



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 25 October 2018

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 25 October 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.

Announcements

PINK RIBBON DAY MORNING TEA

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind members that a Pink Ribbon Day morning tea will be held in the Macquarie Room today from 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon. Entry is a \$5 donation at the door. I encourage all members to pop by the Macquarie Room to help support this worthy cause.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2018

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment.

Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 23 October 2018

No. 1 GOVT No. 1 [c2018-148]

Page 6, Schedule 1.9, lines 5–7 and 21–24. Omit all words on those lines.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (11:11): I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendment.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:12): The Opposition does not oppose the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2018-2019

Debate resumed from 18 October 2018.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:12): It is a pleasure to once again speak about how the New South Wales 2018-19 budget affects the people of my electorate of Wyong, particularly as this is the last opportunity to do so before the next State election in March 2019. While there was some good news in the budget for the Wyong electorate, I am obliged to raise the very strong concerns expressed by people in my electorate, if not people across the whole northern part of the Central Coast, regarding the proposal for the Pacific Highway to traverse the township of Wyong. On previous occasions I have drawn the attention of the House to documents obtained through freedom of information indicating that the tender documents have been drawn up and ready to be released since 2016. Two years later, in the period of the current budget, \$1.5 million has been allocated for planning. That takes the total amount for planning to almost \$30 million.

The state of the road is a major constraint on our local economy and a daily blight on the life of local residents. Recently I was visited by the owner of Wideline Windows and Doors who has two worksites: One is at Tuggerah Straight and the other is at the North Wyong Industrial Estate. The business owner was absolutely distraught over the cost of getting a truck from his North Wyong premises to the premises at Tuggerah. Sometimes the trip takes almost an hour over a distance of approximately three kilometres. He quite rightly said that because traffic congestion is costing his business big time, remedial action needs to be taken now. It is simply not good

enough that Wyong has reverted to a cycle of planning and replanning the upgrade. My electorate office is located on the Pacific Highway so I speak with firsthand knowledge of the difficulty. Sometimes I take detours to avoid the usual traffic jam on that stretch of roadway.

The problem was recognised in 2010. When Labor was in government, Tuggerah Straight was opened in 2009. The next section of upgrade for the Pacific Highway is between 1.2 kilometres and 2 kilometres of roadway. At the time it was unfortunate that there was not local agreement on the plan to rectify the problem. Although the then Labor Government was about to allocate funds to the project, the local business community intervened and wanted examination of a new option—a cut-out—which was agreed to at the time. That probably was a mistake. Ten years later, my electorate is still waiting for that section of road to be completed.

The budget has allocated \$19 million under Restart NSW. I call on the Government to allocate that money now so that the project can commence. The documentation obtained under freedom of information shows that enabling works could commence tomorrow. Without even affecting traffic using that part of the road, construction on two new bridges, relocation of the transport interchange at the station, and works on the new commuter car park for Wyong racecourse can commence. All those things can be commenced without interrupting the traffic.

In the latest meeting I had with Anna Zycki, for whom I have a great deal of respect and who was then with Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], the concern was that if work on the road and M1 Motorway upgrades occurred simultaneously and a problem emerged, that would cause major chaos. While I do not disagree with that, the enabling works could commence without affecting the Pacific Highway. The upgrade cannot begin until the enabling works are completed. The road upgrade is not really a political argument: Everyone agrees that work should get underway. It is just a matter of allocating the reserved \$19 million and getting on with the job.

Business people, local residents and tourists have all been complaining about that section of road causing major disruption. It is probably the most congested part of the Central Coast. Failure to address the problem has gone on for too long. There is no easy solution. The Government must build four lanes of roadway through the centre of the Wyong township. Businesses now accept that that is the solution. Every option has been examined—bypasses, overpasses, underpasses, additional entry points onto the freeway—which is what the \$30 million was spent on. The current proposal is the only viable option. It is time for the Government to move on and release the funds for the project.

I know that it was difficult. I acknowledge that under previous budgets the current Government upgraded the intersection at Tuggerah Straight and Wyong Road, and that certainly has made a difference. The work has to keep going. The northern corridor has now been left, and I acknowledge that the southern corridor between Lisarow and Ourimbah needs work done on it as well. The northern corridor needs to be looked after because the majority of growth is happening around the Warnervale area. There have been 4,000 new blocks identified and construction has started. Those people move down that corridor to do their business, particularly if they are heading to the industrial parks at Tuggerah, or Westfield. There is no disagreement that it needs to happen; it is the speed at which it happens. Unfortunately, \$1.5 million in this budget will not cut it, and the Restart NSW money needs to be allocated as soon as possible so that those enabling works can begin.

I understand the total cost of the project is estimated to be between \$240 million and \$280 million. It is not cheap, but it is a project that has to occur if there is to be economic resurgence in Wyong, which is hamstrung by daily traffic jams. Traffic, particularly on school days, can be backed up two kilometres from the lights in the middle of Wyong township to the lights at the Wyong Golf Club and the North Wyong business park. In the evening the traffic banks back to the new intersection on Tuggerah Straight. It is a major problem. It also affects public transport because buses are caught up in the traffic trying to access the Wyong railway station. Commuters need to park at Wyong because services at Warnervale have been cut. They drive to Wyong in the morning to catch the train. That creates more pressure. It is a no-brainer and it needs to start.

There is some good news in the budget with the construction of two new ambulance stations at Toukley and Hamlyn Terrace. I met with some of the residents of Hamlyn Terrace. The ambulance station is to be constructed on the hospital site. The local residents have concerns about how that will impact on their lives. There is a brand-new housing estate across the road from where the new ambulance station will be located. The existing residents on Skyhawk Avenue were very concerned that with the ambulance station operating 24/7 there would be sirens affecting their lifestyle. I was happy to know that authorities met with them and reassured them that in residential areas ambulances do not use sirens, only lights.

I agree with residents that the location of the ambulance station on Louisiana Road is problematic, and this is a council and State Government issue. The intersection of Louisiana Road and Warnervale Road floods. Last week we saw videos of the flooding at that end of the road. The other end of Louisiana Road at the intersection with the Pacific Highway is very dangerous. Only buses are allowed to make right-hand turns, although obviously ambulances will as well. The local residents are banned from making right-hand turns. There have been plans for

a long time to put a set of lights at that intersection. The council has been waiting for the section 94 contributions to come from the other side of the road. AV Jennings has paid its money. There are potential building blocks on the other side of the Pacific Highway and the council is waiting for that money.

I would suggest that as it currently holds \$94 million in developer contributions, it would be a very good project to use some of that money to fast-track that intersection. It is very dangerous and there are multiple accidents there. It is on a partly blind corner. Young people cross the road there because the major skate park is on the opposite corner. It is also the main thoroughfare for students who walk to Wadalba Community School. A new Woolworths has opened up the road, therefore potentially pedestrians will be using the intersection more and more. It is clear that traffic lights are needed there. I call on the council and the Roads and Maritime Services to get together to come up with a solution. The current solution was only ever meant to be a short-term strategy, but with the construction of the ambulance station it is even more important to install traffic lights at the intersection.

I thank the Government for the ambulance station at Toukley, which is progressing towards completion. I am sure I will not be invited to the opening, but I am pretty used to that. I do not get invited to any of the openings. I did not get invited to the opening of the Wyong police station, which was 95 per cent built before we lost government in 2011. The police gave me a tour afterwards, which was nice of them. It would be good to be invited because I am a member in this place who acknowledges the Government when it does good things. Having been in government, I understand it is difficult to find money to put into an electorate. I acknowledge new infrastructure, particularly in a growing area, when it is delivered. As local members, our first job is to fight for our electorates, and our second job is to play the politics. When the Government does the right thing, I will give it a tick. When it does the wrong thing, I will give it a kick. And that is the way it should work in this place.

The upgrade to Wyong Public Hospital has begun. The car park construction has been completed and the enabling works on the site are also under construction. That is good news. Health and education facilities, as well as other services, are absolutely essential in a growth area such as Wyong. The budget allocated \$6.5 million to the Wyong hospital car park and a further \$23.5 million for the redevelopment of the hospital. The hospital continues to grow and I am pleased to say that in 1995 the former member for Wyong, Harry Moore—who is a legend in the Wyong area—obtained the funds for the first upgrade of Wyong hospital under the Greiner Government. The community very much appreciated that. When Labor was in government we completed further upgrades and built a new section at the hospital. With the growth of the population this latest upgrade is needed. The \$6.5 million for the car park and the \$23.5 million for the hospital is welcome.

There is also a commitment to a new school at Warnervale. I understand there are some issues. I met with Minister Stokes, and I appreciate his support for the project. I did warn them at the time that the site chosen is problematic. The history is that in 2009 Labor built a new primary school, but not on the existing site. Because there were considerable issues on that site land was purchased and the school was moved to that alternative site. I was very surprised at the announcement that a new school to accommodate 1,000 students would be built on the old site. I met with Assets and said, "Look, you guys obviously know what you are doing, but you do realise there are some issues with that site, that is why we didn't build a school there?" They said, "No. It's all good, it's all good." But, guess what! There are issues with that site concerning the bushfire protection zone. The NSW Rural Fire Service will not sign off on what has been proposed; they want a 70-metre protection zone. That takes three quarters of the site. It appears that the Rural Fire Service will not budge.

If it is clear that the site will have major issues, perhaps it is time to look for a different site before all of the land has been bought. There is land available in the area; in fact, the Department of Education owns two other sites, one on Sparks Road and one on Hakone Road. The department might be able to do a trade with one of the housing development companies for an appropriate site for the school. There is no doubt that we need a school. We also need a new or upgraded high school in the area. As I said, the growth in population in the area is flooding all the existing facilities. I ask those responsible for assets in the Department of Education to look at other options if they have hit a brick wall, otherwise the project could be delayed for one or two years, which would put more pressure on the existing schools in the area.

The lesson might be that it would be useful to tap into the knowledge of a long-term local member. If they did so they might avoid confronting the potential pitfalls. I had the privilege of being the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and I know where many of the skeletons are buried. It would save time if they were to ask for the local member's opinion. As I said, they are paid a lot of money and they obviously know what they are doing—some days. It is a shame that they are confronting this problem because there is community goodwill about the project. The committee was meeting and the members had started to think about names for the new school. There were some initial problems that they worked through, but it comes back to the fact that the site was destined to have major environmental issues. I believe there is a sugar glider pathway through the area and that the housing development company next-door is having issues with it.

Funding has been provided in the budget papers for the new intercity trains. I have no complaints about getting new trains. However, even though they have some nice features—fold-down trays and mobile device chargers—they do not have reversible seats. Fixed seating means that half of the passengers travel backwards. That is a big bugbear for commuters; they really do not like it. The surveys that were conducted clearly revealed that passengers like reversible seats. Commuters were asked what they wanted, but the trains were built without reversible seats. Consultation is good when it is acted upon, but if it is not it can cause consternation. [*Extension of time*]

What should have been a big plus for the Government has become a massive negative with people feeling very upset about the configuration of the new trains. They are also still worried about the timetable changes, which have cut services to smaller stations. Many of my constituents need to catch a train to Sydney at 5.00 a.m., and that means they have to catch one train to Wyong station and then transfer to another to access the Sydney service. That creates many problems. Most people do not go to Warnervale now; they travel to Wyong, which has put more pressure on parking there.

Another issue not well covered in the budget papers should be examined. Tuggerah Lake is often described as the jewel in the crown of the northern part of the Central Coast. It has a series of navigation channels, which are silting up. Many of the boat owners, who pay jetty fees and other fees, particularly on Ourimbah Creek, can no longer access the lake. That is a real problem. We have had extensive discussions on the Central Coast about dredging. I have raised with the shadow Minister that the navigation channels should be a Roads and Maritime Services responsibility given that they are roadways on the water.

When these channels silt up they cause safety issues. People launch their boats from the new boat ramp and try to get through the narrow channel. However, it is choked with weeds, which get into their engine intakes and their engines overheat and stall. Marine Rescue NSW is called and the boats are towed out. Of course, the Marine Rescue boat then has trouble getting through the channel. The only way to get through is to gun the engine and hope that the weeds are blown out. That is also an issue because there is a four-knot speed limit. People who know boating will understand that the boat must be on the plane to get through the channel, and that creates safety risks because the channel is very narrow.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Can you trim?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The weeds still get into the intake. If two boats are coming from opposite directions and both are trying to hit the plane at high speed, there could be an accident. The Roads and Maritime Services response was to suggest closing the channel by taking down the navigation poles. That cannot be done when boat owners are paying fees for access. That is not a solution. I have spoken to the council and I was given a commitment that the weed harvester would be used to remove some of the weeds. That has not happened even though I was given that commitment 12 months ago. We are coming into another summer and the problem must be solved. I would hate to stand in this place to talk about an accident that occurred because this issue has not been addressed.

Although funding has been allocated for a new primary school, my electorate still has an issue with secondary education facilities. I have spoken with the Minister and he is receptive, as is the shadow Minister, to Wadalba Community School being upgraded to include a senior college. Wadalba Community School is now a K-12 school—it is the only public school of that type on the Central Coast. It has a lot of land and it is in a planned community. Rather than building a new high school, which would accommodate only 500 to 600 students, it would make more sense to utilise the site and to build a senior college. It would be connected to the existing school, but it would be able to accommodate senior students and it could offer a wider range of year 11 and year 12 courses. That appears to me to be a good solution.

Many parents in the area want a new high school. However, when I explain that a new high school would limit the courses their children could study because of the number of students, they agree that the senior college would be a good idea. I hope the planners agree. A new high school would cost \$40 million to \$50 million, even if the land had already been acquired. A senior college could be built for \$10 million to \$20 million. That certainly would be a very good solution. It would also not drain students from the surrounding high schools, so they would maintain their numbers. It would be a great option for an area that is attracting so many new residents.

The final thing I want to talk about is the Warnervale Link Road—or, as the locals call it, "the missing link". There is money in the budget—I think it is about \$42 million—for planning for that road, which would join the Pacific Highway at the suburb of Watanobbi to Sparks Road, and would create a really good link from Tuggerah all the way through to Sparks Road. It would run parallel with the freeway through the town along the railway line, giving access to all the new suburbs, including the new industrial land in the Wyong employment zone. The first third of that road was built quite a few years ago. Unfortunately, the council ran out of money

because workers ruptured the principal gas main when they were putting in the road, and that had to be repaired. So the road ends at the end of Lakes Grammar School.

The next section is in the planning stage, and it could be built now. That is probably the least difficult part of the proposed works. If that were completed it would open up what council has designated the Warnervale Business and Education Precinct and create hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs in that area. The final link under the most recent plans—it is the most difficult one—would require a 405-metre bridge across a protected wetland to make a final connection to the Pacific Highway. That is the problematic section. I hope this planning money will be followed up with some construction money so that, together with the council's contribution, the second third can be built to open up the business precinct because jobs are needed very much in our local area. I hope also that planning continues for the final section. Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] has put the third section—the Watanobbi end—out to public consultation.

There has been a lot of opposition, because it contains a no right-hand turn for residents out of the suburb of Watanobbi. Instead, they have to turn left and use a U-turn bay. That is clearly not a good option. I have made that known and there have been submissions against that option. I think the RMS has realised that that plan will not cut it with the public. Residents hope that the final solution will include a right-hand turn and that it happens as soon as possible so that that section of road, as well as the upgrade of the road through Wyong, can be completed, thereby improving the link between Wyong Road in the south to Sparks Road in the north, opening the employment precinct at the northern end of the road. That concludes my final budget update for this session. As I have said, the Government has moved on some major projects but a whole lot more needs to be done, particularly in this growth area. I hope that the Government is prepared to listen to local members. If this Government does not, I know that after March a new government will certainly listen to the local member.

Business interrupted.

Bills

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (WALAMA COURT) BILL 2018

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:43): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I have great pleasure in introducing this bill on behalf of the Opposition. The objects of the bill are to amend the District Court Act and the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act. The amendments contained in the bill aim to establish the Walama Court, which will be part of the District Court exercising criminal jurisdiction. Jurisdiction is conferred on the Walama Court to deal with the sentencing of Aboriginal persons and allow a trial judge to refer a person to the Walama Court. Additionally, the bill aims to enable the District Court to provide for additional and different procedures for the Walama Court, to enable the Chief Judge of the District Court to issue practice notes concerning the practice or procedure of the Walama Court and to confer jurisdiction on the Walama Court, instead of the Parole Authority, to deal with offenders upon whom intensive correction orders have been imposed and who fail to comply with the order.

The bill is to establish the Walama Court, which will be an Indigenous-specific court within the District Court. It will be part of the District Court rather than a separate specialist court in the manner, say, of the Drug Court. Structurally, it is perhaps better thought of as analogous to the Coroner's Court and Children's Court as they stand in relation to the Local Court. In one sense, it is a pity that I have had to introduce this bill. I thought that the Government would have introduced this measure well before now. The provisions of this bill were originally drafted by Senior Counsel and presented to both the Government and the Opposition by the Bar Association. The members of the association—particularly Arthur Moses, SC, a member of the party opposing mine—are strong supporters of the proposal.

The final form of the bill has, obviously, come from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel. Getting to this point with the proposal has been a frustrating journey. The proposal was first raised informally with then Attorney Upton in May 2015. A formal proposal was put by the District Court itself to government in November 2015. Just to emphasise it, the proposal came from the District Court. The proposal has sat on the desk of subsequent Attorneys General until today. The memorandum from the Bar Association sets out the case for the bill:

The New South Wales Bar Association is of the view that swift and decisive action on the establishment of a specialist Walama Court will provide improved justice outcomes for Indigenous Australians and impact on the disproportionate rate of Indigenous incarceration in NSW within a relatively short period of time.

After consultation with the Chief Judge of the District Court and Judge Yehia, and NSW barristers with relevant expertise, it is suggested that the Walama Court could be operationalised through the creation of a District Court practice note supported by minor legislative amendments to two pieces of legislation.

This bill encapsulates these legislative amendments to two pieces of legislation, the District Court Act and the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act. The Bar Association tells me that the Government tells it that funding is not a problem. Granted that the court does not object, one can only assume that the Government's recalcitrance stems from an ideological objection to establishing so-called separate systems of justice, in line with the attitudes of right-wing ideologues such as the Institute of Public Affairs. I have to say in this context that this is simply nonsense. It is hardly a separate system of justice; it is part of the District Court. It is considerably less of a separate system of justice than is the Drug Court, although if it were to be established, one could only hope the Walama Court would have the success of the Drug Court.

More than that, any objection by this Government to this proposal because it is separate justice is unmitigated nonsense and complete hypocrisy. Circle sentencing was introduced in the Local Court by the previous Labor Government. For the past eight years, under the current conservative Coalition Government, it has been proceeding quite effectively without causing any difficulties, completely innocent of any intervention from the State Government. The Government cannot have supported circle sentencing in this manner, and then oppose the Walama Court because it is allegedly a separate system of justice.

The accusation of hypocrisy can be labelled even more seriously. On the initiative of the President Peter Johnstone, the Children's Court established a Children's Koori Court sitting at Parramatta. That occurred during the term of this Government. I have seen that court in operation and have been impressed by it. It was established without government funding but with the enthusiastic endorsement of the then Attorney General Brad Hazzard. The then Attorney took some trouble to seek justifiable media attention from what was a positive development. Even if it was not his idea, he supported it and no-one would begrudge him the media attention.

Then, early this year, the State budget announced the expansion of the Koori court to Surry Hills. The Attorney, the Treasurer and a range of others featured in fetching photographs in, among other places, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, celebrating the expansion of Indigenous courts. Of course, this myopic and ideological stance is not only opposed to the initiatives supported by this Government in this State; it is opposed to the examples of many other courts in Australia—the Murri Court in Queensland, Nunga Courts in South Australia and the Koori Court in Victoria, for example. There is a need to focus on solutions that might actually work rather than adopt a blinkered pre-conceived ideological view. If we had adopted a blinkered view the Drug Court never would have been established.

Although I note that the then Opposition—and now Government—expressed its scepticism at the time, they were wrong then about the Drug Court just as they are wrong now about the Walama Court. It is worth going to the opinions of those who deal with some of these issues every day. I have mentioned already the attitude of the Bar Association to the Walama Court. When the Bar Association made its public declaration of support for the Walama Court it was jointly with the Police Association. A joint media release was issued by Arthur Moses of the Bar Association and Pat Gooley, Secretary of the Police Association. About the Walama Court, Mr Gooley said:

The Police Association of NSW has supported this proposal for some time. Police are sick of the rhetoric to gain political mileage. This is a genuine solution that will reduce the number of victims of crime and reduce the incidence of predominately young men being incarcerated.

He also said:

The social impact that incarceration has on Aboriginal families and communities is seen on the ground every day by the members of our Police Force. The Walama Court proposal is designed to reduce recidivism rates of Indigenous people through the use of more rigorous supervision orders and diversionary programs in the sentencing process, as well as increased cooperation between the criminal justice system and respected persons in the Indigenous community.

The model is based upon the model of this State's Drug Court and the Victorian Koori Court. This anticipates a community-based option where a judge is able to monitor an individual post-sentence. Rather than locking someone up and throwing away the key, and accepting with equanimity the inevitable post-release recidivism, there is intensive monitoring, including by Community Corrections. This reduces the likelihood of reoffending to the benefit of not only the individual concerned, but also potential victims, the justice system and, frankly, taxpayers. This relies upon the current legislation and sentencing regime. The court will have regard to the existing legislation and the existing principles of sentencing. The motivation behind this approach is both stark and notorious. Aboriginal people constitute less than 3 per cent of the population, but they make up about a quarter of the population in New South Wales prisons. Both proportionally and in absolute terms, their incarceration rates are greater than at the time of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. They are also greater than they were in 2011.

While I strongly support the proposal for a Walama Court, it is not the only thing that should be done. For example, four years ago Labor made funding commitments about justice reinvestment projects. Those commitments remain and are critical elements in addressing these problems in the long term. The provisions in the bill are comparatively straightforward. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the District Court Act. New section 9A establishes that the District Court may sit as the Walama Court, which may deal with Aboriginal persons. New section 171 allows the court to proclaim rules or practice notes to provide for the operation of the court. This allows the greatest flexibility for the District Court to manage its own affairs in accordance with the proposal from the Bar Association that has been discussed, as I mentioned, with the District Court. It was also proposed by the association as the most propitious way in which to progress the proposal.

Schedule 2 provides amendments to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act. This allows the Walama Court to have ongoing jurisdiction for offenders who have been sentenced. I think that has been one of the most successful features of the Drug Court. As I have indicated, that court has been remarkably successful. The model in this bill has been designed by the Bar Association to have the Walama Court established expeditiously. There is still time for this Government to pursue this broadly supported proposal that has been sitting on the Government's desk for four years. Over the past two weeks the Parliament has been subjected to a flurry of cognate bills largely restricted to implementing statutory reviews and recommendations that should have been implemented eons ago. This bill gives the Government and the Parliament the opportunity to adopt a proposal of some significance that will actually make a difference. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

Mr NICK LALICH: I have a written authority from the member for Maroubra, Michael Daley, MP, requesting the postponement of General Business Order of the Day (for Bills) [Plastic Shopping Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2018].

Bills

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 24 October 2018.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (10:53): I resume my contribution on the Opposition's bill to protect our firefighters when they contract cancer. In my original contribution I commended the shadow Minister for his work on this bill. Having spoken to firefighters, I know they appreciate his advocacy, and that has led to the Government introducing its bill. As I said in a debate yesterday, imitation is the greatest form of flattery and sometimes good pressure from a good Opposition will make the Government take good decisions. We all support protecting our professional and volunteer firefighters across a range of areas. In his second reading speech the shadow Minister made some key points, particularly that 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.

Seven years ago the Federal Government did this in the Australian Capital Territory. That legislation ensured that firefighters who were diagnosed with one or more of the listed cancers who met the requirement of service would have their cancer presumed to be an occupational disease and, as a result, have requisite grounds to claim compensation. Following the introduction of that 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.

This bill by the Opposition and the bill introduced by the Government, will finally do that for the firefighters in New South Wales. The South Australian Parliament unanimously passed legislation based on the Tasmanian model. In 2015 that legislation was amended to remove the requirement for volunteers to have attended at least 150 exposure events. I think that is a good move. As I said in the last part of my previous contribution to this debate, firefighters work in dangerous environments and their workplaces differ greatly. While they can take certain precautions to protect themselves, it is impossible to fully protect themselves from the toxic exposure to smoke and chemicals that are emitted during fires. In March 2015 the Northern Territory Parliament passed

legislation, in September 2015 the Queensland Government passed legislation and on 19 May 2017 the Victorian Government confirmed its intention to introduce presumptive legislation. Victoria held a parliamentary inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill. That inquiry noted:

The Government has come to the strong conclusion that the case for reform is now overwhelming.

It also said: The introduction of a presumptive rights compensation scheme acknowledges the risks that they take when carrying out their work. Before the Opposition's bill, New South Wales was the only jurisdiction that had not introduced presumptive cancer legislation for firefighters. I was very pleased to attend a meeting outside the Kincumber fire station in the electorate of the member for Terrigal, where we met a couple of firefighters who have unfortunately contracted cancer. They said that the stress of not only coping with the disease but also trying to prove that it was linked to their previous work doubled their worries and it was something that they did not need. I strongly support the legislation introduced by the Opposition. I acknowledge that the Government has introduced similar legislation. I will of course strongly support that as well because, as happens in politics, the Opposition's bill will not be supported but Labor will certainly support the Government's bill. It is overdue. As I said, change started in 2011 with the Australian Capital Territory and down the track the States have progressively moved on the issue.

The 12 occupational cancers and their qualifying periods that are referred to in the Opposition's bill—the Government's legislation is slightly different—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. All those types of cancer will be protected if people have served the requisite times. This is a big stress relief for firefighters and their families, and is long overdue. I commend the Opposition's bill to the House.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (11:00): The object of the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018 is to establish presumptive rights to workers compensation under the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and the Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987 for firefighters suffering from certain kinds of cancer. Our Fire and Rescue NSW firefighters are the unsung heroes of the New South Wales emergency services. They are tasked with some of the most difficult and frightening situations imaginable and it is their responsibility to get those situations under control safely. When a building is on fire and people are running out of it, our firefighters bravely run in. If someone is trapped somewhere it is the responsibility of our firefighters to free them safely. Those kinds of incidents require brains, courage and problem-solving skills, not to mention peak physical condition.

Fire and Rescue NSW is one of the world's largest urban fire and rescue services and is the busiest in Australia. Its overriding purpose is to enhance community safety, quality of life and confidence by minimising the impact of hazards and emergency incidents on the people, property, environment and economy of New South Wales. Fire and Rescue NSW currently has more than 6,858 firefighters, approximately 5,891 community fire unit members and 432 administrative and trades staff working together for a safer, confident community. Members in this Chamber will agree that our firefighters deserve the best workers compensation to help them deal with some of the difficult health problems they face after retiring.

Studies have proven conclusively that firefighters are at a much greater risk of developing certain cancers as a result of their exposure to hazardous substances while at work. The bill brings New South Wales in line with other jurisdictions and ensures that firefighters diagnosed with one of 12 listed cancers who have the required years of service will have their disease or diseases automatically presumed to be caused by occupational hazards encountered while firefighting. To be eligible, a firefighter's diagnosis must occur either during their term of employment or within 10 years of their retirement from active firefighting and the lodgement of the application. As our firefighters risk their lives to save people in our community every day, it is only just and proper that we in this Chamber support them by making sure that their health during their career and after is taken care of.

The support from stakeholders, the Fire Brigade Employees Union and the Rural Fire Service Association shows that NSW Labor is on the right track with this bill. I congratulate my colleague the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, Guy Zangari, and his staff on all their hard work in bringing this bill before the House. I congratulate also Leighton Drury on his work with the Fire Brigade Employees Union and Mr Brendon Rea from the Bonnyrigg and Cabramatta fire stations. I sincerely thank all our NSW Fire and Rescue workers, whether they are in my electorate of Cabramatta or elsewhere throughout New South Wales, for their courage and bravery in doing one of the most dangerous jobs around.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (11:04): Earlier today the member for Wyong congratulated the Government on its legislation that is similar to the Opposition's Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018 but a much-improved version. It was introduced in this place a few days ago. I note and echo the sentiments expressed by those opposite about the activities of firefighters within the State of New South Wales—they enter buildings that are on fire when others are running out and tackle other serious situations in our community. The Opposition's bill seeks to provide workers compensation protection for those firefighters who suffer difficulties as a result of exposure to unknown flammable chemicals and toxic substances in industrial areas. However, as I indicated previously, the Government has introduced its own bill, which substantially improves on the Opposition's bill. Therefore, the Government will oppose this bill.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:06): I have with me in Parliament today a teddy bear friend who travels with firefighters across New South Wales so that I may convey the sincere appreciation of the firefighters of New South Wales for the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018 introduced by the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, Guy Zangari, and to put pressure on the Government to pass this important legislation. Members on this side of the House will speak for our first responders even if the Government has been slow to respond for them. Labor will always look after the workers of New South Wales.

The bill recognises the risks involved in the industry—not those day-to-day risks that firefighters take as they fly into the face of danger but the risks from exposure to the chemicals used in their line of work. In 2011 the Commonwealth Parliament introduced the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill, which set the precedent, and encouraged similar legislation to be enacted in each State and Territory in Australia. Such legislation has been enacted throughout Australia, but not in New South Wales. For seven years we have lagged behind, but today we can finally give proper care and consideration to those who put their lives on the line to protect us.

While we all appreciate the immediate risks that firefighters face, too often we do not realise the underlying and more insidious dangers lurking in the background. Firefighters are at much greater risk of developing certain cancers as a result of exposure to hazardous substances while performing their duties. We must eliminate red tape for firefighters seeking support when diagnosed with these illnesses to ensure that they get the help they need. We now know much better than before about the health risks that firefighters face, including from the now discredited per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances [PFAS], which were a popular firefighting tool for many years. The foam was praised as "virtually indestructible" in the environment and able to repel grease, oil and water.

It was also the key ingredient in 3M's popular fabric protector Scotchgard, and was used widely in firefighting foams, food packaging and metal plating. The chemical still poses a threat in Australia today, mainly because of its use in aqueous film forming foam, which is a fire retardant manufactured by 3M and used by the military, commercial airports, fire brigades and heavy industry for decades. I send a shout-out to the people living in the red zone in Williamstown and Medowie, and acknowledge their suffering. I hope the Government comes to the party and provides the support they need. In 2009 a global agreement was reached to ban perfluorooctane sulfonic acid [PFOS] by listing it on the United Nation's Stockholm Convention. Australia is one of the only countries that has not ratified the decision, which would cost an estimated \$39 million. At least 171 countries have agreed to the phase-out, including the United Kingdom, Germany and China.

These countries recognise that PFOS is a human health hazard that at high enough levels can cause immune dysfunction, hormonal interference and certain types of cancer in humans. Our fireys did not choose to use these products; they were just doing their jobs. But now some could end up with serious illnesses because of it. That is just one of the reasons that fireys need this protection. Just the other night I was sitting with a firewoman from Victoria and she talked about research into the burning plant toxins that our rural firefighters are exposed to. She said that xanthorrhoea fires are really smelly. We must do further research into what our bushies are exposed to, as well as our town fireys.

The bill that Labor has introduced today provides career and volunteer firefighters with protections should they contract a cancer known to be caused by exposure to hazardous substances associated with fighting fires. It is great that the Opposition has come up with a bill to protect firefighters. Labor seeks to ensure that a firefighter who is diagnosed with cancer and has the requisite years of service will have their cancer recognised to be caused by occupational hazards encountered while firefighting. This means that our fireys can get on with getting healthy and will receive compensation without needing to get caught up in red tape. There is no member of Parliament or community member who is not touched every day by the work of our fireys. They hold a special place in our hearts.

I recently had the privilege of visiting a fire station in a neighbouring electorate with one of our local councillors, Jeff Sundstrom, who is a firefighter. I had the opportunity to talk with a number of firefighters who

shared their own very personal journeys with cancer. They generously explained the risks their employment posed to their health, and the elevated risk of cancer within the firefighting community. In a career, firefighters attend hundreds of fires; rescues involving house, car, factory, bush, boat and tanker fires; chemical spills; and hazmat incidents, the products of which are extremely toxic and carcinogenic when ingested, inhaled or absorbed through the skin. I cannot begin to imagine a workplace filled with choking and fuming gases or being soaked and swimming in firefighting foam. Today I thank our fireys—the career men and women and the bushies—for the dangerous work they do every day to protect the people of New South Wales.

One recently retired gentleman turned up to speak with the shadow Minister "just in case". Envisaging a real risk of cancer in the future is a tough way to live at the sunset end of an excellent career spent looking after the people of New South Wales. He has seen his workmates gutted by news of their cancer diagnoses, often retiring before the "due date". Sometimes the cancer is detected too late for chemotherapy or radiation treatment. Firefighters are often faced with the reality of leaving young families behind and having to deal not only with their health circumstances but also their financial future—the cost of treatments, mortgages, school fees and everyday expenses, as well as how far their superannuation will go. There is also the potential loss of human life.

Local councillor Jeff Sundstrom—firefighter, family man and community activist—has battled cancer during his career. He comes from a regional location and the threat of bushfires is ever looming. We cannot forget the important role that our Rural Fire Service volunteers play in protecting our environments and defending our homes against danger. I am very pleased that the Fire Brigade Employees Union and the Rural Fire Service Association have pledged their support for this legislation. They have watched as their colleagues around the country have been given these same protections and support by their State governments. Finally, the Liberal-Nationals Government is being forced to consider this legislation.

No-one wants a cancer diagnosis, but after being diagnosed no-one wants to be told by an insurer that they must identify the particular chemical responsible for causing that cancer, nominate the actual fire attended where the particular chemical was present, and then prove that it caused the cancer. That is an impossible task, as many of the thousands of incidents attended during a firefighter's career could have had—and probably did have—carcinogenic chemicals present. The last thing a person needs when diagnosed with a potentially fatal disease—at a time when they and their families are struggling with doctors, treatments and an uncertain outcome—is to have to worry about the costs of treatments or whether they will have a job once their employer is aware of the seriousness of their illness. Fireys know—and have told Labor about—the importance of enacting presumptive cancer legislation for firefighters and volunteer firefighters in New South Wales. Labor was told, and Labor has acted. It is good that the Liberal-Nationals Government is considering this bill.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (11:15): I make a contribution to debate on the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018. Firefighters put their lives on the line to protect our communities from harm. The bill before the House is intended to assist firefighters during the tough times that follow the diagnosis of cancer. This legislation is sensible and important, as studies have made conclusive links between exposure to hazardous chemicals and substances and the development of certain cancers such as brain cancer, breast cancer, testicular cancer, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, myeloma, prostate cancer, ureter cancer, colorectal cancer and oesophageal cancer.

Firefighters are workers who must be compensated, just like any other worker deserves to be compensated for a work-related disease or injury. They should not be required to jump through hoops to prove that their cancer is work related when, as I said before, the evidence shows a direct link between exposure to hazardous substances, which we know occurs in firefighting, and the development of certain cancers. These essential protections have been enshrined in legislation in every other jurisdiction in Australia. Support of this bill will finally bring New South Wales in line with all other Australian States—it has been a long wait for our firefighters. This week the Government tabled its own firefighters compensation bill, which shows that it has been shamed into action by Labor yet again. This Government is simply incapable of taking the lead on beneficial workers compensation legislation.

I do not think firefighters care which side of politics brings this legislation into reality. But given the Opposition bill is on the table now, if the Government wants to act in the best interests of firefighters it should either vote for it or propose sensible amendments to it so that we can get this done. Voting down this bill only to bring on its own bill in the future is the Government just playing petty politics—and firefighters know it. The significance of this bill was brought to my attention by the many constituents who contacted my office and asked that I support it. One story that stuck out to me was that of Stephen Nunn, who was a long-serving firefighter diagnosed with cancer at age 47. The former Newcastle fire station officer began to feel ill and visited his doctor, who ordered blood tests that confirmed he had stage IV leukaemia.

Leukaemia is a type of cancer linked to exposure to benzene and formaldehyde, which are chemicals found in all plastics and pesticides—things that Stephen had come into contact with in his working life as

a firefighter. Stephen endured eight months of intense chemotherapy and the removal of his spleen. To this day, Stephen still has periods where he cannot get out of bed for days due to lethargy and nausea. Not only did Stephen have to take time off work and endure life with leukaemia, but also he had enormous medical expenses. Thankfully, the local fireys banded together for a fundraiser that raised \$90,000 to help with his medical costs. While raising these funds was an amazing accomplishment, after years of putting his body on the line to serve our community, firefighters like Stephen should not be forced into fundraising for medical expenses incurred as a result of occupational cancer. In his time as a firefighter, Stephen attended hundreds of fires, rescues and hazmat incidents involving chemical spills, tanker fires, ship fires, house fires and car fires. Stephen has given immense public service; he deserves the easy access to compensation that this bill will bring.

When I met with the Fire Brigade Employees Union and with fireys on site I learned that, while the protective clothing worn by firefighters is important in preventing them from being exposed to life-harming chemicals, the clothing needs to be removed at some point and so firefighters will never have zero risk. The act of simply being in the same room as protective clothing exposes firefighters to hazardous substances. No matter what protective equipment firefighters are provided with, they will always be exposed to life-harming chemicals. I thank the Fire Brigade Employees Union and the Rural Fire Service Association for their persistence and hard work in campaigning for these essential protections. I also thank Labor's shadow Minister for Emergency Services, and member for Fairfield, Guy Zangari, for introducing this bill to the House. I am proud to be part of a Labor team that has brought legislation to this place to support our firefighters, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (11:21): I support the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018. The bill seeks to introduce amendments to the Workers Compensation Act 1987, the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 and the Workers Compensation (Bushfire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987. The bill would provide employed and volunteer firefighters with the appropriate protections should they contract a cancer known to be caused by exposure to hazardous substances while performing firefighting duties. The bill will bring New South Wales in line with other Australian jurisdictions. Its primary objective is to ensure that a firefighter who is diagnosed with one or more of the 12 listed cancers and who has the requisite years of services will have their disease automatically presumed to be caused by occupational hazards while firefighting. This will ensure that any firefighter who is diagnosed with one of those cancers is eligible for compensation without needing to go to excessive lengths to prove a direct cause of the disease.

Over the past year, the shadow Minister for Emergency Services and his team have consulted extensively with the Fire Brigade Employees Union and the Rural Fire Service Association. Both groups have pledged their support for this legislation and highlighted the importance of presumptive cancer legislation for firefighters and volunteer firefighters being enacted in New South Wales. NSW Labor is taking action on an important issue that the New South Wales Government has failed to act upon. I note that the Government is now attempting to play catch-up. As the member for Charlestown said, while our fireys do not care who gets this law up, the effect and difference it will have on their lives is absolutely vital. We have introduced this legislation and the Government should vote for it. If the Government wishes to make changes or additions, it should bring them as amendments to this legislation. That makes a lot of sense.

At the beginning of this month I joined the member for Charlestown and Fire Brigade Employees Union Branch Secretary Jason Morgan at our local fire station in Cooks Hill, Newcastle, where many firefighters support this legislation. We introduced the legislation to make it much easier for firefighters suffering from cancer to access workers compensation. We received a lot of support from the local fireys, who put their lives on the line to protect our communities from harm. The legislation is intended to protect and assist firefighters during the tumultuous times that follow the diagnosis of cancer. Fire Brigade Employees Union Branch Secretary Jason Morgan said:

Hopefully there's bipartisan support for the bill ... There's a lot of blokes up here that have been affected by cancer so if this helps them or anyone else ... that's a win for everyone.

As I said, the Government needs to get on board, put up any amendments it feels are necessary and support our legislation. This will protect and assist firefighters during the terrible times after a cancer diagnosis. We are committed to giving our firefighters the reassurance that they will be looked after. This is why this legislation is vital. I commend the bill to the House and congratulate the shadow Minister on bringing it to Parliament.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (11:25): I am pleased to contribute to debate on Labor's Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018. This legislation is well overdue. While I acknowledge that there is bipartisan support for our firefighters, I find it distasteful that the Minister for Emergency Services has refused to support this bill just because it is a Labor bill, and has instead introduced his own near-identical bill. Put simply, the Government has had seven years to take action, but instead

it waited until after Labor introduced this bill to realise it had to act. The Minister claims to have been working on a bill for some time. That came as a surprise to firefighters, who had not been consulted on it.

This is in stark contrast to the excellent work of shadow Minister Guy Zangari, who has consulted with the Fire Brigade Employees Union, the Rural Fire Service Association and individual firefighters across New South Wales. There was no surprise when Labor's bill was introduced, because it had been widely consulted on. Firefighters on the ground know that this issue is not new. In 2011 the Federal Parliament introduced the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill, which covered the Australian Capital Territory and aviation professional firefighters. That bill, like the one we are debating today, recognised that exposure to toxic chemicals and smoke puts firefighters at a uniquely increased risk of certain medical conditions, including certain cancers.

Like today's bill, the 2011 legislation ensured that firefighters who had been diagnosed with one or more of the listed cancers and who had met the requisite years of service would then have their cancer presumed to be an occupational disease related to their work as a firefighter. This presumption would reduce the burden on already sick firefighters who had been denied workers compensation and had to fight for it. As part of the 2011 legislation, a Senate inquiry report was handed down recommending the passage of the bill and expansion of the list of possible occupational cancers from seven to 12. The report also 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. The Federal bill passed with bipartisan support on 24 November 2011. The first State to act on this issue was Tasmania. The Tasmanian Parliament unanimously passed a bill on 29 September 2013, recognising the same 12 cancers and the qualifying periods. The Tasmanian legislation also extended the presumption to volunteer firefighters who could demonstrate attendance at 150 exposure events over 10 years. The Western Australian Parliament followed suit, and unanimously passed a bill on 29 October 2013 that replicated the Commonwealth legislation and covered career firefighters. In 2016 it extended the presumption to volunteer firefighters who had attended at least five hazardous fires during that year. The South Australian Parliament acted next, adopting the Tasmanian model on 10 March 2014. That legislation was subsequently amended in 2015 to remove the requirement for volunteers to have attended at least 150 exposure events. In 2015 the Northern Territory Parliament passed legislation based on the Tasmanian model for volunteer firefighters. In September 2015, the Queensland Government adopted a similar policy, although with a new model for volunteer firefighters whereby claims are considered by a special committee that examines individual evidence, such as fire service records. In May last year the Victorian Government confirmed its intention to introduce the Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill. New South Wales is the very last State to act.

Rather than working on this issue, as the Minister claims to have been doing, he has waited for every other State and Territory in the country to act, and then waited for the Labor Party in opposition to do his job for him—to do the consultation, draft the bill and introduce it in this House before he has had to wake up and act. I thank Labor's shadow Minister and member for Fairfield for all his hard work and dedication to the firefighters of New South Wales. I also thank the Fire Brigades Employees Union and the NSW Rural Fire Service Association [RFS] for their strong advocacy on behalf of their members.

The legislation before the House today sets out 12 cancers that have demonstrated links to a firefighter's service, and qualifying periods for each of those cancers. This approach is consistent with other jurisdictions around the country. Perhaps the only benefit of being the last State to act is that across each State and Territory there at least will be a consistent approach to this issue, although I note that now the Minister has suggested making the New South Wales regime different from those for firefighters in other States and Territories. The 12 occupational cancers which are included in the bill have been referred to by other members who have contributed to the debate, so I will not take up time by listing them. However, I mention that the qualifying periods for those cancers to be presumed to be related to a person's service as a firefighter range from five to 25 years.

For a firefighter to be eligible, they must meet the criteria set out in the legislation and their diagnoses must occur either during their term of employment or within 10 years of retirement from active firefighting and the application. I understand the Government is proposing to adopt a different view on eligibility. The Government could have proposed an amendment, which would have been accepted by the Opposition if the Government had had the decency to support this bill with amendments. In considering the list of cancers noted in the legislation I am aware of the growing science for other cancers as well and fear that the list may grow in the future. It is a sad reality that our firefighters not only put themselves in harm's way when fighting fire, but those dangers can continue to haunt them for years and decades afterwards.

Members of this House would be aware of my support for residents in my electorate who have been impacted by per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances [PFAS] contamination caused by firefighting foams manufactured by the United States firm, 3M. Those very same foams have been used by many firefighters in many settings over a long time. Retired firefighters have described bathing in this foam for decades as they carried out drills on air force bases. They have had similar experiences also in the RFS and in Fire and Rescue NSW. The Fiskville Country Fire Authority training facility in Victoria was closed after the existence of a cancer cluster associated with those chemicals was revealed. A number of RFS sites across New South Wales currently are being investigated. A retired firefighter who lives in my electorate of Port Stephens, Mr Geoffrey Zipper, has told me of his battle with bladder cancer, which could have been related to his service as a firefighter, and exposure to those chemicals. Thankfully Geoff has won his battle against the cancer. He has been a fierce advocate for reform that will ensure that firefighters in their time of need have the requisite support. I thank Geoffrey Zipper for his advocacy.

I attended the funeral of a retired Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] firefighter, Mr Bob Ingle, who lived in Karuah, and who lost his life to cancer. His cancer may or may not have been connected to his work as a firefighter, but the uncertainty is exactly why the bill is so important. The statistics show that firefighters have a higher than normal chance of having cancer. To have to prove that the cancer is related to their employment is virtually impossible. Instead, they either have often been left with no support or have to undergo an undignified battle for workers compensation by trying to establish a causative link. Given all of the uncertainties of cancer and the numerous potential causes of cancer, it is extremely difficult to establish that a workplace caused the cancer. The bill is important because presumptive rights to compensation are exactly what are needed in those circumstances. The Government should have acted sooner to address the situation because, fundamentally, the issue comes down to dignity and respect.

The bill affords firefighters the respect they deserve and the comfort of knowing that they will be looked after if the worst-case scenario occurs. This bill allows firefighters to retain the dignity that they deserve at a time when they need it most. Again I thank the shadow Minister for his commitment to forcing this Government to do the right thing and to follow the course he has led, which paves the way to firefighters being shown the respect they deserve. I urge the Government to support the Labor Opposition's bill before the House today instead of playing politics and replacing the bill with its own substitute bill, which has virtually the same content. I commend the bill to the House and urge the Government to support it.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:35): I join in debate to express support for the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018. Because limited time has been allocated for this debate and because I know other members wish to participate, my comments will be brief. Full-time and voluntary firefighters perform an essential emergency service in our communities. They place their lives on the line when attending all types of emergency situations, such as raging bushfires, an asbestos-riddled building engulfed in flames, a serious motor vehicle accident, or responding to hazmat spills and other contaminant leakages. Firefighters, in common with other emergency service responders such as the police, ambulance officers and State Emergency Service [SES] personnel, perform a vital community role—keeping our community safe and protecting life and property. As a civilised modern-day society, we must ensure that our workers, especially those who place themselves in harm's way for the protection of others, are fully protected from expected potential risks to which they are exposed during the course of their duties.

As the lawmakers of this State, members of this House have an obligation to make sure that foreseeable risks to which workers are likely to be exposed are identified, legislated for and protected against. In my electorate of Orange, I have spoken with a number of firefighters, both retained and voluntary, who expressed their concerns over the lack of protections. The bill seeks to address that. In rural regions, hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteers in the Rural Fire Service brigades—men, women, families and generations of families—share similar concerns. This presumptive rights legislation identifies that, should a firefighter be diagnosed with a certain type of cancer as a result of prolonged exposure to contaminants, they will receive legislated protection and access to compensation. Research shows that firefighters are at greater risk of developing certain types of cancers as a consequence of repeated and prolonged exposure to carcinogenic chemicals with which they are regularly in contact in the course of their duties. To name just a few, those cancers include primary leukaemia, brain cancer, breast cancer, testicular cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, bladder cancer, colorectal cancer, kidney cancer and prostate cancer.

How can those who oppose the bill attend their next fire service award ceremony and look those brave men and women in the eyes knowing that they did not support the introduction of legislation that would protect those officers and their families? In Orange, I regularly attend the long service award ceremonies for my local Rural Fire Service brigades. Earlier I alluded to those men and women, some of whom have more than 50 years of diligent, brave, selfless, and voluntary community service, who do their jobs not for payment, but for the safety, wellbeing and protection of their local communities. Over many years they have saved the Government millions

of dollars. Members of Parliament owe it to them to introduce this legislation. I thank all firefighters, both full- time, retained and volunteers, who do a tremendous job of keeping us safe. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:38): I support the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018, which was introduced by the member for Fairfield and shadow Minister for Emergency Services. The members who preceded me in this debate have pretty much covered the points I intended to discuss. We all know that firefighters do an incredible job. They are often the first on the scene of the worst of situations among other first responders. Their role is to protect lives by not only putting out fires but also by looking after us as a community. I speak on the bill because, like everyone else in the electorate, I have had a fair bit to do with the emergency services, and those outstanding people do everything they possibly can to protect and support their communities. One thing I love doing when I visit schools is ask the kids what they want to be when they grow up. Not many say they want to be a politician, but they say they want to be a police officer or a firefighter, somebody who does something for the community. Maybe there is a lesson there for us as members of Parliament.

As the member for Fairfield mentioned earlier, this legislation came about after an incredible amount of consultation, working with different organisations, associations and the firefighters. It is important that we look after those who look after us. As the member for Orange said, the measure of a good society is that it looks after those who protect it well, and this is encouraging. I remember having a chat with the shadow Minister when this legislation was first proposed. I thought it was a good idea and important because when we talk about putting heart into legislation and policies, we can see that. I was hoping that the Government would support the bill. The Government is putting forward its own legislation. Yesterday in this place Government members talked up the legislation. Any member who introduces legislation that makes society better or looks after first responders— firefighters in this case—is doing the right thing. I was disappointed that we got bogged down in petty politics.

The Opposition has introduced a bill that is similar to the proposed Government bill, apart from one or two items. But that is why we have amendments. The member for Fairfield is a reasonable person. He probably looked at the amendments and said, "Can we work together?" Ultimately, when we talk about these issues politics must be put aside. There is a lesson in that for all of us. I am not giving a lecture to any member in this place about being high and mighty but the public would see it makes sense. The Opposition has introduced this legislation that will protect our firefighters. It ensures that when there is a diagnosis of cancer, they know somebody is there standing with them. In this case it would be the Government. It is our way of saying thank you, but it is also our way of ensuring we look after them and their families in their most difficult time of need.

I ask the Government to support Labor's bill. If there is an issue between the Government legislation and our legislation, an amendment should be moved. I am confident that the member for Fairfield and shadow Minister would not say no to an amendment. Indeed, that is the spirit of bipartisanship. Outside of this place the public wants to see bipartisanship on these sorts of issues. Yesterday I completely agreed with members when they spoke about this important legislation. But I had one thought: Why can we not move an amendment? Instead of bagging the legislation, just move one or two amendments to ensure it is fine. Not only do I commend the member for Fairfield for introducing the bill but also I commend any member who supports it and everyone who supports our emergency services personnel.

I take this opportunity to thank everybody who puts their life in harm's way to protect all of us. It is incumbent on anybody who has a position of authority or influence to ensure that we do not forget that. I want to hear more kids say, "I want to grow up to be a firefighter and know that I will be looked after", "I want to grow up to be a police officer and know that I will be looked after." I want to hear more people say that they want to serve the community. The best thing that we can do as human beings is serve our community in some capacity. Members in this Chamber have a responsibility to ensure that we look after those who look after us. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:43): It is a great privilege to stand in this Chamber and add my support on behalf of the people of Maitland to the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018. I congratulate the shadow Minister on introducing the bill to this place. I assure all members in this Chamber that I have received more than 20 emails about this legislation and my constituents have given me clear guidance, requesting that I support it, which I am more than happy to do. The people of Maitland have made these points clear to me: cancer is an occupational disease of firefighting and firefighters deserve support if they contract cancer. Today I speak for and in defence of the rights of Maitland firefighters, both Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW Rural Fire Service, to be given fair and proper workers compensation protection, including for cancer contracted as a result of frontline duties. We on this side of the House believe that there should be an Act which establishes the presumptive rights to workers compensation for firefighters suffering from certain kinds of cancer.

As this House knows, I have had my own journey with cancer. If it was caused by my work, the anger that I would feel at a government which has not acted would be unimaginable. The Commonwealth set the precedent seven years ago with its Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill 2011. I note that the Commonwealth had the scrutiny of a Senate inquiry behind that. We have a focused bill—the diseases presumed to be work-related must be contracted during service. Importantly, we want to support those people who save our lives and property and who make us stronger as a community through times of natural disasters and fires. That is the very least that we can do. I will end my contribution because I want to give the shadow Minister the opportunity to respond so that we can pass the bill today and make it happen.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I welcome guests to the gallery this morning. We are listening to debate on the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018. The member for Fairfield is about to speak in reply.

Bills

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

Second Reading Debate

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:46): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Ku-ring-gai, Cabramatta, Seven Hills, Gosford, Blue Mountains, Campbelltown, Wyong, Charlestown, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Lakemba, Orange and Maitland for their contributions to the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018. As members would be aware, following the introduction of the bill last month, the Liberal-Nationals Government concluded they would not be outdone and have since introduced the Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment (Firefighters) Bill 2018, which mirrors the intent of this bill. However, it omits any retrospective coverage because it would come with a hefty price tag. This is not a new strategy from the Liberal-Nationals Government. They have been known to vote down Opposition bills only to implement their own copy shortly afterwards.

The legislation before the House today would provide the requisite protections for career and volunteer firefighters throughout New South Wales who have contracted one of the listed cancers associated with their occupation. Those provisions in the bill would serve to protect not only them but also those who have previously dedicated their lives to keeping our State safe and ensuring they are afforded the same protections of all firefighters in future. This legislation was introduced following more than a year of substantive consultation with volunteer and career firefighters. This important legislation is the culmination of work between the Opposition and those who are presently affected and those who may be affected by an occupational disease now and in the future.

New South Wales is presently the only State in Australia without any presumptive protections for its firefighters. We have been lagging behind because the Liberal-Nationals Government has failed to take charge. Members opposite have been critical of the bill for a number of reasons, which they too have pointed out could have been amended and resolved. We would have been open to discussions about possible amendments. Instead of working with volunteer and career firefighters and Opposition members, the Government has decided to play petty politics with what should have been a bipartisan bill.

Volunteer and career firefighters throughout New South Wales are well aware that the New South Wales Government has not been leading the charge on this issue. They are also very well aware that this issue was not on its agenda until the Opposition introduced the bill last month. The Opposition will be happy to continue working alongside our dedicated and passionate volunteer and career firefighters with the development of policies and initiatives that serve to better protect our emergency service personnel and, ultimately, our community. I encourage members to vote in support of this important legislation and to put petty politics aside. We must work together to support our firefighters and to ensure that all career and volunteer firefighters in New South Wales are afforded the same protections irrespective of whether their occupational cancer was contracted half a year ago or in a year's time. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes37

Noes44

Majority.....7

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J	Atalla, Mr E	Bali, Mr S
Barr, Mr C	Car, Ms P	Catley, Ms Y
Chanthivong, Mr A	Crakanthorp, Mr T	Daley, Mr M
Dib, Mr J	Donato, Mr P	Doyle, Ms T
Finn, Ms J	Greenwich, Mr A	Harris, Mr D
Harrison, Ms J	Haylen, Ms J	Hornery, Ms S
Kamper, Mr S	Lalich, Mr N (teller)	Leong, Ms J
Lynch, Mr P	McDermott, Dr H	McGirr, Dr J
McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D	Mihailuk, Ms T
Minns, Mr C	Park, Mr R	Piper, Mr G
Scully, Mr P	Smith, Ms T.F.	Tesch, Ms L
Warren, Mr G	Washington, Ms K	Watson, Ms A (teller)
Zangari, Mr G		

NOES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Conolly, Mr K	Constance, Mr A
Cooke, Ms S	Coure, Mr M	Davies, Mrs T
Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr A.W.	Evans, Mr L.J.
Fraser, Mr A	George, Mr T	Gibbons, Ms M
Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T	Griffin, Mr J
Gulaptis, Mr C	Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A
Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A	Notley-Smith, Mr B	O'Dea, Mr J
Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Mrs M	Perrottet, Mr D
Petinos, Ms E	Provest, Mr G	Roberts, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J	Sidoti, Mr J	Speakman, Mr M
Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M	Tudehope, Mr D
Upton, Ms G	Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R
Williams, Mrs L	Wilson, Ms F	

PAIRS

Cotsis, Ms S	Berejiklian, Ms G
Foley, Mr L	Dominello, Mr V
Hoenig, Mr R	Lee, Dr G

Motion negatived.*Motions***EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS MEMORIAL****Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:58):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the 2018 Emergency Services Volunteers Memorial Service, which honoured those volunteers who have lost their lives while ensuring the safety of others in the community.
- (2) Pays respect to all front-line emergency services personnel who protect people when they are at their most vulnerable.
- (3) Commends all volunteers for their hard work, courage and commitment as well as the families that continually support them. I express the Government's gratitude to all emergency services volunteers for their longstanding and steadfast commitment to protecting communities across New South Wales. The Emergency Services Volunteers Memorial ceremony took place on Sunday 14 October this year and was attended by the Hon. Troy Grant, Minister for Emergency Services. The memorial event is important for emergency services—and, in fact, for all of us—as it is a day when we come together to pay tribute to all those volunteers who have lost their lives serving on the front line. We also support their families, friends and colleagues.

The memorial's roll of honour bears the names of 90 volunteers, which stands as a stark reminder of the inherent dangers associated with the work of our volunteers. This year will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the deaths, on 29 October 1968, of firefighters in the Blue Mountains District, including Captain Tom Chalmers of the Faulconbridge Bush Fire Brigade, firefighter Greg Eley of the Warrimoo Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, and fire-fighter Pete Hawkins of the Warrimoo Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade. A memorial service will be held at the Shaw's Ridge fire trail this Sunday 28 October to honour their sacrifice. Thankfully, no new names were added to the memorial this year and I hope we can say the same for many years to come. The Emergency Services Volunteer Memorial Service provides an opportunity to commend all emergency service volunteers in New South Wales for their true community spirit and selfless sacrifice to the people of New South Wales.

When emergencies like floods, storms and bushfires strike, our volunteers stand shoulder to shoulder, often putting their own lives at risk, selflessly guarding the safety of others. The New South Wales emergency services have over 88,000 men and women serving as volunteers in their ranks, who assist their communities in times of greatest need, no matter the weather or time, day and night. These volunteers belong to the NSW Rural Fire Service, the NSW State Emergency Service, Fire & Rescue NSW, the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association and Volunteer Marine Rescue NSW and Surf Life Saving NSW. Two of the three government emergency services are specialised volunteer organisations that rely on a small cadre of paid staff and a much larger workforce of volunteers who mobilise and respond to disasters and emergency incidents. They answer 000 calls; attend the scenes of horrific accidents; fight blazing, out-of-control fires; and save people who are caught in dangerous rips. They save lives and property.

We should take pride in the fact that across New South Wales people selflessly commit themselves to the service of their communities and provide a capability to the State that no government could afford. These volunteers are also active within their local communities and deliver prevention, preparedness and recovery programs which are of vital importance, particularly in rural and remote areas. The invaluable role that volunteers play in emergency response is demonstrated in every major incident or natural disaster to impact New South Wales. For example, the east coast low weather system of June 2016 was a major natural disaster for the State of New South Wales and saw the primarily volunteer State Emergency Service record more than 11,000 requests for assistance and conduct 210 flood rescues.

I note that 71 of the 90 names on the emergency services Volunteers Memorial honour roll were from the NSW Rural Fire Service. That is why I want to take this opportunity to recognise an RFS volunteer in my electorate who epitomises the commitment and dedication of RFS volunteers right across New South Wales. I speak of Allan Hagney. Allan gave a lifetime to the Rural Fire Service. He started in the mid-1950s at the Terrey Hills brigade and then went to the Hornsby Heights brigade from 1969 to 1996. Allan remains a serving member in his role as the Deputy Captain of the Camden Haven brigade, where he has been since 1996. There was, rightly, a standing ovation for Allan when he was recognised at an award ceremony just recently for his 60 years of service. For 60 years he has been there for others, protecting them in times of need, when fire threatened their homes, properties or, often, their lives.

On behalf of all volunteer firefighters who are part of the Rural Fire Service across the State, I take this opportunity to sincerely thank those who support them and those who allow them to serve for us—their families: their partners and their children. Our State emergency services play a critical role in our local communities and they, too, should be recognised for the important role that they have played. On 1 June this year I had an opportunity, with other personnel and dignitaries, to recognise the contribution of some 31 volunteers from the Port Macquarie and Hastings local government area.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:05): I pay tribute and commend the efforts of more than 88,000 dedicated men and women who comprise New South Wales' volunteer emergency services agencies and workforce including the State Emergency Service, NSW Rural Fire Service, Marine Rescue NSW and the Volunteer Rescue Association. On the 14 October 2018 a memorial service was held to honour and remember the emergency services volunteers who lost their lives in the line of duty while protecting their community. Since 2001 the Volunteers Memorial at Mrs Macquarie's Point in Sydney has borne the names of 90 volunteers who lost their lives while giving their all to keep their communities safe. The memorial is a testament to the bravery and courage displayed by our volunteers throughout the State, and serves as a constant reminder to the community of the ultimate sacrifices our emergency services volunteers have made and the inherent dangers forever present for them as they carry out their ongoing duties.

In the memorial's roll of honour this year, the community pays tribute and recognises the fiftieth anniversary of the death of three volunteer firefighters: Tom Chalmers, the captain of the Faulconbridge brigade; and Peter Hawkins and Greg Eley of the Warrimoo Bush Fire Brigade, who lost their lives in the 1968 North Springwood fires. By the time the disastrous fires were under control, the 1968 North Springwood fires had

claimed the lives of these three courageous volunteer firemen, burnt more than 70 houses to the ground and destroyed 9,300 hectares of bushland.

On behalf of every member of this House, I can attest to the pride we all share for our local emergency services volunteers and personnel, and how grateful we are for everything they do in our communities. Emergency services volunteers play an integral role in carrying out routine protection and preventative measures throughout our local areas; however, they are also at the forefront of the danger when a natural disaster strikes. During an emergency—whether it be a bushfire, a storm or residences being flooded—our volunteers will be found in the middle of it all, devoting their time, expertise and, ultimately, putting their own lives on the line when responding to the needs of their community.

New South Wales emergency services volunteers are selfless and continue to put the needs of their friends, family, community and State above all else. As we are heading towards another dangerous bushfire season, I for one would like to take a moment to say thank you. I say thank you to every single emergency services volunteer who devotes their time and resources towards being a protector of our great State. The importance of the role they play in our community is immeasurable and their dedication and willingness always to put the community first is truly commendable.

The families of emergency services volunteers, too, deserve some acknowledgement and our heartfelt thanks. Those families let their loved ones go out and protect others during very difficult times when emergencies occur. The families provide a cornerstone, which allows these brave volunteers to continue keeping our community safe and enables them to save so many lives when the chips are down and disaster strikes. I would like to thank the member for Port Macquarie for bringing this very important motion before the House. The emergency services volunteers deserve to be acknowledged and commended for their longstanding history of protecting communities throughout not only New South Wales but also other jurisdictions when the need arises. Whether at home or abroad, they go out and their expertise is known around the world. We take our hats off to them. Once again, I thank those volunteers and everyone who supports them for their tireless efforts throughout our State. I also acknowledge the emergency services volunteers whose lives were lost in the line of duty.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:09): I speak on the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie and I thank her for bringing it forward. The Emergency Services Volunteers Memorial Service honours those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and highlights the invaluable contribution that emergency services volunteers make to the safety of communities in New South Wales. Every volunteer deserves to be recognised for their commitment to serve the people of the State. I also pay tribute to the families who allow their loved ones to risk their lives in the protection of our local communities. During the 2017-2018 bushfire season, NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS] volunteers responded to 10,036 grassfires and bushfires around the State.

Their efforts saved lives and thousands of properties. The Government supports this monumental effort and is pleased that the Rural Fire Service has instituted a number of measures in training, equipment and facilities to improve safety in regional areas where volunteers are essential to emergency incident responses. Two regionally-based remote area firefighting training centres at Glendenning in Western Sydney and Mogo are now operational, with the remaining two facilities at Lithgow and Tamworth in development. In 2017-2018, the Rural Fire Service spent more than \$20 million on building new and upgrading existing brigade stations and fire control centres across the State, more than \$4.5 million on personal protection, more than \$6 million on firefighting equipment and \$32 million on firefighting appliances.

Those investments ensure that volunteers are provided with the best possible facilities and equipment to protect themselves when serving their community. In August 2016 the New South Wales Government passed legislation to establish a strategic fire trails network. The program commenced in 2017-2018 and provides a network of trails for agencies to access during bushfire operations and hazard reduction works. As of July 2018 planning workshops have been held with 40 bush fire coordinating committees and further workshops are scheduled. The Rural Fire Service and the New South Wales Government have taken the steps to ensure that the best possible equipment, resources and facilities are available to protect volunteers and the communities that they serve. I commend all volunteers for their hard work, courage and commitment and the families that continually support them.

As we all know, the State Emergency Service [SES], Marine Rescue and the Volunteer Rescue Association [VRA] are important parts of our wider community. I pay tribute to Rural Fire Service regional coordinator David Cooke, Cudgen RFS captain Troy Middlebrook, Bilambil RFS captain Brian Gillespie and Tweed Coast RFS captain Jared Lee. All of them lead a fine bunch of men and women. I feel one with the RFS, SES, Marine Rescue and VRA. As we know, the North Coast suffered a significant flood event that saw the destruction of many hundreds of properties and the loss of life of around five people. The community came together to support those emergency volunteers and they continue to support them. I continue to support them and

so do all the members here. I commend the member for Port Macquarie for bringing this great motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): It is obvious that all members are 100 per cent for the Tweed, as is the member for Tweed.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:13): I am pleased to speak to the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie. There are none more selfless than the men and women who put their hands up to do the gruelling, unpredictable and often dangerous work of responding to emergency incidents, which can occur at all times of the day and night and in all kinds of weather. Those dedicated and committed men and women make sacrifices that most people cannot fathom. I think of Mr Grant Steele, who was on the roll of honour for his service in Warringah. He passed away in 1979. The Government supports the emergency services in any endeavour to improve safety for its volunteers. I can speak specifically to two of those.

The State Emergency Service [SES] has improved connectivity and enhanced technology in regional areas, ensuring that vital communications and information are available to its volunteers at the forefront of an incident. That includes fibre network connections replacing asymmetric digital subscriber line [ADSL] services at key locations across the State, an increase in network capacity in key locations by up to nine times and an increase in network reliability, particularly during storm events. It has also delivered more than 600 laptops and personal computers to replace an ageing fleet, meaning that the New South Wales SES members have access to vital information during operational events.

The State Emergency Service has just concluded a program to put the latest equipment into the hands of volunteers. It has seen the replacement, installation and support of 4,500 radio terminals with enhanced safety functionality and expanded coverage and the delivery of digital high frequency radio in the remote Far West regions. It has also upgraded 14 incident control centres with interactive audiovisual information display suites to enhance connectivity during the times of crisis. In August the State Emergency Service, in conjunction with the NSW Telco Authority, launched the first agency-operated, fully mobile government radio communications site. The critical equipment provides frontline volunteers with critical operational radio communications where there is no coverage or where existing infrastructure is damaged during an incident.

Whilst the Government does everything to ensure the safety of all emergency services members, tragically sometimes those men and women make the ultimate sacrifice while keeping us safe. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the work of the Manly unit of the State Emergency Service, whose major responsibilities in Manly are floods and storm emergencies. It provides general rescue efforts also across the electorate. In 2018 the New South Wales State Emergency Service Officer of the Year was a volunteer from Manly, Naomi Leviton. She has been a volunteer for six years and is also a music teacher at Manly selective campus. I am incredibly proud of her contribution, and her nomination and success on being named the New South Wales State Emergency Service Officer of the Year for 2018. I have the privilege also of representing Minister Troy Grant at the upcoming Northern Beaches district medals presentation on 1 November, where we will recognise local volunteers and award national medals and long service medals. I am sure every member of this House shares my great admiration for those willing to risk their lives to make our corner of the world a much safer place in times of flood, emergency and crisis. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for moving this motion. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:17): It is with great pleasure that I make a contribution in support of the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie. It is an important subject matter. My electorate of Upper Hunter is large and thousands of volunteers do a lot of wonderful work through the Rural Fire Service [RFS], State Emergency Service [SES] and the Volunteer Rescue Association [VRA]. It is an unfortunate situation that three people from the Upper Hunter electorate are memorialised in the honour roll. They are Mr John McLean from Quirindi who passed away in 1964, Patrick Gehrig from Dungog who passed away in 2000 and Graham Patton from Singleton who passed away in 2004. All of them were RFS members. Our thoughts are with their families and friends who have suffered along with the individuals themselves. It was the ultimate sacrifice of people doing nothing but going out there, volunteering their time, expressing their care and love for the community and paying the ultimate price.

When it comes to emergency services, I do not think it should go unsaid that the New South Wales Government has invested and continues to invest record amounts of money to help keep our volunteers safe. Across the RFS, State Emergency Service and Volunteer Rescue Association stations in my electorate significant investment in the upgrade of vehicles, radios and equipment is providing our local volunteers with the ability to work on behalf of our community with the best possible equipment to keep themselves safe so they can come home to their families after the event, unlike the unfortunate volunteers who occasionally lose their lives.

In addition to the investment in equipment and so forth, this week the House debated the Government Telecommunications Bill, which will see a \$600 million investment into the Government Radio Network, which is critical to enable our rescue and emergency services volunteers to communicate with each other. I said in my contribution to that debate approximately 30 per cent of the State is covered at the moment. With this \$600 million investment we are looking at about 95 per cent of the State. In April 2015 in Dungog three people lost their lives in the April superstorm, as it is known, and unfortunately emergency services were out of contact for approximately 72 hours. We have to do everything we can to keep our community and our volunteers safe. I commend this motion to the House.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:21): I, too, speak about the Emergency Services Volunteers Memorial Service. I acknowledge the member for Port Macquarie for moving this motion. These men and women to whom we are paying tribute are those emergency services volunteers who have lost their lives protecting the community and they hold a special place within our hearts and within our community. Members of our State Emergency Service and volunteers are selfless people in what they do day in and day out, but to lose one's life whilst being so selfless on behalf of one's community is an extraordinary act of community spirit. Today we highlight and acknowledge those men and women who have lost their lives whilst volunteering for our communities. I commend the Minister for Emergency Services, Troy Grant. At the memorial service on Sunday 14 October the Minister said:

The Volunteers Memorial, which now bears the names of 90 volunteers, pays tribute to those who have lost their lives while protecting others in the community.

He went on to say:

While I'm incredibly grateful that this this year no new names will be added to the memorial, it remains a sobering time for us to take pause and pay our respects.

This year the memorial's roll of honour, the community's tribute to these volunteers, recognised the fiftieth anniversary of the deaths of three firefighters: Tom Chalmers, Captain of the Faulconbridge Brigade, and Peter Hawkins and Greg Eley of the Warrimoo Bush Fire Brigade, who lost their lives in the North Springwood fires of 1968. It is an honour to be able to acknowledge those three selfless individuals and those who have lost their lives since. We cannot forget that there are more than 88,000 volunteers who make up the NSW Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, Volunteer Rescue Association and Marine Rescue NSW.

Today I pay tribute to each and every one of those 88,000 men and women who give of their time to ensure that the community in which we live is a much safer and better place for us to work, play and bring up our families. I thank each and every one of those individuals for their time—the time they are away from their families. I thank them for putting themselves in harm's way quite often. By the very nature of what they do as emergency services workers, they are putting themselves in harm's way. The motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie is to acknowledge each and every one of those individuals and to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice whilst serving their community.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:25): In reply: I thank and acknowledge members who contributed to the debate this afternoon: the member for Fairfield, the member for Tweed, the member for Manly, the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Camden. All of us are aware of emergency incidents that have occurred in our local communities. We also know very well that we rely absolutely on our emergency services volunteers during those times. Those volunteers are from any of those organisations that are honoured on the memorial roll: the NSW Rural Fire Service, the NSW State Emergency Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association, Marine Rescue NSW and Surf Life Saving NSW. Members will always take the opportunity, particularly when they are in their electorates, to attend those medal presentation ceremonies at which we can recognise long-serving volunteer members across any of those services.

It is not surprising that so many members were eager to participate in today's debate and to take the opportunity to thank volunteers in their own electorates. It would be remiss of me not to also highlight another significant emergency incident in New South Wales that occurred earlier this year in March. The Bega Valley bushfires burnt through more than 1,250 hectares of land, impacting properties in Tathra and in surrounding areas. In that fire, as members probably know, 65 houses were destroyed and a further 48 houses damaged. However, through the efforts of all the emergency services and their volunteers, a staggering 810 houses were saved and there was not one single loss of life.

Again we can take this opportunity, for all of those incidents in all our electorates, to thank those emergency services volunteers for their ongoing service and commitment to each of our communities. Bearing in mind the current conditions as we head into the bushfire season, we offer well wishes to all of our emergency services members and particularly those in the Rural Fire Service. I spoke earlier about Allan Hagney, who had an incredible 60 years of service in the Rural Fire Service. I take this opportunity to briefly highlight and

acknowledge the service of a couple of members of my local Marine Rescue who play an important role in my coastal electorate, where boating by local residents and tourists is a popular activity. I was pleased in February this year when I heard about the announcements honouring those hardworking and dedicated volunteers from the local Marine Rescue services in Port Macquarie, Camden Haven, Harrington and Crowdy Head.

One gentleman, Karl Stauder, received a Long Service National Medal for 15 years as a volunteer for Marine Rescue. He is a volunteer at the radio base, as many of the members are. He says that his passion and drive to help people and save lives on the water brings him much joy. He acknowledges that our emergency services do an excellent job and that everyone works well together as part of a strong and united team. In closing, I remind the House of the very important memorial service that took place recently to recognise and commemorate our volunteers. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I acknowledge the motion moved by the member for Port Macquarie. I was unable to contribute to the debate but I acknowledge the great work of all the volunteers on the Central Coast, whether they be part of our amazing Rural Fire Service units, Marine Rescue—of which I am a very proud patron—or the Volunteer Rescue Association. They do an amazing job keeping us safe, especially during tough times. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

GIDGET FOUNDATION

Debate resumed from 18 October 2018.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:30): I continue debate on the motion supporting the Gidget Foundation, which is based in the North Shore community, and the launch of its Start Talking campaign for its groundbreaking video counselling program to support the emotional and mental wellbeing of expectant and new parents, which is supported by the New South Wales Government with funding and resources. I will focus on the work that the Gidget Foundation does to support women and men with perinatal depression and anxiety. The Start Talking program has been instituted to enable more people to access services. While the Gidget Foundation is based in North Sydney, there are services across Sydney and in other areas. But some of the most significant constraints are in our regional and remote communities, where services are less accessible and there may be more of a stigma around accessing them.

With the introduction of a video counselling service, people across New South Wales are able to get the support they need. Members may know that the Gidget Foundation was named after a young mum who took her own life following the birth of her child. Her family and friends rallied together to ensure that they invested in women and men across the community to try to reduce the incidence of suicide and, more broadly, postnatal depression and anxiety. The Gidget Foundation has evidence-based research that shows the effects of perinatal depression and anxiety across Australia, with one in five new mums and one in 10 new dads suffering from it each year. That is almost 100,000 expectant and new parents. This service will influence a lot people's lives for the better. We know that by removing the barriers of distance and location, more women and men should be able to find and receive help and support.

We know that there is a great need for psychological counselling services in perinatal maternal health. The Government looks forward to hearing more about the program as it rolls out. I thank the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Women for their support of this initiative through \$270,000 in funding, which was put towards the launch of the program. Care and support for women with perinatal mental health issues in New South Wales is offered through a mixture of public, private and non-government providers, such as St John of God Health Care, Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia and, of course, the Gidget Foundation. There are also health-affiliated partners such as Karitane and Tresillian—which is also based in my community, in Wollstonecraft. This weekend Tresillian is having its gala ball to celebrate its anniversary. NSW Health also works with the Wesley Mission Mums and Kids Matter program.

I served on the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services inquiry into support for new parents and babies in New South Wales and one of the key issues raised, which I expressed some strong views on, was ensuring more public access to mother and baby beds in acute services to ensure that women who are experiencing acute psychotic or psychological issues following the birth of their child have the capacity to be treated in hospital with their baby. That is something the Government is considering. I thank everyone who is supporting this motion to assist the Gidget Foundation and perinatal and maternal health.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:34): In 1999 I had my first child, a son named Joshua. We were very excited to have him. At the time, we ran a small business and we ran a raffle to choose his name. We picked a name out of a hat and the people who had suggested his name won a \$250 voucher and took a trip to the Northern Territory. During that time there was a lot of excitement. I was working with a group of older people

and it was like having every grandma on the planet rooting for me. They sent me booties, hats, scarfs and everything else. Josh was supposed to be a millennium bug, due on 31 December 1999. I agreed to the idea of naming him in a raffle because my husband's other idea was to name him "Kodak" to get sponsorship. We all know how that would have gone. Instead of being a millennium bug, Josh ended up being a little Christmas beetle, arriving on 21 December. Anyone who knows my son will know that there is always a strategy—he managed to squeeze in an extra Christmas that he was not entitled to.

At the time I was living in Walcha—a small town of 1,600 people in New England—in the matron's quarters next to the hospital. But I could not deliver Josh at the hospital because it was my first baby and the rural health facilities there did not cover obstetrics for new mums. I knew that I was going to have to go to Armidale for the birth. The only obstetrician practising in Armidale at that time, Dr Colin Mason, was due to retire on 31 December, so it was probably very fortuitous that Josh was a little more strategic than I. My husband and I were so pleased to have this child. When I was younger I was told that I probably would not be able to have kids because I had endometriosis. We were so excited. During my 19-hour delivery in a rural hospital—I was lucky to have the obstetrician there—I had a complete inverted uterus, and the whole shop came out after a ventouse extraction and massive tearing.

I am from a generation of women who did not talk about problems in childbirth because they did not want to scare new mums—I am sorry. But it happens to one in 10,000 women. Luckily, it was something I had prepared for. I had read religiously—like it was my bible—*What to Expect When You're Expecting*. Every day since then I have thanked Dr Mason for saving not just my life but also my fertility. I was not sure whether I would be able to have another child, and I was very lucky to have my second child, Jessica, a little over two years later. They are now aged 16 and 18. They are great people in my life whom I love so much. Four days after I gave birth, I attended my first work function—it was such a happy time—and I went back to work full time after nine days. My husband and in-laws had brought me a few things to do in hospital to keep me going. That was just the life of women working in small businesses who had babies before the introduction of paid parental leave, which has made such a big difference.

Six weeks after Josh was born we moved to Maitland. I had a new general practitioner and a new obstetrician. I was closer to my parents, thank goodness—they were a five-hour drive rather than an eight-hour drive away. But my husband went on the bus with our tours and my in-laws went on the bus with their tours and I stayed home with our new baby and our new business. I am sure people can work out—and I now realise—that I probably had perinatal depression at that time. The confusion of that experience made it hard for me to accept. My sister put it eloquently—as she so often does—when she said, "If you had been in hospital for a week after a car crash, no-one would have expected you to go back to work and be happy and have such fun. You have this amazing baby but there are still all these things you have to do." I had health issues for the next six months.

I make special mention of a doctor in Newcastle who was both an obstetrician and a psychiatrist. He helped me so much because I did not need to describe the horror of the birth to him. I could just talk about my feelings because he knew what I meant when I spoke of my experiences. I thank the member for North Shore for bringing this motion to the House today, because I was one of the one in five new mothers who experience perinatal depression. One in 10 new fathers will experience perinatal depression and 50 per cent of all parents will experience adjustment disorders. We all know this, even though we laugh about the late nights and early mornings.

I had my experience while living in regional, rural and remote areas, so I sincerely thank the Gidget Foundation because its free video counselling service would have helped me enormously. The service helps new and expecting mums and dads who are experiencing perinatal depression and are unable to have a face-to-face consultation. It is important that people know about the Gidget Foundation's free video counselling service, Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia's helpline and Lifeline. We have an opportunity in this place to talk about things that impact our communities. The debate is always so much more careful and thoughtful when members have experienced an issue themselves. Every day I thank the political parties and people in our electorates who have worked to get more women into Parliament so we can talk about issues like this that affect women across our State.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:41): I support the motion moved by the member for North Shore about the Gidget Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that provides a range of programs to support the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new mothers. The Gidget Foundation evokes the late Gidget's warm and lively spirit. It was established by her friends and sisters and has continued to grow. It is now supported by passionate individuals, community leaders and health professionals. We have heard the statistics of those who are impacted—both men and women—by perinatal depression and the anxiety that comes with it. I congratulate the Gidget Foundation on its amazing work. As it says on its website, the foundation provides support services for families suffering emotional distress during pregnancy and early parenting, and also offers education and awareness programs for health professionals and the community.

I know the member for North Shore will thank the member for Maitland for her contribution, but I also thank her for sharing her story. Debate is so much more powerful when it includes people's personal stories. Organisations like the Gidget Foundation are about raising awareness, and that occurs when brave souls like the member for Maitland talk about their experiences. It is critical. The Start Talking telehealth program was launched in April this year. At the launch Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Minister for Women Tanya Davies announced \$240,000 for the program. As the experience of the member for Maitland revealed, it is difficult for people in rural communities to access face-to-face services. That is why telehealth services are critical to health delivery in regional and rural communities.

It is important that the Start Talking program continues to be supported. It provides 10 free telehealth psychological counselling services for expectant and new parents who suffer perinatal depression and anxiety and who, for a range of reasons including the tyranny of distance, are not able to attend face-to-face sessions. The sessions are conducted via a video call platform. The Start Talking office has been highlighted by the Gidget Foundation as providing the same quality of care that is available through the face-to-face psychology services offered at Gidget House. Start Talking gives people access to quality, clinical, psychological treatment. I thank all people in the community who continue to work hard to raise awareness of important programs like those that the Gidget Foundation offers. I found a story on the Gidget Foundation's website from Sophie Henderson-Smart. Sophie writes:

I was introduced to the Gidget Foundation by my obstetrician Vijay Roach when I was pregnant with my first child. I was shocked and saddened to hear Gidget's story. Perinatal anxiety and depression is a cause I had heard little to nothing about and so, when planning my baby shower I decided that I would ask my guests to donate to the foundation in lieu of gifts. In doing this I was able to do two things, raise money and most importantly raise awareness and get people talking about the mental health of new parents.

I thank Sophie and everyone else who contributes to raising community awareness of this issue.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:45): I thank the member for North Shore for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. Perinatal depression and anxiety is a condition commonly experienced by women during pregnancy and in the year following the birth of the baby. In some cases, perinatal depression can also affect new fathers. The condition can be extremely scary and isolating for those involved. It is important to know the signs and symptoms of this disorder, which include insomnia, loss of appetite, intense irritability and difficulty bonding with the baby. It is important for new mums and dads and visiting friends and family to look out for those symptoms.

The Gidget Foundation does a lot of work in this area. It is a not-for-profit foundation that supports the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents. The foundation ensures that those in need receive timely, supportive and appropriate care. It emphasises the importance of having a conversation to allow mothers and fathers to open up about their feelings and emotions. The statistics on this condition are incredibly upsetting, with one in five new mothers and one in 10 new fathers experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety. In Australia at least 50 per cent of all parents will experience some sort of adjustment disorder during or after birth. The Liberal-Nationals Government recognises that perinatal depression and anxiety is an important issue, and I am glad to say that the New South Wales Government has invested \$270,000 in the Gidget Foundation Australia's Start Talking program.

I happened to come across a video of Deputy Premier John Barilaro announcing that funding. He gave an incredibly personal, frank and heartwarming speech about a confronting issue. It was good to see a politician tear down barriers, as the member for Maitland just did, and expose some of the inner feelings that we keep bundled up to show that there is a need for this funding and a need to make a difference. We can help so many families who might experience perinatal depression and anxiety in the future. Many parents are unaware of the signs and symptoms of perinatal depression and anxiety, so the Gidget Foundation works hard to inform and care for those who are at risk. It has other programs that help new parents, apart from the one I have mentioned. The Gidget Foundation does incredible work and I am proud to be part of a government that supports it.

Emotional wellbeing is important. That is why I will take a moment to mention a constituent of the Holsworthy electorate whom I have had the pleasure of meeting on several occasions. Deborah Vickers works incredibly hard alongside the charity Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia [PANDA]. I have attended a few functions with her and she keeps me in the loop about the organisation's initiatives. She updates me on the resources it needs and uses to help mums and dads through its helpline and playgroup programs that provide information and resources. Deborah does amazing work, and I consider her to be a champion for the Holsworthy community. We have spoken about how mums can require mental health care after the birth of a baby. If they need extra care, we must look after them. I thank Deborah Vickers for her work on this important issue.

I take this opportunity to also mention the Baby Bundle initiative announced by the New South Wales Government. The bundle of care for new parents is valued at \$150 and includes such essential items as a safe sleeping bag, a room thermometer, nappies and wipes, and an important educational booklet on signs, symptoms

and management of postnatal depression. No-one really told me what to look out for and I guess we muddle through; but it is important that friends and family know what to look for. They know that moment to step in and say, "Hi. You may need a little bit of extra support. Here's a phone number. Here's a way to go to get out of that spot." I thank the member for North Shore for moving the motion and drawing this matter to the attention of the House. I also thank those who have gone through this experience, and those who have helped to bring others out the other side.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (12:49): I support the motion. I have listened to the comments of members from both sides of the Chamber. It is wonderful to hear that so many members of Parliament understand the challenges for a mother and father in the lead-up to having a baby, and certainly after the baby is born. Very few of us would not know people who have been in that situation, which we know can be quite horrific. Bringing a baby home is probably the most exciting thing that can happen in life. It gives us—it gave me anyway—a great sense of validation. This is why we are put on earth: to have a child, to nurture a child and to forever after look after the child you have brought into the world.

But in those early stages, sometimes things can go terribly wrong and parents can be left in a very dark space. The relationship parents have with their child can become extremely challenged. Physically looking after the little one and having sufficient emotional support can become very problematic, which can have terrible consequences for the parents and other family members as well as for the baby. In August I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Gidget Foundation's western suburbs facility at Stockland's in Merrylands where I met Gidget's sister and mum. As we discussed the issues and as people expressed support for the concept and the work of the Gidget Foundation Australia, I am certain I saw a tear in the eye of Gidget's mum. If I needed to be reminded, I realised how profound grief can be when one loses their child. In Gidget's mum's case, that is precisely what happened.

But out of that great sadness came the birth of the most amazing organisation. As I understand it, each of the foundation members of the group were friends of Gidget. That culture continues to spread throughout the Gidget Foundation today. I acknowledge the presence at the opening ceremony of Labor member Julia Finn, The Nationals member the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC, and Kerryn Baird. Kerryn and Mike Baird had their own challenges, which many of us have heard about, either privately or publicly. Kerryn and Mike are great advocates who have spoken out in their attempt to assist people who suffer from postnatal or perinatal depression. I acknowledge Antoinette Lattouf, who attended the opening—a person who really understands the issues and who shared her personal story.

I thank Stockland and the commercial organisations that have put up their hand to support organisations such as the Gidget Foundation. By having a facility right in the heart of Western Sydney at Merrylands, women can walk in on their shopping day and obtain critical assistance without anybody else necessarily knowing they had visited the foundation. I encourage other private enterprise organisations to come forward and support the Gidget Foundation Australia to expand beyond its fifth facility in Merrylands. I wish the Gidget Foundation Australia much success in its endeavours, and I give the assurance that the New South Wales Government will continue its support. I am sure that members on both sides of Parliament support the Gidget Foundation.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:55): By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for North Shore and assure the House of my support for the Gidget Foundation Australia. The member for Maitland shared powerful thoughts in expressing her support for the Gidget Foundation. The Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research also shared his experiences. I am a father of four children, and my wife and I are some of the lucky ones who never needed services like those provided by the Gidget Foundation. I was very surprised to note that one in five mothers and one in 10 fathers will experience perinatal depression. My wife and I did not experience perinatal depression. The extent of our reaction was that we felt it was hard being new parents, and that is where it ended. When babies cry, parents get up and attend to them and sort out whatever is the problem. Because I have not experienced perinatal depression, it is difficult for me to grasp how it impacts on individuals and how it makes them feel.

The statistics are sobering. One hundred thousand Australians are impacted by perinatal depression each year. Suicide is the leading cause of maternal death. That is astonishing. I take my hat off to the Gidget Foundation for its support of people with perinatal depression. The need for the foundation's services and what the foundation does have been well stated by members who preceded me in the debate. I endorse the comments of the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, who said that government can only do so much and we need corporate and community involvement. I take this opportunity to read some testimonials by people who have been helped by the Gidget Foundation. One states:

I first became aware of Gidget Foundation Australia when I was invited to the Ladies Lunch ... 650 women I felt we all shared a common bond of sisterhood and we identified with the symptoms of PNDA—the agony of loneliness, the horror of silence and the guilt from feelings which couldn't be controlled.

This lady goes on to state that she was convinced she could help. She owns a laser clinic. With her partner, they provided vouchers for the auction to raise money and pledged \$30,000 for the foundation's programs. She also stated:

It was very comforting to know that our donation was going directly to programs rather than administration fees. I am thankful to be involved and believe Gidget Foundation Australia is making a significant difference to the lives of those they help.

Rochelle Collis

I do not know Rochelle but I acknowledge her sentiments and her financial support for the foundation. It is very easy to expect businesses to contribute, but Rochelle, by her passionate support of the foundation, is showing other businesses what can be done. It is only with the support of the business community and the wider community that the Gidget Foundation will be able to continue to do its wonderful work. All members who have contributed to the debate and all other members of the New South Wales Parliament, I am sure, support the Gidget Foundation. The Gidget Foundation is making a remarkable difference for those who really need its services. Keep up the good work.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:59): In reply: After speaking about the Gidget Foundation and all the different challenges facing parents, we seem to be experiencing something a little like the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon: As soon as we start thinking about something, we see it everywhere. I discovered my own pregnancy shortly before giving notice of this motion. Not many other people knew about it—except my husband, of course. The perinatal depression phenomenon manifests itself when we begin to be exposed to, and constantly think about, babies and parenting all the time. It gave me the opportunity to reflect on some of the challenges that I had not thought about previously that might affect me as an individual.

I return to what the member for Maitland said about our role as members in this place. Our role is to try to understand what affects people in the community. We may not have always had that personal experience, as the member for Camden did not. Once we start to have empathy, compassion and understanding, or even just thinking about what people are going through in the community, it empowers us to take action. We are speaking during Mental Health Month about action that can change lives and sometimes save lives. The Gidget Foundation is doing an excellent job of raising awareness and destigmatising perinatal depression and anxiety so that we have a better understanding. It is ensuring we have access to services in the city and in the bush and that people know they can and should access those services.

In recent years our society has advanced a lot in its understanding of what is mental illness and mental wellbeing. The kind of services provided by not-for-profit, private sector and government organisations have also advanced. That does not mean there is still not a long way to go. In moving this motion today I am trying to utilise this place and the voices of my colleagues on both sides of the Chamber to say to people that these services exist. They should exist and be accessed and they should have our support. A mother or father who is facing a medical condition during or after a child is born should not be ashamed. They should be able to access the same health services regardless of how the medical condition was induced. Following this discussion today I hope that people will have a greater level of awareness and understanding of mental illness and mental wellbeing.

I thank the member for Maitland for her contribution. I am also having a Christmas baby. Let us hope it goes well. The member for Maitland shared her experiences very frankly. The challenges of returning to work while having health complications can happen to any of us at any time. I agree that having access to this service would have made a real difference to her life; it will make a difference to many others, especially in rural and regional areas. I thank the member for Port Macquarie, who shared with us her own rural and regional perspective. I thank the member for Holsworthy, who I know has been involved in local services and spoke about some local champions.

It was wonderful to have the Minister for Health join us and talk about his involvement with the opening of a Gidget centre in Merrylands and the relationship that he built with Gidget's family. The member for Camden reminded us that suicide is the leading cause of maternal death. On any day, but particularly during Mental Health Month, it is important that we think about the idea that so much joy and pain could be felt at the same time. Accessible services should be available to everyone and mental illness must be destigmatised so that people have the courage to seek help. I thank all members in the House for their support of the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

NEW SOUTH WALES FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:03): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that 863,210 people played football in New South Wales in 2017, an increase of 44 per cent over the previous year.
- (2) Notes that \$417 million was contributed to the economy last year from football, which would increase by \$202 million if demand for football facilities was met.
- (3) Encourages the Minister for Sport to unlock this economic potential by investing in football facilities.

I have heard through the grapevine that the Government is supporting this worthy motion, and I appreciate that. I will disappoint Government members and say that I know that the Jets are going to win the next season, so I am sorry for all those who support every other team.

Football Federation Australia [FFA] announced that football was Australia's number one club-based sport in 2017. Northern NSW Football statistics show that there were 75,722 soccer players in the State's north last year. When we add that to the other New South Wales figures we discover that more than 10 per cent of our population play soccer. We know the benefits of soccer and football are many. Social benefits include having a stronger sense of community as people identify with their clubs and build local connections, teamwork and commitment. People of all backgrounds, ages and genders are brought together on the pitch and in the stands. Many multicultural communities call Wallsend home, and we are lucky for that. The world game unites long-term residents and new arrivals like few other sports can. One participant told Football NSW:

As recent migrants, it's helped us to gain a sense of belonging and connectedness.

There are positive health benefits as well. The lifetime contribution of football to the health of people in New South Wales has grown 42 per cent from 2015. That saves our healthcare system from almost \$63 million to more than \$89 million. Football NSW estimates that the game's impact on the physical health of the New South Wales community has increased by 16.2 per cent. Given that a lack of physical activity and obesity are major health issues, we cannot overestimate the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle. Crucially, Football NSW estimates that the benefits of football have decreased expenditure on mental health in the State by 15.8 per cent. Northern NSW Football Chief Executive Officer David Eland stated:

Football's appeal as the most popular sport in NSW makes it the ideal vehicle to support the development of healthy and inclusive communities, providing improved social, health, educational and cultural outcomes for all.

And we all agree. Then there is the positive economic impacts of football in our communities. New figures from Football NSW estimate a yearly community impact of almost \$520 million. In 2018 in Wallsend alone, peak bodies, associations and clubs pumped a total of \$1,782,689 into the economy. Over the same period, football participants, members, supporters and volunteers added another \$4,575,232. This comes on top of an estimated \$1,740,568 in business and multiplier indirect contributions. That is an impressive \$8.1 million contributed to the Wallsend electorate economy.

In Newcastle, football contributed \$9.25 million. A staggering \$17.57 million was injected into the Lake Macquarie economy, thanks to the Northern NSW Football headquarters being located at Speers Point Park. I wish it were in Wallsend. I am jealous of the member for Lake Macquarie, but I am pleased for him too. According to projections from FFA and Football NSW, hundreds of millions of dollars would be injected into the economy if facilities matched demand. However, as the sport is growing facilities are not keeping up with demand. Every season 2,500 players are turned away as more Australians become fans of football. More will be turned away, robbing them of the sport's benefits and keeping money out of our local economies. Football NSW Chief Executive Officer Stuart Hodge said:

Further investment by governments is clearly justified and will empower football to grow the game and build stronger communities for all.

The FFA has highlighted the importance of investing in women's facilities to help tap into this economic potential, making building women's participation a priority. Football is on track to have the highest female participation in the country. The Westfield W-League is in its tenth season and crowds are growing for every game. Our national women's team, the Matildas, have accomplished extraordinary skills on the pitch and are now ranked fourth in the world. After Matildas hero Sam Kerr became the first female recipient of the FFA fund, Chief Executive Officer David Gallop said:

We truly hope that historic days like today will ensure we create an important legacy for professional female players in the future.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (13:10): I too support the motion of the member for Wallsend. I thank the member for Wallsend for not giving up her sources when she said she had heard it on the grapevine.

Guilty as charged—we will be supporting her today. The member for Wallsend is very solid; she does not give up her sources. I acknowledge the Jets' season last year. I am happy to be corrected, but I think they were awarded the wooden spoon the previous season and were a game away from the title this season. That is an outstanding effort and says so much about the coach and the culture, because I believe the playing roster was very similar but a few changes were made at the top. I too commend the Jets for the wonderful season they had. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful Sydney Football Club [FC]. I believe their number one badge holder is here—I see him at many games. He sits in much more expensive seats than I do.

Mr John Sidoti: Name the players.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I know them backwards.

Mr Stephen Bali: You've got to now mention Western Sydney Wanderers.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: "Criticised" is a strong word, but coming from Camden I have had it pointed out to me that I should be a Wanderers supporter. Forget the flares, forget the Red and Black Bloc, forget all the reasons I would not be a Wanderers supporter; it is more for the reason that you never change your team—the member for Wallsend would agree—and we were always Sydney FC supporters. After a one-all match against Adelaide last week, I look forward to the local derby this week and I look forward to Sydney FC quite rightly stamping their authority on the pitch this weekend.

The member for Wallsend made some great points. This year nearly one million people are playing football in this State—the member for Wallsend quoted figures of close to 900,000 in 2017—and it is growing exponentially. All credit to those in the hierarchy who came from the grassroots levels. Two of my four children now play football every season, one child plays cricket and one is doing their Higher School Certificate. Last year Sophie had a fantastic season with the Macarthur Rams. We went to the stadium that the member for Wallsend spoke about at Lake Macquarie and it was fantastic. The member for Lake Macquarie came and watched. We played the emerging Jets and I think the score was 7-1. The member for Lake Macquarie was quietly gloating to all those around and introducing me as "the member for Camden, the father of a player in the losing side".

The facilities there are beautiful and what the member for Wallsend said is correct. We drove up the day before, so we needed accommodation; we ate in one of the clubs; we needed petrol on the way home; and we had lunch after the game. The point is that football games are fantastic for local economies. In the second round, when the emerging Jets came to our stadium, I am sure visitors did similar things. The Minister for Sport is extremely supportive of football and growing sport. One only has to look at Penrith Stadium where we hosted two sell-out games of the Matildas last year. I am happy to be corrected, but I believe 16,000 people attended. As the member for Wallsend quoted the FFA chief executive officer as saying: this is women's sport. But it is fantastic that it is not just women's sport; this is mainstream sport. We are filling stadiums with our outstanding women athletes and we are very proud of that.

We are achieving more in women's football and cricket than we are in men's football and cricket. As proud Australians and proud New South Welshmen, this is wonderful to see. I am the father of two boys and two girls; I have a twin boy and a twin girl who are 15. Everything that my son Tom has afforded to him—he loves his cricket—my daughter Sophie is entitled to. She should be receiving exactly the same, and that gap is getting narrower. Although this motion is not specifically about women's events, we are saying: let us grow the sport. If we grow the sport we will grow female participation in the sport and that is a win for everybody involved. As a father of four kids, the \$100 rebate for each child from the Active Kids program helps. Max's rebate goes to the Camden Tigers Soccer Club, and last year Sophie's went to the Rams. It is a big help because it is a big expense for families to get their kids on the paddock playing sport. This is a good motion and the member for Wallsend has our support. The Minister for Sport does a great job, he is very encouraging, and together as a House we must do everything we can to get our kids playing sport.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (13:17): I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion highlighting the positive impacts of football. Football contributes to significant community-building and social cohesion, which everyone in this place understands, but this motion also highlights the significant positive economic impact which sometimes is lost when considering the impacts of sport on the community. The economic impact of purchasing jerseys, footballs, football boots, nets, equipment, food, et cetera, has a significant impact on the retail economy. There are also support services involved, such as physios, doctors, allied health practitioners, coaching, personal trainers, sports administrators, specialised sports coaching in skills development and others in the services industry. The member for Camden spoke about petrol and hotel costs when attending away games.

Behind all these goods and services is much research. The pursuit of technology in assessing and enhancing performance is amazing and can range from Fitbit watches through to technology incorporated into

clothing and the various allied health fields. The Blacktown District Soccer Football Association that I am associated with has 23 clubs and more than 10,000 registered players. This number greatly expands when all the support personnel, such as the volunteer committee members, coaches, managers, groundspeople, registrars, referees, sponsors and spectators are included and the numbers can swell to in excess of 30,000 people.

The growth of football has its challenges. The old amenities blocks must be changed dramatically. There is an active and growing population of women playing football, whether as players or officials. Amenities buildings have to be changed to match modern usage. The days of only having one set of change rooms for home and away teams need to make way for two sets of change rooms because men's and women's games can be played simultaneously if more than one field is available or when games are scheduled consecutively. Change rooms for game officials also have to be reconfigured given the officials for one game can have a combination of ages and sexes. Better accessibility on footpaths around fields and new-style stands are needed to allow wheelchairs and the elderly to attend games of their children or grandchildren.

This all costs money. The Government talks about accessible issues, but it fails to match the funding. Councils cannot pay for upgrading all existing change rooms that are many decades old as well as pay for new change rooms required in growth areas. The old style \$300,000 amenities blocks are outdated and do not match the modern needs of the community. Amenities buildings now cost around \$900,000 to build. I have not touched on the requirements for synthetic fields or car parks. The Government must meet with local government representatives and sporting associations and decide the best way to address these important issues. Football has a significant effect on social enhancement, cross-culture inclusion and the economic bonus of over half a billion dollars per annum. The Government should make an allowance in future budgets based on fairness, equity and usage to upgrade amenities buildings and accessibility to all football fields across the State. It must deliver the required upgrades of facilities. It is time for the Government to deliver and put its money where its mouth is rather than make simple platitudes of how important sport is.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I welcome to the gallery 60 students from Nowra Anglican College, guests of the member for Kiama. I hope they are better behaved than those down here. I understand the students will be in the theatre for question time. I hope they have the sound turned off.

Motions

NEW SOUTH WALES FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (13:22): The motion moved by the member for Wallsend centres around football facilities in New South Wales and the economic contribution made to the State as a result of participation in football. This is a great motion. Members on this side of the House do not just talk the talk, we walk the walk. Whether we finance local sport at a grassroots level or a professional level, members on this side of the House give their support. Members on the other side of the House are against stadiums. It is hypocritical that they support sport, then they do not support sport. Opposition members try to differentiate between the different levels of sport. The Government has been sensational across my electorate, supporting the knockdown and rebuild of Abbotsford Soccer Club, which was an investment of more than \$1 million; the knockdown and rebuild of the Concord Soccer Club, another \$1 million investment; the renovation of Ron Routley Oval, dedicating \$6.2 million to an individual sporting facility with services and amenities that are available 24/7; the \$30 million plus investment in Concord Oval, which has a special focus on the Inter Lions female team. This Government has delivered. It has given a commitment to the Wanderers and Sydney Football Club that we have the greatest stadiums in this State for Australian and international games.

Unfortunately, members on that side of the Chamber are against stadiums. They do not want to spend money on stadiums because it does not suit them politically. The Government supports stadiums and participation in sport, whether it be by males or females. The Government is forming that bond to encourage participation. We can all be proud of the Government's commitment to support the Matildas by making McDonald Jones Stadium available to host international fixtures. As the member for Blacktown said, there is a spin-off to those events, which is great for the economy and that is what this Government is about. As outlined within A Vision for the Hunter Sports & Entertainment Precinct, Venues NSW is currently positioning McDonald Jones Stadium as an important sporting and entertainment infrastructure in Newcastle, seeking to draw national and international events. This is a great achievement.

Sport is the great divider. Whether it be football or any other sport, it is a great community builder for many that have no alternatives or interests. In a recent documentary, Johnathan Thurston attributed his success to his love for sport. He said without sport he would probably be in jail. That is remarkable. Football is life-changing.

Every member of this House should get behind football in Australia and promote this great sport. I am happy to say football is busting at the seams, particularly at a local level because this Government is encouraging participation in sport through the Active Kids \$100 voucher rebate. Public transport is busting at the seams in this State because the Government is encouraging people to use public transport. It is growing at unprecedented rates. This Government is promoting sport at both the grassroots and professional levels.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:26): I make a brief contribution on the benefits of football to the entire community. I imagine the favourite sport of all the young people in the gallery would be football, otherwise known as soccer. As the Minister for Disability, it gives me great pleasure to speak on behalf of an organisation known as the Pararoos. The Pararoos have been inspirational. Two weeks ago I attended the annual awards of the Pararoos at the Novotel Sydney Norwest. I joined David Gallup Chief Executive Officer of the Football Federation of Australia and Peter Hugg Chief Executive Officer of Football NSW, together with Matt and Charlotte from Football NSW—who work very hard on behalf of that organisation—to acknowledge the wonderful Pararoos players and present excellence awards.

The Player of The Year award was presented to David Barber. He has been an inspiration, captaining the Pararoos for many years. Ben Atkins and Benny Roche are famous players that have played for the Pararoos year after year. The Pararoos are achieving great things. In a couple of weeks they will travel overseas to Iran for the Asian Cup and hopefully qualify for a place in the World Cup in Spain. The Pararoos are an inspiration not only to every person who plays soccer in this country but also to people with a disability. Many of those players have cerebral palsy. It is inspiring to the people of New South Wales to see them find a new purpose in life through the great foundation of sport. It is a wonderful achievement for them. I wish the Pararoos all the best. I acknowledge the 12,500 football players in my backyard who participate under the banner of the Hills Football Association.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:29): In reply: I thank the members for Camden, Blacktown, Drummoyne and Castle Hill for their contributions to the debate. I welcome the students from Nowra who are in the gallery: I am sure many of you are interested in a debate about the benefits of football, and I am sure many of you—both boys and girls—play soccer. I acknowledge the member for Wyong. He did not have an opportunity to speak because of limited time. I know he is a keen Central Coast Mariners supporter and follows soccer closely. The member for Fairfield is a Western Sydney Wanderers Football Club [FC] supporter. He was in the Chamber to contribute to the debate but time did not allow it.

I thank each member who contributed to the debate for their positive words. The member for Drummoyne was a little bit offside, but otherwise positive in his speech. I know that both Government and Opposition members love soccer, and that is a wonderful thing. I acknowledge Peter Tuziak, Chamber attendant. We have had many discussions about the Football Federation Australia, soccer in general and his support for the Sydney FC. Peter has more knowledge about soccer in his little toe than I will ever have. I acknowledge the Newcastle Jets FC, their coach and manager Ernie Merrick and their Chief Executive Officer Lawrie McKinna. They are wonderful and doing great things. As the member for Camden mentioned, the improvement throughout the last year is due to good leadership. Wonderful leadership is important.

I thank the member for Blacktown. As he is a modest man, he did not mention that his son is a talented soccer player. I wish him well in the future. It is nice to have that involvement within the family. I note that the member for Blacktown is a keen soccer supporter himself. I thank the Minister and member for Castle Hill, who said many positive things about soccer in New South Wales and soccer teams in his electorate. Those who will benefit from the growth in popularity of football are the girls who want to participate. The success of the Newcastle Westfield Matildas has encouraged many young girls to play soccer. We take our hats off to them. The Matildas will play Chile in Newcastle on Tuesday 13 November. Unfortunately, Parliament will be sitting. I wish it were on a different date so that I could attend. We wish the Matildas well, and we know that it will be a fantastic game. The crowds that attend such games are phenomenal. I conclude by saying that I am pleased the Government supported this motion. I wish everyone well. Go, football!

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Before I put the question, I compliment the pupils from the Nowra Anglican School on their exemplary behaviour. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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

*Announcements***PINK RIBBON DAY MORNING TEA**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I acknowledge the wonderful generosity of the members and staff of the Parliament who donated \$1,063.60 at the Pink Ribbon Morning Tea held this morning in the Macquarie Room. Well done! I appreciate the effort. I thank the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Maitland for co-hosting the event.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise in the gallery this afternoon Paul Maytom, mayor, and Jackie Kruger, general manager, of the Leeton Shire Council, guests of the member for Murray. I also extend a warm welcome to Glen Crump and Darrel Smith from Moree Miyay Birray Youth Service, guests of the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills. I also welcome students and teachers from Holsworthy Public School, guests of the Deputy Government Whip and member for Holsworthy. I also welcome Peter Aplin, who is the brother and guest of the member for Albury, Greg Aplin. He has retired to the Central Coast and I note that he is a neighbour of Usain Bolt. Please give him our regards.

I acknowledge teachers and students from St Nicholas Primary School, Tamworth, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads, Maritime and Transport, and member for Tamworth. I also acknowledge Dr David Rosenwax, AM, and his wife, Anna, guests of the member for Coogee. I acknowledge Tim Kelly and Mark Arden, guests of the member for North Shore, and Ted Walsh, guest of the Hon. Ben Franklin.

I also recognise His Excellency the Hon. Anote Tong, President of the Republic of Kiribati from 2003 to 2016, who is accompanied by representatives of the Edmund Rice Centre and the Pacific Calling Partnership, guests of the member for Summer Hill. I acknowledge year 5 students and their teachers from Nowra Anglican College who are viewing question time today in the theatre. They are guests of the Speaker and member for South Coast, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama.

*Members***VALEDICTORIES**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: With the indulgence of the House, I thank everyone for the honour and respect shown to me last night during my valedictory speech. No doubt that will continue throughout question time today.

*Members***REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On behalf of Mr John Barilaro: I advise the House that today the Deputy Premier will answer questions in the absence of the Premier, who is attending a family funeral. The Deputy Premier will also answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing.

*Bills***GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE BILL 2018****Assent**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bill.

*Question Time***QUEANBEYAN HOSPITAL MATERNITY UNIT**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:21): I direct my question to the Deputy Premier, in his capacity as Minister representing the Premier. Given that up to 600 babies are born each year at the Queanbeyan Hospital, why, for three years, has the Government ignored doctors' pleas for the installation of proper surgical lights in the maternity unit given that it is too dark to properly examine mothers post-delivery, which is putting their welfare at risk?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:21): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for a

question about Queanbeyan. It is also nice to get a question about what is happening at Queanbeyan Hospital. Queanbeyan Hospital—particularly the maternity unit—is punching well above its weight. The hospital is accepting patients from across the border because the Australian Capital Territory health system is overloaded. Former Chief Minister Katy Gallagher signed a memorandum of understanding with the then New South Wales Minister for Health, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, to provide services at Queanbeyan Hospital, which is a fantastic hospital. Unfortunately, the hospital contained some dangerous cladding, but the Government has spent money to replace it. I am very proud of the hospital. It has two theatres, a great maternity unit, great staff and great doctors.

Queanbeyan Hospital is a local hospital that delivers to the local community and helps to address the service backlog in the Australian Capital Territory. I acknowledge, for the Leader of the Opposition, the \$70 million investment delivered by the Labor Government, which was accepted and welcomed. Of course, this Government has continued to invest in nurses, doctors and specialists at the hospital. On my watch, we have seen more investment: for example, a CT scanner has been installed to offer even more services. In response to the Leader of the Opposition's request for theatre lights, I inform him that requests such as that are dealt with by the local health district, and often the local member is not aware of the issues. I know this issue is urgent and I know that Minister Hazzard has given an instruction for the lights to be installed. Hopefully they are being delivered today.

Mr Brad Hazzard: We did that within minutes of being told about it.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Yes, within minutes. I have an open door, not only as a Minister and as the Deputy Premier but also as the local member. I am very proud of how I connect with my community. I was born and bred in Queanbeyan and I care about it. I was born in the old red brick Queanbeyan Hospital well before the new hospital was built. My three children were delivered at the hospital. Unfortunately, like many of our parents and grandparents, my father is very unwell and must often go to Queanbeyan Hospital. I am proud of the hospital and the health services provided by its doctors and nurses. They are very important to Queanbeyan. Look at the investment that this Government has made in Queanbeyan Hospital. This Government will always deliver for the needs of Queanbeyan Hospital. We have just heard from the Minister for Health that he received a request and he was able to respond to it. The Government could only respond to that request because it has a budget in the black. I have been talking all week about the ability to respond.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: When Minister Hazzard received correspondence directly from a doctor at Queanbeyan Hospital he was able to respond because he knew that, within his \$8.5 billion capital expenditure budget for health, he could do that immediately. But that can only occur because the Government runs a balanced budget. The budget is in the black, there is a surplus as far as the eye can see and an \$87 billion infrastructure pipeline. The Government is doing what we have always said it will do—invest in services. It is exciting that the Government is able to do more than governments have ever done before. The Government is able to deliver things that governments have sometimes been put in the bottom drawer because they are not core business.

This Government has been able to start to deliver the extras, like an additional CT scanner for Queanbeyan Hospital so that services can be provided locally. That is a fantastic outcome. Queanbeyan works well in the Southern New South Wales health district. There is a fantastic hospital at Bega. More than \$200 million has been invested there. A fantastic hospital is to be built in Goulburn. The Government delivered investment in dialysis services at Cooma Hospital after 2011 so that people like Rosie Schenker need no longer get into the back of an ambulance and travel 1½ hours in each direction from Cooma to Canberra to undergo dialysis. This Government delivered that.

In his valedictory speech last night the Deputy Speaker had an opportunity to talk about his legacy. When other members talk about all the stuff they have achieved it will not be about hundreds of millions of dollars or the billion-dollar projects; it will be about making a difference in someone's life. For me Rosie Schenker is that person. She is a beautiful woman—a migrant who moved to Cooma and who, with her family, is still part of that community. She is now able to be cared for in her home town of Cooma. This Government was able to deliver those services. Through its investments and by managing budgets, this Government has been able to do things that have only been dreamt of. Significant investment has been made in health across the State, including in 78 hospitals. More exciting news on investment in hospitals is yet to come. The multipurpose services [MPS] will deliver more nurses. *[Time expired]*

SNOWY HYDRO LEGACY FUND

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (14:26): I address my question to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How is the New South Wales

Government maximising the benefit of the Snow Hydro Legacy Fund to deliver a stronger, better future for regional New South Wales?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will be heard in silence.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:27): There is a really good Nationals party flavour in the House today. This question is from a Nationals member, the Deputy Speaker is a member of The Nationals and I am representing the Government today. So it is a really strong Nationals flavour. I will even admit this: everybody had better take cover—the Nats are in control.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will return to the leave of the question.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the member for Tamworth for his question. What a significant day for regional New South Wales. Previously, 30 per cent of the Restart Fund was allocated to regional New South Wales. Billions of dollars has been going into hospitals, schools, rails and roads—all the infrastructure that is so important to grow a vibrant regional New South Wales. The Government is very proud of that investment—not just the \$6 billion that came from the leasing of the poles and wires but also the proceeds that have gone into the Restart NSW fund. I think the share for regional New South Wales is closer to \$9 billion. The amount since 2011 and over the forward estimates amounts to between \$45 billion and \$50 billion. It is a great news story for New South Wales. The windfall that came from the sale of New South Wales' 58 per cent share of Snowy Hydro to the Federal Government has given the Government an opportunity. My message to the Federal Government is that I hope it continues with the Snowy 2.0 project because it is so important for my region and for the electricity market. It is important for the great nation-building infrastructure.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Today I have an opportunity to talk about the proceeds of that sale. On the day that the Government received those proceeds—it was flagged in the budget—we said that it would be spent on transformational, intergenerational infrastructure. The Government has said that we will look to the legacy left by Snowy Hydro—a piece of infrastructure that is just as important today as it was 60 years ago, when it was first envisaged. Jobs were created and skill sets built. It forged a strong multicultural migrant community that brought skills from all over the world to build a great piece of infrastructure. We should build upon that legacy.

Because of the actions of our forefathers we can talk about the story of the original Snowy Mountains Scheme fondly—its history, heritage and, more importantly, its legacy. That is why this Government announced that it will invest in infrastructure that is transformational and intergenerational. This Government will not underpin business-as-usual budgets. This Government will not use those proceeds to build hospitals and schools, because record investments have been made in those things. We have an opportunity to build the stuff that we have dreamt of.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The first priority for us is clear.

Mr Ryan Park: A new stadium for Queanbeyan.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite are the ones who have already committed to spending the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund. They have promised it three times.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That is typical of Labor members. If they get \$4 billion they will spend \$12 billion and wonder why they cannot run a budget in the black. If those opposite stop interjecting I will tell them what the Government has announced today. That Government has announced that its number one priority is water security—to build the dams and pipelines to go some way to drought-proof regional New South Wales. We are going through one of the toughest droughts. That has an impact on farmers and families including on their wellbeing and mental health of the members of those communities. The Government has an opportunity today to investigate, and invest in, more dams and more pipelines to bring some level of water security to regional New South Wales.

The second target, which I believe is one of the most ambitious targets, was announced today. Part of the fund will go to digital connectivity. The Government has an ambitious target to make New South Wales free of mobile phone black spots. The Government wants to build towers right across regional New South Wales to support families and businesses.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite will scream out that telecommunications is a Federal issue. Yes, it is, but this Government has the means to do something that is transformational.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The city members opposite are saying, "Let it go, let it go." They are used to switching their phones on and connecting to family but emergency services in the regions who turn up to floods and fires need to remain connected. It is important for the wellbeing and safety of our families for them to remain connected to other family members. We know that technology is disrupting businesses in this day and age. It is necessary to have access, at the minimum, to mobile connections but we also want to see more investment in data hubs and in broadband and internet for regional New South Wales. The Government's third priority is passenger rail transport and roads. The Government wants to see more investment in faster and safer rail transport so that people can get in and out of, and around, regional New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

Those on this side of the Chamber know how important rail transport is to growing regional New South Wales, not just for the movement of freight—I will talk about that in a minute—but also for the movement of passengers. The idea is that travel time could be improved along the Canberra to Sydney corridor. The same could happen out to the Central West or right across the State, through realignments and investing in the rails. The Government has already announced that, by the end of the year, we will have signed new procurement contracts to replace all of the country trains, but today we are announcing a further investment in roads and rails.

The Government's fourth focus will be on freight. What the Government is doing is exciting. This State has the best produce in the nation. We want our farmers to have access to international markets directly from regional New South Wales. So one of the exciting announcements today is that some of our funds will go to looking at investing in regional international airports for freight. Could you imagine having, in Griffith, Narrandera, Tamworth, Dubbo or Parkes, the ability to put produce into the back of a cargo plane and have it on a Singapore shelf overnight—within 24 hours in that Asian market. We know that our produce is the best. We have it in our homes and we want to see more of it in other homes.

The final area that the Government is focused on is growing what we call "special activation precincts". We need to build diversity in our local economies. We want to drive industry to regional New South Wales. Through our special activation precincts we will invest in the infrastructure that unlocks land and builds precincts, technology parks and industrial parks. It puts in place all of what we call shared infrastructure to allow businesses to easily make a decision to move to regional New South Wales. These are behind the Snowy Hydro. None of it will be spent before the next election. The threat is what those opposite will do with the funds. We have a clear vision of the \$4.2 billion of Snow Hydro funds not only for today but also for the generations to come. I hope the generations to come—those five-year-olds in the public gallery—say, "Thank goodness for the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government." [*Time expired.*]

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY TRIP- PLANNING ASSISTANCE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:35): I thank the Deputy Premier for adopting all of Labor's policies. It is very good of him.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is that the member's question?

Ms JODI McKAY: No, that was a statement; my question is to come. There is no question that the Government is adopting all of Labor's policies. My question is directed to the Minister for Disability Services. Over-the-phone services for trip-planning advice and Opal top-ups are very important to people with a disability. What actions will the Minister take to ensure that over-the-phone services continue to be available to people with a disability?

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (14:36): I inform the House that those services were services that were never provided by New South Wales but were part of the research program by the University of Sydney, I think, in conjunction with Monash University. They were services on behalf of a research program, which were never provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. It is interesting to finally get a question on policy—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! An Opposition member asked the question. Members will listen to the Minister in silence.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: —to deflect a little bit of attention away from the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is about a phone service related to Opal. Officers from the Council for Intellectual Disability are in the public gallery today and they would like an answer on whether the Government is going to ensure that the service continues.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have heard enough. I draw the Minister back to the leave of the question.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: This Government is incredibly proud of the fact that through its strong financial management, it has been able to find \$3.2 billion each year to contribute to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is the greatest social reform in a generation for people with a disability.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question relates to an Opal telephone service. It is not about the NDIS on which the Minister wants to put all of the State Government's responsibilities—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Sadly, the Labor Party never wants to acknowledge the great support that this Government has shown to the most vulnerable members of our community through that contribution of \$3.2 billion, which is changing the lives of people with disability and will continue to change the lives of thousands of people who are diagnosed with a permanent state of mental illness. It will continue to provide support for more than 13,000 children, who are among those people who have supports and a plan in place under the NDIS.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is not often that people with disability are spoken about in this House. It is very important for people with a disability—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: —that this over-the-phone service continues.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister should give respect to these people and ensure that this service continues.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have heard enough. The Minister has the call.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: On Saturday night it gave me the greatest of pleasure to attend a function for Cure Blindness Australia in the Hunter. I noticed that there was not a member of the Labor Party at that event, but we were more than happy to attend it.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has the Minister finished his answer?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: No, not at all. Is there a point of order?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, there is.

Ms Liesl Tesch: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is about a phone service that is no longer available, that people with disabilities could use to access information about the Opal card.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: That service is still in place, as the member would know. It is just one of those facts that the Labor Party does not want to acknowledge is the truth. If those opposite had asked the appropriate Minister that question, they would have got the appropriate answer. But I am more than happy, as the Minister for Disability Services to continue to speak up on behalf of the most vulnerable members of our community —

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: —as this Government will always continue to do. Our \$3.2 billion investment is changing the lives of thousands and 100,000 people are now accessing the NDIS. We are very proud of that fact. The Labor Party is very embarrassed about the fact that the Liberal Party is the party of social reform and will continue to support those most vulnerable.

JOBS GROWTH

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (14:41): My question is addressed to the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the New South Wales Government delivering stronger and better jobs growth, and are there any alternative approaches to ensuring jobs and prosperity for the people of New South Wales?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:42): I thank the greatest member that Miranda has ever had for her question. The Government knows, and she knows, that the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government continues to deliver great things for our State. It is only because we run our State's finances well that we can create a strong economy to do so much for the people of New South Wales. The numbers really tell the story. In Labor's last term, it scraped together \$22.8 billion for our schools, hospitals and public transport. That sounds okay, but in the latest budget our investment of \$65.5 billion is almost three times Labor's record. The education Minister will note—

Mr Clayton Barr: That's rubbish. You just make things up, Dom.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The one man who apparently reads the budget papers.

Mr Clayton Barr: You know that's not right.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Now you'll know. School capital investment under Labor was \$4.6 billion; under the Coalition it is \$6.8 billion, a 50 per cent increase.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Who told you that, Ray?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You were closing schools; we are opening them. Under health, Labor invested \$2.5 billion; under the great health Minister, it is \$8 billion. Transport \$15.7 billion under Labor; \$51.2 billion under the Coalition, which is more than triple again. Anything you can do, we can do three times better. I am pleased to inform the House that the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force figures were out today—even more great news for the people of New South Wales. We know that off the back of the unemployment rate of 4.4 per cent—the lowest it has been in more than 10 years—Western Sydney employment, which the member for Londonderry will be happy with, has grown by another 50,000 jobs in the past year alone. The unemployment rate for the over-55s is just 3.5 per cent. We have transformed New South Wales from the welfare State to the working State. There is another alternative to the member's question on jobs, and that is where the Labor Party cancels projects and destroys jobs. That all starts under the leadership of Labor's big three. We will start with the shadow Treasurer, Potts Point Park. He preaches—

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Come on! We are not going to get through this if you are going to get up for that.

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

Mr Guy Zangari: First of all, I draw your attention to Speaker Murray's ruling from 19 September 1999—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was here and I do not remember it.

Mr Guy Zangari: —that all comments be addressed through the Chair. We know you were here. Second, the other ruling is about members being addressed by their correct title. Currently the Treasurer is not being respectful to the shadow Treasurer, and member for Keira.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Fairfield will resume his seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: He preaches about the sin of negative gearing while using it to build his own property empire. I note that the Master Builders Association released research that Labor's policy will destroy 32,000 jobs and cost billions of dollars to the economy. He supports Labor's position to shut down the coal industry knowing full well it will destroy thousands of jobs in the Illawarra. On Tuesday, as the member for Miranda has pointed out, he stood in this place and called the F6 "a stupid project". We have a shadow Treasurer for New South Wales at war with the housing industry—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —who despises the mining industry and wants to destroy the construction industry as well. This man is a recession waiting to happen—Recessionary Ryan, who wants to take New South Wales down with him. Number two is the shadow planning Minister: a man busy telling all those

opposite how to do their job when he cannot even do his own job. I want to say something today using parliamentary privilege: The member for Maroubra is lazy—Lazy Daley. He is the laziest member.

Mr Gareth Ward: You can say that outside.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I will say it outside. I will walk 10 metres outside and say it because it is the truth—and I have 93 witnesses. [*Extension of time*]

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 73 and Standing Order 74. If the Treasurer is going to make an attack on another member, he should do so by way of substantive motion. Failing that, he is being very quarrelsome at the lectern. I ask you to intervene to prevent a quarrel.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We now move to the Leader of the Opposition. He has one job: to provide a positive vision for our State. What do we get? No plans, no policies, no vision—no nothing. I can say this because I feel sorry for all those opposite because they are all going down—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

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

Ms Jodi McKay: The question was about jobs and the economy. I bring your attention to the fact that the Treasurer's comments are entirely irrelevant.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: It is under Standing Order 129—relevance. This is irrelevant to the question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer has been relevant to the question he was asked.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They are all going down with the sinking ship of Pale, Male and Stale. This is what happens when the patriarchy takes over. I feel sorry for the brilliant Labor women on that side of the House who do not have their rightful positions of leadership: the member for Londonderry, the member for Swansea, the member for Summer Hill. The problem with the Labor Party is that its B team is better than its A team. And there are so many great potential leaders: You, you, you, not you and you—not you.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: The problem, Dom, is the Liberal Party is saying you are better than you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I am sure everyone wants to hear the Treasurer's explanation. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No, Mr Deputy Speaker. There is not much more to say. But on this side of the House, unlike those opposite, we have a team with leadership, a team with a bright, positive vision for the people of New South Wales and a team that is going to take New South Wales from good to great.

MY DIRECTION EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Disability Services. The community organisation My Direction has provided early intervention support for children in the Goulburn and Palerang regions for 30 years. It does incredibly important and meaningful work. What action is the Minister taking to ensure that this vital service continues?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (14:51): It is wonderful to continue to get questions in regard to policy for such an important area and such an important issue, as I have said before. I go back temporarily to say this Government is incredibly proud of the fact that it has been able to provide \$3.2 billion each and every year on behalf of the most vulnerable people in New South Wales, those people with disability. With the doubling of funding that will be made available by the Federal Government, they will be able to provide important services such as early childhood and early intervention, which the member for Port Stephens has asked about. A number of providers have already been contracted and put in place in order to provide early childhood early intervention—or ECEI, as we call it. At this point in time I acknowledge that 13,500 children aged zero to six years of age are receiving supports and services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] on behalf of early childhood early intervention. Very importantly—and this point needs to be—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129. The question relates specifically to a service called My Direction. I have with me the letter that says it has now shut its doors because it has been defunded by this Government and it is no longer sustainable.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Sadly, that is certainly not true because very important services for children are being provided through a host of different providers across New South Wales. Early childhood early intervention is an important aspect of supports to children at an early age and is absolutely vital. We see that in the increasing number of children now entering mainstream schools because they received those important supports and services at such a young age. Importantly, it goes a little further. It is not just the supports provided to children; it is also the supports provided by ECEI to parents of children with disability. We know—and it is an absolute fact—that parents of children with disability face a traumatic and very trying time. Mothers and fathers ask themselves whether they can continue to work through the services they need. Under the ECEI provision, which has only been available under the NDIS—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: I refer again to Standing Order 129. I ask the Minister to answer the question, which relates to the service that says families in the area will no longer get the support they need.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have heard enough. The Minister has the call.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Very importantly, the NDIS will continue to provide those important services to families whose children have a plan under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. They will receive early childhood and early intervention services, which are absolutely vital. I make the point that this Government will continue to support families with the most vulnerable children.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The member for Port Stephens has taken a number of points of order concerning relevance. I refer yet again to Standing Order 129. The company is called My Direction. If the Minister will not even mention the name in the Parliament—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: As I have said before, we are very proud of our record of being able to support the National Disability Insurance Scheme. New South Wales was the first State to sign up to the scheme. I am very proud that this year we completed the full scheme of agreement. The most vulnerable members of our society—people and children with disability—are now receiving the appropriate supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, of which we are so very proud.

BUS SERVICES

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (14:56): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the New South Wales Government delivering stronger, better bus services; and will the Minister advise of the risks to the State's transport services?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:56): I thank the member for Coogee for his question. I am going to say something in relation to the second part of the question first, and it relates to what was said in this place about 15 minutes ago. I acknowledge the Council for Intellectual Disability representatives who are the gallery. I say this as a former Minister for Disability Services. People such as John Della Bosca, Jenny Macklin, Julia Gillard, Barry O'Farrell and I worked damn hard to take partisanship out of this. I say that because everybody—Labor, Liberal, Greens or Independent—came together in a way that this country deserves to break down human rights barriers for people with disability. What I have seen in this Parliament over the past couple of years, with the breakdown in that bipartisanship, is not in our interests or in the community's interests—it is in nobody's interests.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It took people such as Jenny Macklin, whom I worked with extensively, to take what was a failing disability service and create one with a national support system. It is not perfect by any stretch, but we all worked together. What has upset me today is that there was an opportunity to ask me about the Opal system—it did not have to be done in here; it could have been done outside the Chamber.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There is not going to be any change whatsoever to that Opal hotline for people with disability. I could have told members that before question time. A number of years ago there were people in this Parliament who worked together. I urge everybody to do that in relation to disability services. It is okay to come in here and ask questions about services and what have you—I am talking to you.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I just ask that some respect be brought back to the debate. I am happy to get John Della Bosca and Jenny Macklin back in here and to ask for it. Together, both sides of the political divide can achieve so much for those who need it most.

Ms Kate Washington: So when I ask for a meeting with the Minister do you think he might answer me?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am sorry to inform the member, but I am the one who runs the Opal system; not the Minister for Disability Services. I have said enough; I have made my point. In relation to the part of the question about bus services—

Ms Kate Washington: Get off your high horse.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Excuse me? Who said that? Did you say that?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order is in relation to being quarrelsome.

Mr Anthony Roberts: What standing order is that?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is Standing Order 71, I think, or 74. I cannot give a number, I am sorry; it is not bingo. I am trying to draw the attention of the House to the fact that we have listened respectfully to the Minister but he has made some assumptions about processes that have been followed that I am sure are not entirely correct. I am sure he is not entirely privy to them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The statements are not open for debate.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: His behaviour in this place has been quarrelsome, and I think it is very unfair to the community that is at stake here.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Maitland will resume her seat.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I am trying to be very respectful to you and to the people in the gallery who have been asking for this question. I am trying to bring your attention to the fact that if we are going to be respectful in this place, it has to be on both sides.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! It does have to be and I will rule that way.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: The Minister cannot get up and lecture us and then do what he just did.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: When I heard the last comment I was concerned.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: He was not aware of what the processes were.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maitland will resume her seat. Everyone in this place deserves respect and comments are coming from both sides of the House that do not show respect. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I again make the point, as the Minister responsible for the Opal system—the Minister who should have been asked the question—that services are going to remain in place. And it is not only for people with disabilities; it is for those who have communications challenges, particularly in rural and regional communities. In relation to the question that the member for Coogee asked about bus services, it was very pleasing to join him and the member for Vaucluse in the delivery of the 333 Bondi link service. This uplift in service is a "turn up and go" service that has taken 1,000 seats from the morning peak and added them to the network—which basically means around 10,000 more seats across the week.

I can tell the House that since the introduction of that service patronage has gone up by not 10 per cent, 20 per cent or 30 per cent, but by 84 per cent—which is great for those in the eastern suburbs. Over the past 12 months we have seen that in 2017 passenger trips on the 333 service went from 154,000 to 284,000. That is the very nature of bus travel in Sydney. We have seen the introduction of the B-Line as largely a "turn up and go" service and the Bondi link service. This is what is going to continue to happen across our bus network. The B-Line is averaging almost 18,000 people per day between Mona Vale and the central business district. That is an average of 60,000 trips per week. [*Extension of time*]

As we know, the B-Line is now accounting for around 30 per cent of all bus trips on the northern beaches and lower North Shore. It is pleasing to see that the number of people travelling on public transport on the northern beaches and on the B-Line services in the afternoon and evening is increasing. It is up 15 per cent. I know the key point is that some people expressed concern about B-Line in the beginning, but look at what has happened. The great news is that not only are people getting out of their cars and onto public transport, but also—incredibly—the trip into the city is now 10 minutes faster. That is the success of B-Line. At a time when we have—

Ms Yasmin Catley: The trip from Newcastle is 30 minutes longer.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am glad that the member for Swansea mentioned Newcastle because guess who started testing light rail vehicles in Newcastle this week? I have brought a smile to the face of the member for Newcastle, with a new light rail vehicle travelling right past his front door.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is Thursday and we always have a bit of fun on Thursday.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I turn to my good friend the member for Blue Mountains for a bit of fun on a Thursday. The member for Blue Mountains recently—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

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

Mr Michael Daley: If the Minister thinks he will toy with someone who has taken him to task because his trains do not fit through the tunnels—

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

Mr Michael Daley: It is under Standing Order 73. He does not get the opportunity to do that.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Unfortunately, I have only 12 seconds to talk about train services from the Blue Mountains. I wanted to give some good news to the member for Blue Mountains but that point of order just wrecked her good news. I am sorry about that. She should talk to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about it. [*Time expired.*]

BRISBANE WATER DREDGING

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:06): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Minister for Lands and Forestry. The Palm Beach ferry stopped running in May. Since then, the Government has spent more than \$1 million on three lots of emergency dredging and told our community that the dredging would be completed nearly a month ago. It has now been revealed that the dredging has moved sand into the channel, creating further blockages. Communities on both sides of Ettalong Channel want to know: When will the dredging be completed?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:07): I thank the member for Gosford for her question. It is a good question, and it is good to ask questions in relation to our electorates about the issues that matter to our communities. Up to \$2.45 million will go towards an expanded dredging program in the Brisbane Water.

Ms Liesl Tesch: We don't care about that; we want it now.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am giving the member an answer. She has asked the question.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Okay, good. Let's go.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Thank you. This will be in addition to the dredging that is currently underway to see ferries and boating return to Ettalong Channel. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is contributing \$1.225 million through the Rescuing our Waterways program towards a new, long-term solution for Ettalong Channel, which will be overseen by the Central Coast Council. Under this program, councils apply for funding to assist with dredging projects on a matching dollar-for-dollar basis with the New South Wales Government. This new phase of dredging will see 80,000 cubic metres of sand removed from the navigation channels, with the intention to relocate it to the near shore areas of Ettalong, Ocean and Umina beaches. The project will focus on keeping the Ettalong and Box Head channels open and navigable, and reducing sand from

re-entering the waterways. This will build upon the current emergency dredging that is taking place in the channel, which will allow the ferry service to resume.

Ms Liesl Tesch: That is in the future. The channel is currently closed. That is a future plan.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Absolutely. Remember that it is a \$2.45 million project. We have committed our half. It is a 50-50 arrangement with the council.

Ms Liesl Tesch: The council has also committed their half.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It has always been that arrangement.

Ms Liesl Tesch: No, it has not.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It has been that arrangement. The arrangement was always a 50-50 arrangement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I can update the member—if those opposite will allow me to answer. It is surprising that I have been asked a question today that I can actually give an answer to. The dredging will start in 14—

Ms Liesl Tesch: The dredging is moving the sand into the channel. The channel is blocked.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The dredging is planned to start in—

Ms Liesl Tesch: The ferry doesn't operate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If I may continue, the planned dredging will start within 14 days. We have an answer, we can respond and we are responding. The New South Wales Government prides itself on responding to the issues and needs of local communities. I thank the member for raising the question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not think the member for Gosford listened to what the Minister said.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I compliment the Minister responsible—

Ms Liesl Tesch: We know that in our community, but the dredging does not work.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Oh, goodness. I congratulate the Minister responsible on the work he is doing in this space. We are focused on—

Ms Liesl Tesch: The dredging has blocked the channel.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Oh, my goodness. As I said, the planned dredging will start in 14 days. We have a response; I have answered the question. I thank the member for Gosford for her question this afternoon. Hopefully, she will go back to her electorate and allow her constituents to hear my answer.

WESTERN SYDNEY SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:10): My question is addressed to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport. How is the New South Wales Government investing in sporting infrastructure in Western Sydney and delivering a strong and better future?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I will order the clock to be stopped every time members interject. The Minister has the call and will be heard in silence.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (15:10): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. He is fully across how much his community loves the idea of having fantastic sporting infrastructure across Western Sydney—whether it is grassroots community facilities like local cricket nets and sporting fields, which the Government is supporting through its \$100 million Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund, or the fantastic world-class stadium being built at Parramatta. The member for Seven Hills knows that the Western Sydney Stadium is an absolute game changer for the quality of sporting infrastructure in Sydney.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: It is fantastic to see today that, with the announcement of the National Rugby League [NRL] draw for 2019, clubs are voting with confidence about the future of football and the future of sport in Western Sydney by signing up to play matches at the Western Sydney Stadium. Today the Parramatta Eels signed up to a long-term deal to play at Western Sydney Stadium.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: The Parramatta Eels chief executive officer [CEO] said today, "This stadium is an absolute game changer in Australian sport. The stands are the steepest stands in Australian sport. You'll be closer to the action than any other stadium in Australia."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am sorry to keep interrupting the Minister. We have all afternoon and I will continue to order the clock to be stopped if members continue to interject. The Minister has the call.

Mr STUART AYRES: Parramatta Eels CEO Bernie Gurr said that the size of the stadium—30,000—is absolutely ideal. He continued, "There's no question in my mind or our club's mind that this will be the absolute best game experience. It will be absolutely compelling and I think that this stadium will sell itself. Once fans come here, they'll always want to come back." NRL CEO Todd Greenberg said: The new Western Sydney Stadium is a game changer and the opening match between the Eels and the Wests Tigers should be a wonderful occasion. The West Tigers chief executive officer also has signed up for matches in the Western Sydney Stadium. He said:

Western Sydney Stadium is set to be an incredibly impressive facility, which will provide the best game day experience in Australia.

The New South Wales Waratahs have signed up and want to take the Waratahs to the Western Sydney Stadium. They want to make sure they get access.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time.

Mr STUART AYRES: After the Leader of the Opposition has been out and about saying that no teams want to play at the Western Sydney Stadium, what have we got? We have the Parramatta Eels and the Wests Tigers.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: We also have the New South Wales Waratahs, and Canterbury has decided to take a match to the Western Sydney Stadium in next year's fixtures. We know that VenuesLive, our operator, currently is working on an agreement with the Western Sydney Wanderers. I have no doubt that in the next A-League season, we will be welcoming the Wanderers to the Western Sydney Stadium. I know their fans who have been playing out at Sydney Olympic Park for the past couple of years will be wanting to get back into the Western Sydney Stadium—right in the heart of Parramatta.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: We on this side of the House know how important it is that Western Sydney gets world-class, high-quality infrastructure, particularly when it comes to our sporting and tourism infrastructure. We want to maintain those numbers that the Treasurer was talking about earlier—the lowest unemployment rate in more than 10 years in New South Wales, but particularly in Western Sydney, the lowest youth unemployment rate on record. A lot of those new jobs come through tourism, entertainment and sport. This Government is making sure that we have fantastic sporting infrastructure in the heart of Western Sydney, which is absolutely critical for growing the economy. Government members know that the Opposition is completely divided over the Western Sydney Stadium. The member for Mount Druitt absolutely loves the idea of the Western Sydney Stadium. The member for Bankstown also loves the idea of the Western Sydney Stadium. The member for Fairfield cannot wait to go to the first Western Sydney Wanderers game at the Western Sydney Stadium. We have Western Sydney Labor members of Parliament who want to see the Western Sydney Stadium built—except for the Leader of the Opposition.

There has never been a more anti-Western Sydney leader of the Australian Labor Party in the history of New South Wales than the member for Auburn. We see evidence of that every day. He is opposed to the Western Sydney Stadium. He is opposed to the infrastructure investments across Western Sydney. He is opposed to every single policy initiative that has generated economic wealth and jobs for people across Western Sydney. There is no better example of this than the Western Sydney Stadium. [*Extension of time*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister has the call.

Mr STUART AYRES: Government members know that people across Western Sydney will come to these venues in droves for games and matches because they absolutely love their sport. They want to be able to

go to the games and have the same experience that people are getting in Brisbane and the same experience that people are getting in Adelaide.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the first time. The Minister has the call.

Mr STUART AYRES: For the first time, in 2019 Western Sydney will finally get the world-class sport infrastructure that it deserves. The clubs that are passionately supported by people across Western Sydney, such as the New South Wales Waratahs, the Parramatta Eels, the Western Sydney Wanderers, the Wests Tigers, and the Canterbury Bulldogs, will choose to play in the Western Sydney Stadium. This Government wants to ensure that those clubs are as financially stable as possible so that they can invest in their football programs and community programs, and continue to be the drivers of economic activity across Western Sydney.

It is only on the Government side of the House that there is a united team supporting Western Sydney. On the Opposition side, members are completely divided. There is no doubt that all the Labor Western Sydney members of this House—the Tigers fans, the Eels fans and the Wanderers fans—will be the first to ask for tickets to the first game at the Western Sydney Stadium. They will be the first to line up for tickets because they know how important this stadium is. It is a shame they cannot bring themselves to talk to the Leader of the Opposition and say, "Why don't you back the Western Sydney Stadium like the clubs of Western Sydney are backing it?"

CBD LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:19): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Considering the recent light rail customer satisfaction results, demonstrating increasing concerns about overcrowding, when will the Government act to purchase the additional light rail vehicles needed and duplicate the Dulwich Hill stop to ease congestion?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:20): I thank the member for Balmain for his question. The member for Balmain is passionate about public passenger transport. He is willing to say when things are going well for his community in the transport space. He has taken a very real interest in light rail in the Inner West.

Mr Jamie Parker: People love it but it is overcrowded.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is true, and it is quite telling. I provide the House with the definition of a popular service: annual patronage has increased from 3.9 million journeys in 2013 to 10.3 million in 2017-18. That is an example of this Government delivering projects on time and on budget. The fact that we extended this project from Dulwich Hill to Lilyfield has resulted in an incredible uplift in services. We have had to introduce 220 extra weekly light rail services. I assure the member for Balmain that the Government is now examining ways to increase capacity further. Everyone should be aware that Transdev Sydney Light Rail Pty Ltd, which operates this system, are under the public-private partnership [PPP], which will be incorporated into the delivery of the CBD light rail services over a 15-year period and will operate the inner west light rail services as well. The PPP model for light rail is delivering benefits.

The Government needs to do the capacity study. Following that, the Government will be able to make the necessary decisions on, for example, the purchase of more vehicles and looking at other means by which to deliver greater capacity. It is an absolutely phenomenal service. Given that the question relates to light rail, I provide the House with an update. It has not been made public, but only 200 metres of track slab remains to be laid for the CBD light rail, which represents a very significant light at the end of the tunnel. When that is laid, it will allow Transdev and Alston to extensively gather pace and start testing the vehicles on the CBD light rail. They are world-class operators. I have every faith in them getting on with the job to deliver the CBD light rail in 2019. I pay tribute to Transdev for the incredible quantity of work it is doing on the inner west light rail and it will soon carry out extensive work on CBD light rail. The light rail service is incredibly popular. The figures I have cited demonstrate that the community responds to and does love light rail. The CBD light rail will be implemented in due course and the community will respond to and love that part of light rail as much as do communities in the inner west who use light rail.

STATE PLANNING

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:23): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State. What is the New South Wales Government doing to build community confidence in the planning system for a stronger and better future? Are there any broadly relevant related matters?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I know it has been a tough week, but I am sure all members would like to listen to the answer to the last question of the day.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:24): I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question and her interest in this important matter. First, as Leader of the House, I think it is important to address the elephant in the room. All of us know that last week a Minister made a controversial contribution in the House that has generated a lot of discussion in this place and a great deal of soul-searching. It has generated probably too much discussion in the press, on social media and in many of our homes. Many members in this place have had time to reflect on that contribution, and to think how perhaps they would have made that contribution differently. I am, of course, talking about the poetry of the Minister for Education. I prepared a poem of my own:

There once was a planning Minister,
Who got up to something sinister,
But we kicked them out,
In an election rout,
Now a better State we administer.

And what a better State it is. New South Wales has a thriving economy, making it a top destination for people to live in. Recently, the population passed eight million people, and it is anticipated to reach 9.9 million by 2036.

[Interruption]

No, the poem has finished. We stopped it. It is supposed to rhyme so it stops there. We go back. For the information of Hansard staff, it stops after "administer", but they would understand. In responding to this growth, we need a planning system that can support the need for more homes, jobs, services and infrastructure, while maintaining our natural environment and creating great places to live, work and play. A key objective of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act is to increase opportunities for community participation in the planning system. That is why we introduced the requirement for all New South Wales planning authorities, including my department and others, to prepare a community participation plan.

The plan's approach is designed so that even when there may not be consensus on a decision, the community can acknowledge the process was fair and transparent and that proper consideration was given to all the views and concerns raised. Open and timely involvement of the community in decision-making not only allows the community's voice to be heard but also is vital in delivering integrity and accountability to our planning system. Our engagement with communities, whether it is through these plans or through our local character statements, is what separates us from the bad days of Labor's planning regime. It demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to community participation and building confidence in the planning system for a better and stronger New South Wales.

On a related matter, I seek the House's indulgence to reflect on a subject that goes again to the heart of our community's trust in our institutions. Another matter has been discussed in households around the State. Another matter that, unfortunately, has captured the media's attention. This matter was started with a contribution by Minister David Elliott. I am, of course, talking about the royal visit. It may surprise many members to learn that I am in fact a staunch constitutional monarchist.

[Interruption]

I will go outside, and I will take you, you, you, you and you, and half of you. Her Majesty the Queen is the head of our sovereign State of New South Wales. This House thanks her for sending her grandson, the Duke of Sussex, and the Duchess of Sussex to our shores to promote such a worthy venture as the Invictus Games. I will, of course, as Special Minister of State, together with my wife, Alicia, be sending their royal highnesses off in the coming days and I will be sure to wish them the very best on behalf of all in this House. *[Extension of time]*

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 131 (3). If the Minister is going to continue, I ask him to start his next poem with, "I once met a planning Minister from Nantucket."

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I did put that forward, but the Clerks said no. For members who are constitutional monarchists who got knocked over as the republicans raced to see the royal couple—and I am sure I spotted the member for Liverpool in a wig and sunglasses waving a hanky wildly at the passing motorcade.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 317.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is that one?

Mr Paul Lynch: When Cromwell comes in and deals with him.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: We saw Cromwell off eventually. In all seriousness, it is worth reflecting that trust in our public institutions is at an all-time low. These are taxing times for good government, for public

service and for civil society. The erosion of faith in our public institutions erodes the very democratic consensus that has defined governments since the end of the Second World War. Some Opposition members may think it is anachronistic that conservatives such as me still laud the Royal Family, but we are happy to poke fun at ourselves for it occasionally. The royal family demonstrate a commitment to public service and a sense of decency and respect that we should all hope to recapture.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: I do not know what plans the Minister has for the Royal Family, but this is clearly in breach of Standing Order 129. This has nothing to do with the question that he was asked.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Every bit of planning and other legislation that goes through needs to be assented to by the Governor. Remember that. To end on another note of poetry, allow me to paraphrase the words of Australia's greatest Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies quoting the seventeenth century poet Thomas Ford:

We did but see them passing by,
And yet we shall love them till we die.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Reports

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: As Chair: I table report of the Committee on Environment and Planning Report No. 2/56 entitled "Land release and Housing supply in New South Wales", dated October 2018.

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended:

- (1) On Wednesday 14 November 2018 to permit the consideration of Business of the House—Petitions, Orders of the Day Nos 4 to 6 for a period of up to one hour following the giving of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices).
- (2) On Wednesday 21 November 2018 to permit the consideration of Business of the House—Petitions, Order of the Day No. 7 together with any further such petitions that are presented in the interim, for a period of up to one hour following the giving of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices).

Motion agreed to.

Documents

PRINTING OF PAPERS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That the following papers be printed:

Report on the Statutory Review of the Succession Act 2006, dated February 2018.

Office of Transport Safety Investigations Report entitled 'Bus Safety Investigation Report, STA Bus MO 1504 Fire, Sydney Harbour Bridge, 6 May 2016'.

Final Report of the Interim Statutory Review of the Entertainment Industry Act 2013, dated February 2018.

Report pursuant to section 25P of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2017.

Report pursuant to section 26ZN of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Report pursuant to section 26ZN of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Report pursuant to section 26ZN of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2017.

Report pursuant to section 27ZB of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Report pursuant to section 27ZB of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Report pursuant to section 27ZB of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2017.

Report pursuant to section 242A of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force on Covert Search Warrants and Criminal Organisation Search Warrants for the year ended 30 June 2017.

Office of Transport Safety Investigations Report entitled "Bus Safety Report, Bus Fires in New South Wales in 2017".

Report under section 242 (6) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission on Criminal Organisation Search Warrants for the period 7 August 2015 to 6 August 2017, dated October 2017.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Crimes Amendment (Cheating at Gambling) Act 2012, dated March 2018.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, dated August 2017.

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Annual Compliance Report, Energy network operator compliance during 2016-17", dated October 2017.

Report of Multicultural NSW entitled "Community Relations Report 2016-17".

Report of the Inquiry under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 into The Returned Services League of Australia (New South Wales Branch), RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution, and RSL LifeCare Limited, dated January 2018.

Report by the Attorney General pursuant to section 42 of the Workplace Surveillance Act 2005 for 2017.

New South Wales State of Biosecurity Report 2017.

Report of the Department of Family and Community Services entitled "NSW Disability Inclusion Plan Update 2017", dated October 2017.

Report on the 2018 Review of the Exemption for Private Gaming Rooms under the Smoke-free Environment Act 2000.

Statutory Review: Victims Rights and Support Act 2013.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Defamation Act 2005.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Bail Act 2013.

Report on the statutory review of Part 3A of the Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2007, dated April 2018.

Office of Transport Safety Investigations Report entitled "Bus Safety Investigation Report, Driver Incapacitation on Bus 2635 ST, Cammeray, Sydney, 1 July 2016".

Office of Transport Safety Investigations Report entitled "Ferry Safety Investigation Report, Ocean Rider, Collision with Wharf 6, Circular Quay, 28 May 2016".

Annual Report and Determination of the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal on Additional Entitlements for Members of the Parliament of New South Wales, dated 16 May 2018.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Mandatory Pre-Trial Defence Disclosure) Act 2013, dated August 2018.

Report entitled "OCHRE Evaluation Synthesis Report, Stage 1 Final Report", dated June 2018.

Report 145 of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission entitled "Review of the Guardianship Act 1987", dated May 2018.

Report on the Review of the Mental Health Commission of New South Wales.

Report 146 of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission entitled "Dispute Resolution", dated June 2018.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment (Family Member Victim Impact Statement) Act 2014, dated June 2018.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Local Court Act 2007, dated June 2018.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Relationships Register Act 2010, dated June 2018.

Report on the Statutory Review of the Surrogacy Act 2010, dated June 2018.

Report of the National Rail Safety Regulator entitled "Implementation of the NSW Government's response to the Final Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Waterfall Rail Accident Reporting period: April 2017 - March 2018", Report 38.

Report by the Attorney General pursuant to section 45 of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 for the period ended 30 June 2018.

Report pursuant to section 242A of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force on Covert Search Warrants and Criminal Search warrants for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Report pursuant to section 26ZN of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Report pursuant to section 25P of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Report pursuant to section 27ZB of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the NSW Police Force for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "NSW Energy Savings Scheme - Compliance and Operation in 2017, Annual Report to the Minister, NSW Energy Savings Scheme", dated July 2018.

Report of the Statutory Review of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007, dated October 2018.

Office of Transport Safety Investigations Report entitled "Ferry Safety Investigation Report, Steering loss Ocean Rider, Sydney Harbour, 5 May 2016".

Office of Transport Safety Investigations Report entitled "Rail Safety Investigation Report, Disabled Xplorer Service NP23, Muswellbrook, 2 December 2016".

Report of the Industrial Relations Commission for 2016.

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2017 of—Workers Compensation Independent Review Office; Official Community Visitors; Public Defenders; Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales; Natural Resources Commission; and Animal Research Review Panel.

Reports for 2017 of—Border Fence Maintenance Board; Technical Education Trust Funds; Wine Grapes Marketing Board (accompanied by a statement of reasons for late tabling); and Industrial Relations Commission.

Motion agreed to.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Pet Shops

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

Sydney Metro Pitt Street Over-station Developments

Petition rejecting the current proposed Sydney Metro Pitt Street over-station developments, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

The Star Casino

Petition opposing construction of a proposed residential and hotel tower on The Star casino site, 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**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Niall Blair—Drought Assistance—lodged 18 September 2018 (Ms Jenny Aitchison)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—South Coast Rail Line—lodged 20 September 2018 (Ms Jodi McKay)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Old South Head Road Clearway—lodged 20 September 2018
(Ms Gabrielle Upton)

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Report: Review 2016-17 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC

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

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:36): As Chair: I speak to the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption's sixth report in the Fifty-sixth Parliament, tabled on 18 October 2018. The committee's role includes examining each annual report and other report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] and its inspector. The committee's report is the result of its review of the 2016-17 annual reports of the ICAC and the inspector. I turn first to the review of the ICAC's annual report. The committee took the review as an opportunity to examine the ICAC's functioning in light of its recent restructure and changes made by the 2016 amendments to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act. The committee found that the ICAC is operating well under the new model and it is to be commended on the successful transition. Decision-making by the new three-member commission is proceeding smoothly, and a chief executive officer, Mr Philip Reid, has been appointed to manage the ICAC's day-to-day affairs. This frees the commissioners to focus on their important statutory duties. The ICAC has also taken steps to implement new procedural guidelines for the conduct of its public inquiries.

The committee heard evidence that all relevant ICAC staff are now aware that those guidelines must be applied. They are critical in ensuring that people who appear at the ICAC's public inquiries are treated fairly. This is an area that the committee will continue to monitor with interest. The committee also noted a recent funding boost to the ICAC, with the Government approving an additional \$3.6 million on a recurrent basis. The committee is pleased that this funding increase has strengthened capability across the commission's various divisions to perform its vital corruption-fighting role. In particular, the funding has allowed the ICAC to conduct concurrent inquiries while keeping abreast of its investigative caseload. Increased funding has also allowed the ICAC to progress its plans to develop a more proactive approach to the way in which it assesses corruption risks and investigates.

Budget increases have enabled the ICAC to establish a strategic intelligence research unit and to employ two specialist data analysts to advance to a more proactive approach. Additional capital funding of \$500,000 over the forward estimates period to 2021-22 will also enable the ICAC to replace information, communication and technological equipment to meet operational requirements. While the committee welcomes these developments, proper oversight of the proactive approach is critical, and it has therefore recommended that the ICAC publish various related details in each of its annual reports. These include high-level details of the methodologies, systems and processes used by the ICAC in the exercise of its proactive jurisdiction, and any areas of emerging and potential public sector corruption risk identified as a result of it exercising its proactive jurisdiction.

I turn now to the committee's review of the inspector's annual report. The committee was pleased to find that the inspector's resourcing remains appropriate to carry out his important oversight functions. In addition, it was pleased to find that processes are in place to promote a productive working relationship between the inspector and the ICAC. The committee also examined the inspector's audit function. The Independent Commission Against Corruption Act requires the inspector to audit the ICAC's operations to monitor compliance with the law of the State. The committee noted the importance of this audit function in ensuring appropriate oversight of the ICAC. It is therefore a concern that the Commonwealth's Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act continues to prevent the inspector from fully performing his audit function. The Act allows the inspector to access telecommunications interception material held by the ICAC only for a targeted inspection; he cannot access it for general audits. This has been an issue for some years, and the committee understands that the Government and previous inspectors have raised it with the Commonwealth Government. The committee considers that the New South Wales Government should raise this matter again with Commonwealth Government, and has recommended accordingly. In short, the inspector must have access to all relevant material to thoroughly oversight the ICAC's exercise of its formidable covert and coercive powers.

In conclusion, I thank the ICAC's Chief Commissioner Peter Hall, Commissioner Rushton and Commissioner McDonald. I also thank the ICAC's executive team for its contributions to public hearings for the committee's review. I thank Inspector Bruce McClintock, SC, for his contributions to the public hearings. I also thank my fellow committee members for their valuable input during the review process. This is the last report the committee will be making to this Parliament. It has been an enormous pleasure to have been the chair of the committee. I believe it has achieved a great deal in reviewing the ICAC and the amendments to the Act. I could

not have done that without a strong committee and positive interaction between members. I take this opportunity to single out the cooperation afforded to me by the member for Heffron. I thank the staff of the committee secretariat for their assistance in conducting hearings and preparing the committee's report. It has been a pleasure to have been the chair of this committee.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:42): As Deputy Chair of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC], I make a contribution to today's take-note debate on the committee's review. As the chair noted, the ICAC's new three-commissioner structure and a recent funding boost to the ICAC has allowed it to operate concurrent public inquiries while keeping abreast of its investigative caseload. This is a positive development for corruption fighting in this State. During its review, the committee also considered the ICAC's liaison with the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP]. It noted that in cases where the ICAC has referred a matter to the DPP to consider whether a person should be prosecuted for a criminal offence, it is essential that the ICAC provide the DPP with all disclosable evidence about the matter. This is to ensure that the person is dealt with appropriately and fairly. The committee was therefore pleased to note that the ICAC has recently established a committee to develop policies and procedures to ensure that exculpatory material is disclosed, and that the ICAC's disclosure requirements to the DPP are met. The ICAC is to be commended for its work in this area.

Turning to the inspector's annual report, as the Chair has noted, the committee found the inspector's resourcing remains appropriate to carry out his important oversight functions. One of the inspector's principal functions is to deal with complaints of abuse of power, impropriety and other forms of misconduct by the ICAC or its officers. Another is to audit the ICAC's operations to monitor compliance with the laws of the State. Both the auditing and the complaint-handling function are important in ensuring appropriate oversight of the ICAC's formidable covert and coercive powers. The committee was therefore pleased at the inspector's evidence at its 1 June hearings that he was managing his complaint-handling function well under his current part-time employment arrangements and that, having nearly cleared his complaints workload to date, he would be in a position to start auditing the ICAC's operations.

Still on resourcing, in conducting its 2016 review of ICAC, the committee recommended that consideration be given to resource-sharing arrangements between the ICAC inspectorate and the inspectorate of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC]. As part of the current review, we noted that such arrangements have now been made and that they are working well; with the two inspectors sharing office space, a principal legal advisor, and a business coordinator. In sum, appropriate resourcing of the ICAC inspectorate is important, and it is an area that the committee will continue to monitor.

In closing, I would like to thank the ICAC and inspector for their contributions to the committee's review. I would also like to thank the Chair. Without the Chair's leadership, guidance and consideration, I do not think we would have arrived at such a good place for the ICAC. I thank the Chair for his guidance. It is much appreciated. I would also like to thank my fellow committee members for their valuable input. At times there was good collaboration between the committee members and all the issues were resolved. That is reflective of the good leadership of the Chair of the committee.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee staff for their professionalism and support. I know that Chairs of committees always thank the parliamentary committee members but without the committee staff we would not have the high level of reporting and support. Every member—from both sides—of any committee I have ever served on is deeply appreciative of all the committee staff here. They go beyond what is required and they should be rewarded because they are first class. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 63/56

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

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:47): As Chair: I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today about the Legislation Review Committee's sixty-third digest for this Parliament. In this digest, the committee examined 19 bills introduced in the last sitting week. I will now draw the Parliament's attention to some of the key issues raised in the digest. The Government proposed a number of reforms aimed at improving protections for victims of crime with the introduction of the Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 and its related bills: the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment Bill 2018; Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Amendment (Victims) Bill 2018 and the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Motor Vehicles) Bill 2018.

The Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment Bill 2018 introduces reforms to the apprehended domestic violence order regime. The committee noted that the bill provides that certain apprehended domestic violence orders may be made for an indefinite period. Such orders would restrict the freedom of movement and other freedoms of a person against whom such an order is made, for an uncertain amount of time and with no requirement to periodically assess whether there has been any significant changes since the order was made. However, the committee also noted the right to be protected against violence and abuse and that serious circumstances are required to be present before an indefinite order may be made. Given these circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

The committee also examined the Surveillance Devices Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018 and its related bills: the Terrorism (Police Powers) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018 and the Road Transport Amendment (National Facial Biometric Matching Capability) Bill 2018. In the Terrorism (Police Powers) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018 the committee noted proposed provisions which regulate the circumstances in which a person in investigative detention is able to contact a lawyer. Such contact is limited to visits and telephone calls, which may be monitored by the police.

The committee identified that the proposed restrictions may trespass on a person's right to access legal representation by limiting the amount of contact they can have with their lawyer, including by not allowing written communication. This, in turn, may prejudice their right to a fair trial. Although the proposed amendments are part of a suite of potential safeguards relating to legal representation, and a statutory review suggested that a number of stakeholders supported the amendments, it is incumbent upon the committee to note the provisions which impact on the ability of detainees to access legal representation and receive a fair trial. The committee therefore referred the appropriateness of these provisions to Parliament for its further consideration.

The Road Transport Amendment (National Facial Biometric Matching Capability) Bill 2018 authorises Roads and Maritime Services and certain other New South Wales Government agencies to release photographs and associated personal information to the National Facial Biometric Matching Capability. The committee noted that the bill permits the collection and sharing of private information and that legislative privacy protections, which would normally apply to such information, will not apply. While the committee noted that safeguards have been built into the National Facial Biometric Capability and it has been subject to privacy assessments, the committee referred this issue to Parliament for its consideration as to whether the provisions trespass on an individual's right to privacy.

The final bill that I will comment on today is the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The bill amends the Crimes (Administration of Sentence) Act 1999, the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 and regulations made under those Acts. The bill aims to improve security in correctional centres and juvenile justice centres. The committee noted that the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Bill 2018 authorises the use of force by correctional officers against visitors. As such, the bill would impact on an individual's right to personal physical integrity.

However, the committee noted that force can only be used in circumstances that relate to the security and good order within the correctional facility. In addition, where force is used, a written report must be supplied to the governor of the place of detention. Given these circumstances, the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on the sixty-third digest of this Parliament. I encourage everyone to read the full digest, which is available on the committee's website. I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat for their contribution. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:52): I wish to contribute to this discussion on the sixty-third digest of this Parliament, dated 23 October. The committee considered 19 bills and commented on all but one of those, so the digest is quite a substantial document on this occasion. I would like to take this opportunity to comment on one of the functions of the committee with respect to bills.

The committee examines bills with respect to five broad areas. One of those is whether a bill insufficiently subjects the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny—that is at section 8A (v) of the Legislation Review Act 1987. Amongst the bills considered this month was the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. In relation to that bill the committee noted that the bill provides that a person will not be guilty of certain offences created by the bill if the person has acted because of a purpose prescribed by the regulations or with the authorisation of a person prescribed by the regulations, or for a reason prescribed by the regulations.

The committee considers that to foster appropriate parliamentary oversight in matters such as these, the details of the defence to offences that attract significant maximum penalties should be contained in primary but not subordinate legislation. However, regulations are subject to disallowance by Parliament under section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1987. Given this safeguard, the committee made no further comment. However, in relation

to the Charitable Fundraising Amendment Bill 2018, the committee noted that the bill contains several provisions that delegate matters to the regulations, including provisions relating to appeals conducted by persons engaged in business or otherwise deriving benefit, conditions of authority, suspensions or cancellations of authority, and annual return and audit matters.

The bill also contains a provision that permits the regulations to create offences punishable by a maximum penalty of 50 penalty units regarding conditions of the authority. The committee noted that it generally prefers that substantive matters are dealt within the principal Act to afford parliamentary scrutiny. Given that these matters deal with requirements that must be complied with by persons operating under the Act and may create offences, the committee considered that these may involve substantive matters.

The committee referred these issues to the Parliament for its consideration as to whether the bill insufficiently subjects the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny. Members know regulations can only be unmade here; members have no power in their making. The committee will always comment where a bill seeks to use regulation in relation to substantive matters and will always draw that to the attention of members of the House. I commend the digest to the House and encourage members to refer to it. I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat and thank the House for its time.

Report noted.

Visitors

VISITORS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the Speaker's gallery five members of the Samoan parliamentary delegation, who, I understand, have been here all week. I feel their pain! I hope they have enjoyed their week here and that they have a safe trip home when they depart. I welcome them and hope they enjoy the rest of their stay.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Report: Prevention of Youth Suicide in New South Wales

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:56): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Parliament on the recent inquiry of the Committee on Children and Young People into the prevention of youth suicide. After reviewing the evidence received in more than 50 submissions and at four hearings, including a regional hearing in Singleton, the committee has tabled a report making 27 recommendations aimed at improving the approaches to preventing youth suicide in New South Wales. At the outset I acknowledge that suicide affects all age groups. While the committee supports suicide prevention aimed at the whole population, the specific focus of this inquiry was on the current approaches to preventing youth suicide.

I also note that many witnesses gave evidence that youth suicide is unique in some of its causes and features, and, therefore, requires a unique response. Great work is being undertaken in suicide prevention at the moment. The most prominent example of this may be the LifeSpan trials taking place across Australia. LifeSpan embodies a systems-based approach to suicide prevention, which recognises that prevention works best when tailored to the evidence and unique needs of each community. The results of these trials, including four in New South Wales, should provide further valuable evidence of what works, and where further support is needed. The committee's recommendations seek to support and build on the significant work already underway. I will now turn to some of those recommendations.

A major focus of the inquiry was the governance and coordination of suicide prevention services. Although great work is being done by the Commonwealth, State Government and local governments, as well as many different non-government organisations, the committee heard that sometimes the wealth of services on offer resulted in duplication and made it difficult for young people and their families to access the help that they need. The committee made several recommendations aimed at improved governance and coordination, and also welcomes the release of the Strategic Framework for Suicide Prevention in NSW 2018-2023. The committee hopes the framework will go some way to promoting improved strategic focus and increased coordination.

The evidence shows that there are some groups of children and young people at increased risk of suicide. Those with a child protection history or those who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are at high risk. That is why the committee has made recommendations focused on reducing rates of suicide among these groups, including the creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific youth suicide prevention plan and compulsory training for all child protection workers and foster carers. Good suicide prevention is based on

evidence of what works and so the committee has also made several recommendations focused on improving potential gaps in the evidence base.

Further research may help us better understand how we can reach young men, who are less likely to reach out for help, and also to identify what suicide prevention services work best for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex young people. The committee also took great interest in the way data about suicide, suicide attempts and self-harm is collected in New South Wales and areas for potential improvement. The committee has recommended that a suicide register, which would draw on coronial records to record all suicide deaths and relevant information about each, be established in New South Wales. It would bring New South Wales into line with other States, including notably Victoria and Queensland. In addition, the committee has recommended improvements to the way data is collected on self-harm and suicide attempts. A better understanding of rates of self-harm may assist in responding to areas of emerging risk and preventing clusters of suicide, which the committee heard are more common among young people.

Technology, including social media, can have a positive and negative role to play in youth suicide and self-harm. While it can be used to promote help-seeking and link a young person to support, it may also expose a young person to trauma or distress. When used appropriately, technology like telepsychology and video-psychology can be used to overcome some of the barriers young people may face when accessing support like distance, cost and stigma. That is why the committee has recommended that the Government investigate further opportunities to use technology to provide clinical support to children and young people, particularly those in rural, regional and remote areas, who may find it difficult to access a face-to-face service. In an inquiry about children and young people, it makes sense that one of the areas of focus was the services provided in schools. Overall, I am pleased to say that there appears to be much positive work being done to promote mental health and wellbeing in high schools.

The main gap identified by the committee was the period after high school, which, the committee heard, is a time of transition and elevated risk for young people. For that reason the committee recommended that the New South Wales Government work with the tertiary education sector to implement suicide prevention activities. I thank all those who gave evidence as part of this inquiry. We value the expertise of the many government bodies, advocacy groups, research organisations and service providers who made submissions and appeared at our hearings. I also especially thank the brave young people and bereaved families who came forward to share their stories in writing or in person. We are humbled at the time they gave us and I want to express my thanks to them.

I also make special mention of a former committee member, the Hon. Catherine Cusack MLC, and my fellow committee member Mr Michael Johnsen MP, for the special role they both played in advocating for this inquiry. I know the committee members are all glad that we took up the idea. I also thank my fellow members for their dedication to this inquiry. Their ongoing commitment to improving the lives of children and young people in this State was paramount. We feel like we have achieved something throughout this inquiry and I hope we have achieved something through the report. I also thank the committee secretariat. They are phenomenal people who are able to put together a great wealth of information into something of which we can all be proud. Their time, skill and dedication is phenomenal. I thank them for that. On behalf of the committee, I present the report.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:02): As a member of this committee, I also contribute to this take-note debate. Sadly, suicide is the leading cause of death in Australia among young people. In 2017, 106 young people died by intentional self-harm. So the report from this inquiry is timely and undertaking the inquiry into this topic was absolutely appropriate. One death by suicide is one too many. Disturbingly, the committee became aware through the inquiry that the groups of young people who are most at risk are, I would think, likely to be some of the most marginalised in our society: children and young people with a child protection history; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; children and young people living in regional, rural and remote areas; lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex young people; and a group I did not think would be thought of as marginalised—young men.

The report makes 27 recommendations to the New South Wales Government and government agencies relating to governance and coordination; vulnerable, at-risk children and young people; accessing services; improving data collection; and awareness training and education. Through the inquiry, evidence given repeatedly indicated that a young person who has attempted suicide is at higher risk of later death by suicide. The committee also heard that there is often a failing in our health system to follow up in the days immediately following discharge from a mental health facility after a suicide attempt. NSW Health has a key performance indicator [KPI] to follow up each mental health patient within seven days of discharge. The target for this KPI is 70 per cent of patients to be followed up within that week after being discharged.

While I must say that the follow-up rates are improving, they are disturbing. The follow-up rate of post-discharge community care for under 18 year olds by St Vincent's Health Network Sydney was 53 per cent for 2017-18. Compare that with 100 per cent follow-up in the Far West Local Health District. In my area, the rate for

Hunter New England Health was 89 per cent, while in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District it was 73 per cent. The rate for Western NSW Local Health District was 58 per cent. Why was this? According to the health districts there are challenges posed by young people being admitted outside their resident local area health district as well as the fact that some young people refuse contact post discharge. The target is set at only 70 per cent partly because there is no ability to include follow-up care by private clinicians and organisations such as headspace in the figures. In many cases they may be the most appropriate forms of follow-up for young people—I certainly do not deny that.

This is a real problem. I am of the view that every person, especially young people, should be followed up by our health system post discharge. We cannot let people who have mental health issues, or who have attempted intentional self-harm to end their life, be unsupported at this most crucial time in their lives. As I said earlier, one death by suicide is too many. I know staff in our mental health facilities are working incredibly hard, but our system must do better. That is why I am very keen to see recommendation 15 included in the report and am eager to see the Government's response. Recommendation 15 is that NSW Health prioritises strategies to improve post-discharge care for children and young people, especially children and young people who show reluctance to receive care.

In closing, I thank each of the 57 organisations and people who made submissions, all of those who gave evidence at the four days of hearings and my fellow committee members for the time that we have spent together over this term. I particularly thank, as the Chair of the committee identified, the committee secretariat, who did an amazing job. Their drafting and summarising is without peer. I commend the report to the Parliament and I look forward to the Government's response to the recommendations.

Business interrupted.

Matter of Public Importance

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:07): Today as I speak as a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in the presence of other female members of Parliament. It is inconceivable to think that until 100 years ago this would not have been possible because I am a woman. It is sobering to think that it is less than a century since this State saw its first woman elected to the Legislative Assembly, Millicent Preston-Stanley. In other words, for nearly 70 years men had the run of this place on their own. We need to call that out for what it is: quotas.

Millicent Preston-Stanley was from a more conservative side of politics than I am, yet her presence in the Legislative Assembly and its celebration over the past couple of years highlights the sisterhood that goes across political parties and still unites women across those so-called "sacred benches" in the oldest Parliament in our nation. The Women's Legal Status Act also paved the way for women such as Marie Byles, the first solicitor in this State, and Sybil Morrison, the first barrister in New South Wales, to practise their craft of law. It also paved the way for women to participate in local government. Earlier this week the Hon. Peter Primrose from the other place spoke at the Local Government NSW conference. In his speech he recognised Lilian Fowler:

... a Labor stalwart who, in 1928 became the first female alderman in NSW. Lilian was also Australia's first female Mayor, elected to that position in December 1938, and served as only the third woman elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly from 1944 to 1950.

Her name lives on in the Federal Seat of Fowler, which covers parts of Fairfield and Liverpool.

Ironically, Lilian ultimately lost her place on Newtown Council when it was merged with the City of Sydney in 1949, proving that forced council mergers have always been an endless source of trouble!

I thank the Hon. Peter Primrose for that contribution. It is interesting that advances in the representation of women are most often made in the Legislative Assembly, the "people's House", rather than the Legislative Council. Indeed, it was not until 1926 that the Constitution of New South Wales was changed to allow women to stand in the upper House. When we look at the representation of women today, we have less than a quarter of seats—just 10 of 42, or 24 per cent—held by women in the Legislative Council, while we have nearly reached the critical mass figure of 30 per cent in the Legislative Assembly, with 27 of 93, or 29 per cent. I acknowledge the presence of members of the Parliament of Samoa in the public gallery. I pay particular tribute to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, who is a leader in the representation of women in the Pacific.

When I was in Samoa a couple of years ago at the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project, the PWPPP, she was an inspiration to many women across the Pacific, and I remember her getting everyone playing ukulele. What struck me the most, though, was the fact that women in Samoa and across the Pacific are experiencing the same issues that those early women parliamentarians in New South Wales would have experienced of being the only woman or perhaps one of the few women in their Parliament. Samoa has more than

one, thanks to the temporary special measures whereby more positions are made available to women in the Parliament of Samoa until there are at least five women. It is a great initiative. Other countries in the Pacific have tried to implement that but have not had the leadership shown by Samoa. There are political parties in Australia who do not believe in quotas for women. It is great to see the Parliament of Samoa with the leadership it is showing in that way.

In the last 10 years in New South Wales we have seen the State's first woman Premier and in this term we have seen the first woman Liberal Premier. Perhaps my personal favourite example of women leading in traditionally male portfolios within the current Parliament is that after former roads Minister the Hon. Duncan Gay told the member for Miranda that "building a road is not like buying a handbag, Eleni", we now have the State's first woman to serve as Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. So perhaps it is not that dissimilar after all. We cannot celebrate the success of women in Parliament if we do not celebrate the success of all women. I pay tribute to Linda Burney, the first Aboriginal woman in this Parliament, and of course to my dear friend Liesl Tesch, the first Paralympian in this Parliament.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:12): I wish to contribute to this matter of public importance and I thank the member for Maitland for raising it today. As many members would know, a century ago, after many years of advocating for a woman's right to be elected to the New South Wales Parliament, the Women's Legal Status Act was passed in this Legislative Assembly, making it possible for a woman to be elected to the Chamber. After women achieved the vote in 1902, more than 15 years of campaigning elapsed before the bill was brought before the House and finally passed. The First World War delayed the process in one way but it also demonstrated that women could make a significant contribution to the community and the State, beyond the boundaries of the home. Significantly, at this time amendments were made to the bill in the Legislative Council preventing women from being appointed to that Chamber. As the member for Maitland said, it was not until 1926 that women could become members of the Legislative Council.

We are here today to mark the centenary of the Women's Legal Status Act 1918. As female members of Parliament, it is an occasion very dear to our hearts. Without the passing of this historic Act I would not have been permitted to stand for election and none of us would have been able to serve our communities. As has usually been the case throughout history, the fight to secure women's rights and access to the same opportunities as their male counterparts has been long and convoluted. Purely looking at women's political history within our own State, we did not gain the vote until 1902, we did not gain the right to stand in Parliament until 1918—a full 16 years later—and the first female parliamentarian did not grace the benches of the Legislative Assembly until a further seven years after that, in 1925.

In the Legislative Council women were not appointed as members until 1932, with the appointment of Catherine Green and Ellen Webster. However, I am proud to say much has been done in recent years to acknowledge the legacy and contribution of women to the political and social life of New South Wales. For the first time in its 200-year history, the Parliament hosted an exhibition focusing solely on female parliamentarians and community leaders. The exhibition, entitled "A Fit Place for Women: NSW Parliament", was our most successful exhibition to date, receiving more than 70,000 visitors. This was extended this year to include a display for Vivid, for which banners of trailblazing female members of Parliament [MPs] were hung from the building's facade—also a first. I am sure all members appreciated the purple and green suffragette colours adorning the building.

Other changes introduced to help remove barriers that exist for female MPs include the introduction of family friendly sitting hours and days, as they call them; the relaxing of the rules concerning infants in the Chamber—I always love seeing infants in the Chamber and may bring my own in soon—the introduction of a parents' room; and upgrades to the building's facilities and bathrooms. Many of my colleagues, including the Speaker, worked very hard to bring down what was often described as the last bastion of the parliamentary "boys club". In terms of legislation, I can say that this Parliament does seek to vote in women's interests. On 7 June—which is my birthday—the New South Wales Parliament voted to pass the Public Health Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill 2018, which provides safe zones of 150 metres around reproductive health clinics in New South Wales. The introduction of this type of legislation is often borne by women in this place and often gains more support from women in this place. I will read a brief excerpt from my contribution to that debate:

I reflected on the portraits of Millicent Preston-Stanley, the first woman to be elected to this place, that we pass every day when we enter this building. I often consider her journey, the issues that she championed and the challenges she faced and I wonder how far we still have to go almost 100 years later. In her inaugural speech in 1925 she spoke of this place and the effects of its decision-making on women:

"As women taxpayers and workers, they are subject to the laws you make, the inadequate wages you impose, the taxes you collect, the injustices you perpetuate, the anomalies you tolerate, and they suffer under the many vital and important matters you forget to

handle. They are also subject to the many unfortunate results which follow from the neglect of the Legislature to handle effectively many of the great questions which may be considered to be of vital importance not only to women, but to the entire nation."

For me—and, I imagine, my female colleagues—being a member of Parliament is a true vocation. It is something that we are drawn to by our desire to make a difference to our communities and to the State. I thank those who passed the Women's Legal Status Act 1918, which enabled us all to be here today.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:17): I speak on this very important matter, the Women's Legal Status Act 1918. I thank the member for Maitland for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. This is certainly something that we should be celebrating and the member has given us the opportunity to do that in the House today. I too welcome our friends from the Samoan Parliament. How welcome they are. They are our guests and our neighbours, and we love having them here. As the member for Maitland said, our parliaments, particularly our women, have come together to discuss issues regarding women in Samoa and in Australia, as well as in neighbouring countries. I welcome them. I am so pleased they are here for this debate today.

As the member for North Shore said, it took 15 years for this legislation to pass in this place after it was first introduced. I suspect that the blokes just decided that we were not going to go away. They were absolutely right to come to that conclusion. The Act enabled women to become members of the Legislative Assembly, representatives in local government and judges of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. It is a moment in time that we should all be incredibly proud of. I acknowledge the trailblazers of that time. It would have been incredibly tough. Today it is still tough for women to be preselected as representatives at all levels of government, so I can only imagine what those women went through. I am so pleased they did. The female representatives in this State today are the beneficiaries of that.

I am most proud of Labor's strong history of female representation. In my town we had the first female Lord Mayor of Newcastle many decades ago, and her name was Joy Cummings. We are all so proud of her legacy. In the Hunter, female representation far outweighs male representation. I am not saying that the blokes up there are not so crash hot; they are very good. However, we have been used to good female representation for a long time and I am very proud of that. We have come a long way in 100 years, that is for sure. Labor has a very considerable number of female representatives. As the member for North Shore said, it is important that women are in these representative roles. I was so pleased that she mentioned that female members raise issues that are related to women. All of the issues that the member for North Shore raised were very pertinent. We have changed this place. Now, we just need to turn up the air conditioning a bit because we do not all wear suits. I am so proud of the member for Maitland for raising this issue in the House. I congratulate her.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:20): When I arrived in this place in 2015 I was struck by the large increase in the number of women. The class of 2015 is one of the most diverse groups of parliamentarians in the State's history, which is a good thing. As the member for Swansea and the member for North Shore said, when we have a Parliament that reflects the diversity of our community, it does not just change the way we vote on certain issues; it also changes the issues we vote on. Safe access zones is a very good example of that. Female members of Parliament in New South Wales are mums, sisters, grandmas, spouses and daughters. Since the 2015 election, at least five female MPs have given birth to eight children. Some male MPs have become dads.

Through the New South Wales branch of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, which I chair, we have collectively and successfully advocated for a family room. We have also reviewed and discussed issues such as breastfeeding in the Chamber and having small children in the Chamber. We staged a "loo coup" to highlight that in a building with more than 60 per cent female employees, we had access to approximately 25 per cent of the amenities. We can never forget that bathrooms have always been the last defence of sexism and limiting women's participation in the armed services, in sport and in workplaces around the world. Indeed, when Millicent Preston-Stanley was a member here, it has been estimated by her biographer, Dr Wendy Michaels, that her offices outside of the main building were too far from the Chamber for her to have been able to make a division bell.

In the same week as the New South Wales parliamentary loo coup, a building site in the Northern Territory was shut down because bathroom facilities had not been provided for female construction workers. The Victorian Government has instituted a "facilities equalisation program" to ensure community sports facilities have access for female players. We tell girls that they should play more sport, but how many of them have tried to play soccer or other sports and had to change in the car because there has been no facilities for them?

I acknowledge the young female students in the public gallery. There is a place for them here. Women belong in politics. Women are changing the face of law and politics in New South Wales for good. There is no doubt that the Women's Legal Status Act was a game changer for women in New South Wales, and indeed for our whole society. We have made great strides over the past 100 years, but we need to be forever vigilant to ensure we continue to move towards equality. At the highest levels of the parliament and the legal system this will involve men stepping aside for women of equal or better skills, abilities and qualifications. Men need to get used to this

system, which is actually called "merit". Because for the first 70 years of their time in this place, men had a 100 per cent quota system in place, which supported them to hold all positions of political and legal power in this State. We must never again listen to arguments against a 50 per cent quota to achieve equality because that, my friends, is what works.

Community Recognition Statements

REBECCA WHITTLE

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:24): I congratulate Abbotsleigh Year 11 student Rebecca Whittle, who last month won a gold medal at the annual International Earth Science Olympiad in Thailand. A Killara resident, Rebecca was in a team of four, which included three members from New South Wales and one from the Australian Capital Territory. Each team member was selected to compete against the very best earth science students from around the world. Rebecca first made a shortlist of 91 students, drawn from the more than 6,000 students representing more than 280 schools who took the qualifying exam. The shortlisted students attended a summer school at the Australian National University, where a 27-person Australian team was chosen for the categories offered in the UNESCO-sanctioned International Science and Mathematics Olympiads.

At the Olympiad Rebecca and her colleagues took more tests, but also took part in group projects and had the opportunity to go on excursions to learn more about their local environment. Rebecca earned her gold medal by placing in the top 10 per cent of the 150 or so competitors who took part. Each of her teammates won silver medals. Rebecca has an obvious passion for earth science, which she sees as a combination of physics, chemistry and biology that is closely linked with geology. I congratulate Rebecca on her win.

LIVERPOOL NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTIONS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:25): I recognise Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections, also known as LNC. I was present at Warwick Farm Community Hub last Friday, 19 October, at the presentation of a cheque to LNC by the mayor of Liverpool Wendy Waller. The cheque, totalling \$46,000, represented the proceeds of the 2018 Liverpool Mayoral Ball and is a significant contribution to the LNC. The mayor and council should be congratulated on their efforts. Also at the presentation were LNC Chair Carole-Anne Priest and the indefatigable manager of LNC Pat Hall as well as councillors Geoff Shelton and Nathan Hagarty.

The money will be used to purchase a vehicle that will take children to venues they have never visited, deliver food parcels to families suffering food insecurity and fulfil the other activities of the LNC. The chair described the work and mission of the LNC as "kindness". The money will help the LNC spread kindness. More formally, the LNC's mission is to contribute to building a strong, inclusive community that overcomes disadvantage by providing direct relief from poverty through a range of accessible services, community development, capacity building and advocacy services. It does that well.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH TUNCURRY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:26): On Friday 12 October I had the pleasure of joining Pastor Graham Stewart to officially open the Seventh Day Adventist Church Tuncurry Community Garden. Community gardens provide the opportunity for education, and for people to grow and harvest their own produce, but more importantly I hope that this garden will offer the chance for people to get their hands dirty in a communal plot, share conversation and be brought together. This wonderful initiative would not be a reality without the work of Neil and Kay Button, Mark Wellings, Tony Foote, Ernie Houfnagel, Michael Bradley, Christine and Alan Bates, Glenda and Keith Duncan, Stafford Ormsby, Jenny Robson, Elwyn Scales, Graham Stewart, Sonia McNamara, Larry Croker, Brian Holloway, and Bruce and Debbie Hopper. I also make special mention of Gwenda Duncan, who cooked up an absolute storm of an afternoon tea with scones and cakes.

INNER WEST COMMUNITY ENERGY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:27): I draw the attention of the House to Inner West Community Energy, a fabulous independent non-partisan community group that works to promote renewable energy within the electorate of Balmain. I commend Inner West Community Energy committee members Gavin Gilchrist, Kathy Bluff, Barb Matchett, Rafael Chemke, Dr Leila Alem, Tom Zwar and Coby Smith for their work. Inner West Community Energy provides assistance to individuals, businesses and community organisations that wish to harness the power of solar energy. I was lucky enough to attend its annual fundraising event last week. It was an incredible evening. This organisation makes a vital contribution to the movement to make renewable energy more accessible across the whole community, especially through its work with households. I congratulate Inner West Community Energy on recently becoming a member of the Nature Conservation Council and I thank it for all of its incredible work to make my electorate of Balmain more solar friendly and a better place to live.

PREMIER'S ANZAC MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:28): A lucky student from Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College will be chosen to take part in a once-in-a-lifetime tour of key World War I and World War II battlegrounds as part of the 2019 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. I acknowledge the students from Monte who are in the gallery today in support of Sophia Skarparis and the petition she has submitted to the Premier. Although these students are probably a little old to participate in the competition to win this trip, students in years 9 and 10 with a keen interest in history are encouraged to apply to participate in the Anzac Memorial scholarship. Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College is just one of 20 schools across the State that was lucky enough to win the ballot to have a successful student undertake a tour of World War I and World War II sites in Germany, France and Belgium, which will deepen their understanding of the causes of war and commemorate the service of Australians in both World War I and World War II.

TRIBUTE TO MORRY BREEN, OAM

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:29): On Tuesday local legend Morry Breen at the age of 82 succumbed after a battle with leukaemia, while surrounded by his family. Morry was a father of three and had lived on the Central Coast since 1963. He has made a huge impact on the region. He is known as the driving force in the establishment of the Wyong Rugby League Club in Kanwal; the grounds are named in his honour. He was also a passionate unionist. He organised many different sites across the Central Coast and participated locally in the green ban movement. Morry's achievements are numerous and impressive, especially considering he was monitored by the ASIO for many years. Only recently Morry was awarded a medal of the Order of Australia for his services to Rugby League and industrial relations. Words cannot do justice to a man like Morry; he made everything he touched better and everyone he met brighter. Vale Morry Breen, OAM.

Business interrupted.

Petitions

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

Discussion

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:30): I speak on the petition concerning the introduction of legislation banning the use of single-use and heavy retail plastic bags at retail points of sale in New South Wales. I recognise the students from Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College who are here today to listen to this discussion. I thank the many thousands of New South Wales residents who have signed this petition requesting a ban on lightweight plastic bags in our State. Like the Minister for the Environment, I am encouraged by the ongoing passion that our community shows about environmental issues, and I commend the efforts of the community for bringing this issue to the attention of the House.

The Government shares the concerns of the New South Wales residents who signed this petition. It recognises that plastic waste, including plastic bags, is a major issue for our environment and the community at large. The Government also recognises that littered plastic bags and other plastics can have a negative impact on the environment, particularly in our waterways and oceans. It is pleasing to see that many retailers have already taken steps to reduce the use of plastic bags and other plastic waste. In 2017 major Australian supermarkets volunteered to phase out lightweight plastic shopping bags in all their stores nationwide by July 2018. In June 2018 major supermarkets committed to additional waste reduction actions, including phasing out plastic packaging for fresh food and providing soft plastic recycling bins in all stores nationwide. I commend these retailers for their proactive steps to reduce waste of all types throughout their stores. Supermarkets are the largest provider of lightweight plastic bags, so their voluntary decision to phase out plastic bags will significantly reduce the number of bags entering our waterways.

To complement the voluntary phase-out of lightweight plastic bags in supermarkets, the Government is working with other States and Territories to explore options to reduce the use of heavy weight or boutique-style plastic bags. The Government is an active part of the inter-jurisdictional working group established to do this work. This Government has also commissioned research into the impacts of biodegradable plastic bags, which have been used to replace lightweight plastic bags in some jurisdictions. In addition, the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] has engaged the CSIRO to review the types of biodegradable bags available. Its research showed that some biodegradable plastic bags release significant amounts of toxic metals such as lead and zinc into the environment as they break up. This suggests that some biodegradable plastic bags may be as damaging to the marine environment as standard plastic bags.

While our work on plastic bags is important, this Government recognises that plastic bags are only one type of plastic packaging. Other types of plastic packaging have similar environmental impacts to plastic bags.

I am sure members will agree with me that we need to reduce our use of all types of plastic packaging, not just plastic bags. Accordingly, in April this year the Minister joined with other Australian environment Ministers to formally endorse a target of 100 per cent of Australian packaging being recyclable, combustible or reusable by 2025 or earlier. This 100 per cent target includes plastic bags. The Government is already working hard to deliver on this target. Together with the other States and Territories, it is working with the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation, which represents more than 1,100 leading packaging companies, to achieve the 100 per cent target. The Government is listening to the community's concern about the impacts of plastics on the environment. The Government is working hard to reduce plastic waste.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I call the member for Newcastle to order. I understand the passion of the discussion on this petition, but I ask members to show the member for Seven Hills respect.

Mr MARK TAYLOR: I sincerely thank everyone who signed the petition. I encourage you to remain engaged in this very important issue. I again thank the students of the Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College for their efforts and for bringing this very important issue to the attention of this House.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (16:34): I am very pleased that this discussion is taking place. At the outset I confirm that the Labor Party is fully committed to banning the supply of single-use plastic shopping bags, which is a sensible, reasonable and common sense solution to a serious and longstanding environmental problem. It will reduce the volume of litter entering the environment and help to protect critically endangered marine wildlife. Almost three years ago—in 2015—at Maroubra Beach I announced Labor's policy with Ian Kiernan standing alongside me. The late Ian Kiernan, AO, was a great campaigner for the environment. I know his people at Clean Up Australia met with Sophia this morning. Perhaps a torch was passed from the environmental activism of Ian Kiernan's generation to a younger generation who are just as passionate and committed to fighting for our environment. I think Ian would be very pleased.

I first heard about this petition when I read an article in the *Catholic Weekly* about the efforts being led by Sophia Skarparis of Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College to collect signatures to ban the bag. I wrote to Sophia to congratulate her. Now she and all her friends are present in the gallery with 12,000 signatures on their petition and their petition is before the House. The petition has been signed overwhelmingly by students throughout the State. Approximately 7,000 of the 12,000 signatures come from school students—student environmental leaders, who were approached by Sophia and her Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College friends—student environmental leaders at so many schools pushing the petition that has been signed so enthusiastically by thousands of students at many of the schools in this State. It is great to see a group of intelligent and hardworking young people with a serious commitment to the environment.

A ban on plastic bags is long overdue. It is shameful that every other State in the country has imposed a ban, but we in New South Wales have not. The refusal of this Government to act is beyond rational explanation. It is a refusal to act in the face of ever-increasing evidence that plastic bags kill turtles, seabirds and other marine life. Plastic bags are non-renewable and are a major part of the larger problem of plastic waste entering the environment. Every beach in Australia now is polluted by plastic. The CSIRO has done extensive research on the problem of plastic pollution. It has reported that approximately three-quarters of the rubbish along the Australian coast is plastic. But still the Government refuses to act. Most recently the Premier was asked about banning plastic bags at the budget estimates hearings. She said that the market would fix the problem. She went on to state:

It means the Government does not have to exhibit its heavy hand in doing that.

That is an ideological position. Government regulations to protect the environment are not evidence of a "heavy hand". We are not talking about a totalitarian state. Environmental regulations are evidence of collective responsibility—of people acting together. We know that some things in our society depend on far more than individuals: they depend on people coming together. Protecting the environment is one of those things. Two weeks of sitting remain for this Parliament. After the House adjourns tonight, we will be back in November for two weeks of sittings and then the Fifty-sixth Parliament will be over.

The State goes to a general election in March 2019. My appeal to the Premier is: Whatever may be our other differences, let us legislate for the ban in the next sitting fortnight in November. It just makes sense. On a bipartisan basis we could pass a simple banning of single-use plastic bags. It could pass through both Houses in a day and night. Plastic bags kill marine life. The deaths they cause can be slow and agonising. Dr Larry Vogelnest at Taronga Zoo Sydney wildlife's hospital told the *Sydney Morning Herald* about the damage that plastic bags cause when he said:

Sea turtles are the main species we have affected. They see these bags in the water and they think they are jelly fish, so they eat them. 70 per cent of turtles we get in have ingested plastic, around 20 per cent of those end up dying.

I welcome the fact that major retailers have acted, but that is not enough. It is voluntary and unenforceable, and does not extend to all retailers. It does not solve the problem because a ban has to be comprehensive to be effective.

Now is the time for Parliament to act. I thank Sophia, her friends at the Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College, and student environmental leaders around the State for their work in bringing to this House this 12,000 signature strong petition. I promise I support you. If the ban is not passed by this Parliament in November, and Labor forms a government next year, we will pass legislation to ban the bag then.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:39): I thank the residents of New South Wales who have signed the petition. I congratulate the organisers of the petition on their interest in the environment. The National Litter Index surveys show that plastic bags are a part, but only a small part, of a much wider plastic litter problem. In the November 2017 survey supermarket lightweight plastic bags were found to account for 0.25 per cent of the total litter volume in New South Wales whereas heavyweight plastic bags made up only 0.06 per cent of the total. It does not make sense to target plastic bags alone when the numbers show that they are not the major sources of litter.

Therefore the New South Wales Government is committed to reducing all kinds of plastic litter, not just plastic bags. We are focusing our efforts on delivering and maintaining two key programs that target the major sources of plastic litter—the Container Deposit Scheme and the Litter Prevention Grants Program. The Container Deposit Scheme Return and Earn is the single biggest litter initiative in New South Wales history. The scheme provides a 10 cent refund on drink containers, which are a major source of plastic litter in New South Wales. The National Litter Index survey from November 2017 showed that eligible drink containers made up 46 per cent of the total volume of litter in New South Wales.

As of mid-October 2018 the New South Wales community had returned more than 803 million containers. This has had an immediate impact. It is pleasing to know that since the scheme started in 2017 there has been a 33 per cent drop in eligible drink containers in the litter stream. Reducing litter, including plastic bag litter, is one of the Premier's priorities. Reducing litter will have major benefits for our waterways and oceans because it will protect those environments from many types of contaminants, not just plastic bags. The New South Wales Government's target is to reduce the volume of litter by 40 per cent by 2020. We already are well on the way to achieving this.

Since 2013-14 the National Litter Index shows that we have reduced the volume of litter in New South Wales by 37 per cent. This success is due in large part to our Litter Prevention Grants Program, which is part of an \$802 million Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. From 2012-21 we have allocated \$50 million towards the Litter Prevention Grants Program. Through that program, we are rolling out the Hey Tosser! campaign, which raises community education and awareness about littering and its impacts on our environment. Some 94 per cent of the New South Wales community approves of the Hey Tosser! message and 80 per cent of New South Wales adults remember the campaign.

The Litter Prevention Grants Program also has funded more than 150 grants to councils and the community to run clean-ups and install anti-litter infrastructure at litter hotspots. We are seeing great results at the hotspots, with average litter reduction results of more than 60 per cent. Another aspect of the program is better enforcement of litter laws to change littering behaviour. The Environment Protection Authority [EPA] offers a report to the EPA web service that enables community members to report littering from vehicles. The EPA can issue fines based on those reports, after verifying and checking information. As of June 2018 more than 45,000 reports of littering were received. I am confident of this Government's achievements to date, and I am confident that we are reducing the impact of all litter, including plastic bags.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:43): If today tells us anything, it is that with young activists like Sophia and her friends, who are in the House today, the days of single-use plastic bags are indeed numbered. Collecting 12,000 signatures is no mean feat. It takes patience, commitment, passion and courage. And it takes courage to come into Australia's oldest Parliament and speak truth to power. I welcome Sophia and her friends to this House and thank them for fighting to end the scourge of plastic pollution. Single-use plastic bags must be banned. New South Wales is the only State in the country that has not banned them. There are no excuses for failing to ban single-use plastic bags. Rather than leadership, the Premier has relied on markets and retailers to enforce voluntary bans. And we know how that has worked out! On 20 June Woolworths [Woolies] stopped providing single-use plastic bags, and Coles said it would follow suit. Woolies did a backflip, then handed out reusable bags for 10 days. Coles, on the other hand, backflipped on its ban, offering plastic bags indefinitely, only to backflip on its backflip. It does not work. I say to the Premier: We need to ban the bag.

The Boomerang Alliance estimates that in New South Wales three billion plastic bags are used every year—a third of all plastic bags used in Australia. They estimate that even with supermarket self-imposed bans, at least 10 million bags will continue to clog up our State. These bags end up in our streets, beaches, parks, rivers and oceans. They end up in the stomachs of seabirds, mammals and whales, and they break down into microplastics as well. They end up in our bodies and accumulate up the food chain. The threat of plastic pollution

is immense. We have to act now to do something about it. Every single one of us—every business, every family, every community—has a role to play.

But saving our world from choking in plastic will take principled leadership. That has been seen in every other State and Territory in Australia, except New South Wales. It has been seen in the European Union, which today announced sweeping reforms to ban plastic pollution by 2021. It has even been seen in small island nations, such as Vanuatu. It can be seen from Sophia and her colleagues here today, who have said: Enough is enough; it is time for real action. There is too much at stake. It is time for the Government to listen to Sophia and our community and to ban the bag, because our future absolutely depends upon it.

Ms Tamara Smith: I seek leave to contribute to the discussion on behalf of The Greens.

Leave not granted.

Ms Jenny Leong: I seek leave to contribute to the discussion.

Leave not granted.

Mr Jamie Parker: I seek leave to contribute to the discussion on behalf of The Greens.

Leave not granted.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Point of order: The standing orders state that there are two speakers from each side. If The Greens and Labor want to share the two speakers, they may do so.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I thank the member for Myall Lakes. We are all aware of the standing orders. Order! The standing orders are quite clear.

Ms Jenny Leong: I seek leave to suspend standing orders to move a motion to allow an additional contribution to the discussion on the petition signed by more than 10,000 persons. If 12,000 people have signed this petition, I am guessing that some of them may be supporters of The Greens and will want to hear The Greens' perspective.

Leave not granted.

Community Recognition Statements

TRIATHLETES RAY HUNT AND BRIAN ELVERY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:47): I congratulate Ray Hunt, who shows us that age is no barrier if we set our mind to something. At the age of 75, Ray has just been crowned a world champion in the sport of triathlon after taking out the sprint distance in the 75 to 79 age category at the 2018 International Triathlon Union World Triathlon Grand Final held recently on the Gold Coast. Ray then backed this up with a second place in the standard distance event. Also taking to the podium at this event was another local, Brian Elvery, who took out a silver medal in the standard distance event in the 60 to 64 age category. I congratulate both those gentlemen and wish them continued success with their future events.

AHEAD FOR BUSINESS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:48): On 11 October, thanks to an invitation from Lake Macquarie Business Growth Centre, I attended the launch of Ahead For Business at Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery. Ahead For Business is a new evidence-based response to the mental health and wellbeing of small business owners in New South Wales. It was developed by Everymind in Newcastle and designed to reduce the onset and impact of mental health problems in those who work in small business. It is being piloted in Lake Macquarie, Singleton and Parramatta.

My parents were small business owners, and through them I have some understanding of the challenges faced by small business. Small business owners face a number of unique risk factors that can result in poor mental health, poor general health and family conflict. The launch brought together small business owners from across the Lake Macquarie local government area and guest speakers, including former Wallaby Clyde Rathbone; David Burroughs, who is a recognised expert in workplace mental health; and Jaelea Skehan, the director of Everymind and an internationally respected leader in the prevention of mental ill health and suicide. Congratulations to all involved in developing the pilot, and I look forward to seeing mental health support being provided to small businesses across the State.

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE SPORTING CHAMPIONS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:49): It was a pleasure to recently attend Toongabbie Sports Club, where I found a number of young local sporting champions celebrating their great achievements. I note the

success of Pendle Hill Football Club's Under 18 men's team. Not only was the team the Granville District minor premiers, but also it was the grand champion and Football New South Wales' Under 18s State Cup champions. The team had one more big win. Over the weekend, the team drew one-all with East Bankstown Football Club, but won 4-1 in a penalty shootout to claim the title of Football New South Wales Champion of Champions for the under 18s division. I commend Luc Awad, Nikhil Balakrishnan, Joshua Callaghan, Trent Drinnan, Matthew Drinnan, Jack Felkin, David Moore, Matthew Moses, Benjamin O'Brien, Chane Prasongdee, Adam Rima, Benji Scarcella, Adam Telkic, Liam Terry, Jayden Wright and Benjamin Yates. A big congratulations goes to team coaches Vince Scarcella and Warren Drinnan, and manager Harrison Conroy.

KUAN YIN PUSAT BIRTHDAY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:50): This Saturday one of the most popular deities in the Buddhist religion celebrates her birthday. Kuan Yin Pusat is the Goddess of Mercy in Buddhism and one of the most symbolic deities to many in my local community. Associated with compassion and venerated by Mahayana Buddhists, Kuan Yin is one of the four great Bodhisattvas in Chinese Buddhism. Buddhist worshippers will pray specifically to the Goddess of Mercy when they are in a dire situation. Sometimes newborn babies are blessed by Kuan Yin and are considered her adopted children in the hope that her mercy will bring strength and protection to the child. Kuan Yin's popularity is such that the Chin Lien Temple in Canley Vale is called the "Kuan Yin Temple", and at the Ming Yue Lay Temple in Bonnyrigg there is a gigantic statue and fountain of the Goddess of Mercy. May the blessings of the Goddess of Mercy continue to protect and look after all the good people of Cabramatta and members of this House regardless of their religion.

SIGN INDUSTRY AWARD WINNER CHRISSY GENSCH

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:51): I acknowledge Miss Chrissy Gensch of Holsworthy. Miss Gensch was recently awarded a silver medal at the Sign Industry Award event. She won silver for her astounding effort in turning a blue Subaru car into a metallic purple car using her detailed wrap skills. Miss Gensch works at Bear Designs in Holsworthy, where she specialises in car signage. She is also studying for a Certificate III in Signs and Graphics at TAFE. All this allowed her to gain the necessary skills and experience to excel in her work, as she continues to do what she loves. Miss Gensch is a great advocate for women in the car industry because she encourages other young females to get involved in the industry. Once again, I congratulate Chrissy Gensch on her achievements and wish her the best of luck in the future.

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC CHURCH MALTESE FESTA

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:52): On Sunday 7 October, I joined the local Greystanes Maltese community to celebrate the annual Festa at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church. In keeping with Maltese tradition, the annual Mass for Our Lady of Victories is followed by a procession of the large statue of Our Lady Queen of Peace around the church, then a huge fete and celebration. Despite the cold, wet weather, hundreds of people came to celebrate the Festa, to enjoy freshly cooked pastizis, to watch the fireworks and to listen to the Our Lady Queen of Peace Maltese band. They were supported by many sponsors, including the Maltese Rugby League Club and Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School. It is a great tradition and I thank parish priest Father Paul Marshall and Maltese chaplain Father Noel Bianco for performing the Mass, and the Festa committee for organising such a fantastic event: President Lisa Bright, Charlie Pace, Joseph Teuma, Eddie Calleja, Martin Sultana, George Dimech, Phil Grech, Charlie Mifsud, Charles Grima, Angelo Borg, Michael Sultana, Joseph Fenech and Michael Sultana.

QUEENSLIFF BOARDRIDERS CLUB FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:53): I congratulate Queenscliff Boardriders Club on its fortieth anniversary. The club was established from humble beginnings in 1978 and has been at the forefront of club surfing in Australia ever since. The club is one of the proudest and most successful boardriding clubs in all of Australia, and I am proud of its role in our community. From the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles and enjoyment of the water to being custodians of the marine environment, the club is a pillar of our local community. I am grateful for the advocacy and support of Queenscliff Boardriders Club and the advice of Matt McSorley in securing the Vissla Sydney Pro at Manly, which we will welcome again in 2019. Congratulations, Queenscliff Boardriders Club and all the gumbies.

CABRAMATTA MOON FESTIVAL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:54): Recently the City of Fairfield sprung to life as the community banded together to celebrate the twentieth annual Moon Festival, which was held in the Cabramatta central business district. More than 90,000 Sydneysiders filled the streets and joined in a variety of festivities, which included delicious food, a range of street stalls and a variety of entertainment ranging from lion dancing and martial arts exhibitions to the children's lantern parade and, everyone's favourite, the fireworks finale. The

Cabramatta Moon Festival continues to grow bigger, better and even more popular with each passing year. It is all thanks to the Cabramatta Place Manager, Ms Cheryl Bosler, and her remarkable team, who dedicate an enormous amount of time and energy towards making the festival such a tremendous success each year. I also acknowledge the remarkable efforts of the volunteers, who gave so much of their time towards supporting the various events, stalls and entertainment on the day, which help to make the Moon Festival a truly special time for us all.

THE HILLS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (16:55): I had the great honour of recently attending The Hills Leadership Program, a program created by Emma Vumbaca, a teacher at Castle Hill Public School, to guide newly elected school leaders. The aim of the program is to provide year 5 students with an opportunity to learn what being a leader is all about. Year 5 students at Samuel Gilbert Public School participated in the program and invited year 9 and 10 Student Representative Council students from Castle Hill High School to act as leaders and mentors for the younger students. I was thoroughly impressed by the program. I believe it is a concept that could be duplicated by schools across the State. My congratulations go to Emma Vumbaca on her fantastic initiative and to the many principals of the schools which embraced this idea. I particularly thank the many students who participated with interest and enthusiasm and who were completely engaged throughout the day. There are no greater role models in leadership than the many teachers and principals in my electorate of Castle Hill. I applaud each and every one of them for the wonderful education they provide to our students.

FRED HOLLOWS HUMANITY AWARDS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:56): I congratulate Isabell Kelly and Georgia Aspinall-Simmons of St John the Baptist Primary School in Maitland and Blade Mahony of Metford Public School, who received Fred Hollows Humanity Awards at Parliament House earlier this week. Named in honour of the legendary Australian eye surgeon, the award encourages our students to show compassion, integrity and kindness and to make a positive difference in their school or community. Isabell was nominated for fundraising, the proceeds of which were donated to Real Life Church's Christmas lunch for the homeless. The drought has been a motivator for Georgia to fundraise at school to buy hay, water, dog food and groceries to help farmers around Tamworth. Blade received his nomination for being a compassionate, selfless leader who always puts others before himself, which is also a commendable quality. I thank Metford Public School and St John the Baptist Primary School for nominating their students and I look forward to encouraging all other schools in Maitland and community organisations to participate in the Fred Hollows Humanity Awards next year.

CENTRAL COAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:56): Last weekend the Gosford/Erina and Coastal Chamber of Commerce along with the Wyong Chamber of Commerce held their awards at Mingara. This annual event recognises the fantastic achievements and contributions of employers and employees across the Central Coast region. I take this opportunity to congratulate all winners: Outstanding Young Employee, Amanda Woodbine from the Australian Reptile Park; Outstanding Business Leader, Tim Faulkner from the Australian Reptile Park; Excellence in Business, The Australian Reptile Park; Excellence in Small Business, CostSmart; Outstanding Employer of Choice, Milestone Bellanova; Excellence in Innovation, Gosford Private Hospital; Start Up Superstar, The Opportunity Collective; Outstanding Young Entrepreneur, Laura Prael from LEP Digital; Excellence in Sustainability, Mark Moffett from Bounce Rubber; and Excellence in Social Enterprise, Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council. The Excellence in Local Chamber of Commerce award went to the Wyong Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the 2018 Business of the Year was the fantastic Australian Reptile Park. All of these local businesses and workers make huge contributions to the economy and the lifestyle of the Central Coast. I congratulate all of them on their recognition on the evening.

UMINA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:57): It was great to stand with members of the Umina Surf Life Saving Club to hand over their new jetski for the 2018-19 season, thanks to a Community Building Partnership grant. The experts at the club—although this may be biased, as they are the jetski coordination team—claim that this is the most important piece of surf life saving rescue equipment. We spoke of future challenges where jetskis will feature in rescues, including managing stand-up paddleboard [SUP] safety. As they venture away from the shore in a new SUP fad called down-winding, challenges arise in distributing rescue capacity offshore as well as maintaining skilled patrol members on the beach if a paddleboard gets into trouble a long way from support. Added to this is the new drone capacity being trialled on the Central Coast this summer. The flags are up and I send a huge thanks to all surf club volunteers on the Central Coast this summer. I wish them a fabulously safe season looking after the wellbeing of locals and tourists alike.

CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE POLICE REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (16:58): On 19 October 2018 I attended a service for Police Remembrance Day hosted by the Central Synagogue, Bondi Junction. On Police Remembrance Day we celebrate the invaluable contribution of local police and thank them for their dedicated service in keeping our communities safe. I thank Rabbi Levi Wolff of the Central Synagogue and Rabbi Mendel Kastel, OAM, and Chief Executive Officer of Jewish House, for hosting the service with the support of Jewish House Co-Presidents Roger Clifford and Gary Cohen. I thank Eastern Suburbs Police Area Command Superintendent John Duncan and Board of Deputies President and local resident Lesli Berger for their commemorative messages. I also acknowledge the attendance at the service of Rabbi Dovid Slavin and Laya Slavin and Waverley councillor Leon Goltsman.

ILLAWARRA BLACK MONDAY BUSHFIRE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:59): Sunday marks 50 years since bushfires ravaged the Illawarra. Thirty bushfires burnt from Coledale to Dapto in what has become known as Black Monday. My own home village of Mount Kembla was particularly impacted. Recently a friend of my mother's described looking out of her hospital window after giving birth to her son and seeing the entire Illawarra escarpment on fire. Thirty-one homes were destroyed and hundreds were damaged. This winter has been dry, and the escarpment is also expected to be dry this summer. I hope there is not a repetition of those bushfires 50 years on. I thank in advance the members of the Illawarra Rural Fire Service for their preparations for the summer and their willingness to sacrifice time with their families to protect our lives and property as we head into what is expected to be another tough bushfire season.

IMB BANK ILLAWARRA BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:00): On Friday 19 October I attended the 2018 IMB Bank Illawarra Business Awards at the WIN Entertainment Centre, in my capacity as the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra. I thank and recognise all of the nominees and award winners. It was great to celebrate the achievements of our business community over the past year. Itree absolutely cleaned up on the night, being crowned the 2018 IMB Bank Illawarra Business of the Year and Outstanding Employer of Choice. Additionally, Itree's own Andrew Jackson won Outstanding Young Employee, and Kylie Moffitt of PhysioHealth and Sports Injury Clinic was named Outstanding Business Leader. Other category winners on the night included for Excellence in Small Business, Boab Services; for Excellence in Innovation, Warrigal; and for Excellence in Tourism, Cupitt's Winery. That is an outstanding winery and I recommend it to everyone. The winner for Excellence in Business was IOH Injury and Occupational Health. The Outstanding Young Entrepreneur category was won by Sarah Nolen, Birdblack Design and the Wollongong City Centre Business Excellence award went to Breakout Bar and Escape Rooms. I once again congratulate all of the award winners and wish them the very best for the future.

NEPEAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:01): It was a privilege, once again, to attend the annual Nepean Football Association awards dinner to celebrate the achievements of local football clubs in the Greater Penrith region. I send big congratulations to Londonderry clubs in the National Football Association. Henry Lawson Football Club, which is celebrating its fortieth year anniversary, took out the all-age men division 7, the intermediate men division 2 and the under-14 girls division 2 championships. Penrith Rovers Football Club was competition winner for the under-15 division, all-age men division 1 and all-age men reserves. I congratulate St Pauls Grammar Football Club and St Mary's Band Club Rangers Football Club, which were competition winners for the all-age women division 2 and over-35s Friday night division. I congratulate also St Marys Convent Football Club, St Marys Soccer Club, competition winners of the all-age men division, and Wollemi Football Club, competition winners in the under-15 division 3 championship. I had the privilege of presenting the Bill Morris Club Championship award to Hazelbrook Football Club. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Blue Mountains. Congratulations to all teams on a great season.

POULTRY EXHIBITOR CHAMPION BRIAN CASTLE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:02): I offer my congratulations to local poultry exhibitor Brian Castle, who took out the Grand Champion Bird of Show prize at the recently held Brisbane Ekka. Brian's bird, Australian Pip Game, was in perfect condition, with not a feather out of place or broken. This is a wonderful achievement and makes all the time and effort that goes into the preparation of birds prior to showing all the more worthwhile. Brian has been exhibiting birds for a long time and whilst his win is no surprise it is well deserved. Well done, Brian. Hopefully this bird will continue to win you many championships.

SUMMER HILL ELECTORATE YOUTH SERVICES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:03): Today I acknowledge the important work of youth organisations in my electorate of Summer Hill. These organisations operate across a number of areas to support our children and young people at every stage of their lives. Organisations such as the Community Child Care Co-Operative in Marrickville are shaping the future of our kids and educating the next generation. Organisations like Youth Off the Streets in Marrickville provide outreach and crisis accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness. The Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat supports and connects Aboriginal kids and their families. I also acknowledge organisations that nurture young people to build important skills that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives, such as the Marrickville Youth Resource Centre and Marrickville PCYC. I thank these organisations and their staff for their hard work supporting and assisting youth in the Summer Hill community.

MOOREBANK RAMS UNDER 16 RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:04): I congratulate the Moorebank Rams under-16s rugby league team on their many achievements this year. The team finished the season as minor premiers and qualified for the NSW Rugby League Conference Championships for the second year in a row. The boys had a tremendously tough final against Arncliffe in which they lost by only one try. The team manager said, "They have mateship and friendship that is carried on the field at all times." The coaching staff said the boys showed significant dedication to the sport which was highlighted when some of the boys were selected for the development sides. The Moorebank Rams under-16s boys team has been nominated for the junior Sports Stars team award which recognised them for their dedication, fairness and sportsmanship. I wish them the best of luck with the young Sports Star awards. I cannot wait to see what this talented team do in the future.

IRRAWANG PUBLIC SCHOOL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:05): A golden anniversary was recently marked when Irrawang Public School celebrated 50 years of delivering quality public education to the people of Raymond Terrace. This wonderful event celebrated five decades of service to the community of Raymond Terrace and the many lives that have been touched by the school over those years. Parents joined with former staff and students, including former principal Ken Follett, to recognise this great achievement. The day's celebrations also included the awarding of life membership of the P&C to Melissa Beasley and outstanding service awards to Belinda Kay, Pip Hennessey, Jenn Burton, Barb Lyons and Heidi Winter. While many stalls were manned by students, staff and parents, events like this also rely on fantastic sponsors who give back to their community. I give a special thanks to Raymond Terrace Bowling Club, Terrace Meats, Raymond Terrace Marketplace, Heatherbrae Bunnings, Raymond Terrace Woolworths, Telstra Raymond Terrace, Bakers Delight at Marketplace and Hungry Jack's Heatherbrae for helping make the day a success. A final congratulations to principal Stacey Mathieson and her dedicated staff, P&C president Sam Winter and secretary Emma Morris for their commitment to Irrawang Public School.

NATIONAL LANDCARE AWARD FINALIST CLEAN4SHORE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:06): Earlier this month the National Landcare Awards took place. One of the finalists was Clean4Shore, a not-for-profit organisation based in my electorate that works to keep our beautiful waterways clean. Graham "Jono" Johnstone and Clean4Shore were recognised as the People's Choice Award winners. It is a special achievement as they are the only vote-based award recipient. I take this opportunity to congratulate Jono and his team of volunteers for their work. Jono and his team regularly engage with local groups including schools, Juvenile Justice groups and local businesses to work together to clean up our environment. I recently caught up with Jono and a school group at Erina Creek in my electorate of Terrigal. Jono told me about the significant difference he has noticed in local waterways since the fantastic Return and Earn scheme started. Through initiatives like Return and Earn, together with organisations like Clean4Shore, our local environment is being cleaned up and improved. Congratulations again to Jono and Clean4Shore.

DEATH OF DOMINICO NGUYEN VAN AN

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:07): On 13 October I was honoured to attend a mass of thanksgiving for the life of the late Dominico Nguyen Van An. The funeral service was held at Saint Felix's Catholic Parish Bankstown. It was attended by more than 1,000 local people. I acknowledge that Mr Dominico Nguyen Van An lived a simple and humble life, participating in many religious activities, and being the leader of the first pastoral council of the Vietnamese Catholics at Lakemba. He then became the treasurer of the Vietnamese Catholics Organisation in Sydney and provided assistance to the late Father Nguyen Van Doi during his pastoral work. I acknowledge Mr Dominico Nguyen Van An's family and his son parish priest Reverend Van Vuong

Nguyen. He passed away on 8 October, surrounded by his family of nine children, children-in-law, 20 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. May God bless his soul.

LOU'S PLACE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:08): On behalf of the Sydney electorate I commend Lou's Place in Potts Point. It is a drop-in day centre for women in crisis who are experiencing homelessness, health concerns, violence or abuse. I recently met with the women and workers of Lou's Place. The women were passionately keen to be actively involved in reform, to have their stories and experiences heard and to address homelessness in both the inner city and across New South Wales. Following this meeting, more than 100 women experiencing homelessness and crisis have written and openly shared their individual stories of strength and resilience to overcome hardship and difficult times. I have delivered these letters to the Premier who I hope will visit Lou's Place and meet with these women to discuss ending homelessness. I commend Lou's Place and these inspiring women for sharing their extraordinary stories. I acknowledge the workers and volunteers for providing a supportive and safe space for women to get through tough times and back on their feet.

AUSMUMPRENEUR AWARD NOMINEE RAYA DU PLOOY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:09): I congratulate Ms Raya du Plooy of Prestons, the owner of online business Oh Flossy. Recently Ms du Plooy was a finalist in the 2018 AusMumpreneur awards, which recognise Australian mums in business and their achievements. Oh Flossy is an online business that sells children's play make-up. It includes low-transfer, low-allergen products that allow children to safely play with make-up products. The business idea grew out of Raya's own experience with her daughter trying to use her make-up, which would result in eczema. She was determined to find something for her daughter to play with that would not be harmful—and not overly dramatic—leading her to start her successful business. Once again I congratulate Ms Raya du Plooy on her business achievements and wish her the best of luck for the future.

MARINE RESCUE LAKE MACQUARIE OPEN DAY

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:09): On Sunday my electorate will be celebrating Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie open day. We celebrate the day every year when the community comes together to celebrate one of the most esteemed organisations in Lake Macquarie. Marine Rescue shares the electorates of Swansea, Charlestown and Lake Macquarie and all of us are proud of the assistance it provides to our waterways. Lake Macquarie is the largest saltwater lake in the Southern Hemisphere so members can imagine the workload that Marine Rescue has on a weekly basis. It is a 24-hour operation and the dedication from its volunteers is well revered and well respected. It is a terrific day and not only will Marine Rescue be there but also other community representative organisations including other emergency services. If any members have a spare moment, they are welcome to come along and enjoy the day with us.

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA FAIR BY THE SEA

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:10): Last weekend I had the privilege of attending Our Lady Star of the Sea's Fair by the Sea festival. It was an amazing day. The weather could not dampen our spirits. The turnout to the annual Fair by the Sea was incredible. I congratulate principal Peers, all the staff, the parents and volunteers at Our Lady Star of the Sea who organised a magnificent day. I also note the member for Seven Hills is in the Chamber. His wife was a teacher at Our Lady Star of the Sea, which is an excellent education facility in my electorate of Terrigal. I was given the tough job of judging the art competitions from kindy to year 6. The quality of the artwork that the students presented was fantastic. Once again, I congratulate principal Peers, all the staff and parents at Our Lady Star of the Sea on yet another successful Fair by the Sea fundraiser for the school.

NSW FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS PRESIDENT ALBERT VELLA

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:11): I acknowledge the work of Albert Vella as he retires from his role of President of the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools after 15 years of distinguished service. The NSW Federation of Community Language Schools plays a vital role in preserving our vibrant multicultural community in Summer Hill. Its success has been, in no small part, due to the tireless work of Albert, who has ensured that communities across the inner west are able to not only maintain their cultural traditions but also participate in the diverse melting pot of modern Australian life. Albert once said:

Multiculturalism is the ability to live in a society where each culture, language and religion is valued and respected.

His work ethic in the pursuit of that goal over the past 15 years has been undeniable. Summer Hill is fortunate to have had someone as committed to forging a respectful, multicultural society as Albert. I wish him all the best as he embarks on the next chapter of his life.

TOONGABBIE WEST PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:12): I commend the work of the Toongabbie West Parents and Citizens Association [P&C] to the House. The P&C consists of Matt Chalmers, Shylee Green, Alison Wall and Julia Leahy, who this weekend are putting on Toongabbie West Public School's tenth annual Halloween carnival. It will be a fantastic day. From 3.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. there will be carnivals, rides, markets and food. Most importantly, I will judge the spookiest costume competition with certificates and vouchers to be handed out.

*Private Members' Statements***KHALIL FAMILY**

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:13): I pay tribute to the fantastic Khalil family who live in my electorate—Antoinette and her children, Rabie and Rebecca. For around three years I have known the Khalil family and see them everywhere. They are active in the community and their church. In 2016 I met Rabie when he was school captain of Holroyd High School. He gave an incredible speech at their multicultural day assembly about his pride in his Palestinian heritage and the right of return that he is denied. Antoinette works down the road from me at George Koseffi's hair salon. Rebecca has just started year 12 at Holroyd High School and has been involved in creative and sporting activities at the school in all the time that I have known her.

When I first met them, they regularly attended the St Elias Melkite Church in my electorate; however, while it is being rebuilt, they have been involved in other churches including fundraising and major events at Our Lady of Lebanon. The Khalil family came to Australia and sought asylum after their father, Bassam, died. He had been repeatedly kidnapped and detained by Hezbollah. Antoinette, Rabie and Rebecca believe the stress of repeated kidnappings played a part in his untimely death. Bassam ran a communications shop and was accused of spying and was also pressured to spy on his clients. As Bassam was Palestinian, Rabie and Rebecca inherited his Palestinian nationality and refugee status under Lebanese law, not their mother Antoinette's Lebanese citizenship.

I understand that after Bassam Khalil died in 2009, Antoinette, Rabie and Rebecca faced increased harassment from Hezbollah and their sympathisers until they left in 2012. After Antoinette, Rabie and Rebecca left for Australia, I also understand that Hezbollah visited Antoinette's mother Elaine seeking information about where they had fled. She too has now fled Qana. Unbelievably, their application for political asylum was not granted straight away. Neither was their appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, despite the tribunal's finding that:

The tribunal accepts that, between 2004 and 2006, the applicant's husband was taken from his home by Hezbollah, detained for short periods of time interrogated and mistreated. The tribunal accepts that, in 2006, the applicant's husband travelled to the Ivory Coast. The tribunal accepts that, when the applicant's husband visited Lebanon in 2008, he was again interrogated by Hezbollah.

Antoinette, Rabie and Rebecca had a genuine fear of persecution, should they return to Lebanon. So in effect, Rabie and Rebecca, who were already refugees, were forced again to seek asylum and safety in another country. When their appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal was declined, the family was in shock, as was I. Rabie received a Royal Bank of Canada scholarship to study construction management at university. As an international student, he was forced to pay full fees, which are beyond the reach of most refugees and asylum seekers. He was in his first year of study but deferred his studies to fight to stay in Australia, and to work to raise money for this fight.

I supported their application to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and also their recent successful appeal for Ministerial intervention to the Hon Peter Dutton, MP. Minister Dutton is not known for his generosity in granting asylum to refugees, but in this case he supported this wonderful Palestinian Christian family to stay in Australia, safe from any possible further persecution from Hezbollah. I am proud of the role I played, along with Rabie and Rebecca's former school Principal, Dorothy Hoddinott, their church and many others in supporting their application for asylum, and I am thrilled that it has been granted. They have been granted permanent residency and I hope that they will in turn become Australian citizens. Like so many who have come to my electorate as refugees and asylum seekers, they are making a great contribution to our community and I am sure they will continue to do so for many years.

Over the past 18 months, I have been subjected to comments from the Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs, and member for Baulkham Hills, to the effect that I support Hezbollah. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, as I have just detailed, I have actively helped a Palestinian Christian family gain permanent residency in Australia to avoid persecution from Hezbollah, an organisation that repeatedly kidnapped their father over a number of years. Last week the member stated in this House that I have spoken at Hezbollah rallies and spoken in front of a Hezbollah flag, neither of which has ever happened. I do not even know if Hezbollah has ever organised a rally in Australia.

It is extremely serious and troubling that the Minister for Counter Terrorism would make those comments. The external security wing of Hezbollah is a listed terrorist organisation in Australia, although not its domestic political and charitable operations. The Minister may be referring to a rally at which I spoke in support of Palestine and gave a speech surrounded by Palestinian flags—a photo of which was tabled in this House at that time. But for the information of the House, and for the Minister for Counter Terrorism, who should know these things, the Hezbollah flag is yellow. It has an AK47 on it and looks nothing like the red, black, green and white Palestinian flag. Hezbollah are not even Palestinian. I do not support them and neither does anyone I know.

All my Lebanese friends, Christian and Muslim, were appalled by Hezbollah's role in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, their disruption to the Lebanese Parliament, where they are the largest political group, not to mention the kidnappings and other crimes. I never mentioned Hezbollah in my previous personal explanation about my speech at that Palestinian rally for one reason: I did not want to further endanger my friends the Khalil family, should their application for asylum be rejected and they be returned to Lebanon where they already faced grave danger from Hezbollah. *[Time expired.]*

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:18): Last week I spoke about a number of events and announcements made in the Myall Lakes electorate and I will now refer to some more recent ones. Recently I opened the stage 1 redevelopment of the Coomba Aquatic Club that was assisted by a \$160,000 grant. Whilst there I was able to make an announcement of \$1.24 million for stage 2 of the redevelopment. That means that the facilities there will now be the headquarters of northern New South Wales disability sailing. This is extremely important to the area. On a number of occasions I have had the pleasure of attending disability sailing regattas at that facility. On top of that they also have sailing education and training for juniors and others.

I also attended Wingham Showground, the heart and centre of the Upper Manning area, where I announced \$836,000 for much-needed refurbishment and upgrades at the showground. That figure comprises two grants, a Stronger Country Communities grant and a Crown Reserves Improvement Fund grant. Wingham Showground hosts 17 different community organisations such as the Beef Week organisation, a rodeo organisation, campdraft, the women's wool working and weaving group, and the men's shed, amongst many others. The funding will allow the removal of several dilapidated cattle pavilions and the replacement of one facility 60 metres long and 30 metres wide which will then become a multipurpose undercover facility. An example of why it is needed is that last weekend I was there to open the three-day Wingham Akoostik Music Festival on the Friday night but it was washed out on the Saturday night and again on the Sunday. With this new facility they will be able to move their festival undercover and will not have to worry about inclement weather.

I also attended the Old Bar sports complex, where I announced \$445,000 for that complex, including two all-weather netball courts. In the past the netball club has used the netball courts at the public school which are being replaced by eight new classrooms, which is why they need the new courts. There will also be a seven-bay lockup security facility for seven different sports. Sports such as netball and soccer, and groups such as the longboard association and the Old Bar festival group will get the use of that. It is something that is very much needed at Old Bar. I also attended Croki recreation reserve. Croki is a fantastic village on the banks of the mighty Manning River just off the Pacific Highway north of Taree and just south of Coolongolook. The money will go towards new toilets and amenities; an upgrade to the access to the river; removal of the rope mesh on the swimming pool and replacement with stainless steel mesh, which will mean fewer sticks and less debris will get caught in the mesh, making it a much more pleasant place to swim; and landscaping and upgrades to the park facility there.

On Friday evening I also attended the Bobin School of Arts Hall where the community gather to have a few nibbles and drinks and socialise with each other. As the Temporary Speaker knows, community halls can be the heart of a small town or village, and so it is with the Bobin School of Arts Hall. We announced \$32,000 to go towards the upgrade of the facilities there. They have already raised their own money, painted the hall inside and out and completed some other improvements to the hall. This money will go towards putting in a disabled ramp, an undercover area, improvement of the waste treatment system and some other facilities. I commend that community group. To go out and raise your own money and do your own work is absolutely fantastic. Now the Government is partnering with them for more much-needed improvements to the hall. I congratulate all the groups I have mentioned for their hard work and what they do for their communities.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): Before I call the member for Clarence, I want to ask the member for Myall Lakes when he sleeps.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: I get at least three hours a day.

GRAFTON BASE HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:23): Last Friday I launched a community-based petition to help build the strongest possible case to secure the funding required to redevelop Grafton Base Hospital. The redevelopment of the hospital is a high priority for the Clarence Valley community, which was evident on the day. I was joined by a range of community, medical and business leaders and groups, including Clarence Valley Mayor Jim Simmons and his wife, Lexie, and representatives from the local united hospital auxiliary, Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce, headspace, Our Healthy Clarence, Clarence Youth Action, New School of Arts & Neighbourhood House, Clarence Village Limited and Northern Pathways, which is constructing the new jail in Grafton. Also present were community stalwart Bill Dougherty, OAM, respected Indigenous leader Avery Brown and numerous other residents who care about their local community.

I was also joined by a number of local medical professionals, including Northern NSW Local Health District board member, chairman of Grafton Base Hospital Medical Staff Council and local anaesthetist, Dr Allan Tyson; intensive care unit director Dr Andrew White; local general practitioner, paediatrician and chair of the hospital's Medical Quality Committee, Dr Andrew Terrey, longstanding career medical officer in the emergency department, Dr Alastair McInnes; clinical director of the emergency department, Dr Robin Endersbee; local anaesthetist Dr David Clough and other hospital staff.

It is fundamental to have the backing of the local community to arm me with the political muscle needed to support the case for redevelopment and to add weight to the lobbying I have already undertaken with the Deputy Premier and health Minister to secure this funding. I know the community is grateful for the \$17.4 million invested by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government for the new ambulatory care centre, with construction due to commence early next year, but the redevelopment of the hospital is the next priority. It has reached its use-by date and is close to capacity. Its resources will be further stretched with the commissioning of Australia's largest jail just south-east of Grafton in 2020. With 1,700 inmates, 600 permanent staff and families of inmates all coming to the jail, it will become the fourth largest community in the Clarence Valley.

Other key drivers for the redevelopment that have made it the number one priority for the Northern NSW Local Health District include the expectation that inpatient beds, emergency department, renal dialysis and chemotherapy infrastructure will reach capacity around 2022; a growing need for inpatient and community-based mental health services consistent with the National Mental Health Service Performance Framework modelling tool; and an extremely high utilisation of health services by an ageing population, a large Aboriginal community and residents of a low socio-economic status.

The Clarence Valley Health Services Plan 2016-26 has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and has been endorsed by the Northern NSW Local Health District. Grafton Base Hospital plays a significant role in providing for the majority of acute health needs for the 51,000 people of the Clarence Valley. For more complex treatment residents have to drive 1½ hours north to Lismore Base Hospital or one hour south to the Coffs Harbour Health Campus.

Grafton Base Hospital predominantly provides level 4 surgical services, including selected trauma, orthopaedics, gynaecology, ear, nose and throat, ophthalmology, dental, gastroenterology and general surgery. It also provides emergency operating theatres for gynaecology, general surgery and orthopaedics. The hospital has benefitted from a range of capital works undertaken over the past 10 years, including \$1.7 million in recurrent funding from the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government to support the establishment of an orthopaedic surgery service and \$4 million towards the expansion of the medical imaging department and six new orthopaedic surgery beds. These important upgrades ensure patients receive the benefits of improvements in medical technology and modern medical practices, but they have all been built on an ageing facility.

The master plan, which was developed in 2016, has critically assessed the existing buildings in light of their ability to be reused or adapted to deliver the health services objectives. Existing buildings and services will not be demolished or relocated as a matter of course. Practical, existing buildings will be reused in a staged redevelopment of the hospital. The redevelopment will look at the extension of clinical units rather than relocation and will make the best use of the existing assets. The new and expanded services planned in the redevelopment will deliver the health services required to meet the growing needs of the Clarence Valley community, as articulated in the Clarence Valley Health Services Plan 2016-26.

People power is an essential ingredient in putting forward a strong case and I encourage members of the community to sign the petition and join with me in supporting a case for the redevelopment of Grafton Base Hospital. I ask the New South Wales health Minister and New South Wales Government to acknowledge the priority that the Northern NSW Local Health District has given the redevelopment of the hospital and to listen to the people of Grafton and the wider communities of the Clarence Valley. It is what the community needs and certainly deserves. We have waited a long time and now it is our turn.

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (17:29): We are coming to the close of a curiously significant period in our modern lives: the observance of the centenary of World War I. There have been programs, documentaries, overseas pilgrimages, grants, services, fresh memorials and more over a period that, strangely enough, has gone on longer than the Great War itself. As we near the end, what do I feel about the experience? First, the centenary has felt like a long time. In 2014, the New South Wales Government announced there would be a ballot across New South Wales to select 100 high school students to make the trip to Gallipoli for the centenary of Anzac. They would attend the dawn service at the Anzac Commemorative Site and the Australian Memorial Service at Lone Pine in Turkey in 2015.

One of 25 schools chosen by ballot to go on the tour was St Mary MacKillop College Albury. I was privileged to sit on the panel formed to choose four suitable students from the school. Clearly, the experience for these students and their school community was significant and formative. In response, I was moved to retell their experiences in Parliament. Secondly, the centenary has provided the community with inspiration to find unique ways to pass on some sense of the impact of this war—the war to end all wars. *Cat in the Hat* author Dr Seuss said, "Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory." Though the momentous battles and wars that forged the Anzac identity are now long in the past, younger generations somehow want to engage with those turbulent events and times.

Staff and students at Murray High School developed a memorial garden, opened in November 2017, designed to help explain the significance of the war and to make those long ago events perhaps more real for the students who walk past that memorial garden every day at school. The student representative council started things off in 2015 with the planting of a Gallipoli rosemary bush. Since then, an Anzac grevillea and Gallipoli rosebushes have been planted, followed by sculptures. Financial assistance came from the Department of Veterans' Affairs under its Anzac Community Grants Program. We contributed to the Hall of Service artwork at the Anzac Memorial in Sydney, which presents the names of 1,701 towns, suburbs and localities across New South Wales where men and women enlisted to serve in World War I. Soil samples were collected from no fewer than 51 locations across the Albury Electorate, from Albury to Wymah and from Jerilderie, Jingellic, Khancoban, Lowesdale, Mulwala, Oaklands, Ournie, Rosewood, Table Top, Thurgoona, Tumbarumba and more. The artwork will forever be a wonderful commemoration of those who served and sacrificed for our freedom.

Thirdly, we have heard—and, importantly, within this broader narrative—Albury's own set of World War I stories, keeping them alive for another generation or two. Last year we focused on the returned diggers who helped create and landscape—and then name for a battle in France—Noreuil Park on the bank of the Murray River. The Noreuil battle raged over two days, with the Australians forced to ground under heavy machine gun fire. Prisoners were taken on both sides; territory gained, lost, then recovered. Casualties were high and an Australian cemetery was created on the spot.

Here we are, a century later, still contemplating the meaning of the journeys that took Albury folk across the world to fight and, in some cases, sacrifice their lives in the far-off fields of Noreuil, a village that to this day flies the Australian flag. This year we focused on Lieutenant Albert Borella and how he earned his Victoria Cross, along with a reminder that a prominent Albury road was named after him. The Albury RSL played a crucial role in identifying an opportunity to have a new roadside rest stop on the Hume Freeway named after Lieutenant Albert Borella, VC. This act demonstrates the way in which our local RSL was alert to developments in the community and sympathetic to bringing various government and other parties together to realise a fresh memorial within the Albury area.

Fourthly—my final response to five years of commemoration—it is good to reach the end. All things must pass, and this too is a reminder that the wickedness that leads to war will pass, that evil philosophies and atrocities will end and that friendships can be rebuilt, albeit over time. It is a reminder that war is the failure of diplomacy, the failure of politics to bring people together rather than push them apart, and the dangerous chasm of national impotence that can engulf a nation when politicians get caught up with themselves and their own importance. The Armistice was an ending and a beginning. Imagine how the people of this nation felt when an end to hostilities was declared and the troops and nurses would be coming home. It must have been sheer relief, mixed with utter sadness at the waste of life. This natural response of the nation to the end of the Great War, I suspect even now and at the distance of 100 years, retains the capacity and emotional power to move us to tears. Lest we forget.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:33): As the Parliamentary Secretary for Veterans, I commend the member for Albury for his involvement with his community regarding the centenary of World War I. The member spoke about the Premier's Anzac Ambassadors Program and the great opportunity it provides for students. I recommend that all members take the initiative to attend a local commemoration in their communities on 11 November. Last weekend I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Centenary Extension of the Anzac

Memorial at Hyde Park, opened by a grandson of the Queen. It was a magnificent day. I commend the Minister for Veterans Affairs and the Premier for their initiative and for an outstanding occasion.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:34): October is Mental Health Month. Today I will speak about the Mental Health First Aid [MHFA] program. One in three people will experience some kind of mental illness in their lifetime. Those numbers clearly show it is a common health problem, yet many people feel isolated and stigmatised by their illness. In the Blue Mountains there is a groundswell of community support for people living with mental illness as well as their family and friends. Local organisations are working together to raise community awareness, and bring an end to stigma and health discrimination. I have long been an advocate for people affected by mental illness. Recently I joined with local neighbourhood centres in my electorate to champion the cause and show my support for skills training through the Mental Health First Aid program.

The Mental Health First Aid program is pulled together in a manual outlining the help that should be provided to a person who is developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The first aid should be given until the appropriate professional help is received or the crisis has resolved. There is a standard mental health first aid course and courses specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, for the suicidal person, for older persons and a blended course for the workplace. Course content deals with the development of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, psychosis and substance use problems. It also address mental health crises such as suicidal thoughts and behaviours, non-suicidal self-injury, panic attacks, traumatic events, severe psychotic states, severe effects from alcohol or other drug use, and aggressive behaviours.

Course participants learn the signs and symptoms of mental health problems, where and how to get help and what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective. There is also a 14-hour course that teaches adults how to provide mental health first aid to adolescents. We know that mental illness often starts in adolescence or early adulthood. It is important to detect problems early to ensure that young people are properly treated and supported. Recently I met with representatives from the Blackheath, Springwood and Winmalee neighbourhood centres to discuss ways to challenge the myths about mental illness and provide practical ways to impart knowledge and skills to enable family, friends and the wider community to support those who are experiencing a mental health concern or crisis. I am honoured to be recognised as a champion for the program. It is relevant to the entire community, but as a parent, former teacher and a carer of a family member with a mental illness I am more than aware of the importance of early intervention and providing appropriate support.

It is fantastic to be able to acknowledge in this place some of the people in my community. I thank Jo Davies, the community development worker at Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre, and her team. I also thank everyone in our neighbourhood centres and the community services sector. We are lucky to have MHFA instructor and community trainer Jane Armstrong partnering with us to run workshops. Three have already been run and the courses will continue. I encourage people in my community and elsewhere to access the MHFA website if they would like to organise a course for themselves or their workplaces.

Mental Health Month is celebrated each October. The theme this year is Share the Journey. I acknowledge local advocates Col and Pat Jennings, two people in my community who are especially active in raising awareness for older people. Their studies and their travel around the world have convinced them that being able to engage with others—especially through open dialogue family therapy—and listening to others are important parts of the healing process. In sharing that theme again, "sharing the journey", I acknowledge my family and friends who have helped me at difficult times in the depths of despair and hope that are a part of mental illness.

COFFS HARBOUR BYPASS

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:39): Tonight I speak on an issue that relates to my electorate and that I have spoken about in this House recently—the Coffs Harbour Bypass. The concept has been around since 2004 when the route was chosen. On 11 October a public meeting was called. A number of members of council attended that meeting. At the same time, councillors had come out en masse to say that they did not agree with the proposal put forward by Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] that called for tunnels and for covering over the top of cuttings, et cetera.

The people who attended that meeting clearly decided that they wanted a western bypass, but unfortunately that is not possible. It would cost somewhere between \$1.2 billion and \$1.5 billion. It is the dearest section on the Pacific Highway and will cost more than \$100 million per kilometre. As the result of that meeting I agreed—now with confirmation from the Minister's office and from RMS—that we would extend the

consultation period and not release the Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] until the end of January. With that in mind, and given council's obvious interest in this issue, I wrote to council the next day and said:

As discussed at last night's meeting Roads and Maritime Services indicated that they would like an opportunity to have a permanent display of the route in the foyer of Coffs Harbour City Council Chambers until such time as the Environmental Impact Statement is completed.

As Council has shown an interest in this matter, I would be most grateful if you would agree to this request and additionally, also have a copy of the consultation documents in the foyer.

I received this response on the same day from the general manager:

Thanks for the letter. I have requested that our Group Leader Customer Service make contact with Adam Cameron to facilitate the display if at all possible.

I still have not heard from them, but the local media came to me on 18 October and said the response it had had from council was:

... as the Highway is not our road—it is the NSW Government's, specifically the responsibility of the RMS—we won't be creating a display as we don't have the concept designs, plans, reports etc.

This is despite the fact that I have specifically offered to make those documents available to council. This has got to a stage where RMS has dropped documents in to the council. Council obviously just wants to play a political game on this, but the reality is that the majority of the 360-odd people at that meeting on 11 October have bought land and built homes next to the proposed route post-2004. It is interesting to note that the council authorised those subdivisions after 2004, knowing full well that the route would interfere with these people's lifestyles. It will. As the member for Tweed would appreciate, all bypasses or roads affect the community in some way, shape or form, but the majority of those concerns can be met.

I attended another public display held on Saturday two weeks ago at the golf club. I spoke to a lot of people and a lot of them had their questions answered. Yes, they do have concerns, but those concerns can be answered by the EIS. As council appears not to want to assist RMS in this important decision-making process, I now call on the Minister's office and RMS to find a suitable premises in Coffs Harbour and have a permanent display there from now until the end of December. I ask for the EIS not to be released until the end of January and for public consultation to continue up until the Christmas break.

I have spoken to the Minister and her staff and to the RMS, and they are quite happy to find a suitable space to have this permanent display. Unfortunately, as I said, the council does not want to play ball, as it were. That means the only thing we can do to address the concerns of the people of Coffs Harbour in relation to the bypass is to hire space in an office or a shopping centre for a display so that people have the opportunity to continue to comment, raise their concerns and seek assistance from the RMS as the route goes ahead. I hope that by early next week we will have found premises to house the display to assist the people of the Coffs Harbour area.

CONCORD REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL

INVICTUS GAMES

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (17:45): I update the House on progress with the Concord Repatriation General Hospital upgrade. Many in this House know how passionate I am about Concord hospital. Securing an upgrade to the hospital has been my priority since I was elected, having made mention in my inaugural speech back in 2011 of the importance of ensuring that local residents have the services they both need and deserve. It is a common topic that constituents want to chat about, and residents have selflessly lobbied successive governments for an upgrade of the hospital. It is therefore with great pleasure that I inform the House of the detailed plans for Concord hospital's new \$341 million clinical services building, featuring Australia's first comprehensive care centre for veterans and their families.

It was an absolute pleasure to unveil these plans on Sunday with the Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard, and executive staff from the Sydney Local Health District and the hospital. We toured the site of stage one of the redevelopment, with the new clinical services building boasting more than 200 inpatient beds—which is an increase of some 20 per cent. There is a difference between announcing and delivering. Unfortunately, for a long, long time we were used to announcements with no delivery, but I can proudly stand on this side of the House and say that this Government is delivering the upgrades for Concord hospital and countless other hospitals across the State.

Concord hospital has a proud history of providing outstanding care for veterans. That is what makes this upgrade so special—delivering and constructing this one-of-a-kind service will support our diggers, young and old, and their families. The National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare will replace wards built in World War II. This upgrade facilitates the delivery of a range of world-class health and wellbeing services. It ensures that

exceptional staff have the exceptional facilities to match. The centre will provide substance and alcohol misuse programs, specialist pain management, a mild traumatic brain injury service, rehabilitation services and psychological wellbeing and family support.

The new clinical services building will also link to the current hospital, and include new inpatient units for aged care and rehabilitation and a comprehensive cancer centre. It will also have additional outpatient consultation rooms and capacity for 48 infusion chairs. Demolition works at Concord hospital are continuing on site and main works construction is due to start next year. It is vital to note that funding for the new Concord hospital more than doubled in the 2017-18 budget, with the New South Wales Government investing an extra \$191 million on top of the \$150 million announced in 2015. It is an achievement that we must celebrate, and we are proud of it.

It was a fitting time to visit the hospital on Sunday during the commencement of the Invictus Games. I was very privileged to attend a welcome dinner for the Italian National Invictus team on Monday evening and joined players and their families at the Club Five Dock RSL, the heart of Little Italy. The close connection with veteran welfare and the strong affiliation with the Italian community make the Five Dock RSL club and sub-branch fitting sponsors of the team. I commend the RSL and the sub-branch, especially Mr Ridge and his crew, for their dedication to the Invictus Games and to supporting the Italian team. It was a great pleasure to see that many members of the local Italian community are absolutely thrilled about hosting in their suburb some of the Italian athletes. It was a true honour to meet the Italian team and to hear firsthand from competitors how symbolic and meaningful the Invictus Games are to them. I offer all the ex-service men and women who are competing at the games my best wishes for success.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:49): I note the passion of the member for Drummoyne not only for the Italian community but also for the Invictus Games. He is generally supportive of people with challenges in their lives, particularly people with disabilities that they overcome. I acknowledge and commend his very consistent and very strong campaigning for Concord hospital. There is no doubt that, while the Government is spending a record amount on health infrastructure across the State in all electorates, in significant measure the \$341 million that has been allocated to the Clinical Services Building at Concord hospital is due to the consistent, strong and passionate advocacy by the member for Drummoyne, John Sidoti. I state for the record that his community should be duly appreciative of his efforts.

CESSNOCK ELECTORATE SOCIAL HOUSING NSW MAINTENANCE BACKLOG

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:50): As members of Parliament, we often try to give voice to those who are voiceless. Today I draw attention to the apparent backlog of maintenance issues with Housing NSW properties in my electorate. I am not talking about the lack of properties, which is causing people to be on waiting lists for many years; rather, I am talking about residents who are already tenants and who have to live in substandard conditions. As far as being a landlord goes, the New South Wales Government appears to be not a very good one for anyone who has a maintenance issue, especially a big maintenance issue. Tenants are doing the right thing by contacting the maintenance line. Their concerns are registered. Sometimes the first call will result in a contractor being sent out and sometimes they even get the problem fixed. That is how the system should work and, on occasions, it does. But for many that is a dream result and far from the lived reality.

People who contact my office often have contacted the maintenance line on numerous occasions and had many contractors visit the property who took photos and lodged reports, but it seems that that is where the service stops. Perhaps one easy-to-fix problem will be rectified whereas the more difficult ones are forgotten. One lady has been to my office many times over the past few months. She has four children and it would be an understatement to describe the condition of her house as a disgrace. There are holes in the walls, holes in the floor, black mould in the bathroom and even a gaping hole in the outside wall that goes through to the inside and lets the weather in. Recently during bad winter weather a branch from a tree she previously reported as needing to be removed went through the roof—and, yes, now there is another hole in the house. That hole in the roof is letting the weather and outside conditions into the house she occupies.

Housing NSW is working with her, but nothing is being resolved. Numerous contractors have come to the house she occupies, taken photos and submitted reports, but nothing has happened. Could that be because, as more than one contractor has said, the property should be bulldozed and rebuilt as opposed to being patched? The department has said that it will put her in temporary accommodation—a mother, her four children and one dog. No family of five should be placed in a motel room for an extended period while a house is rebuilt, so the mother said no to the motel room. The department has said that it will try to find her more suitable temporary accommodation but so far it has been unsuccessful. Meanwhile, the mother, her four children and the family dog are living in a property—for which they are paying rent—that in the private sector would not be rentable and would probably be condemned.

I do not condemn the staff who are attempting to help this lady. They have rules, regulations and guidelines and a budget they have to abide by. I do not condemn the contractors who attend, take photos and make reports. They have to wait for the work to be approved within budget. However, I do condemn the lack of funding that stops the maintenance work being approved and performed, which places this family—and so many other families in my electorate—in the position of living in a property that no-one should have to live in. I condemn the lack of funding that allows a property to get into that state in the first place. There appears to be no such thing as preventative maintenance anymore, only reactive maintenance. In far too many cases, reactive maintenance is being delayed for far too long.

The stress this places on tenants is huge—and in this instance it includes four children. Stress not only affects their physical health but also their mental health. This mother has had to defer her university course because of the trauma involved with her home. Some use the idiom "to pull yourself up by the bootstraps". This woman is trying to do exactly that by completing her education, but she is getting no help and support. She is doing everything in her power to improve her future prospects, and that of her children, but she is being stymied by a poorly maintained house. These circumstances maybe outside her control, but they are not outside the control of the New South Wales Government.

As a local member of Parliament, whether in Opposition or in Government, I attend Parliament House in Macquarie Street and participate in the Government of New South Wales. In conclusion, I have a short addendum. On 12 June 2018 I sent representations on behalf of this family. In August 2018 I received an unsatisfactory response to those representations. On Tuesday this week my office again contacted the Minister's office to explain how a recent storm had further affected this particular house. I am happy to report that of this morning the Government has taken action to help this family. I appreciate that support.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE SCHOOLS PARLIAMENTARY VISIT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:55): Every year I invite the primary school captains and vice-captains in the Davidson electorate to attend Parliament. This year's visit will occur next Monday and Friday, when it will be my privilege to welcome 68 primary school leaders from 18 local schools to experience a taste of this Chamber and that of the Legislative Council. This will be followed by an afternoon tea and presentation of leadership certificates. I always enjoy meeting our young school leaders and thanking them for undertaking leadership roles within their local school communities. I also encourage them to continue contributing valuably to their school, and the broader community, as they transition into high school next year.

The names of the schools and students are as follows: Gordon East Public School—Charlotte Wykes, Will Shaw, Nina Drury and Louis Corry; Mimosa Public School—Ashton Ellery, Madison Rainey, Joshua Ashley and Annika Hore; John Colet School—Darya Troedson, Edward Tomicki, Sascha Kneipp and Sasha Wilcock; Wakehurst Public School—Hailey Chappelow, Thomas Chappelow, Annabelle Grigg and Nathan Barlow; Castle Cove Public School—Saskia Raymond, Axel Pape, Jessica Rye and Thomas Clare; Kambora Public School—Kirra Wilkins, Diego Lyons, Jessica Ryken and Riley Mock; Lindfield Public School—Alice Taylor, Eliza Thompson, Ian Yi and Tom Baty; Forestville Montessori School—Aisha Jackson, Elizabeth Harris, Jay Sefton and Levi Rehn; Roseville Public School—Ava Hui, George Stephenson, Abigail Barfield and Ivan Ho; and St Ives Park Primary School—Declan Reaper, Emily Pullar, Isobel Gardner and Matilda Grimmond.

Further schools and students are: St Ives North Public School—Nate Roberts, Zoe London, Daniel Belzycki and Georgia Koulouris; Lindfield East Public School—Sarah Gaskin, Phoebe Ballantyne, Lachlan Thomas and Louis Lee; Masada College—Kira Fittinghoff and Ricky Maltz; Roseville College—Emily Barnard and Chloe Marchant; Belrose Public School—Austin Stapleton, Jett Sully, Katie McCrindle and Jasmine Oesterlin; St Ives Public School—Jess Crawley, Maya Torlakovic, Matthew Jarman and Sam Daykin; Corpus Christi Primary School—Tommy Schell, Saskia Bowie, Ethan Kotarac and Elijah Wehrhahn; and St Martin's Primary School—Pacha Saidi, Eden Russell, Sophie Hemens and Ben Cramp. I look forward to welcoming all these young student leaders to the New South Wales Parliament. I am confident that they have a bright future ahead of them.

HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:59): I have spoken many times in this Chamber about the healthcare industry in and around my electorate of Seven Hills and the many services that provide critical physical and mental support to local residents. Throughout this term I have seen a large investment in health by this Government across the Western Sydney Local Health District and the State. The Minister for Health, Mr Brad Hazzard, has visited the Seven Hills electorate many times to make announcements of further upgrades and funds, in particular for the Westmead health precinct. This \$1 billion investment is positively changing Westmead and when complete it will revolutionise patient services, educational services and research facilities. The investment

provides for new buildings and upgrades across Westmead Hospital and the Children's Hospital at Westmead and adjacent research and health education hubs.

In particular, I speak about the Minister's recent announcements and visits to Blacktown hospital a few weeks ago. The Minister announced a \$2 million patient services trial related to emergency department services. During the visit I had a tour of the emergency facility with Blacktown hospital director of emergency medicine Associate Professor Reza Ali. He is working creatively, constructively and innovatively to further positively enhance the emergency department experiences in Blacktown hospital. He is also working on a trial to change the current system of evaluating patient status and their direct needs in conjunction with other doctors and the department's specialised and dedicated nursing staff. Blacktown hospital is one of the State's top performing hospitals and this can be attributed to shorter emergency waiting times. I commend Associate Professor Reza and all the doctors at Blacktown hospital for taking such great initiatives and constantly striving to make it the best hospital it can be.

Last week the Minister returned to Blacktown hospital with me to inspect the new activity-based working units, the B2Hub and the B3Hub, and to view the progress on the construction of the new acute services building. The hubs are the first purpose-built, activity-based working spaces for hospitals in Australia. They will allow for a more productive, positive, collaborative, efficient and effective workplace. All workplaces could benefit from this, and I am proud that this Government has invested a great sum of money to ensure the staff of Blacktown hospital have the best facilities to treat the constituents of Seven Hills and offer them a world-class service. During the visit the Minister and I inspected construction of stage two, which included the additional acute services building. This building will open with the new emergency department in mid-2019. It will be a significantly expanded facility to meet the growing demands of Western Sydney and includes reception, triage, a waiting area, acute care, urgent care, short stay and resuscitation areas for adult and paediatric patients, satellite imaging with magnetic resonance imaging, research and training, a simulation centre and a psychiatric emergency care centre.

Paediatric services will be expanded at the Blacktown hospital in 2019. In addition to paediatric emergency, Blacktown will also provide inpatient and outpatient services for children from mid-2019. It was a pleasure to welcome the Minister and other colleagues back to Blacktown hospital as each milestone occurs throughout the incredible \$700 million health infrastructure redevelopment. This is revolutionising the services that are offered to the people of Western Sydney. In addition to the funds to redevelop the Westmead health precinct and the Blacktown health precinct, the New South Wales Government has delivered a new ambulance superstation in Northmead in my electorate, just a few hundred metres from Westmead hospital, as well as the Blacktown ambulance superstation just outside my electorate that will service those on the western side of Seven Hills. The healthcare sector and all the professionals who work in it, particularly the doctors, nurses and other key workers at Westmead Hospital, provide a great service to my community in Seven Hills. I commend them to the House and pay tribute to their work.

MINISTER'S XI AND INDIAN CONSUL GENERAL'S XI CRICKET MATCH

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (18:03): Many speak of the Ashes when they reflect on cricketing history. Nation against nation, fighting it out for glory and honour, nailbiting overs, spectacular crowds and footnotes in history that will never be forgotten. Step aside Ashes, there is a new game in town. On Sunday 16 September at Meadowbank Park, my Minister's XI took on the Indian Consul General's XI, led by Shri Vanlalvawna, to write cricketing history a new chapter. Thanks to the founder and president of the Australia India Sports Education and Cultural Society Incorporated, Gurnam Singh, and with the assistance of Kevin Pagaddinnimath, two teams of warriors faced off in an historic battle. The ministerial line-up was packing big guns, including former Australian cricketers, Trevor Chappell and Jason Kreza; International Cricket Committee World T20 2020 chief executive officer, Nick Hockley; the Federal member for Bennelong, John Alexander; City of Ryde councillors Jordan Lane and Roy Maggio; Kevin Pagaddinnimath; Rodney Bourgien; Alex Miller; and Amarjeet Singh. They faced a fierce Indian team, including Chandru Appar, Verma Navjot Bhatti, Paul Manohar, Jim Beilie, Ritvik Sharma, Anupam Khorgade, Yuvraj Singh, and Rog Chabra.

The Indians opened the batting, scoring some impressive runs. The Consul General scored a number of boundaries, despite formidable bowling from self-confessed Dennis Lillee wannabe, John Alexander. Roy Maggio put his body on the line to protect the boundary. Meanwhile, the Indians defended their crease and scouted for gaps in our defence. Totalling 193 runs by the end of the overs, we had a bit of catching up to do. A short spell in the sheds and the team was fired up and ready to chase down the lead. With Trevor Chappell in fine form, he took a half century and it looked like we were in with a fighting chance. However, the Indian bowlers took no chances and worked their way through the batting order. With an over remaining, we were on 168 and were 25 runs behind. While it was not impossible, we still needed a miracle to get 25 runs from six balls. Despite an initial boundary showing good signs of a comeback, my ministerial batsmen could not capitalise on the remaining balls, and we

finished up with 175 runs—still a little short. It was a courageous effort, and we were definitely not disgraced. I told the Consul General that next year it will not be so easy.

Mr Jonathan O'Dea: How did you go?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I scored one run, not out. I came in to bat in the last over to slog away, but it just did not work. My message to the Indian Consul General is that he should not get too used to the glory. His days of victory are numbered. While competitive, this event was also indicative of something far greater; that is, the strength and diversity of the Ryde community. Supporting the day were more than 150 local spectators, and special guests, including my parliamentary colleague the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC; Reena Jethi; the former Captain of the Australian women's team Lisa Stiilaar; Justin De Dominico from Cricket NSW; Philip Heads from the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust; Baron Wills from Hyatt Regency Sydney; Councillor Trenton Brown; and Inspector Alison Curtis from the NSW Police Force. We also had world-class sponsors, including the McGrath Foundation, which supplied the pink hats and stumps, and Surjit's Indian Restaurant. Once again, Ryde brought together many different elements of our community to create a lasting legacy that will be remembered for decades to come.

I also thank the Australia India Sports Education and Cultural Society Incorporated team of Gurnam Singh, Harry Dhillon, Sahil Zaidi, Jazeel Mistry, S. Bhalla, Devina Lal, Rohan Dhowan, Guru Dha and Mittu Gopalan who made the day possible. Thanks to the team and its organisation of world-class catering and almost commercial film crews, there was not one Indian-Australian or cricket fan in Sydney who did not know about the match. Finally, I thank the local party members who helped with the barbeque, particularly Cameron Dunger, Amy Lee and Natalie Hissey, with the assistance of Melanie and Ella Marcellino from Kent Road Primary School. While the Indians might have won the cricket, the community won the day by bringing together so many different people from a variety of backgrounds. I am grateful to everyone who participated. It was a day on which everyone came together and the community was the winner.

DEATH OF COURTNEY TOPIC

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (18:08): I address the House on the tragic and avoidable death of Courtney Topic on 10 February 2015 at Hoxton Park within the electorate that I represent. She was almost 23 years old when she died of a gunshot wound to her chest fired by police. She was a constituent of mine and her family continue to be my constituents. I recently met with Courtney's parents, Ronny and Leesa Topic, and her brother, Kristopher. Their pain and loss is palpable. As they said to me, they used to be a family of six and now they are a family of five. They said that there is an empty room in the house and an empty chair at the dining table. Until the day of her death Courtney had not been in trouble, despite a mental health history. She finished high school and maintained a permanent job. The family was close and socialised together. Subsequently, experts concluded that at the time of her death she was suffering undiagnosed schizophrenia and was probably experiencing a severe episode of psychosis. She was shot dead with a knife in her hand. The death of Courtney was investigated by Deputy State Coroner Ryan, who delivered her findings on 30 July 2018. The report stated, in part:

Courtney was holding a knife and she was not responding to police commands to put it down. The situation quickly escalated. Less than a minute after police officers arrived Courtney was on the ground, fatally shot to the chest.

The Deputy State Coroner concluded:

It is probable Courtney was not able to understand that police were telling her to put down her large knife.

Although her death should not have happened, it would be wrong to understate the seriousness of the situation. She was moving in the direction of the police officer who shot her and she was within two metres of him when he fired his pistol. He had reason to believe his life was in danger. But that cannot be all. Courtney's death is emphatically not one where it can be said "This couldn't have been prevented." Her death raises broad issues about how police officers are trained to deal with people suffering a mental health crisis.

The Deputy State Coroner also said:

Her inquest forces us to ask are there ways of reducing the risk of using lethal force, without unduly compromising police officers safety. The conclusion I have reached is that there are. If changes are not made there will be more deaths like Courtneys.

Between 1989 and 2011, nearly 42 per cent of people shot by police in Australia were suffering from a mental illness. The Deputy State Coroner said there was no reason to expect this to decrease over time. The Deputy State Coroner said that the police force had done some work in responding to people in a mental health crisis, but concluded that Courtney's death and the inquest exposed gaps in the way that those processes work. She stated:

Along with so many others who have been involved in this inquest, I believe swift action is required to help prevent others from suffering in this way. Above all Courtney's family needs to believe that her death was not in vain.

Courtney's family is keenly awaiting the police response to the Deputy State Coroner's recommendations. Their implementation would make this tragic death slightly less pointless and, even more importantly, prevent similar

instances in the future. The Deputy State Coroner did not focus on making findings against the police but on the serious systemic issues. She found that police used their weapons when they had subjectively reasonable grounds to do so and did not, in so doing, breach police policies and procedures. However, they took an approach to disarming Courtney which was not appropriate.

The Deputy State Coroner made 10 recommendations. The first four recommendations focus on a better integration of Mental Health Intervention Team [MHIT] training, and police weapons and tactics policy and review. That should include an emphasis on de-escalation techniques. That is acutely relevant here as Courtney was shot 41 seconds after police arrived. Recommendations five and six result from the fact that there are currently no protocols or training concerning communication among police where mental health issues appear to be present. Recommendation seven relates to developing a system where four-day MHIT accredited officers be first responders where cases involve people with possible mental health issues. Recommendation eight deals with all senior officers receiving training to ensure they understand the new protocol for deploying MHIT officers. Recommendation nine concerns more "hands-on" training, in the four-day MHIT program. Recommendation 10 deals with MHIT booster training.

The Topic family awaits a response, not just in a formal sense but in a sense of whether action will be taken about these recommendations, not just whether there is formal acceptance or rejection. I am aware of the requirement of a response to Coroner's recommendations within six months of them being made. As shadow Attorney General I am acutely aware of the frequency with which that obligation is honoured in the breach. I ask the Government to ensure that there is a speedy response to the recommendations. Courtney's death was entirely preventable. There are compelling reasons to make changes. If not, there will be more avoidable deaths. The Topic family also forcefully argue the case for a more systemic review of police shootings. They argue for a review by the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. They make telling points about the contrasts with developments in Victoria, which has made much more systematic efforts to address police shootings.

Operation Beacon in the 1990s in Victoria, for example, is reported to have resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in police shooting deaths. The Victorian model emphasises the danger of engaging too quickly, the need for police to avoid the use of force and, if possible, to avoid confrontation. An approach that involves de-escalation and appropriate communication rather than narrowly focusing on a control model will save lives. The Minister should take urgent action on this matter and ensure that these recommendations are urgently adopted.

ROSE BAY BEACH WORKING GROUP

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (18:13): Last Friday, 19 October 2018, the Rose Bay Beach Working Group met for the fourth time since I called for it to be set up late last year. The working group's task is to identify problems and to help find solutions to improve the water quality issues at the beach, which takes longer to recover from stormwater pollution because of the lower levels of tidal flushing to clean it up. Rose Bay Beach is an iconic part of my electorate—it is loved and enjoyed by residents, families, visitors and even dogs on their walks across the beach.

The working group is made up of local residents and representatives from Sydney Water, Woollahra Council, Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and the Office of Environment and Heritage. It continues to be an effective forum, which has already delivered wins for our precious beach. We have developed a joint-agency action plan which outlines the main water quality issues and solutions. Actions have been drawn up to address many of those issues, and those actions are underway. This is primarily possible because of the good working relationships that have developed between the stakeholders and through the great input of the local community.

The places where sewer discharge has been entering Rose Bay Beach from the stormwater channels have been identified as the main issue affecting water quality. We have been able to locate and fix most of these leaks. That is a great achievement, which has already made a difference according to recent water-quality tests. Solutions may include more intensive works, such as fixing pipes and accommodating the storage of more stormwater by raising weir levels. Sydney Water is already calibrating its sewer hydraulic model for the Rose Bay catchment so that we can better predict and prepare for the occurrence of wet weather discharges. This would reduce the overflow of stormwater and sewage so that it is up to 80 per cent less than its current rate. That would be a big win.

Removing larger pollutants is one of our tasks—starting with plans to upgrade the Caledonian Road gross pollutant trap, which is also known as a GPT. It is a large, cage-like mechanism which catches rubbish in our drainage system. Woollahra Council has undertaken additional water quality monitoring and has completed a clean-up targeted at removing broken glass. This is in addition to making sure Woollahra Council and RMS clean the beach of litter more frequently. Dog litter bag dispensers are refilled more frequently and Woollahra Council has also increased the beach patrol by its companion animal officer, to help residents learn about the on-

leash and off-leash dog areas, and the need to clean up after their animals. Keeping our beaches clean requires cooperation and teamwork from the whole community. I thank all the local residents for their help on this issue. The RMS is undertaking a harbour-wide review of cleaning needs, including contacting harbour party-boat operators to help stop bottles and other waste being thrown overboard, because it can often end up at Rose Bay Beach.

As it is one year after we started meeting, I want to take this opportunity to thank and commend all of the working group members: Bruce Bland and Jennifer Turner from the Rose Bay Residents' Association, and local residents Maria Judd, Joe Tweg, David "Taffy" Thomas, Ann Kirkjian, and Michael Van Niekerk, for taking the time to volunteer to come along to the meetings and, in many instances, put in the hard work by collecting litter on Rose Bay Beach. I also want to thank Woollahra Mayor Peter Cavanagh and councillors Mary-Lou Jarvis, Claudia Cullen and Lucinda Regan; Woollahra Council Director of Technical Services Tom O'Hanlon; Team Leader of Environment and Sustainability Micaela Hopkins; Rod Kerr from Sydney Water; David Copley from RMS; and Meredith Campey from OEH Beachwatch.

We have a proud record of clean beaches in the Vaucluse electorate. Nielsen Park is not far away and Watsons Bay and Camp Cove have been rated good or very good. In fact Nielsen Park was rated very good in a recent Beachwatch report. Through the Rose Bay Beach Working Group, residents and community members have already noticed a big difference in the water quality and levels of litter at Rose Bay Beach. The working group is a great model. It is doing its bit and has already done a lot, with that collective goodwill, to improve Rose Bay Beach. I commend my statement to the House.

PORT STEPHENS SCHOOLS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:18): With the Higher School Certificate [HSC] exams now underway I want to send my good wishes to all of the students who are working hard on their exams. As well, I send my congratulations and thanks to parents who are assisting them. To the students in year 11 who are embarking on their final 12 months of high school study: good luck to you, as well. There are many avenues for success in life, and I remind the students completing these exams—and their parents—that whilst it is important to work hard and aim high there are many pathways to achieving their goals beyond the HSC.

High school is a stressful time for many students and families, and for residents in Medowie and the Tilligerry Peninsula it is made harder by the long distances that students are required to travel by bus to and from their schools. More than 1,000 students are bussed out of these communities each day. I held a number of community meetings with parents earlier this year to discuss school bus safety for students travelling from Medowie and the Tilligerry Peninsula. Parents and students recounted their concerns about overcrowded buses travelling at high speeds as students stood in the aisle or sat three to a seat. There are no seat belts on the buses. Many issues we discuss in this place require complex answers, but for this issue the answer is simple and well known: build the long-awaited Medowie public high school.

Members may not realise that this is the issue that got me involved in politics. It is the reason I stand in this place today. As president of my children's primary school parents and citizens association, I saw firsthand the frustration of parents when their children entered high school and had to travel long distances. The current system is a cause of much stress and angst for the parents and students and comes at a cost of lost family time and the opportunity to engage in after-school programs. In Medowie, once our kids go to high school they are rarely seen in the community. Maintaining a connection is difficult and mental health issues are on the rise. The education department purchased the land to build the school in 1983. We are determined to see a public high school built on that land in the near future. One of my predecessors, John Bartlett, MP, was a proponent of a high school in Medowie and pushed the campaign along in the early 2000s. Later, Port Stephens member Craig Baumann continued the push. He said in 2010, following a bus accident, "There is a need for a high school in Medowie now".

The current Government was elected in 2011 and promised to start the detailed planning works for Medowie high school to have the project shovel ready. Instead, there has been no progress. Nothing has happened. The land still sits vacant. Just as we have seen statewide, this Government has failed to invest in our children's education, whether it is preschools, schools or TAFE. It has also failed to invest in the physical school infrastructure our children will need in the years to come. Medowie is a growing area. Looking at current developments, the 400-lot Bower estate is nearing completion, the 238-lot Lifestyle estate is under construction and the 50-lot Tall Trees estate is being assessed. This is in addition to the urban infill and smaller scale developments already underway, which will see hundreds of new families in Medowie in the years to come.

While the high school will be in Medowie, it is likely it will also support families from the Tilligerry Peninsula, Salt Ash and Williamtown, and even areas such as Fern Bay and Karuah. Since 2011 enrolments at Tanilba Bay Public School on the Tilligerry Peninsula have grown more than 30 per cent. Total enrolments at

surrounding schools have increased by 15 per cent since this Government was elected. In defending its backflip, the Government will point to Irrawang and Hunter River high schools at Raymond Terrace and suggest that one of them would be forced to close. This ignores the 3,000-lot subdivision being planned at Kings Hill, north of Raymond Terrace, which is predicted to bring as many as 11,000 new residents in coming years. Raymond Terrace is already experiencing population growth and the Hunter River and Irrawang high schools will reach capacity in the near future.

These two high schools have the largest infrastructure maintenance backlog in Port Stephens, with the Irrawang High School requiring \$1.7 million worth of maintenance work and the Hunter River High School needing \$1.6 million. In the 2017 budget these schools received only \$100,000 each for maintenance works. Not only has this Government failed to build a public high school in Medowie, it has let other local schools fall into disrepair. Despite the neglect of this Government, there are increases in student numbers and improved results and spirit. What is happening in these schools is amazing, despite neglect by this Government. For too long this Government has taken the approach of approving new residential housing without thought for the accompanying infrastructure. Medowie needs a public high school and it is only Labor who will deliver it.

TRIBUTE TO HEDLEY SOMERVILLE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (18:23): I pay tribute to a unique Hornsby resident who recently passed away. I refer to Hedley Somerville. His contribution to the local community will long be remembered. In his working days Hedley conducted the business of Somerville's Produce Store. He was the third generation of the Somerville family to have run the store. His grandfather James Somerville established the store in 1902. Hedley's father Charles continued the family business. Hedley took over from his father and continued to operate the produce store until his retirement. The store closed in 1988. Somerville's Produce Store was an institution at Hornsby over a very long period. It opened when the area was basically rural and continued as Hornsby transformed into the residential area it is today.

Working in the store gave Hedley a close view of the passing parade of Hornsby's characters and events. People came in with large orders for farm produce or with smaller requirements for pet ponies or backyard chook pens. Hedley's customers ranged from ordinary working people to judges and even a New South Wales Premier who used to arrive in shorts and a T-shirt. He saw and knew the lot. He spent his whole life at Hornsby and his wife, Del, was also born there. They met dancing at the old Pacific Cabaret. Del and Hedley worked together in the produce store and became lifelong partners in every sense of the word.

When they retired, Hedley and Del developed a dream: It was to produce a book telling the story of the Somervilles and the produce store. Inevitably, it went further and included other information about Hornsby and its surrounding districts. Hedley and Del slowly built a magnificent collection of local photographs—some gathered from archives, some from local friends and some through their own photographic efforts. Hedley wrote his book and it came into being in 2002. It is a superb record of early Hornsby that immediately became compulsive reading for a generation of his contemporaries. Cupboards were raided, memories consulted and additional information poured in. Soon, enough material had been amassed for a second book, which was published by Del and Hedley in 2006. It too was a marvellous success.

Hedley gave the books the titles of *A Taste of Ginger* and *A Bit More Ginger*. The titles reveal another unique aspect of Hedley's work. His father, Charles Somerville, was a boyhood friend of Jimmy Bancks, the creator of the comic, *Ginger Meggs*. Charles was a red-haired boy, prone to mischievous adventures, and it is widely recognised in Hornsby that the comic strip character was based on Hedley's father. Hedley has recognised that he and his siblings were not allowed to read the comic until their father had checked it. Hedley's father, Ginger Meggs, grew up to not only manage the produce store but also to become the longest serving councillor in the shire of Hornsby. This provided Hedley with firsthand knowledge of most of our civic leaders. Always positive in his recollections, Hedley attended a huge number of Hornsby events and disasters, including the fire in 1957, which almost destroyed the Hornsby township. Hedley cared for his father in old age and was rightly very proud of him. Hedley wrote in his second book a quote that summarised his attitude to life:

Don't let the past dictate who you are, but make sure it remains part of who you become.

In a manner afforded to few people, Hedley has left a legacy of contribution to the Hornsby community that many would like to emulate but few will ever be able to achieve. Tom Richmond has given me a copy of a poem that he wrote for the launching of *A Bit More Ginger*. Perhaps it captures something of the Hedley Somerville dream:

Jump on board the billycart, then, and
Take a trip down Nanny Goat Hill,
Through the mists of childhood pleasures—
Then enjoyed, remembered still.

Past the glow of simmering bonfires

Cracker nights and Empire Day,
Round the Sun Rocks, down the Valley,
Adults working, kids at play.

Smoke from steam trains as we pass them
Shunting in the Hornsby Yard—
See the roadworks now in progress
Smell the surface freshly tarred.

Past McCloy's—and there's the circus
Elephants and clowns and rings;
Front stall seats in Osborne's theatre,
Fixing bikes at Harry King's.

Look, they've got the Sunday papers,
Ginger Meggs and Gladsome Glad!
Past the hallowed Council Chambers,
Storey, James and Hedley's Dad.

Ride the billycart round old Hornsby,
Where it goes we cannot tell,
Bucketloads of pure nostalgia—
Thank you Hedley. Thank you Del!

Hedley Somerville has made a remarkable contribution to our community. His legacy will live on through all those who had the privilege to meet him. He has helped build Hornsby into the town and shire that we know and love today. Although he is gone, he is certainly not forgotten. I pay my respects and pass on my sincere condolences to Del and the entire Somerville family. Hedley will certainly not be forgotten.

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:28): I speak on a matter deeply felt in the Sydney electorate—poverty and inequality—and I thank Kyra Parry-Williams for her work in my office on this matter and as a social work intern. Current poverty data paints a bleak picture and, on behalf of the Sydney electorate, I call for action to address the growing inequalities that leave people stuck in entrenched intergenerational poverty. The recent Anti-Poverty Week reminds us that we need to address the causes and consequences of poverty. A report by the Australian Council of Social Service and University of New South Wales, entitled "Inequality in Australia 2018", highlights a massive gap in wealth and income between the highest and lowest income earners.

The top 1 per cent of earners takes home as much in a fortnight as the lowest 5 per cent of earners do in a year. This divide will increase if we do not reform policies and budgets. The data shows that those worst off rely on low social security payments like Newstart or pensions. Persistent disadvantage is prevalent among Indigenous Australians, some migrants and those with chronic health conditions or disability. One third of sole parents and one in six children live in poverty. Sydney's unemployment rate increased between 2011 and 2016, and there are fewer vacant jobs than there are long-term unemployed. Newstart payments have been frozen since 1994 and those relying on this income have just \$39 a day to cover rent, food and all living costs.

Child poverty has increased and Indigenous disadvantage continues to grow. Older people increasingly face unemployment, homelessness and poverty, and many young people are locked out of housing. Anglicare's 2018 Rental Affordability Snapshot shows a single person on Newstart or Youth Allowance cannot possibly afford rent in the Sydney private market. The analysis of the Australian National University for Australian Council of Social Service and the Brotherhood of St Laurence shows lowest income households spend more than 10 per cent of their incomes on energy while better off households spend less than 1.5 per cent, and the gap has widened since 2008. The "Foodbank Hunger Report 2018" found that four million Australians have not been able to afford food or have run out of food in the past year.

People in these situations face entrenched poverty and inequality. It takes heroic efforts to overcome these dire conditions. Behind the statistics are real people who are excluded from activities and opportunities that the rest of us take for granted. It is not surprising that disaffected groups and individuals turn against others, do not trust official bodies and give up hope. Inequality, disadvantage and poverty limit people's ability to reach their potential and contribute to our community and economy. This goes beyond empty wallets to affect physical and mental health, education, employment and quality of life. Wider economic impacts arise through crisis and health care, welfare services, courts and prisons, and through our failure to develop and prosper as a community.

We pride ourselves on being egalitarian, but dispossession, unfair treatment and deliberate policy decisions—particularly on tax, housing, employment and income support—have caused inequality and injustice. Australia is one of the wealthiest countries in the world and has had more than 20 years of economic growth. New South Wales has had budget windfalls and huge income from the sale of public assets. Yet poverty is

increasing. Poverty can land on any family or individual and a civil society provides a strong safety net that supports those going through tough times.

I call on the Government to commit to reducing poverty by half by 2030, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Government must invest in social and affordable housing and in supported accommodation for people with complex needs. All children should have access to early childhood education. Our schools must be up to date and teachers skilled and paid properly. We need adequate health programs for people with mental illness and substance use issues to remain part of our community, with jobs, families and homes. A raft of reforms is vital to redress Indigenous disadvantage, with community control to ensure reforms are effective.

While income payments are a Commonwealth responsibility, the New South Wales Government must advocate for social security reform and increase Newstart and sole parent payments, with help for sole parents transitioning into work and childcare subsidies that do not exclude disadvantaged families. We must invest in TAFE vocational and second-chance education. While employment is also a federal responsibility, the Government should advocate for livable minimum wages and real job programs. Jobs for NSW could target those being left behind by new industries and technology and the Government could fund job training and employment creation to build infrastructure and communities. Full equality and zero poverty may not be achievable, but we can do much better.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE SCHOOL STAFF

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:33): I thank, praise and congratulate the staff at schools across the Gosford electorate on another splendid year of education on the coast. I offer my sincere gratitude to the 11 high schools and 19 primary schools in the Gosford electorate for all the work that is done in the classroom and connected to the curriculum, as well as the incredible over-and-above work done to improve the education and lives of students on the Central Coast.

I would love to have the time to deliver an individual program success story for every school, because I know there are hundreds, and I was honoured to have been invited to visit the majority of schools in the electorate this year. I will share a few highlights, with no disrespect to any of the great schools that will not receive a mention this evening. Perhaps the greatest highlight was a day spent with shadow Minister for Education and the member for Rockdale touring some of the schools where the kids have special needs and discussing alternatives and opportunities.

At Glenvale School we saw young teachers running diverse programs, and we talked about possible alternate funding models and the challenges of maintenance. It was great to see what is being achieved there. At Gosford East Public School we visited a fantastic support unit with a great playground and then in the afternoon we saw a great World Cup Day, where students with and without disabilities were fully integrated, playing games from countries across the world. We finished that evening at Henry Kendall High School, where Principal Andrew Backhouse led us with stories of success about diverse opportunities and interesting new models of the curriculum operated in the very vibrant Henry Kendall High School.

I had the great pleasure of visiting a number of schools to talk about the Invictus Games, as Temporary Speaker Crouch knows. Kariong Public School is a great primary school that also delivered piles of presents for charity during the year. Gosford Public School is the band champion of New South Wales yet again with a great program run by Esther See. Kulnura Public School celebrated its ninetieth anniversary with tree plantings participated in by four generations of community members. When I rang to organise my visit to Peats Ridge Public School there were 24 students. On the day I visited they had had an extra enrolment so there were 25 students in the house who were there with their leaders from Kariong Mountains High School, which got Invictus tickets and took the whole school to cheer on our fantastic Luke Hill in the swimming.

Umina Beach Public School, the closest school to the beach in New South Wales, held a kindy pamper day at which lucky parents were pampered by their kindergarten kids. Ettalong Public School celebrated World Tree Day. It has a great new bush tucker garden in its community, planted and shared with the aunts from Mingaletta. It was great to have a look around Point Clare Public School's very new open plan classrooms. It has three classrooms in one space, and an amazing vibe of colour and enthusiasm from the teachers about that new space.

I also express special thanks to the staff at Girrakool Education and Training Unit. This year I had the pleasure of visiting its Harmony Day celebrations and had a great time sampling a bit of food the students were preparing. I joined the swearing in of captains at Kariong Mountains High School at which there was a spectacular performance by students in the Certificate III in Music Production at Grove Studios. I had the pleasure of visiting

St Edward's College as part of the Lions Science and Engineering Challenge in which schools throughout the coast were invited to solve all sorts of complex problems.

It was also great finishing last year with a chillax day at North Gosford Learning Centre and sharing with the students as they showed their highlights video of what had gone on in the year. I also congratulate both campuses of Brisbane Water Secondary College for another great year. It was great to attend its Top Blokes graduation and discuss with the young students what they had learned. That took place a week after the Defqon.1 dance party, so I send a thumbs up to Top Blokes and Brisbane Water Secondary College. I also congratulate the school on their stars barbecue at which more than 200 parents joined in to celebrate their students' successes.

Woy Woy Public School put on a fantastic International Day of People with Disability, with Puff the Magic Dragon flying around the school. I wish all the students—and their parents—who are completing the Higher School Certificate exams all the very best for this year and good luck in the future no matter what it brings. There are challenges and hiccups along the way but enjoy it. To do true justice to the work done by teachers in the Gosford electorate, let alone in schools across New South Wales, would take a whole session of Parliament. By sharing just a few examples of that work I thank the teachers, school leaders, and administrative and support staff. Even though they are quite far off, I wish them enjoyable holidays for a break, recovery and rejuvenation. I congratulate and thank them for a fabulous 2018.

BANKSTOWN CBD PLANNING PROPOSAL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:38): Today I draw the attention of the House to the planning proposal for the lands identified as 83-99 Stacey Street, Bankstown, and 62 The Mall, Bankstown, passed at the recent Canterbury Bankstown council meeting. Sadly, the proposal is another step towards rampant overdevelopment of the Bankstown central business district [CBD] without planning for good economic growth, employment opportunities or affording Bankstown the adequate infrastructure and support that it will require well into the future. In 2015 the Bankstown council was approached by property group Fioson Pty Ltd—the new owners of the Compass Centre in Bankstown—to discuss the option of buying the old Bankstown Library site. Originally it was hoped that the site would be a community centre, and potentially a museum. The council at the time decided instead on a planning proposal that would see the library sold off in exchange for office space in the new building and a few parking spots.

In November 2015 it was recommended that the council assess and submit a planning proposal to the Department of Planning and Environment. The proposal outlined intentions to increase the maximum building height above the existing height restriction, from 41 metres to 62 metres, with the north-east corner restricted to 53 metres in height. The general manager was delegated authority to prepare a draft voluntary planning agreement. At the council's ordinary meeting of December 2015, the proponent sought an increase of an additional 10 metres. I note that three councillors objected to that: councillors Downey, Kuskoff and Gollidge.

As many members will know, in May 2016 the Bankstown council was dismissed by the Baird Government and an administrator was appointed. On 22 January the Gateway process was begun. It appears that during 2016 and 2017 there were several meetings and more and more amendments to the planning proposal. At some stage, the proposed height was increased to 83 metres. That is a jump from 41 metres to 83 metres in the Bankstown CBD. The Gateway Determination was amended several times: first, on 22 January 2016; again on 9 December 2016; again on 7 November 2017; and then again on 21 September 2018. It is an interesting way to undertake planning.

At the last council meeting, the planning proposal was finally adopted. It was brought to the attention of the public on the Friday by way of the council business paper being put on the internet. By Tuesday, it had been adopted by the vast majority of the councillors. The motion was moved by Liberal councillor Charlie Ishac, seconded by Labor councillor Clare Raffan and supported by Mayor Khal Asfour and councillors Bilal El-Hayek, Mohammad Huda, Philip Madirazza, Nadia Saleh, Glen Waud and Mohammad Zaman. I acknowledge the four councillors who opposed this overdevelopment: Linda Downey, Rachelle Harika, Alex Kuskoff and Steve Tuntevski.

I ask the Minister to take a serious look at this spot rezoning application when it reaches him. If I were the Minister for Planning, I would not support it. This is a skyscraper delivered via the back door and most of our community are none the wiser that their council has passed this development despite strong community opposition to overdevelopment. It is a breach of trust, and residents are well within their rights to be angry. New South Wales Labor has just had a great victory with the community in knocking over the Sydenham to Bankstown massive rezoning priority precinct plan, and I do not want the State Government to allow the same sort of overdevelopment through the back door.

I will formally write to the Minister, but I have already put some questions on notice in relation to the number of alterations that were made to the Gateway Determination and why a new Gateway Determination was not issued regarding the increase in the building height. I ask the Minister to confirm that all probity concerns regarding the planning proposal have been addressed and that the Department of Planning is monitoring adequately all proposals submitted by Canterbury-Bankstown Council. I also ask the Minister to assure the community that the council has sought to achieve valuations on each occasion that the applicant sought to have the height increased for the identified lands. This is an horrific start to planning our city, and I ask the Minister to intervene. I would like to be confident that the Minister is assessing this application carefully. This decision needs to be reviewed and investigated thoroughly.

TRIBUTE TO ALLANAH FALAPPI

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:43): I pay tribute to a truly remarkable woman, Mrs Allannah Falappi, who dedicated her life to her friends, family and community and towards supporting those who were truly in need. Allannah was an incredibly dedicated teacher at William Stimson Public School, where she spent 25 years mentoring and shaping the minds of young students in our local community. In addition to her career as a schoolteacher, Allannah was also an incredibly talented singing teacher who was responsible for nurturing and guiding a plethora of young talent, many of whom who have grown up and made it quite big in the Australian music industry.

I had the privilege of meeting Allannah for the first time seven years ago when she became the chairperson of the Fairfield Relay for Life. Allannah put in a tremendous amount of time and energy making the Fairfield relay the tremendous success it is today. Throughout her short tenure with Relay for Life, Allannah helped raise approximately half a million dollars for the Cancer Council and garner a lot of support from local businesses and community groups alike. Allannah had her own personal battles with cancer for the longest time, but she never let it dampen her spirit or allowed it to slow her down. Any time I saw Allannah, she was always a bundle of joy, filled with enthusiasm and happiness.

Allannah was always looking to help and support others in need. Allannah was super committed, and devoted countless hours to organising and hosting a range of great community events, which focused on inclusivity and welcoming everyone with open arms. Allannah's happy-go-lucky attitude came equipped with the brightest smile I ever have seen as she always strived to brighten the days of everybody she met. As one of the most humble individuals I have ever met, Allannah truly had her roots planted in our local community, and she was not afraid to dig in and help get things done. No job was too big or too difficult when it came to those who needed some help.

Some people have described Allannah as a one-in-a-million person, who was constantly giving to the community and supporting others. I would lean more towards one in a billion, as I am well aware of the tremendous impact she has had on so many lives. Allannah was always happy to share her family story and detail the challenges and hardships she had faced along the way without sugar-coating any of it. This unique insight and no-holds-barred way of opening up to others helped to inspire those who needed it most and instilled strength in those who were struggling to overcome their challenges. I believe we all need to take a leaf out of Allannah's book in order to find strength and courage when all hope is lost. Even in the most difficult and trying times, we can always find a way to embrace the positives, as Allannah did with her many years of service to her local community.

The news of Allannah's passing has spread far and wide, as the community mourns an amazing woman who was larger than life itself and made such a lasting impact on so many lives. Our community is poorer for her passing. However, she has left behind a lasting legacy, not only in her professional career but also in each and every one of us she touched and inspired throughout the years. Even in the most difficult times there is hope. Allannah will always be a testament to that. On behalf of every member of this House and the greater Fairfield community, I extend my heartfelt condolences to Allannah's husband, Lee, and their two daughters, Liana and Sarah. Vale, Allannah Falappi. Her legacy will live on through us all.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:49 until
Tuesday 13 November 2018 at 12:00.**