legislation, once again, based on Commonwealth legislation, for Northern Territory career firefighters. Like other States, it adopted the Tasmanian model for volunteer firefighters. The precedent has been set across the country. In September 2015, the Queensland Government passed legislation based, once again, on Commonwealth legislation for its career firefighters. Queensland introduced a new model for volunteer firefighters whereby claims are considered by a special administrative committee. The committee may consider evidence that may include fire service records and other similar information that would demonstrate volunteers' fire-scene exposures.

On 19 May 2017, the Victorian Government confirmed its intention to introduce presumptive legislation and subsequently held a parliamentary inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill. The inquiry noted that "the Government has come to the strong conclusion that the case for reform is now overwhelming" and "the introduction of a presumptive rights compensation scheme acknowledges the risks that they take when carrying out their work". That is what the Opposition is doing: It is identifying these risks and saying that, as a result of the firefighting experience, should a firefighter be diagnosed with cancer, they should be protected by legislation. That is the bottom line of this legislation.

The need for legislation that appropriately protects and supports career and volunteer firefighters has been acknowledged in every other Australian jurisdiction. New South Wales remains the only jurisdiction left lagging behind with regard to presumptive cancer legislation for firefighters. That all changes today because the New South Wales Labor Opposition is backing in all firefighters who go in when other people go out. It is as simple as that. Whether it be a house fire, a bushfire or a road accident, these fine men and women go in when the rest of us go out. I have the privilege of introducing the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018, which aims to provide career and volunteer firefighters throughout New South Wales with the reassurance and peace of mind that they will in turn be looked after when they need our help. That is very important. Firefighters put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe and it is time that New South Wales afforded them the same protection in return.

Studies have conclusively proven that firefighters are at much greater risk of developing certain cancers as a result of being exposed to hazardous substances in their job. The bill seeks to make amendments to the Workers Compensation Act 1987, the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998, and the Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987 to provide New South Wales firefighters with the appropriate protection should they contract a cancer known to be caused by exposure to hazardous substances while performing their firefighting duties. This will ensure that any firefighter who is diagnosed with one of the listed occupational cancers is eligible for compensation without needing to go to excessive lengths to prove a direct cause of the disease. Many members have spoken in this place about cancer and the impact it has had on them or on family members. I ask them to imagine what it is like for firefighters having to go through an exhaustive process to prove that their duties caused their cancer. Under this bill these firefighters are protected.

The 12 occupational cancers and their qualifying periods which are referred to in this bill are: primary leukaemia, five years; primary site brain cancer, five years; primary site breast cancer, 10 years; primary site testicular cancer, 10 years; myeloma, 15 years; primary non-Hodgkin lymphoma, 15 years; primary site bladder cancer, 15 years; primary site colorectal cancer, 15 years; primary site kidney cancer, 15 years; primary site

prostate cancer, 15 years; primary site ureter cancer, 15 years; and primary site oesophageal cancer, 25 years. For a firefighter to be eligible, they must meet the criteria set out in the table and their diagnoses must occur either during their term of employment or within 10 years of their retirement from active firefighting and the application. Minimum service periods must be equal to that of the qualifying period as I previously mentioned.

I note that this criterion remains consistent with legislation set out in other Australian jurisdictions and will provide a fair and just means to appropriately support volunteer and career firefighters should they contract an occupational disease. The legislation before the House today has come together, as I said at the start of this address, following extensive consultation with other jurisdictions and key stakeholders—some of whom are sitting in the gallery—including the affected firefighters, the Rural Fire Service Association and the Fire Brigade Employees Union, to form a holistic approach towards supporting firefighters who contract an occupational disease.

I have limited time to speak on this bill, but I have a number of heartfelt, moving stories from firefighters, which I look forward to reading out on another occasion. I acknowledge the contributions made by Mr Darin Sullivan, who has spoken about his cancer story, Mr Stephen Nunn and Mr John Bromwich. I thank them for the stories that they have given to me and I look forward to reading them onto the *Hansard* record. When it comes to occupational diseases, there is a clear need for firefighters to be supported and protected through legislation. People like John, Stephen, Darin and their families deserve support during those tumultuous times, which can tear families apart. It is as simple as that—we know what cancer does.

The legislation before us today makes the necessary changes to ensure firefighters in New South Wales will have their occupational disease immediately presumed to have been caused by their years of service and exposure to hazardous substances while fighting fires in New South Wales. I once again invite members opposite to support this legislation and to support our dedicated firefighters throughout New South Wales. Firefighters are the people who protect us. What hope do they have if legislators in this place do not protect them? This legislation is about providing that protection. Once again, I thank the firefighters for the jobs that they do and for their year's worth of consultation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery students from the electorate of Hornsby, guests of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and member for Hornsby.

*Bills*

## PUBLIC FINANCE AND AUDIT AMENDMENT (STATE-FUNDED PRIVATE ENTITIES) BILL 2018

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 21 June 2018.**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (11:05):** We heard the shadow Treasurer and member for Keira, outline the Public Finance and Audit Amendment (State-Funded Private Entities) Bill's follow-the-dollar powers for the Auditor-General. The bill would allow the Audit Office to carry out performance audits to assess how non-government organisations [NGOs] or other private sector entities have spent public money to achieve a public purpose. The Government opposes the bill because it contains several shortcomings. Most significantly, this bill is ambiguous, raising the possibility that the power it seeks to create could apply to a wide scope of activities that would not be appropriate. Clause 52H of the bill states:

- (2) A private entity is State-funded if:
  - (a) the State provides money for a public purpose (the relevant public purpose), and
  - (b) the private entity receives some or all of that money (whether directly or indirectly) because the private entity:
    - (i) agrees to use the money in achieving the relevant public purpose, or
    - (ii) has entered into a contract that relates to the relevant public purpose.

This is so ambiguous that an organisation that provides stationery to the Government—that is, has received money for a service that supports a public purpose—may be subject to an audit by the Auditor-General. This might seem absurd, but the broad drafting of the legislation does not preclude this type of application. This bill in its current form also gives rise to the prospect of retrospective application to pre-existing contracts and arrangements. Section 52H states:

- (1) The Auditor-General may at any time conduct a performance audit of a private entity that is State-funded.

The bill would increase the size of government without proper consideration of whether there are ways to drive better performance. This is a critical difference between those opposite and the Liberals and Nationals. Labor's first and strongest instinct is to presume that the solution to any problem is bigger bureaucracy, more regulation and more heavy-handed interference from government. This is the attitude and the ideology that puts the New South Wales economy in shackles when Labor is in office. On this side of the House, we know that heavy-handed government is not the answer. We believe in finding ways to drive better performance.

We believe in finding smarter ways to perform the functions of government. Providing the Auditor-General with additional powers of the nature of those in this legislation should be considered carefully. It should be done in proper consultation with those organisations that are commissioned or contracted to provide a government service. Under this bill, non-government organisations risk being burdened with red tape and paperwork that takes them away from their primary purpose—delivering services to the people of our State.

This legislation also risks squeezing out smaller non-government organisations from being able to deliver services on behalf of the Government. It would discourage smaller organisations from applying to provide government services at the risk of being burdened by over-regulation and additional paperwork. This risks leading to less competition and innovation in the provision of public services. As a result, this legislation puts at risk value for money for the taxpayer and the creation of a second quasi-bureaucratic, high-cost non-government sector. Without proper consultation the bill will inevitably have negative consequences that could have been avoided. Instead, with consultation we will be able to reach out to non-government organisations and with them collaboratively reach an appropriate balance for putting in place the right checks and balances for improving performance.

Our Government has a proud track record of partnering with non-government organisations to deliver services. This is not about ideology, as it is for those opposite. I refer to a 7 July article written by two great journalists, Matt Wade and Alexandra Smith, under the heading, "What is the future of privatisation in NSW?" The article was written following the State budget and a senior Labor source is quoted as saying, "It would be fair to say we felt deflated after seeing the budget." That feeling is probably with good reason. The source goes on to say that Labor is opposed to privatisation, showing no understanding of the fact that it is our strong financial management and asset recycling that have put the State budget in its current strong position. Labor is typically concerned about the budget but has no idea how to get the budget into a strong state in the first place.

In the article the shadow Treasurer, Ryan Park, is quoted as saying that the party will not shift from its commitment that there will be absolutely no privatisation under a Labor government. The Government has no plans in this space, but it is interesting that the Labor Party has an ideological obsession that the Government can solve all society's issues and problems. Whilst the Labor Party is ideologically associated with the means, the Liberals and Nationals are ideologically connected to the outcome. We take the view that our role as a government is to provide the best services to our citizens at the best price to taxpayers. In certain circumstances, that will be wholly located within the government sector, as is the case with Service NSW.

Gone are the Labor days of government services, such as the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA]. People would rock up to the local Labor motor registry having taken half a day, or possibly a day, off work. They would hit the button on the machine and out would come a ticket. They would sit down and get through half a novel. They would then go to the counter and be grunted at by the Labor Party union member employee behind bulletproof glass, who would probably tell them that they had the wrong ticket and needed to go back and get another ticket. They would hit the button again, but the machine was probably broken and nothing would come out of the bottom of the machine. They would get another ticket and they would get through the second half of the novel before they went back to another union member sitting at a desk behind bulletproof glass. That employee would grunt at them and then probably walk away for a smoko and come back about 20 minutes later. They would also tell that them had the wrong ticket—and so on and so forth.

Now we have Service NSW centres, which are publicly run and offer a great service with a 98 per cent satisfaction rate. We have completely revolutionised service delivery. One of the great aspects of Service NSW is that, despite the limitations in some aspects of the public sector, these centres provide high-quality service and a great culture. In my view, that is a lot to do with the employees' buy-in to the organisation itself. When I was Minister for Finance I had the great opportunity to open a number of these centres and to meet a number of their staff. I had a circle-of-service system set up in the centres where members of Service NSW staff, who are public servants, have the opportunity to put forward ideas in respect of changing service delivery models. One of the staff at the service desk came up with the idea of setting up digital kiosks in shopping centres around New South Wales. That is just one example of how those in the public service, with a strong sense of purpose, can change attitudes within an organisation. This is one of the proud achievements of the New South Wales Government.



Returning to the shadow Treasurer's comments about privatisation, Service NSW is an organisation that is wholly within public ownership but is getting better outcomes. In the Labor RTA provision of government service, staff had no buy-in and showed no consideration for citizens. In contrast, Service NSW is citizen-centric, is focused on outcomes, has highly motivated staff and is within public hands. That is a demonstration that this Liberal-Nationals Government is driving better outcomes from within. Another successful model is Insurance and Care NSW [icare]. This Government made changes to workers compensation legislation in 2015, in my recollection, which were opposed by the Labor Party. I remember debates about this legislation at the time.

I have a high regard for the member for Cessnock, but he and other Labor Party members said that we were abolishing the Dust Diseases Board. That was one of the most disgraceful things I have heard in the seven years that I have served in this place. Statements like that show that the Labor Party plays politics above principle. During the debate on workers compensation, those opposite felt that they had a political advantage on this issue. We had made some changes to set up an organisation as part of icare that is wholly located in the public sector, not the private sector. The Labor Party used that fact for political purposes, to instil fear and concern in some of the most vulnerable people in society, those who are suffering from dust diseases such as mesothelioma. It tried to instil—

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: I take my point of order under Standing Order 73. If the Treasurer wants to make imputations of motive against the member of Cessnock, he should do so by substantive motion and not in this manner.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland should listen more closely. The Treasurer said that he holds the member for Cessnock in high regard. I do not believe what the Treasurer is saying requires a motion under Standing Order 73.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I hold the member for Cessnock in incredibly high regard, as I said at the start. If the member for Maitland took my comments as a reflection on the member for Cessnock, that was not my intention. My comments are a reflection on the Labor Party, which tried to use such a sensitive issue to instil fear in some of the most vulnerable people in society by saying that those people would have services cut off as a result of changes to workers compensation legislation. It was one of the most awful things that I have witnessed in this place. I appreciate the fact that the member for Cessnock apologised for the comments that may have caused harm, particularly to the Bernie Banton Foundation. However, the comments showed that those opposite will always put politics before people. As part of the changes we made to icare, we have been able to provide support and payments to those in need in an expedited manner, which was not the case under Labor. Labor's attitude that the public sector in isolation can provide the best services is not actually the case.

As a government and as a State we need to be open to partnering with the public sector and the private sector, sometimes with a mix of the public sector and private sector working together. As a State we should be focusing on the outcomes, end product and end service. We should not be ideologically wedded to the provider. This Government has been very open minded and has proven in a number of different forums—including in the public sector, in public-private partnerships, in State-owned corporations and in outsourcing to the private sector completely—that it has been able to revolutionise service delivery. When matters come to the Cabinet Standing Committee on Expenditure, I am proud to be part of the Liberal-Nationals Government. We ask, "What are we here to do? What is the role of State government?" The role of State government is to provide the best services possible to our citizens. That is what drives us ideologically.

While there are elements of the bill that are well intentioned, it is clear that what ideologically drives the Labor Party is its public sector union mates, at the expense of our citizens, such as those in the public gallery today. We are on the citizens' side; those opposite are on the unions' side. There are many excellent examples of non-government organisations delivering great services on behalf of the Government, whether it is providing bus services or providing support for people with disability—for example, organisations such as Barnardo's and the St Vincent de Paul Society work tirelessly in assisting the Government to help vulnerable children in out-of-home care.

One of the great initiatives of the New South Wales Government has been our social impact investment. What is that all about? It says that as a State we may not always have the answers to society's problems and ills, but we will look at different ways to partner with the private sector to pay for solutions to the problems that we are trying to fix. As part of this year's budget we brought in a \$10 million social impact investment for economic outcomes for our Indigenous brothers and sisters. As part of that budget I was pleased to appoint the great Warren Mundine, a former president of the Labor Party, to assist me in providing advice on how we can better drive investment in remote Aboriginal communities and drive better economic outcomes in those communities.

Whilst we have a great public service sector that always looks to do the best, we also need to appreciate that we do not always—as a State, as a bureaucracy and as a State service—have all the solutions to these

problems. It is also important that as a government we acknowledge that we should not be scared to get things wrong. We make investments and decisions and one of the concerns I have with the public service and governments is that there can be a lack of risk-taking and a lack of looking outside the box and trying different things. We should not be too concerned when a certain investment may not have been successful—in fact, that should drive us even more to look at different, more innovative ways to drive better outcomes across a range of social services. Throughout history, government is generally—as a beast—very risk averse. It can operate in silos and, unlike the private sector, be less focused on looking at new and innovative ways of doing this. I am proud to be part of a government that is driving this approach.

I am concerned by some of the comments that have been made by shadow Treasurer Michael Daley and the Leader of the Opposition Luke Foley in response to the great budget we handed down. In a *Sydney Morning Herald* article a Labor source said, "It would be fair to say we felt deflated after seeing their budget but I think Luke's strong position on privatisation in his speech helped internally." Therein lies the problem. The budget is delivering for the people of New South Wales. There was a \$3.9 billion surplus, and on average \$1.6 billion surpluses are expected over the next four years. There is significant investment—\$87 billion—in infrastructure. I acknowledge the schoolkids in the gallery and note students are receiving 47 new and upgraded schools. There will be 40 new and upgraded hospitals, and road and rail projects as far as the eye can see. The Opposition opposed the means of the Government being able to deliver those services, schools and hospitals.

In addition to that, the Opposition opposed the means by which we can deliver. One of the great aspects of last year's budget was the Active Kids rebate. I hope some of the students in the gallery have accessed that rebate, which provides \$100 for every school-aged child to participate in community sport. We have seen thousands—the Minister for Finance, Services and Property has told me the exact figure but it slips my mind—of vouchers downloaded by parents across the State of New South Wales over the past seven months. On budget day I told a story about a grandmother I met at a street stall on the first day of her granddaughter's netball season. She was there with her granddaughter—they had just moved to the area from Bathurst—and she said that the girl's mother was at work and could not be there for her daughter's first day of netball. The girl was in the under-10s and the grandmother said the only reason she was able to be there to play her first game of netball was that her local club had donated the uniform and the Active Kids rebate paid for her netball registration.

We can sit in this Parliament on Macquarie Street and talk about the \$87 billion in infrastructure, all the schools and hospitals, WestConnex and NorthConnex, but strong fiscal management, which the Liberal-Nationals Government prides itself on, also delivers outcomes for families across the State. We are focused on really reducing the cost of living. Due to the success of the Active Kids rebate, in this year's budget we have extended the funding to a new Creative Kids rebate to encourage parents with the same proposition to enrol their kids in extracurricular activities such as music, coding, drama, second languages and the like. We look forward to many of the students in the gallery taking up those opportunities.

Returning to the *Sydney Morning Herald* article by Matt Wade and Alexandra Smith, a senior Labor source—they are always unnamed; they never put their names to anything—said, "It would be fair to say we felt deflated after seeing their budget ...", meaning that the Government's budget was a great result for the people of New South Wales, which is bad for Labor. The source went on to say, "but I think Luke's [Foley] strong position on privatisation in his speech helped internally". They did not say that it "helped the public" but that it "helped internally". That is the difference between us and them. We are focused on delivering for the people of this State; those opposite are focused on a speech that helps maintain their position internally, with their strong links to the union movement. It is not that I have any issue with the union movement; in many instances it has done a fantastic job. But it is important that we do not serve the union masters; we must serve the great people of this State first. That is exactly what this Government does.

An important part of achieving objectives is ensuring that we have in place the right checks and balances. Those checks and balances should begin at the point when the funds are allocated and should safeguard the best interests of citizens throughout the process. NSW Treasury already is conducting further work to investigate opportunities to improve public accountability and transparency with relation to government finances. This will help to ensure that we have in place the right arrangements to get the best outcomes from organisations that deliver on behalf of the Government. I have serious concerns that the bill before the House introduced by the shadow Treasurer seeks to undermine the work being done by our great Treasury team that already is underway in New South Wales.

In its current form, the bill appears to be nothing more than a stalking horse by Labor on behalf of the public sector union to ensure that there can be no flexibility in the way the Government goes about delivering services to our people. For Labor, this bill is not about delivering the best services for citizens; rather, it is about putting union interests above the public interest and doing the bidding of union powerbrokers rather than serving

the people of our State. As I said earlier, the Government appreciates in certain areas the intent and the motives of the shadow Treasurer.

However, the Government certainly will not rush through this process. The Government will not support a bill that has been put together without proper consultation with the community. I say that particularly with reference to many non-government and private organisations that the Government procures through and that the Government has arrangements with, but they have not been brought through. The Government wants to make sure that no adverse consequences impact on them. The Government wants to ensure that those organisations continue with their great work in partnership with the Government to deliver great services to our citizens.

The Government will not support a bill that also is about political point-scoring and one that could have negative consequences for the services upon which our citizens rely, and will not be pressured to put up piecemeal amendments to pass a bill that clearly has not been given the appropriate time and consideration by the Labor Opposition. Strengthening accountability for public funding is an important issue for jurisdictions across our country. No government is more committed to making better use of taxpayer funds than the Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales.

This Government will not allow something as serious as accountability for public funding to be reduced by the manner in which this bill has been presented. Rather than rushing through the legislative process, the Government will ensure that any moves to implement follow-the-dollar powers, involves appropriate consultation with those affected and will ensure that any proposed changes are made in the broader context of holistic public accountability reform. That is what responsible governments do. That is the approach that the Government will adopt on this important issue.

The Labor Party constantly preaches about public accountability but, unfortunately, Labor members never practise what they preach. In 2011 when the Coalition came to office, the Labor Party had left New South Wales with projected deficits of \$4 billion and with State debt blowing out to \$19 billion. In addition to that, Labor left our State with a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog. Those numbers might seem significant, but behind every one of those numbers is a person and a family across our State. The reality is that we in New South Wales do not run surplus budgets for the sake of it and we do not apply strong fiscal discipline throughout the year for the sake of it. Treasury does that every day so that we can deliver the best services for our citizens.

Earlier this week I said in the House that I am sure the Labor Opposition members of this House are well intentioned. I am sure that the Labor Party tries its best. That is not saying much, but the reality is that I am sure Labor members wanted to deliver schools and hospitals; but they cannot do that if they do not have their finances in order. I am pleased to say that this Government has done that and now citizens across our State can reap the dividends of that strong fiscal management. When it comes to accountability for public finances, the record shows that Labor has no credibility. The people of this great State will never forget—I can guarantee they will never forget because in the lead-up to the next election Government members will certainly assist our citizens in not forgetting—Labor's legacy to this State.

New South Wales had a shattered financial position and this State's economy was the basket case of all other States in Australia. In 2011 New South Wales was ranked the worst because of the State's economy. When Tasmania is doing better than our State, then we have a real problem. That is what we get under Labor. The Labor governments were a fiscal and economic disaster for the incoming Coalition Government. This Government has spent the past seven years preparing, restoring and setting our State back onto the path of success. As I said earlier, currently the State is in a strong budget position with a \$3.9 billion surplus whereas Labor was facing a \$19 billion debt.

As Treasurer, I announced in the budget a negative net debt position for New South Wales simultaneously with the Government announcing and embarking on an \$87 billion infrastructure investment over the next four years in addition to surpluses and in addition to net worth. Labor members criticise the Government's sales and privatisation. The asset base of our State this year will reach a quarter of a trillion dollars, which is the largest asset base in the nation. The exact opposite of what Labor complains about is what is at the forefront of Treasury's mind: that is, asset recycling to exchange one asset for another asset, and replacing an asset that is not fit for purpose with one that actually delivers benefits for our citizens. The member for Cessnock has returned to the Chamber. Here he is. He starred in the start of my speech. He is looking for his big promotion post-March to shadow Treasurer.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Not true.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I am hearing that a bit of undermining is taking place among Labor members. Earlier in my speech I referred to comments made by the member for Cessnock in respect of icare. I am reminded that a few weeks ago when I was in the office I was handed a letter written by the member for Cessnock

to one of the operators within icare saying how he had seen from his end the great improvement that icare has provided in the workers compensation system by having a much greater focus on injured workers and on people than icare had previously.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I do not remember that letter.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** You don't remember it?

**Mr Clayton Barr:** No. I do write to you a lot, though.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! I ask the Treasurer and the member for Cessnock to direct their comments through the Chair.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The member for Cessnock does not remember. If he comes back to the Chamber in question time, I will bring the letter out at 2.15 p.m.. The great efforts of this Government include an \$8 billion investment in hospital infrastructure, building and upgrading 40 hospitals and \$6 billion to provide education infrastructure to build and upgrade 170 schools. Those investments can be made only by achieving a strong fiscal position—something that Labor could never achieve. As I said earlier, Labor members preach public accountability, but Labor's record on that is abysmal.

Everyone in New South Wales knows Labor's record of public accountability. We saw all that being aired through the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Former Labor Cabinet Ministers are in jail. When it comes to public accountability, Labor probably has to give itself maybe 10, 20 or 30 years before its members can start raising fiscal management issues in this House. The bill before the House should be rejected because of its unclear drafting, its lack of proper consultation with an important sector that does very important work for our citizens across the State and, importantly, the risk it presents to the proper provision of government services to the great citizens of New South Wales.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:38):** I assume that the Public Finance and Audit Amendment (State-Funded Private Entities) Bill 2018 is still being debated. It was quite some time ago that I left the Chamber, just as the Treasurer started his diatribe. The Treasurer has the capacity to talk at length about nothing. He is the father of five children, so I imagine he would be very good at stories at bedtime because he is good at stories.

The object of this bill is to amend the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 to authorise the Auditor-General to audit private entities that receive money from the State for public purpose. It is pretty straightforward. If the State gives private entities money, these are our options: Should the State be allowed to see where and how that money is spent and whether it was spent correctly, or should the State and the taxpayers not be able to see that at all? That is fundamentally what this bill is all about. The choice we are making today is whether we can follow the money or not follow the money.

The Labor Opposition has introduced this bill because it believes that if taxpayer money is given to an external entity then we should be able to see where and how that money is spent. That seems pretty reasonable. The Government will oppose that position. It is taking the view that once we sign the cheque and hand over the money we should put on the blinkers, close our ears and let that money go, and that no-one have accountability for it. Quite frankly, at the moment, that is not working out particularly well for the Government at all. There is a number, a large number—and the Government will crow about the number—of infrastructure projects, but almost all of them are blowing out by more than 20 per cent.

In most instances, they are unexplainable blowouts in costs, but the inexplainability should not come as a surprise because the justification for the projects was never explained either. In this day and age, there is this neoliberal concept that we need to outsource everything, which comes from the private sector, because outsourcing everything in the private sector becomes a tax deduction. But no-one has stopped to think that it does not work for a State Government because we are not paying the taxes. We have to take steps to make accountable every external entity that gets taxpayers' money. That is the whole purpose of all the accountability Acts—the freedom of information Acts and the access to public information Acts—that exist in this State. Parliamentarians' wages, properties and donations are all publicly exhibited because there has to be a level of scrutiny; and the public expects that level of scrutiny. It is fair and reasonable for that level of scrutiny to exist.

Why on earth would the Government say today that it is unreasonable to follow the money that is spent once the Government signs a contract with a private entity? How many times have we seen that fail? Hundreds of millions of dollars have been pilfered out of taxpayers' pockets or accounts and given to registered training organisations, and no net result. Why would we not want to follow that money? Consultants, project managers and private contractors are all given taxpayers' money. When I talk about consultants, I am talking about billions of dollars of taxpayers' money. Why would we possibly not want to be able to see where, how and for what outcome that money was spent? It is such a simple question.

The Treasurer has been on his feet for quite some time espousing the fairytale finances of the State. I should respond to that briefly. In 2018 the New South Wales State has borrowings that are more than double what they were when the Coalition came to government. In 160 years this State had managed to rack up just under \$14 billion in borrowings. In the past eight years those borrowings have blown out to more than \$33 billion and they are on their way to \$47 billion by the end of the forward estimates. That is the ability of this Government: the ability to triple the borrowings of this State. If we did not have debt, because the Treasurer—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! Out of courtesy, members should listen to the member for Cessnock in silence.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** The Treasurer would have us believe and he would say to the State that we have zero net debt. That is a tricky little turn of phrase and I congratulate him on his sneakiness. But if we had no debt, then why would we pay \$2.5 billion in interest this year? Why would we pay that—\$5 million a day? If we had no debt, why would we pay interest? The Treasurer comes into this place and talks about the fiscal accountabilities and responsibilities. Indeed, there is a Fiscal Responsibility Act 2012, which suggests that we should have expenses growing at a slower rate than our income is growing. The reality is that those two paths crossed this year and our expenses will grow faster than our income as of this financial year, which means that this Government is in contravention of its own Fiscal Responsibility Act.

The reason that is happening is that all of the assets that the State used to own that produced an income have been sold. The State no longer has that income. A financial train wreck is coming to this State as a result of selling off all the assets, outsourcing so much of this work and engaging so many private contractors. That collision will come in the next couple of years. This bill is simply about saying that because all of those assets have been sold, because so much of the money is now outsourced and spent externally, because this State is facing a financially dire future, at the very least the State and taxpayers should have the capacity to follow the money that is being spent through external agencies.

Indeed, the Government set up a number of specific external agencies for projects such as WestConnex. It specifically set them up in a way that they were not accountable under the Government Information (Public Access) Act or the Freedom of Information Act. It is outrageous. I am not sure how the Government will find the words to justify the fact that it does not want to be able to follow the money. It does not want to be able to have transparency. It does not want to be able to see where, how and for what outcome the money is spent. Whatever solution it comes up with in terms of words and phrases and language, I will give it to those opposite: They are very good at using tricky, sneaky language, which, by and large, in many instances, is dishonest. It is very good at the language—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The member is calling members of the Government dishonest.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** What is the standing order?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** He is impugning the character of members of this House. If he wants to do that, he should do it by way of a substantive motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! I am sure the member for Cessnock is aware of his responsibilities in the Chamber, and I am sure he will continue his contribution in a professional manner.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Correct. The language is really important here. But the truth and the honest reality is that this bill is simply about being able to follow that money. I think that we all—in a bipartisan, tripartisan and non-partisan way—should have a collective interest in and responsibility to the people of New South Wales and we should have the capacity to follow the money of New South Wales as it is spent. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:48):** I am delighted to speak on the Public Finance and Audit Amendment (State-funded Private Entities) Bill 2018. I will make some observations on the comments made by the member for Cessnock before I make my contribution. Importantly, he, probably like a lot of Labor members, has perhaps been in this place for a bit too long. Prior to my time in this place—

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Three minutes ago.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Yes. I was one of those consultants he just so eloquently, basically, vilified. Perhaps he does not appreciate that, as those consultants, we worked damn hard. We worked with pride. We worked with integrity and we always understood that if it was the taxpayers' dollar that was paying for the job we were working on then that was well and truly understood.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Saying it was wrong doesn't take that away.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** No, the rigour, the complexity, the intent in delivering value for government contracts in a competitive marketplace was always there and always at the forefront of any consultant's mind when bidding for government work. What the member for Cessnock has just said is a massive oversimplification of this bill, and is absolutely ridiculous. To suggest that taxpayers' money delivered in the form of contracts—irrespective of work across government, whether it is building something or delivering a service or doing any form of work—is handed out with no rigour or that it is not the first hurdle in winning that work, delivering value for the taxpayer, shows a complete lack of understanding of how private enterprise works and is a vilification of the role of consultants and their ability to provide a good service for this Government. It is all well and good to speak in the House—and with all due respect, I have been here for only a fraction of the time of some members—but those opposite do not appreciate and understand what is going on in the marketplace.

If they do not appreciate that the competitive market delivers good value for money for the Government and the taxpayers of this State then I encourage them to have a chat to a few different organisations and entities out there to get a full appreciation for what is going on, rather than just the unions, of course. The Treasurer has comprehensively explained the numerous problems and faults of this private member's bill and the reasons the Government should not support it. It is another attempt to bring forward an amendment that has already been rejected in the upper House during the debate on the Government Sector Finance Bill and cognate bills. The private member's bill loses site of the fact that the Government's program of legislative reform as reflected in those bills focuses on public financial management matters, rather than the scope of the powers of the Audit Office. In debate on those bills the Treasurer stated:

Any discussion on the authority of the Audit Office to evaluate the spending of government funds by external organisations, such as non-government organisations or private sector partners, should be discussed in the context of changes to the Government Sector Audit Act 1983. Changes to the authority of the Auditor-General are not within the scope of this legislation and this debate.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile reiterated this position most in rejecting an amendment in the Legislative Council that proposed follow-the-dollar powers when he said:

The questions, problems and issues that have just been highlighted regarding the proposed amendment demonstrate that the follow-the-dollar-powers for the Auditor-General need to be properly thought out and analysed. They also need to be considered in the context of changes to the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, not quickly tacked on to legislation dealing with public financial management. As such, the Government does not support the amendment.

Clearly, and for the reasons my colleagues and others have explained, this private member's bill should not be supported. It is narrowly focused on one issue only: providing follow-the-dollar powers to the Auditor-General. It does nothing and says nothing about ways to improve accountability and transparency of government finances more broadly. It not only falls short of the mark in terms of its technical detail but it also fails the consultation test. If the Opposition is serious about improving accountability and transparency in relation to government finances, it should support the cognate Government Sector Finance Legislation (Repeal and Amendment) Bill 2018 as introduced in the upper House.

Doing so would enable the substantive Government Sector Finance Bill and all the benefits it brings to commence. I repeat, if the Opposition is serious about improving accountability and transparency, it should support the cognate Government Sector Finance Legislation (Repeal and Amendment) Bill 2018 as introduced in the upper House. One really must question the Opposition's commitment to transparency and accountability when it attempts to block major reform legislation that is at the heart of improving accountability and transparency in government finances to this State.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (11:53):** I oppose the Public Finance and Audit Amendment (State-funded Private Entities) Bill 2018 because I do not believe in legislated work programs for the membership of public sector unions that control the New South Wales Labor Party. This legislation exhibits the unsophisticated nature of the financial understanding of the New South Wales Opposition. This bill will add to the cost of the private sector providing services to the New South Wales Government. That means it will be sucking up taxpayer dollars that are unnecessarily spent on the cost of private entities being subject to an audit under this legislation if it were passed. That is not in the public interest.

The public sector already knows that it is getting value for money because of the rigorous, competitive tender processes that the Government has for the provision of third-party private sector services to the New South Wales Government. As long as that tender process is robust and ensures the best value for money for the Government, the Auditor-General's role remains the same; that is, to audit the public sector review of those services that are being provided by the private sector to ensure that the services that have been contracted or agreed to be provided to the Government are provided in accordance with the contract. There is a very important reason this legislation is a complete and utter overreach. That is, it will apply to government grants and one of the great grant programs that the New South Wales Government has, for example, is the Community Building Partnership program.

Since I have been the member for Ku-ring-gai, a number of organisations in my electorate have been the beneficiary of Community Building Partnership funds that, under this legislation if passed, would subject them to the cost of complying with an audit by the Auditor-General. For example, the Gordon West P&C Association, Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School, St Lucy's School, West Pymble Public School Parents and Citizens Association, the Ku-ring-gai Creative Arts High School P&C Association, Pymble Public School Parents and Citizens Association, the Turramurra North Public School P&C Association, Beaumont Road Public School Parents & Citizens Association, the Hornsby Girls High School P&C Association and the Normanhurst Public School P&C Association. They would all be subjected to the new cost of getting a grant from the Government under the Community Building Partnership program if this legislation were passed.

It does not stop there. Other charitable organisations in my electorate that would also be subjected to a new cost if this legislation were passed include Easy Care Gardening Incorporated, the Hornsby Shire Historical Society Incorporated, the Ku-ring-gai & Hornsby Meals On Wheels Service, Life Education New South Wales, the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra and Sunnyfield, which provides disability services and accommodation in my electorate. All these charities with volunteers would be subjected to a new cost in getting grants from the Government, which is the possibility of being audited. That could require all their paperwork to be gone through, all because they applied for a government grant. That is not in the public interest.

It is not in the public interest that third-party private contractors for profit are subjected to having their affairs audited by the New South Wales Auditor-General, and it is not in the interests of our community that charities, parents and citizens associations and other people who provide free services through their voluntary labour for the benefit of New South Wales are also subjected to a new cost under this legislation. This legislation has been introduced because the New South Wales Labor Party wants to try to beef up membership of the public sector unions that control the party. This legislation is not in the public interest, and I encourage all members to oppose it.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (11:58):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate on the Public Finance and Audit Amendment (State-funded Private Entities) Bill 2018. It is a very important bill. It is a bill that—interestingly in relation to the Government's opposition—has previously been put forward by Government chairs of the Public Accounts Committee as an important piece of legislation. "Follow-the-money" legislation is not radical. It allows an audit to occur. It provides an assurance to the community that when money is committed to private sector and not-for-profit organisations that it is spent as the taxpayer deems fit. That is not revolutionary; it is good fiscal management. It is good financial performance and shows a great sense of rigour in how we want and expect taxpayers' money to be spent. We in this place must understand what has been revealed in the financial services royal commission. Coalition members in Canberra were strongly opposed to that royal commission. "Nothing to see here," they said, "Waste of time." They would not say that now.

Funding from taxpayers' money is a privilege and we expect organisations to use it properly. This bill is designed to strengthen governance to make sure they use the money effectively. It is not designed to impose a burden; it is designed to make sure that taxpayers get the services, infrastructure and programs that we charge the private sector or not-for-profits with delivering. That is important. It is not revolutionary; it is good financial management and good fiscal practice. Labor wants to see this as part of the Government's program. If it does not become part of its program, Labor, if privileged to be elected in March, will reintroduce this bill to improve financial management.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....35  
Noes .....43  
Majority.....8

**AYES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Hornery, Ms S  
Leong, Ms J  
McGirr, Dr J  
Mihailuk, Ms T

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Daley, Mr M  
Finn, Ms J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C

Bali, Mr S  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dib, Mr J  
Foley, Mr L  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mehan, Mr D (teller)  
Park, Mr R

## AYES

Parker, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Washington, Ms K

Piper, Mr G  
Tesch, Ms L (teller)  
Zangari, Mr G

Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G

## NOES

Anderson, Mr K  
Barilaro, Mr J  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Elliott, Mr D  
Fraser, Mr A  
Goward, Ms P  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Aplin, Mr G  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A  
Evans, Mr A.W.  
George, Mr T  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Petinos, Ms E  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S  
Brookes, Mr G  
Cooke, Ms S  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Humphries, Mr K  
Marshall, Mr A  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Roberts, Mr A  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

## PAIRS

Catley, Ms Y  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Harris, Mr D  
Watson, Ms A

Berejiklian, Ms G  
Grant, Mr T  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Rowell, Mr J

**Motion negatived.**

*Motions***DEMENTIA AWARENESS MONTH**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:08):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that September 2018 is Dementia Awareness Month.
- (2) Notes that dementia is the second leading cause of death for Australians.
- (3) Acknowledges the support and care given by family members helping a loved one with dementia.

This issue is close to the heart of a number of other members in this House, including the member for Myall Lakes, who will make a contribution to this discussion. It is particularly important to him and to me because of the high prevalence of dementia not only in our electorates but also more broadly on the North Coast. My co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia, the member for Port Stephens, will also make a contribution. I thank both members for being part of the discussion this morning. As I mentioned yesterday, dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australians. Sadly, we do not yet have a cure for it, and we are experiencing a significant increase in its prevalence in New South Wales.

For those who are unaware, the term "dementia" is given to a group of symptoms that result from failing brain function. The major signs are memory loss, confusion, disorientation and lessening of intellectual capacity. Of course, we all forget things from time to time, and sometimes we put it down to our age. However, the loss of memory associated with dementia is very different. It is persistent and progressive; it is not occasional. For some people it can mean losing their job. It involves forgetting to do things like turning off the gas, which could have extremely dangerous consequences. It is about suddenly not being able to find one's way on a previously familiar daily walk to the park. Eventually it means forgetting how to dress and to attend to personal hygiene and the other activities of daily living. Advancements in health care have led to an increase in life expectancy. While that is good news, it also means we are now witnessing an increase in the prevalence of dementia.



Dementia Awareness Month, which is observed in September, provides an opportunity for us to raise awareness about this very important State and national issue. The importance of raising awareness has been noted by the World Health Organization, which has made dementia a global health priority. In 2012, Australia also identified dementia as a national health priority area, and in 2015 the National Framework for Action on Dementia 2015-2019 was released. Under this framework, the New South Wales Government and other Australian governments are committed to a number of priority action areas, including increasing awareness and reducing risk; the need for timely diagnosis, which is critically important, particularly for carers; accessing care and support; during- and after-hospital care; accessing end-of-life and palliative care; and promoting and supporting research.

The impacts of dementia are widespread. It affects an individual's health and, as I mentioned, employment opportunities, social engagement and quality of life. Of course, dementia also impacts an individual's family and friends, with loved ones often taking on the caring role. As a result, it can also have an impact on the carer's employment and quality of life. Aside from the social and health impacts, the economic impact of dementia is also significant. The estimated national cost of dementia in 2018 is more than \$15 billion. The indirect costs are also worth mentioning. They include the costs arising from the potential loss of income and productivity of people with dementia and their carers, which had an estimated cost of \$5.6 billion in 2017.

The New South Wales Government has a leading role to play in supporting people living with dementia, their families and their carers. It has led a number of support initiatives such as the establishment of community-based dementia clinical nurse consultant positions, which provide a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that is able to support people living with dementia in the community and their families and carers. It has also rolled out the Care of Confused Hospitalised Older Persons program, which aims to improve the experience and outcomes of confused older people, including people with dementia, and to help them and their carers, families and friends to find a more supportive environment in hospital.

The Dementia and Delirium Care with Volunteers Program supports the care of hospitalised patients who have dementia and provides care similar to that provided by family carers when they are not available. The volunteer provides the patient with emotional support and practical assistance, such as helping with eating and drinking. Dementia Awareness Month is heavily promoted by Dementia Australia. One of the things that the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia does is to support the work of Dementia Australia, and having this discussion is one way of doing that. The theme for this year's Dementia Awareness Month is "Small actions Big difference". It aims to highlight the small actions that people can take to create a big difference for people impacted by dementia, their families and their carers.

The Dementia Awareness Month organisers are asking people to pledge their support by becoming a Dementia Friend and to make a positive difference to the lives of people living with dementia, their carers and their families by increasing community awareness. The Parliamentary Friends of Dementia held an event to encourage people to become a Dementia Friend. I am pleased to inform the House that the Premier attended the event and has become a Dementia Friend, and she encouraged all members to do the same. As members of Parliament, we can encourage people to do likewise; that is, to get a better understanding of what dementia is about and the impact it has on those living with it and, importantly, the people who care for them. This is a great campaign and I again encourage all members of Parliament to promote the Dementia Friends campaign.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:16):** I support this important motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie relating to Dementia Awareness Month. We are co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia. I am also making this contribution as the acting shadow Minister for Ageing on behalf of the New South Wales Opposition. As the member for Port Macquarie said, this is Dementia Awareness Month. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the enormous number of people with dementia in New South Wales, Australia and across the world. Every member would acknowledge the incredible challenges facing many Australians who are dealing with the onset of dementia and their loved ones who care for them.

It would not be appropriate to have this discussion without mentioning the issues facing the many people in aged-care facilities in this State who have dementia. The recent *Four Corners* program detailing an investigation of aged-care facilities in Australia demonstrated that too many older Australians suffering dementia are in aged-care facilities because their complex needs mean they can no longer stay in their own home. The *Four Corners* two-episode exposé revealed that we have a long way to go to ensure that people with dementia in aged-care are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. One of the aims of Dementia Awareness Month is to increase awareness of dementia and to make our communities more dementia friendly. That is incredibly important. However, we also have an obligation to ensure that those in the late stages of dementia have the services and facilities they need to ensure they have that dignity and respect. Media reports and inquiries have demonstrated that some facilities are not achieving that goal.

Along with millions of Australians, I have been shocked and appalled by the images and stories that have been broadcast by the ABC over the past two weeks. It has been a shameful reflection on a lot of aged-care

providers, particularly those who are for profit and who are putting profits before the quality care of residents. Dementia sufferers are some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. They have a reduced capacity or no capacity, so they are particularly exposed. Therefore, legislators have an obligation to ensure there is adequate oversight and regulation of these facilities. Dementia is the second leading cause of death in our country. That is why it is important to make communities and workplaces dementia friendly.

At the acute phase of the disease, when dementia sufferers are in need of the most support, we need to ensure that they have the services that meet their needs. Most importantly, the Government must invest in training and must properly resource the healthcare system and our aged-care system to deal with the increased prevalence of dementia. All members of this Parliament would agree that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity as they age and as they contract diseases, particularly dementia. Everyone deserves to be supported in the way that we would want to be supported. That is why Dementia Awareness Month is so important.

The theme of Dementia Awareness Month, as pointed out by the member for Port Macquarie, is "Small actions Big difference". We can all take small actions to make a big difference to people impacted by dementia, their families and carers. Something small that anyone can do is to become a Dementia Friend. It is not hard; I have done it, I am a Dementia Friend. It involves watching some short clips and answering some simple questions. People who become Dementia Friends have a raised awareness of people in our communities who are living with dementia and the challenges that their carers and loved ones face. It means that when we are waiting to be served at a shop while someone ahead of us is fumbling for money or taking time to make a decision, we respond with patience and understanding.

In our busy, frantic world, people sometimes respond impatiently to small delays. Having met many amazing people living with dementia and having heard their stories and the stories of their loved ones, I certainly look through a different lens when I move around my community. It is about allowing people the time that they need to do tasks that come more easily to others. It is about showing respect and dignity to our elders and others who may seem a little different or a little slower. I am honoured to represent a community that has a large proportion of residents. In fact, I represent the town in Australia which has the oldest median age.

The median age of residents living in Tea Gardens on the north shore of Port Stephens is 68 compared to Australia's median age of 28. It is a beautiful, vibrant, creative, energetic community. Many people retire to the area—as they do up and down the coast of New South Wales—because of its relaxed lifestyle and natural surroundings. But with an older population comes a higher prevalence of dementia, so it is something close to my heart and close to the thoughts of the members of the electorate that I represent in this place. There are many people living with dementia in all corners of our communities. We owe it to them to take small actions to make a difference to the lives of people suffering from dementia.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:23):** I start by acknowledging the member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams, who has chaired the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia for a long time. It is an issue close to her heart and I know that she puts a great deal of time, thought and organisation into making sure we are all aware of dementia. My experience with dementia started when my grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's when I was at school. After a long time of trying to get by on her own, we were very pleased that she moved in with us because it meant that we could look after her and help her be comfortable. I would like to acknowledge Freda Johnson at this time. I have not done that since my inaugural speech; it is nice to do so again. She means the world to me and I named my daughter Audrey Freda after my grandma.

Dementia is a syndrome that detracts from a person's character. We know who they are but they do not necessarily know who we are. That is incredibly heartbreaking for loved ones and carers. The carers are the people who continue to love the dementia sufferers even though they may not be the person they once were. Caring for someone with dementia can cause a high level of emotional, economic and physical strain. That is why I want to talk particularly about the carers. In helping to look after people in New South Wales living with dementia, the New South Wales Government recognises that it is important to support the formal and informal carers who are caring for people with dementia at home, in the community and in residential aged-care facilities.

There are approximately 900,000 carers in New South Wales. Under the NSW Carers Recognition Act, a carer is anyone who provides ongoing unpaid support to family and friends who need help because of a disability, chronic or mental illness, or who are frail aged. This definition includes those caring for people with dementia. Carers make a significant contribution to the New South Wales community and play an important role in providing care and support to people living with dementia. Carers can also play a major role in the early detection of dementia, as they will often recognise early signs and symptoms which may not be apparent to the individual themselves.

The document "NSW Health Recognition and Support for Carers: Key Directions 2018- 2020" provides guidance on responding to the needs of carers across the New South Wales public health system. The key

directions include actions to support consultation with carers to ensure their views and needs are included in the assessment, planning, delivery and review of health services. The incredible work of carers, families and friends to support people with dementia must be acknowledged and we must ensure proper support is provided for this group.

The New South Wales Government provides funding to Dementia Australia's NSW Division to support a statewide network for carers. These support groups focus on providing relevant dementia education and information; providing opportunities for breaks and social outings; sharing ideas, management tips and techniques with other carers; learning about local community services for people with dementia and their carers; and learning coping mechanisms and techniques such as stress management and relaxation. Dementia Australia provides additional support to carers through the National Dementia Helpline—1800 100 500—and face-to-face counselling and a dementia library and education service.

The New South Wales Government provides support to carers in a range of other ways, including through a health-led initiative called the Top 5. The Top 5 is an approach that engages with carers to gain information that personalises the care delivered. It acknowledges the value of carer information about patients who have memory and thinking problems and focuses on patients with dementia requiring hospitalisation. Talking to the carer helps staff to understand cues given by the patient, allowing staff to communicate better and to allay patient fears. Top 5 facilitates communication between health professionals and carers to record valuable non-clinical information. I acknowledge the local group in my electorate HammondCare, which has an amazing dementia facility. That organisation is phenomenal and has taught me the value of looking after people with dementia and how it is done.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:27):** I contribute to the debate on Dementia Awareness Month. It is a topic that is important to all of us in this Government and across the Parliament. My electorate of Myall Lakes has the oldest demographic in New South Wales and, perhaps not surprisingly, has the highest rate of dementia in the State. When we think of dementia we automatically think of Alzheimer's, but there are 100 or more different types of dementia. There are many causes of dementia, including trauma, disease and drug or alcohol abuse. Someone diagnosed with Alzheimer's has a life expectancy of about 15 years, and there is a stigma attached to it. Dementia Awareness Month is trying to remove that stigma and to raise the awareness of people in the community that there are those amongst us who can live a good life and contribute to their community, particularly in the first few years of the disease. As the population ages and the rate of dementia grows exponentially over the next 20 years, we need to become more tolerant and understanding.

When people have dementia, they should be able to meet their friends in coffee shops. But it can be annoying for people who do not understand their condition if they fumble with their change. The same is the case when they go to a shopping centre and they are fussing around in their purse to try to find the correct money to pay for items. We want people to understand their condition and we want to raise awareness by encouraging people to watch short information videos on dementia. If they are workers in whatever walk of life who come across someone displaying signs of dementia, they will be able to recognise the condition and treat the person with patience and tolerance. I have discussed the experience of dementia with people suffering from dementia and their supporters and carers. They talk about the stigma of having dementia, and one of the big things is that people in the community might not understand their condition and might react to them inappropriately.

This month we raise awareness of dementia and people living with dementia. A number of people are particularly vulnerable, including people who live alone and people living in rural communities. As I said, the electorate of Myall Lakes has the highest rate of dementia in the State. I think the member for Port Macquarie's electorate has the second or third highest rate of dementia in New South Wales. I am 100 per cent for the Tweed, and the member for Tweed's electorate has either the second or third highest rate of dementia in New South Wales. People of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds also have a high rate of dementia. Other affected groups are the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersex community and low socioeconomic groups. We need to support these groups and they need to understand that there are those amongst them suffering from dementia. We need to raise awareness that community members should be more patient and tolerant. I commend the member for Port Macquarie for bringing this motion before the House.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (12:31):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for bringing this motion before the House. I begin by acknowledging the member for Port Stephens for her work on dementia awareness. I remind the House that Dementia Awareness Month is an opportunity for parliamentarians to think about many members of their communities who are afflicted by this terrible condition. It also gives us an opportunity to think about how we as parliamentarians can make improvements at all different levels of government in supporting different organisations that provide day-to-day support for people suffering from dementia. We know that dementia does not discriminate. Some dementia statistics are frightening. We know that every day 250 people will be diagnosed with dementia nationwide and that number is growing each year. We

know that each day 36 people will die as a result of dementia. Despite research into dementia, more and more people are being afflicted with this terrible disease.

My mother worked as the manager of a dementia unit of a nursing home for more than 20 years. As a teenager I volunteered quite regularly at the nursing home. I was asked to attend to a number of activities, and one of the activities was to sit down with residents, talk to them about their families and go through their photo albums. There were other activities: We would play games like checkers and do crosswords to help to stimulate residents while engaging with them. All of these activities help them. I remember the importance of respecting residents and giving them the respect that they deserve while supporting them. I remember how difficult it was for family members and carers who visited residents of the nursing home. These family members and carers put a lot of trust into the staff at the nursing home.

I know the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Port Stephens and others in this House are concerned about the evidence of abuse of elderly people in aged-care facilities that was shown on *Four Corners*, which has led to the establishment of a royal commission into elder abuse. It is frightening to think that every month an aged-care facility is being shut down by the Federal Department of Health. All levels of government and the community need to address these concerns. We need to be mindful of how important it is to support and respect older people, particularly those living in nursing homes. A large number of these patients are affected by dementia and are unable to advise their loved ones about any abuse they may be experiencing in aged-care facilities. This is an important motion, and it is important that we discuss issues that are relevant to society. There is no doubt that Dementia Awareness Month is an important opportunity for each of us to reflect on how we can do better in supporting members of our community afflicted by dementia.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:35):** I speak in debate in relation to Dementia Awareness Month and I thank the member for Port Macquarie for moving this motion. It is a very important motion—there is no doubt about that. A number of people in the Tamworth electorate live with dementia. The theme of this month's Dementia Awareness Month is "Small actions Big difference". The theme aims to highlight the small actions people can take to create a big difference for people impacted by dementia, their families and their carers. For Dementia Awareness Month 2018 we are asking the community to pledge their support by becoming a Dementia Friend, and to make a positive difference to the lives of people living with dementia, their carers and families through increased awareness and support.

What is dementia? It is not one specific disease. Dementia affects thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday tasks. The brain function of people living with dementia is affected enough to interfere with the person's normal social or working life. The person living with dementia needs to be cared for, but we also need to think about who cares for the carers. Who takes care of the people who are looking after someone living with dementia? Quite often it is a traumatic experience to live with a person suffering from dementia. It is a difficult time not only from a personal perspective but also from a family and friends perspective when a loved one is living with dementia. It can be a sad time and it is heartbreaking to see dementia taking over the life of a loved one. It is particularly difficult when a vibrant personality has been afflicted with dementia having been known to be full of life. This is an insidious disease, and it can be heartbreaking for loved ones, family, friends and carers.

This is why we are asking the community to pledge their support by becoming a Dementia Friend and making a positive difference to the lives of people living with dementia, their carers and families through increased awareness and support. As I said, the theme of Dementia Awareness Month is "Small actions Big difference". There is a roadshow featuring local dementia advocates, Dementia Australia ambassadors and some of Australia's leading researchers. There will be other ways people can get involved in Dementia Awareness Month, including a number of events happening across the country throughout the month.

Dementia Australia is the peak body for people with dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. Those four services—advocacy, support services, education and information—can often make the difference in terms of the quality of life for someone living with dementia. More than 425,000 people have dementia in Australia, and this number is projected to reach more than 1.1 million by 2056. While we need to do all we can to support, to love and to care for those living with dementia, we also need to think about who cares for the carers. It is up to us to ensure that we have the support mechanisms in place to make that happen. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for bringing this important matter to the attention of the House.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:40):** In reply: I thank the members who contributed to the debate this morning: the member for Port Stephens, who is the co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Dementia; the member for Myall Lakes; the member for Holsworthy; the member for Bankstown; and the member for Tamworth. It is clear from the discussion that we have heard this morning that dementia poses a significant challenge for Australia and the world. The projected statistics for dementia in Australia and New South Wales are sobering. Currently, there is no single test that can accurately diagnose dementia, but a detailed medical history,

memory and thinking tests, laboratory tests and brain scans are typically used in the diagnosis process. Current research into the diagnosis of different types of dementia aims to develop better methods for accurate and earlier diagnosis. Earlier diagnosed dementia is very important to allow time for families when it comes to planning and maximising the potential for treatment.

As we heard this morning, it is evident that carers and families play an important role not only in the early detection but also in the timely management of the disease and the ongoing support of their loved one as the disease progresses. I commend the work that is being done in New South Wales, particularly by Dementia Australia, to support people who live with dementia and their families and carers. However, the projected increase in the prevalence of dementia means there needs to be ongoing commitment not only from all levels of Government but also from the community to ensure that people living with dementia and their carers are supported. Creating a dementia-friendly community has been a focus in my electorate. In fact, Port Macquarie was one of the first dementia-friendly communities in Australia. That was progressed by the Port Macquarie Dementia Friendly Community Steering Committee. A dementia-friendly community is a place where people living with dementia are supported to live with meaning, with purpose and with value.

Dementia-friendly communities encourage organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals to make practical changes, as described by other speakers, that will have a positive impact on the lives of people living with dementia and their carers. During Dementia Awareness Month a number of events in Port Macquarie were organised in partnership with the Port Macquarie Dementia Friendly Community Steering Committee. On 4 September I was pleased to open Dementia Awareness Month in Port Macquarie. I acknowledge that there were soup pop-up cafes in Wauchope, Laurieton and Port Macquarie to bring the community together to raise dementia awareness. The cafes were for people living with dementia and their carers to have social activity with members of the community. They raised almost \$1,660 from the three soup pop-up cafes, which they donated to Dementia Australia to help purchase new items for the memory garden.

On 11 September I attended the book club event at the local library. We had a pretty lavish supper and heard a conversation between six panellists, all of whom had read a different book about dementia. That was really interesting and gave me a few more books to put on my reading list. The Dementia Friendly Community Steering Committee makes presentations to the council's access committee so that when the council is developing new infrastructure within the community it has an understanding of the needs of people living with dementia.

I give a shout-out to Kara Nicholson and Julie Priest, who worked with council to discuss the new modular public toilet block, for example, and future amenities in the local area. I thank also the Port-Macquarie Hastings Council for its ongoing support of the Dementia Friendly Community Steering Committee. It would be remiss of me to not remind members of the date for the next Parliamentary Friends of Dementia event. It is on 14 November this year and we are having a breakfast at Parliament House. I look forward to having members join us to work with Dementia Australia to raise awareness about dementia, the needs of those living with dementia and, importantly, the needs of their carers.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **CARDIFF RAILWAY STATION PARKING**

**Debate resumed from 20 September 2018.**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:44):** In the mere minute I have to speak on the need for increased car parking at Cardiff railway station, I reiterate why this issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Government was given the land at Cardiff railway station for parking but has done nothing with it to improve car parking since that time. Last week in this debate I started talking about the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange but was cut off. This project is essential to support the region's growth. It will alleviate car parking issues at Cardiff station, one of the busiest train stations in the Lower Hunter. But the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange was denied funding by the Liberal-Nationals Government in this year's budget.

Cardiff station is one of the region's busiest transport hubs and is a key connection for my constituents to Sydney. The number of cars parked on the streets around the station is causing massive headaches for residents and commuters alike. The issue needs to be fixed now. The Liberal-Nationals Government has neglected the transport needs of our rapidly growing community for too long. The Minister must create a long-term solution to ease the parking issues at Cardiff station. He should do it or get out of the way and let us fix it.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:45):** After eight years in this place I am a bit tired of hearing this sort of rubbish. The former Labor Government, which was in power for 16 years, did absolutely nothing about transport. I commend the member for this motion because I know she has a genuine intent for her community and

goodwill. However, the member said that the Government is doing nothing for transport. When I came into government in 2011 there had been a Labor member representing the electorate of Drummoyne for 49 years. I can tell the House about the lack of parking around Rhodes station, Concord West station and North Strathfield station and I can tell the House about entering stations with no elevators. That is what we had to put up with and that was in Labor seats.

Now an Opposition member is saying, "Get out of the way. If you cannot deliver it, we can." The hypocrisy is incredible. I am incredulous at those opposite. I cannot believe that they come here and forget about the past and think that they can just draw a line in the sand and say, "We are all good and pure," and dress in white and say, "Here we go. It is a new start." It is not. Transport for NSW has completed accessibility upgrades across the State. It has constructed new commuter car parks, where possible, under the Transport Access Program [TAP], which has been funded more than it has been in the past. The program is an initiative to provide a better experience for public transport customers by delivering all the facilities that we want—accessible, modern, secure and integrated transport infrastructure that will encourage people to use public transport.

On the line in the electorate of Drummoyne we have seen a 20 per cent increase in patronage. That goes to the heart of everything we do. Then those opposite say: "Oh, the trains are full." When the trains are not used the Opposition blames us and when they are used the Opposition blames us. It is great. Opposition members can just say, "Look, there is a pothole," but Government members have to fix it. That is the challenge and we are addressing it electorate by electorate and street by street. The job of members opposite is to criticise, and they certainly do that, but I do not see them offering any solutions. I never hear about where the budget is going to come from to fix it all.

Cardiff station was upgraded under the TAP. The upgrade was completed in 2013 and included new lifts, with three stops linking the council's Mary Street car park with the station car park and the pedestrian footbridge; a regraded ramp and footpath access from the footbridge to the main road; a new main station building with accessible paths, weather protection, enclosures, an upgraded ticket office and a wheelchair and family accessible toilet; an extension of the platform to fit eight-carriage trains; and new and upgraded closed-circuit television surveillance and lighting. On 8 April 2013 the Premier opened the new lifts as part of the Cardiff station upgrade.

The upgrade of the Cardiff station represents a significant investment in transport infrastructure in the Hunter by this Government. It will help people who catch public transport by making public transport more accessible. In the absence of the facts I have outlined, it would be a totally different debate. Labor Opposition members cannot demand, "We want a car park. You've done nothing." That seems to be the tenor of the speeches made by Opposition members, whereas the truth is that there are many things the Government has done over a long period. I inform the Opposition that this Government not only upgrades stations but also does so on the basis of need, not based on who is the local member.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:50):** By leave: I participate in debate on the motion moved by the member for Wallsend to urge the Government to provide adequate parking at the Cardiff railway station. I will participate in the debate from a slightly different perspective than has been expressed so far. I acknowledge that the State Government has done a lot of upgrading work—as pointed out by the member for Drummoyne and Parliamentary Secretary to Cabinet—particularly through the Transport Access Program. I also acknowledge that the Government has provided improvements to access at Wyee station, which is a really important area. However, I have noticed that much of the debate advanced by Government members has not actually dealt with the facts that have been conveyed directly to the members for Wallsend and Charlestown by the people of Cardiff and surrounds.

I support the member for Wallsend bringing to the attention of the House issues that have been raised by people who live in her electorate. Those issues also have been raised in the electorate of Charlestown and in the electorate of Lake Macquarie. Cardiff station is in an area where the three electorates of Wallsend, Charlestown and Lake Macquarie almost merge, so the member for Wallsend and the member for Charlestown and I are interested in the very same issues. While it is all well and good to speak about what has happened at Cardiff—there has been investment in improved access, installation of lifts and upgrades to the platforms—that does not change the fact that commuters cannot easily park in the area.

While on the one hand the Cardiff station has been upgraded, on the other hand the upgrades have exacerbated the problem of the lack of car parking space. The Government should always do upgrade projects holistically. It is not just a matter of attracting people to use public transport; we have to give them places in which to park at the interchange. Perhaps the members of Parliament to whom I have referred and members of the community are somewhat frustrated by the issues at the Cardiff station because of a lack of ability to get traction in relation to—with apologies to the member for Wallsend—construction of the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange at Glendale. The issue of the interchange has been considered by the Hunter Joint Organisation of

Councils, local councils, the Newcastle Business Chamber and the Hunter Development Corporation that regard the interchange as one of the most significant pieces of transport infrastructure a government could provide.

We want to see people use public transport, and I am sure the Government shares that view. I suggest to the Government, though, that it would not want to invest in public transport that people do not use. I recognise that there is conflict associated with the interchange project, but it is also creating frustration that we all share. It has been stated that the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange would take away so much of the demand for public transport in the Lower Hunter area that Cardiff would be able to return to a throughput of passengers more appropriate for a local station. Cardiff station is somewhat compromised by the topography of the area. As the member for Charlestown mentioned, the Lake Macquarie City Council has made land available for additional parking to be provided. I would really like to see the Government come on board. The lack of car parking space should be addressed in a number of areas of the Hunter.

I acknowledge that consideration has been given to the provision of increased car parking spaces. In the most recent budget the Government increased the allocation for the Transport Access Program. While I acknowledge that the Government is addressing some problems, that does not take away from the fact that people in our areas are frustrated, as has been properly articulated by the member for Wallsend and the member for Charlestown. I am pleased to support both members because we share so many issues that should be addressed. We are all in this together. I want to see more people using public transport, as I am sure does the Government.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:54):** In reply: I thank the member for Oatley, the member for Campbelltown, the member for Terrigal, the member for Charlestown and the member for Lake Macquarie for their contributions to the debate on this important motion. I hope the Government will support it. I draw to the attention of the House that the motion is positive. It asks the Minister to improve the facilities at the Cardiff railway station that is turning commuters away from using public transport. At no point is the motion negative. It merely recites a few facts in a positive way. That is the way in which issues are approached in Wallsend. I want to get things done and I know that the community really does not care who gets it done, as long as it is done.

None of the comments about negativity made during the debate relate to the motion. That is a bit of a problem because I notice the member for Oatley and the member for Terrigal referred to upgrades to the Oatley and Narwee stations, lots of things happening around Terrigal on the Central Coast and what the Government is doing across New South Wales, but there was no mention of the importance of improving facilities at the Cardiff railway station. That was a little bit disappointing from two very intelligent and clever men.

**Mr John Sidoti:** I spoke about that.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** I thank the member for Drummoyne for mentioning Cardiff during the last minute of his speech, which was wonderful, but at no point was I being negative. I believe that being negative does not achieve anything, so I would not express negativity. The member for Charlestown spoke particularly well and informed the House of some really important facts. She mentioned that more than 300,000 commuters use Cardiff station each year. She also mentioned that more people want to use it, but they are frustrated by the problems they have getting public transport to the station. Some of the new bus timetables have forced people to drive their cars to the station instead of catching public transport, which is actually what they want to do—and what local Labor members want—but they are unable to utilise public transport. People who find themselves in that predicament are being forced to park their cars in suburban streets.

I know that there is land available for car parking spaces. I am simply asking the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to closely examine the problem and to tell us what can be done to get more people using that wonderful train service. Obviously, in the longer term we want to see a better service from Newcastle to Sydney: We all want our Federal colleagues to work on achieving that because it is so important. The member for Lake Macquarie spoke eloquently, as he always does, and mentioned what I refer to as the Glendale interchange. I acknowledge that he refers to it as the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange. It is horses for courses, but the point he made is that the interchange is really important. The member for Charlestown and the member for Lake Macquarie mentioned the Glendale transport interchange because of its importance in providing better commuter experiences in public transport in the long term for people who live in the western suburbs of Newcastle, Charlestown and the Lake Macquarie areas. The interchange will be essential for them and for me.

The problem is limited access to parking at Cardiff station. That problem is exacerbated when, logically, the people who live near the station are becoming fed up with commuters parking in their area and limited parking space being available for residents. That is fair enough. Council has been forced to do something about it, but imposing limits on on-street parking does not solve the problem. I understand why the council did that, but it does not solve the problem of limited parking being available in the area, which we want the State Government to address. That is really important because ultimately we want to get people out of their cars and onto public

transport, which will make everyone better off. Certainly, if more people used public transport, the number of accidents on the M1 would be reduced. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....33

Noes .....45

Majority..... 12

#### AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Daley, Mr M  
Finn, Ms J  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mehan, Mr D (teller)  
Park, Mr R  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Washington, Ms K

Bali, Mr S  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dib, Mr J  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N  
McGirr, Dr J  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Piper, Mr G  
Tesch, Ms L (teller)  
Zangari, Mr G

#### NOES

Anderson, Mr K  
Barilaro, Mr J  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Humphries, Mr K  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Petinos, Ms E  
Rowell, Mr J  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
Fraser, Mr A  
Goward, Ms P  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S  
Brookes, Mr G  
Cooke, Ms S  
Evans, Mr A.W.  
George, Mr T  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
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

#### PAIRS

Catley, Ms Y  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Foley, Mr L  
Harris, Mr D  
Watson, Ms A

Berejiklian, Ms G  
Davies, Mrs T  
Dominello, Mr V  
Grant, Mr T  
Hancock, Mrs S

**Motion negatived.**

#### WORLD PARKINSON'S DAY

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:05):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises that World Parkinson's Day is on Wednesday 11 April 2018.
- (2) Acknowledges the outstanding work of Parkinson's NSW, and in particular its President, David Veness, for their passion and commitment in raising awareness and funds to improve the lives of those living with Parkinson's, as well as the support they provide for the families and carers.



- (3) Notes that His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, David Hurley, and Linda Hurley will host a morning tea for World Parkinson's Day supporting the vision of Parkinson's NSW to have a community free of Parkinson's.

World Parkinson's Day is an opportunity to raise awareness and for Parkinson's support groups and the community in general to have fun. This year celebrations included picnic days, cake stalls, information booths, parties and cocktail parties. The theme for World Parkinson's Day 2018 was "Pause 4 Parkinson's". Parkinson's NSW, which I will talk about in a moment, also hosted the Unity Walk in the Park, which is an annual fundraising initiative to support ongoing research and services for people affected by Parkinson's disease. More than 1,300 people joined the 2018 Unity Walk in the Park, including people living with the disease, their carers, family members, friends and colleagues. As I said in the motion, I acknowledge David Veness for his amazing work and advocacy for people living with Parkinson's in his role as president of Parkinson's NSW. I also acknowledge Professor Bryce Vissel, vice-president of Parkinson's NSW, the chairs and the directors. Behind the board are people working on the ground to make sure that the vision of Parkinson's NSW is being achieved, particularly in our regional and rural communities.

I acknowledge the Jo-Anne Reeves, chief executive officer of Parkinson's NSW, executive assistant Sarah Swarbrick, administration officer Jayne Walker-Smith, corporate services manager Mary Kay Walker and the InfoLine coordinator Julie Austion. Parkinson's NSW has done a lot for members of Parliament in providing information about the disease and its impact on communities. As a regional member of Parliament I had the privilege of meeting many times with David, as have a number of members on this side of the House. David is able to share some up-to-date statistics and it is sobering to hear not only about the social impact of Parkinson's but also about its economic impact. For example, in 2014 the total economic cost of Parkinson's disease was \$567 million.

It is estimated that 210,000 people are directly impacted by Parkinson's disease. People with Parkinson's are five times more likely to be in aged-care facilities. One in every 340 people in Australia lives with the disease and, on average, 32 people are diagnosed with it every day. It is important that we are aware of and understand these statistics because it emphasises to us, particularly as policy-makers and local members, the impact that Parkinson's disease is having on our local communities and what we can do to support Parkinson's NSW in achieving its vision of having a community that is free of the disease.

As a local member of Parliament I was pleased to have ongoing conversations with David Veness and his team. I congratulate them on their advocacy over many years and the advocacy of our Parkinson's support group in Port Macquarie. Their advocacy means we now have a neurological nurse in Port Macquarie. Parkinson's patients on the mid North Coast will benefit from the appointment of the specialist neurological nurse who will be trained in the care and treatment of people with this neurodegenerative condition. On 15 April this year plans for the appointment of a specialist neurological nurse in Port Macquarie were announced by David Veness, President of Parkinson's NSW, and me to mark World Parkinson's Day 2018, which was held on 11 April. This position is being funded by the Mid North Coast Local Health District in partnership with Parkinson's NSW at a cost of \$450,000 over three years.

I commend the work of the chief executive officer of the Mid North Coast Local Health District and thank him for taking on board the statistics that were presented to us by Parkinson's NSW. He understands that the appointment of a neurological nurse will have a significant impact on those people in our community who are living with Parkinson's. David Veness said that the appointment of a neurological nurse will make a huge difference for the local community. Studies show that the health-related quality of life is lower for people living with Parkinson's in regional areas compared with those in the city. David said:

The prevalence of Parkinson's has been reported as higher in rural and remote areas, yet most of the specialist services for Parkinson's disease are found in capital cities therefore access to quality health care is an issue.

It has been proven that the placement of specialised neurological nurses has many benefits for people living with Parkinson's, but it also has significant benefits for their carers and families. The placement of a nurse assists with the high rate of depression and anxiety associated with Parkinson's and carers and family members have also noticed significant improvements in their own wellbeing with reduced levels of depression. Hospital stays can be reduced with the intervention of a specialist nurse. This is great news for the Port Macquarie electorate. Parkinson's NSW, under the leadership of David Veness, is working to have other neurological nurses placed in communities across regional New South Wales.

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I welcome to the Legislative Assembly schoolkids from the Al Noori Muslim School in Greenacre. They have spent some time with the member for Lakemba, who

is their State member of Parliament. Later today they may visit the Legislative Council. I hope they enjoy their day in the oldest Parliament in Australia.

*Motions*

**WORLD PARKINSON'S DAY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:13):** I support the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie concerning World Parkinson's Day and thank her for bringing it to the attention of the House. Wednesday 11 April 2018 was World Parkinson's Day. Parkinson's is a movement and mood disorder typically presenting with symptoms such as slowness of movement, muscle rigidity, instability, tremor, depression and anxiety. Some 80,000 Australians are estimated to be living with Parkinson's disease. A diagnosis can occur at any age with the most common age of diagnosis being 65. Parkinson's NSW is under the outstanding leadership of president David Veness, and it does an exceptional job of raising awareness and funds for those living with Parkinson's, and supporting families and carers. David has dropped by my office to provide updates on the progress of the association in the Cootamundra electorate and statewide.

Recently it was wonderful to hear of progress being made with the research projects that are underway and the success that has already been achieved with the approval of a nursing position in Port Macquarie and extra funding in Shoalhaven. I am sure the successes will continue in and around the Cootamundra electorate where I am from. I thank Mr Veness for his passion and dedication to the cause. New South Wales has more than 70 Parkinson's support groups run by local volunteers who have been touched by the disease. The groups are supported by Parkinson's NSW staff. In the Cootamundra electorate, support groups operate in Cowra and West Wyalong. Today I acknowledge the great work of the Temora Parkinson's support group, which was established two years ago by Mrs Christine Patt, Mrs Coral Moncrieff and Mrs Leslie Muir.

The group meets on a Tuesday every second month at the Bundawarra Centre for a social get together. Eight locals with Parkinson's from Temora and surrounding farms and properties attend with their carers. They not only provide companionship to one another; it is also a chance to share knowledge and experiences. The group has grown steadily and it provides a valued source of support and strength for those diagnosed with the disease and their families. They soon hope to engage guest speakers and are already actively lobbying for funding and services for the local community. Coral Moncrieff's husband suffers from Parkinson's and Chris Patt has been diagnosed with Parkinson's.

They support each other through this difficult and degenerative disorder. Hearing their experiences has provided this Government with invaluable insight. I thank them from the bottom of my heart for their work in the Temora community. The vision of Parkinson's NSW is to have a community free of Parkinson's. Our local support groups, Parkinson's nurses, healthcare staff and advocates work around the clock every day of the year. I once again thank the member for Port Macquarie my colleague Leslie Williams for bringing Parkinson's disease to the attention of the House.

**Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (13:18):** I came to Parliament as a result of a by-election last October and David Veness was one of the first people I met in Orange at a regional Nationals party conference. David introduced himself to me and outlined the work that Parkinson's NSW is doing in trying to appoint neurological nurses throughout the State, particularly in regional areas. At every conference since, David has found time to sit with me and talk about the progress Parkinson's NSW is making. As recently as last week David was in Parliament to talk to people to promote the work of Parkinson's NSW. David made a tireless effort despite suffering from the ravages of Parkinson's disease. He travels around the State and talks to anyone who will listen including the support groups. Next week I look forward to meeting the Griffith support group. David's vision is to have New South Wales free from Parkinson's disease. Parkinson's NSW does not just sit back and ask for money; it is working towards employing neurological nurses. It has already done some preliminary work that shows that neurological nurses will be of benefit to the State and the community.

Preliminary data shows that there will be savings for the health system as neurological nurses would be available to help with the timing of medications, offer support for those diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, and limit the number of falls. When a person who suffers from Parkinson's disease falls it tends to be serious and it requires a hospital visit. There are many more benefits to be achieved from having neurological nurses. David has secured funding for more detailed work to be undertaken by the Charles Sturt University to provide cost estimates of the benefits of having neurological nurses.

I support David's work and the work of Parkinson's NSW to try to improve the lives of those who are suffering and to try to find a cure for Parkinson's disease. Neurological nurses play an important role in the lives of those who are suffering from the disease. The Parkinson's NSW website assists those who are suffering to halt the impact of the disease and to limit any decline in their health. I congratulate the member for Port Macquarie

and thank her for bringing this matter to the attention to the House. I commend David Veness and Parkinson's NSW.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:22):** I am pleased to contribute to debate on the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie relating to Parkinson's disease. In my inaugural speech I referred to Phil Papworth, or Pappy, the principal at the first school at which I worked in a casual capacity as a physical education teacher. That gentleman gave me a go. After making a few changes here and there he gave me a permanent position at the school. I arrived at the Mount View High School in 1993—Pappy arrived in 1995—and we both left the Mount View High School in 2002. Pappy retired because he had Parkinson's disease and the disease had reached such a level of seriousness that he could not continue to work. I left the school to embark on a different career. Cessnock is often ridiculed for being a working class town—it is a tough old town. Some of the kids who grew up in Cessnock did not think of the world as their oyster.

When Pappy was principal of the Mount View High School he referred to the school as a school of excellence. Pappy would stand up at every assembly and tell 1,000 students, "MV equals E", or "Mount View equals excellence", and that anyone attending the school could become anything they wanted, which was a fantastic message. I was born and bred in Cessnock and I was familiar with all the mocking and the ridicule. I went to the University of Newcastle and travelled to many different places but I still came across people who ridiculed Cessnock. Pappy was passionate about Cessnock and he loved all the students. On Tuesday this week, after experiencing a decline in his health, Pappy was released from the Cessnock Hospital and he transitioned to an intensive care nursing home. Pappy is not long for this world. Ultimately his Parkinson's disease will consume him. Pappy, one of the great leaders in my community, is also one of the world's greatest teachers. In some ways Parkinson's disease cut his career and his journey short.

I was blessed to have spent seven or eight years working with Phil Papworth. Pappy was a great and wonderful man. As a result of my connection, Pappy established the Coalfields Parkinson's Support Group which he called "the movers and shakers". Pappy started writing a monthly newsletter and I was very happy to help and support him with that. Pappy asked me to become the patron of the Coalfields Parkinson's Support Group. I do not want to fast-forward the demise of the great Phil Papworth but it would be remiss of me not to speak in this Chamber today about the man I mentioned in my inaugural speech—a great bloke who gave me a go in life and who encouraged every kid in Cessnock to give themselves a go. Go, the great man Pappy. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for moving this motion.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:26):** As the Minister for Multiculturalism in New South Wales I welcome the students in the public gallery from Alnoori Muslim School in Greenacre. As the Minister who is responsible for youth, I am proud that they are here today in the New South Wales Parliament—the oldest Parliament in Australia—listening to an important debate about Parkinson's disease. I am sure that the students will not have to deal with Parkinson's disease for a long time but because of our ageing population it is becoming more prevalent. We have good and capable people in Parliament such as the member for Port Macquarie—a nurse in her former life—who has cared for people suffering from Parkinson's disease. In celebrating the richness of our diversity I say As-Salaam-Alaikum.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I welcome Jackson and Max, guests of the member for Hornsby and Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. Jackson and Max are from Thornleigh West Public School and are participating in the Hornsby School Leaders Program. Welcome to the New South Wales Parliament.

#### *Motions*

#### **WORLD PARKINSON'S DAY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:27):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Cootamundra, Murray, Cessnock and Castle Hill for contributing to debate on this motion. For the benefit of the students in the gallery, we are talking about Parkinson's disease as it is estimated that some 80,000 Australians are impacted by this disease. Figures show that it could be close to 110,000, which is a significant number. Like many other diseases that relate to an ageing population, such as dementia which was also referred to, those figures are set to rise significantly. The most common age for the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease is 65, but 20 per cent of the cases diagnosed are of people under the age of 50 years and 10 per cent is of people as young as 40. In 2014 the prevalence of Parkinson's outstripped that of many cancers, including breast

cancer, leukaemia and lung cancer, which is why we want to acknowledge the work of Parkinson's NSW, particularly in encouraging the employment of neurological nurses.

We now have nurses in four regional communities: Coffs Harbour, the Shoalhaven, Orange and my electorate of Port Macquarie. They cater for more than 1,000 patients. These nurses play a key role in meeting the general needs of people living with Parkinson's by liaising between patients and specialists, educating aged-care facilities, health-care professionals and pharmacists, and administering advanced nursing practice. They also provide support during hospitalisation and help with referrals to complementary therapies such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology.

As I said, the president of Parkinson's NSW, Mr David Veness, is committed to continue his advocacy work for more neurological nursing services, particularly in our rural and regional communities. As mentioned by the member for Murray, Mr Veness commissioned a study by the Charles Stuart University to support the efforts of that organisation. I place on the record my sincere thanks to the Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, for his support of this research. He has committed to providing Parkinson's NSW with funding to support this important research work. I certainly hope, as other members do, that in the future more neurological nurses will be appointed as a result of this important research.

I acknowledge the amazing support group in my electorate. President Sue Faulkner, her husband, Greg, and all of the committee provide amazing support and advocacy on behalf of those in our community living with Parkinson's. I also acknowledge the Westport Club. As members of Parliament we know that our local clubs play an important role in our local communities. The Westport Club in Port Macquarie has provided some excellent books about Parkinson's, which are available for loan from the Port Macquarie library.

The third part of my motion was to note that His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, David Hurley, and his wife, Linda, hosted a morning tea for World Parkinson's Day, supporting the vision of Parkinson's NSW to have a community free of Parkinson's. I acknowledge both His Excellency and Mrs Hurley for their commitment to working with Parkinson's NSW to continue to provide advocacy and also for supporting the great work it is doing on the ground. We appreciate both His Excellency and Mrs Hurley for being very much involved in this important issue in our local communities.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to a dear friend of mine, and a dear friend of Australia, the Hon. Tim Fischer, former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia and former member for Murray in this place.

I extend a warm welcome to Mayor Bob Kirk and general manager Warwick Bennett of Goulburn Mulwaree Council, who are guests of the member for Goulburn and Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. I welcome to the public gallery Brian Marsland, a former president of Bowls Australia. I know that he has kept the member for Tweed under control for a long time. I also welcome his partner, Kaye Archer, and it is good to see Jason Rofle here as well.

I welcome the members of the Rotary Club of North Sydney, who are guests of the member for North Sydney. I acknowledge Mayor John Dal Broi and general manager Brett Stonestreet of Griffith City Council, who are guests of the member for Murray. I acknowledge Yasmin Jimmieson, who is a recipient of the Premier's Anzac Ambassadors Program from the Muswellbrook High School and is accompanied by her mother, Paula Jimmieson. They are guests of the member for Upper Hunter.

#### *Members*

#### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTER ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that today the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Finance, Services and Property.

*Question Time***LIBERAL PARTY PRESELECTION**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:22):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier confirm that the member for Epping was enticed to a private meeting at her home under the pretence of assisting with the Treasurer's move to Castle Hill, only for her to then tell him he should stand aside from Epping in order to save her Government?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! It sounds like we are going to have a repeat of what we have had for the last three sittings. You laugh about it—this is just a stunt. The Opposition has asked the Premier a question and will listen to the answer in silence.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24):** I am not sure what fairytale—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** —the Leader of the Opposition has been reading. As much affection as I have for the member for Epping, regrettably I have never invited him to my house—although I would love to in the future.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** However, I will ensure—

**Mr Damien Tudehope:** I'm bringing the family, Premier.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Thank you!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Epping should not get too carried away.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I have been asked some pretty ridiculous questions by members of the Opposition, but that one takes the cake. I should ask the Leader of the Opposition how Barbara Perry is going. How is the seat of Auburn going?

**Mr Bruce Notley-Smith:** Bring back Barbara!

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Exactly. Bring back Barbara. That is what we say.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Coogee to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** When the member for Bankstown asked me some questions yesterday about gender and women in politics—

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Yes, and they were actually—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Bankstown that this is not a debate.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** —I referred to some incidents—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** —reported in the press, but some members were not aware of them. I found the article in which they were reported. It was published in the *Daily Telegraph* on 25 May 2016 and it states:

It was not the first time angry Luke has been on display. Foley gave it both barrels to Tania Mihailuk, another member of the Right, who walked out of a shadow cabinet meeting—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The article goes on. I thought I would clarify that for members.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am just making a point. As I said, I have had some doozies in my time, but that is an embarrassing question. I say this in all seriousness and as a point of difference: This Government works hard, day in and day out, for the people of this great State. I do not want to steal the Treasurer's thunder, but yesterday we got some very good news about the economy and our budget position. I will allow the Treasurer to talk about that. Ours are the parties that care about jobs, infrastructure, services and the cost of living, which matter to the people of New South Wales, and we will continue to do that. If members opposite go down into the gutter, we will go up and serve the people of this great State.

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

**FRONTLINE SERVICES SUPPORT**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:28):** I address my question to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government looking after our frontline services?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:28):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question. I know that he and everyone else in this place care deeply about our frontline workers. Our emergency services personnel put themselves in harm's way on a daily basis. They walk into tragic situations to keep us safe. Whether it is fighting fires, catching criminals, delivering lifesaving medical treatment or rescuing people from natural disasters, our emergency services workers and volunteers do an outstanding job on our behalf. I take this opportunity to say how deeply we appreciate the work they do and how much we respect the danger they face day in and day out. That danger is sometimes physical and apparent, and sometimes it is not.

That is why the Liberal-Nationals Government is proud to ensure that it supports our emergency services agencies with record funding, whether it is for the State Emergency Service, the NSW Police Force, firefighters or paramedics. This Government has provided record numbers of personnel and record funding to support our key workers in these areas. When a government has a strong budget and a strong economy, it can afford to announce an extra 700 paramedics and extra police officers. It can certainly also afford to ensure our firefighting men and women and all our other emergency services personnel have the best equipment possible to get on with their jobs.

I am very proud to be able to say that this Government is taking further steps today to support our emergency services personnel. I was pleased this morning to have had the Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Police, Troy Grant, and the Minister for Finance, Services and Property, Victor Dominello, confirm and announce that the New South Wales Government is introducing a bill to make it easier for firefighters diagnosed with 12 different types of cancer to claim compensation. Unfortunately—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am pleased to confirm that the Government has been working on this for more than 12 months.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** No, you haven't!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Fairfield—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Troy has not consulted with the Rural Fire Service Association or the Fire Brigade Employees Union, and you know that.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Importantly, unlike the proposals put by members opposite, the Government will not impose a 10-year limit on accessing the presumptive provision after firefighters retire from employment or volunteering. Because of the work the Government has done and because of our strong economic position, I can confirm that the Government will not impose the 10-year limit that members opposite have proposed. The Government believes that our firefighters deserve better protection than that proposed by members opposite. I stress that the Government's bill will contain no time limit on accessing the presumptive provision after a firefighter's career ends. The bill will ensure that our firefighters, who risk their own life and health to protect the people of this State, receive their workers compensation entitlements promptly. That is the difference between this Government and the Opposition: We do our work and we protect our citizens and our firefighters.

I also note that once the changes are introduced they will apply to eligible firefighters diagnosed from today with one of the 12 prescribed cancers. When we expect men and women to put their lives on the line, whether they face daily danger or acquire a serious illness because of the danger to which they have been exposed, it is our obligation to protect them and their families in the future. That is why this is such an important initiative. It would be remiss of me not to mention that tomorrow we will commemorate Police Remembrance Day, when we proudly remember fallen police officers. [*Extension of time*]

Anyone who has held my position or who has been the Minister for Police, in particular, would know how moving the ceremony at the Police Service Wall of Remembrance can be. We remember our police officers who have died in the line of duty and, of course, we also acknowledge their families and their loved ones left behind. We honour the officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is a stark reminder that we expect so much of our frontline emergency services workers, whether they are firefighters or police officers. Police Remembrance Day is an opportunity for us to take stock and to thank them for their sacrifice and courage. Whether it is policing or firefighting, they are putting their life on the line for the health and safety of others. It is an attribute

that not everyone has. It is incumbent upon us as a government to support and protect them, and also as a community to appreciate them and to thank them for their sacrifices.

### LIBERAL PARTY PRESELECTION

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:34):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Yvonne Keane, the former Liberal mayor of The Hills has said of the Treasurer's grab for Castle Hill, "It exposes an underlying culture riven with a repellent obsession with self, a grandiose sense of entitlement and, most appallingly, an utter disregard for the ordinary everyday Australians." When will the Treasurer stop focusing on himself and start focusing on the needs of people?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:35):** It is great to quote someone who is not a member of our party! Those opposite try to stack the gallery all the time, but I will say this—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This is a Government, and I am the Treasurer, completely focused on delivering for the people of New South Wales.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This week we have seen an Opposition more focused on preselections than on the people of our great State. Every single question from the other side of the House has been—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Guy Zangari:** People go for a sea change; you go for a seat change.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Fairfield for the second time. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the third time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** You have the shadow Minister over there—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —who has said in this place this morning that he wants to put a cap on cancer.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Fairfield to order for the third time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** On this side of the House we will ensure that every single question that our members ask is focused on the people of New South Wales, whereas those opposite are focused internally. This morning the shadow Treasurer introduced the follow-the-dollar legislation into this place.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The member for Cessnock was there—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Keira to order for the third time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** This morning I raised this great article by Matt Wade and Alexandra Smith in the *Sydney Morning Herald* about the launch of the shadow Treasurer's campaign early this year. There were a number of quotes by the Leader of the Opposition but he got one of his friends—I am not sure who—to say:

It would be fair to say we felt deflated after seeing their budget—

That is fair enough.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I am happy to read the question again.

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is about a quote from Yvonne Keane—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member will resume her seat. The Treasurer is being relevant to the question he was asked.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** No, this is about the "underlying culture riven with repellent obsession with self" and "a grandiose" self-entitlement.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Strathfield will not say "No". She will resume her seat. I place the member for Strathfield on three calls to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I am being lectured by her on focusing on myself! The quote then goes on to say:

... but I think Luke's [Foley] strong position on privatisation is his speech helped internally.

There lies the difference between this side of the House and that side of the House. We are focused on reforming this State for the people of New South Wales; those opposite are focused on themselves. The member for Cessnock—a good member—raised something this morning. Members might recall that in 2015 our great workers compensation legislation was opposed by those opposite. I thank the member for Cessnock for coming into this place after making comments in relation to the abolition of the Dust Diseases Board, and saying that he was wrong. He apologised to the Bernie Banton Foundation, and I appreciate those comments. In his reply speech he said that this is not an improvement to the scheme for injured workers across New South Wales. He said that the bill is "complete and utter rubbish". He said—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I thought that everyone would want to listen to comments relating to workers in this State. The Treasurer is repeating the comments that were made about our workers by the member for Cessnock. He is being very relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I thank the member for Davidson, the great Parliamentary Secretary, who showed me some correspondence from the shadow finance Minister today, who has written an email to icare, which says, "Icare have taken a real tone of 'We are fighting for you, the injured workers, and making sure that you get what you deserve'. This is a brilliant thing. Thank you. Can you please pass on my congratulations to everyone at icare who fights for the injured workers every single day." That is what we, on this side of the House, deliver.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There was an opportunity to seek an extension of time but no-one sought it.

#### REGIONAL INVESTMENT

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:40):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. What is the New South Wales Government doing to attract investment and grow local jobs in regional New South Wales?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:40):** I thank the member for Cootamundra. She was an award-winning small business owner prior to her time in this House and she really understands what it takes to create jobs in regional centres by backing small businesses, by working with the community and by offering jobs to people who live locally. It is very important to create jobs in the regions and provide job security. Small business plays an important role in that.

If you look at the Government's track record over the past three years you will see that about 85,000 jobs have been created in regional New South Wales. Compare that to Labor's last eight years. Labor created 68,000 jobs in eight years compared to our 85,000 just in the past three years. The Government is doing that by creating an environment where small business owners feel comfortable and secure to invest—to mortgage their homes, show courage and be part of the small business community. The Government is attracting investment—small, medium and large—in regional centres. That is a focus of this Government. We know that our job is to create that environment, but not necessarily the jobs.

We want to see long-term jobs in the regions and diversity in those jobs. We can do that by empowering the private sector. That is why it is very important that the Government continues its infrastructure spend right across regional New South Wales, that the Government continues the supports through the Small Business Commissioner's Office and that the Government continues to run programs that empower the new start-ups and give seed funding. We look to Jobs for NSW and the interest free loans for businesses that want to expand. We make sure that we invest in what we call that shared infrastructure through the Growing Local Economies fund to make sure that we continue to see investment and local businesses grow.

But that is only part of what the Government is doing in regional New South Wales. A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to travel to Parkes. We all know what is happening at Parkes with the inland rail. I have spoken about this before. Parkes will become what we call an "inland port". Because of the inland rail it is already seen as a logistics hub. And there are many businesses that are now looking to start their businesses in Parkes. The New South Wales Government is speaking to a number of those businesses—I am talking about investments



of up to about \$50 million—which are offering long-term, new jobs in places like Parkes in the Central West. The benefits flow right across regional New South Wales.

When I was visiting Parkes a couple of weeks ago we announced the Regional Investment Attraction Package. The Government knows that sometimes the State needs to attract investment from across the borders or from overseas. We have created a package that allows us to work with businesses to attract them, as first movers, into regional centres. In this case, in Parkes—where we are calling it a special activation precinct—there is an opportunity to make it easier for people who are looking to invest in regional New South Wales to come across the border and start a new business. That package includes the regional Investment Attraction Fund—\$20 million grants or interest free loans to offset things like levies or payroll tax, which is an impediment for businesses right across the board.

That is just one part of it. We have also recognised that in regional New South Wales we need a skilled workforce. As we are rolling out the investment in TAFE through \$2.4 billion going to the skills budget, another part is to attract to the regions skilled workers from places like Sydney. We have announced a skills relocation assistance package, with \$10 million in grants and up to \$10,000 for eligible skilled workers to help them to meet the costs of moving and accommodation when they settle in regional New South Wales. We know that once they come to regional New South Wales, they will not leave because it is a great place to work, to raise a family and to be part of a strong community.

Another thing we have done with this package is to put in place what we have called an investment concierge from government. We know that for businesses trying to work with government, sometimes the maze of regulations is confusing. There are lots of resources and lots of opportunities for government to partner with small businesses in regional New South Wales, but sometimes establishing these relationships is complicated. The concierge service is a one-stop shop on behalf of government and will work with businesses to make sure those businesses are as successful as possible in getting access to government support. Earlier I touched on our special activation precincts, which are designed to streamline government policy and cut red tape to make it easier for businesses in regional New South Wales.

These packages are part of our 20-year vision for regional New South Wales. We have identified 10 industries and seven principles backed by the Snowy fund, with \$4.2 billion to unlock the potential and the opportunities in regional New South Wales. I am really excited about what is happening. We have created many jobs so far, but we are looking to the future. We are looking at what we need to do to build resilient economies and resilient communities in the regions. [*Extension of time*]

Last week I had the opportunity to talk about the Country Labor conference and Labor's blueprint for regional New South Wales. Labor talks about a network of roads connected to other roads; we call them highways, but those opposite think they are something new. When it comes to growing regional economies, this is what NSW Labor said, "NSW Labor recognises that the regions play a vital role in the economic development of New South Wales". We recognise that; we know that. "New South Wales Labor will seek to strengthen regional economies by implementing regional development plans which recognise the needs of each region and provide the necessary infrastructure to sustain ongoing regional development." We call that the Regional Economic Development Strategies—REDS—that we have been working on with the local government. We have identified 37 economic zones in regional New South Wales. We have done the work, we are rolling out the investment and right now lots of councils and communities are receiving their fair share of \$500 million through the Growing Local Economies Fund.

We know we need strong industries. One industry that we believe is strong in the regions is forestry. Another policy from the Country Labor Party is, "encouragement of primary producers to expand their agricultural base to include native forestry". I think we call that private native forestry, PNF. The Local Land Services are being rolled out and lots is happening for farmers. This is a great investment to build resilience in the agricultural sector. Those opposite talk with a forked tongue. On forestry, the Country Labor Party said, "ensure that no woodchip licences are issued until full environmental impact studies are undertaken". Those opposite will stop further investment in forestry while they appease The Greens to win seats in Sydney. Once again we have a strategy and a vision for regional New South Wales. We have money to back industries. Those opposite are the greatest threat to regional New South Wales.

#### LIBERAL PARTY PRESELECTION

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:48):** My question is directed to the Premier. Why did the Premier encourage the Treasurer to run for preselection against his colleague the member for Castle Hill but then not have the courage or decency to pick up the phone to the member for Castle Hill and advise him of her cosy and now brilliantly executed arrangement?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:48):** Well, well, well another question time and those opposite have scoured the papers seeking out what to question us about today. What rumour or innuendo is there? Do those opposite want to ask us about jobs? No. Do they want to ask us about transport, or roads, or education? What about the cost of living? What about our frontline workers? What about our emergency service workers? They come in here and ask us about rubbish like that.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** What about women? Let's talk about women.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I can assure the member for Swansea that I will not tolerate the same behaviour today as was displayed yesterday.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 130. If the Premier does not like the question, she cannot debate the question. She has to answer the question. We ask the questions, and Ministers answer them.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Premier is answering the question. Debate is coming from the Opposition side of the House.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I will finish on this point: The member for Port Stephens has had enormous opportunity to talk about police stations in her community, or road upgrades in her community, or education in her community, but she does not take that opportunity. That is why we are coming after her electorate.

**Mr Luke Foley:** You can't even win Orange, John.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members on the Opposition benches might think that is funny.

**Mr Michael Daley:** We think it's hilarious.

*[Interruption from the gallery]*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

#### STATE ECONOMY

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (14:52):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Treasurer update the House on any recent economic developments in New South Wales, and are there any alternative approaches?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:53):** There are, and those opposite should have waited a couple of minutes. I make this point: I will never again complain about Liberal Party branch members. I do not know how those opposite do it. But I thank the member for Miranda for her great question and, importantly, her interest in running a strong economy and delivering for the people of New South Wales. As we know, under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, the New South Wales economy continues to go from strength to strength. We have got more people into work than ever before—the shadow Treasurer knows this—record infrastructure as far as the eye can see and above trend economic growth.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government New South Wales has won back-to-back premierships for seven years straight. We know, as the Premier pointed out just last week, Moody's confirmed that we have maintained our triple-A credit rating, highlighting, as it did, our asset-recycling strategy, which was opposed by those opposite and the investment in infrastructure, which is also opposed by those opposite. Today I inform the House that just this afternoon Standard & Poor's has also confirmed its triple-A credit rating for New South Wales. It stated that this reflects, "New South Wales' wealthy economy, excellent financial management and exceptional liquidity". This is another big tick for the economic management of the Government. I am hoping—I am giving him three days—this will make the shadow Treasurer's economic update for September. Is it out yet? He has three days to go. He will get there. But I do not think it will. Because it is a real report by real economists with real credibility. We remain one of 26 sub-sovereign jurisdictions in the world with a triple-A credit rating.

**Mr Luke Foley:** I am sure you will feature in it.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There is a lot there, I say to the Leader of the Opposition. As I said before, the better the economy goes, the shorter his updates become. Importantly, our triple-A credit rating did not just happen; it happened because we have maintained a strong fiscal discipline to reign in Labor's legacy. The shadow Treasurer tries to reinvent history. We know Labor left debt and deficit as far as the eye could see. I can inform the House—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I challenge the Treasurer to tell us two years when we ran deficits—two. Name two years.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Fifty bucks if you can.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Resume your seat.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Fifty dollars if you can name two years.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I will. How about the last one?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Labor once had a good Treasurer in Michael Egan.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** But they were vanity surpluses at the expense of delivering the infrastructure the State actually needed.

**Mr Michael Daley:** If you want to talk about former Treasurers—

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** Your Government used to have a Treasurer they were proud of too, before you came along.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member will resume his seat. That was very good.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** What was that?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I do not know what it was; it was not a point of order and it was not the truth either.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Labor left the State with deficits and debt, which we have cleaned up. We know that and they know that. I also inform the House that just before question time we received a deposit into the New South Wales bank account of \$9.3 billion for the WestConnex transaction, money that will build the missing link between the M4 and the M5, and provide billions of dollars for schools, hospitals, road and rail across this State. We know the Opposition opposes the transaction and we know the Opposition opposes WestConnex, but, importantly, we know that this transaction did not just happen. In fact, it almost did not happen because of the behaviour of the shadow transport Minister. As we know, she was so political, without any due process, without any commercial advice, without any understanding of the complex nature of that transaction she wrote to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and demanded that one of the consortium be immediately ruled out. [*Extension of time*]

Simply to get a news grab, juvenile Jodi jeopardised billions of dollars for the people of this State. Following the announcement, which the shadow Treasurer did not attend, there was a press conference with the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow planning Minister. I mean, I love Robbo, but I would never let him run a transaction. But along comes the shadow—

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

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: It is entirely in breach of Standing Order 75 for the Treasurer to refer to Minister Roberts as "Robbo".

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I uphold the point of order. Members will be referred to by their electorates.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Withdraw the comments about the Minister.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I withdraw the comments about the great Minister for Planning of New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I make this point—and this is why Luke dropped him—he sat there and said, "We oppose the transaction and oppose the road, but, no worries, we will pocket the money." That says everything about the hypocrisy of the Labor Party. Labor members have opposed asset recycling and have opposed

every measure the Government has taken to get the budget in order, but they are always there to spend the money. They came in here last week and spoke about Infrastructure Australia and we know the shadow Treasurer's great new plan to reduce the discount rate from 7 per cent to 4 per cent. He still keeps at it. What did Infrastructure Australia say? He says it backed it in, but what did it say today? "We wouldn't do this to the kids in our schools; it's intergenerational theft. We would not lower the standards in our hospitals and we wouldn't do it for our major infrastructure projects." Infrastructure Australia goes on to say, "Lowering the rate will make the process worse. It's like reducing a passing grade from 50 per cent to 25 per cent." That is what you get from the Labor Party. *[Time expired.]*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will resume his seat.

#### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE REPRESENTATION**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:01):** My question is directed to the Minister for Women. Does section 68 of the Industrial Relations Act, which provides that a woman must not have her work terminated because of pregnancy, offer protection to the member for North Shore against her male preselection challenger?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I rule the question out of order.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Could you tell us why you have ruled it out of order?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Because I have ruled it out of order. It is inappropriate. Members laugh about it.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Standing Order 126 does not have a paragraph (d) that says "it is inappropriate." A question can be asked about a Minister's portfolio and public affairs. If the Minister for Women can't be asked—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** For a start, who would handle that question? Which Minister?

**Mr Michael Daley:** The Minister for Women.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member is wrong. The member will resume his seat. It is not the Minister for Women.

**Mr Michael Daley:** You can't just rule questions out on a whim. So, she doesn't know how the industrial relations [IR] Act applies to women?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Was it an industrial relations matter or not? Yes or no?

**Mr Michael Daley:** No.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It is not. In that case, I do rule the question out of order. Resume your seat.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** If I may assist, it is quite—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I do not know about assisting, but I will listen to you.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** It is quite clear that, as usual, you are right. The question is totally out of order to the Minister for Women.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have ruled that way.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** I am merely trying to back you in.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I appreciate the support.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** To the point of order: Mr Deputy Speaker, are you saying that matters that have been raised in the media by the member for North Shore cannot be raised in this House?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I did not say that at all, but that is a typical response from the Opposition.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** I simply want to clarify your ruling on the point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have clarified it for you.

#### **OUT OF HOME CARE**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:04):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to improve the lives of children and young people in out-of-home care? Is the Minister aware of any alternatives?

**Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (15:05):** I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question and note his commitment to bettering the lives of our most vulnerable children. As the Parliament would know, the New South Wales Government initiated Their Futures Matter, which is a landmark reform to deliver improved outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families. The Government's vision is to create a service system that delivers coordinated and evidenced-based support for children and families to transform their life outcomes. Unfortunately, there are some children and young people in out-of-home care who have experienced severe trauma and, as a result, display complex and challenging behaviours.

The Government is committed to finding and implementing evidence-based services that give those particularly vulnerable children the support that they need to successfully live in a family setting. That is why recently I was very proud to announce that the Government has invested almost \$5 million to implement Treatment Foster Care Oregon. This program will act as a pathway for children and young people whose behaviour is difficult to manage in the current care setting to transition into long-term stable placements. Under this program, children displaying complex and challenging behaviours are placed with a highly trained carer for from six to 12 months while being supported by a group of qualified specialists: a child therapist, a family therapist, a teacher, a team leader and a caseworker. Those specialists work with the child, the carer, the local school and the long-term carer or family to ensure that the trauma is treated and that the challenging behaviours are addressed and managed.

The program is backed by evidence from numerous international trials and has led to great outcomes for children who have experienced it elsewhere in Australia. I am very proud to be part of a government that is committed to tackling the biggest challenges in our child protection system and achieving better outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. I am asked about alternative approaches. Unfortunately, once again the shadow Minister and member for Bankstown has shown a total ignorance about how to improve the lives of vulnerable children.

**Mr John Barilaro:** That is terrible.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I agree. The shadow Minister has never proposed a significant policy change or an investment or an improvement. Do Government members think that the shadow Minister welcomed the \$5 million announcement last week? No. Do Government members think she supported the fact that it is an internationally acclaimed evidence-based trial? No. Do Government members think she supported her own constituents in Western Sydney? No. Instead the shadow Minister and member for Bankstown issued a lazy press release criticising the Government for rolling out this trial in Western Sydney.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister is being very relevant to the question she was asked.

**Ms Anna Watson:** The Minister is not being anywhere near relevant to the question. All she is interested in is bagging out the member for Bankstown. For a Minister of the Crown, that is pathetic.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** That outburst comes from a political party whose government starved Western Sydney for 16 years. I remind the House of the quote in the media release:

Once again the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is ignoring the plight of vulnerable children in regional and rural NSW ...

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister is being very relevant to the question she was asked.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** What is this Government doing to protect vulnerable kids that causes the Minister to attack the shadow Minister?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Fairfield will resume his seat. I have ruled that the Minister is being relevant. I remind the member for Fairfield that he is already on three calls to order.

**Mr John Barilaro:** What about the alternative approach, which is you guys—the Opposition? You are the alternative approach.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier will come to order.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The member for Bankstown's own constituents should know, of course, that the member for Bankstown does not want them to benefit from an internationally tried and tested evidence-based program, which is exactly what she has opposed.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Clayton Barr:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Minister wishes to attack a member of Parliament, she should do so by substantive motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will listen further to the answer.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** We must start with the fact that the member for Bankstown needs to know that the Government already has introduced world-class therapeutic programs to keep families together. That includes Functional Family Therapy through Child Welfare [FFT-CW] and Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect [MST-CAN] in areas that include regional New South Wales. Nine hundred families a year receive assistance in locations such as Ulladulla, Coffs Harbour, Tamworth, Central Coast, Wagga Wagga, Leeton, Charlestown, Nowra and Shellharbour. [*Extension of time*]

Clearly, regional areas are benefiting from programs that will enable vulnerable families to continue to care for their own children in regional New South Wales. I remind the House that under Labor there was absolutely no focus on permanency or adoption. The shadow Minister was not a member of this House then. I was. The number of children in out-of-home care tripled between 1996 and 2010. The caseworker vacancy rate, which Labor used as a balancing budget item, soared to 13 per cent in 2009-10 and only one in five children received a face-to-face assessment from a caseworker.

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** That is Labor's legacy. That was the Coalition Government's starting point. Labor members can do all they like with spin, but they cannot change the facts.

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

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** It is this Government that has overseen a reduction in the number of children entering out-of-home care and families being assisted to actually keep their children. This Government has achieved a record number of adoptions and a record low vacancy caseworker rate—achievements that Labor members could never claim to have. That is why Labor members do not deserve to be anywhere other than on the Opposition benches.

#### **INNER SYDNEY VOICE AND COUNTERPOINT COMMUNITY SERVICES FUNDING**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:12):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier commit to supporting the social wellbeing of public housing tenants in Redfern and Waterloo by ensuring the longstanding and much-valued work of Inner Sydney Voice and Counterpoint Community Services continues to be funded?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:12):** I thank the member for Newtown for her question. It is actually the first policy question that I have had all week so I very much welcome the question. The member for Newtown mentioned this issue to me when we bumped into each other the other day. I assure the member for Newtown that our Government is absolutely committed both to supporting the most vulnerable people in our community, especially by ensuring that they have a strong and stable place in which to live, and to breaking the cycle of disadvantage, which is extremely important.

I appreciate the work done by the organisations to which the member for Newtown referred. I assure the member for Newtown that, as I understand it from advice from the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS], there was a tendering process in which the two organisations participated. Obviously, they were evaluated against other organisations that also want to provide those services. Along with every other government agency, FACS works to ensure that the very best proposals that benefit tenants are the ones that are successful. I understand that the process of determining the best provider was quite robust. But I share the member's absolute concern and support for ensuring that we provide services to the most vulnerable people. The Government also strives to improve the measurable outcomes that exist and are created when people have both a stable place in which to live and wraparound services to support them. I am assured that the tender process for that part of inner Sydney ensures just that. The Government wants to make sure that it supports organisations that provide the best opportunities for those most vulnerable. I am advised that the Department of Family and Community Services will continue to work with each current provider as well as the new providers to ensure that there is a smooth transition.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am very pleased to say that through the Government's Social and Affordable Housing Fund we have been able to ensure that a number of providers and organisations are at the coalface providing housing and supporting the most vulnerable. Since we have been in government, we are pleased that we have increased the number of social housing homes by more than 11,400. Of course, we are not stopping there; there is so much more that we need to do.

It is concerning that when those opposite were in government there was a decrease, on average, of 600 places every year. This Government has increased social housing places by more than 11,000 since we came to office; on average, those opposite decreased it by about 600 every year. They went backwards in supporting the most vulnerable. Through thousands of extra places to live, we are supporting those most vulnerable with the most support. We ensure that when different tenderers assume those services there is a smooth transition. I thank the member for raising the issue; I know it is something that she cares passionately about. I assure her, as I know the Minister of Family and Community Services does on a daily basis, that we are a government that is committed to supporting the most vulnerable. We have the resources and also the heart and the compassion.

#### NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE REPRESENTATION

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:16):** My question is directed to the Minister for Women. Are there any legislative protections available to pregnant women whose employment is under threat in light of the attempts of the Liberal Party operatives to put the member for North Shore out of work?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I rule the question out of order.

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (15:17):** I am happy to answer it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister wishes to answer the question.

**Ms TANYA DAVIES:** I thank the member for Bankstown for her question, which is her second attempt to get it right. Unfortunately, after 7½ years on that side of the House they still do not know which Minister is responsible for which legislation. Nonetheless, I am proud as the Minister for Women to represent the 3.9 million women who call New South Wales their home.

*[Interruption]*

I acknowledge that interjection from that side of the House—a yawn. That is what they think about the opportunity to represent our communities in this place. They are bored.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** I said "member for North Shore".

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member cannot change her interjection. I did not hear the word "shore".

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Point of order—

**Ms TANYA DAVIES:** It is an absolutely disgusting response. On this side, we believe to be able to represent our communities is an honour.

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

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** I make it very clear that I said, "member for North Shore."

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member will resume her seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** You can't beat the Russian.

**Ms TANYA DAVIES:** It is my heritage too.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Those types of comments are not acceptable.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** I agree.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** They came from the member for Bankstown's side of the House.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** I apologise.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Opposition tries to create a facade that it is protecting the community and then Opposition members make those types of comments in this place. Such comments are unacceptable.

**Ms TANYA DAVIES:** I remind members that it was this side of the House, the Liberals and The Nationals, that took action to change the legislation that was in existence—when those opposite were in government for 16 years—that allowed a pregnant woman working in the public service to be discriminated

against and be sacked. The Liberals and The Nationals changed that legislation. Not only do we have a track record—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Does that mean you are going to protect her?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! That part of the question should have been ruled out of order. Questions should not relate to a party or a person. I allowed the question only because the Minister for Women indicated that she wanted to answer it. The question is about pregnant women generally. Members will listen to the answer in silence.

**Ms TANYA DAVIES:** It was this side of the House that instituted this Parliament's first female Speaker.

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

**Ms TANYA DAVIES:** This side of the House, the Liberals and The Nationals, agreed to the establishment of a parents' room in this place for expectant mums and mums like me—today we celebrated Harry's second birthday—to facilitate women balancing their family and career.

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

**Ms TANYA DAVIES:** This side of the House has released the Women's Strategy to drive equality and opportunity for women across this State.

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

**Ms TANYA DAVIES:** The Opposition's pathetic attempts are on the record. This side of the House promotes women on merit. We do not tick a box. Every woman in this place is here on merit. Is there more work to be done? Yes, there is. I am confident that we will continue to strive towards equality when this Government will lead the State under our female Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, after the 2019 election.

#### MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:22):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex and the Minister for Sport. How is the New South Wales Government continuing to attract major sporting events, including the National Rugby League grand final? Are there any alternative arrangements?

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (15:22):** I thank the member for Parramatta for his question on attracting major events and fantastic sporting events like the National Rugby League [NRL] grand final. I will talk about that later. The member for Parramatta is a passionate advocate of the Western Sydney stadium, which will drive major events and sporting activities into Western Sydney. I update the House that the stadium is 70 per cent complete and it will be open in 2019 for fantastic events coming to Western Sydney. More than 1,200 jobs have been created in the creation of this 30,000-seat stadium in the heart of Parramatta, down the road from Eat Street.

A great sporting experience is coming to Western Sydney. It will be an experience that people from all over Australia will want to come to. Unfortunately, the members opposite do not want this to happen and are opposed to the Western Sydney stadium. The member for Fairfield was yesterday telling everyone in this Chamber how passionate he is about the Western Sydney Wanderers. I see that he has on his Wanderers tie and badge. That is fantastic. I cannot wait for the first game of the A-league season in Sydney against the Newcastle Jets on 23 November to see the member for Fairfield and the member for Auburn in the middle of the red and black block wearing shirts emblazoned with, "I don't support Western Sydney stadium." That will go down as an absolute treat. If the Opposition really does not support it, they should go out there and stand with the fans and tell them they do not support the Western Sydney stadium.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister is being entirely relevant to the question he was asked. There is no point of order.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** He is not. I am a foundation member and so is the member for Auburn. Of course we support the Wanderers. Where is your tie?

**Mr STUART AYRES:** The member is a foundation member who does not support the increase in facilities for sporting clubs in Western Sydney. That is the type of foundation member he is—no support for the Western Sydney Wanderers, no support for any of the rugby league teams. If he really believed it, like his boss over there, he would put on the shirt, stand amongst the most passionate of fans and tell them.



**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Paul Lynch:** The Minister is not entitled to speak directly to this side of the House. He must direct his comments through the Chair.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. That is two out of two.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** It seems very clear that the member for Auburn and the member for Fairfield are completely opposed to the Western Sydney stadium. They are completely opposed to every job it will create and they are completely opposed to every dollar that it will drive into the Western Sydney economy. It is as simple as that. If they do not support this stadium, they should go out there and stand in front of the most passionate fans in sport that Western Sydney has, the Western Sydney Wanderers fans, and tell them that they do not support the stadium.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I warn the member for Fairfield that he is already on three calls to order.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** If you believe in the Western Sydney stadium—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member must direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** —you should send the Penrith Panthers across and tell them how much they need to be in the big new facility. If you don't do that you don't support the stadium.

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

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I am loving the fact that the member for Cessnock directed his comments through the Chair! It is plainly obvious that those opposite do not support the Western Sydney stadium; they do not support attracting any events to Western Sydney; they do not support the visitor economy in Western Sydney. It is most likely that they want to export the National Rugby League [NRL] grand final to Queensland or to Victoria. That is what they want to do, in grand final week, when even a passionate Panthers fan like me can find it in myself to support the Roosters this weekend. I can do that because they are the only New South Wales team in both the men's and the women's grand final and it is a fantastic opportunity for us to get out there and support the New South Wales teams.

On the weekend we will see one of the great sporting events across the nation, the NRL grand final, and for the first time the women will be on the same stage as the men. That is fantastic. We should be getting out there and supporting Simaima Taufua, captain of the Roosters, taking on the Brisbane Broncos. It does not matter whether people support the Roosters or not, get out there and support the only New South Wales team that we have got in the grand final this year. Then when the men's game is on, we can get behind Boyd Cordner and the Roosters, because everyone in New South Wales has to make sure we take on the Victorians. Given that those opposite do not support any of the stadiums that we are investing in, it is hard to think that they are not fans of the Melbourne Storm and the Brisbane Broncos this weekend. They are the only people who want to export the grand final to Melbourne or Brisbane. [*Extension of time*]

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I would have thought that the Opposition would be supporting the National Rugby League [NRL] and the appointment of its new commissioner. It is a very important week for Sydney and the NRL.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** We know that those opposite do not support the Western Sydney stadium. We know they do not have the courage to tell people in Western Sydney that they do not support the stadium. We know that they will never turn up to those passionate fans and tell them. We know that they will not support the New South Wales teams this weekend. My message to everyone in this Chamber is to get out to the footy on the weekend, support the first ever women's grand final on the main stage of the NRL, and support the Roosters, even if it hurts a little bit, because they are the only New South Wales team on the paddock. When it comes to backing sport, I can say well and truly that there is only one side of this Chamber that is putting New South Wales first.

#### *Documents*

### **PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE**

#### **Tabling**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 14 of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010, I table the Parliamentary Budget Office Operational Plan 2018.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING****Chair**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 26 September 2018 James Henry Griffin was elected chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Pet Shops**

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

**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**.

**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**.

**Short-term Letting**

Petition calling on the Government to give owners corporations the authority to control short-term letting in strata buildings, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

**Campbelltown Railway Station Car Park**

Petition requesting that a multistorey commuter car park be built at Campbelltown railway station, received from **Mr Greg Warren**.

**Haberfield Public School Pedestrian Crossing**

Petition calling for a crossing guard at the Haberfield Public School Bland Street pedestrian crossing to protect student safety and for an investigation of the air quality around the school, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

**Werris Creek Road Upgrade**

Petition calling for funding to upgrade Werris Creek Road between Werris Creek and the City of Tamworth, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****Reports**

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

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:32):** As chair, I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Parliament on the recent inquiry of the Committee on Children and Young people titled, "Review of the 2016-2017 Annual Report of the Advocate of Children and Young People and the functions of the Children's Guardian." Part of the committee's functions is to report on how the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People has performed its functions under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, and to monitor and review the functions of the Office of the Children's Guardian under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012. To assist with the report this year, the committee heard from the Advocate for Children and Young People, the Children's Guardian as well as representatives from the Office of the Children's Guardian and the former chair of the Youth Advisory Council. Some of the key themes and activities in this year's report included the launch by the advocate of the Strategic Plan for Children and Young People, the work of the Advocate

engaging with children and young people, the operation of the Working With Children Check, and the public awareness and advice functions of the Children's Guardian.

I will now discuss in detail some of the key themes. The committee was pleased to report that after consultation with more than 4,000 children and young people and representatives across government, the advocate launched the first strategic plan for children and young people during the reporting period. The strategic plan establishes a set of standards against which New South Wales Government policies and services for children and young people can be measured. Through the plan, the advocate is acting in accordance with many of its statutory obligations, including to consult widely with children and young people and to focus on systemic issues. Another area the committee reported on was the advocate's engagement with vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including those in the juvenile justice system and those with disabilities. Given that children and young people in the juvenile justice system are particularly vulnerable, the committee was pleased to hear that the advocate plans to visit every juvenile justice centre in New South Wales twice over the next year and to trial exit interviews with juvenile offenders.

The committee was also pleased that the advocate is currently establishing an advisory committee comprising children and young people with a disability. The committee commended the advocate's efforts to reach children and young people in rural and regional areas. The advocate aims to ensure that 40 per cent of children and young people who participate in its activities are from regional and rural areas. It reaches those children by visiting regional schools, facilitating video conferencing at events and flying in children and young people from especially remote areas. The committee's report highlighted that children and young people had particular concerns about the use of drugs and alcohol and the lack of youth-focused drug and alcohol detox services, particularly in rural and regional areas. On this issue, the committee understands that the advocate's Our Local information platform will assist in improving access to information about drug and alcohol services that are youth-friendly.

I now turn to the Children's Guardian. In the 2016-2017 reporting year, the Children's Guardian processed close to 393,000 applications for working with children checks, with an average of 1,556 online applications per day. Of those applicants, 80 per cent were cleared within 24 hours. In terms of trends in compliance with the working with children check, the committee learned that within the volunteer sector there is only a 56 per cent verification rate by employers verifying the relevant details of a volunteer. This is compared to 82 per cent of employers in the paid work sector. The committee was informed that recent amendments to the Act now make it an offence for employers, including within the volunteer sector, to fail to verify details. The committee will monitor whether those changes improve the verification rate in the volunteer sector.

Another important area on which the committee reported was the public awareness and advice functions of the guardian. The committee was pleased to hear there has been a large uptake of the guardian's suite of Child Safe eLearning packages. The guardian wants to make the Child Safe products free and as accessible as is possible for more people. One final issue concerns the promotion of child safe principles. The committee considered that there may be merit in requiring organisations that have been identified by the guardian as non-compliant with the working with children check to complete child safe training. The committee noted that improving an organisation's understanding of what it means to be child safe is important to ensuring safe environments for children and young people.

To conclude my remarks on the committee's report for the 2016-2017 reporting period, I thank Ms Janet Schorer for her work and service to the community as the Children's Guardian and Mr Andrew Johnson for his work and service to the community as the Advocate for Children and Young People. I also thank their staff for what they do to make a better environment for our children and young people. I thank my fellow committee members, including the member for Charlestown, who will also speak to this report. I thank them for the hard work they put in and the interest they take. I particularly thank the committee secretariat for their hard work and support. They are phenomenal, as I say every time I speak on our committee staff. We could not do it without them. I commend the report to the House.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:37):** I am happy to contribute to this debate. Often in this place we get caught up in our positions as Government and Opposition and the hurly-burly of question time and taking points on one another. This is often what we get remembered for as politicians—the antics of the bearpit, if I can call them that. But so often it is the work of committees that makes a difference—the work done in meeting rooms, inquiries and hearings, and travelling across the State. The committees often do not behave in a partisan manner. They are opportunities for us as members of Parliament to get to know one another and work in a collegial fashion. They are productive, they are polite, and even with heavy subjects such as those this committee has dealt with—youth suicide and sexualisation of children—they can be enjoyable to be part of. That is why I particularly wanted to contribute to this take-note debate.

As is noted in the joint committee's report, the primary role of the Committee on Children and Young People is to monitor the exercise of the functions of the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People. Our role is set down in the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014. As well as establishing the new role of the Advocate for Children and Young people, the Act established the committee's role. Appendix 1 of the report outlines those functions and the committee chair has outlined them as well so I will not go into them further. Today I will comment on the work of the advocate for the period of the annual report. I commend the work of Andrew Johnson, the Advocate for Children and Young People. I am consistently impressed by Mr Johnson's ability to work with young people of all ages and backgrounds and from all locations, and his ability to properly put forward their views without colouring those views through his own lens.

The first Strategic Plan for Children and Young People was launched in July 2016. It was an incredible piece of work by the advocate and I must say his very lean office in consulting but, more importantly, listening to more than 4,000 young people across New South Wales—including in my area, the Lower Hunter—on what issues are important to them and what government can do to support them. The plan specifies a range of measures that will be taken across all government departments to address the six objectives young people raised in the consultations: being safe, connected and respected, and having opportunity, wellbeing and, importantly, a voice in the decisions that affect them.

I particularly mention an action that I view as incredibly important and innovative in this plan, and that is the development of young people as quality assessors. They will also be known as Children and Young People Inspectors and their role will be to visit services relevant to young people and provide feedback on whether those services are appropriately geared to children and young people. As adults we obviously have a view on how best to provide services for children and young people—after all, we were all young once. However, our society is rapidly changing and is increasingly complex, so what we think as adults may well be completely off the mark. I will be quite excited to hear about the findings of these inspectors. So far, 20 young people have been trained to be inspectors and 44 have registered interest in the role. The inspectors will provide the proof of the pudding as to whether government services are hitting the mark for what young people need.

In closing, I thank the advocate, Andrew Johnson, members of the energetic and thoughtful Youth Advisory Council and the Children's Guardian, Janet Schorer, for their responsiveness to the committee. I also thank the committee secretariat, Elaine Schofield, Emma Wood, Stephanie Mulvey and Abigail Turingan, and my fellow committee members the Hon. Wes Fang, the Hon. Paul Green, the Hon. Greg Donnelly, the members for Epping and Upper Hunter and of course the chair of the committee, the member for Holsworthy. I look forward to soon discussing the recommendations of the committee's next report on the prevention of youth suicide.

#### **Report noted.**

### **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)**

#### **Report: Inquiry into the Management of Health Care Delivery in NSW**

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

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (15:42):** I speak to the Public Accounts Committee's report of its inquiry into the management of health care delivery in New South Wales, which was tabled on 18 September 2018. This inquiry was conducted as part of the broader remit of the Public Accounts Committee to maintain a watching brief on public expenditure and the management of State financial outlays. Expenditure on health services in New South Wales constitutes more than a quarter of the State budget and is increasing due to pressures on limited resources, a growing and ageing population and requirements for better targeted treatments. The significant role of health care prompted the committee to assess its overall management with a view to identifying deficiencies in efficiency and effectiveness and recommending improvements.

The committee's inquiry was conducted against the background of the broader review of the Australian health system and the development of a performance framework endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, reported through the Council of Australian Governments. The terms of reference were designed to cover healthcare service delivery across the breadth of the sector, with particular reference to the performance reporting framework, data collection, information provision and the achievement of health system objectives. As the inquiry progressed, the committee's attention was drawn to media coverage of an incident at a mental health unit adjacent to the Lismore Base Hospital, indicating a complete breakdown in patient care.

In response to a request from the Minister for Mental Health, the committee paid particular attention to the provision of mental health services and whether appropriate accountability mechanisms are in place to promote the wellbeing of patients with a mental illness. The inquiry's detailed examination of mental health complements the work of an independent review of mental health services conducted by the New South Wales Chief Psychiatrist.

A key factor in the delivery of targeted and effective health services is the adequacy and accuracy of available data. The collection and use of data, which plays a vital role in health care administration and service delivery, determines optimal health outcomes. In the course of the inquiry particular issues were raised in relation to data privacy and the integrity and confidentiality of patient records. The collection of data based on incident reporting also emerged as a significant aspect of patient safety. The committee makes specific comments and recommendations to address these issues.

Due to the individual impacts of service delivery experienced by many patients, particularly in the mental health field, the committee received many personal, detailed and in some cases moving descriptions of system failures and their consequences for themselves and their families. A particular issue raised was the lack of specific targeting of drug treatments based on individual genetic profiles. The committee recommends that targeted drug treatment based on individual genetic profiles be given more emphasis in our health system.

As part of the inquiry, the committee convened an open public forum with patients, carers, healthcare providers and members of the public in Lismore. In addition, it conducted inspections and further meetings at the Lismore Base Hospital, including a visit to the refurbished mental health unit. While many individual accounts of service delivery were confidential and are not directly referred to, the issues raised have been taken into account in the preparation of the report and are reflected in its recommendations. The report makes 29 recommendations in all directing NSW Health to implement changes to improve data management, performance measurement, patient safety, healthcare coordination, consumer feedback, privacy safeguards, staff recruitment, targeted drug treatment and service integration.

The committee thanks all those who made personal submissions, shared their own experiences and participated in the inquiry by giving evidence at the hearings and at the Lismore meetings. In conclusion, I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions. It has been a long inquiry. Of course, I thank the committee secretariat, particularly Bjarne Nordin, for its assistance in conducting the inquiry. It has been an exhausting process and everyone did a great deal of work. I thank them for what they have done. I commend the report to the House.

**Report noted.**

#### **COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY**

##### **Report: The adequacy of youth diversionary programs in New South Wales**

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

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:48):** I speak as Chair of the Committee on Law and Safety on the committee's report on its inquiry, tabled on 20 September 2018, into the adequacy of youth diversionary programs in New South Wales. In conducting its inquiry, the committee considered how effective the State's diversionary efforts are in addressing the underlying causes of youth offending, getting young people back on track, and keeping them away from long-term involvement with the criminal justice system. The committee was particularly concerned about the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the juvenile justice system. It looked at the programs available to target this issue and how well they were working.

The committee undertook extensive consultation for its inquiry. It received 38 written submissions from a range of stakeholders, including the New South Wales Government, the Children's Court of NSW, peak representative bodies and legal experts. It also heard from 23 witnesses at three public hearings. In addition, the committee recognised the need to speak with people with on-the-ground experience. Therefore, it undertook a number of site visits during the inquiry. It visited Juvenile Justice centres in Wagga Wagga, Dubbo and Airds, the Mac River rehabilitation service in Dubbo, and the Youth Koori Court at Parramatta. The committee's visits to Juvenile Justice centres allowed members to speak directly with staff and detainees about diversionary programs, what was working well, and what could be done better.

It was sobering to talk to young people in those centres, and particularly to hear about their journeys. Some of them have gone through a lot and many have been abused and exposed to drug use. It was important that members heard both sides of the story. In fact, the committee was able to conduct one-on-one interviews with detainees and former detainees to hear about their lived experience in the juvenile justice system. It was a valuable process and the interviews with three detainees and one former detainee feature as case studies in the report. On behalf of the committee, I sincerely thank the young people with whom we spoke. Their candour about the supports that are needed to help young people get back on track gave members a richer understanding of the issues, and helped greatly in shaping the committee's recommendations and findings.

The committee's report makes 60 recommendations and 17 findings, which span a variety of areas, including mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, education and housing. They reflect the very real need

for wraparound support to ensure that young people's needs are met, and that the complex underlying causes of youth offending are addressed. In particular, the committee examined the diversionary options available under the Young Offenders Act, and recommended changes be considered to make it easier for the police and the courts to divert young people using warnings, cautions and youth justice conferences.

The committee also recommended that the Government examine the current age of criminal responsibility in New South Wales following stakeholders expressing concern that the current age of 10 years may be too low. In addition, the committee was concerned about evidence it received that young offenders in regional New South Wales are less likely to be diverted from the criminal justice system than those in a metropolitan area. To help to address this, the committee found there is a need to expand to regional and rural areas initiatives that have been successful in metropolitan areas of New South Wales, and made recommendations to achieve this. For example, it has recommended that the Government increase the availability of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services for people under 18 years of age, with a particular focus on regional areas. It also recommended extra funding so that more juvenile criminal matters across the State can be heard by specialist children's magistrates, given data indicating that they are more likely to divert young offenders than generalist magistrates sitting in the children's jurisdiction.

On the topic of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people in the juvenile justice system, the committee also made recommendations that aim to deal with this troubling issue. Chief among these is a recommendation to further expand the Youth Koori Court. The committee's site visit to the court at Parramatta confirmed overwhelming evidence that it is a culturally appropriate initiative that focuses on addressing the complex underlying causes of offending behaviour. Stakeholders also told the committee about the importance of safe and secure housing for youth diversion, and especially for those young people leaving custody.

Without safe and secure housing, young people cannot connect effectively with services, employment or education and are more likely to offend or reoffend. Based on this evidence, the committee made recommendations that build on some of the excellent initiatives of the New South Wales Government that aim to combat youth homelessness. This included a recommendation to increase the supply of social housing for young people exiting custody, and for people under the age of 18 more generally. In conclusion, I thank all stakeholders who participated in the inquiry and my fellow committee members for their valuable contributions. I also thank the committee staff for their professionalism and support. I commend the report to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:54):** As a member of the Committee on Law and Safety I wish to speak on this report on the adequacy of youth diversionary programs. I acknowledge the chair's concluding remarks about the support of the committee staff and I acknowledge the open mind of the chair in the conduct of this inquiry and what appeared to be a very collaborative approach by all the members of the committee, given the content and where we all sit on the political spectrum. An absolutely key element of this inquiry was our ability to go out to Juvenile Justice centres and meet with young people—current detainees and former detainees—who have found themselves caught up in the criminal justice system. I want to focus my brief remarks on a number of key areas that I believe are important to highlight. First, I would like to place on the record that The Greens, including me, object to the first finding of this report which is:

The NSW Police Force's Suspect Targeting Management Plan is an important community safety tool that should be retained.

There was no evidence provided to the committee to make this finding. We were provided with a statement by the NSW Police Force that it was useful and that there was support for the plan by the local area commands. However, there was no evidence provided on that, and when we asked for further information and whether this view was shared by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research or anywhere else, no independent information was provided. In fact, a number of submissions made to the inquiry recommended that the Suspect Target Management Plan should not apply to people under the age of 18—to children. Remember, a person may be put on the Suspect Target Management Plan even if they have committed no crime if the police believe that at some point in future that person may commit a crime. So it was very concerning to hear the evidence that the age of youngest person on the Suspect Target Management Plan was 13 years.

Now that I have put that objection on the record, I would like to talk about some positive recommendations that are in the report and highlight the concern expressed in evidence to the committee that a lot of disadvantaged young people are finding themselves with the necessary health care, psychological and mental care, dental care and education support that they need once they enter a Juvenile Justice centre. Surely there are better ways to provide those young people with those supports. It is great that the report makes recommendations to look at other ways to support young people.

The huge issue of homelessness and housing came out consistently in the evidence, particularly from the young people. A particularly concerning fact that the committee heard when we were visiting one centre was that Family and Community Services will not act to find a young person a permanent home because while they are in

the Juvenile Justice centre they are not considered homeless. Therefore the department cannot process their application, even though they know their release date, at which point they will become homeless. I hope that there can be some amendments that will change that situation. The final point that I want to highlight—which I feel shows the power of what this committee did in speaking to young people in Juvenile Justice centres—is recommendation 47. When I heard this evidence I made a note to myself that there was no way that this would find its way into the final report but it has. That recommendation was:

The NSW Government should consider providing a free Opal Card to young people for the six months after they exit the custody of Juvenile Justice NSW to assist them to link up with services and re-establish their lives.

That one practical recommendation would make a massive difference to the lives of the young people connected with the juvenile justice system. I look forward to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure implementing it.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:57):** As Deputy Chair of the Committee on Law and Safety I too would like to contribute to today's take-note debate on the Committee's recent report into youth diversionary programs. As the chair has noted, the inquiry provided an important opportunity for the committee to examine how well diversionary programs and efforts are working to keep young people out of the criminal justice system. The inquiry raised a broad range of issues and this is reflected in the committee's report. One of these issues is the NSW Police Force's Suspect Target Management Plan, and I would like to focus on that today.

The Suspect Target Management Plan [STMP] targets people known to be, or suspected of being, repeat offenders, or responsible for emerging crime problems within police area commands and police districts across the State. During its inquiry, the committee heard various opinions about the STMP. This included concerns from some that the STMP is undermining youth diversionary efforts. In particular, we heard that increased police monitoring of young people under the STMP can be perceived by those young people as unfair and arbitrary, and can cause poor relations between police and young people. The committee also heard calls for police to stop applying the STMP to anyone under 18 years.

However, police told the committee that a fair percentage of crimes committed in New South Wales are committed by people under 18 years. Further, the STMP allows police area commands and police districts to focus their resources in an efficient way to deliver maximum effect in maintaining community safety. Police area commands and police districts also provided feedback that the STMP is an effective crime prevention tool. Ultimately, the committee found that the STMP is a useful tool for ensuring community safety, and that it should be retained, including for those under 18 years. However, the committee also made recommendations to ensure that the STMP does not negatively impact the good work being done to divert young offenders.

These recommendations include introducing guidelines about the way in which STMPs are policed for those under 18 years to limit confrontational practices and language. We also recommended that high-level policy and operational arrangements for the STMP be made publicly available to increase transparency and accountability around the program. In addition, the committee noted its support for an initiative that already exists within the NSW Police Force so that children under the age of 12 years cannot be placed on an STMP without approval at assistant commissioner level.

The committee heard that the placement by the police of people under the age of 18 on an STMP is not a decision reached lightly. It is the objective of the police to initiate such action only after ongoing escalations in youth offending and after every available alternative has been explored. It is an absolute last resort, and it is in the interests of the community. Placement upon and management under an STMP is an alternative to arrest and incarceration. If a child is on an STMP they are generally at liberty on bail and/or undergoing some form of diversionary program.

In short, the STMP is a necessary tool for police in maintaining community safety. However, every effort should be made to ensure that placement upon an STMP does not undermine the valuable work that police and others are doing across the State every day to divert young people from the criminal justice system. In closing, I thank all those who provided evidence during the inquiry. I also thank the Chair, the member for Tweed, for his leadership, and my fellow committee members for their hard work. I also thank the committee staff for their assistance. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:01):** I make a very brief contribution to this debate. The deputy chair of the committee referred to the Suspect Target Management Plan and the issues raised in relation to it by the member for Newtown. The Suspect Target Management Plan is a tool used by the police to effectively divert young people from crime. That is its intention and its objective. Great results have been achieved through the use of those targeting arrangements in diverting people from committing crimes. I just want to make the point that there are currently only three children under the age of 14 who are the subject of that management plan. It is a useful tool. The committee embraced it. We ought to congratulate the police on the work that they do.

**Report noted.***Matter of Public Importance***MENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:03):** I thank the House for the opportunity to bring forward this matter of public importance, recognising Mental Health Month. As the shadow Minister for Mental Health I am very passionate about raising awareness of this issue. It is very important that all levels of government ensure that they are always raising awareness of mental health. October is Mental Health Month and it is important to acknowledge that raising awareness of mental health takes place over a month, not just a day or a week. The community is given the opportunity to take a full month to share the mental health journey. This year's theme for Mental Health Month is "Share the Journey". The theme conveys an important message that isolation has a significant impact on the wellbeing of everyone, particularly individuals suffering from mental illness or poor mental health. Share the Journey encourages people to reach out to friends and family during tough times and to find connections within local communities of people with similar experiences. It encourages individuals to share their stories and reach out to others who may need assistance.

These messages are particularly relevant, as recent statistics demonstrate that the number of individuals who have died by suicide nationwide is the highest in 10 years, with suicide being the leading cause of death in young Australians aged between 15 and 44. It is estimated that one in five Australians will experience a mental illness in any given year and almost half the population will experience a mental illness at some point in their lifetime. Approximately one million Australians suffer from a range of disorders such as depression and bipolar, and more than two million suffer from some form of anxiety. Mental health and mental illness are significant issues that we face as a society.

Many statistics concerning mental health are quite frightening. One in three young Australians experience moderate to high levels of psychological distress and one in seven adolescents aged 12 to 17 experience a mental illness. These statistics, unfortunately, are on the rise. New South Wales has the second highest increase in suicide statistics in Australia, and regional New South Wales has a suicide rate of 2.9 per 100,000 individuals, compared to the average rate of 1.6 in greater New South Wales. Suicide is higher amongst males. We are fortunate that a number of organisations undertake a range of programs and projects for people affected by mental health issues throughout the year to raise awareness and to ensure that there is more research and more support for people who are afflicted with any one of the numerous mental health conditions.

I acknowledge important dates like R U OK? Day, World Suicide Prevention Day and World Mental Health Day, along with Mental Health Month. In my own community I will attend Waratah Day on 1 October, which will be held by the community mental health support group Beautiful Minds. Many other organisations are involved with mental health. I acknowledge headspace, beyondblue, Lifeline, the Butterfly Foundation, One Door Mental Health and Sane Australia for the tremendous role they play in supporting individuals with a mental illness.

In my patch I acknowledge the Canterbury-Bankstown Council for organising a number of events, including yoga classes and a film festival, within Mental Health Month to encourage individuals to think about their own mental health and wellbeing. I also acknowledge the WayAhead Mental Health Association NSW for organising a number of Mental Health Month events throughout New South Wales and creating this year's theme. The association continuously provides educational facilities and services to ensure that we as a community raise mental health awareness statewide.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:08):** Mental Health Month is important, and I thank the shadow Minister for Mental Health and member for Bankstown for bringing this matter of public importance to our attention this afternoon. Mental Health Month is aimed at encouraging us all to reflect on our own mental health and wellbeing. It gives us the opportunity to recognise the importance of mental health in our daily lives, and encourages people to seek help if they need it. As we have heard, this year's theme is "Share the Journey". Share the Journey is about fostering a better sense of connection with others around us to reduce isolation and stigma around mental health issues. Isolation is one of the key triggers for mental health difficulties, and one that other people can help sufferers to overcome. Connecting with others is vitally important for health and wellbeing.

Studies have shown that feeling connected, valued and loved by others gives us a sense of security, support, purpose and happiness. These social relationships are essential in maintaining wellness and preventing mental health issues. The importance of good mental health cannot be overstated. Almost half of all Australians will experience a mental disorder at some time in their life, and around one in five of us will experience a mental disorder over a 12-month period. Any ill health, whether mental or physical, affects not just the individual concerned but also those around them, including immediate family and the larger circle of loved ones.



As a Government, our vision is for a mental health system where services are oriented to the needs of individuals, carers and families, and where help is available wherever and whenever people need it. As a Parliament we have come a long way in appreciating the seriousness of this issue over the years. In 2011 then Premier O'Farrell instituted the first Minister for Mental Health, identifying it as a priority that needed to be specifically addressed. This theme is shared across the aisle as everybody becomes aware of the need to reach out to support those in the community who are unwell and to reduce the stigma of being unwell so that help can be delivered. Our Government is proposing a 10-year program of reform to our mental health system, which is underway to help us achieve these outcomes.

This program is a major piece of work that will ultimately create a system that is more responsive to and supportive of individuals of all ages who may need help. It will mean more people will be able to access care. It will give more support for staying well at home as community mental health services are enhanced. It is services oriented to individual patients, carers and families to help people live better lives in the community and in other care settings. It will mean a better balance between care provided in our hospitals and that provided in the community. For people with complex needs, there will be a focus on high-quality acute and long-stay care.

Underpinning our efforts is a record \$2.1 billion investment in mental health as part of the 2018-19 New South Wales budget. The commitment includes \$39.4 million to deliver an extra 1,400 mental health admissions and \$100 million per annum over four years to strengthen early intervention and specialist community mental health teams, to enhance psychosocial supports and to transition long-stay patients into the community. A feature of this year's budget is a new \$700 million statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program. It is designed to enable us to update and transform our existing facilities to better support new contemporary care models. As part of this program, we will be delivering up to 260 new step-up, step-down community-based beds to transition long-stay mental health patients from hospital into community settings to support recovery.

The Share the Journey theme is an encouragement to all of us to connect with others in our community, particularly those who feel isolated, feel lonely and have more time on their hands than is healthy for them. It is an opportunity to reach out and perhaps try an organisation like a local bowls club, an amateur drama society, a choral society, a men's shed or whatever attracts the person's interest and gives them a way to connect with others and become involved. Often these opportunities provide people with an outlet to do something for others at the same time and is a great reward in itself. I support this matter of public importance, which gives us an opportunity to talk about Mental Health Month. I encourage everyone in our community to share the journey and help others do so as well.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:13):** Happy tenth birthday, headspace Gosford: Thank you so much for all the work you do, your fabulous commitment to supporting young people on the Central Coast and acknowledging that things will improve with more input and more resources. And a huge thankyou to all the individuals, families, friends, organisations and workers across the coast who every day support individuals living with a mental health condition. It is an honour to speak on the importance of Mental Health Month in the New South Wales Parliament today, and I thank the shadow Minister for Mental Health, the member for Bankstown, for bringing it to the attention of the House. It is especially an honour after listening to the personal stories of so many people in the Gosford electorate who live with mental health conditions and to one of Australia's leading experts, Professor Pat McGorry, who advised New South Wales polities yesterday in Parliament that we need to pull up our socks to catch up with demand for mental health support in New South Wales.

During October I encourage all to visit the Mental Health Art Works Exhibition at the Gosford Regional Gallery on the Central Coast. I thank Central Coast Primary Care for putting the exhibition on for the nineteenth year. Artists of all ages affected by mental illness exhibit a diverse range of artworks, including different mediums in painting as well as sculpture, drawings, ceramics, photography and writing. The artworks engage the Central Coast community in a better understanding of mental health issue as artists share their own personal stories in a unique exhibition. Mental health is real. My brother-in-law Tim lives with a mental health condition. He lives a good life and is working hard towards achieving his goals.

I am honoured to have spent time during the past two weeks with returned servicemen Luke, Matt, Jim and James, who expressed with honesty and dignity the impact serving for Australia has had on their own mental health. Whilst we worked together to promote the Invictus Games to students across the Central Coast, these four guys gifted me with an insight into the real impact on mental health of serving our nation in the military and living with mental health struggles. The Invictus Games offer us a new space in Australia to openly discuss the realities of post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] and mental health and the impact that it has on individuals, their families and friends. When we launched the games in Sydney late last year, I was comfortable with the athletes with physical disabilities but was very quickly brought up to speed on post-traumatic stress disorder by the able-bodied athletes living with mental illnesses who will be competing in Sydney in October.

On the stage of primary schools in the Gosford electorate, these returned servicemen generously shared their personal stories of PTSD and the work they have done to overcome their own mental health challenges. They all talked of pushing through their personal struggles to be able to re-engage in their communities and reconnect with family members, work, community, and to be on the stage of local schools promoting the games. I thank Matt, Jimmy and James and send my absolute best wishes to Luke Hill, our very own Coastie, who will be representing Australia in the Invictus Games in swimming next month. In the words of Prince Harry, the Invictus Games are not about gold, silver or bronze. They never have been. It is about the journey that athletes and families have had to the start line.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:16):** In reply: I thank the member for Riverstone and the member for Gosford for their contributions to the debate. I note that we have 51 mental health units in New South Wales. The member for Riverstone acknowledged that there is \$700 million in infrastructure funding for the next four years. There is \$20 million allocated for infrastructure improvements across the 51 mental health units for the next year. To date, it is not clear where that funding will be allocated or how. Mental health is an area that often enjoys bipartisan support because every one of us in this House wants to ensure that mental health is funded properly, particularly when we think about acute mental health and the state of our mental health units in New South Wales.

I acknowledge how important it is for us to be transparent when it comes to mental health. Last year, I called for an inquiry into the resourcing and capacity of our mental health units, which was, sadly, rejected by the Government. I also acknowledge and thank the member for Gosford for providing us with some detail about some of the events that will take place on the Central Coast. It is good to see that in her community there is a particular interest in supporting a variety of different programs related to mental health. I do not know if I would quote Prince Harry, but no doubt some members appreciate that. I thank all members for their support for this matter of public importance. As parliamentarians, it is important for us to end the stigma around mental health.

I acknowledge someone from the other side who is passionate about ensuring that the stigma around mental health ends: John Brogden. I am going to meet him shortly to discuss Lifeline and the work he does there. I acknowledge the many different mental health organisations. I also acknowledge Carmel Tebbutt, who has taken up a new role as well. A number of events have been held by the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health and I acknowledge the work of the many parliamentarians who are involved, including the Hon. Scott Farlow, who is chairperson of the group. I thank members for their support. Mental Health Month will be an opportunity for each of us to attend community events across our electorates. It is a wonderful opportunity to share the journey with those who are suffering with poor mental health and to support the many community members who are taking care of their loved ones during difficult periods.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **MAL'S TOY SHOP OWNER MAL GEARY**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:19):** I pay tribute to a local businessman in my electorate, Mr Mal Geary. Mal's Toy Shop has called Chatham Avenue home for approximately 30 years and has been a haven of fun for children of all ages. Mal has seen many trends come and go over the decades, including board games, collector cards, models, kites, furbies and train sets. When Mal and his family announced his retirement and the closure of the store on 1 November on Facebook, community members were quick to share their memories. On behalf of a grateful community, I thank Mal.

#### **ITALIAN AUSTRALIAN SERVICES AND WELFARE CENTRE INC.**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:20):** I rise to recognise the Italian Australian Services and Welfare Centre Inc., a community organisation that is registered as a charity. The organisation was established to provide for the relief of the poverty, suffering, distress and misfortune of people in New South Wales, particularly people of Italian descent or origin. The organisation has been in existence for only a couple of years but already plays an important role for the Italian-speaking community in south-west Sydney, especially the Fairfield and Liverpool areas. The organisation fulfils a particularly important role for older members of the community and focuses particularly on persons of Italian descent or origin. I have had the pleasure of attending several of the organisation's events and was at the 2018 annual gala lunch in July at St Johns Park Bowling Club. The organisation provides, among other things, a welfare agency, day care for seniors and the Marco Polo Italian School. The vast bulk of what is done by the organisation is done by volunteers. I acknowledge the good work done by the organisation committee, which includes President Giovanni Testa, Vice-President Giuseppina Cavallaro and Secretary Stella Maimone.

**AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY MUSIC LEGEND DREW MCALISTER**

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:21):** I acknowledge Australian music hero and down-to-earth living legend Drew McAlister. In 2003, Drew won the Maton Talent Search at the Gympie Muster and in 2007 won his first Golden Guitar. He went on to win many more Golden Guitars for "Song of the Year" and "Heritage Song of the Year". Drew has achieved so much, releasing many albums. I congratulate him on the release of his latest album, *Coming Your Way*, which contains some of the best music ever made and speaks of real life and personal inspiration. I really appreciate the lyrics of the song *Coming Your Way* and encourage everyone to have a listen. The song helped me during some difficult times. I congratulate Drew on supporting the music industry by helping new artists and raising money for our farmers. I am pleased that, after working with him on the upcoming Mount Hunter Country Music Stampede, I can call him a mate. Drew is a true-blue Aussie, a country music legend and a national treasure. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I thank Drew for his music, support of the music industry, farmers and community. Thanks, mate.

**BIRRONG SPORTS FOOTBALL CLUB PRESENTATION DAY**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:22):** Last Sunday I attended the Birrong Sports Football Club Presentation Day. It was a wonderful opportunity to share with the many families who were in attendance. My own two sons received their awards on the day and were a bit embarrassed when I had to hand the awards to them. It was a wonderful occasion. I pay tribute to the club executive members: President Tyrone Wait, vice-president John Webbey, secretary Michelle Davis, Andrew Baker and club captain Stephen Howell. I thank all the volunteers, who put a fantastic day on. There were lots of rides, activities and fun games, including bubble soccer, which I did not try but which my sons and daughter loved. I also acknowledge the Bankstown Sports Club, which always sponsors the Birrong Sports Football Club. I wish the club good luck for the next season.

**SURF LIFE SAVING NSW**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:23):** As we look forward to summer, I highlight the excellent and important work of Surf Life Saving NSW, a wonderful community organisation that has its headquarters in Belrose, a suburb within the electorate of Davidson. Surf Life Saving NSW has more than 21,000 volunteer surf lifesavers and more than 330 lifeguards patrolling our beaches each summer. Coordinated through the Surf Life Saving NSW State operation centre, the system has saved more than 1,000 lives since 2008. Tragically, there have been four coastal drownings along our beaches in the past week. Tomorrow, Surf Life Saving NSW will launch the start of the patrol season by raising the iconic red and yellow flags at Manly Beach—the home of the member for Manly. The Premier, the member for Manly and I will be in attendance, as well as, I am sure, other colleagues. I thank Surf Life Saving NSW for its ongoing efforts to keep beachgoers safe, and I encourage people to get involved with its fantastic work.

**UNDER CONSTRUCTION CHOIR TENTH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:24):** Last Saturday, I had the pleasure of attending the Under Construction Choir's tenth anniversary concert. The Under Construction Choir is the Newcastle region's mental health and wellbeing community choir. In Mental Health Month, it is apt for this House to recognise its importance. The choir was formed in 2008 by a group of mental health consumers as a means to help them unlock their creative potential through singing. The program aims to develop positive connections, enhance health, wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence in a fun, engaging and non-threatening environment. On Saturday, their voices and harmonies were beautiful. I commend the choir on its performance. I will leave members with the following quote that accompanied my invitation to the concert:

Music has such an extraordinary capacity to take us out of our heads and into the realm of the spiritual. When I sing I am mindful of only the music thus giving a welcome break from my head. I feel. I love. I experience.

**MIGHTY CLARENCE TOASTMASTERS CLUB AWARD RECIPIENT SUE HEREFORD-ASHLEY**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:25):** I congratulate Sue Hereford-Ashley who recently was named the 2017-18 Toastmasters Oxley Division Director of the Year for her outstanding service and exceptional leadership. Sue joined the local Mighty Clarence Toastmasters Club in 2011 after searching for something to get her out and about and meeting new people. She then went on to be an area director for two years before taking on the division director role. Sue says that, with the changes that are occurring with technology these days, the traditional role of Toastmasters in mentoring and assisting young people with their communication skills has taken on a reverse mentoring phase: The older members of the club are helping the younger people with how to speak, and the younger people are assisting the older members by mentoring them to become tech savvy. I wish Sue and all the members of the Mighty Clarence Toastmasters Club continued success in the future.

### **WOY WOY RUGBY CLUB**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:26):** Congratulations to the Woy Woy Rugby Club for another very successful season. It was great to catch up with Eric Tweedale at the Lions presentation dinner at the Ocean Beach Surf Life Saving Club last weekend. Eric is Australia's oldest living Wallaby, who played for Australia between 1946 and 1949. At a very sprightly 97 years old and with his walking stick hidden in a corner, Eric says he has a great quality of life at the Peninsula Village and recites poetry whenever he can to keep his brain active. Eric was joined by Jim Phipps, whose parents owned the third house built in Ettalong. Jim Phipps played for the Wallabies between 1952 and 1958. By the looks of things on social media, the presentation night ended up in spectacular style. What a great way to finish a successful season for the Woy Woy Lions. Congratulations to all the award winners, individuals, teams, volunteers and committee members. I give a special shout-out to the brand-new women's team that was formed only this year and made it through to the finals. Bring on 2019. Up the Mighty Lions!

### **RUGBY UNION EXHIBITION MATCH**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:27):** Last weekend I was proud to host a rugby match at the Brookvale Oval in support of the 2018 Invictus Games, which will be held in Sydney between 20 and 27 October. Nearly 1,000 locals turned out to watch the mighty Manly Marlins take on the Royal Australian Navy Rugby Union team. The exhibition match between the two sides was to raise awareness for the Invictus Games on the northern beaches while highlighting the power of sport to inspire recovery and support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding of and respect for our veterans, including our contemporary veterans. While the Marlins won the match, it was a wonderful day and both sides should be congratulated on playing the game in the true spirit of the Invictus Games. I recognise the contributions of the Manly Marlins and the Navy Rugby Union players and executives, the team from the Northern Beaches Council, the Manly Lions Club, the Manly Warringah Pipe Band, the Four Brothers Espresso and the Hot Dog Man for their contributions on the day, as well as Mr Brad Hunter from Salty Dingo and Mr David Campbell for their sponsorship of the event.

### **MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF THE ILLAWARRA STALWART RUDI HORVATH**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:28):** Recently Rudi Horvath stepped down from the Board of the Multicultural Communities Council of the Illawarra [MCCI] after serving for 40 years. What an incredible effort and amazing contribution! Rudi is from Zagreb, Croatia. He arrived in Wollongong in 1959. He was involved in establishing MCCI in 1975 under its former name of the Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council and has been on the board since 1978. He is a champion of multiculturalism, a dedicated community leader and a committed South Coast United Football Club fan. It was through sport that he was able to help break down barriers within and between communities, but of course people like Rudi do not stop. Not content to completely vacate the field, he will continue to support MCCI as a Community Ambassador. I thank Rudi for his contribution over many years on behalf of everyone he has helped directly and everyone else who has benefited from his decades of effort.

### **JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH FOUNDATION CENTRAL COAST ONE WALK**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:29):** I am a very proud supporter of Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation [JDRF] and its mission to treat, prevent and cure type 1 diabetes, and turn type 1 into type none. Last Sunday, the Central Coast One Walk 2018 was held. It is estimated to have raised more than \$20,000. I am very pleased to have secured an additional \$5,000 grant from the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, for the Central Coast One Walk, leading to money for research into type 1 diabetes.

I was delighted to attend and participate in the walk—I actually started the walk this year—with 300 local people joining everyone at the beautiful Davistown waterfront. JDRF research is made possible only by people who donate their time and energy to raise money and awareness about type 1 diabetes. I take this opportunity to thank all involved in making the Central Coast One Walk happen again last weekend. Every single day, seven people in Australia are diagnosed with type 1 diabetes—indeed, there are 1,600 people on the Central Coast with type 1 diabetes, 383 of whom live in the Terrigal electorate. It is absolutely essential that we do everything we can to work to help turn type 1 into type none.

### **AGED CARE EMPLOYEE DONNA JONES**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:30):** I recognise the amazing contribution from the Whiddon Group of Laurieton employee, Donna Jones, who was recently acknowledged on Aged Care Employee Day for her 24 years of working in aged care sector. Since taking up her career 24 years ago, Donna has diligently focused her efforts on providing a safe and loving atmosphere for elderly residents living at the Whiddon Group

retirement home. Donna acknowledges her passion and motivation to care for elderly is a rewarding experience, notwithstanding the valuable life experience and stories of times past that can be learned through caring for older people.

On 7 August 2018, Aged Care Employee Day was celebrated at the Whiddon Group in Laurieton to mark the special and significant role that aged care employees play each day to support all aspects of the entire industry. Employees are recognised for their tireless contribution that often takes them above and beyond the call of duty. Donna acknowledges the holistic approach of care provided by employees on a daily basis, and the challenges of levels of care with each individual situation that are not often considered by people from outside the sector. In recognition of Aged Care Employee Day, I thank the wonderful aged care workers for their outstanding efforts in working morning, noon and night to care for the elderly in our community.

### MAROUBRA SYNAGOGUE

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:31):** By leave: I ask the House to recognise that the Maroubra Synagogue has just celebrated its seventieth anniversary. Established as the Kingsford Maroubra Hebrew Congregation by Holocaust survivors as "an act of faith, belief and defiance", the Maroubra Synagogue's website states:

These qualities, instilled by the founding families, continue to set the tone of a community that is aware of its past and at the same time embracing its future.

The Maroubra Synagogue established a preschool, supported by Jewish families, shortly after it was established—a preschool I attended. In 1980 a group of parents who had children at the preschool decided to start a primary school. With a loan from the Jewish Communal Appeal [JCA] in February 1981 Mount Sinai College opened at the Maroubra Synagogue. Since then the adjoining land was acquired and, after a number of building programs, it is one of the leading Jewish Days Schools. The success of the Maroubra Synagogue, which is one of the largest in Sydney, is a result in no small way of the determination of Holocaust survivors and their families. The Maroubra Synagogue began from adversity and atrocity to become what is now a renovated and vibrant modern Orthodox Jewish community. I ask the House to pay tribute to the Maroubra Synagogue, its history and heritage, and those families who are responsible for the synagogue's success.

**Business interrupted.**

### *Petitions*

### WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE KOALA HABITAT

#### **Discussion**

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:32):** Today I lead the discussion on the petition, and at the outset I thank the 13,000 people who signed this petition that was organised by the Wollondilly Shire Council. I thank the council for recently presenting me with the petition for tabling, led by the mayor and the councillors. I acknowledge the presence in the House of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Deeth, and councillors Michael Banasik and Matthew Gould, and I thank them for their attendance today. The petition has been supported by many members of the community. The day I was presented with the petition was a great day and I thank everyone responsible for it. I also thank everyone who played a part in bringing this very important issue to the attention of the House.

I highlight the good work in which the Government and I have been involved over a long period of time to protect the only disease-free koala colonies within the Wollondilly electorate and within the Macarthur region. The New South Wales Government has partnered with the Wollondilly Shire Council and other organisations, including the Koala Health Hub and Conservation Volunteers Australia, on a vital project that is helping to protect this valuable population of koalas and their habitat and to inform future development planning and conservation management decisions. The project aims to deliver vital information about where koalas live in the Wollondilly, to help to identify how they move about, and to map the Wollondilly's high-quality koala habitat.

The Wollondilly Koala Conservation Project has significantly raised awareness about the important koala population in the Wollondilly shire. There has been a significant increase as a result of reporting from the community. More than 400 systematic spotlighting surveys for koalas have been completed to inform our understanding of the Wollondilly koala population's distribution and density. Koala habitat mapping is currently being developed using the survey data, 100 fine-scale vegetation plots and new aerial photo interpretation. The Wollondilly community has been highly involved in this project, volunteering with the Office of Environment and Heritage and Conservation Volunteers Australia to collect data by radio tracking koalas and restoring koala habitat. The data and information collected by this project is already helping to identify risks to koalas by analysing

injury and fatality data. It is also identifying approaches that the community and Government can take to ensure a viable breeding population of koalas into the future.

The information collected so far has been used to inform advice to Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], the Wollondilly Shire Council, and the Department of Planning and Environment on measures to help to reduce koala road deaths. The New South Wales Government has supported the Wollondilly Koala Conservation Project, with \$90,000 in funding 2016-2017 and a further \$101,000 in funding 2017-2018 provided through our Saving our Species program, which aims to secure threatened plants and animals in the wild in New South Wales. The Government has pledged \$100 million over five years to the Saving our Species program to protect the State's threatened species. The support for the Wollondilly Koala Conservation Project is just part of the action that the New South Wales Government is taking to protect our iconic koalas.

On 6 May this year the Government released the NSW Koala Strategy, committing \$44.7 million towards securing the future of koalas in the wild. This is the biggest commitment by any State Government to koala protection. It also sets out the foundation for the Government's longer term vision to stabilise and increase koala populations across New South Wales. In addition to this, I have been working closely with RMS and the Government to see what we could do to put wildlife barriers on Picton Road. Further discussions have been had in relation to Appin and other major roads. I acknowledge that logistically, practically and effectively this is a major challenge that must be resolved to protect our koalas.

On the development side of the equation, urban growth in Western Sydney requires careful and strategic planning to balance the need to deliver housing and infrastructure, and maintain and protect important koala population. I have been advised that the circumstances that led council to proceed with the petition have been resolved in part by council and the applicant regarding the Wilton South East precinct. But the work does not stop there. Strategic conservation planning will avoid important koala habitat, including primary habitat corridors, when determining the development footprint within Wollondilly and beyond. In the Southern Highlands, I was pleased to announce a three-year \$450,000 collaborative project with the Wingecarribee Shire Council to address koala conservation in the highlands. Statewide spatial analysis has highlighted that the Wingecarribee area has highly significant for koalas, just like Wollondilly.

The funding will be over three years and will support a koala project officer, who will be employed and co-funded by the council and operating in the region. The Wingecarribee Shire Council will contribute significant resources to the project, including staff time. Partnerships with other conservation groups in the region will be developed now that the funding agreement is finalised with the council. The work with both Wingecarribee and Wollondilly councils delivers against the NSW Koala Strategy commitment to local actions for key koala populations across the State. While I still have six months in this role, I will continue to fight for our koalas. I thank the visitors of the Wollondilly Shire Council for being here today, leading the charge for our community.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:37):** I thank the 13,000 residents who signed the Wollondilly Council's petition, as well as the proactive community that supports this serious and important issue. I acknowledge deputy mayor Councillor Deeth, Councillor Banasik, Councillor Gould and Damo from the Wollondilly Shire Council and their passion on this issue. I also note Councillor George Greiss from the Campbelltown City Council in the public gallery. In 1933, Benjamin was trapped in the Florentine Valley and was later moved to the Hobart Zoo. Benjamin was the last surviving Tasmanian tiger; he died on 7 September 1936. That date is synonymous in the minds of many preservationists, but indeed many Australians because it is known to be the extinction of that tiger. We do not want that to be the case with koalas. A report by Patrick Wood said:

Koalas are on track to be extinct by 2050 in New South Wales if current land clearing rates continue. We do not want to be in that situation and that is why this petition is so very important. Koalas are listed as vulnerable in the New South Wales Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Development has placed Campbelltown's koalas in an extremely vulnerable position. Yes, we want to live in a home, but koalas and our habitat need a home too. The preservation of habitat and the preservation of our koalas must be at the forefront of any planning framework and have as much priority as the profits of developers or the needs in those particular areas. I was talking to my colleague in Wollongong. In 1803 the first two koalas were captured in Port Kembla.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Just up the road from my house.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** Yes. Campbelltown, as we know, has the largest disease free colony in New South Wales, that is, no chlamydia. The first European reported of sighting of the koala was at Bargo in the Wollondilly electorate. The 2016 report of the chief scientist estimated the population between 100 and 150. The biggest threats were wildfire, vehicle collisions, habitat loss and domestic dog attacks, with vehicle collisions and habitat loss highlighted as the biggest concerns. We must find the balance and we must maintain the preservation of our koalas as a priority. The Federal Government's Department of Environment and Energy stated that from 1990 to 2010 New South Wales' koala population had declined from 31,400 to 21,000, which is 33 per cent. The

Queensland population decreased from 295,000 to 167,000, a reduction of 43 per cent. The life expectancy varies, depending on which agency or organisation you listen to, but it is around 12 years.

On 6 May this year Premier Gladys Berejiklian and environment Minister Gabrielle Upton launched the \$44.7 million New South Wales koala strategy—\$20 million for new reserves—but not one of those reserves was in Macarthur or Campbelltown; 24,000 hectares was set aside for koala parks and reserves on the Central Coast, Southern Highlands, North Coast, Hawkesbury and Hunter, but none in Campbelltown or Macarthur; and \$10.8 million to improve safety and health, which included fixing vehicle strike hot spots, but they are not aware of any in Campbelltown or Macarthur at all. The planning guidelines have not been adequate for Campbelltown, and I refer to Gilead and other areas of development around the Appin Road. There must be a balance. Preservation must be the priority. There is an allocation of \$8.9 million to increase our knowledge of koalas and of their habitats, but knowledge is no good if koalas and their homes are wiped out.

[Interruption]

I note the interjection by the member for Wollondilly. He can be certain, along with the people of New South Wales, the people of Wollondilly and everyone who signed this petition, that Labor will make the preservation of our habitat a priority. Labor will not sit back and see our koalas become extinct. We will lead the charge in this area under a Labor Government. [Time expired.]

**Mr Jai Rowell:** The Liberal Party has already done that, fixing up your mess.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:43):** We all agree that koalas are an iconic part of both Campbelltown's and Wollondilly's natural history. As we have heard, the first recorded sighting by Europeans of a koala was near Bargo in 1798. We have also heard that the south-west of Sydney is home to Sydney's largest disease free koala population. These are significant facts that we need to take into account. Clearly, this Government wants to incorporate in its planning a strategic approach that assesses where koala habitat is and where koalas are likely to be found so that it is possible to develop in a balanced way while protecting the koala populations. That is why the Government is committed to protecting the habitat of those threatened species, especially iconic species like the koala, as we roll out strategic planning. The Government has acted to protect koalas and their habitat using legislation and policies, such as the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and the Local Land Services Act 2013.

A significant number of koala sightings were reported by the community, which triggered the Wollondilly Shire Council and the New South Wales Government undertaking the Wollondilly Koala Conservation Project. As members have heard, the project has grown over the last two years, with recent surveys proving that there is a healthy colony of breeding koalas in the region. The Government has acted by providing a \$90,000 grant from the Saving our Species program to the Wollondilly Shire Council for expanded survey work. Furthermore, in May last year the New South Wales Government released the NSW Koala Strategy which sets an objective to stabilise and then increase koala numbers over the longer term, ensuring genetically diverse and vital populations across New South Wales. That is key to ensuring the viability of the population and the genetic diversity. There have to be koalas protected in a variety of regions in a number of different parts of the State. We cannot concentrate all our eggs in one basket. Clearly we have to look after a lot of baskets, if that is a term one can use.

Planning well in the Macarthur region is as important as planning well on the Central Coast, on the North Coast, in the Hawkesbury, or wherever else, to ensure that where koala habitat is identified, where feed trees are found, that we take the appropriate measures to protect the populations in those areas. Those on this side of the House understand and appreciate that balancing urban growth in Western Sydney requires a calm and strategic approach in order to deliver more houses and infrastructure while protecting these important koala populations. Our strategic conservation planning approach is critical to achieving this result. The Government's work will help identify and avoid important koala habitat, including primary koala habitat corridors, when determining the development footprint in the growth areas in Wollondilly and Campbelltown. The strategic conservation plan for Western Sydney will set specific requirements for protecting species, such as koalas. The Government is committed to ensuring koalas survive in New South Wales.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (16:46):** I acknowledge our special guests in the gallery, whom have been noted by my colleagues. I lend my full support to the intention behind this petition, that is, to conserve and preserve the healthy koala population in south-west Sydney. I thank all the residents who have signed this petition as a way of showing their commitment to our environment and our koala population. The petition with 13,000 signatures is undoubtedly a significant response to what is a very important issue in our local area. My electorate of Macquarie Fields is bounded by the lungs of Campbelltown in the Scenic Hills to the west and the lush bushland along the Georges River to the east. As I have said many times in this Parliament, I am a passionate defender of these green spaces, which are increasingly under threat by overdevelopment.

In my recent Stop the Squeeze survey, thousands of people provided feedback on how they feel about development in their area, what they fear about overdevelopment, and how important it is to save our green, open space and maintain our local community's environmental heritage. My survey is providing valuable insight into how deeply my constituents care about our green, open spaces and our precious wildlife, with specific mention of the local, healthy koalas. People lament the fact that koala habitat is being destroyed. They fear that koalas will no longer exist in the wild and zoos will be the only place to see these incredible animals.

It is no secret that the Campbelltown local government area [LGA], where more than half of my electorate sits, is home to the only disease-free koala population in the Sydney Basin. Long-time koala expert Dr Robert Close told ABC Radio last year that the combination of vegetation, Sydney's sandstone and the Cumberland Plain Woodland soils as well as the close proximity to the Georges River have allowed the koala population to survive longer than have other colonies. But urban splatter has a negative impact on their habitat. Koalas are increasingly being spotted in urban environments, getting caught in fences whilst avoiding domestic pets, or tragically lying on the side of the road after being hit by a vehicle.

Just yesterday Help Save the Wildlife and Bushlands in Campbelltown posted on its Facebook page a story about two koalas being rescued from a fence in Macquarie Fields. Thankfully the mother and its joey were given the all clear by Sydney Wildlife and WIRES before being released into nearby bushland. Unfortunately, many others are not so lucky. The green, open spaces in the Scenic Hills and at Hurlstone are under threat from overdevelopment, which will result in irreparable destruction of natural habitat for our koalas. The best way to protect our koala population is to develop a clear conservation plan for south-west Sydney. I stand with the residents who signed this petition along with the Wollondilly Shire Council to send a strong message that our green spaces and our koala population need protection and it is a worthy cause to be protected for future generations.

**Ms Tamara Smith:** I seek leave to make a contribution on behalf of The Greens.

**Leave not granted.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **WALLAMBA BULLS WOMEN'S RUGBY TEAM**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:51):** On Saturday the Wallamba Bulls women's rugby team played in the Lower Mid North Coast Rugby grand final. They were the minor premiers for the year. Unfortunately, on the day they were beaten by the Gloucester Cockies. I congratulate Sharon Cobb, Kaley Barnett, Nic Cooke, Lalirra Simon, Hayley Dunk, Shannon Hensing, Chantelle Guihot, Kirsty Schumaker, Ashley Lambourne, Lena Donnelly, Katie Waardenburg, Lorraine Benson and Sarah Tout, and their coach Daniel Sawyer, manager Rodney Watt, trainers Jason Nicholson and Eric Haley, and ball boys Macauley Morris and Hamish Wilson.

#### **QUEEN'S SCOUTS AWARD RECIPIENT ANGUS ELLIS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:51):** On the weekend I was once again delighted to present Angus Ellis of the 1st Belmont Scouts Group with a Queen's Scouts Award. Angus is another worthy recipient. After 3½ years in the Venturers Scouts working towards his goal, he finally received the prestigious Queen's Scouts Award. Angus particularly enjoyed the outdoor pursuits of abseiling, cross-country skiing and sailing. He developed his leadership skills by mentoring and guiding the younger Venturers and organising and running activities for the scouts and cubs. Angus also contributed to the local community through a local Landcare project and participated in the Australian Jamboree 2016 as a Venturer helper, assisting in running the rock-climbing base. He attended Australian Venture 2018 in Brisbane and chose the tall ship sailing expedition. He thoroughly enjoyed three days sailing on the *Solway Lass* in the Whitsundays as well as snorkelling, swimming and climbing the rigging. Angus's passion for the great outdoors has helped him to reach his goals.

#### **MATER DEI SPECIAL SCHOOL FUNDRAISING DINNER**

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:52):** I acknowledge my beautiful wife and family who are in the gallery today. Even though I am retiring from politics, my wife insisted that we attend the annual fundraising dinner for the Mater Dei Special School on our wedding anniversary. The annual fundraising dinner raises funds for students with special needs. I acknowledge that two of our three sons are here today. Menzies is growing up to be an awesome young man and we are proud of him. Today our newest son attended his first question time. He was like a duck in water in the Chamber. My advice to him is not to get used to it; he does not want to be here. Our older son will be in Parliament later in the year doing work experience. I am blessed to have the most amazing family. I love them all very much.



### CABRAMATTA MOON FESTIVAL

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:53):** Last weekend I attended the annual Cabramatta Moon Festival, marking its twentieth anniversary. As always, the streets were packed as approximately 90,000 people descended on John Street and Freedom Plaza. Smiling children and families filled the streets. The aroma of delicious food filled the air and the sound of the *dom cheng* filled our ears as multiple lion dancing groups performed throughout the day. The festival highlighted the fact that Cabramatta is now a popular destination for locals and tourists. I congratulate everybody who has been involved in the Moon Festival over the past 20 years, including community members and the Fairfield City Council. I especially congratulate and thank the Cabramatta place manager, Cheryl Bosler, and her team for their hard work in putting together another hugely successful Cabramatta Moon Festival. Cheryl and her team put their heart and soul into the festival every year so that we all enjoy a fantastic Moon Festival. Well done to the Cabramatta place team and the army of enthusiastic volunteers.

### TRIBUTE TO BARRY SUMPTON

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:54):** It is with a heavy heart that I pay tribute to a great man, Barry Sumpton, who was taken from us far too early. Barry was an outstanding educator whose passion for education and genuine care for every student saw him make a remarkable impact across the community. Thousands of people have been able to realise their potential thanks to the dedication, passion and outstanding education they received from Barry Sumpton. He was known for his love of literature, music and his genuine care for every student he came across.

Barry had a distinguished career as a teacher and school leader. In retirement, he continued to give back to the profession by mentoring and supporting new teachers on a voluntary basis, particularly at the Hornsby North Public School. He was as good a man as anyone will ever meet. He always had time, a kind word and a big smile for those he met. Barry's other passion was, of course, his beautiful family. His wife, Maree, was the love of his life; they were the perfect partnership. His daughter, Katie, and son, Dan, are remarkable people—as one would expect with the parents they had. He leaves us far too soon and will be greatly missed by the entire Hornsby community and education fraternity. Rest in peace, my friend.

### ST MARYS SPRING FESTIVAL

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:55):** I congratulate everyone involved in organising St Marys Spring Festival. There were 20,000 people on Queen Street to celebrate the coming of spring at our famous festival. The weather was wonderful and, as always, the highlight of the day was the grand parade, which saw community groups march down Queen Street with floats. There was also live entertainment. During the week we saw the crowning of St Marys Citizen of the Year—always a great event—which went to my great friend Tom Thorburn. He has been a resident of St Marys for three decades—a relative newcomer to that community—and webmaster for the St Marys Historical Society for 22 years. He has been an active volunteer with the spring festival for two decades and is vice-president of the St Marys Senior Citizens Club. Well done to Tom.

### HURSTVILLE MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:56):** Recently I attended the Mid-Autumn Festival in Hurstville, organised by Kingsgrove community services. I thank everyone involved in the event, including centre manager and chief executive officer Anne Farah-Hill, who is a wonderful supporter of the multicultural community in the St George area. The Mid-Autumn Festival began as early as 3,000 years ago during the Shang Dynasty and is celebrated all over the world. Here and overseas, the celebration usually begins on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the Chinese lunar calendar. Kingsgrove community services celebrated it last weekend and it was well attended by many Chinese people living in and around the local area. I thank them all and wish everyone a happy Mid-Autumn Festival.

### BLUE MOUNTAINS ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE GROUP

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:57):** I acknowledge my local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, which provides advice; promotes respect, empowerment and self-determination; participates in collaborative consultation; and advocates for cultural affirmation to ensure that the diverse and unique identities of Aboriginal students, teachers, families and local areas are recognised and valued. I acknowledge the Indigenous communities that I represent: the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. Ngarra Wingarru is the Blue Mountains group, which meets each school term. I attended a recent meeting at the Faulconbridge Public School and was impressed with the large attendance. The school library was filled to capacity with interested and engaged people. I thank some of our former and current committee members and those who are important educative connection points in our community. These people are instrumental in sharing knowledge, stories and resources in working collaboratively with our community at large: Jacinta Tobin, Charmaine Tully, Ian Frape, Uncle Graeme and Emma Le Marquand.

### KU-RING-GAI NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:58):** The Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre [KNC] is an organisation that does wonderful work within my local community in the Ku-ring-gai Council area. It is a mainly volunteer-based organisation that has played an invaluable and integral role in the community as an information centre and service provider operating out of St Ives. The Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre turns 40 next year. It has a long history within the region of active, comprehensive and non-discriminatory support—particularly of the aged. That allows greater access to services for people regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre was led by chairman John Bagley, who sadly passed away in June this year. I acknowledge his significant contribution. Peter Lenehan has taken over the chairman's role, which he has performed previously, and is supported by the deputy chairman, Frances Forrest, and a great board. Chief executive officer Michele Bell leads the centre's operational team, which includes a large number of wonderful volunteers. For example, Jan Kirkland received the 2018 Mayoral Award for outstanding contribution to the community by an individual after joining the KNC in 2010. Well done to Jan and to the whole KNC team.

### SADLIER PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:59):** I recognise the Sadlier Public School and particularly acknowledge the official opening of its all-purpose sports court earlier this year. The court was funded through the Community Building Partnership program and I was delighted to support its application. I was approached by the school parents and citizens association [P&C] and met with Safaa Achour, Layla Charafeddine and Tina Shashati and had discussions with the principal, Matthew Ralph. The result was my suggestion of a Community Building Partnership grant application. The opening also featured Kevin Lisch of the Sydney Kings. Also present were the current P&C officeholders: president Jenny Blunt, vice-president Maria Tsoukalas and vice-president Denise Dunn. The new facilities already have been well used by students. Interestingly, teachers told me that those using the court were not only those students who were usually involved in sporting pursuits. That is undoubtedly very good news. It is also a testament to the good sense of the previous Labor Government, which instituted the scheme.

### TERRIGAL ELECTORATE MEN'S SHED

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:00):** Last week we celebrated Men's Shed Week. This is a great opportunity to acknowledge some of the great work that volunteers do across New South Wales. In my electorate of Terrigal there are four fantastic men's sheds: Terrigal, Erina, Kincumber and a new one at Copacabana. A few months ago the Minister for Mental Health, Tanya Davies, joined me at Copacabana to announce \$21,800 from the State Liberal Government to lay the foundations for the new Copacabana Men's Shed. I am delighted that I was able to secure the funds for this project, and I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of Mike Mitchellmore, Ian Lord and all the local residents involved. Each of the men's sheds across my electorate has a significant number of members, which reflects the important role they play in our community. Men's sheds provide a chance for elderly men to socialise in a safe and comfortable context, and contribute to our community in a range of ways. This is certainly true of our local men's sheds across the Central Coast. I congratulate them and pay tribute to all their great work.

### LASALLE CATHOLIC COLLEGE GRADUATION DINNER

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:01):** I thank the LaSalle Catholic College, Bankstown, for the kind invitation to attend its year 12 graduation dinner on Tuesday evening. I acknowledge the principal, Michael Egan, Brother Jerry, and former police commissioner, Ken Moroney, AO, APM, who is a former student at the LaSalle Catholic College. There were many other guests and lots of parents and families in attendance, not to mention the proud year 12 boys from the college. The school is now co-educational. In two or three years time male and female students will graduate from year 12, but at the moment it is only boys. As always, it was a delight to see them in the wonderful mother and son dance—the boys were very embarrassed. I acknowledge the school and all the students.

### TRIBUTE TO RUSSELL JOHN SHARP

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:03):** I bring to the attention of the House and pay tribute to a remarkable constituent of mine who sadly passed last week. Russell John Sharp—known to locals as the Flower King—was a local legend in Rozelle. His florists shop coloured life on Terry Street, Rozelle, thanks to his exceptionally beautiful blooms and his vibrant personality. The Flower King was larger than life. Whether a customer or a pedestrian, people could expect a warm wave and a hello from The Flower King every time they passed his little shop. Dare to stop, and he would give a lengthy run-through of the day's arrangements and all manner of ways they might brighten your life. In his personal life, Russell was a caring and gentle soul who

warmed the hearts of everyone he knew. He will be missed by his friends, family, the floristry industry and of course by the people of Rozelle, who loved his store and his personality. A funeral service to celebrate Russell's life will be held in St Canice's Church in Elizabeth Bay tomorrow at 2.00 p.m. Rest in peace, Russell.

#### **WALLAMBA BULLS MEN'S RUGBY TEAM**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:04):** I congratulate the Wallamba Bull's Men's Rugby Team who won the grand final 19-13 against the Forster Dolphins last Saturday. I congratulate Chris Pfeiffer, Curtis McNally, Paul de Szell, Joshua Porche, Tim Horn, Rhys Hessing, Daniel Hessing, Tom Berry, Andrew Payneter, James Dinnan, Curtis Paff, James Handford, Saul Clough, Steven Curnow, Chris Tout, Daniel Aldridge, Aaron Gordon, Jayden Watt, Mitch Ede, Jessie Wrigley, Nathan Ford, Ben Thomas, Daniel Sawyer, John Stevens, Phil Entwisle, Adrian Pryke, Lee McDonald, Aaron Griffiths, and coaches Lee Sullivan and Jim Wilson. It was a game played in the proper spirit and on a great afternoon. There was a big crowd at Tuncurry. The Wallamba Bulls were the minor premiers and well-deserving winners.

#### **GALGABBA SCHOOLS STEM EXPO**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:04):** I know my colleagues agree that one of the great things about being a representative is seeing the next generation apply their experiences and creativity to real-world problems to come up with a solution. I was fortunate to see this recently at the Galgabba Community of Schools STEM Expo, which I attended at the Swansea High School. Students from Nords Wharf, Swansea, Pelican Flat, Marks Point and Blacksmiths public schools put their heads together to resolve the real-world problems we face in our local community. The students developed creative solutions to problems like adapting homes to accommodate rising sea levels and developing ways to live more sustainably in ecologically sensitive areas like our community. In addition, the students had the opportunity to hear from Oenone Wood, who shared her journey from an elite athlete to a woman working in STEM. It was a fantastic evening, and I was very impressed with the students' projects. I say a big thankyou to the organisers. We are safe when we have kids like this leading the way.

#### **KING GEORGES ROAD WIDENING**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:05):** Motorists on King Georges Road are closer to faster and more reliable journeys with concept design plans taking shape to widen the road between Beverly Hills and Hurstville. Roads and Maritime Services has developed a proposal to ease congestion, save time and improve journey reliability on King Georges Road between Stoney Creek Road, Beverly Hills, and Forest Road, Hurstville. Motorists are experiencing significant congestion on King Georges Road, particularly during peak periods when more than 43,000 vehicles are travelling in both directions. The people in my community have been waiting for more than 40 years for the widening of Kings Georges Road. The plan will prevent right-hand turn movements in some sections of the road. Work will also include relocating street lighting, kerbs and drainage, road resurfacing, line-marking and some tree removal, trimming and landscaping. The community is invited to review the concept designs at the project website. They can contact Roads and Maritime Services and provide feedback between now and Sunday 21 October. This is a big win and a boost for my local community.

#### **LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE CLUB GRANTS PROGRAM**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:06):** I acknowledge the ClubGRANTS Program in the Liverpool area. Last month I was able to attend the Mounties Club for its presentation of club grants. It allocated grants to 43 community organisations involving 47 projects valued at more than \$650,000. These were split 55 per cent to 45 per cent between Fairfield and Liverpool council areas. This amount was only part of the \$5.7 million that Mounties allocated that year for community purposes. Over seven years, the club estimates that it has allocated about \$40 million. I acknowledge the club's vice-president and Chair of the Grants Committee Steve Fitzpatrick and other grants committee members, Trevor Foreman and Lorraine Dean, and chief executive officer Greg Pickering and his staff. Also present on the night were directors Leon Hansen, Jenny McNevin, John Dean and Stephen Edwards. Also last month, a presentation was held at the Brighton Lakes Recreation and Golf Club, which featured the grants made in the Liverpool council area under the scheme. They totalled more than \$802,000. Apart from Brighton and Mounties, the other clubs involved in the program include Club Liverpool, the Liverpool Catholic Club, Moorebank Sports Club and Kemps Creek Sporting and Bowling Club.

#### **SENIORS CARD PROGRAM**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:07):** Businesses providing essential services, products and entertainment in the St George area are the target of a renewed New South Wales Government push to encourage more businesses to join the Seniors Card program. Recently I said the number of participating businesses offering discounts to Seniors Card holders had more than tripled since 2015. It is vital that we continue to do everything we can to put downward pressure on the cost of living. The Seniors Card program has enabled older people in the community to do more for less. Everyday living discounts range from energy to phone bills to education courses,

travel insurance and, of course, a simple coffee at a local coffee shop. Seniors are already enjoying some of these big savings through big brands like Woolworths, AGL and Telstra. I call on retailers throughout my electorate to get on board and to support the Seniors Card program. Business owners are catching on and realising that the benefits of offering a NSW Seniors Card discount are twofold in that it entices new, loyal customers and gives back to the community. When the cost of living is increasing, this is a great initiative by the New South Wales Government.

### **BANKSTOWN MID AUTUMN FESTIVAL**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:08):** I thank the Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS] for its kind invitation to join its members at the Mid Autumn Festival celebrations at the Bankstown Senior Citizens Centre. I pay tribute to Henry Pam, OAM, Ivan Wong, Colin Chen and the many other distinguishes guests. I acknowledge Councillor Rachelle Harika, who was also in attendance. It was wonderful to see so many seniors from the Bankstown CASS group at the lovely celebration where we enjoyed beautiful food, including some moon cake. The Mid Autumn Festival is the second largest celebration each year for the Chinese community. I again acknowledge the amazing work that CASS does within our community to support Australians of Chinese heritage.

### **LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATIONS**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:09):** I recognise the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee's NAIDOC Week festivities held this year in Liverpool, which consisted of a street march and community celebration. The march commenced in Macquarie Mall at Elizabeth Street and proceeded down the mall to Bigge Park where the community celebration was held. Mervyn Taylor was the master of ceremonies and the celebration featured a speech by Tony Scholes, Chair of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, and others. As part of the celebrations a morning of conversation and song with Christine Anu was held at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, which was followed by further entertainment and discussion.

A family fun day was held at the Miller Community Centre and Miller Square. The theme of NAIDOC Week this year, which was celebrated nationally from 8 to 15 July, was "Because of her, we can!" NAIDOC celebrations are an appropriate time to consider ways forward to reconciliation in Australia. Many of those present at the Liverpool events were strong supporters of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, an Aboriginal voice in Federal Parliament, a Makarrata Commission, with all the truth telling that entails, and the need for treaty.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **WEST WALLSEND BUTTERFLY CAVE**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:11):** I have spoken before in this House about the Butterfly Cave, which is a beautiful natural sandstone cave that happens to be a place where butterflies breed. More importantly, it is a sacred Aboriginal women's site in the electorate of Cessnock. We have been on a long journey to get to where we are today, but if any of us think that our work to save the Butterfly Cave is finished we are ignorant of the facts. The Butterfly Cave has been listed as a special Aboriginal place, and that is the wonderful thing. The failure of the listing is that the cave has been given only a simple 20-metre buffer zone.

As I have said before, we probably all have an Aboriginal artwork on our wall at home. The reality is that for our first Australians their journey was as much a part of their story as any given destination. That is why those beautiful pieces of artwork essentially show a bird's-eye view of the journey taken by various peoples as they moved across the country and interacted with the land in its natural state. It should not be a massive leap for us to comprehend that the journey to and from places is as sacred to Aboriginal people as the places to which they journeyed.

The small and inadequate 20-metre buffer zone around the Butterfly Cave shows ignorance and simply denies the obvious logic of the journey. The local Aboriginal women who it is my privilege and honour to represent have been helping me to understand the importance of the site. They have been working with various government departments at local, State and Federal levels to get the necessary protections not only for the site but also for the journey pathways to and from it. This morning it was heartening to hear the Minister talking about the national park estate and saying:

The fourth addition to the estate will be to the new Yengo State Conservation Area. As well as conserving important biodiversity, the bill will protect sites of significant cultural heritage. Around 647.5 hectares of Yengo State Forest in the central region will become Yengo State Conservation Area. The area has been identified as containing significant cultural heritage and the whole landscape is important to the local Aboriginal community.

I could not agree more. The Minister summed it up beautifully in addressing the need to protect an entire landscape because of the cultural significance to our first nations people. Yengo State Conservation Area happens to be in the electorate of Cessnock. I know for a fact that there are dozens of incredibly important Aboriginal historical

sites out there. People can only get to see most of them if they are Aboriginal and if they have gone through the necessary stages of becoming an elder—and then only if they are a senior elder in the local Aboriginal communities.

I repeat the Minister's words that the area "has been identified as containing significant cultural heritage and the whole landscape is important". That is the argument I have been posing about the Butterfly Cave. It is an argument I have been making for the past five years. It is not just a matter of putting a 20-metre circle around that cave and nor is it about recognising that destination; it is about recognising the journey to and from that destination. The whole landscape is important. I urge the Minister for Environment and Heritage who made that speech this morning to take stock of the beautiful Butterfly Cave and the surrounding bushland and to protect it in the same way that she sought to protect Yengo State Conservation Area this morning.

### **RURAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:16):** Once again I express gratitude to all emergency service workers and volunteers across the State. As this House knows, in April this year the people of the Holsworthy electorate—and also the people in the electorate of Temporary Speaker Evans—came together to combat bushfires that engulfed almost 4,000 hectares of land. When this crisis hit we were extremely lucky to see the many Rural Fire Service [RFS] teams and volunteers come together to defeat the fires which came right up to the back fences of people's homes. The fires were incredibly scary but those heroes came out to defend our homes and our environment, and we were so lucky to have them.

When I was asked to officially open the Sandy Point Rural Fire Brigade station on Saturday 15 September on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Troy Grant, I was delighted. The event once again highlighted a massive sense of community and dedication. It felt like one big family coming together, particularly as we have such a small community. I congratulate all the dedicated members of the brigade on making the wonderful facility a reality. The new station is worth \$1.55 million but to the members of this brigade it is a priceless resource. We are so lucky to have it. The station now features vehicle bays, a kitchen and amenities, a storeroom and a workshop, a training room, an operations and administration office, and an outdoor terrace area. That outdoor terrace area will be a big membership driver as it is in a beautiful spot overlooking the lovely Georges River.

As the brigade was formed in 1953 it has a history of 65 years. It has continued to grow since opening and now hosts 62 members, with nine added just last year. As I said, I believe the membership will be boosted now that they have a fabulous new station. An even greater achievement is that between these members they have a combined service length of 571 years. This remarkable number shows the dedication of the members of the Sandy Point RFS and their diligence and love for our community. I make a special mention of Mr Mark Cassidy, captain of the Sandy Point Brigade and also Mr Stuart Townsend, captain of the Menai Bushfire Brigade, who both received awards on the day. These two men are extremely dedicated to their brigades and are always at the front line when there are any fires to ensure that their local community is safe and protected. I acknowledge all the recipients of awards on that day and I commend every one of the volunteers of the RFS. Their jobs are often difficult and they demonstrate an incredible level of dedication.

I am so happy that we were able to deliver such a great facility for all the selfless, brave and generous people of the Sandy Point RFS brigade. I was able to thank not only the volunteers of the RFS but also the family members who support the RFS members to volunteer so generously. Delivering this station is extremely close to my heart, as many of the members of the Sandy Point RFS were the ones who helped save the 888 homes that were under threat from fire in April. It was such a pleasure to open the fantastic new station, and I congratulate all the members for their dedication and the hard work they do for the community.

The bushfire season is approaching yet again, and I would like to promote an exceedingly important event that took place just last weekend. The event was Get Ready Weekend, an initiative of the NSW Rural Fire Service to help to prepare for the upcoming summer. Over the weekend of 22 and 23 September the NSW Rural Fire Service hosted more than 600 events across the State featuring firefighting vehicle displays, information stands, kids activities and workshops. In the Holsworthy electorate we are lucky enough to have three amazing RFS stations, made up of Menai RFS, Casula RFS and Sandy Point RFS. Over the weekend all three of these stations put on their own events, which provided essential information and details to get our community ready for fire season.

I was fortunate enough to attend one of these events at Barden Ridge with Stuart Townsend and the other members of the Menai Bushfire Brigade. It was a wonderful day on which members of the community came together to learn what they can do to prepare for the fire season and also to thank members of the brigade for their contribution in protecting their lives and homes during the recent bushfires. It was also great to see that they have installed the new community notice board, which I was able to help fund through the Community Building

Partnership grants. This noticeboard also gives fire indicators so that we know when there is a higher risk of fire, which will be a great asset for our community.

I cannot even begin to explain how important it is to have a bushfire survival plan in place in bushfire season. Now is the time to do the work needed to get prepared for the bushfire season. The top five actions that the NSW Rural Fire Service recommends in preparation for the bushfire season include trimming overhanging trees and shrubs, mowing the lawn and removing all cut grass, removing material that can burn around your home, clearing debris out of gutters surrounding your home and preparing a hose that can stretch around the house. These five simple steps can make a huge difference in a time of bushfire. Once again I thank our RFS volunteers across the State.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:21):** I thank the member for Holsworthy for her outstanding effort in her electorate. I also thank the RFS, the Menai Bushfire Brigade and those who protect communities in time of crisis. Our emergency services do an outstanding job in our local communities. They go out of their way to protect the communities. They do a wonderful job in the Holsworthy electorate, in my electorate and across Australia. I thank those who went out of their way to protect the community of Holsworthy during the fires in April, which is not a time when we normally experience bushfires. I thank all in our emergency services, not just in the Holsworthy electorate but across New South Wales, who go out of their way to protect our communities.

### JOB SECURITY

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (17:22):** The former managing editor of *Time* magazine Henry Anatole Grunwald once said:

Journalism can never be silent: that is its greatest virtue and its greatest fault. It must speak, and speak immediately, while the echoes of wonder, the claims of triumph and the signs of horror are still in the air.

For the communities of New England and the north-west, and particularly those in the electorate of Northern Tablelands, this immediacy, this virtue and occasional fault, this act of journalism, is under very serious threat again, for the second time in three years. I spoke in this place in November 2015 about a date forever etched in the minds of residents of the Northern Tablelands: 5 November, when Fairfax media outlets across the north-west region were told that there would be mega staff cuts across the region.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Shame on them!

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Shame.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** I acknowledge the interjections of the member for Cessnock and the member for Gosford—absolutely shame on them. Across our famous and popular mastheads in the region, nearly 30 journalists, staff and photographers were given the chop. The spirit and journalism of our country communities have been the biggest losers as a result of these cuts. Papers like the *Guyra Argus* no longer have a shopfront in Guyra; the town's newspaper is now produced in Armidale. The *Walcha News* is also produced out of Armidale. The *Glen Innes Examiner* has one journalist when it used to have three. The staff complement of the *Moree Champion* was halved. The *Namoi Valley Independent* at Gunnedah, the *Armidale Express* and the *Inverell Times* were all profitable mastheads that had been around for more than a century proudly serving their communities and reporting on all sorts of matters.

Whether it is the fiftieth anniversary of the Country Women's Association, the cake stall at the local school fete or the big issues of government funding announcements for new hospitals and schools, cuts and various other political intrigues, the mastheads are a staple of every discussion around the kitchen table in every home in every community in the Northern Tablelands and across country New South Wales. That has all changed in the last three years. Unfortunately, I have heard some strong rumours about Fairfax, with the looming takeover of Channel 9—which has said publicly that journalism and newspapers is not really its priority—which I am calling on Fairfax to come out and deny. The rumours are that some of these well-known and beloved mastheads will be closing.

I have heard that the *Guyra Argus* will be completely shut down and retired, and I have heard that the *Glen Innes Examiner* will be retired after proudly serving the Glen Innes and Highlands communities for more than 100 years. This cannot be allowed to happen. It would be an absolute travesty and a kick in the guts to those communities, which need and deserve their local publications. They need and deserve to have their local news sources retained. It is an important part of the heart and soul of country communities to have that journal of record, where people can pick up the newspaper and see the sporting results from the weekend and how their grandkids went at the local eisteddfod, or learn about what is happening with their local council and what their State and Federal members are up to or not up to, whatever the case may be.

I call on Fairfax Media to come out and publicly announce what the future holds for the mastheads across the Northern Tablelands electorate: the *Moree Champion*, the *Inverell Times*, the *Glen Innes Examiner*, the *Guyra Argus* and the *Armidale Express*. While I am at it, Fairfax should also come clean about the future for the *Walcha News*, the *Northern Daily Leader* in Tamworth and my old paper the *Namoi Valley Independent* at Gunnedah, because the future of those papers are important to the people not in my electorate but in the region of New England and the north-west.

Newspapers are important in a climate where we are seeing the contraction of local media and the centralisation of local media. People get very few opportunities, whether it is in radio, television or print, to see local news about their local community. Increasingly, people are being fed stuff that comes from Sydney and other parts of the State that is not local and that they are not interested in. I am not interested in it either. We want to see our local news in our local newspapers. I call on Fairfax to come clean to the community about the future of our valued local newspapers.

### MANGROVE MOUNTAIN LANDFILL

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:27):** I speak of the interesting history of the Mangrove Mountain landfill site, holding a letter in my hand from one of the Mangrove Mountain RSL Sub-Branch members. The letter is dated 2002 and predicts that legal issues would arise in due course. The people of the Central Coast are still awaiting a decision of the current proceedings in the Land and Environment Court between Verde Terra Pty and the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA], adjourned for hearing until 9 October 2018. The proceedings concern applications made by Verde Terra to the EPA to modify an existing environment protection licence issued for the Mangrove Mountain landfill site.

The letter covers issues from the mysterious takeover of the local Mangrove Mountain RSL Sub-Branch by the NSW RSL—which to this day is still under scrutiny—to the recent decision by the EPA to refuse a new application from Terra Verde to continue its landfill dumping licence due to possible adverse impacts on the environment. This is not just the story of a simple landfill, and it goes back a long time. The Mangrove Mountain RSL Sub-Branch was one of the oldest in Australia. It was founded in 1919 and served most of the northern districts of New South Wales for a long time following World War I.

Over time, the local Mangrove Mountain residents helped build the club as it became the local social and community hub. A liquor licence was obtained—one of the very few on the mountain. Later a golf course was built, then the old club house was eventually replaced with the Mangrove Mountain Memorial Club and they obtained a long-term lease from the sub-branch. However, in 2013, seemingly out of nowhere, and against the wishes of a number of sub-branch members, the State Council of the NSW RSL determined that local members of the sub-branch be removed and an administrator be appointed. It was not much later that the NSW RSL notified Mangrove Mountain Sub-Branch that it was also taking control of its trust. On 7 February 2014 the NSW RSL sold the sub-branch's land for \$750,000 to Mangrove Mountain Properties NSW Pty Ltd—land that had been gifted in perpetuity to the Mangrove Mountain Sub-Branch by local residents all those years ago.

Some years later we have now heard of the reality of what was going on behind the scenes in the NSW RSL—financial corruption and cronyism. The former President of the RSL has admitted to a public inquiry that he misused charity money, including spending \$475,000 on a corporate credit card, using allowances to pay off a mortgage and buying mobile phones for his family. RSL clubs around the State, while doing the right thing, get hit by these crises and that is not fair. Local RSL clubs in each of our communities do the right thing, represent their members and give back. It is heartbreaking when a few hurt the reputation of many. It appears that the Mangrove Mountain Sub-Branch got caught up in the infighting and game playing that was happening in Sydney during 2014, and it is still living with that reality.

It was only shortly after the club was taken away that the Mangrove Mountain Sub-Branch and individual trustees were taken to the Land and Environment Court in relation to the operations of the Mangrove Mountain landfill. But it was a damning report from the NSW Auditor-General, Ms Margaret Crawford, that unveiled the sordid web of government failings and backroom deals that found that the NSW EPA was failing to fulfil its basic functions to properly regulate and monitor licences that impact on New South Wales drinking water supplies and failing to stop illegal dumping.

The NSW Auditor-General's damning performance audit report found deficiencies identified meant that the EPA could not be confident that it conducted compliance and enforcement activities consistently or that licensees were actually complying with their licence conditions or the Act. The report indicated that these failures could harm the environment and risk human health. Despite all that has gone on, all the controversy, all the finger-pointing and community outrage, the landfill owner is seeking orders from the Land and Environment Court to have its environmental protection licence varied so it can recommence operations at the Mangrove Mountain landfill. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. While the operator wants to plough on, the community

has stayed true to its desire to have the landfill closed down and remediated. There are too many issues, too many parties and too much history to hope that legal cases will get to the bottom of this issue.

I join the community in its call for a special commission of inquiry so all the questions that need to be asked can finally be answered. We need to know how the State's environment watchdog licensed the dumping of 500,000 tonnes of waste at the Mangrove Mountain golf course for nearly a decade and later backed the environmentally sensitive site as a regional landfill facility to take another 1.3 million cubic metres of waste. We need to know why the EPA failed to act on council complaints to its Newcastle office from as early as 2005 about the volume of waste and site operations. We need a special commission of inquiry. Tomorrow the Government is due to provide its response to the energy from waste report from the other place, which recommends an independent inquiry. In its response the Government needs to back the community, back that bipartisan report and commit to a proper and full commission of inquiry into the disaster that is the Mangrove Mountain landfill. I call on the Government to act.

### CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:32):** Today I recognise the Children's Festival 2018. Over the past 20 years the Children's Festival Organisation has run 29 successful festivals across several Sydney suburbs, giving generations of young people the chance to demonstrate pride in their culture, art, heritage and language. I acknowledge and congratulate a good friend of mine, president Thuat Van Nguyen, OAM, on his vision for a better connected community and on pioneering this event. This year's festival received an overwhelming response from schools, youth groups and multicultural communities that enthusiastically participated in the children's parade and on-stage performances. I am impressed that more than 40 youth groups from five continents participated in the festival.

Children are a starting point in building social cohesion. The Children's Festival is one of the best ways to create harmony in our community and to make us feel proud of being Australians. The experience of the festival has shown that this event is contributing to a more cohesive society and promoting peace in our community. By bringing people together in a fun family atmosphere, the festival showcases our wonderful diversity and helps us to build a more cohesive and harmonious society. Under the motto "Play Together and Live in Harmony", the Children's Festival is a day for everyone, but especially for children, to get together in a multicultural environment to have fun, join in creative activities and share those new experiences with each other.

The entertainment of great music, dancing, traditional costume displays, outdoor games and activities was second to none. The myriad of workshop activities, such as kite-making and flying, and the lion dance were a great source of entertainment and enjoyment for all festival attendees. In New South Wales, we now speak 215 languages, come from 229 birthplaces and from 307 ancestries. Our children keep such traditions alive while forming the future of our peaceful multicultural society. Research demonstrates that culture matters for children's development and wellbeing. We are cultural beings. We learn to communicate and understand our world through context of our languages, traditions, behaviours, beliefs and values. Our cultural experiences and values shape the way we see ourselves and what we think is important. Culture creates community. Cultural perspectives also influence how we do our parenting, how we understand children, how we help them grow up and how we teach them new skills.

I am extremely proud, as we all should be, of Australia being the most successful multicultural society in the world. Training and raising our children to be culturally aware and inclusive are the building blocks to making this statement true for our nation. Children learn and mimic things—I know because I have a four-year-old. They mimic things that they see around them and in their worlds. When we do not model respect and acceptance of cultural diversity to the next generation, we are allowing a breeding ground of racism, stereotyping and discrimination to develop. I hope that our actions, words and behaviours reflect kindness and genuine curiosity to learn about cultures different to our own. May we be wary that we all need to think before we speak and consider others' feelings, especially us who, as members of this House, are elected to represent many nationalities within our electorates.

I conclude by recognising and thanking all of the hardworking volunteers who have contributed tirelessly over many years to staging an amazing multicultural Children's Festival. I thank the 2018 organising committee, which consisted of more than 100 people. I give a special mention to the co-chairs, Mark Burfield and Kana Phung; the treasurer, Gurmeet Kaur; the vice-presidents, John Pestana and Kana Phung; and the secretary, Brian Laul. I again thank the president, Mr Thuat Van Nguyen, OAM, for hosting me and some of my parliamentary colleagues on this wonderful occasion. I had a great time attending the festival earlier this year. I look forward to seeing many Children's Festivals to come.



### COFFS HARBOUR BYPASS

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:37):** Tonight I draw the attention of the House to an announcement made this week in my electorate of Coffs Harbour. The announcement was welcomed by me and the vast majority of the residents of Coffs Harbour. In 2001 or thereabouts, it was decided that the Government would announce routes for the Pacific Highway's four-lane dual carriageway up the New South Wales coast. Now that the Pacific Highway is being upgraded, motorists can travel from Sydney to Coffs Harbour on a dual carriageway road in about 5½ hours on a good day, which is fantastic. But when motorists arrive at Coffs Harbour they are confronted with a bottleneck. There are 12 sets of traffic lights. Finally, this week the Coffs Harbour bypass was unveiled. I was unable to attend the announcement because parliamentary committees were holding inquiries in Sydney.

Unfortunately, the announcement has created some consternation within the community. The polemics boil down to tunnels versus land bridges. The route was decided in 2004—even though the cost was not included in the allocation of funds for the Pacific Highway upgrade—by the then State Labor Government and the then Federal Labor Government. At the time, even though I did not support it, I welcomed the announcement. I put my support behind a far-western route that went up the old Summerland Way or, alternatively, went west of Coffs Harbour and wound its way back in at Halfway Creek or thereabouts.

A media release states that public consultation is about to get underway. At this stage, The Greens, the Labor Party and to a large extent the mayor of Coffs Harbour have decided to play politics. They are all advocating in favour of tunnels. The argument against using tunnels is that if dangerous goods are being transported through tunnels on trucks, those trucks will not be able to go through tunnels and will have to continue to go through 12 sets of traffic lights in the centre of Coffs Harbour.

Public consultation has not started let alone finished, yet these naysayers are out there. The \$200 million that we applied to the project two or three budgets ago was extremely welcome. I am disappointed that the land acquisition has not been completed; it should have been completed by now. I know that there are people who have not even been approached by Roads and Maritime Services [RMS]. I encourage RMS and the Minister's office to get on with that job for starters. When I was given information late last week that it was going to be announced I asked whether anyone had seen the geotechnical report, because I knew that the argument was already out there about tunnels versus land bridges versus vegetated dirt mounds to stop the noise impacting adjoining residences and Coffs Harbour. I am advised that up to 900 homes will have to have some noise amelioration, yet I still have not seen the geotechnical report. A fellow sent me an email this week saying that more than 100 years ago they put a train tunnel through the ridge and they did it with a pick and shovel, so surely we can have tunnels there.

I am suggesting that we have another look at the geotechnical report to make sure that the design we have is the proper design, because this is going to be there for eons. It is a four-lane, divided, dual carriageway and I have always been fearful of the noise coming across Coffs Harbour itself. Coffs Harbour is basically in a little amphitheatre and I do not want people down at the jetty, which is some four, five or six kilometres away, complaining about truck noise at night, because the trucks are now sitting basically under the edge of the hills there. A company from Bellingen, in the Minister's electorate, OEMG, run by Jason Errey, has developed a method of geotechnical engineering that I am led to believe can be accurate in depth and width to basically a metre and it can identify the types of rocks that are there.

I asked Jason this week whether or not it would work there; it is mainly underwater technology. I implore my own Government to utilise him on the Sydney Harbour tunnels as well. It would cost \$100,000 or less to double-check the geotechnical assessment because they did it by the old-fashioned way of drilling—it may put the residents' minds at rest. I encourage all the residents, including those councillors who made noises about this, to rather than just fire from the hip, go down and have a look at the public consultation, have a look at the route, have a look at the noise amelioration measures there and make up their minds. Finally we are getting a bypass, so let us start it sooner rather than later and let us take the politics out of it.

### HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE EDUCATION INITIATIVES

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:42):** On 13 September 2018 the annual Vocational Education and Training [VET] Excellence Awards were held at Doltone House, Sylvania Waters, hosted by the Southern Sydney Business Education Network, which is a not-for-profit organisation that has been assisting people for more than 10 years to make successful transitions from school to work, training or further education. It achieves this by placing students across Sydney with host employers through its Work Placement Program and by matching students with mentors in its Youth Frontiers Mentoring Program. I was delighted to attend the VET Excellence Awards and see firsthand the hard work and determination students apply to their education.

The Workplace Learning Program provides opportunities for students who study a vocational education and training course to practise skills learnt at school or TAFE as part of their Higher School Certificate in an authentic industry setting. The VET Excellence Awards is a celebration of the dedication of students, parents, teachers, schools and host employees who contribute to the vocational education and training of more than 6,000 students in the south-eastern Sydney region. The award winners are students who have shown excellence, commitment and passion in their chosen industry area of study, and today I commend the following local recipients: Ben Chionchio of Aquinas Catholic College, Menai; Blake Williams of Engadine High School; Natalia Petralito of Heathcote High School; Katie Papadakis of Menai High School; and Julianne Sismondi of St John Bosco College.

The vocational education and training awards were held on 20 August at the Bankstown Sports Club. The event celebrates the dedication of students, parents, teachers, schools and community partners who contribute to the vocational education and training of more than 10,000 students. Recipients of the awards are recognised for their excellence, commitment and passion in their chosen industries. I will pick out a few recipients from my electorate in the areas of business services, entertainment, hospitality food and beverage, and primary industries. Those students were Victoria Jessamine, Kayla Winter, Caitlin Williams and Charlotte Wiseman, all from Menai High School.

TAFE NSW is the country's largest provider of vocational education and training. It is known for delivering to students the hands-on practical education they need to get a job. The New South Wales economy is booming and TAFE NSW is ensuring that we have the skilled workers we need to build our schools, hospitals and roads for better communities. The New South Wales Government is modernising TAFE NSW to streamline its operations and devote more resources to frontline teaching. It is undertaking an unprecedented recruitment drive to hire an additional 253 frontline teachers.

Recently I had the honour of opening the latest learning area at the Dunlea Centre, formally known as Boys' Town, in my electorate at Engadine. The latest learning area, Savio House, will host the Savio Day Program, which is an alternative education day program for students. Participation will provide a number of benefits to the students, including a safe, relaxed and understanding environment to encourage love of learning and allow students to reach their full potential. Dunlea offers the option for boys and girls to attend education day programs or as voluntary residents at the school. This provides flexibility for those troubled youth and their families who are posing risks or causing conflicts or have a potential family breakdown at home.

As part of its programs, the centre works closely with all members of the family by adapting methods such as counselling, coping mechanisms and alternative behaviours to assist in restoring damaged relationships. In recent years, Dunlea Centre has undergone a transforming building program by renewing old classrooms and turning them into modern flexible learning spaces. With Federal Government funding, it has built two new facilities and has upgraded student accommodation areas. I have been privileged to work closely with Dunlea, assisting in securing funds from the Community Building Partnership program.

I have attended Christmas in July events to support funding end-of-year trips for students and have enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by a small group of students with up to 30 guests. In the past I have had the pleasure of hosting a class from Dunlea in Parliament. I organised a tour around Parliament, which included a visit to the Premier's suite, where the students had the opportunity to meet the then Premier, the Hon. Mike Baird. Dunlea is committed to making a difference in the lives of individuals attending its programs. I commend Dunlea Centre on its efforts and I look forward to continuing my support for Dunlea.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:47):** I thank the member for Heathcote for raising this issue. More importantly, I congratulate all those who recently received vocational education and training [VET] awards at Bankstown and at other locations in the lower part of the St George area in my electorate. Many people received awards. VET training gives young kids a leg up into employment once they have finished year 11 or year 12. It provides them with the necessary training. I am a great supporter of the VET training programs that TAFE and many other bodies conduct in my electorate and across New South Wales through many schools, some of which are in my electorate. The VET training programs give young kids a real opportunity for future employment.

#### NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:48):** Five years ago the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] marked a turning point in Australia's collective conscience. We as a nation decided that people with disability deserved to have access to the same opportunities as those without. We collectively agreed that people with disability were just as entitled as those without a disability to a full and dignified life where their disability was not a barrier to achieving their full potential. While it has been heartbreaking to watch the NDIS and disability services generally being used as a political football and undermined by conservative governments, I do not believe that Australians and the people of New South Wales have pivoted away from the

point we reached five years ago. We agreed then, and I like to think we agree now, that it is society which is disabling, not people themselves.

Since this monumental shift in our collective thinking, I am more than disappointed that some institutions in New South Wales remain so inflexible that accommodations cannot be made for people with disability. I am disturbed by recent contact from parents of children with disabilities about to sit their higher school certificate [HSC] exams, who have described to me their experience of applying for disability provisions through the NSW Education Standards Authority [NESA].

Helen from Belmont North lodged her son Wesley's disability provisions application in March this year. Since then Helen has provided numerous medical reports at great personal expense to support Wesley's application. Wesley is only seeking the same provisions that he has received in past years that will enable him to reach his full potential. Initially, all of the disability provisions requested by Wesley, with the support of his doctors, were denied by NESA. Following representations by me, I was advised by the Parliamentary Secretary that Wesley would be receiving an additional 2½ minutes of extra writing time per half hour of examination time. While I am pleased that the original rejection was reconsidered, Wesley and his family are disappointed that the advice of medical professionals in relation to Wesley's needs appear to have been ignored by NESA.

Helen took her concerns to the New South Wales Ombudsman but yesterday was advised that there was no evidence of wrong administrative conduct. However, the Ombudsman had an ongoing interest in HSC disability provisions due to the number of complaints he had received. Helen remains concerned that Wesley's ability to complete his HSC will be drastically affected, to the extent that she feels he may not be able to complete all his exams. I have also been contacted by Lynn whose daughter Katherine has had her disability provisions for the HSC denied on many occasions, despite support from medical practitioners outlining Katherine's needs. Again, after I asked for the initial decision to be reconsidered Katherine has been granted extra time for reading, but has been denied a reader. That is a provision she has previously relied on for exams.

Like Helen, Lynn has questioned NESA's apparent disregard for medical and school reports, advising that these children require disability provisions in order to complete their HSC. Helen and Lynn have fought to ensure their children are not disadvantaged in their education. Only weeks out from final exams they have been told their applications are unsuccessful. It is absolutely heartbreaking. We all need to ask the question: do we really think we as a community are giving students with a disability the best chance to succeed in the HSC? Research shows that the failure of schools to provide equal opportunities for disabled children correlates to Australians with disabilities having the lowest relative incomes and one of the lowest levels of labour force participation out of all the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] countries.

We in Labor know that education is transformative and opens up enormous opportunities for people who are given the chance. Wesley and Katherine are desperate to have the same chance as everyone else. Why would someone actively try to prevent children like Wesley and Katherine from achieving their very best? We should be providing students with disability with the tools they need to achieve their very best. We must remember that these students with their disability have studied and worked so hard for 13 years in order to sit for their HSC. That is to be applauded, not have this achievement taken from them at the last minute because NESA is inflexible and will not permit provisions it has previously provided. I know that Helen and Lynn are wonderful caring mums who just want the best for their children and to ensure they, like every other student, have the opportunity to sit their HSC. With NESA having recently undertaken a review of this exact issue, I hope that it will modernise and be flexible and ensure delivery of our collective values that kids with disabilities get the chance they deserve.

#### **MANNING-GREAT LAKES POLICE DISTRICT**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:53):** I will update the House on the Manning-Great Lakes Police District. The police in that district are doing a fantastic job. I congratulate Superintendent Shane Cribb, Chief Inspector Christine George at Taree Police Station, and District Chief Inspector Allan Fidock at Forster Police Station and every officer working in that command. They are doing a fantastic job. The crime rates across the board are either stable or down. There is always a spike on something every now and then. Overall, the police are doing a great job.

Several years ago I was pleased when police strength increased by 16. There is to be a new police station at Taree and while it is being built the police must be relocated. Two things are happening. The police are moving and will be housed in the MidCoast Water building in Muldoon Street, Taree, while the existing Taree Police Station is demolished and a new one is built. However, the cells cannot be located there so they will be provided at Forster Police Station. This necessitated an extension to that police station, with new cells and a new prisoner loading dock together with other upgrades costing a total of \$1.5 million. Next week I will join police officers to cut the ribbon on the completed renovations. The police will move on Sunday to the MidCoast Water building.

Also next week, the sod will be turned on the demolition work at Taree Police Station, to be followed by construction of the new station at a cost of approximately \$16 million. It is most exciting, as this will be a start-of-the-art facility. Officers have been working at the old police station for decades in what some would describe as Third World conditions. Every time police numbers increased a small extension was built, upstairs or downstairs. The station is like a rabbit warren; every stair is a trip hazard and a danger to police and to prisoners. I am pleased that a new station is being built. I thank the police hierarchy, the Minister for Police and the staff for ensuring that the facility planned and delivered for the Taree police will be the very best.

I have spoken with the Police Association of NSW to ensure that it and the troops are happy with the plans and what will be delivered—and they certainly are. I support the Police Association's call for more police for the Manning-Great Lakes Police District. There is absolutely no doubt that as times change and the population increases, so too does the amount of crime and therefore the police workload. Of course, crime is not the only focus for police, whose other duties range from dealing with lost property to attending motor vehicle accidents. I stand with the Police Association and support its call for an increase in force strength in the Manning-Great Lakes Police District. We need more police.

Finally, I turn my attention to the fact that 29 September is National Police Remembrance Day. This provides an opportunity for all communities to remember the ultimate sacrifice made by police and the families who support them. Tomorrow morning there will be a remembrance day service in Taree. Unfortunately, I cannot be there—although I have attended every other service since becoming the local member. I assure the officers that I will be thinking of those who have paid that sacrifice. I pass on our support to the carers and the families of those who have lost loved ones. Some residents in my local area have lost sons and daughters on the job and others have been recalled to duty, and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

#### **BEGA ELECTORATE BUSHFIRES**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (17:58):** I speak this evening about the ongoing fire threat on the far South Coast. In particular, I pay tribute to the Rural Fire Service [RFS], which for a month now has been battling a blaze called the Yankees Gap Fire that started in the second last week of August. Although it started in winter, the fire took three homes. It burnt for a month then took another home when fanned by fierce winds a week and a half ago. It is one thing to have a fire and another to have RFS volunteers and professional staff to fight it. Typically a fire might burn for a couple of days, but it is unusual to have to fight a fire that has been burning for a month. While a bit of rain has fallen on the fire this week, many logs in the fire zone of 18 square hectares have been burnt, which means that the fire is still alight and will burn for months.

The commitment of the men and women fighting this fire has been nothing short of incredible. Water bombers, including the large aerial tanker, and helicopters have been working around the clock to douse the fire. It has been an extraordinary commitment. On Saturday a couple of weeks ago a fire was burning. The wind was extraordinarily strong and the choppers could not go up. We had an incredible situation where the fire emerged from the ranges of the South East Forests National Park, which is rugged country, and then took hold in farm country with an ember attack. It ended up lapping the town of Bega.

This experience means we must consider that, in view of the drought index, the commencement of the fire season is irrelevant. People think because it is winter we can let fires burn. But when the drought index is at its current level, the commencement of the fire season is irrelevant. The fire season can continue throughout winter, and unfortunately that is what has happened this year. I will discuss with the Premier and other relevant Ministers that when the drought index is extreme we must move the community's mindset beyond thinking the fire season will start on 1 September or 1 October. I am nervous that many home owners in the region have not prepared for the impending fire season. We could have some good, soaking rains but because the ground is dry and the fuel load is high, everything will dry out quickly.

We are heading into a perilous season. We lost 65 homes in March and we lost another four in the Yankees Gap Fire, which caused enormous problems. Again, it demonstrates that Mother Nature has not been kind during this drought. I am nervous because I do not want any fatalities. Touch wood, we have not yet had fatalities in the Bega electorate but we have come close to it. The community must heed the RFS warnings. It is extraordinary that one fire has already been burning for a month this fire season. I urge people to listen to RFS advice about being prepared. Everyone must step up. I thank all the government agencies, from the police through to RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW, that have given their time in the past month to try to put out this monster.

#### **Ji LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOL**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:03):** I bring the attention of the House to the opening of the new, refurbished and modernised library at the Sikh Gurdwara at Glenwood. The Bhai Gurdas Ji Library holds a

collection of Punjabi literature, both religious and secular in nature, that is a useful resource for the growing Punjabi Sikh community in Western Sydney. The Australian Sikh Association temple at Glenwood, known as Gurdwara, is the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. That might be an exaggeration, but it is a significant gathering point in Australia and represents an important spiritual centre for the community.

I was particularly pleased to recognise the efforts of Dr Surinder Singh, the education director for the Australian Sikh Association, who has worked hard with a group of volunteers to bring about the refurbishment and modernisation of its library resource. In this era, it includes not only books but also information technology equipment of various kinds to allow students to gather their information from various sources around the world and to do so with the support of a Punjabi community that is able to share its culture and learning with the next generation.

It was great to see that within that community the library will be run by a number of very youthful volunteers who have put up their hands to be part of the process of sharing learning in Punjabi and making it available to a broader community. The opening ceremony that I attended was a joyful one, with lots of people who had put their shoulder to the wheel to contribute to this project being recognised—rightly so, because it is all volunteer. It is all from their own generosity and commitment to the advancement of their community and the wider community of which they are part. This library exists in the context of a gurdwara, which operates on a number of fronts. As I previously noted, a gurdwara is a spiritual centre but also a practical one for charitable work, hospitality, education and looking after youth. It reaches out to the local community in many ways.

Another undertaking that the education director, Dr Surinder Singh, supervises is a community language school. Many communities have made their home in Australia and taken up the opportunity to operate a community language school on weekends to teach their community their traditional mother tongue and share it with whomever is interested in learning it. The Guru Nanak Punjabi language school operating at Glenwood teaches hundreds of students. It had humble beginnings in older buildings, which were refurbished through volunteer fundraising and donations of labour and materials. I was pleased to assist that process a little with a Community Building Partnership grant to ensure that the students who study there do so with the best opportunity to learn about that language and culture.

The Guru Nanak Punjabi language school teaches the history, culture and values of the Punjabi community and it shares a wealth of wisdom and experience of life born from an ancient culture and brought to Australia to share with the culture in this country. When speaking to parents at community language schools such as Guru Nanak, I observe that I think it is a great blessing and a wonderful boon for a young person to have access to two languages because they have two windows to the world—two sources of wisdom and tradition on which to draw, which broadens their minds and allows them to see the world from different people's perspectives.

I believe it is a great gift that can only enrich our community as more and more people bring that particular gift with them—that ability to empathise with others, see from a different perspective and contribute from a different source of wisdom and tradition. I congratulate the Australian Sikh Association and particularly education director Dr Surinder Singh for the wonderful work they are doing. I thank all of the volunteers who have given so much time to refurbish and refit a new library befitting the twenty-first century and to make that learning available to the wider community.

#### **PENRITH COUNCILLOR JOHN THAIN**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (18:08):** I use my private member's statement today to thank one of my great friends for his service to Penrith City Council over the past two years as its mayor. I speak of Penrith councillor John Thain, who on Monday night concluded two years as the mayor of one of the fastest-growing cities in Western Sydney and the State. He has led the council at a time of unprecedented growth in Western Sydney and particular opportunity for the city of Penrith, in which lives a great part of my electorate. I served on the council with John for eight years and I am proud to call him a very good friend. We speak on a daily basis. I seek his counsel every day. He is a spectacular servant of our community.

I am sure John would agree his crowning achievement in the recent past was as chair of the mayoral forum that helped bring about the Western Sydney City Deal, a bipartisan approach to investment in Western Sydney in concert with the opportunity provided by the Western Sydney Airport. For many years, before it was fashionable, he has been one of the leading figures to advocate for a north-south rail link. Now both sides of politics have come to the table and accepted that that is a necessary investment not only because of Badgerys Creek airport but also because of the opportunities it will provide for north-south transport in Western Sydney rather than the traditional east-west transport to which we have been subject.

He has led a council that has been on the front foot in terms of planning for future communities. He has taken a particular interest in getting the council involved in projects that may not be the regular roads, rates and

rubbish we rely on councils to provide. He has a very strong interest in social housing. In conjunction with the State and Federal governments, Penrith City Council worked with Wentworth Community Housing to open new social and affordable housing units close to my electorate office in St. Marys. It has been a great opportunity for affordable housing in the local area. John personally drove the investment in that.

John has taken a keen interest in and led the council in relation to The Quarter, an award-winning health and education precinct. He was intimately involved in the many developments with Lendlease that have occurred in my home town of Jordan Springs, where we opened the new community hub. I make particular mention of the work of Penrith City Council with its Magnetic Places initiative, which is run by the neighbourhood renewal team. It is one of the most amazing things that council does and it looks at investment in older areas. In councils where we have growing communities and new release areas, it is often the default that older areas get left behind. John has been one of the driving forces behind investment in the neighbourhood renewal team's Magnetic Places program. John has really made a difference in areas like Colyton, Oxley Park and North St Marys, where John lives, in the electorate of Londonderry.

I thank him for his service. I thank him as a servant of Penrith City Council and the Western Sydney community. He has been a great mentor to me and I thank him for that. He has been a mentor to new councillors. In particular for Labor people he is a very important person. He stood up for us at the very difficult Penrith by-election after the vacancy created by the previous member and we will always thank him for that. Recently in very difficult times for Labor supporters in the Penrith area, he reminds us that there actually are good ones. People say there are no nice guys in politics, but John Thain defies that. I am proud to have him as a friend. I am very proud that he has been a great servant of our community.

#### **BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (18:13):** I have met John Thain a few times and the member for Londonderry is right: He is one of the nice guys in politics. He has been very supportive of our veterans community in the Penrith area. I inform the House of recent events in the Baulkham Hills electorate at a time when the New South Wales Government is delivering once-in-a-generation boost to school buildings, upgrades and maintenance strategies to ensure every school-aged child has access to high-quality educational facilities at their local schools.

As members may be aware, a project is currently underway in the Baulkham Hills electorate to deliver a new primary school, from kindergarten to year 6, on Fairway Drive in Kellyville. The new Bella Vista Primary School is set to be officially opened next year in February and will deliver 40 future-focused learning spaces, a new hall, covered outdoor learning spaces, and space for up to 1,000 students. Shared sporting facilities with The Hills Shire Council will also be provided and will include a double indoor sports court and an outdoor artificial soccer pitch.

Since March this year, the main works contractor has completed the site establishment, detailed excavation has been done and in-ground services have been installed. Continuation of construction works to level 1 of blocks A to D are steadily progressing, with structural steel for block E and the sports court complete. The design concept has been developed to incorporate the following education principles: creating an innovative and sustainable contemporary new school for a new community supported by technology; forming flexible and stimulating spaces that are adaptable for changing needs of students and learning modes; and establishing a community-focused and holistic learning environment that promotes well-connected indoor and outdoor learning spaces. The next steps include completing the roof structure, commencing internal finishing trades, ordering of furniture, sports hall external cladding works, and commencing landscaping and external works. With a final handover near January 2019, I am pleased to note that all prospective students whose residential addresses are within the catchment area of the new school will be accommodated in 2019.

Members may recall that the Government's 2018-19 budget includes an additional \$160 million as part of the record \$747 million maintenance investment announced last year. This is the largest investment in maintenance in the history of New South Wales. In the Baulkham Hills electorate, an upgrade is underway at Excelsior Public School in Castle Hill. The upgrade is set to deliver 14 new teaching spaces, a new three-storey building, a new library and additional administration area, as well as a new school entrance. This will allow the school to increase its current student capacity from approximately 500 to 650. Similar to the new Bella Vista Primary School, the design of the upgrades is predicated on education principles and future-focused learning models consistent with Excelsior Public School's local character, including: focusing on the needs of learners and learning; building a greater community and sense of community identity; and providing contemporary and sustainable learning environments.

I am pleased to note that the detailed design has been completed in addition to the finalisation of demountable relocation works to allow for the construction of the new three-storey building. Construction works are expected to commence later this year, with a final handover in late 2020. It would be remiss of me not to mention North Rocks Public School. My wife, Nicole, kindly opened the annual school fete on my behalf on the last Saturday of August. She was amazed by the exciting activities, crafts, entertainment and delicious foods offered throughout the day for everyone to enjoy. This is the fifth year in which the P&C association and the school have worked unceasingly to organise yet another fantastic fete. I thank Principal Robert Ieroianni for supporting this worthy cause, and the dedicated volunteers of the North Rocks Public School P&C Association, whose tireless efforts are the reason this fete continues to flourish year after year.

Of course, this is an exciting time as well, with upgrades being planned for the school, including new permanent future-focused classrooms, and an upgrade of student and staff amenities, which will serve as another big success. The school's project team is working closely with all relevant stakeholders to guide the development of the schematic design. I am delighted to inform the House that the concept design has been completed and endorsed by the school and other stakeholders. Construction is set to commence in early 2019, with a handover near June 2020. I welcome this long-overdue revitalisation in educational infrastructure in my electorate. I applaud the New South Wales Government, the Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, and the departmental officers, whose commitment to providing accessible, high-quality education to children and their parents across the State is evident in the electorate of Baulkham Hills.

## **RURAL FIRE SERVICE MIA MEDALS PRESENTATION AWARD RECIPIENTS**

### **TRIBUTE TO ROY STACY**

**Mr AUSTIN EVANS (Murray) (18:17):** I recently had the pleasure of attending the NSW Rural Fire Service MIA District Medals Presentation on behalf of the Hon. Troy Grant, Minister for Emergency Services. A total of 54 people were to be honoured for their service to the community for an extraordinary 1,730 years between them. As it happened, 47 award recipients attended and their service covered 1,602 years. The MIA district includes 71 brigades, comprising 166 firefighting vehicles and 1,663 members. It takes in the local government areas of Carrathool, Griffith, Hay, Leeton, Murrumbidgee and Narrandera, totalling more than 40,000 square kilometres.

The service of the recipients ranged from 10 years up to an incredible 63 years. I commend all recipients for their dedication, commitment and service to the local community. I will acknowledge some of the longest serving recipients of medals: Andrea Finch and Ronald Finch, 30 years; Geoffrey Forster, 31 years; Tony Dal Broi, 34 years; Bruce Armstrong, Rodger Colbert, Brian Conlan and Steven Lanza, 38 years; Ray Cheers and Garry McMaster, 39 years; Ray Gullifer, 40 years; Ian Blight, 41 years; Geoffrey Jackson and Michael Milthorpe, 42 years; Ronald Harris and Alexander Vearing, 45 years; Peter Borella and Russell Campbell, 47 years; William Kite, Geoffrey Luelf and Colin Smeeth, 50 years; Barry Gibbs, Wayne McLauchlan, Peter Pfitzner and Wallace McDermott, 54 years; Terri Merriman, 56 years; Richard Billing, 58 years; and Gordon Heffer, 62 years. A medal was also presented posthumously to Robert Hurst for 63 years service. I thank those volunteers for their tremendous contribution to the Murray electorate.

I also acknowledge and pay tribute to a long-serving member of the Rural Fire Service and wonderful contributor to the Griffith community who passed away recently. Last week I was one of many people who attended the funeral of community stalwart Mr Roy Stacy. Roy was a highly popular and well-respected person who made an incredible contribution to our society. One of 11 children, born and bred in Griffith—who grew up with Griffith—Roy embraced life with vigour. His accomplishments include military service spanning nearly 10 years, primarily with the RAAF Fire Service in Australia and overseas. Following his return to civilian life, he continued his commitment to fire brigades. He was instrumental in establishing the Kooba Bush Fire Brigade, of which he was captain for 13 years. He also had a long association with the Griffith brigade, including roles as president and treasurer until only three years ago. Roy was recognised for his commitment with life membership to the NSW Rural Fire Service in 2004.

The Griffith community honoured Roy with the award of Citizen of the Year in 1990. He was also awarded Volunteer of the Year in 2009. He is a life member of the Probus Club and the Rural Counselling Service and is also a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary. His commitment to fighting fires continued throughout his life. Even at age 80 he was a strike team leader during the Kosciuszko fires in 2000. In 2010 he was presented with his 70 Year Long Service Award for service to the Rural Fire Service. He was also named as Freeman of the City of Griffith in 2015. In 2018 the 340 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets appointed Sergeant Herbert FitzRoy Stacy as their patron.

Other medals Roy received include: the Australian Fire Service Medal from 1939-1945; the Australian Service Medal 1939-1945; the Australian Service Medal with clasp, and National Medal with three clasps,

1945-1975; the Australian Defence Medal; and the Return from Active Service badge. I offer my condolences to Roy's wife, Nancy, and his family on his sad passing. I know they must be very proud of his lasting achievements and contribution to our community. I had the pleasure of meeting Roy at the opening of the new Griffith Rural Fire Service station when he was 95 or so. He showed up in his full uniform, he was bright as a button and happy and engaging. He was a magnificent human. At his funeral someone commented that if all citizens were like Roy we would have an incredible society. I thank him for his contribution to the Griffith community. Vale, Roy Stacy.

### ETTALONG CHANNEL DREDGING

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:22):** The Ettalong Channel is a crucial local waterway for the Central Coast region. I have spoken about it a number of times in this House. It provides an access point to Brisbane Water for local and visiting recreational boaters. It is also a transport link between Wagstaffe, Ettalong, Saratoga and Empire Bay in Brisbane Water to Broken Bay and Sydney's northern beaches. Small businesses in Ettalong rely on reliable and safe access to the local waterway because some of their business activity is dependent upon people travelling to and from the Central Coast. Despite the channel being a local waterway, the council had unfortunately not taken any action on it for almost a decade.

Earlier this year, in partnership with advocates from the community, we were successful in prompting the Central Coast Council to provide a compliant application for the State Government's Rescuing our Waterways program funding, despite that being opposed by all the Labor councillors and the member for Gosford. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government co-funds dredging work in local waterways in partnership with local councils in accordance with the NSW Coastal Dredging Strategy. This strategy makes it crystal clear that the waterways on our coastline that do not contain State maritime infrastructure assets are defined as "local waterways", and are thereby the responsibility of local councils.

Unlike members opposite, who are quite happy to splash cash everywhere without doing any hard work, research or planning, this Government's Coastal Dredging Strategy provides a crystal-clear plan for managing these local waterways. I can inform the House that Central Coast Council has been successful in its application for Rescuing Our Waterways funding, despite the opposition by Central Coast Labor councillors and the member for Gosford. Earlier this month, I was delighted to announce a new \$2.45 million long-term dredging program for the Ettalong Channel. As this is a local waterway, it is co-funded dollar-for-dollar through the Rescuing Our Waterways program, and the Central Coast Council will be provided with \$1.225 million by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals State Government to oversee the long-term plan. Council's plan involves removing 80,000 cubic metres of seabed, which will be relocated to Ettalong, Ocean and Umina beaches. The project also focuses on preventing sand from re-entering the waterway.

I take this opportunity to thank the Central Coast Council staff—under the leadership of new general manager Gary Murphy, formerly of Lismore—for working cooperatively with Crown Lands. I praise Gary and the staff for the proactive nature in which they have taken on this project despite the opposition from the Labor councillors and the member for Gosford. It has resulted in a very positive outcome for the Liberal-Nationals State Government, which will help provide a long-term solution to this waterway.

I also urge the council to continue to work to implement a long-term maintenance strategy so that we never see a repeat of what has happened over the past 12 months of inaction. I must also note that the State Government provided an extra \$660,000 of emergency dredging, which has been underway for a while. Early this week, Fantasea Cruising—the ferry provider—undertook a trial in the channel. It hopes to resume permanent services as quickly as possible. The current dredging is being completed to provide the ferry service and recreational vessels with permanent and safe access to the channel. However, I must emphasise that it will be the ferry operator's decision when to resume services.

This funding commitment of \$1.225 million provides certainty to communities on both sides of the channel. The council and the Government will work together to keep this waterway safe and accessible to all. Indeed, many constituents of mine in Wagstaffe, Killcare, Hardys Bay, Pretty Beach and surrounding suburbs have been inconvenienced by having to travel to Patonga simply to use the ferry service. I take this opportunity to thank every single local resident who made their strong views on the need for dredging known to council by attending meetings and by signing the online petition. As a community, we have sent a very clear message to the council that we expect and demand action to keep the channel open. I am absolutely committed to ensuring that the Ettalong Channel remains safe for and accessible to all users of this local waterway. The council can apply for additional funding through the Rescuing our Waterways program should it need to in the future. I encourage the council to put in place a clear strategy of maintenance to keep the channel open for everybody in the future.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:27):** What a fabulous local member—what an example of someone who is working with his local council to get results! The member for Terrigal brings matters into this House to make sure that those matters are aired at the highest level. It is because of the diligence, hard work and—dare I



say it—the effervescence of the member for Terrigal that we get results such as those with the Ettalong Channel in his electorate. The member for Terrigal works with councils to make sure that we get good environmental outcomes, unlike the member for Gosford, who does not share his passion, enthusiasm and dedication, and unlike the member for The Entrance, who would not know how to fill out a grant application because he would not know where to find a pen.

**Mr David Mehan:** Point of order: This is not an opportunity to have a go at those on the opposite side of the Chamber. These are private members' statements.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Yes, it is, because you did nothing for 16 years.

**Mr David Mehan:** You've been quiet all week, sunshine. Get back in your box.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The member for The Entrance will take his seat.

### NATIONAL POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:29):** I take this opportunity to acknowledge our fallen police officers statewide and nationwide ahead of National Police Remembrance Day. In the towns and villages of the Cootamundra electorate we know our local police officers by name. They are the faces who show up day and night, good or bad, and who become stalwarts in our communities. So when tragedy strikes, and in the line of duty we lose them, the loss truly reverberates through the fabric of our towns. Over the past century a number of local officers have died in the line of duty, whether killed in action protecting our communities or as the victims of tragic accidents. Policing is dangerous work. It takes great courage, and service can come at the ultimate cost. From 29 September 2017 through to 27 September 2018, 16 serving New South Wales police officers have lost their lives across New South Wales.

This Saturday, 29 September, is National Police Remembrance Day and I encourage the community to take pause on this day. Every year we gather to remember the men and women who dedicated their lives to the safety of others. Our police officers go to work day in and day out not knowing what they will confront in the line of duty or whether they will return home safely at the end of their shift. But they do it anyway, largely out of a great sense of duty and care for the communities they know and love. And they have been doing this since the early days of settlement.

Our local memorials and history books tell of constables and officers fallen from horses and slain by bushrangers. In Wantabadgery exists a site dedicated to Senior Constable Edward Bowen, who was killed in an exchange of gunfire with Captain Moonlite and his gang of bushrangers in 1879. Unveiled in 2015, this rusted iron figure stands immortalised, proudly upon his horse on Jewnee Street before the Wantabadgery MacDonald Memorial Hall. This project, while recognising a fallen officer, did more than that. It had the effect of bringing together a community and forming invaluable bonds between the local force and residents outside times of crisis. The project was years in the making, led by Inspector Stephen Radford, Superintendent Bob Noble and the Riverina Police District Police. I look forward to joining them to pay my respects tomorrow in Wagga Wagga in a service to commemorate the fallen.

The Cootamundra electorate is represented by four police districts, each holding ceremonies for their communities. For those in the electorate who are covered by the Chifley District, a service will take place in Bathurst on Friday at 11 a.m. For those in Narrandera and surrounds covered by the Murrumbidgee Police District, a service will be held in Griffith. For Grenfell, the service will be held in Yass. Locally, many stations such as Young are also holding services. I encourage all to go along and show thanks to our serving men and women in blue.

In the lead-up to and on National Police Remembrance Day, it is important that we acknowledge those officers who have lost their lives as a result of their policing career. But we must also pay our respects to the local men and women in blue who work tirelessly to keep us safe from harm every day. If you see an officer out on the beat, please stop them and thank them for the work they do. A smile goes a long way and is the least we can do. Another way to pay homage and support the fallen is through the phenomenal work of NSW Police Legacy. Through illness, injury, or death of a serving or retired police officer, NSW Police Legacy cares for the police family. Legacy currently supports approximately 1,000 police legatees across the State, plus many more members of the police family.

Saturday 29 September also marks Police Legacy's biggest fundraiser of the year, the Blue Ribbon Ball. A silent auction is being held online for those who cannot make it and, of course, you can donate to this important cause all year round. My thanks go to all of our serving police officers for the vital, risky and courageous work that they do. Of course I pay my deepest condolences and respect to the families of all officers nationwide who have lost their lives protecting our communities.

### NSW SENIORS CARD SENIORS' STORIES

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:33):** Volume 3 of the NSW Seniors Card *Seniors' Stories* showcases a collection of tales written by seniors from across our great State. I thank the Minister for Ageing, Tanya Davies, who recently facilitated a launch of this series. The stories were categorised according to themes, which were focused on the *NSW Ageing Strategy 2016-2020*, and some of its priorities, including health and wellbeing, working and retirement, housing choices, getting around and inclusive communities. Many submitted their own contributions to the publication; however, only 100 were selected to be published and of these, I am proud to state, two were from the Kiama electorate. First, under the category of "health and wellbeing", William Lawton wrote a tale of deep reflection and meaning. The experiences shared are extremely personal and revealing, shedding a light on the incredibly unfortunate but inevitable experience of loss. I include the following extract for the record:

Longing and desire are the waking emotions of each day. And longing and desire mark its close. There is longing to touch and to speak but the room is empty. There is desire for presence, awakening and transformation. But the day carries heaviness and unfulfilment. One more week and it would have been Margaret's birthday. Instead it will be two months since her all-too-sudden death. The room remains empty.

...

I hold still to this in my daily memorial of Margaret. She is here in memory. She is alive in memory. I see the evidence of her in the generosity and transforming life she bestowed on others. I read the letters of former clients grateful at how she pointed their longing and desire to hope and fulfilment.

I thank William for his contribution. The descriptive translation and recount of significant prior events speaks to all, especially those who previously have endured loss of a loved one. The piece is extremely moving and demonstrates the power that narrative provides. Secondly, Peter McAra's piece entitled, "Now what the hell am I gonna do?", in the category "working and retiring" follows the experiences of a man venturing into the new and sometimes daunting unknown of retirement. The tale illustrates the change and impact that the formative experience of retirement can bring. Peter's work was descriptive and insightful, and I recount an extract of his detailed insight:

Born in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, the son of a gold miner, I was raised to understand the merit of hard work.

During high school vacations, then university, I took on blue-collar jobs such as truck driver and miner and also earned a living in roadwork and bridge construction.

In adult life, my work ranged from chemical engineering to management consulting to academic jobs in Australia, USA and the UK.

I'm still a bit confused about the career I was meant to have.

One chilly July afternoon in 2005, with "retirement day" number one to begin the following morning, I gave my last lecture at the University of Wollongong, strolled to the car park, and drove home puzzled. What to do with the rest of my life?

...

Cedars kept me amused by day, but what about evenings?

Television is great, but one's brain sometimes hungers for something else. Like many retirees, I'd long suffered from a festering sore called "novelitus." I'd always wanted to write a novel. Now, after more than 50 years of a too-busy working life, I had the time.

I've had my share of rejections, good advice, and bad reviews.

But now, seven years later, six of my books smile down at me from my bookshelf. And let me tell you, writing novels can be a pleasant break from boring television. But then on a cold wet day, writing can also be an excuse for me not to struggle into my working clothes, climb onto my tired old tractor, and go to mulch the cedars.

Both pieces provide an insight into two vastly different experiences, and I commend them on the time they have taken to submit the articles. Once again, I commend Peter and William for their contributions and wish them both all the best for the future. We have some incredibly talented writers and talented people in the Kiama electorate, and Peter and William were but two who were recognised on this occasion. I think about the arts community frequently. An important part of the community is the work that we see in literature. I could not be prouder to take the time of the House to recognise these two gentlemen for their great contributions, which will live on in the written word.

### DRUG TESTING AND HARM REDUCTION SUMMIT

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:38):** "Hey Jenny, I am a resident of Surry Hills and I've been looking for someone to hear my story." That is how an email I received from a constituent earlier this year started. First, this morning, I was pleased to attend the parliamentary summit on pill testing and harm reduction, co-hosted by my Greens upper House colleagues Cate Faehrmann and David Shoebridge, and the member for Sydney Alex Greenwich. A range of key stakeholders, experts, academics, festival organisers, music industry representatives

and others came together to share information about their work and experiences, and discuss current views and approaches to pill testing and other harm minimisation approaches, as well as the impact of current policing strategies.

I place on record The Green's disappointment that the Premier did not agree to the request from MusicNSW for someone from the music industry to be included on the expert panel that has been set up in relation to pill testing. Some of the observations shared by those who are participating provided a valuable insight into the current situation. We heard that often contradictory messages are given to young people and drug users at festivals and other events. For example, many young people have never spoken to a medical professional about their drug use and how that might impact on their use of prescription medication. We also heard that on the one hand young people are told if they or their friends need help they should go to the medical tent and on the other hand they are told it is a drug-free event with a zero-tolerance approach.

We also heard that people who are the subject of sexual harassment or assault at festivals, and who were using illegal drugs at the time of their abuse, did not go to the police to seek help or to report the incidents. They were worried the police were there to bust them for drug use, rather than to provide a level of safety and protection. That is a key concern to me. I am passionate about the need for a harm-minimisation approach to drugs and I support the idea of pill testing in New South Wales. We need to put an end to the current law and order approach, which is not working, and to the intimidating police drug detection dogs—commonly known as sniffer dogs. So back to the story of the constituent who got in touch with me and wanted to share. This is her story, and I quote:

On a fateful February night in a quiet Sydney pub ... my life changed for ever.

I was attending a friend's birthday party, I was passed one cap of MDMA ...

As it was to be, NSW police had decided to launch one of their ... sniffer dog raids on this quiet pub ...

Within a blink of the eye there was 15 police, and three sniffer dogs almost doubling the patrons of the pub [and] I got arrested.

A bit about me, I was always the unassuming girl ... attending a public school [outside of Sydney], and moving to Sydney to go to University of Technology Sydney.

A few years out of university I had found my dream job in advertising, flying around the world to design campaigns, loving life and all it had to offer.

Plans to move to Los Angeles the following year had been put in motion and in a split instance my life came crashing down.

I had maybe used MDMA a few times in my life [before], although it was never a must, it was more a spur of the moment activity if I felt so inclined.

In a country where over 30% of adolescents admit to using illicit substances, I didn't really feel any different to my friends and counterparts.

That was until I was part of the 1% of all party goers that actually get caught. So for a 29 year old women who had never spoken to Police, let alone being thrown against a wall and strip searched this was a traumatising experience.

After they found the pill I was released with a court attendance ticket, the rest of my friends who also had MDMA had been quick enough to dispose of it prior to the Police raid.

The pre-court process from there was truly traumatising - calling parents, visiting lawyers, going to an addiction counselling service (for an addiction I didn't have), and getting references from family friends.

Lawyers advised I would likely get a section 10 bond and lucky that occurred ... however the sheer fact of pleading guilty would dash any USA plans I had made. This was not good. As expected [this stopped me] travel to the USA. I got fired as I could no longer do my job. I couldn't pay my rent, I moved back to my parents .... My life slowly ended and I spiralled into depression ...

...

I admit I made a mistake, I should not have possessed drugs. ... I should not have possessed drugs in NSW, a state that still views possession of a minute amount of substance a criminal issue—apparently worth of life long repercussions. Should I have lost my career, my mental health and all my work to date due to one error in judgement?

If I had committed the same crime in any other state ... all my dreams would still be intact and I [could have got] a verbal caution.

...

NSW has invested so much in terms of my public education ...

I hope rational thought will prevail, so others do not live like this.

I give a commitment to this House and to the community I represent that I will do all I can to ensure that we take a harm-minimisation approach to drugs so this constituent's story does not become the story of others.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:43):** This Government takes a very serious view of illicit drugs. While I acknowledge the comments made by the member for Newtown, it is important for this Government to continue to send a very strong message that people of all ages should be discouraged and dissuaded from using illicit drugs. The Government will continue to support the NSW Police Dog Squad because sniffer dogs play an

important role in drug detection. I acknowledge the comments made by the member for Newtown about the stress and concern caused by the use of illicit drugs. Of course I also acknowledge the story of her constituent. However, it is important that we take every opportunity to remind people of the harmful impacts of drugs, not just on the individual but also on the individual's family. The life of addiction that can result should be reason enough for people to be dissuaded from taking illicit drugs. I am sure that all members of this House agree with what I am saying. While I acknowledge the statements that were made, the Government remains committed to taking a strong tough-on-drugs stance.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:45  
until Tuesday 16 October 2018 at 12:00.**