



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 8 May 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 8 May 2019

The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea) took the chair at 10:00.

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Motions

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I advise members that this speaker cannot be heard outside the Chamber, which means that anyone who is watching the parliamentary coverage cannot hear contributions made from this microphone. I move:

That the business of the House be interrupted:

- (1) On Wednesday 8 May 2019 at:
 - (a) 11.30 a.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Dubbo, Coffs Harbour and Murray; and
 - (b) 5.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Coogee and Auburn.
- (2) On Thursday 9 May 2019 at:
 - (a) 11.30 a.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Lismore; and
 - (b) 4.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Albury.
- (3) On Tuesday 28 May 2019 at 4.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Wollondilly, Camden and East Hills.
- (4) On Wednesday 29 May 2019 at:
 - (a) 11.30 a.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Barwon; and
 - (b) 4.30 p.m. to permit the presentation of inaugural speeches by the members for Goulburn and Hawkesbury.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit consideration of the Address-in-Reply during the period in the routine of business set aside for consideration of government business.

Motion agreed to.

Governor

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Debate resumed from 7 May 2019.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (10:14): I congratulate the member for Davidson on his election as Speaker in this place. As the representative of a neighbouring electorate, it is a privilege and an honour to see him elected and I wish him all the best in the role. It is my pleasure to contribute to the fine words of the member for Oatley in his address-in-reply to the speech made yesterday by Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Margaret Beazley, AO, QC, at the opening of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales. I also congratulate the newly appointed Assistant Speaker. I thank Her Excellency for her speech and express loyalty to Australia and to the people of New South Wales. We will faithfully carry out the important duties entrusted to us by the people of New South Wales and, in my circumstance, the people of the best electorate in New South Wales—Manly.

Her Excellency remarked that we "have the privilege of representing the people of this great State in this, the oldest Parliament in Australia." I believe there is no greater privilege than representing one's community,

making a positive and real improvement to the lives of our communities, as Her Excellency pointed out, and doing everything we can to ensure that we lead our communities with integrity and passion. I am grateful to the electors for putting their faith in me and for allowing me to serve them for another four years. The past two years in this place have gone incredibly quickly but they have been two years of hard work and delivery for my community—the delivery of projects both big and small and projects of infrastructure while also ensuring that we care for the vulnerable and the voiceless in our community.

Her Excellency remarked that the agenda designed to secure the future of New South Wales will deliver a strong economy, quality jobs and security for the workers of today and tomorrow, and will provide the highest quality education no matter where a person lives or what their circumstance may be. It will create well-connected communities and quality local environments. It will make government work better for people by putting the customer at the centre of everything government does. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, it will break the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage by fixing problems that for too long have been in the too-hard basket. The Governor remarked, "The Government has made clear that it is not here to avoid the toughest problems or simply to mark time." I echo those sentiments today. The leadership of the Liberal-Nationals Coalition in New South Wales was a compelling reason for the outcome of the election. I congratulate the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, the Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet, and the Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, as we look forward to the next term. I give my best wishes to the rest of the ministry of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales as they deliver an inspired and meaningful agenda in the coming years.

The past few years of government provide a good view of what the future performance will look like: commitments made and commitments delivered. There is good reason to look at Manly and the northern beaches, whether in health care, public transport or education, as Manly has benefited from the strong economic management of this Government—and appropriately so. Over this four-year term I will continue to prosecute the argument for continued investment in Manly to ensure that we receive our fair share, as should all communities across New South Wales. Delivering a strong economy has allowed this State to make real and meaningful investment in hospitals and public health care, including on the northern beaches.

Last October the Premier and the Minister for Health and Medical Research opened the new Northern Beaches Hospital. This hospital services the people of the northern beaches alongside community health centres in Mona Vale, Brookvale and Seaforth. As at 1 May this year, there have been 29,860 emergency department presentations, nearly 18,000 outpatients treated, nearly 8,000 theatre cases, more than 20,000 admissions and more than 900 babies born—including my son, Ted. I am proud to say that Ted was one of the first babies registered to be born at Northern Beaches Hospital—in fact, he was baby number two in the registration system. I do not know who baby number one is. Never before have we seen a higher level of care provided on the northern beaches: a state-of-the-art hospital facility to provide services that neither Manly Hospital nor Mona Vale Hospital could deliver. When the hospital is fully operational it will provide nearly 500 beds compared with the combined total of 297 beds previously available at Mona Vale and Manly hospitals.

When we speak of the importance of a strong economy, it is not an end in itself but a means to an end, delivering the vital services—including health care—that the people of New South Wales not only need but also deserve. Whilst we opened the new Northern Beaches Hospital late last year, in this next term of Government I look forward to fulfilling my commitment to build Australia's first hospice for young adults on the Manly Hospital site. The site has a long and proud history in health care on the northern beaches in spite of its ageing infrastructure and because of the commitment of its doctors, nurses, ancillary staff and wonderful volunteers. This Government commenced an evidence-based needs analysis to explore whether a range of health service opportunities can be accommodated on the old hospital site in the future. One of those is the provision of a hospice for adolescents and young adults, which will take pride of place at North Head. Late last week I was privileged to visit Bear Cottage, which is a stone's throw away from the Manly Hospital site, to recognise the Federal Government's \$5 million contribution towards the construction of the new hospice. That is coupled with \$2 million recurrent funding that the New South Wales Government will provide for the ongoing operating costs of the facility.

I cannot overstate the importance of the project in providing dignity to young people with life-limiting illnesses. Currently, there is nowhere in Australia that young people can receive intensive care and respite with their family and carers. The stark reality is that many young people will end up in a nursing home. But this Government will change that. Premier Berejiklian, health Minister Brad Hazzard, Federal Member for Warringah Tony Abbott, and former Premier Baird joined local resident Kay Van Norton, who is a truly remarkable Manly resident and philanthropist. Kay has made a personal donation of \$5 million towards the construction of the hospice—an incredible example of how governments can come together with philanthropists to create something special that will benefit not only the people of Manly, but also all people of New South Wales. Perhaps more importantly, Kay's commitment to this project is matched only by that of the Manly community to get the

facility—which will service the entire State—built. That, in many respects, is Manly's gift to New South Wales. Her Excellency remarked:

Over the last eight years, through a combination of hard work, fiscal responsibility and strategic investment, New South Wales has rebuilt its economy.

That is not an end in itself, but a means to provide important services such as the Northern Beaches Hospital and the adolescent and young adult hospice. As we saw throughout the last term, this Government has addressed the issues, including our local roads and public transport, that for so many years were placed in the too-hard basket. Yet, with a passionate Minister such as Andrew Constance—whom I congratulate on his new appointment as Leader of the House—and the excellent team within Transport for NSW, we are making dramatic improvements to public transport not only on the northern beaches but also across New South Wales. The B-Line is one example. In only its first year of operation the B-Line made nearly six million passenger trips, which is greater than the population of Greater Sydney. The turn-up-and-go service, with a customer satisfaction rating of more than 90 per cent, has revolutionised public transport on the northern beaches.

For those not aware of what the B-Line is, it is a fine example of road-based public transport with big, yellow double-decker buses running every five minutes during peak times in the peak direction, and every 10 minutes at other times of the day. It is the centrepiece of a rejuvenated northern beaches bus network, which has seen patronage across the entire northern beaches increase by around 11 per cent in its first 12 months of operation, demonstrating that good public transport will entice commuters and encourage increased usage. Nearly 4,500 extra weekly services have been added to the network, including 2,000 B-Line services and around 1,000 new weekly services, to look after the Northern Beaches Hospital and the Frenchs Forest area. New commuter carparks at Manly Vale—which, with its green wall, is particularly impressive—Brookvale, Dee Why, Narrabeen, Warriewood and Mona Vale demonstrate what a Government with a strong agenda and the interest of the people at its core can do.

New bus lanes, tidal flow systems and indented bus bays, alongside the B-Line, have helped reduce the journey time between Manly Vale and Wynyard by around nine minutes—an incredible result that has, for the first time in decades, improved the commute from my electorate to the CBD and Greater Sydney. And the investment does not end there: Alongside my northern beaches colleagues, I made the commitment during the election to deliver a rapid bus transit service between Dee Why and Chatswood, with a bus every 10 minutes. I look forward to working closely with the Minister for Transport and Roads, the Hon. Andrew Constance, and the Northern Beaches Council to see this vital east-west link become a reality.

The Western Harbour Tunnel & Beaches Link program of works and the project itself are much anticipated. The beaches link component of the two tunnels will bypass 19 sets of traffic lights, return local streets in my electorate of Manly to local traffic and turbocharge public transport with new connections to the Sydney Metro—Australia's largest public transport project, which is set to open in just a matter of weeks. The beaches link will enable direct and reliable public transport between the northern beaches and North Sydney, as well as south of the harbour—the like of which we have never before experienced in Manly and all along the northern beaches. It will free up Military and Spit roads by providing more reliable bus services through Mosman, Cremorne and Neutral Bay and ease pressure on Warringah Road for services through Frenchs Forest, Forestville and Roseville Bridge.

Her Excellency remarked that the Government has a strong record in education investment, giving all children in New South Wales the best possible start in life. This Government has a proud record of investment in education, with a record \$6.5 billion and more than 190 new or upgraded schools. Using figures in the billions sounds mightily impressive, and yet it is even more impressive to see the funding as a finished project. I am proud to report that the new school at Manly Vale was opened on day one, term one, of this year. Let there be no doubt: The improved classrooms, library and school hall—which can finally fit all the students in it—have made a remarkable difference to the willingness and ability of the young people of Manly Vale to learn and to embrace the opportunities provided to them at school. Parents and teachers offered their thanks and appreciation to the school infrastructure team and to the then education Minister, Rob Stokes, for their commitment to the project. It has made, and will make, a positive difference to the lives of thousands of young people.

I look forward to continuing the record investment in local schools and teachers, including the \$41 million upgrade of the Curl Curl North Public School, which is taking place as I speak. This is in addition to delivering upgrades to Manly West and Manly Village public schools. One of the single most important policies we announced during the election campaign I believe was the commitment to provide a counsellor or psychologist for every public high school in New South Wales. The issue of mental health does not discriminate; it is blind to postcode and it does not care about your background or your station in life. It would be easy to assume that the idyllic surrounds and laid-back vibe of the northern beaches means that we are insulated from the curse of mental health issues. However, for a variety of complex reasons, we have a disproportionately high level of youth suicide

and mental health challenges. So it is with great hope and optimism that this policy is rolled out—and the sooner the better. All of this is possible only from a government that has the interests of the people of New South Wales at heart and is in a sound budgetary position to deliver.

I thank the Premier, Minister Kean and Minister Sidoti, who I acknowledge is in the Chamber, for giving me the opportunity to support them in my new role as Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Veterans—which has a special place in my heart. I look forward to working closely with Ministers Kean and Sidoti on these important areas of government and supporting them as we pursue a bold agenda that—again, reflecting Her Excellency's words—will address issues that have been placed in the too-hard basket for too long.

If I may, I would like to pass on my best wishes to the new members of this place, in particular my colleagues the member for Albury, Justin Clancy; the member for Camden, Peter Sidgreaves; the member for Coffs Harbour, Gurmeh Singh; the member for Dubbo, Dugald Saunders; the member for East Hills, Wendy Lindsay; the member for Goulburn, Wendy Tuckerman; the member for Hawkesbury, Robyn Preston; and the member for Wollondilly, Nathaniel Smith, who I acknowledge is in the Chamber. Her Excellency encouraged us to "always act with compassion and integrity, and be guided by respect for each other and the community [we] work for." Far be it from me to be giving advice, but all I can say is do not be late to the Chamber and life is much easier in here. Also, the New South Wales parliamentary chocolate in the cafeteria is addictive, so be careful!

In conclusion, I again express the sincere thanks of this House to Her Excellency for her address yesterday when opening the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales. It is fitting that yesterday the Minister for Women, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, announced a new grant program to promote women's empowerment. The program seeks to support women across the State to participate and achieve in a range of areas and works to remove disadvantage that women unfortunately still face. It was wonderful seeing our State's first elected female Premier present to our new Governor, who is also a woman. They both represent the aspirations of so many women, and men, across this great State.

I offer my sincerest congratulations to all elected members. I know we will all represent our electorates to the best of our ability. Perhaps the next four years will present an opportunity for members in this place to inspire people to get involved in public service, to get involved in their local communities and to use the foundations of what has already been a good government to become an even greater one and continue the transformation of this State for the better. I thank the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:29): It gives me great pleasure to speak in debate on the address-in-reply to the Governor's Speech. Mr Speaker, I also formally congratulate you on your election as Speaker. The Speaker and I were both elected as members of Parliament in 2007 and we have worked together on several committees. I am confident he will do a good job in performing the role of Speaker. Yesterday Governor Margaret Beazley, AO, QC, formally opened the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales. Our new Governor was born at Hurstville and grew up in its surrounding suburbs—I assume in the electorate of the member for Oatley. She has had a distinguished judicial career, including having been a judicial member of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, a District Court acting judge and an assistant commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and having served on the Australian Executive of Amnesty International. We are very fortunate to have her as our new Governor. In the past some very distinguished people have served in the role and I am confident she will uphold that great tradition.

The Governor's Speech set out the agenda the Government has committed to over the next four years. But Opposition members also have a job to do on behalf of their constituents. I am grateful to the people of Wyong for not only returning me as the local member but also returning me with an increased majority. They have come on board and have supported the issues I have been fighting for over the eight years that I have been a member of this place. I was interested to hear the Governor speak about the Government's intention to follow through on its election commitments, including to the electorate of Wyong. Over the next four years it will be my role to ensure that the Government delivers on those commitments to my constituents. I will talk more about the importance of those commitments shortly.

As the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs I was very pleased to hear of the renewed commitment to the First Peoples of this State to acknowledge their needs and to improve consultation, in particular, around culture and heritage. Consultation took place in the last Parliament but, unfortunately, members did not debate and pass legislation on culture and heritage. I acknowledge the great work done by Ms Leslie Williams and the Hon. Sarah Mitchell to introduce significant legislation to protect Aboriginal languages. That legislation had bipartisan support. It was an indication of the goodwill of the whole Parliament to further the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio in this State. I was very pleased with the transfer of Aboriginal Affairs NSW to the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Opposition also had committed to transferring Aboriginal Affairs NSW if we were elected. It is important that resourcing and policy are at the forefront of government thinking.

I am hopeful that the Government will take the next step of engaging in meaningful consultation and dialogue with Aboriginal people in this State and move towards a treaty-making process. That is a very important commitment. At the State level it is more about the making of agreements, particularly around service delivery. We also need a dedicated Aboriginal body to advise the Government at the highest level, that is, the Premier. I hold great hope for that and for the Government continuing to deliver on those issues. The Opposition will be pushing for those projects on behalf of not only the constituents in our electorates but also the people of New South Wales.

As the shadow Minister for Regional Development I am pleased about the Parkes Special Activation Precinct. Very early in the last term of government, I went to Parkes to talk to the mayors of both Orange and Parkes about the Inland Rail project. The Government has come on board and is looking to deliver for that area. The project has great economic potential for the western and north-west parts of New South Wales and the Riverina and will grow our regional economy. An issue I have raised in meetings held around the State to discuss regional development is that the solution to Sydney's congestion problems lies in decentralisation and the movement of people to regional centres. We can continue to build roads and we can continue to build rail but they will remain congested if people keep locating to the same places. Our regional cities have great potential and offer a great lifestyle. The location of jobs and services to those areas will ensure the distribution of wealth across New South Wales.

Over the past four years members talked a lot about the two-speed economy: the economy in the city and the economy in regional and rural New South Wales. There has been great disparity in economic development and in unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. Throughout this term of government, the Opposition will hold the Government to account on the commitments it has made. We will make sure that our regional brothers and sisters—and I am from a regional area—are looked after and are part of the Government's main priorities. We will make sure that the old adage that New South Wales governments only look after Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong no longer applies.

Significant projects are needed in the Wyong electorate. To paint the picture for the House, the Wyong electorate is a greenfield growth area. A lot of land is being designated for housing and industry and areas are undergoing rezoning and building processes. In the past few weeks I was very pleased to turn the first sod on a housing development in the Warnervale town centre. This project has been on the books for more than 10 years. Now that the housing development has finally started in that precinct, we have the opportunity to provide the services that are needed. For a long time there has been a proposal to either improve the existing railway station at Warnervale or build a new north Warnervale railway station. That is a high priority on my agenda because Warnervale is reliant on commuter services. We cannot build houses without providing the services to go with them. As well as development in that precinct, 4,000 new houses have been built over the past four years and four new estates have been designated that will deliver between 2,000 and 3,000 more homes.

The Government has committed to a new primary school at Warnervale, which is good news. However, it made that commitment three budgets ago, and so far there has been no progress. There has been a lot of talk—even about the name of the school—but we have not seen much else. In the meantime the local school in Warnervale has six demountables. Warnervale Public School opened in 2008, not long after I became the member for Wyong. There are now six demountables on the school grounds as a result of a boom in the local population. Wadalba Community School, which runs from kindergarten to year 12, is also suffering from overcrowding. During the election campaign one of the initiatives the Opposition put forward to grow secondary education in the area was the establishment of a senior campus at Wadalba Community School. The school would then have greater capacity in terms of student numbers and subject offerings.

Gorokan High School has two selective streams that were introduced between 2007 and 2011, and they are going very well. Wyong Technology High School has selective streams for technology. Wadalba, the other big school in the electorate, now has an opportunity—if the Government is serious about improving secondary education in the area—to develop a senior campus, which will offer more diversity. Variety is important so that students across the Wyong electorate have pathway options, including very strong vocational education and training pathways.

Another project underway is the upgrade of Wyong Hospital. In the Chamber behind me are two Central Coast members: the member for The Entrance and the member for Swansea. They know the fight put up by the community to stop privatisation of the operation of Wyong Hospital. Our community had never come together more than in its opposition to the proposal. Recently a woman in my electorate who works at Wyong Hospital said that the way the Labor member stood up for the community to ensure that the operation of our hospital remained 100 per cent public was a vote changer for her. The proposed privatisation of the hospital was a big issue. As the results of the recent State election show, my colleagues and I were returned with increased margins because we understand what is important to our community.

Mr John Sidoti: By how many?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My margin increased by nearly 3½ per cent and for the member for The Entrance it was 5½ per cent. I am up to 12.4 per cent now. The Government is out of touch with the people of the Central Coast. It did not realise that issues such as the operation of Wyong Hospital unify communities across a whole range of areas. Currently we are fighting against the introduction of parking fees at the hospital. Because of the poor public transport, people generally have to drive to Wyong Hospital. In a low socio-economic area it is unfair to introduce parking fees—a tax on sick people—as proposed under the State policy. Over the past few weeks Labor has been running a campaign opposing the introduction of parking fees at Wyong Hospital. We recognise the difficulty for our community to pay those fees.

Recently I received an email from a lady stating that she had stopped visiting a patient at Gosford Hospital because she could not afford to park her car at the hospital. That shows how out of touch this Government is. In its privatisation and user-pays policies, the Government does not recognise people's capacity to pay. We will fight that campaign because we love our local hospital and we love the hospital staff. In relation to redevelopment, unfortunately in the State budget, when money was being thrown at hospitals everywhere, Wyong did not receive an increase in funding. That means that Wyong Hospital has to consider cutting back on its original plans. Our massively growing community needs more services, yet proposals put forward by the Government will reduce the services offered by the hospital. I find that amazing. [*Extension of time*]

I acknowledge the enthusiasm of the House to hear more about the wonderful electorate of Wyong. I note that the member for Gosford has just entered the Chamber. The whole Central Coast team is now present. One proposal that is currently under consideration relates to a radiotherapy unit at the hospital, which has 10 bays. A new shell for a magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] machine is proposed for the area, but there is no MRI machine. The Federal Labor member for Dobell, Emma McBride, has indicated that if Labor is successful at the upcoming Federal election it will commit a fully funded Medicare licence for an MRI machine. However, the State Government has to supply the machine, which would only cost between \$1 million and \$3 million. An MRI machine at the hospital would represent a saving because currently patients are transported from the hospital to a local private provider for the procedure and then transported back to the hospital. Further, the MRI data from the local private provider is supplied on a CD that is not compatible with the hospital system. Staff then have to go through a process of transferring that information. That is not an appropriate way to do things, particularly in a hospital serving such a large population. We need that MRI machine now.

Another issue is that the radiography ward now has 10 beds but with the proposed "you beaut" renovation the number of beds will be reduced to eight. I am not sure how the Government can say it is improving the hospital when it is cutting the number of beds. Also, the width of the doors has had to be reduced, which means that the bariatric beds do not fit into the new bays. The staff have identified these issues, which have occurred because of cost restrictions. Like the Government, the Opposition has committed to spending \$200 million. That funding commitment is great but the work has to be done properly. A ward should not have to be refitted in a couple of years because it is not fit for purpose.

Staff are becoming very frustrated. They believe that the changes are not about the patients or health care but simply about dollars and cents. They are disheartened and they feel they are being ignored. The local members often speak to the hardworking staff—from the cleaners and security guards to the nurses, radiographers and so on—and we know they are proud of their local hospital. They love working at the hospital and they want the very best for the patients. I, and other members, will contact the health Minister, who is a reasonable person. I am sure when he learns what the hospital management is trying to do he will agree with us. I certainly hope so. We will give him the chance to do the right thing and ensure that our hospitals get a quality upgrade.

The last issue I raise is extremely important, that is, the Pacific Highway upgrade through the township of Wyong. The NRMA, in not one, not two, not three, not four, not five but more than six surveys, has identified this stretch of road as the worst on the Central Coast. A few weeks before the State election the Managing Director of Wideline Windows and Doors came to my office. He told me that he had a workshop at North Wyong and another one at the Tuggerah Straight Commercial Centre. He said that it takes his trucks between 45 minutes and 50 minutes to travel the distance between the two workshops, which are 1.2 kilometres apart. That is outrageous. Every day and on the weekend there are traffic jams both ways. I can see the congested traffic from my office and I know how frustrated people have become about this issue. This road upgrade has been planned for 10 years; it has been planned to death.

I can inform members who have road projects proposed in their electorates that more than \$28 million has been spent on planning alone—without a shovel having been lifted. The required property has been purchased. Transport for NSW has stated, probably appropriately, that it does not want to start construction until after the M1 upgrade has been completed. However, it could start building the bridge, moving powerlines and so on. In the election campaign the Opposition committed \$19 million to start that work. If that work were done, it would

probably knock 18 months off the time frame for the project. The work could be started now without blocking the road. I ask the Government to consider including funding in the upcoming budget to allow the works to be brought forward and to give people some hope. I posted a message on Facebook a few days ago and in a couple of hours it attracted nearly 7,000 views and many comments because people are so frustrated. When the Government talks about improving day-to-day customer services, it should consider projects like this, which has been an issue for more than 10 years. The Labor Government delivered the Tuggerah Straight project but work then stopped and nothing has happened since. The economic growth of the Wyong township has been restricted because this 1.4 kilometre project is not happening. It is causing inconvenience; every bus has to go through the station. This one project is holding everything up. I commend the Governor's Speech. The Opposition will be holding the Government to account to honour its commitments.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (10:50): I make a contribution to the debate on the address-in-reply to the Governor's Speech that was given yesterday in the Legislative Council Chamber. I welcome the appointment of the Governor and acknowledge the important role that she will play. The role of Governor is a significant one of service. I acknowledge also the service provided by her immediate predecessor, General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC, (Ret'd). Each of the governors who have served while I have been a member and during the time of members who have been here longer than I have served with distinction and have played an important role in ensuring that the Government directs its efforts in the best interests of the people.

Her Excellency spoke to that theme yesterday when she urged all of us elected to these roles to direct our energy in the spirit of service and in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. I commit to doing that. I know members across the spectrum come to this place with the intent to serve the community to the best of their ability. I acknowledge more generally the role of the constitutional monarchy in Australia and New South Wales. We are enormously blessed in this country. We are one of the most stable, free, prosperous nations on earth, and we have enjoyed this wonderful lifestyle in no small measure due to the system of government we inherited.

This generation did not create that good fortune. We inherited that good fortune from our forebears who laid the foundations. If one attempted to design a democratic model of government one would never think of the Australian version of governors-general and governors in a constitutional monarchy and a federated nation. It would be a hard model to invent. It would not be the first model to come to mind. Yet it has been one of the most extraordinarily successful democratic models in the history of the world. That is a big statement but it is self-evidently true. There are few peoples presently on the earth or in the history of the earth who have enjoyed a better way of life or a more free democratic way of life than we do.

I want to place on record how important that system is for us. The constitutional monarchy is the linchpin of that system. I do not consider myself an ardent monarchist but I am a supporter of our constitutional arrangements because they are good for all Australians and they have allowed us to enjoy such a good quality of life. Yesterday I took the pledge "Under God I swear my loyalty to Australia and the people of New South Wales." I chose that model because I believe the monarchy of itself is not the end but serves the interests of the people of New South Wales. It has been good for us for a long time and can be good for us for a long time into the future. I defend the present system simply because of the benefits it bestows on our people.

I want to thank the people of Riverstone for their continued trust in me. I have had the privilege of representing them for eight years in this place and together we have seen enormous changes in our area. There is much more yet to come that is in the pipeline for the district. Change can sometimes be disruptive and inconvenient; it can cause tensions and difficulties for people. I respect and thank the people of Riverstone for their continued faith in me throughout that process. I am humbled to receive their support yet again so that I can continue to advocate for them in this place and publicly in my role as their local member. All members recognise it is an important role that we are entrusted with. I hope I can live up to representing my electorate in the terms outlined in the Governor's Speech.

I thank the Premier for my appointment as Parliamentary Secretary for Education. I will talk about education later. The Premier is to be acknowledged for and congratulated on her role in delivering good government to New South Wales and in ensuring the success of the Liberal-Nationals Government at the recent election so that the Government can continue to deliver good government. The big-picture story that we were able to take to the people of New South Wales was one of the Government taking real action to address the needs of the community, not being timid, inhibited or constrained by difficulties. There will always be difficulties. The Government has been prepared to take bold decisions to ensure that we have the capacity to deliver for the people.

Governments need capacity before they can obtain the desired results. To make the funds available was an enormous task. The Government collectively has worked towards that task over its eight years in office, not to raise money for the sake of it but to make funds available in order to meet the needs of the community. All members have a great desire to do wonderful things for our districts and to meet their needs. For example, the member for Wyong spoke earlier about the need for a road upgrade through the centre of Wyong to relieve

congestion. We cannot do it without the resources. The hard part is making decisions, following policies and building platforms in order to make the resources available to do everything we wish to do. I commend not only the current Premier and Treasurer but also those who have gone before them during our eight years in office for making the hard decisions that make the bold actions possible.

As I said, I greatly appreciate my appointment as Parliamentary Secretary for Education. Education was my choice and I am pleased that the Premier agreed to my appointment to that portfolio. I wanted to be Parliamentary Secretary for Education because I am passionate about the role that education plays in the lives of people in our community. Education is not just preparation for a job, although that is an intrinsic part of education. Education is preparation for life in every aspect. Education helps to unleash the talent, capacity and potential within people.

Teachers have the privilege of helping children to discover and unlock their potential. I have been fortunate to have had that privilege in a former career. The role of teachers should never be undervalued. Teachers unlock the talent within people and schools provide the means for people to discover and realise their full potential in life and to be able to contribute to, participate in and enjoy life to its fullest. Teaching is a very valuable profession. I want to emphasise the importance of the work of teachers and others in the school community. I also want to talk about the role of parents in education. Parents are the first educators of children. It has been recognised throughout the history of education that parents are the first and primary educators. Schools and teachers work in partnership with parents to bring about the best possible results. The best results are possible only when parents and teachers are on the same team.

The legal profession has long recognised that in many ways teachers stand in what is called in loco parentis, in the place of parents. Teachers have responsibilities that follow from that role, but there is a legal recognition that the parent is the primary educator. That is important in today's world, when experts, academics and practitioners often feel that they know best. In many ways they do know best in their field of expertise, but in a child's life it will always be the parent who knows best. We recognise that in matters of religion and morality—life education, if you like—parents have the final say. That principle is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In article 18, which deals with religious freedom, the covenant states:

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

Enshrined in the covenant is that internationally recognised human right. Australia and nearly every other country are signatories to the covenant. This important principle has been long understood in the Australian context as the bedrock of the partnership between parents and schools. For education to achieve the potential that it has in the lives of students, parents and schools must work together. New South Wales was one of the first jurisdictions to introduce universal compulsory education; it was not the very first jurisdiction to introduce universal compulsory education, but it was a leader. The debates in the latter part of last century in this place spelt out some of the principles on which education would be based.

While there were disputes—I note that there was sectarianism and many arguments about the role of church and state, the role of established churches versus other churches and so on—what has evolved in New South Wales and in Australia generally is a kind of compact between parents and the state about how to run education. This historic compromise includes explicitly recognising the right of parents to ensure religious and moral education in accordance with their convictions. To respect that right, special religious education in New South Wales has been accorded a historic place in the curriculum. [*Extension of time*]

It is also why, in the fullness of time and following political debate, we reached a compromise in Australian education where independent schools receive some government funding in recognition that parents who choose to send their children to non-government schools are also taxpayers. These parents contribute to the common good through their hard work and can expect in return to receive support for their choice, as recognised in the covenant, to educate their children in accordance with their own convictions. It was not easy to reach that historic compromise; there was argy-bargy for decades to come to that point. However, through the latter part of the twentieth century there was harmony in broadly recognising that principle. I am disturbed that to some extent the compromise is unravelling now, when the recognition of the rights of parents to choose a kind of education for their children is being challenged. I hope we do not go back to the bad old days of sectarianism and division, but rather find a new way to restore that compact between parents and school systems.

I turn to my electorate of Riverstone—or should I say the electorate of Riverstone, which has been so good as to entrust me with the role of their representative in this place. I do not consider it "my" electorate, and I try to avoid that terminology because I want to remember the privilege bestowed on me. In the eight years that I have been the member for Riverstone I have been fortunate that a number of projects have been delivered by this Government: upgrades to Richmond Road and Schofields Road; the delivery of a new police station at

Riverstone; the building of the Ponds High School and Riverbank Public School; a massive upgrade of Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital, at a cost of \$700 million; extra buses and new bus routes to serve the growing suburbs in the community of Riverstone; upgrades to Quakers Hill East Public School and Schofields Public School, which continue as I speak; and, opening in 2½ weeks, the massive Sydney Metro Northwest project, which will fundamentally alter the way the north-west of the city works and immensely increase the opportunities available to people living in the region I represent.

We need more schools because continued growth is planned and new areas are being released. This Government is tackling an emerging issue by committing \$40 million for a multi-deck car park at Schofields station. This recognises the extra challenges faced by residents of the growing suburbs on the fringes of Sydney trying to get to work in a timely, reasonable manner. It is difficult for those who have to drive to a station to take a long train journey to work if they cannot park within cooe of the station. We are making that possible. "Cooe" is an interesting word—another measure to address this challenge is the introduction of an on-demand bus service, which is being marketed in my area as Cooee Busways. For this service, a commuter with an app on their phone, similar to the Uber app, can call a bus to the point where they have parked and the bus will get them to the station. This service is being trialled and will go into full operational mode with the opening of the Metro on 26 May.

We are also committed to new road projects. The Denmark Link Road will mean something to the people of my community, as it will be a pressure release for the very congested level crossing on Garfield Road at Riverstone. The new Bandon Road project will happen in the future. It will be an arterial road across the region. We have committed to building a new public hospital at Rouse Hill—a massive step forward. It is a wonderful thing because it is very rare for a government to commit to a brand new greenfield site for a public hospital. Such projects come along only every few decades, so I am delighted that that commitment has been made for the electorate of Riverstone.

We are also focused on building a community. The big projects are absolutely necessary, but we are supporting, through the Community Building Partnerships and other measures, the small things that make communities tick. We know that there is a risk that, with new areas of development, lots of new houses are built in new suburbs with almost no new services. Social and community infrastructure—clubs, churches, schools, private associations and links that tie people together—can take years to form. If we can lend a helping hand to the establishment of the bodies building those networks, it will be an incredibly valuable service and help people feel that they are part of not just a suburb but a community.

We are also building a new fire station for Marston Park and addressing the vexed question of the Garfield Road level crossing. I am on the record in this place saying that I would prefer that the rail line is lifted for a rail-over-road crossing. I believe that would be a much better town-planning outcome for the region, as it would provide opportunities, perhaps in conjunction with duplication of the Richmond line to Riverstone, to improve the service for commuters. Although these things are happening, the challenges for my community and the surrounding areas are those caused by rapid growth. There are challenges around station parking, the need for new buses, school capacity and delivering services to meet the needs of new communities as houses are built. *[Extension of time]*

It is an achievement of this Government that new housing is being provided in the north-west, as it is important that people have an affordable place to live. It is just as important that we provide the services and the infrastructure to support the new residents of these communities so that they have the opportunity to enjoy a good quality of life and the same level of service expected elsewhere in Sydney or anywhere in New South Wales. I commend the Government's plan for the coming term, as outlined by the Governor yesterday. I acknowledge the contribution made by the Premier and the Government team over the past eight years in bringing us to the cusp of achieving really great things for the people of New South Wales, and I look forward to being part of that.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the public gallery school leaders from high schools across New South Wales who are attending the Secondary Schools Leadership Program, conducted by the Parliamentary Education Office. I particularly welcome students from Georges River College Oatley, which is in my electorate.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (11:10): Mr Assistant Speaker, I congratulate you on your elevation to the role—a worthy appointment—and on being the centrepiece of the election results in Oatley. Mr Assistant Speaker, the motion moved by you, in your capacity as the member for Oatley, in reply to Her Excellency's important speech to all members of Parliament in the Legislative Assembly yesterday stated:

To Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley, Officer of the Order of Australia, Queen's Counsel, Governor of the State of New South Wales in the Commonwealth of Australia.

May it please Your Excellency—

We, the members of the State of New South Wales, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our thanks for Your Excellency's Speech, and to express our loyalty to Australia and to the people of New South Wales.

We assure Your Excellency that our earnest consideration will be given to the measures to be submitted to us, and that we will faithfully carry out the important duties entrusted to us by the people of New South Wales.

We join Your Excellency in the hope that our labours may be so directed as to advance the best interests of all sections of the community.

It is an honour and privilege to contribute to the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech. With the indulgence of the Assembly, I will commence my contribution by paying tribute to the new and outgoing Governors of New South Wales. Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley, OA, QC, was sworn in as the thirty-ninth Governor of New South Wales on 1 May 2019 after an illustrious career on the bench, culminating in being the first woman to service as President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal from March 2013 until earlier this year. Her Excellency replaces His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC, FTSE, Governor-General Designate of Australia, who served this State so well as Governor from October 2014 to this month and will be sworn in as the Governor-General on 28 June 2019. On behalf of all members of this Chamber I express my very best wishes to Their Excellencies as they continue their distinguished careers in the service of this great State and the Commonwealth.

It is also an honour and privilege to be re-elected as the member for Seven Hills, a role which I do not take for granted. I was born and raised in the Seven Hills community, and I do not take lightly the opportunity to serve it and to give something back to the community that has given so much to me and my family. This is also the first time I speak before the House as the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Justice. As a former member of the NSW Police Force who served for more than 22 years, I say it is an honour to serve the Government in that capacity. I greatly look forward to the opportunity of working with the NSW Police Force, the Department of Justice, the Premier and the Government of New South Wales.

In the Governor's Speech Her Excellency set out the broad scope for the re-elected Berejiklian Government's legislative agenda for the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales—one of the most exciting times in New South Wales and a great time to be a citizen of this State. The speech given by the Governor was not the words of a government seeking to sleepwalk through its third term; it was the words of a government that will be unrelenting in its pursuit of projects and reforms that will make a real difference to every community in the great State of New South Wales. This Government is here to make a make a real and lasting difference for the people of New South Wales.

The Governor outlined the Government's election commitments to the people of New South Wales, which include: firstly, locking in the State's strong economy, keeping the budget in surplus and helping businesses continue to create jobs; secondly, taking the pressure off families by helping ease the cost of living and delivering better services; thirdly, by fixing our roads and transport network, easing congestion and, therefore, making it quicker for people to travel around; fourthly, investing more than ever in health so that every person has high-quality care when they need it most; and fifthly, investing more than ever before in schools, giving all children in New South Wales the best possible start in life.

That is an agenda designed to secure the future of New South Wales. It will deliver a strong economy, quality jobs and job security for workers of today and tomorrow; provide the highest quality education, no matter where a person lives or what their circumstances may be; create well-connected communities and quality local environments; make government work better for people by putting the customer at the centre of everything government does; and break the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage by fixing problems that have been in the too-hard basket for too long.

It appears to me that well-connected communities with quality local environments are at the very heart of this Government's agenda. From the road and transport projects that help keep business booming to the social infrastructure that makes our communities more supportive and livable—the infrastructure being built and opened across the State is making a huge difference to the lives of the people of New South Wales. Infrastructure means state-of-the-art roads, like the upgrades to Prospect Highway, and a traffic solution for Toongabbie Bridge in my electorate of Seven Hills. It means a more efficient and reliable train service. We have increased peak-hour service in the intermediate stops between Seven Hills and Westmead, like Toongabbie, Pendle Hill and Wentworthville. We are expanding the capacity of the T1 Western Line to get people and families where they need to go more quickly, so they spend less time commuting and more time doing the things that matter to them.

But infrastructure also means the schools our children attend and, when we are not feeling our best, the hospitals we rely on. Thanks to this Government, the people of New South Wales have one of the most reliable and accessible health systems in the world. Our doctors, nurses and other health professionals are the beating hearts, and of course the brains, behind our world-class health system. By investing in upgrading and redeveloping

hospitals and health facilities across our State, the Government is making sure that they have the health infrastructure they need to do their vital jobs. It is putting the finishing touches on intergenerational upgrades to Westmead and Blacktown hospitals, and stage 2 of the massive redevelopment of the Children's Hospital at Westmead will start next year. Such buildings and redevelopment in the Westmead precinct are certainly making Westmead an area that is highly desirable for those who seek technology jobs or other jobs that support the health sector. Westmead is fast becoming a highly sought-after area in which to live, which will be supported by the Sydney Metro and Parramatta Light Rail.

The Government has upgraded our local schools and it is building a new primary school in the heart of Westmead. Infrastructure means the places where we watch and play sport, and the parks and public spaces where we relax and connect with our stunning natural environment. While New South Wales continues to boom, it is important that the protection of our environment is not forgotten. Communities across the State need green and open space to flourish and thrive. This is why, for the first time, New South Wales has a Minister for Public Spaces who is tasked with identifying and protecting publicly owned land for use as parks or public spaces. This Government has been working hard to create and improve green spaces across the electorate and has been supporting our local sporting clubs with facility, amenity and playing ground upgrades at places such as Max Ruddock Reserve on Romulus Street in Winston Hills and Binalong Oval in Old Toongabbie. As we can see, infrastructure investment and delivery has been and will continue to be a defining feature of this Government.

Over the next four years a number of key projects that will deliver major benefits for families across this great State are due to be completed. They include the transformative Metro Northwest project, which is on track to open later this month and will deliver a train every four minutes at the busiest times. That will bring a massive benefit to constituents living in the north of my electorate as it will take the pressure off the M2 and connect more locals with door-to-door public transport options. Each metro station will have parking, secure bicycle parking and kiss-and-ride zones so commuters can turn up and go.

The Government will be completing the Parramatta Light Rail, which will be a massive improvement for not only the doctors, nurses and healthcare workers who live in and around Westmead in the south-east of the Seven Hills electorate but also local footy fans who are looking for quick and easy access to and from their brand-new and brilliant Western Sydney Stadium. The Government is also committed to getting on with the job of building the Sydney Metro West, which will have stations in Westmead and Parramatta to serve the growing population around the Westmead Hospital precinct. The net effect of all of the public transport infrastructure improvements in the Westmead and Parramatta area will mean that my constituents will be able to leave their cars at home and have access to the State's largest and second largest cities within 30 minutes. The dream of 30-minute cities will become a reality under this Government and that will be a truly exciting time for those of us in western and north-western Sydney.

The new M4 tunnels from Homebush to Haberfield are due to open in August this year—a project that will take some 10,000 trucks off Parramatta Road every day. WestConnex is due to be completed in 2023 and will provide more than 30 kilometres of continuous motorway connecting Sydney's west and south-west with the city, airport and port precinct—a journey that will allow drivers to travel from Penrith to the Anzac Bridge without having to stop at a single traffic light. The difference it will make to commuters and small and family business operators—especially those in western Sydney—cannot be underestimated.

As the Governor mentioned in Her Excellency's speech yesterday, this Government is putting the customer at the centre of everything it does. Over the past eight years a quiet revolution has been taking place. Long gone are the days when citizens had to work around the red tape, rules and requirements of the bureaucracy. Rather, New South Wales has been leading a powerful transition towards a truly customer-centred public service that is designed to meet the needs of the people, rather than the other way around. [*Extension of time*]

The transition is being facilitated by giant leaps forward in technology and automation. Over the next term the Government will take its reforms to the next level—a move marked by the establishment of the Customer Service cluster. The establishment of the new cluster will build on the key customer-service based reforms that have been implemented over the past eight years and have been very successful—as you, Mr Assistant Speaker, would know. Reforms such as the Opal card have revolutionised the way we use public transport. Commuters at Seven Hills station are now starting their Opal journey not only on a bus that leaves close to home but also with access to free 18-hour commuter parking or free access to secure bike sheds, all with the tap of a card.

Our reforms also include the rollout of Service NSW—the Government's one-stop shop where customers can carry out more than 850 government transactions. My constituents have really taken to having a Service NSW one-stop shop in Blacktown and Parramatta, and they will soon also have access to a new Service NSW centre in Northmead. The landmark reform project has caused customer satisfaction to increase exponentially, with individual and business satisfaction with government services reaching almost 80 per cent in 2018. It demonstrates that, while good progress has been made, there is still much more to be done.

I am in this place today only because of the privilege the people of my electorate have bestowed upon me by re-electing me as their local member. It is quite a thrill to represent the area you grew up in and the people you grew up with in the hope of making it a better place in which to live and raise a family. If we think about the sum of all of the policies that the Government offered citizens at the March election, it can really be boiled down to making communities stronger and more livable. It was clear from the Governor's Speech that communities will rightfully be at the heart of the Government's parliamentary agenda for this term.

What does it mean when a government says it wants to build stronger communities? It means investing in the people and the places that bring people together. In Seven Hills it has meant supporting local sporting clubs and fields, church groups, Scouts and Guides, seniors clubs, RSLs and bowling clubs with grants and incentives to grow those organisations by getting more people involved. That approach is working in the community of Seven Hills. It is drawing people of many faiths and backgrounds closer together and breaking down the suburb-to-suburb boundaries that used to define a person's identity in my part of Sydney. There is a real sense of pride and confidence in my community because citizens know that this Government is getting on with the job. Whether it is providing a basic piece of equipment like a lawnmower for a sports group or a full redevelopment of a clubhouse or building, members of my community and people across the State know that projects that are meaningful to the community will get meaningful support from this Government.

Governments must also create livable communities, which means ensuring that citizens can move about more freely and enjoy the natural assets of their local areas. In Seven Hills that has meant massive investments in public transport infrastructure such as the Sydney Metro, Parramatta Light Rail and Sydney Metro West. It has also meant increasing capacity on the T1 Western line and putting more trains on the tracks. On the road it means busting congestion and improving bus services so more people can leave their cars at home.

As the member for Seven Hills it would be remiss of me to neglect to mention the Berejiklian Government's prosecution of the three cities policy, which will bring jobs and international air travel closer to home for people in and around my electorate. The most important thing we can do is put infrastructure in place to get people moving faster, but we also need to create livable communities by protecting green spaces and ensuring that new residential developments are appropriate for where they are built.

I am very proud to represent my electorate of Seven Hills. I thank Her Excellency for her first Governor's Speech. As a member of this Chamber, I commend the Berejiklian Government for its transformative legislative agenda for the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales. Yesterday's opening was certainly an historic day and it contained some important reminders. One of them was that we have a very solemn duty to serve those that we represent. As the new Speaker commented in his opening address, it is important that we in this Chamber serve with respect and integrity and do the very best we can.

Business interrupted.

Members

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from Her Excellency the Governor regarding vacancies in the Legislative Council following the resignation of Mr Ben Franklin and Ms Lynda Voltz. I direct that the joint sitting with the Legislative Council for the election of members of the Legislative Council be set down as an order of the day for 3.45 p.m. today as appointed in Her Excellency's message.

Members

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warmly welcome to Parliament House the friends and family of the member for Dubbo. I particularly welcome his wife, Karen, his mum, Barbara, and his dad, Ian. This is an enormously exciting day for each of you. I hope you enjoy your day in Parliament House today with the member for Dubbo. I also warmly welcome the former member for Dubbo, the Hon. Troy Grant.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:31): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and congratulations on your election to that role. What a humbling and exciting day this is, to be here in one of the most historic buildings in the State, speaking for the first time as a member of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales. I am the first of the new brigade to speak in this Parliament, so let's hope I don't muck it up. I want to start off by saying what an absolute privilege it is to be here representing the people of the Dubbo electorate. It is an incredible part of the State, as anyone who lives anywhere near there knows. It is a very unique feeling to know that for the next four years I will now be the voice for the people right across the region in this Parliament. I have spoken to literally thousands of people from all walks of life during my career as a radio presenter, but I do not think there have been too many times when I have been quite this nervous or quite this

excited about actually speaking. Thank you to everyone who has come along to support me today; I appreciate that and I know there are quite a few people watching on the livestream as well, so thank you.

I come to this role at a time when there is quite a bit of expectation about what will be delivered and when. That has a fair bit to do with the fact that the last bloke delivered quite a bit—more on him shortly. I heard a great quote the other day about the fact that although Rome wasn't built in a day, they were laying bricks and pavers just about every hour. That is what I will be doing. You may not see or hear every single thing I do, but I will be there, laying those bricks every hour, as we work towards a very bright future with this Government. I formally acknowledge the former member for the Dubbo electorate, Mr Troy Grant, and wish him and his family all the best for the future.

I stand here now as the fourteenth representative for the State electorate of Dubbo, first proclaimed in 1894 and its second incarnation from 1930. This is an honour, and it is one that is certainly not lost on me. The electorate of Dubbo now is completely different to what it was eight years ago—yes there has been a boundary change, but the prosperity and the belief in the region has changed completely since Troy was elected as part of a new government back in 2011. I will now be working hard to continue that impact and influence as I take the baton forward. I am proud and excited to work with the leadership team of Premier Gladys Berejiklian and the Deputy Premier, John Barilaro. Both have been extremely welcoming and supportive, and I thank them very much for that. I also thank every Minister who has extended that same support, and the members of Parliament who have made this new journey feel a bit more normal, because it feels a bit weird at times, I can tell you.

My fellow new Nationals member, the member for Coffs Harbour, Gurmeh Singh, will deliver his inaugural speech following me and I wish him all the best as we start this journey together. I know we are both proud to have entered this Parliament, respectful of our party's immense history over the past 100 years, but also excited to join with our Nationals colleagues who have been returned to this House, as we look to make significant contributions to the future of The Nationals and to the future of New South Wales. The Nationals is a great party that represents the people of regional New South Wales unashamedly. It also respects the right of members of Parliament to present the views of the people they represent vigorously. It is a party that's not bound by political ideology or philosophy. As our leader, John Barilaro, regularly says, "It's all about geography." It is about giving all the people who live outside our major metro areas a voice, and sticking up for them. Regional New South Wales is becoming far more diverse, and our party is also reflecting that; it is evolving and constantly changing.

My electorate of Dubbo has a very bright future. From the capital of Western New South Wales—Dubbo itself to Trangie and Narromine, Wellington and surrounds, and across to Mudgee and Gulgong—this is a diverse and extraordinary slice of regional New South Wales that I have very firmly at the front of my mind. It has been a nursery for many sporting champions, and I have no doubt it will continue. It is home to innovative health, education and research programs, with so much potential to develop that more. It is also home to Taronga Western Plains Zoo, a world leader in animal conservation, and a hallmark of tourism. There are world-class wineries and eateries at Mudgee, there is goldmining history at Gulgong and Stuart Town, and the Wellington Caves are one of the most significant mammal fossil sites in the world. Add to that the phenomenal output from agriculture and my part of the State is pretty hard to beat. We just need to keep spreading the word and encouraging more people to be part of our remarkable region.

To be honest, it is still a bit surreal thinking of myself actually working here now and being part of decisions that will be made in this Parliament. But one important thing I do recognise is that it is not being here in Parliament that will define me as a member of Parliament, it is the work I do with my community right across the electorate that really counts. I have a lot of people to thank and acknowledge today, and I will be doing that throughout the course, but at the very start I want to thank my three girls—my wife, Karen, and our two daughters, Georgie and Charlie, are here today. It is fantastic to have them with me as I start this new journey. Thanks girls; I love you lots.

So why am I here? Where did I come from and what are my areas of interest? I think everyone who takes this sort of step to represent wants to make a difference, and for me it probably has been building for a while; but it is hard to know how and why you actually take a step forward for this sort of thing. Up until mid-last year I had been in media for 27 years, including the past 10 years hosting breakfast and mornings on ABC local radio in Dubbo. I was lucky enough to speak to a wide range of people from right across the large central west and western regions, from places like Bourke and Walgett through to Mudgee and my old home town of Mendooran. I heard from people about the things that really matter in their lives and their communities. When you are doing that, you get the good, the bad, the sad and the joyful. It has been a really good way of getting the pulse of different towns and parts of the region, and I have been lucky enough to meet some amazing locals in that time.

As part of that I guess I was always looking to connect problems with solutions: Why isn't this happening? What are the possibilities? What is the best solution? Who can help make this happen? When you are able to take part in that sort of process by asking the right questions of the right people, at the right time, in the right way, it

does feel like you are actually part of helping to create change—and that is an amazing feeling. From my perspective that is a big part of my role as a member of Parliament, with even more tangible links than I have ever had before. I am really looking forward to that and, from speaking to other members of Parliament, the ability to make a difference in people's lives is something they get incredible joy from.

I did not get involved in this sphere because of a particular burning ideology or ethos. I do have ethics, I do have standards, but I think I would be described by most people I know as quite pragmatic. I know there are probably some other thoughts you are thinking at the moment as well, but we will keep them until later. I like to deal with issues and ideas in a pretty straightforward way, based on practical solutions, rather than lots of theories that may not amount to much. But there is that strong reality that you cannot please everyone all the time and it is a bit hard to accept that. It is true, though, and it is something I have become a bit more aware of in the past seven or eight months. For me, the journey to get here started in earnest back in July 2018 when I first nominated to run for pre-selection for the New South Wales Nationals; the first time I have ever been part of a political party in any way, shape or form. The connection to the Nats and me was pretty easy—a love and desire to focus on rural and regional areas, and a series of very simple beliefs that line up with my way of thinking.

Although politics had been mentioned to me by a few people over the years, it was not seriously in my headspace until right around the time that Troy Grant decided to retire—and boy did that put the cat amongst the pigeons! In a very short space of time I had to decide whether this was actually something I wanted to do, and would be able to do, not just for the electorate, but also for myself and my family. I remember having some very frank discussions over a few days about what the decision could mean. Thanks to some very supportive friends and family, and despite a few sleepless nights and lots of second-guessing, I did put my hand up and I am very glad I did! After a vigorous seven-month election campaign, I am here and I am ready to serve.

I have been extremely lucky to have the absolute and unquestioned support of the retiring member, Troy Grant. He has been a mentor and a friend, and has made a huge difference. He has provided unwavering and honest advice, and true friendship through this journey. So to you, Troy, thanks mate; you are a champion. It is really nice to have you back in this Chamber along with your lovely and supportive wife, Toni. It's a slightly odd feeling, actually, because the last time the three of us were in this Chamber—14 November 2018, Troy was giving his final speech, and I was sitting up in that gallery hoping to be here now. Thanks for coming.

I was also lucky enough to have probably the State's most highly regarded campaign director in my corner, Peter Bartley, who became a bit like a second father. Sorry, Barts, I'm not trying to make you feel old. He's been the other great rock that I relied on through this period and we worked extremely well together. Thanks also to his very supportive wife, Kim. Peter built a great team including a few he's worked with before such as Pauline McAllister, Peter Tremble and Kevin Sinclair. It's great to have Kevvy and his daughter, Helen, here today. They are both outstanding helpers and supporters.

I've also had amazing support from the Nats branches and their chairs in Wellington, thanks to the gorgeous Pip Smith; Narromine via Geoff Smith; a couple of David's—Dugan and Kinsey—who were absolute crackers at Trangie; the continued support of the Dubbo branch through Greg Matthews and Richard Mutton; the Mudgee branch through Sandy Walker, Marg Reid and Lloyd Coleman; and the overarching DEC through chair Mike Blake and his team. All of the branches and the members worked really well together and I'm extremely grateful to everyone who came together to help. Geoff Ballard also deserves a very special mention. He's been like a second right-hand for me over the past few months. He was always there to help no matter what was needed and that did include quite a few weird and wonderful things. Thank you, mate. I owe you big time.

My family: It is a little bit difficult to go through my full family scenario. It's complicated, so I'll give you an abridged version today, but it will give you a bit of an insight. I grew up on a few different properties around the Mendooran district after my parents became tree changers back in the mid-1970s. In fact, when I was thinking about this, I think we may have well have been one of the very early tree-changing families. To be honest, I don't think we have ever been properly recognised for that. Trendsetters is what we were. My early life involved milking cows, rounding up sheep, playing with pigs, riding horses, and spending time in the shearing shed, on the tractor and feeding the chooks. After moving back to the area from Sydney, I've been doing pretty much the same thing for the past 13 years, along with radio up until this point at least. For the most part life was good when I was young, apart from the occasional locust plague, drought or family disaster. But, hey, it wasn't meant to be easy, was it?

My parents separated when I was around 11 and that did change everything for me and my brother, Cam, and my sister, Tam. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't all bad but it did change and there were times that I found it very hard. After a period, we ended up having an extended family, which included another brother—Dave's here today and it's great to have him along—and three more sisters, Jodes, Krissy and Dinks. So seven kids; Brady bunch here we come. The memories we now share from those days are all pretty good and it's nice to reminisce. But it was tough and it was hard for everyone. I also have no doubt that my work ethic, and probably the same for

my brothers and sisters, actually came out of those time: having to contribute every day as part of a large extended family means you probably do more than you may have otherwise. It is great to have all those brothers and sisters still in my life today.

I went to a few different schools over the years, but I spent my last four years in Sydney at St Andrews Cathedral School. It was great to have a couple of long-lost friends come up to Dubbo and help on election day. Thanks to Tim Kelly, who is recuperating in hospital today but will be watching. Thanks to Geoff Berkley, who is here today—thanks, mate. Funnily enough I also re-connected with a former teacher yesterday. He's now the secretary for the Governor. Michael Miller was my senior English and history teacher, and also sports master. That was great.

Talking of sport, sport has always been a great passion of mine. In my younger days I played just about every sport you could imagine: cricket, swimming, rugby league and union. I also had a long association with fencing—no, nothing to do with pliers. This was foil, epee and sabre. In fact, the whole family took part for a number of years; you can tell some more jokes about that later. The love of sport also led me in that direction during my media career. After a few years working in regional radio I went to 4BC in Brisbane and then 2UE here in Sydney to join the sports departments. In that time I was lucky enough to work with some amazing teams. I was involved in coverage of just about every sport you can image including rugby league, cricket and rugby union. The highlight no doubt were the 2000 Olympic Games here in Sydney, which was an enormous buzz.

But there was always something gnawing away in the back of my mind about being in regional New South Wales. After our first daughter, Georgie, was a couple of years old we started looking seriously at how we could make that happen, make the move back. It's been a really rewarding 13 years back in the region, full of great experiences, friendships and a few tough times, but I don't think we would change a thing. As a family and through my radio work, we've been involved in all sorts of sports and activities from pony club and swimming club to drama and music, and also some innovative and amazing programs such as Moorambilla Voices. The Artistic Director, Michelle Leonard, is here today. She leads a brilliant team that delivers music and movement to children across my region in a way that changes lives and helps inspire, and I want to recognise that today.

I've been lucky enough to know Michelle and report on the difference that the Moorambilla program has made to young people for the past 11 years, including performances here at Parliament House and also down the road at Government House. I'm hoping to see that continue well into the future. Moorambilla also has a great connection with Royal Far West, which is another group that helps improve the lives of people across my electorate and the greater west. These are the types of organisations that are contributing to the health and wellbeing of our regional youth—our future.

I'm really looking forward to working with our first ever New South Wales Minister for Regional Youth to ensure we give our young people every chance to succeed, no matter what direction they are heading in. Of course this all ties in with mental health connections for young people across the region and it is really important. It is amazing how much your perspective on these sorts of things changes when you're involved personally, which I have been. It matters and it needs attention.

I'm also a very passionate believer in the early years, the first 2,000 days of life where so much good work can be done—or not. NSW Health now has a policy to outline the importance of that time, from conception to age five, and what needs to be worked on to ensure that all children have the best possible start in life. This is something I've had a fair bit of awareness of through my mum, Barbara Wellesley. Mum was in charge of baby and community health centres throughout the central west. She also set up and ran a children's charity from Sydney for many years called Good Beginnings. She worked extremely hard many years ago to highlight the need for this type of focus. These days I think there is a general recognition of how important this is and I will be there as a reminder of that need from a rural perspective.

From a general perspective, I think people across the electorate want to feel like they're being listened to and being represented by someone who cares and has their back. That's exactly what I'll be doing. As I said, I've had a fantastic chance to connect with people across the region through radio over the past decade, but I'm now looking forward to providing a tangible link between problems and solutions, and providing help in a whole new way. I reckon I'm a pretty normal sort of bloke, whatever that means. It's funny how many times I heard people saying through the election campaign, that that's what they want. They want normal people. So how do you keep being normal? I think it's about staying connected with the many friends I have across the regions, but also continuing to talk to as many people as I can about their lives and their communities, and what matters to them.

I've had good times and plenty of tough times. I'm not a career politician; I'm a realist and it is, of course, impossible to help everybody all the time just as I mentioned earlier that it's impossible to please everybody all the time. But if I can get pretty close, I'll be pretty happy. I've also been thinking about the top needs and expectations of the communities across my electorate over the past few weeks. The main thing that each and every

person wants to know is that we are not missing out by choosing to live in a regional area, and nor should we. It's something I'll be working on with the entire Nationals team—not just ensuring that we aren't missing out but also trying to make sure that everyone in my region knows that they aren't missing out and they know how to access what they want and what they need. It's important and we need to do a better job of that.

Drought will continue to ruin lives and there will be lots of tough decisions made in coming months by families and businesses. There has been a stack of money set aside to help in certain circumstances, but there's also the need to re-connect with the many people who have been affected and regain the confidences that we once had. I'm sure we can do that and I know there will be some positive outcomes for the future in that direction. I also ran some community surveys over the past six months, which clearly indicate that the other top issues across the electorate are access to health and health services, better roads and connectivity. A fantastic redevelopment happening at the Dubbo Base Hospital is already making a difference. It will include a cancer centre in the next stage. A new hospital is also being built at Mudgee. But there does need to be more and there will be more—not just buildings, but also a focus on support services.

A part of that will involve the new nurses and health workers for the region, which have been announced. I am keen to see more focus on establishing a health and wellbeing precinct to bring together all the aspects of our region's biggest employer—Health. Investment in roads and rail is at an all-time high, which is great. I'll be pushing to make sure that regional roads and rail lines, which carry locals, freight and tourists between our regional towns, are at the forefront as planning for the future occurs. We'll be maintaining a whole new fleet of regional trains at the Dubbo rail facility in coming years, with better timetables for travellers and a skilled workforce at the centre of it. There really are some very exciting opportunities on the way.

There's also now a huge focus on better data connectivity and less mobile black spots. It is the emerging focus for many businesses, professionals and families looking to live in or move to our regional centres. Big money is set aside from the State Government for exactly this and it could be a game changer for our region. The difference that reliable internet can make to businesses, including agricultural businesses in parts of the region like around Narromine, is immense. It is a big part of our future. The good news is that the Dubbo electorate is recognised as a growth region with lots of potential for the future. We just need to drive that potential, interest and investment to make the most of what is possible.

We need to see new businesses start up and current businesses scale up. With growth we need a skilled workforce. We need to train and retain skilled people locally, and, of course, attract new skilled workers to the region. But if we've learnt anything in the past few years, it is that the times they are a-changin'. There is no guarantee that an industry will remain viable forever, and all regions need to think outside the box and look for potential opportunities. There is no doubt that more opportunities are on the way, but one of our greatest challenges is to encourage our children and grandchildren to live and work and raise their families in regional areas like mine. It is all a part of future-proofing our regions.

As I mentioned, there are so many people to thank and recognise. I have mentioned a few of them already and many of them are in the public gallery, which is fantastic. My family will continue to be the most important aspect of my life. My wife, Karen, is a big part of how I have managed to get here and how I will continue to be able to work successfully as an MP. Our life has been a bit of a roller-coaster, but her passion and support will be so important over the next four years. Thanks, darling, I love you. My daughters—Georgie, who is 17, and Charlie, who is 13—have started to get a little understanding of what this role might actually be, but the reality is it's really hard to know until you're in the middle of it. It is starting to happen now. Georgie Girl, you are one of the most talented people I know. You have a light that shines and attracts people, and you will be a leader of some sort. I love you very much. Charlie Pops, your laugh is the most infectious I have heard. You have so much to give and I know you can do whatever you want to do. I am very proud of you and I love you.

One thing's for sure: Our life as a family has changed completely, from how the girls get to and from school, who cooks what, who does what and when, who does the chores and, most importantly, how much ironing I now seem to have! I am not a big fan. Mum and Dad—Barbara and Ian—and their respective partners, John and Lorraine, are here today, which is great. Thank you. They were also here yesterday as I was sworn in as an MP, which was lovely. I appreciate all of your support. It has been incredible the whole way through, including pre-polling and election day. The encouragement and understanding have been great. Thank you all so much.

My sister, Tamara, and brother, Campbell, have been awesome. They were a big part of the Mudgee crew during the crunch time and, in fact, they were sending me very loving messages every day during pre-polling. They were enjoying it so much. Thank you. I thank Cam's partner, Rhonda, for coming along. My nephew Jackson is also here along with my brother-in-law, Col, and my stepbrother Dave. Thank you, guys, for coming. They also were involved during election day. It is also great to see all the Gottings here. Thank you for coming along today; it is great to have your support.

Obviously, I do not have time to thank every single person who has helped me get here. To all of those who made the effort—there are a lot of people, as there are for everyone—I say, "Thank you very much." When I started down this path, I was lucky enough to have some really good friends, who have also been with me for the entire journey, sometimes in the background but always there and generous to a fault. Thanks to Jen and Steve Cowley and also Mark Horton, who have always had my back and have always been with me. Thank you for coming today. I thank my great friends Craig and Cate Whiteley. Craig was one of the first people I talked to about this decision, and Cate was an incredible bundle of energy during the election campaign. I also thank Cate's dad, Peter Turner, who is renowned as the door-knocking guru and was always around to help, as was Shibli Chowdhury, who is a great helper and mate.

The Gulgong gang, headed up by Marg Reid and former MLC Lloyd Coleman, who is here today, was so generous and supportive. I owe you lots—literally. Thank you very much. I thank Sandy Walker at Mudgee, who was there bright and early every day during pre-poll, just like Kevvy was in Dubbo. These are the sorts of people you cannot do this without. They are unbelievable helpers. Thanks also to the Simmos—Ian and Cate—who are absolute legends. Gus Diffey was tireless and awesome as the corflute warrior during the campaign—thanks, mate. Ryan Hunter went over and above. Mike Blake as Chair of the DEC was involved as much as possible and has always been supportive—a big thanks to you and Melva. To Georgie and Charlie's godparents, Geoff and Bridget Mann, who are here today and have been such loving and caring supporters of us as a family over the years, thank you so much—and happy anniversary! Can you believe they are here on their anniversary? Congratulations! It is great to have you here as part of my special day on your special day.

I'm very lucky to have dedicated and talented staff in the electorate office who bring a range of skills and abilities. A couple of them are here today. To Jane Diffey, who has now stepped up as my senior electorate officer—basically, the boss; a whole new level—thank you for what you have done and for what you are going to do. To Ben Walker, who is still quite new in his role and, I am sure, has many more goals to kick—thanks, mate. I know we're going to work really well together. Thanks for being here today. Our newest member, Jennifer Hoar, starts only next week, but I know she will be a great asset to the team.

I feel like the State as a whole, and the Dubbo electorate in particular, is on the crest of a wave—a wave of prosperity. I am really excited about the possibilities and I am honoured to be the voice for my region. You know, it's funny, I've been told quite a few times in the past few weeks that now the real work starts. I suppose that's true, but it's also worth recognising that a huge amount of work by a huge amount of people has gone into getting this far. And from somebody who's never done anything like this before, you have no idea what's required financially, mentally and physically. It does take a big toll. I will mention a few mates who did all that, and I was hoping they would be here with me in this Fifty-Seventh Parliament, but, unfortunately, they are not. A shout-out to Austin Curtin, Mackenna Powell and my good mate, Andrew Schier—I am thinking of you today.

The way I see it now is that this is the start of making the real difference. Earlier I talked about the decision to put my hand up for this role. It was not an easy decision but it was an important one. It is one that I feel privileged to have been able to make. I finish with a quote from George Eliot, which, I feel, pretty well sums things up for me, "It is never too late to be what you might have been." Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the member. I know that he will play an extremely important role in this House. I wish him all the best. I warmly welcome to the gallery the friends and family of the member for Coffs Harbour. In particular, I welcome his wife, Manni, his mum, Joginder, and his dad, Gurminder. This is a very proud day for all of you. I hope that you all enjoy your time at Parliament House today. I also warmly welcome the former member for Coffs Harbour, Andrew Fraser. I know it will be difficult for him to refrain from interjecting but it would be appreciated if he did not!

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:04): I begin by congratulating Madam Deputy Speaker on her election to that role yesterday. I stand here today extremely happy to have been elected by the good people of the electorate of Coffs Harbour. I pay my respect to the Gumbaynggirr people, the custodians and traditional owners of the land covering my electorate. I also extend my respect to their elders past, present and emerging. Before telling my story, I acknowledge my predecessor, Andrew Fraser, who served the electorate of Coffs Harbour for three decades and is in the gallery today.

My path to this Parliament started over 120 years ago with the decision made by my great-grandfather, Bella Singh, to leave Punjab with 13 other men from the surrounding villages to seek opportunity on the other side of the world in Australia. After reaching Sydney he made his way up the coast to the cane fields of Northern New South Wales. I doubt that in his wildest dreams he would ever have imagined that his great-grandson would be standing here today, in the oldest Parliament in Australia, as the newly elected member for Coffs Harbour; the area where his son, my grandfather, Pritam Singh, chose to settle in the late 1940s. Our ancestral home is in Punjab, on the plains about 30 kilometres from the foothills of the Himalayas, and my surname, Singh, is a Sikh

name dating back to the late 1600s. Even today our ancestral village is only the size of Hyde Park, so one can only imagine the courage it took over 120 years ago to leave home and cross the seas to an unknown land.

I am proud of my heritage but, as members can clearly hear, I am Australian born and bred. I attended Woolgoolga Public and Woolgoolga High schools and immediately prior to my election in March I was a farmer—I grew macadamias and blueberries in the sandy loam soils of the Corindi range. Between my great-grandfather's arrival in 1895 and India's partition in 1947 my family travelled back and forth between Punjab and Australia. During the war my grandfather fulfilled caretaking duties for interned Italian migrants in Coffs Harbour. Eventually he leased a farm of his own and the family settled permanently at Woolgoolga. Although farming and agriculture has been in my blood going back many generations, I was not exactly in love with the job when I was a boy. I was much more interested in just about anything else and would rather have spent my Saturdays playing cricket or footy. Instead, for me and the other children of banana growers, it was all bananas, bananas, bananas. It was enough to drive anyone bananas! For a very long time Coffs Harbour was famous for its bananas—a very big banana in fact—but in 2019 the area encompassed by the electorate is so much more than the pit-stop to Brisbane it once was.

After completing high school I made the decision, which country kids are often forced to make, to leave home for Sydney. I thought it was the only real option for me and it would be where I would finally discover "real" life. At the time I thought the move from the country to the city, then from university to an office job was a one-way move. It never crossed my mind that one day I would move back to Coffs Harbour, but I grew tired of the high-octane world of advertising, long days and late nights. So in 2009 my wife, Manni, and I decided to return home to Woolgoolga. In the decade I had been away, not to mention the decade since, Coffs Coast had experienced considerable growth. Today it is a diverse and thriving region. We have a booming tourism industry and play host to major events, including a round of the FIA World Rally Championship and the Australian Ladies Classic Bonville. Each year in March we also host the National Touch League championships, which is the perfect drought-breaker—hold the event and the rains will fall.

Our perfect climate means that we have families holidaying all year round and no trip is complete without a family photo in front of the Big Banana. We have a successful and growing agricultural sector, with horticulture, beef, dairy, forestry and fisheries all represented. Recent developments in the innovation and digital space are creating exciting new opportunities. More and more people are moving in to share our beautiful beaches and hinterland, as well as everything else Coffs Harbour has to offer. It is also a great place for amateur cyclists like me—admittedly it has been a while between rides—to enjoy rolling rides through the scenic back roads around Dairyville and Coramba, to suffer the slog up to Ulong or to enjoy a coffee at Sawtell after a cruise down the old highway.

While I might have missed out on Saturday morning sports when I was a kid, as an adult I have been able to indulge in pursuits like cycling and footy. I look back with the wisdom of age and the benefit of hindsight and realise that I had a relatively privileged upbringing. While banana farming was not exactly lucrative when I was growing up, it was definitely enough to provide the family with a modest living and, more importantly, an honest living. I learnt the value of an earned dollar and the value of having a strong work ethic.

I grew up surrounded by a large, loving and supportive extended family. We all lived on the same block within 100 metres of each other. There were always people around, willing to pass on life's lessons. I am immensely thankful for their love and attention and I would wish the same for everyone. But, unfortunately, across the electorate and across the State, I know there are pockets where issues of generational unemployment, underemployment and other social issues—issues that are often exacerbated by drug use—are far too common. New South Wales is the premier State, but we all need to acknowledge that some people have missed out—a fact my predecessor Andrew Fraser ensured I understood from the outset.

Immediately following my preselection in November last year Andrew took me under his wing and we spent nearly every day together out in the electorate, talking to people about what matters to them. Andrew knew the importance of representing the entire community, including those, perhaps particularly those, who find themselves in difficult circumstances. Youth unemployment and youth suicide touch too many families in Coffs Harbour and I am looking forward to working with the Minister for Regional Youth to tackle these issues head-on.

As much as I am proud to be here today, I stand here fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead. I thank the electorate for giving me the opportunity to be their State representative, and in particular I pay enormous credit to Andrew for supporting me and for providing great mentorship as I have made this move into public service. Although I have been in the job only a short while, my family is feeling the impact already. For Andrew to hold the job for nearly 30 years was, without a doubt, a result of an amazing team effort, and the whole Fraser family, particularly Kerrie, must also be thanked for their contribution to public life.

Andrew is a man with a tremendous work ethic, which I witnessed firsthand during the election campaign. Together we put up corflutes late into the evenings—and there were some tricky ones, including one that had us high up a billboard in pretty questionable occupational health and safety conditions. Together we walked nearly every street in the electorate, doorknocking and handing out flyers, and meeting with residents, businesses and community groups. Our calorie-laden lunches from a certain fried chicken establishment meant we did not lose too much weight in the heat and humidity of the campaign. I looked after him.

As election day approached we were both at the pre-poll as often as we could be, answering last-minute questions from voters. Andrew, thank you. The electorate embraced our policy vision. Good government is about having a plan to deliver your policies and I look forward to delivering good policy in everything from infrastructure to education. I was lucky, I had a good education and did well at school, and I was fortunate to have options and opportunities. I studied Industrial Design at the University of New South Wales. Fundamentally, that is a degree that teaches you how to examine issues, how to solve problems and how to create workable solutions. And, small world, I lived on campus at the Kensington Colleges at the same time as my Nationals colleague Sarah Mitchell, and Courtney Houssos, from the other place.

I spent nine years in Sydney. I worked odd jobs while at uni—at a newsagency at Bondi Beach and in a late-night pharmacy at Taylor Square in Darlinghurst; genuinely eye-opening times for a kid from the bush. I read a lot. I played footy. I made lifelong friends. I moved on to more professional jobs, steering my career towards marketing, advertising, and design, all the while refining my skills in solving complex problems and building relationships. I brought those skills with me when I moved back to the Coffs coast. After a few years working as a designer in Sawtell I then decided to try my hand at farming full time.

In 2014 I was also appointed chairman of Oz Group Co-Op, a 100 per cent Australian, farmer-owned co-op, which had very humble beginnings in the early 2000s in a small shed in the Woolgoolga industrial estate. Today it is one of the 10 largest agricultural co-ops in the country, and probably the fastest growing. With a turnover of about \$150 million per annum, it is one of Coffs Harbour's largest businesses—a major contributor to the Coffs Harbour economy and comprised entirely of farming families. The members of the co-op recognised the quality and strength of good rules and good governance to further their interests in the long term. They chose to adopt the policies our team created that prioritised long-term benefits over individual short-term gain. The agreement was shaped by fairness and transparency and laid the foundation for our ability to work together and scale the co-op, factors that ultimately led to its success.

I have felt it has been my life's work for the past few years, and while it has been a huge team effort it is an accomplishment of which I am personally incredibly proud. It represents the type of success that I want to help others achieve. Agricultural co-ops seem to have lost favour in recent times, but our example has proved that it can be done. Governance in an agricultural co-op is hard; farmers make for a tough constituency. In a room of 10 farmers you might hear more than 10 different opinions. But fairness, transparency and good governance will win them over. It is this experience that I will bring to my parliamentary career. While I never thought I would be a member of Parliament, I have always been politically curious. I take an interest in new ideas and make sure I do not develop tunnel vision. When I have felt strongly about something I have rarely been one to take a back seat, but I am surprised that it was farming that ultimately prompted me to seriously consider politics and consider what I could bring to the Parliament and to the people.

Working in agriculture introduced me to one of the most nuanced and fractured relationships in Australia's diverse landscape: the often apathetic and antagonistic relationship between the urban and the rural. So much could be overcome by bridging the basic lack of understanding in the urban areas towards people living and working in regional and rural Australia. Unfortunately, activists can tend to focus on the worst while ignoring and negating appreciation for the crucial food, fibre, raw materials and energy that are produced by hardworking families living in the regions. Members of our modern society, especially those in the urban centres, are wholly reliant on these industries for their survival and the quality of their lives. The call for uninformed regulation, red tape and broad, sweeping shutdowns ignores how lucky we are to take access to food, clothing and materials for granted, and ignores how recent our secure access to these commodities is and how precarious it could be.

I was thrust into the political realm when I saw poor policy being proposed at a local level. Good policy offers a hand up, not just more indiscriminate red tape. Governments should work with people to determine and embrace best practice based on evidence and science so we can ensure a sustainable future for all. I look forward to working with my colleagues from across the State to attract the kind of development, growth and innovation that is going to bring prosperity to the region and to my constituents. I am ready to juggle all the aspects of the job, from facilitating access to services to fighting for the funding a growing electorate like Coffs Harbour deserves. I am ready to examine and contribute to policies that will create a better-functioning society. I am also ready to open the events and attend the functions that are a testament to the vitality and spirit of our community.

Today I join parliamentarians like Gladys Berejiklian and John Barilaro who, like me, despite or possibly even because of their immigrant backgrounds, have gone out and got what they want. It has not always been easy. There were times during the campaign when things got personal. But that is not the kind of politics I find useful, it is not the kind of politics of which I want to play a part and, clearly, it is not the kind that prevails. Politics is changing.

When I first worked in digital marketing over a decade ago, social media was largely a way to keep in touch with family and old school friends. The promise of social media was that it would open our minds to new ideas, but the opposite has occurred. New words have entered our lexicon—words like fake news and echo chamber. Social media is often not a true reflection of society; not every issue has its own hashtag. The only true way to know the community is to be an active member of the community. Debate is being pushed further to the extremes of the political spectrum, alienating people who want to remain open and optimistic and who aspire to a pleasant, peaceful life for themselves and their children.

I love the diversity of the Coffs Harbour electorate, but I still maintain there is far more that unites us than divides us. I know getting involved in politics may mean I expose myself to extra scrutiny, bullies and unfair criticism, but I can only go into this confident of my own good intentions. Luckily, I have a strong and supportive network of friends who will not only boost me when I am down but also help keep my feet on the ground. Some of the best friends I will ever have are friends I made in Sydney. I met my closest circle through sport—the smart ones made it here today! Now, as a group of men in our mid-30s to mid-40s, we have realised the importance of keeping those relationships from our late teens and early 20s strong. Too many of us lose touch with our inner circle of close friends as we get older. We now make an extra effort to catch up more regularly, even though we only ever get a quorum at the Christmas catch-up.

Although we met through a mutual love of sport there is far more that connects us as we get older. Throughout the action-packed last 12 months they were a constant source of support and guidance. Excluding the normal seasonal pressures of farm life, there were some big changes at the co-op. In mid-August, a few weeks before the preselection cut-off, our second child was born. And a week later my grandmother, Rattan Kaur—the matriarch of our family—passed away at home at age 96. I had a difficult decision to make about whether this was the right time for me to essentially drop everything and focus on getting elected. As I have often done in life I chose the unpredictable path—and here we are.

I could not have succeeded without the incredible support and hard work of the campaign committee: Andrew Fraser, our State electoral conference chairman, John F. Sercombe, George Cecato, Brett Sprague, Peter and Chris Lubans, Brett Marshall, Kerry Hines, Neil Manson, Paul Shoker, and of course the incredible Joe Lundy, who was the lynchpin of the campaign. I wish him every success in his new role. I thank the hundreds of volunteers who took the time to hand out election material on polling day and at pre-poll, the Young Nationals who helped doorknock, the people who put our signs in front of their homes and businesses and those people who manned the campaign office. It is due to their hard work and support that Coffs Harbour remains a Nationals electorate.

I also thank the Nationals State chairman, Bede Burke, the State director, Ross Caddell, and the entire team in the NSW Nationals head office for their support, hard work and enthusiasm. I acknowledge the many Nationals party Ministers and Liberal Party Ministers and colleagues whom I met along the way. I single out John Barilaro for his support and guidance during the campaign, it was very much appreciated. It was Niall Blair in the other place who first piqued my interest in State politics and he was a sounding board during the rigours of the campaign. Led by Premier Gladys Berejiklian, our leadership team fills me with confidence. We are ready and dedicated to making the regions and New South Wales as a whole a better place.

The last few weeks of the campaign I ran purely on adrenaline and caffeine. I will admit to a few sleepless nights. But on the night before polling day I had the best sleep I had had for months because—to use some football slang—I had left it all on the park. I knew that night that, whatever the result, we had done everything possible to win. I woke up on polling day feeling refreshed and relaxed. I started the day as I have started nearly every day for the last few years: I went down to my local cafe and sat at our regular table 25 and had a coffee with my mates. Although we normally discuss diverse topics such as vegan ethics and mountain biking, on polling day it was all about the election. It is important for me to point out that this group, probably more than any other, encouraged me to take the step of running for pre-selection. I thank them.

So, like every other day, I left Bluebottles that morning with a spring in my step. Andrew and I started the day at separate ends of the electorate. He was at Lowanna and I was at Red Rock with his son Angus, who was with me the whole day. We made it to every booth in the electorate and spent the last hour of the day at my former primary school. That night we celebrated the end of the campaign with friends, family and the campaign volunteers. I thank Diane Leahy, Katie Hunter, and Craig McTear for making the transition in the electorate office so smooth. I look forward to the good work we will do together. I thank Amy Rudder and the other friends I have

spoken to over the last few weeks for their wise counsel over the years and for helping me collect my thoughts for this speech.

I thank the members of my extended family, many of whom are in the gallery today, for putting up signs, dressing the booths and visiting friends and networking in the community. It was truly a team effort. I acknowledge that for my mum, Joginder, dad, Gurminder, my brother, Manvir, and his wife, Amanpreet, and especially my wife, Manni, the past few months have been difficult to say the least. I know you have all shouldered an extra burden. Thank you for allowing all this to happen. It could not have been done without your support and blessing.

I will conclude with a final message: The politics I represent is not about left or right, it is about the people of the Coffs Harbour electorate having access to the same services and the same opportunities as someone living elsewhere in the State. I represent opportunity and growth. I represent rewarding those who work hard. I represent helping those in need of extra support. I represent lower taxes, less red tape and fiscal responsibility. I represent affordable, reliable and clean energy. I represent regional New South Wales. I thank the people of Coffs Harbour for trusting me to represent them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend my personal congratulations to the member for Coffs Harbour. I welcome him to the Fifty-Seventh Parliament as a representative of his community. I know he will do a fantastic job. It is great to have him join the team.

Members stood in their places and applauded.

Senate

SENATE VACANCY

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report a message from the President of the Legislative Council regarding a vacancy in the representation of the State in the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator David Leyonhjelm, agreeing to meet the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber this day immediately following the joint sitting to fill two casual vacancies in the Legislative Council.

Members

INAUGURAL SPEECH

The SPEAKER: I welcome all those here today to hear the inaugural speech of Helen Dalton, the incoming member for Murray.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:29): Mr Speaker, congratulations on your election. I thank you and your colleagues for your warm welcome. I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners and custodians of this land, past, present and emerging. I would also like to acknowledge service men and women for their contribution and sacrifice, which has enabled us to enjoy our Australian way of life. I believe this way of life, however, is under threat. Many here in Sydney have failed to notice an astonishing divide occurring within our State and within our nation. A new Third World country is emerging within our wealthy, privileged borders.

Twenty years ago people in the Murray electorate lived longer than those in Sydney. Today we die, on average, five years earlier. We live to 80 on average while Sydneysiders live until 85, according to NSW Health data. And there is no doubt our health is suffering. Peter Dutton once told the world that health facilities on Nauru were better than they are in some parts of regional Australia. He is right! But it was not always like this. When I was growing up, small country hospitals served all our needs. They set broken bones, removed infected tonsils and appendixes, stitched wounds and did other basic, everyday procedures. Now almost none of the above is done in hospitals across my electorate. Indeed, if a child breaks a finger they need to travel up to four hours to get it treated.

I could tell you many other horror stories, ranging from matters as diverse as stagnant household income, poor educational outcomes, dysfunctional local government, abhorrent water quality, poor access to the internet and insufficient mobile coverage—and you will find rural New South Wales drifting further behind Sydney at an alarming rate. The scary thing is that none of this is accidental. And we are not just losing our facilities and infrastructure but also losing our livelihood. Back in 2012 the journalist Julian Cribb wrote, "If Australia's security agencies got wind of a terrorist plot to destroy infrastructure and jobs, waste billions of dollars and undermine our health, our governments would mobilise our defence forces to prevent it." He went on, "The trouble is the perpetrators in this scenario are Australian governments themselves: Federal and State, from both sides of politics."

Our governments and their bureaucracies are dismantling one of Australia's most productive industries, the irrigation sector. This sector supplies us with most of our daily needs that are essential to a healthy diet and living standard. Water is our lifeblood in the bush. If we have it, we thrive; if we do not, we die. Irrigators who have fed Australians for a century are being sent broke. Water prices are soaring. Food industries are shrinking, local food companies are being sold offshore or shut down, regional towns are dying and many farmers are quitting agriculture for good. It is these forgotten Australians who have put me in Parliament today.

Today is a special day not just for me but also for all my supporters, volunteers, donors, family and friends. It is truly a shared victory, and I am honoured that they have entrusted their votes to me. For those who made the extraordinary effort with pre-poll, I thank you. To the scrutineers, mentors, my kitchen cabinets and confidants, I am indebted to you and I will not let you down. To all of you, I am truly grateful. I wish to thank the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party for providing me with the opportunity to make a difference. The party backed me, a former schoolteacher, country girl and farmer with no experience in politics.

Along with my husband, Nayce, and son, Campbell, we own and operate our own family farm business, which includes both irrigation and dryland enterprises. We produce many of the products you enjoy, such as rice, cotton, corn, winter cereals, beef cattle, wool and fat lambs. Farming is in my blood. I was brought up on a wheat-sheep property north of Rankins Springs in the Melbergen district. My grandparents were pioneers and settled in the area after the First World War. My family still farm there today. My grandfather Georgie was a Scottish migrant from the Orkney Islands and in 1914 enlisted with the Australian forces and served in Belgium and France. My grandmother's people, also from the Orkney Islands, arrived in Australia in 1864 and settled in Lake Rowan. They opened a blacksmith shop and are credited with repairing and modifying the plough blades that were used for Ned Kelly's armour. Ned Kelly's gang called in many times to have their horses shod. On one occasion a ball was held in Lake Rowan to celebrate the opening of the Australasian Bank. Steve Hart and Dan Kelly came dressed as women while police with fixed bayonets were guarding the place.

My mother's people were early settlers. The infamous "flogging parson", Reverend Samuel Marsden, married my grandparents, who were convicts, in Parramatta. Georgie and Elsie, my grandparents, taught me many things, including perseverance and resilience. As a child I was bush happy, with few restrictions. Dust and dry conditions were part and parcel of my environment. Many times in the morning my mother bathed my eyes open with warm, salty water as conjunctivitis or sandy blight seemed ever present. Water was always scarce and highly valued and we were continually reminded that we were not on the Burringjuck!

Back then I did not really understand the significance of what they were saying, until I married my husband, Nayce, an irrigation farmer from the small town of Yenda. We produced four fine Australians in quick succession, and they are here today. Campbell manages our farming business, Jessica is a vet in the Kempsey district, Elizabeth is a doctor in Wagga Wagga and Alexandra lives in Dubbo and works in the cotton industry. I became involved in the Ricegrowers' Association and helped develop the world-first five-tier environmental program. One fantastic legacy is the Bitterns in Rice Project, which continues today. The Ricegrowers' Association of Australia provided many other opportunities for me, which included the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation.

As you have probably gathered, I have deep roots in agriculture, particularly in the Murray electorate, and its future. The Murray electorate encompasses more than 107,000 square kilometres including the Griffith, Leeton, Murrumbidgee, Berrigan, Balranald, Hay and Wentworth shires, and the Murray River and Edward River councils. The area is predominantly flat. I have it on good authority that Conargo is one of the flattest places on earth—so flat that you can see the back of your own head! It encompasses parts of the Murray, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan and Lower Darling rivers. The electorate is the home of 14 nations whose people are the traditional owners of the land, a truly remarkable and unique part of New South Wales. Conservatively, irrigated agriculture from the Murray electorate is worth \$7 billion to \$10 billion at the farm gate and maybe five times that from the flow-on effect. Along the food chain, it helps keep half a million Australians in work.

We are populated by smart, productive, multigenerational, multicultural and innovative people. Together, we have developed world-class production and value-add industries. Sadly, these industries are now under serious threat. There is a very good reason I am here: All is not well in the bush. The March election was history in the making for the Murray electorate—the agricultural heartland of New South Wales—rusting off from traditional voting patterns. As agriculture declines, jobs disappear and our young people move to the big cities. Governments then use declining populations as an excuse to further strip away our services—health, education, water and infrastructure.

Our rural and regional health system is in crisis. We have a serious doctor shortage, low levels of bulk-billing and poor access to mental health specialists. Mental health workers are in high demand but positions are not filled, resulting in sufferers not receiving the treatment they need. Under the current drought conditions, suicide statistics are becoming alarming. Many country hospitals have become glorified bandaid depots. Their

roles have been downgraded and centralised to bigger regional centres like Wagga. A culture of bullying and gagging is further demoralising hardworking medical staff.

Regional hospitals need to have their own local boards. Hospitals need to be defined as either district or base and a charter of health requirements established. We need good corporate governance, fiscal responsibility, an adequate budget and staffing for the provision of community health needs. Concerned and informed people are desperately trying to hold together a system that is falling apart. They are amazing, dedicated people and they need to be heard. The tyranny of distance and small population numbers are not good reasons for substandard health services in the Murray electorate. We keep paying our taxes but getting so little in return.

Education is a huge concern. Schools across the bush are closing down or being forced to merge. They are struggling to attract teachers. Existing staff are being stretched and required to do more paperwork than teaching. The forced merger of the only two public high schools in Griffith was both underfunded and poorly planned. The Government is saving money, but the teachers, students and their families are suffering as a result. This situation would never occur in Sydney. We seem to be the neglected class, and our communities feel that they are being used as social experiments.

I am also concerned about our natural resources. The New South Wales Government owns more than 850 national parks and reserves, which equates to seven million hectares. The 2015 staff redundancy round has left the national parks and wildlife organisation gutted, resulting in the failure of conservation and land management. Like many other New South Wales government departments, the revolving door of staff, inability to consult, leadership vacuums, bullying and unmanageable workloads are commonplace. The lack of sensible management impacts on our ability to access our national parks and educate our children about our wildlife and threatened species.

With the merging of many of our river red gum forests into national parks and the closure of sustainable logging, rural and regional communities again feel sidelined, with little consideration for our environment and our communities. The rhetoric that our future economic development will be maintained by accessing our natural resources in balance with conservation is meaningless bureaucratic gobbledegook. An explosion of feral pests is causing irreparable damage to our lands. South-western communities are again bearing the brunt of poorly thought-out policies. The lock-up-and-leave ideology is clearly failing to deliver.

Water is the lifeblood of the Murray electorate and it was the most important issue during this last election campaign. Our region is the agricultural mecca for New South Wales. All wealth—whether you like it or not—comes from the earth. I was taught in economics that land, labour, capital and enterprise were the inputs of production. Back then, water was a given—but not anymore. It is now a tradeable commodity. All your city jobs, although seemingly removed, come back to the earth. The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is a disaster for regional communities. From the very beginning, government attitude was to tame us, blame us, blame each other, lock us out of the conversation and not listen.

Now, after billions of tax dollars and millions of fish dying, governments still refuse to accept responsibility. The political scramble for water has left the Murray electorate in a desperate State, with dairy herds disbanded and rice priced out of production. Our agricultural diversity has always been our strength but, with water flowing to the highest or most desperate bidders, it leaves communities, contractors, process and transport companies hung out to dry. Several towns across rural New South Wales have run out of drinking water. Farmers are going bankrupt on zero per cent water allocation. But at the same time wealthy corporations are making tens of millions of dollars by trading ghost water.

We know that there is corruption and gross mismanagement. But why is there not action? Why are those responsible for this disaster not going to jail? Some irrigators are facing court over water theft, but what about the bureaucrats and politicians who created this mess? They are supposed to look after our more precious natural resource. Why have they escaped with no consequences at all? Why are they allowed to continue destroying our rivers? How many more taxpayer dollars will be wasted? The Federal and State governments are creating man-made floods with their policy of "just add water", with a cool \$13 billion in their back pocket. They, personally, have nothing to lose with their just-flush-it mentality. The irony of the plan is that it will leave some areas continuously flooded and other areas decommissioned.

I invite every single member to come out and see for yourself the wastage, loss and damage that is occurring in my electorate. While New South Wales crumbles, a smaller State to our west prospers at our expense. South Australia has seized a 100 per cent allocation and has an overabundance of environmental water to keep artificial lakes full. There has been little accountability for its behaviour while everyone upstream is in trouble. Catastrophic fish kills in the Lower Darling were horrendous. Those who live and work there feel violated. This environmental damage in New South Wales has finally caused the bush to revolt in fury. The locals know that if you rapidly drain an essential resource in this land of drought and flooding rains there will be dire consequences.

The Barmah-Millewa Forest has been inundated for months as the river operators try to push more water across the South Australian border. The overbank flows are ruining habitat both in the river and in the forest. This water is netted off against New South Wales irrigators' allocations, causing hardship for farmers and their communities. Where else in the world during a drought would huge amounts of fresh water be allowed to escape to the sea and then be brought back to be desalinated at a huge cost? We know that poor water management is responsible for blue-green algae blooms. Poor-quality water is dangerous to everyone's health. There are very strong links between blue-green algae blooms and motor neurone disease clusters. There are clusters in towns and regions in the seat of Murray, with rates in Griffith seven times the national average. Yet the Government is refusing to fund a study that will definitely prove the cause of these shocking rates.

Despite this bleak picture, our people are defined by their optimism. We are resilient and eternally confident that we can make a go of things, produce food and fibre, raise our families and support our communities, regardless of the many difficulties we might face. Unfortunately, that resilience has been taken for granted for too long. Burdensome red tape is strangling small communities where resources are stretched to the max. We are always being asked to keep doing more with less. The irony of this is that when governments want to see projects delivered then red tape is cut and cast aside without due process.

While country communities have waited decades for new hospitals, the New South Wales Government built a 270-kilometre, \$500 million pipeline from Wentworth to Broken Hill that nobody wanted in just two years. The business case was kept secret. An environmental impact statement was not needed. Today I commit myself to the Murray electorate. I intend to continue to build partnerships with all communities, including New Australians and the First Australians. We need to adequately recognise the economic and environmental contribution we make and support our industries and people with sensible policies.

I refuse to let us be the ignored or forgotten people, or the people who continually receive second best. I intend to put "local" into "localism", and encourage and guide the current Government. We need visionary planning that is nation building and provides for the future. Water infrastructure needs to be high on the list. There are sensible, practical, triple bottom line solutions, and I look forward to discussing those with the water Minister, the environment Minister and their various departments. Rural and regional communities have too often borne the brunt of poor government policy and we have always gone along—sometimes reluctantly—with inappropriate policy. But not anymore. I intend to put Murray on the map. I leave you with a quote from Ray Goforth:

There are two types of people who will tell you that you cannot make a difference in this world: those who are afraid to try and those who are afraid you will succeed.

The SPEAKER: I add my personal congratulations to the member for Murray.

Members stood in their places and applauded.

Announcements

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

The SPEAKER: I make it clear that an instructional directive has been given to all occupants of the chair that we will stick to the allotted time for the giving of community recognition statements from now on. There will be no extensions to the time, but we will make the time frame clear at the beginning. It being 10 minutes to 1.00 p.m., the giving of community recognition statements will proceed for 30 minutes and will be completed by 1.20 p.m. at the latest.

Community Recognition Statements

MANNING HOCKEY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:50): Manning Hockey should be a major contender for honours in next month's under-18 women's championships to be played at Taree. Four Manning players—Lara Watts, Priya Bourke, Jamie Balding and Anika Toohey—were members of New South Wales teams that played in the recent Australian under-18 championships in Hobart. Priya and Jamie were in the Blues side that was beaten 3-2 in the final by Queensland. Lara and Anika played with the State team and won the bronze medal game 5-0 against Victoria. Manning will field two sides in the State event for the first time, with the No. 1 team to play in division two and the No. 2 team to play in division three. Three divisions will be contested at the championships that will be played from 10 to 12 May. I congratulate the Manning teams on their achievements to date and wish them all the best at the upcoming State event.

STRATHFIELD SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (12:51): On Friday 8 March I had the pleasure of hosting the 2019 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Awards for the Strathfield electorate. The awards give us a unique opportunity

to celebrate and recognise the hard work of our local seniors and seniors' organisations that have made a significant contribution to our community. I congratulate all the recipients on their awards. They include Doug Sutherland, Frank Chou, Nat Yoon Paik, Hemachandra Rao, James Ding, Lalitha Mahadevan, Gladys Barnes, Keith Lee, Gladys Lim, Marlene Doran, Anne Byrne, Margaret Grundy, Changming Chen, Saihua Chen and Ada Ching Ku. I also congratulate local organisation recipients, including the Tamil Senior Citizens' Association, the Strathfield School for Seniors, the CASS Ashfield Environmental and Activity Team, and the elderly Australian Chinese home-care and day-care services. I thank all organisations and individuals for their service to the community and heartily congratulate them on their achievements.

SHIRLEY SMITH

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (12:52): I congratulate 2019 Cronulla Local Woman of the Year Shirley Smith, a nonagenarian who has been a committee member of the Caringbah RSL Sub-Branch since 2005. Shirley has undertaken a number of roles within the sub-branch and has been its president for the past five years. When needed, she often undertakes the roles of other committee members such as secretary and welfare officer. Shirley has a long history with the defence forces and is a full member of the RSL, having served as an army nurse.

Shirley is actively involved in raising funds for community projects, many of which benefit veterans. She has worked to secure grants for the upgrade of the Caringbah War Memorial, including the laying of a concrete path and gardens. She is also the key organiser of the Caringbah RSL Sub-Branch Anzac Day commemorations each year. Shirley is an active volunteer with other community organisations. She serves on a number of Sutherland Hospital committees and works with her local Catholic church to assist the community. Being named the 2019 Cronulla Local Woman of the Year is a well-deserved recognition of Shirley's dedication to all those who have served and sacrificed, and to their families and the community generally.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:53): Every week in New South Wales nearly one family loses a child, a parent, a partner or a sibling to workplace incidents, injuries and illnesses. In the 12 months ending 31 March 2019, 48 people lost their lives at work in New South Wales. They never came home. In 2019 that is completely unacceptable. On the International Day Of Mourning, held on the 28 April each year, those people are remembered. This year I was honoured to address a gathering of my State, local and Federal Labor colleagues, many trade union members and organisers, SafeWork NSW representatives, and friends and families to honour and remember those who have lost their lives through or at work. I thank Hunter Workers for organising the event and acknowledge that Unions NSW hosted similar events on the Central Coast and in Sydney. Workplace safety is a continuum where failure means that people die. We must be ever vigilant. We must do better. We must make sure that those lives were not lost in vain.

KINCUMBER NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:54): During the election campaign I was proud to commit and deliver \$55,000 to Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre in my electorate. The centre has served our community for more than 20 years, providing a range of services and activities for children, young people, families and seniors. More than 28,000 people have walked through its doors, which shows what a strong asset it is to our local community. The \$55,000 will enable Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre to expand and reach even more people in our community. The funds will go towards purchasing a new IT system, furniture and new audiovisual system, and upgrading the air conditioning. I congratulate co-managers Colette Baron and Robert Watson, who lead a dedicated team of staff and volunteers whom former Minister Pru Goward and I had the pleasure of meeting with in February. I encourage them to keep up their great work for the Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre and the extended community.

BULLI DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (12:55): I have great pleasure in acknowledging Bulli District Hospital for 125 years of service. It is an important hospital to the community that I am so fortunate to represent and to have fought alongside to secure the redevelopment that is now taking place. We recently attended a celebration of the hospital's 125 years and the publication of a large book in order to appropriately acknowledge the people involved. I pay thanks to Mr John Andrews, who has been a staff member, treasurer and honorary secretary of the Bulli Hospital Auxiliary for over 20 years, and Mrs Janice Puddle, who is a life member and has been serving the hospital for more 50 years. Those two local legends have helped make Bulli hospital what it is today.

LIFELINE CLASSIC

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:56): I recognise people from across my community and the work of Lifeline Northern Beaches through the Lifeline Classic, which took place at Queenscliff Beach this year. Every year more than 65,000 make a suicide attempt, with more than 3,000 taking their life. It is the leading cause of death for Australians aged between 15 and 44 years. The Lifeline Classic is a gateway for many men and women to have an important discussion about mental health. It is a tag-team surfing competition that raises funds for the work undertaken by Lifeline Northern Beaches in providing a vital service to the people of the northern beaches and the wider community.

This year the teams had a fundraising goal of \$5,000 and could choose from a line-up of guest professional surfers to join them in the competition. They raised nearly \$60,000. I thank Surfing Mums Australia, Queenscliff Boardriders Club, Narrabeen Sports High, Northern Beaches Uniting Church, Manly Surf School, the International College of Management, Man Anchor, One Eighty, Hotel Steyne, Steve Harro and my friend Cooper Chapman, along with his mates Alex Hayes and Georgia, for supporting the day. They have all made an outstanding contribution that will improve the lives of others.

FRACTURED FAIRYTALES ART EXHIBITION

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:57): On the weekend in Wentworth Falls I had the pleasure of attending and speaking at an art exhibition entitled *Fractured Fairytales*, featuring photographic works of local artist Livonne Larkins. Livonne is a storyteller. Through the adaptation of fairytales she explores her childhood and the impact of extreme trauma. From early childhood into her adulthood and motherhood, Livonne endured much abuse and tragedy. Art has been her safe haven, enabling her to work through the challenges in her life. The opening night showed this brave woman as a much loved mother and grandmother, greatly admired by her family, artist peers and her community. I am honoured to have been a small part of providing some necessary support for her healing. Stand strong and proud, Livonne! You are a champion and a survivor.

WINGS OVER ILLAWARRA

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (12:58): I acknowledge the great work of Mark and Kerry Bright in coordinating festival of flight Wings Over Illawarra, the largest air show in Australia, which was opened with great fanfare and celebration. I acknowledge the volunteers, particularly the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society at Albion Park and the cadets who helped on the day. I also acknowledge everybody who came to enjoy a great tourist event that brings thousands of people to the Illawarra region. Of course, the Illawarra is closely connected with flight. It is where Sir Charles Kingsford Smith conducted the first commercial flight between Seven Mile Beach and New Zealand. In the northern suburbs of the Illawarra, Lawrence Hargrave worked to develop such things as thick leading wing edges, or aerofoils, as well as the rotary engine. The Illawarra is the home of flight and we enjoyed celebrating it on the weekend. I congratulate the organisers on another great event in the Illawarra.

NEWTOWN ELECTORATE RESIDENTS ACTION GROUPS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:59): I acknowledge REDWatch, the Alexandria Residents Action Group, Friends of Erskineville, Petersham Bowlo and Newtown Mission, who all held election forums in our local community to support and encourage engagement with the democratic system and hold parties and candidates to account. I thank all the volunteers who make our resident action groups the strong, active, engaged groups that they are, advocating for the interests of our local community. I look forward to continuing working with them to serve our community for years to come.

ST PAULS NETBALL CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:00): Recently I had the pleasure of presenting St Pauls Netball Club with a \$4,000 grant for equipment. St Pauls Netball Club is a fantastic local sporting group in Winston Hills that works hard and has great fun. It is run by a dedicated group of volunteers who work hard and devote their time to training nights, events, fundraisers and, most importantly, getting the players ready for their Saturday game days. St Pauls is a small netball club that it is a part of the Baulkham Hills Shire Netball Association and \$4,000 will help go a long way towards providing what the club needs for training and game days. I thank in particular club president Gemma Martin for her fantastic work and enthusiasm in helping oversee the operations of the club and ensuring kids keep active and have fun. Good luck to the St Pauls Netball Club for the rest of the season.

CHANGE THE RULES MARCH

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:00): I commend the Newcastle trade union movement for a fantastic and well-attended May Day Change the Rules march. On Wednesday 1 May unions from across the

Hunter area met in Civic Park, Newcastle, to rally on the issues that are important for workers across Australia and this globe. While there are certainly challenges ahead, on May Day we celebrated the wins of the past, including weekend pay, sick leave, safe workplaces and fair pay. We also stood in solidarity with workers outside Australia, many of whom are still fighting for workplace rights that we enjoy on a daily basis. I thank the unions who marched on the day, including the Maritime Union of Australia, the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, the SDA, the Electrical Trade Union of NSW, United Voice and all those others. Their dedication to their workplaces and community as activists is not forgotten. Long live May Day!

CRANBROOK STUDENTS

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (13:01): This is my first address to this new Parliament. It is a great pleasure to be back. It was wonderful to host the year 5 Cranbrook students at Parliament House last week. It was great to meet such a young, enthusiastic group of students from my electorate. I spoke about their role and in particular the connection of my electorate of Vaucluse to the New South Wales Parliament—especially about William Charles Wentworth, whose oil print hangs over a door in the Chamber, who established *The Australian* newspaper and Sydney University. He was a force to be reckoned with. The students had great questions. I dare say at least one of them might well be gracing these halls of Parliament in the future.

UMINA SKATE PARK

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:02): It was wonderful to see so many young skaters and BMX riders turn out for our community meeting in the darkness at Umina skate park last month. We have been searching for their voices for a long time and they rocked up with loads of ideas and feedback for the design of our new skate park and BMX complex at Umina Beach. I commend the action of Duncan Imlah and Jake Reid who came sliding sideways into my office on their bikes two days before community submissions to council closed demanding that their crew's voice be heard. I commend Mark Nitsos and the Umina Community Group for the action taken to get the skate park upgrade and for working with the riders on the design process. I heard all of them loud and clear on the importance of commemorating local legend "Chinga" Dane Searls and the need to accommodate his elite legacy in our new skate park. I thank all of them for rocking up, sharing their ideas and working together with the Central Coast Council to create the best possible facility in the future. They are legends.

PAULINE TAYLOR

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:03): After enduring the death of her husband 26 years ago Pauline Taylor took on the gruelling Kokoda Track during April this year. Pauline's husband, Graham, was a local police officer who sadly passed away in a road accident. Each year the NSW Police Legacy takes a group of legatees to Kokoda as a way of remembering those officers who have passed away. Pauline said she agreed to do this trek not only as a way to help her heal but also as a way to help others in the healing process. Well done on tackling this gruelling track, Pauline. Your achievements will never be taken away from you. I hope you find great solace in undertaking this challenge in memory of your husband, Graham.

TAMIL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:04): Last Saturday I joined the Tamil Women's Development Group for their important seminar Journey to Wellbeing in partnership with mental health advocacy group Haathi In the Room—"haathi" being the Hindi word for elephant. The seminar sought to raise awareness about mental health in South Asian communities, especially among women, to reduce stigma and to ensure people know how to access the help that they need. The keynote speaker was Joe Lander, artist in residence at the Macquarie University Centre for Emotional Health. Joe gave a passionate and revealing presentation about his mental health challenges and his journey to recovery. He also presented his incredible art project, which is a series of portraits of men who have suffered from mental health problems, helping others to feel less isolated and relate to other sufferers. Congratulations to all the organisers on such a well-attended and informative seminar, which I hope contributes to a better understanding of mental health in our community.

KIM ELVERY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:05): I offer my congratulations to Kim Elvery, who recently won the 60-64 Women's Australian Standard Distance Triathlon Championship held in Mooloolaba. This win qualifies Kim to compete at the world championships, which will be held in Lausanne in Switzerland, although she is not sure whether she will attend this event. I have known Kim for close to 40 years. For her training is a way of life. She is a great competitor and loves nothing better than to beat her husband, Brian. She is a great example of how to live a healthy life. I wish her continued success in the future.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:06): On 25 April this year I had the pleasure of attending four Anzac Day services. The day started at 5.30 a.m. with the dawn service at Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. The number of people that attended this year was massive—it was attended not only by adults but also by a great number of schoolchildren representing their respective schools. At 7.00 a.m. I attended Canley Heights RSL Sub Branch. The service was well attended and treated with dignity and respect. At 12 noon I went to the Mount Pritchard Community Club where again the number of attendees had increased. At 5.00 p.m. I attended the service at the Triglav Club at St Johns Park—a Slovenian club. As explained by President Mr Peter Kroke, there is a late start to their service because 5.00 p.m. in Australia corresponds, with the time of dawn in Slovenia—the rising of the sun. I thank the president of Cabra-Vale Diggers Club, Mr George Taylor, and the president of Canley Heights RSL Sub Branch, Mr Taffy Pritchard. I acknowledge Mount Pritchard Club President Mr Kevin Ingram and Triglav Club President Mr Peter Kroke for their kind invitations.

TWO RIVERS WINES

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (13:07): I congratulate Brett and Linda Keeping of Two Rivers Wines at Denman, part of the Upper Hunter electorate, who were one of six finalists for the prestigious Royal Agricultural Society's [RAS] President's Medal. To be nominated for the President's Medal is a great honour for Brett and Linda as it is the highest accolade presented by the RAS recognising exceptional food and wine products. Due to Two Rivers' enormous success at the 2018 Royal Sydney Wine Show, where it won five gold medals and four trophies including best young white wine for the 2018 vintage and best mature white wine for the 2013 vintage, the winery was named as one of the six finalists from across Australia. I again congratulate Brett and Linda on their exceptional achievement and wish them every success in their future endeavours in promoting the wine and tourism industry in the Upper Hunter and in this State.

NIKITAS CHARTOFILLIS

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:08): I pay tribute to Mr Nikitas Chartofillis. Nikitas is an exceptionally active member of my community and so is his wife, Denise. They have a wonderful family and they live in Kingsgrove. Nikitas volunteers his time for many worthwhile causes, including the Sydney Greek Festival, the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW and All Saints Church in Belmore. Nikitas is particularly dedicated to caring for older members of our community. He is a regular volunteer at the Greek nursing home in Earlwood and he regularly delivers home-baked goods to older people in our community. He delivers home-baked goods to our office as well. He is such a gentleman. He also helps people with vision impairment by picking them up or dropping them off to destinations like Sydney Airport or to other locations outside Sydney. On behalf of the people of Canterbury I thank Nikitas for his tireless dedication and for his selfless commitment to caring for others.

ELKA PETERSEN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:09): I inform the House that 11-year-old Black Head schoolgirl Elka Petersen was excited to travel to Sydney to compete in show-riding events at her first Sydney Royal Easter Show, the country's largest premier agricultural show. In late February Elka and her mount, Uhavta Jackpot, placed third in the child's Large Galloway of the Year show-riding event at the prestigious Hufglocken Grand National Saddle Horse and Rider Championships. The young equestrian earned her entry into the competition following success at Sydney Royal qualifying events held throughout the country. Elka had to compete and win at a number of qualifying shows to gain a place in Sydney, including at Nabcac, Taree, Muswellbrook, Morisset, Camden Haven, Singleton, Grafton, Bellingen and Newcastle. Elka, with the help of her mum, grooms and washes her horse daily, keeps the stables clean and trains four to five times a week for up to an hour, while also keeping up with her school studies. I congratulate Elka Petersen on achieving so much success already and wish her well for her future.

FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:10): On Tuesday 9 April 2019 I had the great honour of attending Fairfield High School's annual "Our Faces, Our Stories" project launch. The "Our Faces, Our Stories" project works with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and empowers them with the tools and resources necessary to tell their stories and to get them engaged through collaborative works. This year the project went digital for the first time. I must admit that the quality of the works and the passion behind the project were truly incredible. I commend and congratulate each and every student who participated: Misheel, Elmira, Luanna, Yahya, Mark Steven, Qiauhong, Raed, Ali, Saimun and Michel. I thank the Story Factory, all of the support staff and all of the local businesses that generously helped make the dreams and the stories for this inaugural digitised project a reality.

NADA POTTER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:11): Nada Potter is one of the most well-known community figures in the electorate of Terrigal. Earlier this year, as part of the inaugural NSW Women's Week, I was honoured to nominate Nada as the 2019 Terrigal Local Woman of the Year. Nada is a trained psychologist and has dedicated many years to providing services and support to families at Chertseydale Community Cottage at Chertsey Primary School in Springfield. She has touched the lives of so many in a unique way. She is a fitting recipient of this award. The Central Coast community is a better place because of her compassion, good humour and lifelong dedication to helping people. I was delighted to put Nada forward for consideration and I congratulate her on being recognised as our 2019 Terrigal Local Woman of the Year.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:12): Anzac Day is a special day on which we remember those who have served in our armed forces during times of war and in peacekeeping operations, and those who have supported the war effort from home shores. This Anzac Day I was able to attend services at Dudley, Redhead and Kahibah, each reflecting their own communities and the histories of those who have served. I congratulate the organisers of each of those Anzac Day ceremonies. Today I would particularly like to acknowledge the efforts of the Adamstown Anzac Committee for restoring the Adamstown Anzac Day service and conducting an emotional and fitting 100th anniversary Remembrance Day service on 11 November last year. The Remembrance Day service was attended by more than 500 people, who showed a great desire to honour service men and women, both past and present. I make special mention of Adamstown Anzac Committee President Gerard Williams for the work he has led the committee through in past ceremonies and in the relocation of the war memorial to Adamstown No. 1 Oval, which it is hoped will be completed by Remembrance Day this year. Lest we forget.

KINGS LANGLEY LITTLE ATHLETICS CENTRE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:13): Late last month I had the pleasure of visiting the Kings Langley Little Athletics Centre to congratulate all our local athletes on an outstanding season. It was an honour to present two community service awards to Craig and Lisa Emme for their dedicated work with the Kings Langley Little Athletics Centre. Craig served as president whilst Lisa served as registrar, and together they were able to secure several grants for the club for items such as equipment and uniforms. Craig and Lisa have been active members of the club for more than 20 years and have devoted themselves to organising events, training athletes, organising fundraisers and helping run the committee. I thank Craig and Lisa and all the other hardworking committee members and volunteers for the time and effort they put into Kings Langley Little Athletics Centre to ensure our kids are staying fit and active. Once again I congratulate all our athletes and wish them all the best as they continue to train hard and to have fun.

TRIBUTE TO RON AUSTIN

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:14): On behalf of the Sydney electorate I celebrate the life of long-time LGBTQIA+ activist and community hero Ron Austin, who recently passed away at the age of 90. Ron was an early member of the Campaign Against Moral Persecution [CAMP], which was one of the first groups fighting for equality in Australia and he was especially involved in the political action committee. He was a founding member of the gay telephone counselling service. Ron was a proud 78er, marching in every Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade. The Most Fabulous Parade Entry Mardi Gras award is named in his honour. He is credited with coming up with the idea for the first Mardi Gras when he asked, "Why don't we have a street party?" Ron later became an active member of the Pride History Group, helping record our history and the ongoing fight for justice. I thank Ron for his contribution to our fabulous global city and Australia's LGBTQIA+ community.

ERIN JOHNSON

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:15): Following the diagnosis of a rare condition, cystic hygroma, Erin Johnson, after the miscarriage of her daughter, Ava Grace, began a journey to break the silence around miscarriage, stillbirth and infant loss. At a time when mothers would be caring for their new babies, Erin began sewing clothes for other stillborn babies to donate to Nepean Hospital. What began as a simple gesture became a massive volunteer effort that has seen clothes donated to hospitals across Australia and overseas. Erin said, "I treasured the items that amazing charities and volunteers had given to Nepean Hospital to pass on to us so that our daughter would have something to wear and we would have something that we could hold in our hands when she was gone." Erin has turned her grief into a story of hope and healing for other parents walking this same path. It was my pleasure and honour to announce Erin Johnson as the 2019 Mulgoa Woman of the Year. Congratulations Erin.

RAMADAN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:16): One of the holiest periods of the Islamic calendar, Ramadan, which marks the revelation of the Qur'an to the prophet Muhammed by Allah, commenced on 5 May. For the next month Muslims around the world will observe the traditional sunrise to sunset fast, one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Ramadan is also a time of prayer, reflection, charitable giving and recitation of the Qur'an as Muslims seek to emulate the life of their prophet. The breaking of the fast at sunset is called an iftar. I will be joining the many Islamic communities in my electorate over the coming month to celebrate with them and break their fast together. It is testament to our wonderful multicultural country that I am always so warmly welcomed at those events. I wish all Muslims a happy and blessed Ramadan. Ramadan Mubarak.

STEVEN GREEN

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:17): I offer my congratulations to Steven Green who was recognised for his dedicated work ethic in his studies at the recent TAFE NSW Excellence Awards held at Kurri Kurri. Steven completed his Certificate III in Commercial Cookery at Grafton TAFE last year and was announced the winner of both the Tourism and Experience Services Student of the Year award and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year award. Steven is a great example of how when someone works with TAFE they obtain the skills to get a job in country New South Wales. I wish Steven every success in his career, which at present has him working as the chef at Toast Espresso in Grafton.

WYONG FIRE STATION

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:18): Last weekend Wyong Fire Station hosted the second round of the 2019 Fire and Rescue NSW Regional Firefighter Championships at Norah Head, which included a team from Toukley and three teams from Wyong. More than 100 firefighters from across New South Wales descended on the Central Coast to compete in a series of firefighting-based events designed to test their speed and skills. As part of the lead-up to the unique event I was one of a group of people invited to experience a "day in the life of a firefighter". Firefighter for a Day is a structured program that allows individuals to participate in a series of activities that are designed to simulate firefighting conditions and scenarios. The activities were conducted in a controlled environment and even in that instance it was clear to me how tough the job must be. I am very proud that my community hosted the second round of the regional firefighter championships and thank the Wyong Fire Station for giving me an insight into the fantastic work it does every day. I acknowledge that it is the current New South Wales State champion.

JOHN MESSARA, AM

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (13:19): It gives me great pleasure to inform the House that John Messara, AM, the owner of the prominent Arrowfield Stud in the Segenhoe Valley near Scone in the Upper Hunter electorate, has been honoured for his lifelong contribution to the thoroughbred racing industry. John received the prestigious 2019 Longines and IFHA International Award of Merit, which was recently presented to him in Sydney. John is the first Australian to receive this award. John's work over the past four decades has focused on elevating Australian racing and breeding and communicating successes around the world. I congratulate John on this outstanding achievement and thank him for his contribution to the Australian thoroughbred industry. John Messara has been instrumental in ensuring Scone has built upon and retained its global reputation as the horse capital of Australia.

SAM POOLMAN

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:20): I congratulate Sam Poolman, Wallsend Woman of the Year. Sam is the captain of the Australian Fast5 netball team and a member of the Giants netball team leadership group. She seeks out opportunities to give back to local groups in a variety of ways and has held ambassadorial roles with NetSetGO, Variety and Dementia Australia. Sam's ASPIRE program focuses on helping the next generation of athletes to develop their skills and to find future pathways. She is passionate about our local area and attributes her success to the opportunities our community has given her as a young aspiring netballer. She believes it is now time to give back. Well done, Sam, our wonderful local netball champion.

COOK PARADE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:21): The children from Cook Parade Children's Centre at St Clair made a special visit to Penrith City Council chambers in April. During their visit they presented the general manager with \$695, which was raised by them and their parents for the McGrath Foundation as part of the council's fundraising drive. The drive seeks to provide more specialist McGrath breast care nurses and to support the foundation's breast cancer awareness campaign. The children posed on councillors' chairs while their photo was taken and they were presented with a certificate from Penrith City Council congratulating them on a fantastic

achievement. Well done to all of the children and their parents from Cook Parade Children's Centre for this terrific achievement in raising money for the McGrath Foundation.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to Mr Malcolm Irving and Mrs Sheila Irving, who are my guests as the Speaker and the member for Davidson. I also extend a very warm welcome to a former colleague and former New South Wales Premier, the Hon. Barry O'Farrell. Mr O'Farrell is the guest of the Premier and the member for Willoughby. I similarly acknowledge another former New South Wales Premier, another respected former colleague, the Hon. Nathan Rees. We welcome you back to the Chamber.

Rulings

REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DURING QUESTION TIME

The SPEAKER: As members would be aware, there is provision in the Standing Orders under Standing Order 131 for members who have asked a question to seek additional information from the Minister. The granting of this additional two minutes speaking time is at my discretion and I would like to take this opportunity to advise members that in determining whether to exercise this discretion I will primarily consider three factors:

- (1) Whether it is in the public interest.
- (2) Whether the Minister's answer has been directly relevant.
- (3) The level of disorderly behaviour during the Minister's answer.

I ask that members consider these factors carefully before requesting an extension.

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

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

Question Time

STATE ELECTION COMMITMENTS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:25): I congratulate the Premier and the Deputy Premier on their election. Elections are very difficult to win and they should be congratulated for it. My question is directed to the Premier. During the election campaign she said that New South Wales could "have it all". Given that income from GST is projected to fall by around \$2.3 billion, will the Premier guarantee that she will deliver on every election commitment she made to the community?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25): I thank the acting interim Leader of the Opposition in the lower House for his question. I congratulate him for coming out of witness protection because, during the campaign as a shadow Treasurer, I do not think he held a single press conference on economic matters.

[A Government member interjected.]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes, but that was an interview; it wasn't a press conference. It is the first question from the acting interim Leader of the Opposition. Like him, I congratulate every member of the House on their re-election. But I also say to him that the people of New South Wales entrusted us to lead a historic third term because of our sound economic management. I will not be lectured by a former shadow Treasurer. I am not sure if he is still the shadow Treasurer: Is he? I do not know if he is still the shadow Treasurer. It is the only time in New South Wales' political history where the Opposition announces tax policy and the shadow Treasurer goes into hiding. In the middle of a drought, Opposition members impose—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier has been asked whether or not she is going to deliver on the commitments to the community, and she needs to answer that question.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Premier.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know you're interested in the leadership—nice try! As I was saying, the people entrusted us to lead this State because of our strong financial management. That has allowed us to make the record investments in schools, hospitals, roads and rail. When former Premier Barry O'Farrell, who is in the public gallery today, was the Leader of the Opposition and we were going to an election in 2011, New South Wales had the weakest economy and the highest unemployment in the nation.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Mr Speaker, yesterday you said that you will look to make this place more productive. We have now waited 2½ minutes. I asked a simple question: Will the Premier honour her election commitments?

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Premier.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The acting interim Opposition leader—and perhaps shadow Treasurer—asked me a question about the State's finances. What is he embarrassed about? Why does he not want us to talk about it? We congratulate the member again on coming out of hiding. He has done an admirable job in the past 24 hours. In fact, I want to support the motion moved by the member for Miranda: I encourage the member for Keira to run for the leadership and expect his colleagues to support him. It is interesting to note that part of the Opposition front bench is very active today but the member for Kogarah is quite quiet.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is the first question of the year and the Premier cannot commit to making sure that she will deliver on her election commitments. This is unbelievable. It has been nearly five minutes and the Premier of the day cannot commit to delivering on her election commitments.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Premier. The acting Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I have heard his point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I was interrupted by the acting interim Leader of the Opposition in the lower House. I congratulate the member for Kogarah for having the guts to put up his hand for the leadership because, no matter how good or otherwise the government of the day is, this State deserves to have an Opposition leader.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, the same point of order everybody else has taken. The question was about the election commitments and adhering to those promises.

The SPEAKER: I remind the Premier that the question was specific, but the Premier is being relevant in general terms.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The people of New South Wales know that we will, of course, deliver on our commitments but I say this: Put the people of New South Wales ahead of Bill Shorten. The Opposition is trying to protect Bill Shorten. The Opposition should elect its leader; the people of New South Wales deserve it.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (14:31): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government delivering its plan for New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:31): I thank the people of New South Wales for honouring us and giving the Liberals and The Nationals a historic third term. We know that each member of Parliament, irrespective of the communities they represent, is here with good intentions. We are here to support our communities in making the quality of life of our citizens even better. I especially congratulate the member for East Hills. The result in that seat was outstanding. The Labor Party head office had already told everybody that East Hills was in the bag for the Labor Party. Its arrogance has no bounds. and I congratulate—

The SPEAKER: Order! If we are going to set the right tone, I remind members that we should do it from the outset.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the electorate of East Hills. I congratulate the new member, Wendy Lindsay. I appreciate that, every time I made a visit to the East Hills electorate, the community was not only strongly supporting our Liberal candidate but also giving me direct feedback on what it wanted for New South Wales. I am absolutely confident that the people of New South Wales entrusted us to get on with the job of delivering because they trust the Liberals and The Nationals to deliver better quality of life to residents across New South Wales. It was a historic election outcome. It dawned on me only 1½ weeks ago that the last time we were given the right to have a historic third term was in 1971. In that election we won by only one seat, so I am pleased to say that we have doubled the majority. No matter where you live, no matter what your circumstances, we are here to govern for all of New South Wales. We set out a plan—

Ms Kate Washington: You can't even give the regions parli secs.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know you want to be the leader but stop interjecting. Take the call if you want to take a point of order; that's how the rules work.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Speaker, as I said, the people of New South Wales entrusted us to deliver a strong economy, to create the jobs of the future and to support all of our workers. They entrusted us to provide a quality education for every student, including mature students, across the length and breadth of New South Wales. They want us to build well-connected communities with quality local environments, which is exactly what we do. They entrusted us to make government work better for each and every citizen, which is why the citizen and the customer is at the heart of everything we do. We do not put politics ahead of policy. Those opposite are putting Bill Shorten's interests ahead of the people of New South Wales. I am incredulous to think that the once grand old Labor Party cannot even elect somebody to be the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales.

I am also pleased that the Government has committed in its third term to break the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage by addressing some of the social challenges that for too long have been put in the too-hard basket. The introduction today of legislation for a new Ageing and Disability Commissioner is but one example. We know that it not only takes words but also action on the ground. So I was incredibly proud to announce that on 26 May the Sydney Metro Northwest will be open to the people of New South Wales. Why did I raise that? Because those opposite promised that rail line a dozen times and did not deliver it. The shadow Minister for Transport—I think that is still her title—a week or two ago even dared to suggest it was not going to open in May. Those opposite need to learn to tell the truth and the facts. They also need to put people ahead of politics because they will still be on the Opposition benches in another eight years if they do not.

REVENUE NSW

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:36): My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Can the Minister guarantee that no-one in his office revealed the confidential, personal information of private citizens held by Revenue NSW to the Liberal Party or to any other person during the election campaign?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:36): I thank the member for Cessnock for his question. The matter is currently before the police. My office—

[Opposition members interjected.]

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Do you want to hear the answer? My office is assisting the police with their investigation. I have nothing further to say other than to again thank the member for his question: That is the first question I have had from the Opposition in about four years.

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (14:37): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its plan for regional New South Wales?

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:37): What was that?

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Oh mate, come on, you guys polled 27.4 per cent primary in Monaro. Good on you.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the newly elected member for Dubbo for his question. He made his inaugural speech this morning, and what a speech it was. In fact, I think it speaks volumes about the calibre of the individual that the good people of the electorate have chosen him to replace Troy Grant, who has left a lasting legacy in Dubbo. Most importantly, he will continue to make sure that the people of Dubbo will have a strong voice in the government of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. There is too much general conversation in the Chamber. It is very early in the Minister's response. I ask Opposition members to show some respect and listen to his answer

for at least the first couple of minutes. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite love to talk about cultural change in this Chamber when they are outside, but when they get in here they get excited. But it is typical Labor—they say one thing and through their actions do something else. The historic return of the Liberal-Nationals Government for a third term will give us the opportunity to serve the people of New South Wales, including those in regional New South Wales. I acknowledge the election of two new members to regional electorates in New South Wales: the member for Barwon and the member for Murray. I also note the re-election of the member for Orange. But The Nationals have to learn from the election result because some regional communities chose to elect alternative members to represent them in this Chamber. I have now had an opportunity to speak to a number of members, and over the next four years we should all be focused on outcomes for the people of New South Wales, regardless of the party to which we are aligned. It is geography that brings us together—the place where we live, where our children go to school and where we drink at the local pub. The members of The Nationals are regional New South Wales. We do not talk about it; we live it each and every day.

Some of the messages from the last election were about a new focus on regional New South Wales. We will now have a dedicated Minister for western New South Wales. Mr Adam Marshall has been appointed as the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Mr Paul Toole has been appointed as the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Water is one of the greatest challenges faced in regional New South Wales, and we have also appointed a dedicated Minister for water. Ms Melinda Pavey has been appointed as Minister for Water, Property and Housing. This will ensure that we get the balance right for our farmers, our communities and the environment. As the Deputy Prime Minister said recently, the key to unlocking the potential of regional Australia—in our case regional New South Wales—is "just add water".

We are enduring one of the toughest droughts in recorded history, and its impact is now beyond the farm gate. Those opposite no longer want to hear about it because the election is over, but during the election cycle they used regional New South Wales and the drought as a political football. Today they are no longer interested in hearing about the plight of our farmers, our families and regional New South Wales. They say they want a cultural change in this Chamber yet they are not prepared to sit here and listen to the facts about regional New South Wales. During the election campaign we committed \$650 million to raise the Wyangala Dam wall. We have put \$25 million on the table to encourage investigation at the State and Federal level to develop a large-scale water diversion project—for example, like the Bradfield scheme.

We are also continuing our investment in the Safe and Secure Water Program at a time when some of our regional communities are running out of water. We have an opportunity to invest in dams and pipelines such as the 270-kilometre pipeline to Broken Hill, at a cost of \$470 million, to secure water supply for that community. So weirs, pipelines and dams—and in some communities we are now punching bores to make sure they do not run out of water. Over the recent Easter break the Premier and I travelled to Bourke, Brewarrina, Deniliquin, Finley and Hay. We decided to visit the regions we knew were feeling the pinch as a result of the drought. *[Extension of time]*

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time. I call the member for The Entrance to order for the first time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time. I call the member for Keira, the acting Leader of the Opposition, to order for the first time. He is overstepping the line.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: As I said, the Premier and I travelled to Bourke, Brewarrina, Deniliquin, Finley and Hay over the Easter break to hear firsthand from the people in those regions. With the election cycle out of the way we wanted to talk about the issues that are impacting on those regional communities. I thank the mayor of Bourke, Barry Hollman, the mayor of Brewarrina, Phil O'Connor, the mayor of Deniliquin, Norm Brennan, and the Acting General Manager of Hay Shire Council, Kirstyn Thronder, for their time and hospitality.

And, of course, as we travelled to those regions we were able to see not only the issues we are facing as communities in regional New South Wales but also the opportunities there are if there was a targeted approach by governments at all levels. No single bullet, no single solution can fix the plight of some of our regional communities that have seen their population decline over decades due to the impacts of drought, the loss of industry and the lack of water. I hope that post the Federal election, regardless of the result, we have an opportunity to talk about the issues, especially water, in a frank, honest and transparent way so that we can get the right outcome for communities.

Everything we do from hereon in must be driven by outcomes, and that must be the focus of this House. Leading into the election the Liberals and The Nationals put forward a vision about the future of regional New South Wales. It is a bold vision, underpinned by five key pillars: investing in connectivity, road and rail, and telecommunications; unlocking diversity in our local economies through special activation precincts; and bringing opportunities to regional New South Wales so that our kids can study locally, can stay local and can remain in their home towns to become the future leaders of our regional communities. We must stop the drain of our young people leaving regional New South Wales and the only way we can do that is to bring hope and prosperity to the regions. We have that vision and that vision will be played out over the next four years.

REVENUE NSW

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (14:45): My question is directed to the Premier. Can the Premier confirm the exact number of people whose personal records were leaked by her Government during the election campaign, which are now subject to a police investigation?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:46): I acknowledge the question asked by the member for Bankstown. First, this issue was raised a number of times during the election campaign; it is not new. Secondly, I do not appreciate the assertions in her question; in fact, I argue that potentially the question is out of order because she has made assumptions that I do not believe are correct. Thirdly, I refer the member for Bankstown to the response given by the very capable Minister for Customer Service. The member's question demonstrates that the Labor Party has learnt nothing from the election result. The Labor Party should focus on the issues that matter to the people of New South Wales.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order: We know that the police are investigating this matter.

The SPEAKER: What is the member's point of order? Please identify what standing order you are referring to.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Clearly there has been a breach, and it is a serious breach. The Premier should give the people of New South Wales a proper answer.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I am happy for the Premier to continue.

Mr Andrew Constance: Yes, but—

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on the point of order. I am happy for the Premier to continue. There was no point of order to speak further to.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Please identify upfront your point of order.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is Standing Order 128.1. I believe the Premier is debating the question that she has been asked. She should answer the question and you should direct her to do so.

Mr Andrew Constance: I seek a ruling from you, Mr Speaker, in relation to Standing Order 128.2, which shows very clearly that the question is out of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am happy to continue answering the question.

The SPEAKER: On the basis the Premier is happy to answer the question, I am happy for her to continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, I think I have made the point clearly that those opposite have not learnt anything about respecting the people of New South Wales. Respecting the people of New South Wales means coming into this place and raising issues that improve the quality of life of our citizens, keeping us accountable in relation to our election commitments and—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier is purporting to answer the question, but she is lecturing us on what questions we can and cannot ask. That brings my point of order back to Standing Order 128. The Premier should answer the question she was asked. People in New South Wales have every right to know if their privacy has been breached.

The SPEAKER: You have made your point of order. The Premier may continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I regret the member for Maitland did not listen to my answer. I raised three valid points at the outset, and I refer the member to *Hansard*, which will be available shortly, I am sure. In the meantime I believe it is appropriate to make the point that what matters to the people of New South Wales is

a government that ensures that we have our priorities right, that we deliver on our commitments and that we are in touch with the community's expectations. What the community also expects—

Mr Stephen Kamper: That they can have it all.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Of course, and isn't that a great thing? What the people of New South Wales also expect is that no matter which member leads the Opposition, the Opposition should respect the people of this State by at least electing a leader and putting the people first.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier has not been relevant and she continues to be not relevant. I ask you to make a ruling—

The SPEAKER: It was a specific question. If the Premier wishes to answer the question, I ask her to do so, given that she has elected to answer it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The question was in relation to matters that were raised and canvassed during the election campaign and I am simply making the point that the Labor Party has learnt nothing from its experience. Meanwhile, we will ensure that the Liberals and The Nationals deliver not only on all of our commitments but also that we ensure that the quality of life of every citizen, including those represented by members opposite, is improved, because that is what good governments do. We are deeply grateful to the people of New South Wales because the Libs and the Nats are going to get it done.

STATE ECONOMY AND JOBS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:50): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its plan for a strong economy and the creation of jobs?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:51): I thank the member for her question and congratulate her on her election to the electorate of Hawkesbury—the greatest member for Hawkesbury in the history of the State. I welcome everyone back to Parliament or, as we like to call it, Fortress New South Wales. We all know who the real "boss lady" is: the first ever female Premier selected on merit and now elected on merit. I congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your elevation to the Speakership. After listening to your speech yesterday I am looking forward to your new regime and seeing impartiality, objectivity and fairness continuing in this place. I am particularly looking forward to your holding the Opposition to account in upholding the same high standards of behaviour as this side of the House. I welcome you all back to Her Majesty's loyal Opposition. You are so loyal you are back here for four more years. Well done.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The Treasurer is directing his comments across the table. He should direct his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The question was about jobs. I want to know who on the other side of the House thinks that Sussex Street did a good job during the election campaign. Minns, I think you have it in the bag. In relation to jobs, the last election was incredibly important because it was a referendum on where the State was going to be into the future. The Opposition ran a campaign on cancelling projects, increasing taxes and shrinking the economy, but we ran a positive campaign based on creating prosperity and opportunity for everyone in this State whatever their circumstances. It was a campaign true to our values: lowering taxes, making prudent investments and doing more with less. Our policies were about uniting the community not dividing the community and about taking our State forwards not backwards. That positive vision is why the people of New South Wales bestowed on us the great privilege of serving them once again. It is a lesson that Labor never learns. Whether it is State Labor or Federal Labor it is always the same. I saw Bill Shorten the other day. He is another big-taxing and big-spending Labor politician from the union production line. He was preaching about the dignity—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The question was about job creation in New South Wales, it was not about the Federal election campaign. The answer is now well and truly outside the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Treasurer has been relevant.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Bill Shorten was preaching about the dignity of work and the importance of giving people jobs. We on this side of the House know that you do not give people jobs, you establish the economic foundation for jobs to be created. Despite Mr Shorten's preaching, if you look at the unemployment rate during the three months following the end of the previous Parliament it was 3.9 per cent in New South Wales. That is not just the lowest unemployment rate in the country but also the lowest unemployment rate in recorded modern history in New South Wales, and all while under a Liberal-Nationals Government. There

was a record participation rate of 65.2 per cent, with female unemployment at a record low of 3.7 per cent. Youth unemployment improved as well.

During the previous term we promised to create economic conditions that would enable 150,000 jobs to be created. At the end of our last term in government more than 420,000 jobs were created in New South Wales. Labor knows how to promise everything but to deliver nothing. Let the record show that it is Liberal policies and conservative values that have delivered the prosperity that the State now enjoys. There is significant jobs growth off the back of infrastructure projects such as the south-west metro, mentioned in the election campaign. *[Extension of time]*

While this side of the House is focused on job creation, for six months the Labor Party focused on one job—who will be Leader of the Opposition. This is a party that campaigns against the casualisation of the workforce. But what do they do? They march in here and create the job of an acting, temporary, substitute, stopgap, makeshift, part-time leader of the opposition, a job currently held by the acting, temporary, substitute, stopgap, makeshift, part-time, interim shadow Treasurer. I am concerned about the job prospects of the member for Keira. It is a temporary role with no job security. He is acting this and interim that. I suspect some wage theft and suggest that he contact his union representative and potentially go on strike. It is time to change the rules.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: There are two parts to the point of order. The member is directing his comments directly across the Chamber rather than through the Chair and that is the second time that point of order has been taken. The member is flouting your ruling.

The SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The team is doing a good job with Sportsbet. The odds for the next Labor leader are: Kogarah \$150; Strathfield \$3; Port Stephens \$7.50; and any other at 10 bucks. Andrew Clennell is at \$10 and I am at \$10, with Ryan Park following at \$20. According to the betting, I have a better chance of being the next Labor leader than Ryan Park.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The member's time has expired.

NEW SOUTH WALES PREMIER

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:58): I direct my question to the Premier. Does the Premier maintain that she was the girl dux of her high school in every year?

The SPEAKER: I am ruling that question out of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:58): No. I never have said that and I never will. I say this: Why didn't you speak up when the Leader of the Opposition made those comments in the Blue Mountains? The standard you walk by is the standard you set.

The SPEAKER: The question has been ruled out of order. On the basis that the Premier is happy to answer it, I will allow the record to stand and take it as a question having been answered.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have not finished.

The SPEAKER: The Premier may continue.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: Mr Speaker, would you identify the point of order that allows you to rule a question out of order and then for the Minister or Premier to answer the question? I am interested in the Standing Order because I want to know where the control of the House sits.

The SPEAKER: I am happy to speak to that. The question was not relevant to the ministerial or portfolio responsibilities of the Premier.

Mr Clayton Barr: I understand that.

The SPEAKER: As has been set by precedent in this House, where Ministers have indicated a preparedness to answer a question that is a relevant factor to the Chair in deciding whether or not to allow the question. In accordance with precedent, I have decided to go down that path and allow the Premier to answer the question.

Mr Clayton Barr: It is convention and tradition, not a standing order?

The SPEAKER: Correct.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I note the Speaker has correctly ruled the question out of order, but I will answer the question. It is an important question about integrity. First, I have never claimed that—others have—and I have corrected the record when that incorrect statement has been made. Secondly, if a member is going to ask a question about integrity they need to look at their own actions. There was a serious comment made by the former Leader of the Opposition at a function where the member for the Blue Mountains was present, and she stood by and said nothing. The Leader of the Opposition in the other place stood by and said nothing.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129.

[A Government member interjected.]

Ms Jodi McKay: That is my point. The Premier has chosen to answer the question. The question is specific.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Premier has answered the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I witnessed this behaviour every day during the State election campaign. The Labor Party purported to take the high moral ground while jumping over their own hypocrisy.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129, relevance. If we are talking the high moral ground and you are doing fake Facebook trolls from your party and your staffers—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Port Stephens raises the issue of trolling.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I ask the member where she was when the acting Leader of the Opposition in the other place did the same to me. She was nowhere to be seen. They have one rule for themselves and another rule for others.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The Premier staked her premiership on winning that electorate. She stopped at nothing.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I will not take any further points of order on relevance for the balance of the Premier's answer.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not normally one who raises issues such as this, but if those opposite are going to question my integrity or that of any other member in this place I will raise the hypocrisy of their statement.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say this because I am deeply grateful to the people of New South Wales for trusting me, the Deputy Premier and the team we lead. We do so in an open and transparent way.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say to those opposite: Treat the people of New South Wales with respect and this place with respect, and look at your own hypocrisy before you ask a question such as this.

WESTERN SYDNEY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:03): My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its plan for western Sydney?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (15:04): Premier, you may have missed out on being the dux of North Ryde High School, but the people of New South Wales made sure you are the dux of New South Wales. I thank the member for Seven Hills for his fantastic question. He is a proud and passionate advocate for western Sydney, particularly in his capacity to deliver for his community on important projects like the Prospect Highway, a \$300 million investment as part of our plan for western Sydney. It is important to recognise that a former Premier of this State, Barry O'Farrell, has just left the public gallery. He understood how important western Sydney is to the future of this State. I also see in the public gallery the Hon. Nathan Rees, a former Premier of New South Wales and a proud son of western Sydney.

There is a job vacancy on the other side of the Chamber—sorry, Nathan, the puppetmaster has not changed; they are just looking for a new puppet!

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: The Minister should direct his comments through the Chair and not directly to a former member sitting in the gallery. Mr Speaker, I ask you to ask the Minister to direct all his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld. Ministers will direct their comments through the Chair.

Mr STUART AYRES: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I will happily direct all my comments about puppets through the Chair. In this election the people of New South Wales voted for a strong and prosperous western Sydney. They know that in the past eight years our economic credentials and our economic management have continued to deliver social and economic prosperity for people right across western Sydney. More than 228,000 jobs have been added to the region since we were elected; in the past 12 months alone more than 58,000 jobs have been added.

At the last election we had a ringing endorsement from people right across western Sydney, because they know that for this community to be successful they have to have strong local members. These strong members have been endorsed by their communities. They are the member for Parramatta; the member for Castle Hill; the member for Baulkham Hills; the member for Riverstone; the new member for Hawkesbury; the member for Mulgoa; the member for Holsworthy; the new member for East Hills, who had a ringing endorsement as a strong and passionate worker; and the member for Wollondilly. All of these communities are represented by strong, ferocious leaders who want to get results for their communities.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Mr STUART AYRES: Well, they work a hell of a lot harder than you did and that is exactly why they keep getting voted back in. Going forward, we have a target of more than 250,000 new jobs across New South Wales. For us to achieve that, we must keep growing jobs in western Sydney. When we think about the strong infrastructure program that this Government has set up, we can say with confidence that we have the ability to hit that target. We are not only concentrating on infrastructure; we recognise that we have the ability to deliver good quality services in western Sydney. We have made strong investments in health, with new investments in hospitals like Nepean Hospital, in my community; Westmead Children's Hospital; Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital; Campbelltown Hospital; Liverpool Hospital—I know the member for Holsworthy has worked hard to achieve that investment; and, thanks to the work of the new member for East Hills, a \$1.3 billion commitment for the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. These investments will deliver better quality services to western Sydney and grow jobs across this community.

In growth areas we are looking at regional roads, including in western Sydney, where we are partnering with the Commonwealth Government. We have committed an amount of more than \$3.6 billion to the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan. Drivers travelling between Camden and Penrith along the Northern Road will see evidence of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been poured into those communities. WestConnex links south-west and western Sydney with the CBD. Over the next couple of months, the first tunnel under Parramatta Road will be completed, finally extending the M4 after years and years of delays under Labor. We promised it; we are delivering it.

We have also committed funds to the North South Rail Link, which links the airport to the T1 Western line. The people of New South Wales can believe that we will deliver that line because we have delivered the Sydney Metro Northwest, another example of a project promised year after year by Labor, but delivered by this Government. We have made a real budgeted long-term commitment to the Sydney Metro West. We know that for western Sydney to continue to grow, we must invest in both road and rail. *[Extension of time]*

Our investment across road and rail will enable western Sydney to grow and we will make sure that people's jobs are created closer to where they live. We will continue to provide fantastic connectivity right across the region. We are investing not just in health, road and rail but also in providing the cultural and social opportunities that people in western Sydney deserve as much as anyone else. That is why we are relocating the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to alongside the Parramatta River. This museum will be a fantastic world-class cultural institution in the heart of western Sydney, making sure that people across the western suburbs get every opportunity to enjoy cultural institutions that exist in world-class cities like Sydney.

We have recently opened the Bankwest Stadium, which is a fantastic facility. I inform the House that the NSW Business Chamber hosted an opening event at the new stadium. I walked into the stadium expecting to see western Sydney's businesspeople celebrating this fantastic new stadium. However, the first two people I saw at the stadium were the member for Blacktown and the member for Prospect. They spent the past two years attacking

the policy; we cut the ribbon and the first two people celebrating with a drink in their hand were a couple of Labor members of Parliament.

[Government members interjected.]

Mr STUART AYRES: I turned up to the first game, to watch the Parramatta Eels and the Wests Tigers—I am glad Barry O'Farrell has left the gallery, because it was a bad day for him—and the first person I saw when I walked into the stadium was the member for Granville. The lesson here is very clear: Those opposite will say one thing and they will do another thing. Integrity and competency do not exist on that side of the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Before I call on the member for Balmain, I point out that an unacceptable level of noise was coming from the Government benches during the Minister's answer. Despite the fact that Opposition members were encouraging the Minister, the level of noise was not acceptable.

BIODIVERSITY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:11): My question is directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Considering the United Nations' recent report on biodiversity warns that as many as a million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction and the New South Wales Government's own State of the Environment report shows almost 1,000 native plant, animal and ecological communities are threatened with extinction in New South Wales, what action will the new Minister take to avert this biodiversity crisis?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:12): Congratulations on your elevation to this esteemed position, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for Balmain for his question. I am particularly interested in the fact that his question is on the topic of threatened species—it is great to see an environmentalist left in The Greens. The report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services should be an important wake-up call for all of us who care about the environment and all of us who want our planet to be left as a better place than when we inherited it. The report correctly highlights, as the member for Balmain did, that more than a million species are currently under threat of extinction, and that extinctions are happening more and more frequently.

The good thing is that the report tells us that it is not too late to make a difference. I tell the member for Balmain and everyone in this Chamber that that is exactly what I intend to do. The Government is already investing in a number of important initiatives to address the issues highlighted in the report and to improve the state of our environment. The New South Wales Government is investing \$100 million over five years in the Saving our Species program, which has the aim of securing as many threatened species as possible in the wild over the next 100 years. The program is currently investing in practical on-ground conservation projects for more than 400 threatened plants and animals. The plants include the Bega and Gosford wattles, the black gum and the yellow gum.

The iconic Australian animals include the fur seal, the bilby, various species of wallaby including the yellow footed rock wallaby, the southern hairy nosed wombat and of course the numbat. I note in particular our Rewilding program and the great work a team is doing to reintroduce the bilby. Recently I had the opportunity to go to Taronga Park Zoo and see firsthand what is being done under that program. Large swathes of national park are being fenced off, pests are being eradicated within them, and species are being reintroduced, some of which have been extinct from those areas for more than a century. It is a great initiative that is addressing the issues raised in the report.

We also have our flagship litter reduction Return and Earn program. Prior to the introduction of the program drink containers made up 49 per cent of the volume of all litter in New South Wales. The Return and Earn program has seen almost two billion drink containers recovered and has reduced eligible drink container litter volumes by 44 per cent since 2017. For the benefit of the member for Balmain, I agree that although we are doing a lot, much more needs to be done. There is no greater risk to our environment than climate change. Climate change risks not only our plants and wildlife but also our jobs and businesses and parts of our way of life that depend on our environment.

Recently we moved quickly and established a new team within the department to focus on climate change. This will help to ensure that New South Wales is playing its part in reaching the Paris goal of limiting global temperature increases to 2 degrees Celsius. But it is not just about managing risks, it is also about identifying opportunities. I put on the record that I want to increase the size of our national parks and increase the quality of protection within those parks and I will be working towards that in my term as the Minister. I want us to make the most of our national parks and protect our native species so that more people can enjoy the beauty of the environment for generations to come. This report highlights the extent of the challenge and I look forward to working with every member of the House to address it. I am delighted to receive a question about the state of the

environment because we all know the state of the environment for those opposite. We all saw the toxic emissions from the former Leader of the Opposition during the campaign, and it cost them dearly.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: My point of order is relevance, Standing Order 129. The first four minutes were quite relevant and interesting, but the rest of the contribution has been entirely irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: I will hear further from the Minister, who is being generally relevant.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am speaking about the Australian environment, for the benefit of those opposite. There was only one member who was prepared to stand up against the former Leader of the Opposition, that is, the electoral messiah himself—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 74 (1). I request that you ask the Minister to answer the question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired.

ROAD AND RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:17): I address my question to the Minister for Transport and Roads. How is the Government delivering on its plan for roads and rail across New South Wales?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:18): I thank the member for Oatley for his question. The member for Oatley came to me before question time and advised that he had a question. I thanked him. He wanted me to reference the huge swing in his electorate and I do so now. I congratulate him on the massive swing in his electorate. I say to those opposite they should enjoy the next four years and the four years after that too. There is no doubt that if we look at what happened in the election campaign in relation to Labor's cancellation plans, the community made it crystal clear that they want to see this State continue to build road and rail projects in the way that it has. Very pleasingly in the next two years the M4 East tunnel will open in the next couple of months, a Metro train will be up and running within three weeks, a new section of WestConnex will open next year, a light rail project will open and NorthConnex will open.

The SPEAKER: The member for Strathfield will contain herself.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am glad those opposite mentioned light rail because I want to talk about Newcastle Light Rail. What a cracking project. It has gone off like a cracker. We opened it in February and there were 47,000 trips, but it gets better: the number of trips doubled to 118,000 in March. We have now had 250,000 people catch Newcastle Light Rail in the first two months of operation. I hope that the member for Newcastle has been on it. Have you been on it? Up went the eyebrows. Come on Crackers, tell us whether you went on it.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 75. Ministers must refer to members by their correct title.

The SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I think that is a yes. I take it he has caught it 250,000 times as well.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129, relevance around the line of attack by the Minister now. He told budget estimates last year that Labor was not allowed to catch the train—

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Newcastle Light Rail is an absolute cracker and there is no doubt that as we continue to see other projects being delivered the clear message is "Get on and build", and that is what we will continue to do. I note those opposite decided to make a few announcements during the election campaign cancelling projects to pay for Metro West. They said that they would build it quicker than the Government. They did not say when they were going to start. They did not say when they were going to finish. There was no indication of how much would be spent, no allocation of funds, and no indication of where they would put the stations or how many stations they would build. We know in relation to Metro West that they first announced it under Bob Carr in 1995.

Mr Jihad Dib: He was a visionary, Bob.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Visionary Bob—I will have that recorded in *Hansard*. This Government is going to get on with the job and get those tunnel boring machines in the ground for Metro West by 2021. [*Extension of time*]

There is no doubt that this Government will continue to deliver projects not only in the city but also in the regions. As outlined in the election campaign the Government's focus on investing in regional roads will continue in a very credible way. Minister Toole and I will work very closely on the duplication of the Princes Highway and the Great Western Highway, and that will save lives. We will continue to see the delivery of the duplication of the Pacific Highway and a myriad major road upgrades right across the bush. At the same time we will invest in making sure that we can deliver faster rail. I particularly acknowledge the member for Goulburn, who has been advocating hard for improved rail services and faster rail through her electorate.

I have to say this: It is unbelievable that we do not have a Leader of the Opposition here to argue transport policy and roads policy. The protection racket of Bill Shorten of not having a NSW Labor leader is absolutely appalling. There is no doubt that the Labor Party will have leadership Tinder in the next three months. It will be quite easy. For Strathfield, swipe left. For Maroubra, definitely swipe left. I reckon the member for Kogarah should definitely swipe left. But let us swipe right for the member for Keira. He has done an excellent job this week. We really wish him well when he announces that he is running.

Documents

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 8 May 2019.

REGISTER OF DISCLOSURES

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983, I table the Supplementary Ordinary Returns by Members of the Legislative Assembly as at 31 December 2018, together with the Primary Disclosure of the member for Wagga Wagga. I order that the documents be printed.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Forster-Tuncurry Public Hospital

Petition requesting the Government to commit funding for the construction of a public hospital in the Forster-Tuncurry area, received from **Mr Stephen Bromhead**.

Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre

Petition requesting the Government to reopen Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre and to invest funds to upgrade the centre, received from **Mr Greg Piper**.

The SPEAKER: I set down discussion on the petitions as orders of the day for a future day.

Motions

PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTORY SUPERANNUATION FUND TRUSTEES

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: By leave: I move:

That in accordance with section 14 (1) (b) of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1971, the following members be and are hereby appointed as trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund:

Michael John Daley
Shelley Elizabeth Hancock
Bradley Ronald Hazzard
Paul Gerard Lynch
Anthony John Roberts

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that during the consideration of the Address-in-Reply, it not take precedence of general business on Thursday sittings.

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:

Public Services

Petition calling on the Government to stop the sell-off of public services and instead invest in public services, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Beekeeping Industry

Petition calling on the Government to support amateur beekeepers by abandoning hive registration fees and allocating more resources to assist amateur and commercial apiarists to maintain a disease-free and sustainable hive network, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Pet Shops

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

Pig-dog Hunting Ban

Petition requesting the banning of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Taxi Licence Buyback

Petition requesting the Government to implement a scheme to buy back the cost of taxi licences prior to the introduction of rideshare services, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Aboriginal Flag

Petition requesting that the Aboriginal flag fly from the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge alongside the Australian and New South Wales flags, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich** and **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Inner West Goods Line

Petition calling for the creation of a living museum to commemorate the role of the inner west goods line, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Haberfield Public School Pedestrian Crossing

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

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**.

Oxford Street Clearway Removal

Petition requesting the removal of the clearway on Oxford Street and the imposition of a 40 kilometre per hour speed limit, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Route 389 Bus Services

Petition requesting more reliable 389 bus services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Route 311 Bus Services

Petition requesting more reliable 311 bus services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Moore Park Pedestrian Crossing

Petition requesting safe pedestrian crossings along Moore Park road, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pyrmont and Ultimo Bus Services

Petition calling for improved bus services to Pyrmont and Ultimo, 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**.

Primary School Language Teachers

Petition calling on the Government to recruit and train language teachers, increase funding for community language schools and expand language learning in primary schools, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Victims of Sexual Assault Support Services

Petition calling on the Government to support sexual assault reform on university campuses and to provide specialised support services for victims of sexual assault, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Social Housing

Petition requesting that the Sirius building be retained and its social housing function be continued, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Affordable Housing

Petition requesting that 15 per cent of all new residential developments be set aside for affordable housing, that councils be permitted to levy developers for affordable housing, that inner-city housing stock sales be halted and that the wholesale conversion of residential homes into short-term holiday lets be banned without zoning changes, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Glebe Island Multi-User Facility

Petition calling on the Government to commission an independent impact assessment of the proposed Glebe Island Multi-User Facility and to protect adjacent residential amenity by imposing operating conditions such as night and weekend bans, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Plastic Bags

Petition requesting the banning of plastic bags in New South Wales, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Wild Horse Management Plan

Petition asking the Government to repeal the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act, implement the Kosciuszko National Park Draft Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan and repair the mountain catchments impacted by wild horses, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

Hawkesbury Shelf Marine Park

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

McNeilly Park

Petition opposing the closure of McNeilly Park, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

Pride Centre

Petition requesting the Government to work with community stakeholders and commit funds to build a Pride Centre in New South Wales, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

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—Beekeeping Industry—lodged 21 November 2018 (Ms Jo Haylen)

The Hon. Don Harwin—Orange Region Mining Exploration—lodged 21 November 2018 (Mr Philip Donato)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Kingscliff Locality Plan—lodged 16 November 2018 (Mr Luke Foley)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Winney Bay Reserve and Bulbararing Headland—lodged 13 November 2018 (Mr David Harris)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Holsworthy Electorate Rezoning—lodged 13 November 2018 (Ms Melanie Gibbons)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—West Byron Development—lodged 20 November 2018 (Ms Tamara Smith)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Luna Park—lodged 20 November 2018 (Ms Felicity Wilson)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Edmondson Park Development—lodged 20 November 2018 (Mr Anoulack Chanthivong)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Northern Macarthur Region Koala Protection—lodged 22 November 2018 (Mr Greg Warren)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Central Coast Railway Stations—lodged 13 November 2018 (Mr David Mehan)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Leppington and South-western Sydney Railway Stations Car Parking—lodged 13 November 2018 (Mr Paul Lynch and Mr Chris Patterson)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Leppington and Edmondson Park Railway Stations Car Parking—lodged 13 November 2018 (Ms Melanie Gibbons)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Leppington and Edmondson Park Railway Stations Car Parking—lodged 13 November 2018 (Mrs Tanya Davies)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Central Coast Railway Stations—lodged 14 November 2018 (Mr David Mehan)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—T1 Express Train Service—lodged 15 November 2018 (Ms Julia Finn)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Edmondson Park and Leppington Railway Stations Car Parking—lodged 20 November 2018 (Mr Anoulack Chanthivong)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Griffith to Sydney Rail Service—lodged 20 November 2018 (Mr Austin Evans)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Surry Hills Light Rail Station—lodged 22 November 2018 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—International Students Concessional Opal Cards—lodged 22 November 2018 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital—lodged 13 November 2018 (Mr Gareth Ward)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Cowra Hospital—lodged 14 November 2018 (Ms Steph Cooke)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Eurobodalla Shire Health Services—lodged 15 November 2018 (Mr Andrew Constance)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Delegate and Bombala Health Services—lodged 21 November 2018 (Mr John Barilaro)

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Homebush Boys High School—lodged 21 November 2018 (Ms Jodi McKay)

The Hon. Mark Speakman—Cannabis Legalisation—lodged 21 and 22 November 2018 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Pru Goward—Riverwood Estate and Community Centre—lodged 14 November 2018 (Mr Jihad Dib)

The Hon. Pru Goward—Waterloo Metro Station—lodged 22 November 2018 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton—Plastic Bags—lodged 13 November 2018 (Ms Jo Haylen)

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton—Wingecarribee Shire Council—lodged 20 November 2018 (Ms Pru Goward)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Bowral Bypass—lodged 21 November 2018 (Ms Pru Goward)

The Hon. Matt Kean—Short-term Holiday Letting—lodged 23 October 2018 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

*Business of the House***INFLUENZA AWARENESS CAMPAIGN****Reordering**

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:29): I move:

That the general business notice of motion (general notice) given by me this day [Influenza Awareness Campaign] have precedence on Thursday 9 May 2019.

Last week the Premier and the health Minister visited Blacktown Hospital to launch the 2019 influenza awareness campaign. They met the dedicated staff of the antenatal unit and some expectant mums who had just had their influenza vaccination. The visit highlighted the crucial role that the influenza vaccine plays in protecting our community. It is the best tool we have to protect vulnerable women and infants.

The 2019 influenza awareness campaign is a crucial tool in our efforts to mitigate the annual impact of influenza on our communities and in our hospitals. It is important that everyone realises that influenza is a serious viral infection that has the potential to kill vulnerable members of our community. Influenza also contributes to an increased burden on our hospitals, emergency departments and general practitioners every winter. The first phase of the 2019 campaign aims to encourage all people eligible for the free influenza vaccine to get vaccinated. The second phase aims to inform the whole community about how to stem the spread of flu—frequently clean your hands, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home if you are sick.

In 2017 New South Wales experienced the worst influenza season since the pandemic in 2009. Over 100,000 people were confirmed to have influenza and at least 650 deaths were due to influenza infection. Influenza impacts most on young children and the elderly. That is why, since 2018, the New South Wales Government has made the influenza vaccine free for all children from six months—the earliest age at which the vaccine can be given—up to their fifth birthday. That covers around 400,000 children. The program was well received in 2018 with over a quarter of eligible children reported to the Australian Immunisation Register as receiving at least one dose, which NSW Health tells me is likely to be an underestimate.

In 2019 the Government is spending \$2.6 million to again purchase the influenza vaccine for young children. I ask members to join me in encouraging all parents of children under five to take advantage of that protection. It is important to counter complacency in the community. In 2018 NSW Health distributed over 2.3 million doses of the government-funded influenza vaccine—50 per cent more than in 2017. I am concerned that the high uptake of the influenza vaccine may have been in response to the severe season in 2017. By contrast, 2018 was a mild influenza year with only around 18,000 confirmed cases and 43 deaths from influenza reported. In 2019 almost 2.5 million doses of influenza vaccine will be available in New South Wales through the National Immunisation Program and New South Wales Government programs.

Other key groups who I urge to take advantage of funded vaccines are those eligible under the National Immunisation Program, being all Aboriginal people, those with chronic illnesses, pregnant women and people aged 65 years and over. The New South Wales Government awareness campaign is promoting vaccination to parents, others at high risk of influenza and GPs as part of the 2019 influenza awareness campaign. That is why it is important to continue the program.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:33): My motion, which urges this House to recognise the need for urgent action on climate change and express concern that the Treasurer of New South Wales has defended climate change sceptics while describing spending on climate change as a "gratuitous waste", should have precedence tomorrow. It is crucial that we reorder business for tomorrow so that we can establish on the record in this place just how deeply the climate scepticism of the New South Wales Liberals runs and how the leadership of this Government is compromised by hard Right faction ideologues like Dominic Perrottet. These hard-right ideologues parrot the stupid, moronic and embarrassing dribble of Donald Trump, with the Treasurer on Facebook going so far as to endorse Trump's views on hate speech, climate scepticism, xenophobic border policy and calling for a conservative spring in the wake of his election.

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections from the Government side are unacceptable. I call the Treasurer to order for the first time.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: The Treasurer once described any government spending on reducing emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change as a gratuitous waste of taxpayers' money. We live in a progressive State. New South Wales voters are concerned about climate change. This came through in the public polling before the State election and it continues to come through in polling ahead of the upcoming Federal election. Instead of heeding the call of its citizens, this Government is obsessed with hard right-wing ideologies which put the interests of big business ahead of meaningful action on climate change. That is because this Government and

its leaders are joined at the hip to regressive climate change deniers such as Dominic Perrottet and the factional freak show—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member to establish priority, not debate the motion or attack the Government.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: The Treasurer must realise that in this country and in this State we are not hard Right reactionaries and the brand of "Trumpian" political nonsense that he is trying to transplant into this State will not stand. I call upon members to join me in voting to reorder business and prioritise this motion, because we must call out the Treasurer every time he tries to raise these matters and knock them on the head. This State once led the way with action on climate change under Labor. Under the Liberals, we have gone backwards [*Time expired.*]

The SPEAKER: Before I put the question I make two things clear to the House for the term of the Parliament: First, the left-hand backbench will be for those voting in the affirmative, in this case with the Government. There is no-one sitting there, therefore it is academic in terms of this vote, but in future that backbench on my left will be for the ayes. Secondly, consistent with what I said in the Parliament yesterday, I am very keen on moving this paper-based approach to divisions to an electronic or app-based approach. In the meantime—and even when we do have an app-based approach—I have consciously handed out the division sheets to the Whips with the aim of trying to save time during divisions. If we can save two minutes or three minutes per division, we will save the equivalent of at least three to four hours of work a day. If any member has any concerns they can raise them with me, but I am trying to save members time and save the House time.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes48
Noes42
Majority.....6

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W
Pavey, Mrs M
Preston, Ms R
Saunders, Mr D
Singh, Mr G
Stokes, Mr R
Tuckerman, Mrs W
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Smith, Mr N
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Gulaptis, Mr C
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
McGirr, Dr J
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Saffin, Ms J

Atalla, Mr E
Butler, Mr R
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dalton, Mrs H
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
Scully, Mr P

Bali, Mr S
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
O'Neill, Dr M
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T.F.

NOES

Tesch, Ms L
Washington, Ms K

Voltz, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Motion agreed to.

*Members***LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

At 15:43 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to elect members to fill the places in the Legislative Council vacated by Benjamin Cameron Franklin and Lynda Jane Voltz, resigned.

*Senate***SENATE VACANCY**

At 15:43 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to choose a senator in the place of Senator David Ean Leyonhjelm, resigned.

*Members***LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

At 16:03 the House reassembled.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report that the House met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber this day for the purpose of electing persons to hold the places in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignations of Benjamin Cameron Franklin and Lynda Jane Voltz, and that Benjamin Cameron Franklin and Rose Butler Jackson have been duly elected. I table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting. I order that the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting be printed.

*Senate***SENATE VACANCY**

At 16:03 the House reassembled.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report that the House met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber this day for the purpose of electing a person to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator David Ean Leyonhjelm and that Duncan Spender was duly elected. I table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting. I order that the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting be printed.

*Motions Accorded Priority***STATE GOVERNMENT****Consideration**

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:06): What a great day it is to be standing here as part of the historically elected Coalition Government. There is a stark contrast from the position at the end of last year, when members opposite were parading around this place like a pack of peacocks and getting very comfortable on this side of the House during divisions. What a difference a few months makes. We have returned after the election and members opposite are very deflated and in a bigger mess than ever. The Opposition has no strategy; its members are jumping up and down during question time as though they are auditioning for the leadership. The people of New South Wales could not have made a better decision than to stick with the Coalition. The Opposition should be deflated because after the election its primary vote is 33.31 per cent. It is in the 30s—nowhere near the 40s—and Labor has absolutely no chance of returning to government in four years. Labor's primary vote is down by 8 per cent on 2015.

Labor put to the people of New South Wales that it was renewed and different from the disgraced Government that was booted out in 2011. But the people of New South Wales have judged those opposite—and judged them differently. The people found them to be the same old Labor, with the same old leadership. But that is interesting because Labor has no leadership. Who is the shining hope for Labor? What is the way forward? The media is talking about the member for Kogarah. He is not in the Chamber at the moment—he is obviously on the phone to "boss lady" to see whether something can be patched up. There was a 5.1 per cent swing against the member for Kogarah, who barely held his seat. He struggled to keep it on 1.8 per cent.

Can the Opposition's potential future leader even get re-elected? We obviously encourage him to try but it is a big step up from being the "water boy". But here is an extra tip for the potential future leader from the Coalition: Do not turn up late to caucus, as you did on the first day of Parliament, because you might miss the vote. What a stark contrast to the Premier—whom he is trying to take on—because this Premier has never been late for anything. She is one of the most punctual people we have ever met. Labor really has to step up if it wants to take on this Government in four years. It is lacklustre, it has nothing on the Coalition and it will not be returned in four years.

REVENUE NSW

Consideration

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:09): I bring to the attention of the House a series of incidents that should deeply disturb us all and the communities we represent. What we know so far about the leaking of very sensitive information is just the tip of the iceberg. Serious questions have been raised that are now subject to both an ongoing police investigation—with at least six members from Minister Dominello's office being interviewed by the Financial Crimes Squad—as well as an investigation by the Privacy Commissioner. Today we are asking for answers from the Government about serious events that involve a significant breach of privacy and a flagrant breaking of a number of laws and regulations.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind the Minister that no points of order on scope or substance may be taken during the establishment of the priority of a motion.

Mr Andrew Constance: That is okay. I understand that. I just hope that the member is willing to repeat this allegation outside the House.

Mr RYAN PARK: On 8 February 2019 *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran an exclusive front-page story outlining information about a so-called "secret" MP hotline. The hotline, in fact, is not so secret and is used regularly by every member in this place as part of their duty to advocate on behalf of their constituents. The article revealed detailed knowledge of private and confidential information that was held only by Revenue NSW, the office overseen by Minister Dominello at the time. Information had clearly been given to the journalist for the purpose of falsely smearing Opposition MPs. But most disturbing of all, information about the speeding fines of hundreds of New South Wales citizens has been given not just to ministerial staff but also to media outlets. We ask this Government some simple questions: How did the media gain access to such specific personal information, who gave it to them and how did they access it?

That person or group of persons, who not only obtained confidential information but also used it for political purposes by leaking it to the media, has or have broken several pieces of legislation. Today Minister Dominello needs to enlighten the House as to how such a breach took place on his watch, what he knew about it and what he is doing about it. This week we have heard some wideranging statements from members opposite about upholding standards and principles of public office but this Government continues to stoop to new lows. Rather than keeping up standards they pledged themselves to yesterday, today they continue to make it personal. We expect answers—[*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Miranda be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes40
Majority.....6

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Gulaptis, Mr C
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
Pavey, Mrs M

AYES

Perrottet, Mr D
 Provost, Mr G
 Sidgreaves, Mr P
 Smith, Mr N
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

Petinos, Ms E
 Roberts, Mr A
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Speakman, Mr M
 Tuckerman, Mrs W
 Williams, Mr R

Preston, Ms R
 Saunders, Mr D
 Singh, Mr G
 Stokes, Mr R
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Barr, Mr C
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Donato, Mr P
 Harris, Mr D
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Parker, Mr J
 Smith, Ms T.F.
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
 Butler, Mr R
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dalton, Mrs H
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 O'Neill, Dr M
 Saffin, Ms J
 Tesch, Ms L
 Washington, Ms K

Bali, Mr S
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dib, Mr J
 Finn, Ms J
 Haylen, Ms J
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Park, Mr R
 Scully, Mr P
 Voltz, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

PAIRS

Taylor, Mr M

Hornery, Ms S

Motion agreed to.**STATE GOVERNMENT****Priority**

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:21): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the historic re-election of the current Government for a third consecutive term.
- (2) Notes that the New South Wales Labor Party has no permanent leader.
- (3) Notes that the members for Kogarah, Strathfield, Port Stephens, Swansea, Keira and Maroubra are all considering nominating for the Labor leadership.
- (4) Notes the outstanding performance of the interim Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly.
- (5) Calls on NSW Labor to put the people of New South Wales before Bill Shorten, and to elect the member for Keira as its permanent leader.

A lot has been said today about what the people of New South Wales deserve and the standards that members of this Chamber set for them. If those opposite truly believe that, then I struggle to understand why we have only an interim Leader of the Opposition. I also struggle to understand why the Labor Party in New South Wales believes the people in this State do not deserve to have a Leader of the Opposition who will hold the Government to account for an extended period. We are only in this position because the Labor Party in New South Wales is bowing and scraping to "boss lady" and Bill Shorten. Time and again, those opposite have demonstrated that they do not care about the people of New South Wales. Accordingly, the people of New South Wales have done the right thing by once again placing their trust in this Coalition Government.

In my earlier remarks about why my motion should be accorded priority I spoke about the member for Kogarah, including some of his attributes and potentially some of the things he might like to consider when making his leadership pitch. In the media other members have also been mentioned as potential leadership contenders. For example, an article that appeared in *The Newcastle Herald* on 7 April 2019 stated:

Labor sources said people within the party had sounded out Ms Washington about taking on frontrunner Chris Minns.

Clearly the member for Port Stephens may be considering a leadership tilt. Another article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 23 April 2019 said that the member for Swansea is "probably the best performer we've got".

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Ms ELENi PETINOS: I thought the member for Swansea might have liked that one.

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

Ms ELENi PETINOS: And it would be remiss of me not to talk about the member for Kogarah. In November 2018 when *The Sydney Morning Herald* was reporting on the Labor leadership vote it was stated in an article:

Mr Minns, who was very close to the former Opposition leader Luke Foley, has a troubled relationship with Ms Murnain and many MPs believe will struggle to get 'more than low single figures' in caucus votes.

History shows that he actually did fill more than a Suzuki Swift in the last leadership ballot and we are expecting him to prevail this time. However, Mr Minns is obviously working very hard on his relationship with "boss lady". He was nowhere to be seen when I spoke in support of my motion being accorded priority but he did appear later. He is always in and out of the Chamber, and struggles to sit through question time.

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

Ms ELENi PETINOS: That leads me to the other person who is spoken highly of: the member for Keira. Those on this side prefer to call him Potts Point Parky. He wants to be all things to all people and a champion of the working class in his electorate, but he does not like the F6. He clearly objects to the idea of a connection between his home in the Illawarra and his home in Potts Point. I digress, but I really struggle to understand that one. On 17 March 2019 in an interesting interview with Andrew Clennell in *The Australian* he is reported to have said:

Um, let me have a think, I think it's about, probably about 40 per cent, then education comes out at about 20-odd, I think it is, transport comes [next], then you go into law and order.

The member for Keira was talking about health. The article continued:

The Australian informed Mr Park that the true figure was 28 per cent. He later said he had confused the health figure.

Does that remind those opposite of any similar incidents in the lead-up to the last election? Struggling with numbers is something those opposite do really well. In fact, it was one of the major downfalls of the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Michael Daley. Potts Point Parky is still struggling with the numbers. It is my sincere hope that there will be a reshuffle and that someone will relieve him of his duties as interim Leader of the Opposition before we hand down what he calls the "boo-zhay" later this year. Time and again, those opposite continue to show that they are more interested in their own self-interest than in the people of New South Wales. They have jostled and postured several times today about who should be the leader. Many of them are anxious to audition for the role. Ultimately they will all need "boss lady", but the people of New South Wales need this Premier and this ministry. This Government will continue to look after the people of New South Wales in the way they deserve.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:26): In speaking against the motion of the member for Miranda I will hold up a mirror for the Government on a couple of issues that have been raised in this debate. I note that after Scott Morrison had done his dirty work a rule was introduced that the rank and file of the Liberal Party must be involved in the election process. I note also that a guy named Tony Abbott—soon to be extinct—also introduced something called the "Warringah motion" about democratisation of the party, trying to give the membership the vote, et cetera. So a couple of pretty big hitters on the Government side have said that democratising the party and giving the membership the vote is a good thing. Yet today the member for Miranda said that because Labor is already doing it—and we are always ahead of them—it is a bad thing. I am a little shocked and confused by her comments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will be heard in silence.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I make a point about the many members who have put up their hands to be leader—which, according to the member for Miranda, is a bad thing. What was the total number of potential leaders amongst those opposite when Mike Baird resigned as a member of Parliament? I think it was two—one of whom was the member for Bega. Never mind filling a Suzuki Swift, the member for Bega could have had a motorbike with a sidecar to accommodate all those who voted for him. I am not sure whether a poll of two is a show of confidence in the member for Willoughby and her leadership; perhaps it is more about anyone but the member for Bega. If the member for Miranda seeks to suggest that having multiple leadership options is a bad

thing then I worry enormously about the future of the Coalition. Giving multiple members the opportunity to consider becoming leader can only be good for democracy in this State and, proudly, in the Labor Party.

We will give our members across the State a vote, we will go through a democratic process and we will find a member who will be the leader of this party. Rest assured that we do not need advice from those opposite about how to run a good democratic political party—we are in front of it; we are already done. The one thing in the motion that I do pay tribute to is that the member for Miranda has identified the performance of the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the temporary leader of our party who is in the Legislative Council. In her contribution the member for Miranda recognised the particularly good work that the Hon. Penny Sharpe has done, and I join with the member for Miranda in congratulating her on that good work. I thank the member for Miranda for having the courage to step outside party politics and recognise a good performance when she sees one. However, we as the New South Wales Labor Party are not going to accept this motion accorded priority in its current form. I move

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraphs (2) to (5) with a view to inserting instead:

"(2) Calls on the Premier to guarantee that the Government will fulfil every single election promise on time."

As an example, in the Hunter the Government made an election promise and commitment in relation to Fingal Bay Road and then about 48 hours later the Hon. Catherine Cusack in the other place wrote an opinion piece in the *Newcastle Herald*, which I can only assume was authorised by the leader's office, saying that because they had not managed to win that particular seat they were no longer going to fund that commitment. The motion now stands as: Will those opposite backing the Premier back this amendment to ensure that all of the Government promises and commitments they have made during the election will be fulfilled on time and where committed?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:32): I am very happy to support the motion moved by the member for Miranda. It seems as if the criterion for speaking for the Opposition on this motion is that nobody has ever mentioned the member as a possible candidate for the leadership. The member for Cessnock went straight where he should not have gone and started speaking about the Hon. Penny Sharpe as the acting Leader of the Opposition. Of course, that reminds us all that when the former member for Auburn was replaced as the Leader of the Opposition last year not one member of the Legislative Assembly on the Opposition side of the House was seen as fit to be the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Those opposite had to go to what Paul Keating called the unrepresentative swill of the upper House in order to get a deputy leader.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: When this Parliament, the Fifty-Seventh Parliament, was convened lawfully yesterday under section 30 of the Constitution of New South Wales there was no Leader of the Opposition. There was no-one to lead the alternative Government. It is a complete and utter disgrace that there was a vacant seat in the Opposition benches today during question time—there was no member for Maroubra. I know there was a big swing against him in his own electorate, but one would have hoped that the electors of Maroubra were at least shown the courtesy of having their representative in this Parliament sitting there in question time. And why was he not there?

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will be heard in silence.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: He was not there because he could not suffer the indignity of having the member for Keira as the acting interim Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. This is comedy country; this is a disgrace. The people of New South Wales deserve better than this because a good, vibrant democracy relies on having a strong and vibrant Opposition, but those opposite treat the leadership of the Opposition as some casualised position. Labor talks about having no casual employment but it is treating a very important role in our democracy as some sort of joke. It is a disgrace.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: A rotating leadership would be consistent with Labor's socialist ideals.
[*Time expired.*]

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:35): All those opposite want to do is talk about the Opposition. The headlines of the *Daily Telegraph* stated: "Premier Berejiklian vows to clean up State Parliament and apply new standards of conduct". If the hubris of this Government—the hubris that emanates from the skin of those opposite like perspiration—and the ungraciousness that it has showed today is indicative of a new style of government and conduct in New South Wales, I will be staggered. The reality is that, despite the circumstances in which Labor, after nearly four years, lost its leader in October and November last year, those opposite did terribly in the State election. They should go and look at their election results to see how bad they are—they got in by the skin of their teeth. They should look at the election results for The Nationals. The Nationals have lost

25 per cent of their electorates over the past four years. They had better make sure they do not have any by-elections or the Liberals will be looking to get into a coalition with the Shooters, Farmers and Fishers Party. That is how bad The Nationals are; they have lost the confidence of rural New South Wales.

If those opposite want to know how bad it is they should look at what happened in the election in Barwon, Murray, Orange and Wagga Wagga—and at how Lismore, after Tommy George, and Ballina went to The Greens. Those opposite should look at regional New South Wales—they are on the nose. I would have thought the Premier would have come in here and indicated in what direction she was going to take New South Wales. The economy has got its problems; the Government's budget has caused problems. The Government has lost around \$2.3 billion of gross domestic product over four years and it has a write-down in stamp duty of \$9 billion.

The Government might have indicated some of the challenges this newly elected government is going to face over the next four years. Instead, the Government reverts to type and attacks the Labor Party and thinks that is the way in which government should operate. When those opposite look at their primary vote they might want to ask themselves why only 31 per cent of the people of New South Wales vote for the Liberal Party. The reality is that people are fed up with politics and they are fed up with the Government's behaviour.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:38): In reply: When it does not suit those opposite and they do not like what the Government is saying, they revert to reframing the question to suit themselves. The Government was not speaking of its own democracy or the democracy of those opposite; the Government was speaking of the democratic process for this State. The way that things should work in a democracy is that we go to the polls and there is an outcome that is binding in this place. This Government went to the polls and won in a significant majority of electorates. Those opposite are now reframing the discussion so it is about their democratic process. Those opposite can vote for whichever leader in whatever manner they want. I suggest the Opposition would be better off pulling a name out of a hat, as that is the level of courtesy that it has shown for the citizens of New South Wales. There has been a revolving door of leadership opposite, exhibiting a distinct lack of quality leadership. I thank the members for Cessnock, Ku-ring-gai and Heffron for their contributions to the debate.

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

Ms ELENi PETINOS: The member for Heffron stated that no clear direction has been outlined for this State. That is a lie. Earlier today in this Chamber Government members responded to the Governor's speech concerning her thoughts on the future direction for this State and what the Coalition had already done for the State. The Premier has spoken several times about the direction and vision she has for the State. That vision was presented to the community and it provided a mandate.

Finally, the member for Cessnock has misunderstood the motion. This side of the House has no objection to the job the Hon. Penny Sharpe is doing. The motion spoke of the interim Leader of the Opposition in this place, the Legislative Assembly, being the member for Keira, Ryan Park. We will forgive that mistake and leave it to the prince of Potts Point to correct any future mistakes. The reality is that those opposite are well aware of the election result. They do not want to talk about it because Opposition members are squishing into the benches and getting comfortable with the reality of not only the next four years but also the next eight years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the words proposed to be left out stand.

The House divided.

Ayes46

Noes38

Majority.....8

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidgreaves, Mr P

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Gulaptis, Mr C
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
Pavey, Mrs M
Preston, Ms R
Saunders, Mr D
Singh, Mr G

AYES

Smith, Mr N
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Speakman, Mr M
Tuckerman, Mrs W
Williams, Mr R

Stokes, Mr R
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Leong, Ms J
McGirr, Dr J
Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Voltz, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T.F.
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Mehan, Mr D
O'Neill, Dr M
Saffin, Ms J
Tesch, Ms L
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Taylor, Mr M

Hornery, Ms S

Motion agreed to.

Amendment negatived.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the original motion as moved by the member for Miranda be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019****First Reading**

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

Second Reading Speech

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(16:52): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Before I commence I acknowledge in the public gallery my good friend the Hon. Paul Green, who was a member of the upper House for some time.

I speak for the first time in this Fifty-Seventh Parliament as a Minister in the Berejiklian Government. I cannot adequately express my feelings of both humility and resolve to present a bill that will serve and protect some of the most vulnerable people in our State. I thank the Premier for that opportunity. In my first speech in this place I told the House about some of my own lived experiences growing up with a disability. As someone living with albinism and legal blindness, I experienced segregation, discrimination, alienation and hurt, but I am the first to acknowledge that my experiences in life are simply nowhere near many of the cases of appalling neglect by those charged with the trust, confidence and care of our State's most vulnerable. There are so many people who are living with a disability or experiencing ageing for whom life has not been kind and people charged with their care and protection have failed even the most basic standards.

As the first Minister for Disability Services to have a disability, I am conscious that expectations are rightfully high as I seek to ensure that people like me and those with other vulnerabilities receive the protection, support and encouragement our community expects. It is with no sense of joy that I introduce this bill. I would

like to think that we live in a world where proposals of this nature are simply not necessary. But I am proud of our Government for not only listening but also embracing the need for an expansion of our State's social contract to include not only a voice but also an advocate charged with the responsibility of defending the rights and liberties of the most vulnerable people of our State and armed with the powers that it needs to do this vital and important work. The bill I present to the House today will, for the first time in New South Wales and indeed across Australia, establish the dedicated role of Ageing and Disability Commissioner, with the purpose of protecting adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation and protecting and promoting their rights.

The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 exemplifies the Government's commitment to and responsibility for the care and protection of people with disability and older people. We are determined to see a society that is inclusive of people of all ages, with or without disability, so that we can live safely in a society with dignity. Accordingly we are prioritising the improvement of responses to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. The impetus and foundations for this milestone reform have been provided by a number of recent reviews and reports. The Ombudsman's special report to Parliament entitled *Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in NSW: The need for action*, tabled in November last year, recommended the establishment of an independent body to investigate and respond to abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults.

In May last year the NSW Law Reform Commission released its report on its view of the Guardianship Act 1987. The Law Reform Commission recommended that a new Act establish a new statutory office, the Public Advocate, to carry out new advocacy and investigative functions. In 2016 the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 likewise recommended in its parliamentary inquiry into elder in abuse in New South Wales report establishing a public advocate with the powers of investigation. This bill embodies the Government's timely response to these recommendations, although we have chosen to call the statutory office the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to better identify the focus of the office.

There already exists a number of national and State bodies or initiatives that focus on the welfare and safety of either those with disability or the elderly. However, there remains a critical gap that this bill seeks to bridge. There are significant numbers of people with disability and older people who are abused, neglected or exploited but who do not qualify for help through existing channels or existing safeguards do not go far enough. For example, people with disability can have recourse to the protections offered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme's NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission if they are accessing those services funded by the NDIS, which many people with a disability are not accessing. The Healthcare Complaints Commission can only investigate complaints against health practitioners. The Elder Abuse Hotline and Resource Unit provides invaluable support, advice, referrals to other services and other assistance to older people, but does not have investigative functions. Nor is there a corresponding helpline or resource unit for people living with disability.

The Ombudsman offers something of an alternative channel of assistance, but there are serious limitations. The Ombudsman can receive, assess, resolve or investigate allegations of abuse or neglect under the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, but this leaves or will leave many people with disability without recourse to protection in two ways. First, the standing inquiry comes to an end on 1 July 2019. Second, it only captures people with disability who receive or are eligible to receive community services and is limited in scope to complaints against service providers.

This bill expands the scope of protection given to people with disability to allow reports about any person alleged to be abusing, neglecting or exploiting the vulnerable person. It is telling that the Ombudsman's standing inquiry was commenced because of an increasing number of reports raising tragic and serious concerns about the safety and welfare of adults with disability in the community and in recognition of the fact that no other agency had the powers to investigate allegations that did not amount to criminal behaviour or did not require a coordinated interagency response. The abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people is also of growing concern. The World Health Organization defines abuse of older people as:

... a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person.

It is confronting for all of us to contemplate that the number of older people who will experience harm or distress at the hands of people they trust will only increase as the population ages if we do not act now to improve protections for this sector, address systemic issues and educate the community, and raise awareness of the issues facing older adults. There is bipartisan support by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to take urgent action to address this growing problem.

The Council of Attorneys-General, which includes Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Hon Mark Speakman, has endorsed the National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians between 2019 and 2023 in recognition of the physical, emotional and social harm that can occur not

just to older persons who are being abused, neglected or exploited but also to their families and communities. There is a financial cost to society when abuse and neglect results in increased demands on emergency services and hospitals, on other healthcare services and on aged care services, not to mention the damage done to the wellbeing of society as a whole when we fail in our collective moral responsibility to keep vulnerable people safe.

Debate interrupted.

Members

INAUGURAL SPEECHES

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I welcome to the public gallery, friends and family of the member for Coogee.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:01): I first acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathered: the Gadigal people of the Eora as well as the Bidjigal people who occupy the eastern suburbs coastline and the electorate of Coogee. I pay my respects to them, their elders past, present and emerging. I apologise to all Indigenous Australians for all the harm that has been inflicted upon them by me or any member of my family past or present. I acknowledge that the State of New South Wales has not yet done what needs to be done to acknowledge the injustices inflicted upon our First Nations people. I commit to doing my best to ensure that this Parliament starts treaty or treaties negotiations with our First Nations people.

I enter this House standing on the shoulders of giants, from where I can clearly see the purpose of my being here. Giants like Kristina Keneally, who put at the heart of her Government a care for the most vulnerable in the community, particularly people with a disability, a Premier who legalised same-sex adoption, improved emergency department wait times, and properly funded schools and TAFE all the while maintaining a budget surplus during the global financial crisis. I stand on the shoulders of Bob Carr, whom *Forbes Magazine* called "dragon slayer" for his landmark tort law reforms, a Premier who created 350 new national parks, and the first Premier in the State's history to retire debt. I stand on the shoulders of Barrie Unsworth, who banned self-loading rifles and fought for a national gun summit.

And on the shoulders of Neville Wran, whose many achievements include the first New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act, radical investment in public transport, public works and the Arts, a Premier who recognised the value of the environment and increased the number of national parks, limited the logging of rainforests, and phased out woodchipping and sand mining in national parks. I stand on the shoulders of William McKell, whose unrelenting tenacity resulted in improvements to working conditions, pensions and public housing, and the revitalisation of country New South Wales. I stand proudly on the shoulders of all those other men and women who have entered this House committed and prepared to work tirelessly to improve the lives of the citizens of New South Wales. I am committed to following their lead. Michael Daley and Penny Sharpe, thank you for your leadership and counsel.

The voters of Coogee elected me to represent them in this Parliament and I will do my very best to honour their trust. The Coogee electorate is both physically and culturally beautiful and enriching. I state this unequivocally, despite the origins of its name. The name "Coogee" is derived from a local Aboriginal word "koojah", which means "smelly place" or in the Bidjigal language "stinking seaweed", a reference to the smell of decaying kelp washed up on the beach. Luckily, I love both the sea and seaweed. Coogee is a diverse electorate, ranging from luxury homes to those doing it tough, with lots of tradies as well as numerous medical and university personnel, strong groupings of those who are religiously active and many who are very much secular.

Coogee is home to the University of New South Wales, the Prince of Wales Hospital and the Royal Women's Hospital, to many RSL, surf lifesaving and bowling clubs, as well as the famous and popular Randwick Rugby Club, the Roosters and Rabbitohs. The electorate abounds with great beaches, parks, restaurants and pubs. It has the Randwick Ritz, which is a great heritage-listed cinema, and quite a few village-style strip shopping centres. Every night of the week there is always something to do, a cheap meal to have and somewhere to go.

There are many like me of Irish-Anglo heritage, with a bit of Polish thrown in, whose families have lived in the area for a long time. I am a fifth-generation Bronte girl. A great number of our residents, particularly those of Jewish and Catholic heritage, came from Europe and settled in the area after World War II. Since the 1970s and the end of the Vietnam War, Coogee has been enriched by growing numbers of international students and migrants from many countries. Coogee is a loyal electorate, but swings with dissatisfaction.

During my current term, the Australian Labor Party will have held the electorate for more than 50 per cent of its existence. The electorate of Coogee, ranging from Bondi Road to a southern point beyond South Coogee beach, is predominantly an educated, socially engaged community that is very concerned with broader social

issues beyond their own immediate self-interests, which includes a commitment to the environment. Coogee residents love their suburbs but care about issues beyond themselves.

Those who have preceded me as representatives of the electorate of Coogee have established benchmarks of excellence in community representation that will guide me in my future endeavours. Bruce Notley-Smith, although I do not share many of the same views as you, I acknowledge your service. Paul Pearce, the last Labor Party member for the electorate, who taught me the value of being honest and to provide genuine representation, thank you for your support and your tireless efforts working for the Coogee electorate.

Remember Ernie Page and his family, including his son and my fellow branch member Harry, and the enormous contribution made by Ernie not only to the Coogee electorate but also to libraries and local governments throughout the State of New South Wales? Michael Cleary, the great Australian footballer, who was also an elected representative for the Coogee electorate and a New South Wales Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Tourism in the Wran Labor Government from 1981 to 1986 and Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Racing and Minister for Tourism from 1986 to 1988. Then there is Sydney "Syd" Einfeld, who was a representative for the then Bondi electorate and later Waverley, who not only changed Australia's immigration policy to provide a refuge for Holocaust survivors but also built the New South Wales consumer protection infrastructure and laws, arguably the most progressive in the world at that time.

I acknowledge and thank all of those who have previously represented my electorate for their work, their commitment and their contribution to improving the lives of those they represented. I acknowledge also the first representative of the electorate of Coogee, Hyman Goldstein, a Nationalist member of Parliament who represented the Coogee electorate from 1927 until his death in 1928 and who had previously served as a member for the proportionally elected eastern suburbs district from 1922 to 1925. He was found dead in 1928 at the bottom of the Coogee cliffs in mysterious circumstances.

Federal Nationalist member of Parliament, Thomas Ley, an enemy of Goldstein's who was concerned that Goldstein was about to expose his corruption in a business deal and who was later convicted of murder in England, is thought responsible for his death. How wonderful is it though that our first New South Wales parliamentary representative for the electorate of Coogee was a Jewish man born in London, England, to tailor Solomon Goldstein and Hannah Cohen? Goldstein's election says so much about the history of Coogee. However, I am extremely grateful that his demise did not establish a precedent for his successors!

I come here from another house, like the one I stand in today, that has strong foundations. My parents, Brian O'Neill and Keri Spooner, instilled in my siblings and me a belief in social justice, and the importance of minimum social and working conditions as rights and entitlements and not as objects of charity. My father nurtured in me a deep understanding of the importance of trade unions as protectors of employees' rights and of legal enactment as the strongest mechanism for enshrining those entitlements. My mother taught me to do the "Sesame Street"—to walk the talk, to know your neighbours and to care about your community.

My siblings, Bridget, Christopher, Mary and Francis, and my nieces, Matilda and Laura, have taught me the power of love and of selflessness, especially as they supported me over the past year. My aunts, uncles and cousins showed me yet again the value of family as they stepped up and not only assisted my campaign but also supported my family through the passing of my father in the days following the election. I must mention especially Korel and Kurt, who literally fed us all as we struggled to stay focused on the election while my darling father was approaching death. To my family and friends, I promise I will not stand on your shoulders, but I might need to lean on you from time to time.

My father, Brian O'Neill, was a unique influence in my life. He was a teacher, a union official, a New South Wales Industrial Relations commissioner and a higher education lecturer. He was a Labor man, a Catholic, an Australian of Irish decent, a farmer, an encyclopaedia of history and, above all else, a family man. He also loved work. Only two weeks before his death he still hoped to return to his lecturing role at the Wentworth Institute. Brian taught us all the value of work, be it as a shop assistant or a judicial member. He loved me and gave me advice, and I listened. He significantly influenced my fundamental values, including the right of all people to a minimum decent standard of living. What I also heard from him, which is of particular relevance to my role in this House, is to not prejudge but to listen and be open to new ideas; to not engage in personality politics but to remain focused on achieving the best result. I am here to secure the best possible parliamentary outcomes for the people of Coogee and New South Wales.

There have been other very important influencers in my life. The Franciscans, the Poor Clares and my primary school education at St Charles' Waverley nurtured in me a strong regard for the environment and the value of gentleness. My high school years at St Vincent's College in Potts Point helped to make me a strong, independent woman with a social conscience. I believe that my many years working in retail at Rebel Sport gave me an appreciation of the value of work. The amazing opportunity afforded to me to obtain a BA from Wollongong

University, a BBus (Hons) from the University of Technology Sydney and a PhD in Management and Economics from Macquarie University all contributed to my developing the knowledge and skills that will assist me to make a worthwhile contribution to this House and this State.

Sport has been a major part of my life, including as a blindside breakaway for the University of Sydney, playing representative rugby and my earlier high school activities playing cricket, water polo, netball and basketball. I am also an active Clovelly surf lifesaver. All of those experiences have shaped me. I love and believe in the value of sporting activities not only for enjoyment and good health but also for the social connections and friendships that those activities enable.

Today I stand before you as a young woman of 33 years, the first female representative for the electorate of Coogee, well educated, with a strong sporting background, with previous employment as a shop assistant and as a lecturer in higher education in Australia, England and the United States. I have been a councillor on Waverley Council for the past few years and treasurer of the Local Government Association. Over the past few years I have learnt the nature of local government and the processes of government, and I have fought in the best interests of my constituents. As a member of this House, I will always advance a fiscally responsible and progressive social agenda. In identifying what that means, I will listen to the electorate. Listening is important. I will soon have more to say on that.

People in the electorate of Coogee tell me that they are very upset by the disruption to their bus services that used to take them to the places they needed to be and their current lack of access to their hospitals, libraries, schools and places of work. Residents choose workplaces and schools based upon existing bus routes that have since been cut. Older residents who once had direct bus access to their libraries and hospitals must now change buses via a train depot—no small task with a walking frame. Coogee residents are distressed by the rampant overdevelopment of their suburb, traffic congestion and the destruction of their trees and old heritage buildings. The returned soldiers and members of RSL and Legion clubs throughout the electorate are angry at the destruction of Anzac Parade and the trees that were planted to welcome home veterans. How can the destruction of so many trees, wildlife inhabitants and the traditional culture of suburbs be at all acceptable?

Residents throughout the electorate are angry that our great public schools are only partially funded and that their P&Cs must raise funds to pay for basic maintenance just to keep their schools functioning. Residents are distressed that there is no new co-educational high school proposed for the eastern suburbs. The people of my electorate place paramount importance on the environment. Put simply, they want me to fight for renewables, to eradicate single-use plastics and to take real action on climate change. They demand that I address the Coogee stormwater problem and push for a proper resolution, not just send the sewage further down the coast.

Responding to my community also means that I must fight for better public health services. In recent months I have personally experienced the worst of public health in New South Wales. My father waited 24 hours to have a cannula reinserted to receive intravenous antibiotics because nurses were unable to reinsert the needle and no doctor was available. He rang for nursing assistance, but none came on so many occasions we lost count because nurse-to-patient ratios were inadequate. Then there was the day he was left naked and cold for half an hour after a shower because no-one answered his call. Do you feel embarrassed for him?

During his last months, Brian articulated many times his great concern for those who did not have a strong family advocacy team like he had to fight for his humanity. I have personally witnessed how bad the public health system can be in this State and I am committed to improving it. I will also be fighting for a better deal for women in all aspects of our lives from birth to death, including reproductive rights and industrial relations. I am particularly concerned about the absence of refuges that allow pets, as research has increasingly shown that pets are often used to entrap and endanger women. I will be fighting for more refuge accommodation that is pet friendly.

These are the issues that my community expects me to pursue and I will. Additionally, the electorate of Coogee, as I have previously stated, has concerns that extend beyond their own immediate worries. They seek a better New South Wales and Australia. I will be forcefully advocating for a much-improved industry planning process. We need to fight for a first-class plan for how this State can move forward, build upon the great opportunities offered in the field of renewable energy and capture State revenue to be generated from new industries such as medical marijuana.

I will fight for a fiscally responsible, socially progressive agenda committed to a better and fairer New South Wales. I will listen to my electorate and more broadly to the people of New South Wales, to hear what they regard as the most pressing issues. Rural New South Wales is of great importance to all of us. My electorate cares deeply about the wellbeing of rural New South Wales, because they are smart and they know where their food comes from. I am very lucky to have spent some time during my life on our family farm in Bannister New South Wales, not too far from Crookwell. I have done fencing, I have planted trees, and I have

mustered, tagged and castrated cattle. I will always listen and respond as best as I can to the needs of rural Australia.

I thank the many volunteers who worked very hard to help me get elected. It is very difficult to win a seat in Parliament and it is particularly difficult to unseat an incumbent in an area in which people are overall pretty happy with their lives. I thank sincerely the Australian Labor Party branch members and trade unionists, particularly the United Services Union, the Transport Workers Union, the Public Service Association, the Electrical Trades Union and the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association, in particular Graeme Kelly and Tony Shelton, as well as Alex Claassens.

I thank the many New South Wales and Federal Labor shadow Ministers and members of Parliament who visited my electorate and supported me. In order of appearance they were Michael Daley, who supported me from the very beginning; Prue Car; Penny Sharpe; Jodi McKay; Walt Secord; Jihad Dib; Tania Mihailuk; Jenny Aitchison; Yasmin Catley; Lynda Voltz; John Graham; Matt Thistlethwaite; Tony Burke; Kristina Keneally; Courtney Houssos; and Chris Minns. To the "boss lady" General Secretary of NSW Labor Kaila Murnain, as well as assistant secretaries Pat Garcia and Rose Jackson, thank you! My gratitude also goes to Dylan Parker, Humaira Nasrin and Todd Pinkerton, who helped me secure the seat.

Thank you to all the branch members who supported me, but also the very many family and friends who put in long hours for me and my best friend, Alex Jarman, who provided me with great personal support. Some of you are here this evening and I thank you sincerely. Paul and Sue Tracy, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for your friendship and frank advice. Jane and Katie Grusovin, thank you for encouraging me to run. Luke Mortimer, Glenn Pede, Troy Swan, Lachlan McGraw, Michael Collins and Mark Spooner—from the moment I was pre-selected you were by my side phone banking, bus stopping and hitting the pavement. Thank you. This year, 2019, marks 800 years since St Francis returned from the Middle East. His message to his followers after meeting with the sultan was to listen more and talk less. I intend to take his advice. This is what I plan to do: I will be the voice needed for social change as dictated by the people of New South Wales. My job is to listen. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: I join the House in congratulating the member for Coogee on her inaugural address. Forthcoming is the inaugural address of the member for Auburn. I acknowledge those in the public gallery, family, friends and supporters of the member for Auburn.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:26): I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this Parliament stands, in this case the Eora people of the Gadigal nation. But I also wish to pay my respects to the Wangal, Wategoro and Gundungara clans of the Darug people, the original inhabitants of the Auburn area that I am now so pleased and honoured to represent. The Cumberland Plains are the home of the Darug people and encompass nearly the entire western suburbs. Western Sydney has the highest concentration of Aboriginal people in Australia, with over 25,000 living in the Greater Western Sydney area. I first want to congratulate the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, on her re-election. It is good to see the Liberal Party coming to terms with the power and expertise of women. It is a pity her Federal colleagues have not followed her example.

Mind you, with just two years up her sleeve in this post she has a long way to go to challenge the records of both Bob Carr and Neville Wran—both of whom were Premier for 10 years and who, between them, in the 1970s, 80s and 90s and up to 2005 won seven elections on the trot. Not since 1896 have such terms been achieved. Premiers Wran and Carr were the pinnacle of progressive government in law reform, human rights, environmental policy and economic management. It is a great honour to represent the people of the electorate of Auburn. My family have lived in the Birrong and Granville areas since 1938. My grandfather and grandmother, Ben and Ada, bought a piece of land on what is now known as Wentworth Street, Birrong, in 1938. It was only the second house on the street and the suburb was essentially bush. Their history replicates that of so many of those who still come to live in the electorate of Auburn. It was an opportunity for a better life.

My grandfather's early years were lived in Walcha. It would appear at some point the family moved to live on the St Clair Aboriginal Mission where his brother and sister, Eric and Rita, are recorded in 1915 in Singleton. This may have had something to do with his father's service in World War I. My granddad always said he was cared for by the Church of England in Sydney but the details of this now appear to be lost. My grandmother, Ada, worked two jobs; in a clothing factory during the week and selling pies at Canterbury Racecourse or at the Sydney Cricket Ground on the weekend to get money to buy the piece of land.

This story is no different from that of many who live in the electorate of Auburn today—families working together to create a better life for their families, often in more than one job, often with more than one family in the home. Some have lived there for thousands of years, some for decades and some have recently arrived. But their lives are a continuum on the land. Once a meeting place for the Wategoro, Wangal and Gundungara clans, the electorate of Auburn has now become one of the great meeting places of the world. These suburbs hold a

collection of stories and have an immense beauty that cannot be found anywhere else. Every house tells a story, every street a new twist, every new birth a celebration, and every weekend a festival. In Auburn we may all speak different languages but fundamentally our story is the same.

Despite this sense of belonging and hope, so many in our local community are being left behind. Auburn has the second highest rate of homelessness in the State, after the electorate of Sydney. Homelessness has grown dramatically in the past 10 years, which suggests that whatever policies are being put in place they are not working. Its unemployment rate of 6.6 per cent is the highest in the Sydney metropolitan area and the second highest in the State, yet there are so many local residents delivering services on the ground, working with community organisations, sporting groups and religious organisations. Government must get better at harnessing the strength of local community if it intends to tackle what is becoming a dangerous trend of increasing numbers of disadvantaged people in the Auburn electorate.

The other dangerous trend this Government cannot ignore is the divisive narrative of "us and them". In a world where the weapon of those who wish to cause us harm is fear and division, those elected as representatives of government should ensure they avoid the temptation of further division by singling out one section of our community over another. In the other place I was always surprised at the ability of some in that Chamber both to ignore history and to present an irrational religious view when it came to the origins of our legal system. This of course was not due to a lack of research or understanding. It was simply a bald-faced attempt to exclude some of our community, essentially to create the us and them dynamic. It is the type of guff we also get from the ideas of the Ramsey Centre for Western Civilisation. Language matters and it should be used to enhance intellectual debate not, as has been the case in both Chambers in this Parliament, to stifle it.

History teaches us that all cultures have been perpetually in discussion with one another. By creating a social narrative that ignores these discussions we are ignoring the nuances of history and the nuances of our identity as a multicultural society. When isolationist politics translates into an isolationist history the only thing you get is lonely people disconnected from society, and that is a particularly dangerous place to be. The last few months have been distressing for many in our community. The senseless terrorist attack in Christchurch, followed by those in Sri Lanka, has shaken the local community.

It is imperative that those in this Chamber stand side by side with the community, taking on racism in all its forms. There is a growing tide of anti-Muslim, anti-Jewish and anti-Christian intolerance across this country and the world. The African community has also come under sustained attack. It is extremely disturbing. We must stand together to fight all these forms of racism and intolerance. It is also important we resist the temptation of standing up for one community whilst launching a veiled attack to silence the voices of another.

My electorate of Auburn has a large Palestinian community. Many Palestinian refugees were my friends at school, alongside a large contingent of Chileans who fled the Pinochet regime. The plight of the Palestinian people and the occupation of their sovereign lands is well understood in this country. Every one of the last five Morgan polls on Australian attitudes to the Israel-Palestine dispute shows majority support among Australians for the Palestinian case. They agree with Labor policy that Palestine, like Israel, should be recognised as an independent state by Australia. The polls show Australians also condemn the Israel Government's actions in allowing settlers to occupy Palestinian land. Palestine is the site of one of our earliest conflicts as a young nation. I have stood on a beach in Gaza and pondered on the forces that drew those poor Australian soldiers, from the ends of the earth, to Palestine and Turkey and on to the mass slaughter on the Western Front.

Australia has a complex history of involvement in conflicts over the last century. People will see this complex history as they walk the streets of Auburn. At Anzac Day memorial services they are likely to run into South Korean servicemen who fought alongside Australians not only in the Korean War but also in Vietnam. The Auburn dawn service always hosts a large Turkish contingent, standing side by side with those who have served in the Australian Defence Forces. There are many in the electorate from the Iraq and Afghan communities; they are here due to more recent conflicts that have seen our troops engaged in their longest period of conflict, lasting two decades.

Alongside these communities, the electorate of Auburn has one of the largest Chinese communities in the State. Anzac Day is also an important time to remember the great loss and service of the Chinese during World War II. Although less well armed than their American and British counterparts, whom they fought alongside in Burma, the Chinese held out 800,000 Japanese soldiers on the Chinese mainland. The horrors of Nanking, the bombing of Chongqing and the fall of Xuzhou contributed to the 14 million Chinese believed to have been killed during this horrendous conflict. It is estimated 80 million Chinese became refugees. The contribution of the Chinese during World War II should not be underestimated. They had a considerable role in the outcome of the war in the Pacific and it should be recognised and acknowledged. It is this shared history that brings us together in our community. The horrors of war never really leave a nation, and war has left a scar on the soul of our nation with so many lives lost over the last century. But it has contributed greatly to the nation we are today, where those

who once either stood side by side or on the opposite sides in the trenches now all live here together. That is what is best about Auburn.

Of course there is much work to do in the electorate. Homelessness and unemployment must be tackled. Auburn Hospital, built by the Carr Labor Government, has seen its services run down under this Government. Local constituents expect more than just childbirth services at Auburn Hospital. I hope that in the future the Minister for Health will sit down with me to talk about, at the least, the return of a fracture clinic to this hospital. It is concerning to have children arrive at an emergency ward at their local hospital with a fracture, only to be sent to another hospital to be treated when diagnosed. I note the member for Murray shared the same concerns in her inaugural speech. When the Government talks in this Chamber about customer service, it is incumbent upon it to provide the services. The reductions of service at Auburn Hospital do not give me confidence in the Government's claims to improving customer service.

Highest on the list of customer service complaints that this Government might want to deal with is its decision to dramatically cut local train services. At Regents Park, Berala, Lidcombe, Auburn and Granville stations the complaint is the same: the new train timetables have been a disaster. Traffic congestion is also a major headache for local residents. The reintroduction of tolls on the M4 has served to drive motorists off the M4 and onto the local roads of Auburn. Of course, the Government is well aware of the problem as it was predicted in the Government's own traffic reports for its business case. Mona Street and Wellington Road turn into continuous parking lots during peak hour. At Wentworth Point the continued failure to ensure any cohesive traffic management plan is particularly frustrating for residents as Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and Parramatta Council continue to find excuses to fail to put in any traffic measurements at the Hill Road-Bennelong Parkway intersection.

A year after signing a memorandum of understanding for the site of a new high school at Sydney Olympic Park, little appears to have happened. Fortunately, we now have a new Minister for Customer Service, who, I am sure, will be on the phone after my speech, fixing these customer service complaints immediately. I think he can expect a bit more of that. As I said earlier, it is a great honour to represent the electorate of Auburn. It contains my spiritual home, Lidcombe Oval—home during my youth of the mighty Western Suburbs Magpies. It is a dynamic place, its schools punch above their weight, it is fast becoming the festival capital of Australia and it contains the most vibrant food, poets, artists and storytellers in the country. Quite frankly, if you want to hear a good yarn, you should come to Auburn.

Before I start the long list of those I need to thank for their support outside this place, I thank my colleagues in the other place. Much of the work in the Legislative Council appears to be unappreciated outside that Chamber—I note some of my colleagues here are from there—but it is often the place of greatest reform in the Parliament. Indeed, I am sure the Premier will want to embrace with open arms the reforms they have been talking about today. I also thank all the long-suffering staff of the Legislative Council for their hard work, often into the wee hours of the morning; on a couple of occasions into the next day.

My staff over the past 12 years as a member of the other place also deserve a medal: Sheena Borbe, Charisma Kaliyanda, Katrina Byrne, Luke McCaskie, Mustapha Khodr Agha and, particularly, Saskia Mulder and Helen Samardzic. I thank also my campaign director in the seat of Auburn, Anthony D'Adam, who is now in the other place as well. I am sure he appreciated the new military precision that was brought to local campaigning. While there are far too many to name everyone who worked on the campaign and gave me support, their commitment and hard work are greatly appreciated. I particularly single out Barbara Dundas, Michael Spicer, Nadia Repin, Kassem Chalabi, Rafah Chalabi, Mustapha Hamed, Ibrahim Taha, Fahad Mahmood, Glen Elmore, Martin Byrne, Sabrin Farooqui, Ali Khan, Ali Ulutas, George Campbell, Steve and Josephine Christou, Baris Atayman, Taha Jamil, Ashlee Kearney, Mark Styles, Tom Mortimer, Kun Huang, Ernest Kulauzovic, Ghassan Alassadi, Ola Hamed and David Chen.

I pay particular tribute to our local stalwart Vince Roach, who, unfortunately, passed away during the campaign. Not only was Vince a fearsome campaigner for the Labor movement, but he was also a vital cog in community transport and the local RSL sub-branch. He will be greatly missed by all in the Labor movement. I thank also for their community support The Association of Bhanin El-Minie, the Turkish Welfare Centre, Iraqi Renaissance, the Palestinian workers association, the Australia Alevi Cultural Centre and the Australian Chinese Workers Association. There were some particularly special hard workers, who may be small in stature but make up for it with gusto on the campaign field who deserve a special mention. They are Elmina and Ahmed Kulauzovic; Inez, Samuel and Atticus D'Adam; and Nicola and Isabella Christou. I thank my good mate Rita Mallia from the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU], alongside Darren and all the other CFMEU delegates, for their support over many years. I acknowledge my union, the Public Service Association of NSW, and, in particular, my good mate Greg Shaw, for his support over many years.

The work unions do is vitally important. I know that recently the CFMEU has been shaken by another loss on a job site when Christopher Cassaniti, only 18 years old, was killed when scaffolding collapsed on the site where he worked as an apprentice. That was a tragic loss and Christopher's parents are heartbroken. Christopher's mother bravely spoke about him at the recent May Day rally in Hyde Park. She spoke of the devastation to their lives due to the loss of their young son. Importantly, she urged governments to do more, particularly regarding legislation introducing more stringent penalties to prevent deaths in the workplace. Members on this side of the Chamber will continue to fight for the introduction of laws that would provide heavy penalties for corporations where workplace death results from breaches of workplace safety obligations. We will also continue to pursue significant jail penalties in appropriate cases where individuals are found to be morally culpable for a death.

Last but not least, I thank my family. I start by thanking my brothers, Mark, David and Anthony, for all their help. While David is a seasoned campaigner at every election, Mark flew in from Austria to spend his holiday standing at pre-poll and banging in garden stakes for posters. It was quite the holiday treat for him! My little brother, Anthony, single-handedly letterboxed Granville South and had the entire suburb covered with such speed and efficiency that I always ended up being called to drop off more boxes to try to keep up. To my mother, Maureen Walsh, and my stepfather, Laurie Ferguson, thank you for not only your hard work on my campaign, but also the ongoing selfless work you continue to do on behalf of the community. Regardless of the strain, you always turn up. I thank my father, Bruce Voltz, and Francis Quayle for all their hard work during the campaign. It is always worthwhile having a former salesman on your team, who believes you are capable of anything and when you need someone to sell your story.

I thank also my big fat Greek family. To Elias, thank you for your friendship and level-headedness in the face of whatever chaos is happening around you. Milto and Vicky Bampos, thank you for all your ongoing support and love and generous quantities of food. To Voula Pimbas, Alex Pimbas and Joanna Passaportis, your ongoing belief and support are very important to us all. Finally, to my not-so-little monsters, Katerina and Anastasia Bampos, it has been said many times that politics is very hard on children. I believe given the breadth of politics in our family, it has been harder on both of you than most. I promise not to make you do too many translations for me for Greek constituents, although I have already broken that rule. I only want to tell you both, for the record, that I love you and I thank you for all your support. Thank you to all those who will be my colleagues in this Chamber. And, as they say in the classics, game on.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I acknowledge the member for Auburn and welcome her to this Chamber. It has been wonderful to work with the member over the years in her other role. I wish her all the best in this House.

Members stood in their places and applauded.

Bills

AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019

Second Reading Speech

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:50): Mr Temporary Speaker, I am so delighted that you have assumed the Speaker's chair. Our decision to refer to the abuse of older persons, rather than to elders, is in line with our respect for the use of the term "elder" by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to denote a person who has gained recognition as a custodian of knowledge and lore, and who has permission to disclose knowledge and beliefs but who may not necessarily be "elderly" in the sense understood by other Australians. In defining who is an "older adult" the bill also recognises the grim fact that Australia has not yet closed the gap with respect to life expectancy between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and the rest of the Australian population. For Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders the bill defines an older adult as a person aged 50 years or over. For the rest of the population the age is 65 years or over.

In October last year the Federal Government announced a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety following more than 5,000 submissions received from aged care consumers, families, carers, aged care workers, health professionals and service providers. Although the terms of reference focus on abuse and neglect in the Commonwealth aged care system, this will inevitably shine a light on abuse of vulnerable people more broadly. By establishing an Ageing and Disability Commissioner, New South Wales is taking the initiative in improving protections for vulnerable people who do not come within the ambit of other complaints mechanisms. I place on record that as a State we will be making a submission to the royal commission. I will now outline the provisions of the bill.

Part 1 contains the objects and principles that inform and reinforce the purpose of the legislation. The simplicity and directness of the bill's objects to protect adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and to protect and promote their rights, reflect the focused and unambiguous purpose of the legislation. The principles recognise important human rights of adults with disability and older adults, including their inherent right to respect for their worth and dignity as individuals, their right to respect for their cultural and linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs and their right to privacy and confidentiality. The principles affirm that adults with disability and older adults should be able to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports and services, and acknowledge the crucial role of families, carers and other significant persons in the lives of these adults.

The principles also recognise that adults with disability and older adults may face multiple disadvantage and are potentially more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation. This may particularly be so if the adult with disability or the older person is a woman, an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander, from a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex community, from a culturally and linguistically diverse background or living in a regional or remote area. These groups can face additional disadvantages as well as barriers to accessing supports and services. The bill requires anyone, including the commissioner, exercising a function under the Act with respect to a particular adult with disability or older adult to have regard to the wishes of that adult.

The bill adopts the same meaning of "disability" as it has in the Disability Inclusion Act 2014, which includes a long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others. This definition incorporates the way in which the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines disability, ensuring that the bill applies to all those considered to be adults with disability in accordance with the highest international standards. Part 3 of the bill contains provisions that set out the general functions of the commissioner, although the commissioner also has other functions contained elsewhere in the bill which I will come to.

The bill specifies seven main functions. First, the commissioner is to deal with allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older adults, whether on the basis of a report made to the commissioner or at the commissioner's own initiative, including by referring matters to appropriate persons or bodies and by conducting investigations. As the formulation of the bill evolved, the Government came to realise that our original intention to determine the ambit of the commissioner's functions by reference to allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation occurring in a "home or community setting" was neither enough nor amenable to unequivocal interpretation. There is, without doubt, a critical gap in protections given to those who are vulnerable to mistreatment in their own homes by people they know and trust, maybe a member of their family but sometimes a neighbour or friend, who is usually, but not always, an unpaid, informal carer. But if the commissioner was confined to investigating reports about abuse, neglect or exploitation in a home or community setting, aside from the clear challenges of legislative interpretation, we would inadvertently exclude others equally in need of protection.

It would, for example, overlook financial exploitation of a vulnerable person occurring remotely and in technologically challenging circumstances, or abuse of persons living in aged care settings or disability accommodation, or even long-stay hospitals by visiting family or friends. The bill therefore sets the parameters of the commissioner's functions by specifically excluding circumstances in which there is a clear and more appropriate recourse. The commissioner must decline to deal with a report if the allegation being made amounts to a complaint that can be made to the Health Care Complaints Commission, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission or the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission. Otherwise, the bill will capture all allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation that are not otherwise captured by these complaints bodies. This approach provides the widest possible protection for people with a disability and older people but avoids overlap, duplication and forum shopping.

Second, the bill gives the commissioner wide discretion to take any further action, following an investigation into an allegation, that the commissioner considers necessary to protect the adult from abuse, neglect or exploitation. This includes making an application to a court or tribunal such as applying to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal of NSW [NCAT] for guardianship orders in respect of the adult. Examples of other actions that the commissioner could take, which would come within this wide discretion, include referring conduct that may be criminal to the NSW Police Force, referring the matter to another body for appropriate action, facilitating the provision or better coordination of services, including health services, and facilitating the provision of more appropriate accommodation. The commissioner can also, of course, conclude that the allegation is unsubstantiated or already resolved and that no further action should or needs to be taken. Operational policies and procedures will provide more detail about appropriate actions to take, depending on the findings of the investigation.

Third, the commissioner is to raise awareness and educate the community about issues facing adults with disability and older adults, including for the purpose of preventing the abuse, neglect and exploitation of those adults. Fourth, the commissioner is to provide advice and general assistance to the public about matters relating to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older adults. Fifth, the commissioner is to inquire into and report on systemic issues relating to matters in relation to which the commissioner may conduct investigations. Sixth, the commissioner is to consult with an Ageing and Disability Advisory Board, set up under the bill, on any matter relating to adults with disability and older adults that the commissioner considers appropriate. Lastly, the commissioner is to advise, and make recommendations to, the Minister, at the commissioner's own initiative or at the request of the Minister, on any matter relating to adults with disability and older adults.

The bill recognises the importance of the independence of the role of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner by providing that the commissioner will not be subject to the control or discretion of the Minister in the exercise of the functions relating to conducting investigations, advising or making recommendations to the Minister, and preparing annual reports and special reports. The bill provides that anyone at all may make a report to the commissioner, providing the person has reasonable grounds to believe the vulnerable adult about whom the report is being made is subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Likewise, persons who are themselves adults with disability or older adults can make a report about themselves if they have reasonable grounds to believe they are personally subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The bill does not attempt to set parameters around who can make a report, about whom a report can be made and the type of conduct that is eligible for reporting because it reaches some defined threshold. This recognises that it is no easy task to determine who might be at risk and who might cause harm, nor, in all cases, to be sure that conduct is abusive, neglectful or exploitative. Abuse, neglect and exploitation can take many forms, both obvious and subtle, recurring or one-off. Opening the door wide to the making and receiving of reports ensures that no-one in need of protection is inadvertently excluded from the ambit of the bill.

The bill encourages people to bring instances of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older adults to the attention of the commissioner to ensure the protection of these adults by giving the reporter a number of protections. The reporter is not liable to any civil or criminal action or any disciplinary action for a report made in good faith. As well, the identity of a person who makes a report in good faith, and any information from which the person's identity can be deduced, remains confidential and can be disclosed only with the person's consent or if disclosure is necessary for the purposes of law enforcement. The bill also includes a power to prescribe in regulations other justifications for disclosure, if it becomes apparent that this is warranted. We emphasise that if a person makes a malicious report or a report that is otherwise made in bad faith, he or she will not have any of these reporter protections and may be liable in defamation or face other actions or proceedings. Nor will the person who makes a report in bad faith have the benefit of anonymity.

There is no need to provide for an offence in the bill of giving the commissioner false or misleading information as this comes within the offences of part 5A of the Crimes Act—in particular section 307B, which carries a penalty of imprisonment for two years or a fine of up to 200 penalty units, which is the equivalent of \$22,000. The commissioner can investigate a report, refer it to another person or body or decline to take any action. In order to determine the most appropriate response, the commissioner can make preliminary inquiries and can ask the person making the report for further information.

The bill also advances the achievement of favourable outcomes for adults with disability and older adults by enabling the commissioner to provide certain information to government sector agencies, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT], public health organisations, public hospitals and private health facilities, as well as any persons or bodies that are prescribed in regulations, to enable or assist them to deliver services to, or take other action for, these adults or make decisions or assessments about their safety, welfare and wellbeing. Information can also be provided under this provision of the bill to enable action to be taken for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of adults with disability or older adults generally. The commissioner can also enter into information-sharing arrangements with these agencies and with the president of NCAT.

Information that can be provided by the commissioner, and which can be shared under an information-sharing arrangement, is limited to information concerning a report under the Act; the safety, welfare or wellbeing of adults with disability or older adults; and the abuse, neglect or exploitation of these adults. We propose making a regulation that prescribes the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission as bodies to whom information can be provided and with whom the commissioner can enter into an information-sharing agreement, similar to that between the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The commissioner cannot conduct an investigation into an allegation unless he or she obtains the consent of the adult alleged to be, or at risk of being, abused, neglected or exploited. Consent can be dispensed with only

if the commissioner is of the opinion that the adult is incapable of giving consent or the allegation is so serious that it is not necessary to obtain consent. We have also included in the bill the ability to prescribe in regulations other circumstances in which it will not be necessary to obtain consent. This regulation-making power was included in case it becomes apparent over time, as reports are received, that there are certain situations in which the requirement to obtain consent is having an unacceptable impact on the best interests of some vulnerable adults and is leaving them unprotected and unsupported.

Making exceptions to the requirement to obtain the vulnerable adult's consent to delving into their circumstances may appear at odds with the Government's support of the right of people with disability and older people to have autonomy over their lives. However, when abuse, neglect or exploitation occurs within a close relationship where there is an expectation of trust, especially when the person carrying out the offending behaviour is a family member, there may well be a reluctance on the part of the vulnerable person to condone the investigation for any number of reasons. This may be out of loyalty, even at a cost to the vulnerable person's own mental, physical or financial wellbeing, or out of fear. The vulnerable person may be being manipulated or intimidated. There comes a point at which the delicate balance between respecting the wishes of the adult with disability or the older adult and keeping them safe tips in favour of the latter. If the allegation concerns serious abuse, neglect or exploitation we feel that it is justified to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable person over his or her right to autonomy.

In cases where the vulnerable person does not have capacity to give consent to an investigation, we did not consider it appropriate to require the commissioner to obtain the consent of another person, whether that be a formally appointed guardian authorised to consent on the vulnerable person's behalf or a carer who is the vulnerable person's informal spokesperson. It may well be that the guardian or carer is the very person whose conduct the commissioner needs to investigate. This risk is well illustrated by a case in Western Australia in which an elderly couple affected by dementia had their assets significantly depleted, without their consent, by their three sons. Following a complaint by the granddaughter, the State Administrative Tribunal found the men were involved in "questionable transactions", including transferring \$1.6 million from the sale of the family farm out of the couple's joint account and into their own bank accounts; transferring ownership of a home from the parents' names into their own; and paying for renovations to the home and for legal bills with their parents' money.

In order to investigate a report, the commissioner can compel attendance at meetings and the production of documents and other things, and can execute search warrants. A person will commit an offence if they refuse or fail, without reasonable excuse, to comply with a notice to attend a meeting or produce something, make a false or misleading statement in response to the notice, or alter, suppress or destroy something they are required to produce. However, a person does not have to produce a document if there is an overriding public interest against its disclosure, if access to the document would otherwise be denied under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, or if it is a document prepared for the dominant purpose of an investigation by a root cause analysis team under part 4 of the Private Health Facilities Act 2007.

The commissioner can apply for a search warrant to be executed on premises where there is an adult with disability or older adult who the commissioner reasonably believes is subject to, or at risk of, serious abuse, neglect or exploitation. A search warrant can authorise the commissioner, or a member of the commissioner's staff named in the warrant, to enter, examine and inspect the premises; to take photographs, films, audio, video or other recordings; to require documents to be produced for inspection; to examine, inspect, copy or take notes from documents; to remove documents and things to inspect them further; to require the owner or occupier of the premises to provide assistance or facilities that are reasonably necessary for the investigation; and to require any person on the premises to answer questions or provide information. Any medical practitioner or prescribed health practitioner accompanying the person executing the warrant can inspect the premises and observe and speak with the adult with disability or older adult, and can examine that adult with his or her consent. Anyone who, without reasonable excuse, obstructs or hinders a person executing a warrant commits an offence.

Supporting regulations and policies and procedures will augment the legislation, providing operational detail and further guidance for the exercise of the commissioner's functions, including conducting and concluding investigations. The commissioner is also likely to enter into memoranda of understanding with other agencies to ensure that the objects of the bill will be achieved in the most effective way. The bill does not provide for the commissioner to make enforceable orders as it is not intended that the commissioner's role will be quasi judicial or anything resembling a tribunal. While the commissioner will have strong powers of investigation, we envisage that the commissioner will have an invaluable role in resolving core issues that gave rise to the abuse, neglect or exploitation, or allowed it to occur, and in assisting all parties involved—the vulnerable adult, carers and service providers—to better provide for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the vulnerable adult. Of course, in serious cases, punitive action against a person harming an adult with disability or an older adult will be a matter for the police and the courts.

The commissioner is to oversee and coordinate official community visitors, being a function transferred to the commissioner from the responsibility of the Ombudsman under the Community Services (Complaints, Review and Monitoring) Act 1993, but only insofar as the program relates to adults with disability. The Minister can appoint on the commissioner's recommendation official community visitors who have functions relating to people with disability who reside in "visitable services", which are accommodation services in the full-time care of a service provider or assisted boarding houses. The regulations can also prescribe a service provided to a person with disability as a visitable service. The functions of official community visitors in relation to a place where a visitable service is provided include entering and inspecting the place, conferring alone with resident adults with disability or employees, inspecting relevant documents held there, and providing the Minister and the commissioner with advice or information relating to the conduct of the place.

In relation to adults with disability using visitable services generally, official community visitors can inform the Minister and commissioner on matters affecting their welfare, interests and conditions. Official community visitors can encourage the promotion of legal and human rights, including the right to privacy, confidentiality, adequate information and consultation, and the right to complain. Official community visitors can consider matters raised by the adults themselves, or raised by staff or people having a genuine concern for the welfare, interests and conditions of those adults. They can provide information about and assist those adults to obtain advocacy services that can help them with grievances or concerns. Official community visitors can refer those grievances or concerns, if reasonable and practicable to do so, to the providers of the relevant services or to other appropriate bodies.

The Government proposes prescribing NDIS service providers as visitable services to enable official community visitors to continue to visit NDIS participants receiving supports and services from a person or organisation authorised or funded as part of the participant's plan to provide those services. The commissioner has a general oversight and coordination role in relation to official community visitors and can determine priorities for the services to be provided. Anyone who makes, or proposes to make, a complaint to an official community visitor is protected from retribution for doing so. The commissioner must prepare and provide to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament annual reports that include a report on the commissioner's activities and the activities of official community visitors during the relevant year and the commissioner's recommendations, if any, for administrative action or changes in the State's laws.

The commissioner is also to prepare a special report on any matter requested by the Minister, which report the commissioner may provide to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament. The commissioner may also, of his or her own volition and at any time, prepare a special report on any matter relating to the commissioner's functions. This report may also be given to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament, provided the Minister has first been given a copy. Part 2 contains the machinery provisions of establishing the office of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. The commissioner is appointed by the Governor and can hold office for a term of up to five years. The commissioner can be reappointed for one further term whether or not those terms are consecutive.

The commissioner is employed under a contract of employment between the commissioner and the Minister, with certain provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 relating to the employment of public service senior executives applying to the commissioner. These include provisions relating to the band of employment and remuneration, employment benefits and allowances. However, the office of commissioner is a statutory office and the provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 relating to the employment of public service employees do not otherwise apply. The commissioner does not directly employ staff but persons may be employed in the public service under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to assist the commissioner to exercise the functions of the office and the commissioner may delegate any of these functions to a member of staff or to someone belonging to a class prescribed by the regulations, if any.

The office of the commissioner becomes vacant if the commissioner dies, completes a term of office and is not reappointed, resigns, becomes bankrupt or in other circumstances related to bankruptcy and insolvency, becomes mentally incapacitated, is convicted or imprisoned for certain offences in certain circumstances or is removed from office by the Governor. The Governor may remove the commissioner from office only for incompetence, incapacity or misbehaviour. The Minister may appoint an acting commissioner during the vacancy or during any illness or absence of the commissioner and can remove an acting commissioner at any time.

I referred earlier to the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. The bill sets up this body to advise the commissioner on any matter related to adults with disability and older adults that it considers appropriate or that the commissioner refers to it. The board will comprise the commissioner as the chair and persons appointed by the Minister who have, in the Minister's opinion, relevant knowledge of and experience in matters relating to adults with disability and older adults. Its composition must also reflect the diversity of the community. The bill

demonstrates and represents the Government's strong commitment to the safety and wellbeing of adults with disability and older adults.

This bill has been worked on by many people. I acknowledge former Minister Ray Williams, the member for Castle Hill, and former Minister Tanya Davies, the member for Mulgoa. I acknowledge the Attorney General, the members of Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health and Community Services, the NSW Ombudsman and the Law Reform Commission. The bill will provide the protections that this class of people require. It is the first of its type anywhere in the country, and I know it will be a positive protection for the people who need it most. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Matter of Public Importance

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (18:15): National Road Safety Week runs from 6 to 12 May and is coordinated by Safer Australian Roads and Highways [SARAH]. SARAH is a wonderful initiative that grew out of unimaginable pain. It was launched by a father, Peter Frazer, following the death of his daughter Sarah in a crash in February 2012. For the duration of National Road Safety Week the Sydney Harbour Bridge will be lit up in yellow. People will see the "Towards zero" message together with a yellow ribbon projected onto the pylons as a reminder to us all of the more than 1,200 lives lost on the nation's roads each year. This year National Road Safety Week coincides with the biennial United Nations [UN] Global Road Safety Week.

Road safety is a pressing global concern. The World Health Organization, in close cooperation with the UN, is committed to raising awareness worldwide of the leading cause of death among children and young adults aged five to 29 years. It is not preventable diseases such as tuberculosis, measles and malaria, or war and famine, or a lack of access to clean water; it is road traffic injuries. Globally, road accidents are the biggest killer of young people. That is astonishing and utterly unacceptable. Every year 1.35 million lives are lost through traffic accidents and many millions more are injured, resulting in devastated families and communities. This is the fifth UN Global Road Safety Week. This year the theme is "Leadership for road safety". This global theme recognises the essential role of strong, effective leadership from all levels of government in order to make journeys safer.

We all aspire to a world where being killed or injured on the road is simply no longer possible. The Road Safety Plan 2021 has the long-term aspirational target of zero road fatalities. It embraces the challenge of committing resources to achieve that target. It will require a lot of work but, given the devastating emotional cost and massive financial impact of death and injury on our roads, it is most worthwhile. To get to zero we need to wage war on many fronts. Not only do we need to design and build better roads that will protect us from errors and the stupidity of others but also we need to change the way that our roads are used. We must educate road users through campaigns targeting specific high-risk behaviours, such as driving tired, mobile phone use and driving while drug affected.

Good use is being made of innovation such as the first trial worldwide of camera-based technology that will detect drivers who are still not getting the message that texting while driving can be deadly. Regulations have been introduced to enforce behaviours where commonsense has failed. Regulations such as the passing-distance rule for cyclists ensure that all road users understand exactly what is considered safe and reasonable to protect the more vulnerable road users. We have also introduced measures to make it easier to detect those who continue to make stupid decisions, such as drug and drink driving, that put us all at risk.

We have tripled the number of mobile drug tests since 2015 and since 1 July 2018 these also test for the presence of cocaine. We are continuing to expand the reach of these units and by 2020 we will be administering 200,000 mobile drug tests each year. We understand that there are some low-risk offenders who need to get back on the road quickly to maintain their livelihood. We have expanded the Mandatory Alcohol Interlock Program and it now covers around 6,500 mid-range and first offenders each year. As a community we need an assurance that people who are behind the wheel are stone-cold sober, and alcohol interlocks give us this comfort. These measures are just a few of the many changes and improvements that this Government has implemented as part of the Safe System approach to road safety.

New South Wales is one of the safest places in the world to travel on the roads and there is a clear trend of constant improvement over time. Some 354 people were killed on New South Wales roads last year, which is 35 fewer than were killed in the previous year and the second lowest number of fatalities since records began in 1908. But that is still 354 people too many. While New South Wales has every reason to be proud of its road safety record, we need to—and will—do even better. I note that China's annual road toll is 260,000 people.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:20): I thank the member for Heathcote for bringing forward this matter of public importance. It gives me great pleasure to speak about National Road Safety Week and to join with my colleagues in Parliament to acknowledge National Road Safety Week. It is especially important to me as I acknowledge the important work done by Peter Frazer, from the Blue Mountains, through the Safer Australian Roads and Highways Group. Peter Frazer tragically lost his daughter Sarah Frazer, one of my constituents, to a road accident on the Hume Highway in 2012. I acknowledge the tragic consequences of this event on the lives of Sarah's friends and family, and on the loved ones of the tow truck driver who was also killed in that accident.

In the years since that tragic incident Peter has been unrelenting in his campaign to ensure that motorists drive so others survive. Peter and his family hail from the Blue Mountains, and I have reflected in the past in this place on the significance of the Great Western Highway to the lives of my constituents. The highway is a way of life for almost every resident of the Blue Mountains. Not only is it our connection to jobs and commerce in Sydney or Lithgow; it is also the main arterial road between each village and township to the shopping centres of Springwood, Katoomba and Winmalee. Likewise for constituents in the villages of Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine and Mount Tomah at the northern end of my electorate, the Bells Line of Road is a similar fact of daily life for every resident.

The message of National Road Safety Week is a very personal one for us in the Blue Mountains. Month in, month out, since 2012 we have seen yellow ribbons for road safety—like those adorning our jackets today—tied to the radio antennas of cars travelling on the Great Western Highway. For our community, road safety is a constant concern. To this end, I acknowledge my friends and Blue Mountains residents Jasmine Payget and Laurie Strathdee who lost their son Rian in 2004 in an as yet unsolved hit-and-run incident involving a truck on the Hume Highway near the Southern Highlands. Rian was just five years old. I acknowledge the pain, grief and anguish of all people affected by road trauma, and I acknowledge the very difficult job of emergency services personnel and first responders who deal on a daily basis with catastrophic road incidents.

I thank members of this Parliament for wearing yellow ribbons for road safety and engaging with this matter of public importance. In many ways these awareness campaigns are grassroots efforts to bring our attention to an important issue and make sure that we address it. It is absolutely crucial that we do not restrict our efforts to wearing a yellow ribbon and giving a speech here today. As legislators, we must act. I call upon this Parliament and our Federal Parliament not just to speak on this issue but to act. State and Federal governments must work continually towards improving our road infrastructure and updating our road rules so that motorists are supported to drive so others survive.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (18:24): Road safety is a matter of public importance, particularly for people who live in the country. Just one-third of the State's population live in the bush, but our regional roads are over-represented in the road toll. In 2018 there were 241 fatalities on regional roads—that is, 68 per cent of the statewide road toll. We are losing the equivalent of the community of Tucabia, a small town in my electorate, each year. This week is National Road Safety Week. We saw the Sydney Harbour Bridge lit up in yellow on Sunday as a visual reminder of the more than 1,200 lives lost on the nation's roads last year. For many people the pain and trauma of road accidents is acutely real and relived regularly. Those of us who live in the country must remember that it is not visitors unfamiliar with the roads who are dying. These are local people: local people on the tail end of their journey, local people on their way home, local people whose deaths shatter families and entire communities.

Clearly the cause is not just the road. There is something going on here that will not be addressed by simply improving the quality of the roads. When people see us building roads, many think it is about getting them to their destination faster and more efficiently, and of course that is part of it. But just as big a priority is getting people to their destination safely. It is with this in mind that we are investing \$145.3 million in Saving Lives on Country Roads. Under this program we are rolling out rumble strips, and life-saving flexible barriers to help prevent crashes at high-risk locations across the State. By the end of this year we expect to have rolled out more than 400 kilometres of rumble strips.

We are also implementing our Road Safety Plan, which will see more research and testing of crash-avoidance technology. We will work with the Australian Government to see it rolled out. But the reality is that, while we can build safer roads, improving road safety is a community effort and we need the help of everyone who uses our roads. The New South Wales Government has zero tolerance for drink-driving. That is why this year we introduced new penalties for first-time low-level drink-driving offences. From 20 May anyone without a prior charge who blows between 0.05 and 0.079 can see their licence immediately suspended for three months and they can be issued with a \$561 fine. This reform makes it clear that those who break the law will pay the price.

The reality is those who break the law are not just putting themselves at risk but also putting other people in harm's way. Alcohol-related crashes claimed the lives of at least 68 people on New South Wales roads last year,

accounting for nearly one in five road deaths including 55 lives lost on country roads. Road safety is everyone's responsibility and no-one is an exception to the rule. It is up to all of us—each and every one of us—to make a difference, because one life lost on our roads is one too many.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:28):

By leave: I thank the member for Heathcote for bringing forward this matter of public importance in National Road Safety Week. As the former Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads, Maritime and Transport, this motion is dear to my heart. As we know, National Road Safety Week runs from 6 to 12 May this year. This Government is committed to driving down the road toll to zero. We will do this by doing everything we can to upgrade our roads not only in metropolitan centres but also in regional New South Wales. The commitment that the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales has made to the task of making roads safer and prioritising road safety was reflected in the speech of the Governor, Her Excellency Margaret Beazley, to the combined Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council on Tuesday. The Governor's Speech outlined the Government's plans for the next four years, and road connectivity and safety was a top priority for our regions. The Governor said:

From Nowra to Bega, from West Wyalong to Forbes, from Manilla to Boggabri—the Government will deliver safer and more efficient journeys for businesses and families.

That is great news for the many thousands of motorists who travel from home to work and work to home and who have to sit in traffic to get to the city or who drive on long country runs west, north, south or east. We have a duty of care to upgrade our road networks, just like the upgrade and duplication of Gunagood Road in Tamworth. We are looking at upgrading Werris Creek Road around Duri. The soil composition in that area continues to break up the road surface and make it unsafe. The Manilla to Boggabri Road, currently a dirt road, is more frequently used by not only local traffic but also travellers who work in mines around Boggabri and travel to and from Tamworth. We have bone-jarring, unsafe dirt roads—and this Government will do whatever it possibly can to make them safer. It is fitting that the member for Heathcote, who is a passionate advocate for road safety, has moved this motion during National Road Safety Week. This Government will provide safer roads and highways right across New South Wales. I thank the House for the opportunity to speak to this motion.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (18:31): In reply: It was my great pleasure to bring this matter to the attention of the House. I thank the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Clarence and the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation for speaking to this most important issue. In 2016 an average of 260,000 people—that is, 700 people per day—died on roads in China. I know I cannot compare apples to oranges, but we are trying to bring down our road toll in New South Wales and it is important that we do our best to assist. A road in my electorate has attracted too many accidents that have been put down to driver behaviour rather than the condition of the road. Drivers using mobile phones while driving cause a lot of deaths and injuries in New South Wales and nationally. Drivers lose concentration when travelling at 100 kilometres per hour and are distracted by their phones.

Car design should have a complete mobile blocker in every car so that drivers have peace and quiet while driving in the luxurious 32 kilometres per hour drive from my house to Sydney. That is as fast as we can travel in peak hour. Many bingles occur because of the ringing of mobile phones, drivers texting or drivers being distracted by a mobile phone. Many people are seriously or fatally injured because they take their eyes off the road for a fraction of a second. Accident scenes have become more tragic than the ones I saw 20 years ago. Cars seem to be flipping over more often due to drivers sharply turning the steering wheel. In our area a young policeman on his way to work was killed by a lady whose car ploughed straight into him. We need to stop those kinds of accidents. Hopefully greater awareness will help stop those kinds of accidents.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Heathcote for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I thank also the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Clarence for their contributions to this debate.

Discussion concluded.

Private Members' Statements

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:34): I congratulate you, Mr Temporary Speaker Piper, on your promotion. I hope to successfully seek the call more often from you in future! I thank the residents of the Holsworthy electorate for providing me with the opportunity to represent them for the next four years. This Government has been able to provide worthwhile enhancements to our area including upgrading Deadman's Creek Bridge, building new Rural Fire Service stations at Sandy Point and Barden Ridge, starting the duplication of Heathcote Road between Holsworthy and Voyager Point, opening the new Liverpool police station and

courthouse, and widening the M5 and Alford's Point Bridge—to name just a few of the infrastructure achievements we have completed in the past two terms.

I am excited for the future of the Holsworthy electorate. This Government has provided \$740 million to upgrade Liverpool Hospital, with a focus on providing a comprehensive cancer centre, expanded capacity for ambulatory care services, expanded neonatal intensive and maternity care, expanded day surgery, interventional radiology capacity and expanded critical care capacity. That will make a massive difference, and so will the provision of an additional \$50 million to this project to allow more parking spaces to be made available at the hospital.

Importantly, this Government is going to continue to invest in my local transport and roads to ensure that commuters and drivers are able to get to and from work safer and faster. To assist with this, I am proud that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government will build approximately 700 commuter parking spaces at Edmondson Park station, 350 at Leppington station and 250 at Warwick Farm station. It will plan the Southwest Metro extension from Bankstown to Liverpool—something that Labor said it would not do but something that will make a huge difference to my area. The Government will increase bus services across our local area and continue the construction of the Heathcote Road upgrade between Holsworthy and Voyager Point.

We are a government that focuses on community, and it is wonderful to see that we will be providing \$400,000 for the Moorebank Rams to upgrade their clubhouse. Its women's team is growing and the clubhouse needs to provide facilities for it. The Government is also providing \$4.5 million to the Southern Districts Soccer Football Association to help upgrade its buildings and facilities in Ernie Smith Reserve, Moorebank. I have been working with the group on this project for the past two years. I was particularly concerned with the state of the women's change rooms which, thankfully, will be addressed in the upgrades. I am proud that this Government will be able to provide this, plus so much more, over the next four years.

I would not have been able to return to this place without the support and dedication from my campaign team, friends and family. There were many people who gave up their time to ensure that Holsworthy was again painted Liberal Blue and that Gladys Berejiklian was returned as Premier. Firstly, I thank all the Ministers who came to represent the Government and support our area, and those who campaigned on the weekends and doorknocked, street-stalled, letterboxed and called houses right across the electorate.

Specifically, I thank Mitchell McMartin, Rhonda Holt, Haris Strangas, Nick Smerdley, Paulene Radley, Arthur Lim, Julia Kokic, Dimitri Konstantinidis, Mazhar Hadid, Tony Hadchiti and Sam Kayal for getting out there weekend after weekend to ensure we got in touch with as many residents as possible. Especially I thank everyone who helped out at pre-poll and on election day to deal with the huge numbers of people. I want to mention those who put in many hours: Darren and Rebekah Foxe, Fiona and Ian MacNaught, Russell and Kerry Vickers and family, Alison McNicol, Marcia McInerney, Amar Singh, Xavier De Domenico, Melanie McPherson, Darren Cook, Ryan Webster, Sheik Mohammed Hbous, Robyn Williams, Luke Tomovski, Tracey Cook, Annelie and Julie Thatcher, Sharna Southwell, Michael Ross, Gary Fox, Jim Dimovski, Faith Perryman, Nicole and Stevie Lillis, Jeff Page, Bryson McMartin, Claudio Alosi, Stephen Nicholls, Carlene Radley, Richard Azar, Ameen Dannoui, Mitchell Clout and also Shane and Cheryl Johnson.

There were many more, but I do not have time to list them all. I thank also the organisational team behind my campaign, led by the phenomenal Daniel Nicholls, who took leave from working with me to volunteer with me. He makes a huge difference to my life and to our electorate. I thank also Alison McInerney and Louise and Justin De Domenico, who also gave up much of their time. Campaigns are never easy but with family support you can get through them. I thank my aunty Jean Reynolds and Aunty Dorothy and Uncle Les Zarebski. I thank my partner, Kent Johns, my daughters, Audrey and Ellie, and my parents, Rhonda and Scott Gibbons, for picking up the slack and helping me to fight for what I believe in and continue to advocate for the Holsworthy electorate.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:40): Recently 197 people registered to inspect a rental property at Long Jetty in my electorate. As a result of the extreme demand, the rent asked for the property was increased from \$425 to \$450 a week. That example illustrates what must be the most pressing social problem facing this State—the lack of sufficient and affordable housing for all citizens. Shelter is the most basic of human needs. Having a secure and affordable home is fundamental to people's ability to participate in the economic and social life of our State. There is now an abundance of evidence that secure and affordable housing is beyond the reach of many. Rental stress is currently experienced by 26 per cent of households across the State, and on the Central Coast that figure is 35 per cent. I think there is a consensus that housing affordability is an issue. What we lack is a consensus on a solution. Since winning government in 2011, the Coalition's housing affordability policy has rested on a seductively simple strategy: Build more houses. The Premier is on record saying that. As Treasurer she was quoted in the Fairfax media as saying:

The most effective way we can tackle housing affordability is to increase supply.

However, despite what has been referred to as a "five year boom in housing supply", house prices and rents have continued to climb at a greater rate than wages and general inflation. Committee for Sydney Chief Executive Officer, Tim Williams, has said:

Homes are unaffordable not because we are building too few but because the market is flooded with cheap credit.

Increasingly access to this is being channelled to existing homeowners over first-time buyers, leading to many Sydneysiders owning two or three properties whilst the average 30-year-old cannot get into home ownership.

We cannot build our way to affordability in such a market.

I am pleased that Labor at the State and national level has policies directed squarely at making housing more affordable and secure. I am also pleased that the community has decided to find its own solution in the absence of a solution from members opposite. Many councils have begun to address the issue in their areas; the Central Coast Council has recently commenced the process in our region. A draft strategy was developed but some in the community sought to stir up fear about what affordable homes might mean for their suburbs. I decided to support the strategy. I thank the many community group representatives who signed my open letter to council encouraging it to adopt the draft strategy. In the letter we noted:

- Housing stress, i.e. Households paying more than 30% of household income towards rent or mortgage, is higher on the Central Coast than for Sydney.
- Rents on the Central Coast have risen faster than rents for Sydney.
- The Central Coast has less social housing than Sydney and the absolute number of social housing dwellings has fallen since 2006.
- Homelessness on the Central Coast has increased.
- There are 24,000 Central Coast households currently in housing stress and, if nothing changes, 7,300 more households will be in housing stress by 2036.

I thank the following people for signing my open letter: Coast Shelter Chief Executive Officer, Rachel Willis, Central Coast Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service Manager Coordinator, Sidonie Shaw, San Remo Neighbourhood Centre Manager, Jillian Hogan, Gosford Regional Community Services Chief Executive Officer, Kathy Sokk, Wyong Neighbourhood Centre Inc. Manager, Kylie Hopkins, Bruce Dent from Gosford Regional Council and the St Vincent de Paul Society, Green Point Community Centre Manager, Marie James, Benevolent Society Team Leader—Community Service, Amy Preston, Central Coast Unions Secretary, Debbie Westacott and Bateau Bay Neighbourhood Centre Manager and Coordinator, Kate Bowden.

I am pleased to inform the House that just last week council adopted its affordable housing strategy. I commend Director of Connected Communities, Julie Vaughan, in particular and all councillors who voted in support of the strategy. If we accept that equal access to secure and affordable housing is a social necessity that is integral to ensuring economic participation, it should be part of this State's infrastructure agenda. This House failed to adequately address the issue during the Fifty-Sixth Parliament. I will work to ensure that will not be the case when we review our work at the end of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament.

EVERYONE CAN PLAY GRANT PROGRAM

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections)
(18:45): I am continually blown away by the great potential of our nation. Every day I come across energetic Australians who, unconvinced by the status quo, are striving to make a difference and taking small but sure steps to build a better future. I have had the privilege of meeting Rebecca Ho and Evander Conroy—two shining lights within our Lane Cove electorate whose small but sure steps have brought dignity and importance to often overlooked parts of our society. Bec Ho was chosen as the Lane Cove electorate 2019 Local Woman of the Year for her commitment as chief executive officer of the national charity Touched by Olivia. Bec has been a driving force in the creation of the Everyone Can Play guidelines and the use of them to build inclusive play spaces for those of all ages and abilities across this great State.

Evander represents our newest generation. When he was one day old he was diagnosed with a neuroblastoma tumour in his chest cavity that compressed his spinal cord. Fortunately, his chemotherapy was successful. However, the tumour left permanent damage. As a result, Evander is facing the prognosis of T5 paraplegia or—for laypeople like us—an injury that affects the function of his legs. Regardless, Evander continues to blow our community away with his triumphs. His first steps were beamed around the world after months of intensive work that was combined with the brilliance of neurologists and engineers at the University of Louisville. His mother, Claire Conroy, told the *Northern District Times*:

The key is retraining the body, we want it to recognise what stepping is so the brain can tell the spinal cord to move.

Evander has taken his brush with fame in his stride. He has been featured as the face of a children's book educating young people about spinal injuries, he has granted the Duchess of Cambridge a moment of his time during her recent visit to Australia and, most recently, he has pushed for improvements in our electorate. As a result of Rebecca and Evander's tireless activism, I can proudly say that Hunters Hill Council will be one of the first 30 councils to receive funding as a part of the New South Wales Government's \$20 million Everyone Can Play Grant Program. The \$200,000 will allow the people of the Lane Cove electorate—no matter how young or old, no matter their ages, abilities or cultural backgrounds—fair and equal access to play spaces.

Children who have struggled with a disability should be helped at every turn. They should not be unnecessarily excluded by narrow or poorly planned public spaces. This program is undoubtedly a step in the right direction and illustrative of the success of the Liberal-Nationals Coalition. It is the result of the convergence of a thriving economy, long-term planning and a Government guided by local representation. It is about what can happen through the meeting of a responsible Government and its honourable citizens.

I again thank Bec Ho for her work together with the Commissioner for Open Space and Parklands, Fiona Morrison, to drive the creation of inclusive play spaces across New South Wales. More of them will be rolled out as the years progress. Evander is a young man who stirred in me the need to use my powers as a Minister to change the way we look at inclusive play spaces. I thank Evander for the leadership he has shown. I hope to see him in this place one day, if not somewhere greater. On behalf of a grateful community I again thank Bec and her team. We must acknowledge and pay tribute to leaders in our local areas because they set great examples and inspire others to step up to the plate and do their best for their communities.

HORNSBY ADVOCATE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (18:49): I acknowledge a Hornsby icon that recently celebrated its 100th birthday, our local paper the *Hornsby Advocate*. For a century the *Hornsby Advocate* has been informing us, making us think and celebrating our local legends. Today I pay tribute to the *Hornsby Advocate* on reaching this impressive milestone. The *Hornsby Advocate* was started by World War I digger Fred McKeller, who printed the first edition on 12 April 1919. It included reports from Allan French and Hornsby schoolmaster E. A. McMahon. It was from the words of Mr McMahon, "Do not be an echo; be an advocate" that the name *Hornsby Advocate* was born. We have seen the *Hornsby Advocate* champion a number of causes, both large and small, over its years of operation. I am proud to have helped with some of those campaigns since becoming the local member.

The first *Hornsby Advocate* called for the construction of a local hospital to fight influenza, which was being brought home by diggers. At that time Hornsby and districts had a population of 20,000, and 200 residents were suffering from the illness. Local medical experts were quoted as saying they could not cope with the influx and a hospital could be built on the site of the Literary Institute. The hospital would not be built until 14 years later, but the *Hornsby Advocate* was there and has continued to cover stories on the hospital even to this day. The hospital opened in 1933 with 40 beds. Today we are seeing the transformation of Hornsby hospital. The *Hornsby Advocate* recently covered the opening of the new car park and the announcement of an additional \$65 million to complete the rebuild of the hospital.

The *Hornsby Advocate* has been a force for community change in the last 100 years. The recent campaign for a second co-educational high school in Hornsby is an issue it has fought hard for. I was pleased to announce earlier this year that a feasibility study will be conducted to determine whether that high school can be built. The Hit the Brakes Campaign was to encourage motorists, particularly those on motorbikes, to slow down while travelling the Old Pacific Highway. I worked with the paper to put forward an increased police presence on that stretch of road and an education campaign for high school students about the dangers of speeding on our roads.

The *Hornsby Advocate* has also broken some big and tough stories over the years. In its first year of publication it covered Barker College having to close its boarding house and place it in quarantine after the deaths of several students from influenza. The following year saw the New South Wales State Government bring electricity to the shire, with rollouts beginning in 1923. While for many this was a welcome addition, some found the lights out the front of homes far too bright. It took seven years but in 1945 the *Hornsby Advocate* covered the opening of the Peats Ferry Road Bridge in Brooklyn. The bridge created a link between Sydney and Newcastle and has become an icon in our area, appearing in many films and television commercials. Another success story of our local area is the Wrigley's factory in Asquith. I recently visited the factory, which opened in 1960. The *Hornsby Advocate* was there to cover the opening. It was also here that my grandfather worked, and today it remains one of the biggest employers in our area, producing more than 60,000 kilograms of Skittles every week.

It is not only positive stories that have been covered by the *Hornsby Advocate*. In 1971 a petrol tanker overturned outside the fire station. The fire engine was unable to leave and the firefighters unable to fight the blaze, which spread. Nine years ago our community was shaken following the deaths of four Rural Fire Service

volunteers during a back-burn operation. George Fitzsimons, father of current New South Wales commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, Eric Furlan, Clair Dean and Mark Cupit were killed in Mount Kuring-gai, and the extremely tragic loss rocked the tight-knit community.

Hornsby is filled with hardworking Rural Fire Service volunteers who dedicate many hours to ensuring the safety of our community, and we are grateful for each and every one of them. In what was seen at the time as a controversial move, a clock was placed in the middle of the Hornsby shopping precinct. It cost \$1 million and was installed in 1993 to much fanfare, including coverage from the *Hornsby Advocate*. Engineer Victor Cusack took more than two years to create the clock, which also serves as a fountain. In 2019 it is seen as an icon of our area, and certainly the most common meeting place for locals. In 2014 a weather phenomenon saw a tornado rip through the Hornsby CBD, causing a great deal of damage. Nicknamed "Hornado" by the *Hornsby Advocate*, it saw a number of trees brought down and damage to property and cars, but luckily no-one was killed.

For many years the *Hornsby Advocate* followed the story of the Hornsby Quarry and what could happen with this vacant piece of land. The newspaper was able to announce that the State Government in conjunction with the Federal Government and Hornsby Council would fill the Hornsby Quarry with the spoil from the NorthConnex tunnel. Late last year the last truck delivered spoil to the site and more than one million cubic metres have filled the hole. Soon Hornsby Council will be taking over to complete the transformation into the Centennial Parklands of the north. Many locals worked and contributed to the success of the *Hornsby Advocate* over the years. Arthur French started at the *Hornsby Advocate* in 1921 and soon bought out the two owners.

Arthur's daughter, Joan Owens, who attended Hornsby Public School and Hornsby Girls High School, started in the stationery shop attached to the paper in the 1950s and worked there for 10 years. Her brother, Gordon, was a photographer and Allen worked in the printing side. It was Joan who was able to save the first editions of the paper that are now housed at the Hornsby Historical Society. There have been many editors of the *Hornsby Advocate*, which is now headed by Simone Roberts, with journalists Jake McCallum, Joanna Vella and Gary Hamilton-Jones and sports reporter John Besley. Thank you to the *Hornsby Advocate* for bringing us your stories. You have made us laugh, question and sometimes cry. I hope there are 100 more years of stories to come.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Welcome to my first session in the Fifty-Seventh Parliament. A warm hello to all of my colleagues, the parliamentary staff and the very hardworking Hansard staff.

NEWCASTLE TRANSPORT

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:55): I begin my first speech in the Fifty-Seventh Parliament the way I began my inaugural speech nearly five years ago, with an acknowledgment of the traditional owners of the country on which we meet, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I also acknowledge the Awabakal and Worimi people, the traditional owners of the land upon which Newcastle was built. Newcastle, founded as a penal mining colony, has become a modern, diverse city. I love Newcastle and I am deeply honoured to be returned to this place for a second full term. I came to this job with a commitment to help Newcastle become a vibrant, smart, healthy city with full employment, a city that nurtures the creativity for which we have become known. After eight years on Newcastle City Council and nearly five years in the Parliament, I aim finish the job I started and to continue with that vision—a Newcastle equipped for the twenty-first century economy, a city which looks to the future while remembering where we came from.

In the course of the campaign, I doorknocked 8,000 homes. I had mobile offices all over the electorate and listened to countless people discuss the issues which mattered most to them. I come into this term with a number of priorities. I will work to improve public transport, keep our city's economy strong, ensure we have resources to put into our health and education, and protect the environment. By these metrics, unfortunately, this Government has failed Newcastle time and again—in fact, only today has Newcastle's public transport service been voted in the bottom five in the State for public transport by the NRMA. Shame on this Government, shame.

In doorknocking those 8,000 these homes it was reinforced to me that Newcastle buses are still in chaos, elderly people are still isolated, students still struggle and the disabled at Access Industries in Hamilton are still hugely disadvantaged. We need an integrated, functional public transport system. Our arterial roads resemble car parks at peak hour, and a lack of reliable, accessible public transport options is keeping people in their cars and making a bad situation worse. I remain as committed as ever to fixing Newcastle buses and I will work with all the stakeholders to find new transport solutions, including a light rail extension. I ask the Minister for Transport: Where is that business case that he said was "just being polished"?

This Government sold off the port of Newcastle for \$1.75 billion with secret anti-competitive restrictions in the 99-year lease, meaning the port can never diversify its operation and build a container terminal. It sold off the family silver for a one-time sugar hit to the State's budget, at the expense of Newcastle's long-term economic future. As the broader economy transitions, we need a new and more diverse local economy; a cruise ship terminal

to encourage tourism, which the Government just pulled the pin on; and a revitalised sports precinct to help inject tens of millions of dollars a year into local businesses, which has stalled. We need to foster the creative arts and innovation and expand our local art gallery, as they are set to be major drivers of our twenty-first century economy. These are seismic changes which require imaginative thinking and innovative solutions, not the blinkered ideology displayed by this Government.

All of this is underlined by the urgent environmental challenges we are facing. Newcastle has had success with revitalising our environmental assets, as shown by the extraordinary regeneration undergone by Throsby Creek, which was once a stinking stormwater drain but has now seen wildlife return in droves. This week it was even reported that a shark was sighted—a true indication of an estuary with healthy biodiversity. I am committed to continuing work of this nature and that means strong action on climate change. Young people are deeply engaged in this issue and they are fully aware that this Government's land clearance policy results in the destruction of priceless environmental assets and irreversible damage. Locally we also need a solution to Stockton Beach erosion. Abraham Lincoln once said:

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present.

We face complicated problems that will require complicated solutions. It is our misfortune that we do not live in uncomplicated times, but it is our responsibility as elected representatives to act in the best interests of all, not just those who agree with us. Newcastle is a beautiful city and a welcoming community, and I am lucky to represent its residents in this place. We face extraordinary changes, but none so difficult as to be unsurmountable. I would like to end my first speech in this Parliament in the way I ended my inaugural speech in 2014: I thank the people in my community for placing their trust and confidence in me. I will do my best to represent them and our great city.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE MID COAST

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:00): In April I attended a wonderful evening at the Rural Fire Service Mid Coast medal presentation. It was great to have Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, Australian Fire Service Medal recipient, travel from Sydney for the presentation. He took some time to get there because of a tragic motor vehicle accident at the intersection of Medowie Road and the Pacific Highway. Also in attendance were counsellor David West, the Mayor of MidCoast Council, the deputy mayor, Katheryn Smith, and Randall Gawne from Marine Rescue NSW. The evening was emceed by Superintendent Kam Baker, who is the manager of the Rural Fire Service Mid Coast.

During the evening 45 members, representing more than 1,000 years of service to that volunteer organisation, received medallions. One member, Bruce Weller, had an amazing 56 years of service in the Rural Fire Service [RFS]. Bruce was part of the Nabiac brigade but is now captain of the Minimbah brigade and is a member of the Weller family, which is famous in the Manning, particularly in the Nabiac and Wallamba area. Bruce received his 4th Clasp of the National Medal. David Alan Witt from Limeburners Creek received his Long Service Medal 3rd Clasp for 41 years of service.

The RFS has a proud history of more than 100 years of caring for our communities. The service has more than 70,000 volunteers and is one of the largest volunteer organisations in the world. These volunteers, with the support of their families, give their time freely to protect our communities—both people and structures. They do a fantastic job without reward and without expectation of any compensation or recognition. But it is great to be able to recognise those volunteers and it was privilege to attend the medal presentation.

Mark Hartwell received the National Medal for 16 years of service. Katrina Rendell received the National Medal for 17 years of service. Catherine Baker received the National Medal and Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 26 years of service. William Ashe received the National Medal 1st Clasp for 26 years, Kristian Guppy received the National Medal for 29 years of service. Peter Jenkins received the National Medal and Long Service Medal for 33 years of service. Robert Pope from Wallaby Joe received the National Medal for 33 years of service. Ian Sirrett received the National Medal for 39 years of service. Sherrie Gaul received the Long Service Medal for 11 years of service.

Kevin Thornton from Old Bar—part of Taree and other organisations—received the Long Service Medal for 11 years of service. Katherine Williams received the Long Service Medal for 11 years of service. Kimberley Wright received the Long Service Medal for 11 years of service. Jeff Hardy received the Long Service Medal for 12 years of service. Mervyn Philp received the Long Service Medal for 12 years of service. Andrew Coombes received the Long Service Medal for 14 years of service. Glen O'Riley received the Long Service Medal for 18 years of service. Judith Rhodes received the Long Service Medal for 18 years of service. William Hastie received the Long Service Medal for 19 years of service. Joanne Collins received the Long Service Medal for 20 years of service. Ian Pilgrim received the Long Service Medal for 20 years of service.

Kathleen Sherar received the Long Service Medal for 21 years of service. Graeme Wilson received the Long Service Medal for 21 years of service.

Jason Kellner received the Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 24 years of service. David Rhodes received the Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 25 years service. Ian Scarr received the Long Service Medal 2nd Clasp for 30 years of service. A posthumous award of long Service Medal 2nd Clasp for Steven Holmes was accepted by his wife for his 31 years of service to the Killabakh Brigade. Robert McMaster received the Long Service Medal 1st and 2nd Clasps for 31 years of service. Dennis Crawford received the Long Service Medal 2nd Clasp for 35 years of service. Ian Vinnard received the Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 21 years of service. Terry Brown received the Long Service Medal 3rd Clasp for 40 years of service. As I said, as well as the medal recipients from my electorate, others not from my electorate attended this absolutely wonderful night. With the attendance of the commissioner, the mayor, the local member and others, the medal recipients realised the high esteem we hold them in. On behalf of the community, I thank them for their service.

TWEED ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): In 2007 the member for Tweed and I were both elected. I welcome the member for Tweed tonight.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (19:05): May I congratulate you on your elevation to the role of Temporary Speaker. I have seen you in that role before, and you have contributed significantly to this House. I am sure that will continue. I speak on a very significant event, Anzac Day in the Tweed. I am sure members from both sides of the House attended many functions on the day. Anzac Day has become a national day to remember the sacrifice made by the men and women from the early Anzacs of Gallipoli right up to the present day. My Anzac Day, like that of many in this House, is extremely busy. I started off at Tumbulgum, a little village, at 4.28 a.m. I pay tribute to Greg Adams, the organiser of that service. About 300 or 400 people attended the service, which involved the Tumbulgum local school. Then I moved on to Tweed Heads, where the service was organised by Joe Russell, the Reverend John Reid and the Chairman of Twin Towns, Michael Fraser. About 6,000 or 7,000 people attended that service. It was then down to Pottsville and Mark Radisich, where about 2,000 people attended the service. Then I went to Kingscliff, where I joined retired Lieutenant Colonel Brian Vickery and a few thousand people.

This was my thirteenth Anzac Day as the member for Tweed, as Temporary Speaker Hornery would know as we both have been in this place for a while. Each year the crowds grow and each year the number of younger people attending the services grows. It is a tribute to the Anzacs. The Tweed has a lot of Vietnam veterans who have retired. We commemorate their day—Long Tan—on Anzac Day. Unfortunately, in recent times the realities of war have come back. A number of years ago we lost two young fellows: Sapper Rowan Robinson was killed in Afghanistan and private Nathan Brews was killed in Iraq. You stand at the podium and you pay honour, and justly so, to the Anzacs and their enormous sacrifice on that day, which saw the birth of a nation and the birth of mateship. All those young men and women who went forth saw the horrors of war. They saw their mates die in their arms and saw the beaches turned blood red. We pay tribute to all the men and women of the Australian armed forces for their sacrifice, and to their families.

Over the years it has been brought home to me that that sacrifice continues today. I know those two young men who lost their lives and their families. I see the anguish in their mothers, their families and their mates. The Tweed has a high number of returned servicemen from Iraq and Afghanistan, and a number of them suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome. A number of them served in special forces. Their suffering continues today. I think we should do a lot more for our veterans. I do not think we have a full understanding of that sacrifice. We honour the Anzacs and so we should, we honour the Vietnam vets and we honour soldiers who fought in the First World War and Second World War. Even in this place we have inscriptions on our walls honouring members of Parliament who lost their lives in the Great War. I feel honoured that this Government, and Minister David Elliot, have made policies for veterans.

Should we do more? Yes. I have talked to current veterans who recently served and who have seen their mates blown up and die in their arms. They suffer horrendous nightmares when they come back home. They suffer a high level of suicide and divorce. There is a high level of pressure on those families. I acknowledge that we do a lot for our veterans but I think we should do a lot more at the State level and, particularly, at the Federal level. I do not think we do enough. I see the anguish and the tears in their eyes when they talk about mates—friends who have not returned. All they were doing was making sacrifices for us here in Australia. To conclude my private member's statement, I implore whoever is the Federal Government in a few weeks and whoever is in power in this place to look at our veterans and support them a hell of a lot more because I do not think we do enough. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

HUNTER TRANSPORT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (19:10): Madam Temporary Speaker, I, too, congratulate you on your appointment. I raise a serious matter affecting the Swansea community; it has done so for some time now. Unfortunately, it is something I have brought to this House many times. Of course, I am speaking about Newcastle Transport's failure to adequately provide transportation for residents in the Hunter and, particularly, in the area in which I live, East Lake Macquarie. For those who do not drive or choose not to drive, a good public transport system ensures that they get to where they need to be, whether that is for their health needs, education, job, to visit family or have access around their community. It means that no matter who you are, you can access those essential services. However, in January last year this access and freedom were completely and totally undermined.

My Hunter colleagues and I have raised this issue many times with the Minister for Transport and Roads. He is well aware of the many and varied problems of the Newcastle Transport network. However, he is unwilling and unable to fix those problems. Minister Constance and the Berejiklian Government continue to parrot the words that we have received a world-class transport system. Let me tell you, nothing could be further from the truth. Just this week the NRMA's latest Rate Your Road survey ranked Newcastle Transport in the bottom five. It scored just 47 points out of 100 and did not even make a pass. In my view, they failed. But we did not need a survey to tell us that; we know that the system is broken. There is absolutely no doubt about that.

The school year in the electorate of Swansea started off with children being left on the roadside again. This new bus network has been in place for one year, yet children are being left on the roadside. I have met with parents of students from the Hunter School of the Performing Arts. The parents have explained to me the struggles that their children face getting to and from school. It is taking up to two hours to get to school at Broadmeadow from Swansea. It is a 30-minute drive and the children are having to catch several buses. That is unacceptable.

I have been approached by other schools as well about overcrowding on the buses and the kids having to stand up. It is unsafe, and again the Government just ignores it. The students are literally being left alone and are not able to get to school. Quite frankly, I find it unacceptable; so do the parents and the broader community. Cuts and changes to the services have also meant that people with a disability are not able to get to work and are left on the roadside. Recently I again met with Access Industries, the largest employer of people with disabilities in the Hunter. I have met them several times now. Their problems are the same as they have been for a year now.

The Government has told us that it will make this State a good place for everyone. I think a great place to start would be the bus network in Newcastle. We think of our public bus network as just that—for the public. It should live up to its mantra of ensuring that people in the community have a public bus network that meets their needs of having the appropriate routes to enable them to get to critical services like hospitals and medical clinics. Many people such as the elderly, the disabled and schoolchildren feel isolated. Some elderly people no longer leave their homes because they do not have access to the bus network. Social isolation negatively impacts on communities. Older people who are unable to get out and meet people or get to the services they need end up in social isolation, resulting in mental health problems.

These are facts; I am not making this up. It has to stop. I have sent copious correspondence to the Minister on this matter articulating my community's concern. If the Government is fair dinkum about customer service it should provide the service that is required to the people who need it the most. It should stop isolating our communities. Government members should stop saying that they are doing a great job when they are absolutely not. The most vulnerable people in our communities are being subjected to Third World transport conditions and it is unacceptable. Government members should hang their heads in shame. They should fix the problem right now. The buses that have been removed need to be replaced.

CLARENCE ELECTORATE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (19:16): I speak in this House to thank the people of Clarence for bestowing their faith in me at the last New South Wales election. It is a real honour and privilege to represent one's community in this place and I certainly felt that yesterday when I was sworn into the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales. I felt humbled yet proud and after nearly eight years in this place I am still very conscious of the responsibility I bear for the people I serve. They are my focus and I take this responsibility very seriously. As I said in my inaugural speech, "I will not let you down". Elections are very stressful. No matter how many elections have been contested they are still stressful, and this last one was no different, even though I went into it confident because we were a good government. The Government delivered the services and infrastructure we needed and deserved. There were no baseball bats after us so I was confident but still anxious.

Of course I would not be here without the tireless work of my supporters and whilst I thanked them on election night I must thank them again in this place. I repeat: I could not have achieved the result I did without their help. There were hundreds of them and I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I cannot name them all

but in particular I thank Fran White from Casino and Cec and Denise Hyde from Grafton. They were the backbone of my campaign. I acknowledge and pay tribute to my staff—Debbie Newton, Janet Gould, Greg Bailey and Lisa Kelly—who kept my electorate office running throughout the campaign, answered constituent inquiries and provided that vital conduit to government that communities need and deserve.

Of course I thank my wife, Vicki, who did not sign up for this job but has been a massive support and influence; I know I would struggle to do this job without her backing. I thank the other candidates who put their hand up for the Clarence electorate. I know they did so with honest intentions and I thank them for their integrity and the way they conducted themselves throughout the campaign. There was no dirt, there was no muckraking or playing the man. I can honestly say it was democracy at its best from start to finish and reinforced to me how blessed we are to live in this country and in the best State in the country. Of course I am convinced I live in the best electorate in the State.

I am thrilled to be returned with an increased margin because it reinforces that we are a good government. I talked earlier about the unprecedented public infrastructure investment in my electorate. I will be thrilled to be the local member when these projects are completed and the public are using them—projects like the Pacific Highway upgrade. The last link is being constructed almost entirely in my electorate. It is currently employing 3,000 workers, with approximately one-third of them being locals, and it is due to be completed by 2020. The new Grafton bridge, which was promised for years but only became a reality when the Liberals and Nationals came to office in 2011, is due to be completed by the end of this year. The new Clarence Correctional Centre, which is due to be completed early next year, is currently employing approximately 12,000 workers and approximately one-third of those workers are locals. When it is fully operational it will provide 600 permanent jobs.

I am also looking forward to the commencement of a number of priority projects still waiting in the wings such as the Iluka Ambulance Station, which was promised by the Deputy Premier just before last Christmas. The Iluka community has been waiting for it for years. I want that projected commenced as soon as possible and delivered this term. Another priority project is the commencement of the \$263 million upgrade to the Grafton Base Hospital. This was a commitment made by the Liberals and Nationals during the election campaign and one that will be honoured during this term.

There are other high priority projects in the north of the electorate that also need funding and I will be working very hard to see them come to fruition—for example, projects like the Casino Showground and Woodburn-Coraki Road upgrades, which are both very important to their communities. We came to this place as members of The Nationals because those who live in regional and rural New South Wales deserve to enjoy the same level of services and infrastructure as do our city cousins. In closing, I repeat what I said to my constituents in my inaugural speech, "I will not let you down."

KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE COMMEMORATIONS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:21): This year there was a passing of the baton in respect of the local Anzac Day tradition in Ku-ring-gai. Morning services at both the Wahroonga War Memorial and Turramurra Memorial Park were instituted by the local representatives of the National Servicemen's Association of Australia—the "Nashos"—over 15 years ago. For the first time this year, they were hosted by the Sydney North Region Scouts and Girl Guides Australia—albeit still in association with the Nashos. The scouts and guides organised the dawn service at Bicentennial Park, which they began in 2015 and which continues to be increasingly well supported by the West Pymble community. Later in the day Ron Seymour successfully organised the always emotionally moving community dusk service at the Kokoda Track Memorial in Wahroonga.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the Hornsby RSL Club Anzac commemoration service I attended at the Hornsby War Memorial on 21 April, where the Federal member for Berowra, Julian Leaser, MP, gave a speech full of local and contemporary relevance, and the service last week at St Johns Anglican Church, Gordon. I was fortunate enough to also attend the Anzac Day ceremony at West Pymble Public School, which was held on 9 April because this year 25 April fell during the New South Wales school holidays. I joined the Federal member for Bradfield, the Hon Paul Fletcher, MP, principal Bronwyn Wilson and the school community for readings and musical performances by the students and an address by Lieutenant Colonel Piero Bertocchi who highlighted the ongoing relevance to our national identity of the qualities of the Anzac spirit: courage, endurance, initiative, mateship and discipline.

At the Anzac Day morning services at Wahroonga and Turramurra I was honoured to offer the prayer of thanksgiving. This is of special significance to my family as my father lost two of his brothers in World War II and always grieved "the loss of a loved one who gave his or her life in the service of their country". Commodore Andrew Smith, AM, delivered a poignant Anzac address at both venues, which in part focused on those who were returning to Australia from overseas service 100 years ago. The subject of returning World War I service men and

women evokes several, and sometimes conflicting, reflections, including the joy and trauma of many of those who made it home; the sacrifice of those who did not return and the enduring sadness of their families; the similarities and differences between the Australia of 1919 and the country that we live in today; and the hostile or indifferent reception received by those who came home from the Vietnam War half a century later.

What was clear in Ku-ring-gai on Anzac Day was, despite the steadily diminishing number still among us of those who fought in the two world wars, the desire to commemorate their service is as strong as ever. A large percentage of those assembled this year were young children for whom the Anzac tradition continues to resonate profoundly. At a time when well-established conventions are being questioned more than ever before, and the desire either to engage as a country or to participate as an individual in armed conflict has arguably never been weaker, many Australians still annually reflect very emotionally and respectfully on those who unselfishly served their country in our armed forces.

The overwhelming evidence is that, as promised in the ode, "We will remember them". Commemoration ceremonies in my local area did not conclude on Anzac Day. In the days that followed 25 April, the Sydney Jewish community held a number of functions to commemorate Yom HaShoah, otherwise known as Holocaust Remembrance Day. This year's theme for the Sydney Yom HaShoah commemoration was "Memorials and Memories", a recognition that the building of memorials to commemorate the Holocaust has served both to preserve the collective memory of holocaust survivors and to shape the memories of the generations that follow.

One of the communal commemorations was held at Masada College at St Ives on 29 April. I count myself very fortunate to have attended and to have heard stories of survival and compassion as well as the address by former Leader of the Federal Liberal Party, member for Bradfield, my former Liberal Party branch member and current Director of the Australian War Memorial, Dr Brendan Nelson. I have heard Dr Nelson speak many times before and, in my opinion, his speech on this evening was the most memorable of all and it received a standing ovation. The speech had great historical content but also contained a highly emotional exposition about character and the way it is informed by values—worthwhile intrinsic virtues such as courage, loyalty, honesty, love of others and "never forgetting from where you come, who gave you what you have and made you who you are".

In the words of Dr Nelson memorials should be visible reminders not so much of what happened but of "the human spirit and qualities ... that inspire us to be better people". It inevitably reminded me of my father's work in the Dutch Resistance and his brother, my uncle Leo, who saved a Jewish family who lived in his attic for more than two years in the Netherlands during World War II. There will also be an Anzac commemoration at Knox Grammar School in a couple of weeks. Whether it is Anzacs or victims of the Holocaust, we all share a responsibility to make their stories live and engaging to a new generation. Lest we forget.

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:26): Today I recognise the people of North Shore and commemorate the services and events that were held for Anzac Day this year. On the sombre morning of 25 April I attended the Mosman dawn service. As with every service commemorating the sacrifice of the fallen and those who have served or those who have returned, the experience was truly humbling. We have a great history in North Shore commemorating a distinguished tradition of military service. There are two continuing naval bases within my electorate of North Shore, HMAS *Waterhen* at Waverton and HMAS *Penguin* at Mosman. They date from the 1930s and 1940s respectively. They were both involved in local services again this year.

The Mosman dawn service was a moving event and I particularly thank the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch for its organisation of the service. It was incredibly well attended. The service highlighted Mr Howard Bowden Fletcher, a Mosman resident, who served in the 12th Light Horse Regiment and the No. 1 Squadron Australian Flying Corps in World War I. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for conspicuous bravery in air combats and attacking ground objectives. Recognition was also given to the 2,562 Australian nurses who served in the Voluntary Aid Detachment overseas and in Australia during World War I and the 13 names that appear on the Mosman War Memorial. We also acknowledged the service of Mr Bill Purdy, a local resident who served as a pilot in the 463rd Lancaster Bomber Squadron during World War II. Bill flew 37 missions over Germany and Europe and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and later the Legion of Honour by France.

I thank president Victor Danko along with Rex Vidler, Reverend Tim St Quintin, Johnny Austin from Mosman High School, Alan Matheson, Ruby Lafferty and Paris Cotis, and the Mosman High School choir and band. I also thank the remainder of the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch, including the treasurer Mr Robert Maul, directors Mrs Jeanette Brice and Mr John Dooley, councillors Roy Bendall and Mr Malcolm Munday. I thank the Mosman Lions Club for the wonderful barbecue and the State Emergency Service for making it all happen. After the dawn service I joined North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch for breakfast. It was attended by many thousands of locals at the war memorial at St Leonards Park. Thanks in particular to sub-branch president Alex Wilson, the new commander at HMAS *Waterhen* and the executive officer at HMAS *Waterhen*.

I did miss out significantly in not attending the North Sydney dawn service as I understand that this year Kamahl performed. Hopefully, when I attend the dawn service next year he will sing for us again. Later in the day our Anzacs were thanked at the Neutral Bay Club Anzac service, which was hosted by Malcolm Stradwick, and I was joined by North Sydney Mayor Jilly Gibson in laying a wreath. I thank Cynthia Palmer, Peter Lewis and Ian Cox for their contributions on the day. A number of weekend services were also held in our community. Cremorne Synagogue paid tribute to the Anzacs with a Saturday service led by Dr David Farenblum, Rabbi Chaim Koncepolski, Mr Roger Selby—who gave a wonderful address, speaking particularly about the historic war service of Jewish service men and women—Mr Mike Swerdlin and Adon Olam. The Kirribilli Club held a service, another Mosman Sunday service was held and a number of our local schools were involved.

On this day, above all days, we always pause to remember those who served our country in times of war. We honour those who served and those who are disabled or who died in the tragedy of war, as they adorn our nation's history. We think, in particular, about those who have returned and those who may bear not physical scars but mental scars. We must never forget that we need to invest in those who have returned to our shores as much as we need to remember those who did not. On Anzac Day we look to something more than ourselves. We forget our own busy lives and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. We remember with pride their courage, compassion, and mateship.

Like so many Australians, my family history is intertwined with the Anzac tradition of service to our nation, with my grandparents both serving in the air force during World War II. For me, the Mosman service's focus on the Lancaster bomber pilots was particularly profound because my grandfather flew 31 missions over Nazi Germany and Europe and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Later in his life he served in the French Foreign Legion. The stories told about nurses in World War I resonated with me as my great-aunt Noala served as a nurse in World War II. We all have those stories of service in our own lives.

The Anzac story teaches us about self-sacrifice and service. I am proud to stand here today and extol the people of North Shore as those who remember it in the most honourable and moving of ways, which brings our communities together and highlights the essence of family and friendship. The mantle of remembrance rests on our shoulders and we have a responsibility to pass on that legacy so that the Anzac tradition continues. Let us not forget.

CAMPBELLTOWN ELECTORATE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:29): Given this is my first contribution following the State election, I begin by congratulating all my colleagues on either their election or their re-election to this place. I thank all the staff of the Parliament as well as, of course, my own staff and the people who supported me through my campaign. I am truly honoured and humbled to have been re-elected as the member for Campbelltown and I thank everyone for their support, including the good people of Campbelltown. I went to the election focused on the issues and concerns confronting our community and I believe it is important that I advise the House, the Premier and the Government of those issues and of the expectations of the people of Campbelltown.

I begin with transport. The train timetable is, quite frankly, a disaster and it clearly disadvantages thousands of people every day. I call on the Government and the Minister for Transport and Roads to take a pragmatic approach to this issue. I accept that we do not get everything right all the time—no-one does—and this is not a reflection on the ability of an individual. It is simply a reflection on a timetable that was put in place and simply has not worked. We can do better. Before I was a manager of an organisation I was an operations manager and, as many people in this place know, I managed a large-scale business. Operationally, getting a plan in place to ensure the effectiveness of a business and the maximisation of productivity is so important. The current train timetable does not do that. We should see the S sets removed completely from our network. I acknowledge there is a plan in place to do that, but I ask that the trains be distributed equally throughout the network, not just on the Campbelltown line—specifically, the Campbelltown to Sydenham line.

Our hospitals and our health system in Campbelltown are inadequately staffed. We do not have enough nurses, physicians or clinicians. Our area is growing enormously; the population is set to increase to more than 500,000. We need to be planning for the future now. I acknowledge that the Campbelltown Hospital has been upgraded. I am proud to have fought—standing side by side with my community—to ensure that that funding was allocated. But let me be very clear: It is people who cure patients, not bricks and mortar. We should be complementing the bricks and mortar that have been laid with appropriate and adequate levels of services and staff.

I am deeply concerned and deeply disappointed about the car park that has been built at the Campbelltown Hospital. Let me make this point: The taxpayers of Campbelltown and other communities across the State have already paid for that car park, yet the Government is locking the people of Campbelltown into paying for car parking space. That is unfair, particularly to hospital workers. Elective surgery waiting times must continue to be

addressed. The required level of action is not being taken. The Government must adopt nurse-to-patient ratios. If there is one lesson we took away from the election, it is that nurse-to-patient ratios have overwhelming support. That level of staffing allows nurses to do their amazing work by making sick people well.

I turn now to roads in my electorate of Campbelltown. Appin Road simply has to happen. We have been talking about it for too long. We have not seen enough action. We need a dual carriageway between Campbelltown and Appin. That can only happen if there is the political will. It can only happen if the Government steps up to the plate. The Government also needs to fix schools in my electorate that are crumbling around our students' feet. It is simply unacceptable that students do not have adequate resources. In relation to environmental matters, Labor took a good policy to the election: the creation of the Georges River national park.

To my mind, this is not a matter of politics. It is a matter of sense and sensibility. It can be done. I will work with the Government if it will adopt the plan to ensure the conservation and preservation of a green space while simultaneously providing protected habitat. I again thank the people of Campbelltown for re-electing me to this House. I renew my unwavering commitment to representing each and every one of them—every man, woman and child—without prejudice and in every way I can. I cannot do everything all the time, but I will always do my best.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:39): I thank the people of Manly for my re-election to this House. I am humbled to have been appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment and Veterans—two important areas of policy that affect the people of New South Wales. I take this time to reflect on those two portfolio areas and to recognise the strong work of the Ministers and the headway that this Government has made. I will highlight the ways in which we will continue to strengthen and reform areas of policy during the term of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament. I look forward to working closely with the new Minister for Energy and Environment, the Hon. Matt Kean, particularly as this Government takes practical action on climate change and implements important reforms—including the delivery of a new national park for New South Wales incorporating vital koala habitat in the Southern Highlands.

During the recent election campaign the Government committed to a raft of green power initiatives that will make it easier for owners of apartments to use solar energy and reduce their power bills. The Government will drive forward the State's renewable energy pipeline. The Government understands that growing our renewable energy capacity is a matter of approving major solar projects—such as the 275-megawatt solar power station at Darlington Point—to ensure that our homes and businesses have the necessary regulatory environment required to allow the expansion of that technology. The former Minister for Energy and Utilities, the Hon. Don Harwin, announced that the New South Wales Government will commit an additional \$20 million to the Emerging Energy Program, which brings the State's total investment in renewable technology to \$75 million.

The Emerging Energy Program is vital to this State because the Government will work with the private sector as a partner in delivering energy security to the people of New South Wales. Private industry will co-fund approximately 400 megawatts of large-scale and on-demand renewable energy projects, including batteries, pumped hydro and hydrogen. Importantly, a new recycling fund for solar panels and battery systems will ensure that this State is equipped to deal with the growth of projects in the future. I look forward to working closely with the new Minister for Energy and Environment on those projects. I state for the record the great pride I have in the solar community in Manly, including but not limited to businesses such as Edify Energy, Wirsol and Solar Choice. From sponsoring local footy clubs to employing locals, those businesses add a great deal to the community and are of value to the Manly electorate.

Protecting our environment is as much about expanding renewed energy capacity across our State and tackling climate change as it is about investing directly on the ground in environments from the east coast to the far west. I note the announcement by the Minister that for the first time in more than 90 years small mammals, including the greater bilby and golden bandicoot, will be re-introduced to the Sturt National Park. Given my coastal electorate, the conservation and enhancement of our marine environment is a major issue for me. I met with a variety of stakeholders during the marine park consultation, including passionate recreational anglers. I believe that working together we can achieve a comprehensive and representative system of marine parks that form an essential component of our efforts to protect Australia's unique marine biodiversity. This can be done without excluding recreational anglers and is an important aspect of any reform.

My new role as the Parliamentary Secretary for Veterans is just as important. It holds a very important place in my family and in my life. As members in this place may know, my father was a brigadier in the army, and my mother the first female commandant of Victoria Barracks. I was honoured to have them join me at yesterday's swearing in. In August last year this Government announced that it had smashed its 2015 election target to employ 200 veterans over four years. More than 650 veterans were employed through the Veterans'

Employment Program, exceeding the target by nearly 300 per cent. Veterans from across New South Wales found new careers in health, education, finance, planning and environment.

The centre of the Veterans portfolio should always be the continuing welfare of our veteran community. The ongoing and meaningful employment in life after service is central to the wellbeing of our contemporary veterans. I look forward to working with the new Minister responsible for veterans, John Sidoti. I know he is paying close attention to the issue of veterans' employment. It is vitally important that we view veterans' affairs not as a set of challenges but as a set of opportunities. As we saw firsthand at last year's Invictus Games, the value of our younger veteran community is waiting to be unlocked to its full potential. My local veteran community such as the Harbord Diggers RSL Sub-Branch and Friends of Freshwater are ready and willing to help. It is a privilege and an honour to be back in this place to represent the good people of Manly. I look forward to the next four years.

COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:41): This is my first private member's statement as a local member elected to serve a full term. The dust—sometimes blinding—of the campaign has finally settled, and I would like to use this opportunity to highlight what I see as an outstanding Coalition policy that resonates loudly in a country electorate like Cootamundra. In March the Premier announced that by 2021 before and after school care will be made available to all parents with children at a public primary school. This represents an investment of \$120 million. It will dramatically expand before and after school care and provide working families with more access to affordable, convenient and flexible services.

Perhaps blurred by the aforementioned dust of the campaign this policy announcement did not receive that much attention in the bush. I am talking about it today because it should have. The Cootamundra electorate has more than 50 public primary schools. Many of the parents of the kids who attend these schools work irregular hours on the land and many travel to neighbouring towns for work. In what is an absolutely crippling drought, many of these families are struggling to keep their businesses afloat, whether they run cattle or the local cafe in town. Juggling this with school pick-up times is not always easy. Our families deserve safe quality care for their children before and after school hours.

Juneë is a town with a population of less than 5,000 in the south of my electorate. It very nearly lost its out of school hours [OOSH] care service. I speak passionately about this move in policy due to the firsthand accounts of the vital need for OOSH care in small country communities. It is no overstatement to say my office was flooded with correspondence from parents concerned about losing this care option. With the dogged advocacy of the community and the sympathetic ear and help of now education Minister, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC, I am thrilled to announce that did not happen.

Thanks to the fast-tracking of their application by a Minister and a Government who understand the concerns of country people, students in Juneë now benefit from the relocated service at Juneë Public School. There were 48 children enrolled in vacation care when the service kicked off late last year. For towns of this size—a typical size for the electorate of Cootamundra—the loss of this service means more than a loss of convenience for parents. If this favourable outcome had not been achieved the town would have lost entire families. Without the security of knowing their children are well cared for while they trip back and forth from work the families working in the neighbouring town of Wagga Wagga would more than likely have been forced to withdraw their children from the local small school and take them to a major centre each day.

Our services in small country towns need to support these families, not drive them out. Under the new policy public primary schools in major regional centres will be required to open their playgrounds, halls or classrooms for before and after school care and school holiday care from 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. to make life easier for families. For smaller or remote schools where onsite services may not be an option, the New South Wales Government will provide transportation for students to and from offsite providers or to locations at other schools so that the communities in that region or area can be fully serviced.

I am speaking today as a member of a party that knows and understands the impact of the rising cost of living on families in regional New South Wales. I am thrilled to share that we will also reduce the cost of before and after school care by up to \$225 per child per year through a capped rental subsidy of up to \$15,000 for providers who use school grounds to provide services. The policy will make life easier for schools with the creation of a new specialist team in the Department of Education to coordinate services and manage leases to relieve principals of this burden.

Having helped the Juneë Community Centre and Juneë Public School navigate this burden, I am certain this departmental help will be welcome. Should parents and carers from smaller areas in my electorate have a need for this service at their school, it is vital that they let us know. Parents and carers can register interest from

1 July via Service NSW. I encourage all members of country electorates to help get the word out about this important new Government policy so we can roll it out and take real, practical steps to ease both the financial and geographical pressure weighing on regional families today.

MARONITE COLLEGE OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (19:46): It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House the outstanding achievements of the Maronite College of the Holy Family in my electorate of Parramatta. The college can be proud of its outstanding academic results in 2018 and ongoing performance in 2019. Last year the school moved up 104 places in the 2018 Higher School Certificate school rankings. I congratulate the students and staff on their outstanding performance. I recognise Joy Akik who ranked third in the State for Arabic continuers. I also congratulate Justina Grace and Jenny Moussa on achieving Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks [ATAR] of 99.8 and 97.20 respectively. Well done to all the students and staff for a successful year. It was a great result, with 11 per cent of year 12 students achieving an ATAR of above 90 per cent and 15 per cent achieving an ATAR above 80 per cent. I commend the staff and students for their dedication, commitment and effort achieving these fantastic results.

The school's outstanding performance continues in a number of extracurricular activities including in-house debating competitions, the Parramatta Diocese Secondary Schools Sports Council, volleyball and rugby league. I recognise school captains Elie Nol and Carla Katrib, and school leaders Danni Makari and Charbel Feghali for their outstanding contributions. I also recognise the great efforts of teachers Mrs Jeannie Gahdmar, Ms Annie Ngyuen and Mr Alex Cheung, who braved the cold to attend the 4.15 a.m. Anzac Day memorial march from Parramatta RSL to Prince Alfred Park.

The Maronite College of the Holy Family continues to pride itself on community involvement. The college also values and rewards positive behaviours in students from persistence, kindness, honesty, courage, patience and reverence through their Keys to Success program for K-6. To date more than 140 all-rounder awards have been awarded to students. I congratulate all students who received these awards and make special mention of bronze award recipients: George Massoud, Elyse Habak, Celina Dib, Sally Zeydan, Lucia Saad, Georgia Hobeiche, Gaia El Khoury, Annalise Khoury, Heavannah Faith Nehme, Natasha Younane, Rebecca Boustani, Julien Nabhan, Joseph Sassine, Michael Boumelhem, Rene El Khoury, Janae Diab, April Zdrilic, Isabella Francis, Charlise Sassine, Mary Merheb, David Kozah, Jacob Abou Haydar, Julian Azar, Eliana Eljer, Juliana Licha, Jason Azar, Youssef Sarkis, Elias Tannous, Annabella Daher, Julianna Fenianos, Angela Hobeiche, Amelia Akkaoui, Jayden Antonios, Charbel Moubarak, Charbel Taouk and Aaliyah Halabi.

I also recognise the Silver Award recipients, Lucia Grace Saad, Natasha Younane, Jacob Abou Hayder, Georgia Hobeiche and Sally Zeydan. In years 7 to 12 the school recognises positive behaviour through a merit system as part of the student development policy that recognises curriculum excellence, extracurricular excellence or personal development excellence. To date in 2019 the following students have received the All Rounder Awards award: Christine Daher, Tiana Boumelhem, Rita Raffoul, Audrey Tannous, Isabelle Sabat, Anthony Samson, Melody Sleiman, Omar Amoud, Simon Bazouni, Norma Samaha, Sayed Sleiman, Charbel Habib, Yveyana Zeaiter, Mabelle Chamchoum, Rafka Semaan, Clarita Fajloun and Robbie El-Bazouni.

I also recognise the efforts of two members of staff: Mr Anthony Bechara, for all the extra hours he devotes outside of work time to the learning needs of his class, mentoring a fellow colleague and overseeing the implementation of the new science and technology syllabus, which is an enormous task involving collaboratively planning and writing teaching programs for primary school staff; and Mrs Susan Fisher, who also goes above and beyond working with students and organising many extracurricular activities to help get students engaged and develop their literacy skills.

UNANDERRA STATION

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (19:51): Madam Temporary Speaker Hornery, it is good to see you back on the Speakers' Panel for another term. After more than 2,700 days the Government has finally caved and committed to building lifts at Unanderra station. The day before the fourth anniversary of footage of a double-amputee, a stroke victim and renowned playwright Wendy Richardson struggling with Unanderra station's 72 stairs went global, the Government finally committed to building three lifts and access ways. In a moment of clarity, the Government finally realised what Wollongong residents have known for years: When it comes to Unanderra station, enough is enough. In the period of the Government's resistance to upgrading the station a dozen people have been injured there.

Thousands have signed petitions supporting an upgrade. Rallies have been held and numerous media stories had been written and broadcast. There was even a community walk to draw attention to the lack of access to a local station surrounded by more than 20,000 residents, which is adjacent to a large industrial estate and

a busy shopping area. I thank everyone who has contributed to this community campaign, which brought together a coalition of businesses, disability employers, unions, carers, the elderly, people with disability and the general public who were interested in seeing everyone have a fair go at accessing public transport. In particular I recognise the efforts of Rebecca Lachlan and Richard Kramer, who have been working on this for literally years. In making the commitment the Minister for Transport and Roads said:

Unanderra station will get the lifts it needs to ensure all customers, including those with a disability, the less mobile and parents with prams can easily access the platform.

And that is the commitment to which the Government will be held. However, it is worth noting that the commitment was slightly less than Labor's \$25 million pledge. That is because it does not include lengthening the platform to accommodate the new intercity fleet, which was included in Labor's plan. This omission is a great disappointment to local residents. They expected and have been fighting for a full upgrade of their station.

Another key difference between Labor's and the Government's commitment is the time line. The commitment I took to the Wollongong by-election and to the March election, which was overwhelmingly endorsed by my community, was clear. A Labor government would allocate the funds for the lifts in its first budget. We would get on with the job immediately. The Government did not match this commitment. The Government only committed to delivering the upgrade within the next term of government. At the extreme end of this commitment, that could mean a wait of another 1,000 days. The Government has a track record in the Illawarra of promising to deliver something in a term, only to leave people waiting until the last few weeks before an election for work to begin.

While it was not an important enough promise for the Government to include in the Governor's Speech yesterday, it is important to Wollongong residents—and they expect delivery in full and as soon as possible. Tonight I call on the Government to commit to fully funding the lifts in the June budget and having them up and running by June 2020. The plans exist—I have seen them—and the Government has conceded that the design work was completed in 2012, which means that if a rework is needed, it can be done quickly. Members of the community would provide feedback quickly because they know what they want; they have been dreaming about it for years. My constituents are sick and tired of excuses when it comes to Unanderra station lifts. They simply want the Government to get on with it. Completing the construction quickly would be a decent way for the Government to make up for the unnecessary delay that it has inflicted on local residents.

Residents would also like to see local companies given priority in the tendering process and local workers and apprentices tasked with construction. That is not too much to ask. Given that the station upgrade was the only commitment that the Liberals made to the Wollongong electorate at the last election campaign, I would have thought they would want to get it out of the way as quickly as possible. I will hold the Government to account every step of the way on this promise. If it wants me to stop raising the issue of Unanderra station, the Minister should get on with the job of building the lifts and make it as high a priority for him as it is for my community.

I will also continue to pursue the Government on other important investments for Wollongong, including funding the upgrade of the WIN Entertainment Centre. A master planning process was nothing more than the Government avoiding committing to the full upgrade of a 20-year-old facility that even performers recognise is in need of some renovation. That is a Government sleight of hand that should be highlighted for what it is: All planning and no commitment. I will also pursue the Government over the relocation of government departments and statutory agencies to Wollongong. The multiplier effect of the salaries resulting from the relocated jobs to the Illawarra would be a significant boost to our local economy. It would also be cheaper to run those organisations given the relatively lower cost of operating a business in Wollongong compared to the Sydney central business district. If the Government can move departments and agencies to Parramatta, it can move them to the third-largest city in New South Wales.

Wollongong businesses and residents also want the fluid question of Wollongong's eligibility for various programs resolved, and resolved fairly. The varying inclusion and exclusion of Wollongong from funding programs has meant, to give one example, that it has simultaneously been left out of funding programs for regional and metropolitan sporting facility upgrades. We have been left with no funds to apply for. I do not know where the Government thinks Wollongong is—perhaps Queensland. It is a situation which I think all members would agree is wrong and which should be addressed. The people of Wollongong have elected me to advocate for them, and that is what I will do while holding the Government to account if it does not deliver us our fair share during this parliamentary term.

GREEN SQUARE URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:56): Four years ago I stood in this House and warned the New South Wales Government that the largest urban renewal project ever undertaken in Australia—the Green Square Urban Renewal Project—was unfolding as a planning failure. I called then for a moratorium on new developments and

population growth to allow time for infrastructure, particularly transport infrastructure, to catch up. I repeated my warnings 12 months later but, with the characteristic arrogance of the Government of the day, those pleas were ignored. The situation is now becoming urgent.

The 2016 Census revealed that 38,000 people resided within the Waterloo-Beaconsfield Statistical Area 2, which encompasses the suburbs of Waterloo, Zetland, Rosebery and Beaconsfield. That is essentially what we call "Green Square". Those 38,000 people fit into just 3.5 square kilometres. What does Green Square look like with 38,000 residents? According to the latest Roads and Maritime Services Key Roads Performance Report, the average road speed on major roads like Botany Road, O'Riordan Street and Anzac Parade is between 22 kilometres an hour and 30 kilometres an hour in peak periods. These are arterial roads that are at capacity. I am fortunate enough to live about eight kilometres from Parliament House. It took me an hour to get here yesterday morning, and I used a rat run.

As I told the House in November last year, Green Square and Mascot stations often cannot accommodate passengers on the platform. They are being corralled by station staff on the mezzanine before they can proceed to the platform. They cannot fit on the station platforms, let alone on the trains themselves. Matt O'Sullivan of *The Sydney Morning Herald* reports that the average load on an Airport Line train is 132 per cent. The maximum recorded load is 160 per cent. That means that every seat on the train was occupied and another 60 per cent of passengers were standing. Not only are the trains at crush capacity, but so are the stations and platforms. The buses are no better. They are chronically late or do not turn up at all, and they crawl through the traffic at a snail's pace.

That is with just 38,000 residents. In the next decade an additional 23,000 people are projected to call this area home, which will be a total of 61,000 people. That is denser than any part of London or New York. Everywhere you go, more and more apartment buildings are being constructed. Huge swathes of Green Square will soon become construction sites. And that is before one considers the ad hoc planning proposals that crop up from time to time that cannibalise the remaining commercial and industrial land to build more residential apartment buildings. This just has to stop. This is not nimbysism: the inner city of Sydney is the ideal place for high-density residential communities.

Of course people want to live close to the city and their jobs, and close to Centennial Park and beautiful beaches. It is not necessarily the fault of developers, as they work within guidelines set by the Government. It is government that is responsible for planning and it is the Government that we must hold to account for these failures. All this residential development has to be supported by transport infrastructure, bus and bike lanes, light rail, metro rail and properly designed intersections.

Residents have screamed about the congestion in places like Rosebery, in streets like Rothschild Avenue and Rosebery Avenue, where it sometimes takes 15 minutes to travel just a few hundred metres. To my residents in Green Square, let me say this: I hear you. I drive on the same roads. I catch the same trains as you. I feel your frustration and I will keep fighting for you. It is now far too late for a moratorium. It is, in fact, time for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to start revoking approvals in the Green Square area. This is a major test for a very bright and capable Minister who knows probably more about planning than all of his predecessors combined. But if he and his Government squib this challenge then the largest urban renewal project in the State will be a failure, and it will devolve into the ghettos of tomorrow.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (20:01): I take this opportunity to talk about one longstanding issue in the complicated water management space in the Murray electorate: a form of water regulation that has negatively impacted on the viability of irrigators in the southern rivers in New South Wales, known as voluntary contributions. I first emphasise that this name is entirely misleading. There is little to do with this system that is in any way, shape or form, voluntary. In essence, the so-called voluntary contributions is a system in which water allocations are effectively reduced by 15 per cent to general security and 5 per cent to high security in the Murrumbidgee Valley and 10 per cent general security and 3 per cent high security in the Murray Valley, with no compensation whatsoever. A further requirement is that farmers continue to pay all the fees and charges for this water.

What this means, in very simple terms, is that the New South Wales Government skims off part of a farmers' water allocation at the start of the season. The Government takes this water that it has skimmed off and store it in dams with no accountability for what then happens to the water. This not only clogs up water storages across New South Wales but also gives a false impression of what water resources are available for farmers. It essentially enables the Government to do whatever it pleases with that water. It can basically mark its own homework. There is a serious lack of transparency. What is even worse, the Office for Environment and Heritage sells water back to the very farmers the Government has taken it from to cover its costs. This is absolutely wrong.

To put the issue in terms that are perhaps more relatable to my fellow members who are not from farming areas or backgrounds, this situation is akin to them turning on their tap at home for some water, yet nothing comes out. They pay for access to that water, and yet they do not receive any. That is what is happening to our farmers in New South Wales. The body responsible for managing these voluntary contributions is the Office of Environment and Heritage. But as to how it manages the water it has skimmed off, your guess is as good as mine.

Currently no mechanisms are in place to measure physical environmental watering outcomes and, as such, there is a total lack of transparency or accountability. Furthermore, no social or economic studies have been done to quantify the impact of these decisions on irrigation communities in regional New South Wales. And to add salt to the wound, the Office of Environment and Heritage actually trades the water it has skimmed off from farmers to cover its costs. The money they make from doing this is not required to be returned in any way to the communities affected. This effectively means that the Office of Environment and Heritage is selling water on the open market, often to the very same people it took the water from.

It is very concerning that the New South Wales Government did not even follow its own recommendations when it acquired this water in 2002. It was supposed to be reviewed after 12 months and in five-yearly increments thereafter. Instead, in 2004 voluntary contributions were rolled into the New South Wales water sharing plans with no review and they remain there to this day, 17 years later. For a minimum of 17 years irrigators in New South Wales have been paying fixed asset fees on 100 per cent of their water entitlements, including on the voluntary contributions they have been required to make. In the Murray and Murrumbidgee irrigation areas, this is estimated to have cost irrigators billions of dollars in fixed asset costs, which they are still required to pay annually with no compensation or reimbursement from the Office of Environment and Heritage.

Additionally, there is the economic fallout from loss of production and profitability in farming businesses and the wider community, which so far seems to have gone unnoticed by the Government. Irrigators and rural and regional communities continue to bear the financial burden for political expectations in providing ecological goods and services, to the detriment of their productive capacity and profitability. As a result of all the above factors plus other water management requirements, such as the Water Act 2007, the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the Snowy Hydro Limited licence, we now have a State department—the Office of Environment and Heritage [OEH]—with a significant and continuously accounted amount of disposable water in our storage and regulatory systems. The OEH is, in fact, the largest water holder in New South Wales, with more than 700 gigalitres of licensed entitlement. [*Time expired.*]

SRI LANKA TERROR ATTACK

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (20:06): I speak on the tragic events that occurred over Easter in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan community and, in my area, the Tamil community are heartbroken over these unspeakable acts of violence. On Easter Sunday, as many Christians gathered on this sacred day to worship with family and loved ones, terrorist suicide bombers targeted three churches and three hotels in Sri Lanka's capital of Colombo, killing more than 250 people and injuring more than 500.

The images and stories following the attack highlight the devastation and the depravity of these senseless acts. The sadness and sorrow felt by many is amplified by the day of the attack—Easter Sunday, a holy and sacred day for Christians. Places of worship, such as churches, temples and mosques, should be places of refuge, care and peace, not violence. My electorate of Strathfield is home to Tamils, mostly from Sri Lanka but also from India. Many Tamil Australians in Strathfield were personally impacted by these terrible attacks and are still coming to terms with them. While many are Hindu, there are also Tamil Christians living in my area. My heart goes out to all of them.

In churches, temples and mosques across Sydney, vigils have been held for the people of Sri Lanka. I have attended Christian services organised by the Strathfield Uniting Church and St Mary's in the city, and vigils at the Sri Durga Devi Devasthanam Temple in Regents Park and the Murugan Temple in Mays Hill. The Opera House was emblazoned with the colours of the Sri Lankan flag, highlighting Australia's solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka. There is no hiding that Sri Lanka has a troubled past, with a civil war raging around the country for close to three decades. For the past 10 years there has been peace in Sri Lanka. In fact, this month marks 10 years since the end of that bloody civil war. The war ended in 2009 and it is estimated that 100,000 lives were lost over the years of conflict. Many in my Tamil community and indeed across Sydney were forced to leave Sri Lanka. They have made their home here. They have had children who in turn have had children. The result of the war has left scars that remain today.

At the end of 2017 the member for Granville and I visited Sri Lanka and had lunch at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel in Colombo, which was the target of one of the bombers. We also visited Jaffna in the north of Sri Lanka, where the majority of Tamils live. We came to better understand the Tamil culture and why language, poetry, literature, dance and music are intrinsic to who they are. That is why I pay my respects today to all

Sri Lankans, whether they are Hindu, Christian, Muslim or Buddhist. This terrible event has impacted people from across the faith spectrum.

In times such as these we must pause and reflect on the strength of our culturally and religiously diverse communities. It is our duty to ensure that every member of our community is valued, respected and included. My thoughts are with the people of Sri Lanka and their families and friends in Australia. My thoughts are with my Tamil Australian community. I stand with all of them in wanting a peaceful Sri Lanka where everyone is safe from religious or cultural persecution. In the days following the attack I was drawn to the words of Father Sudham Perera, a Sri Lankan Catholic priest in the United Kingdom, who said, "These incidents invite us to think in a different way, that we are all human beings and we need to come together and promote humanity."

MARSDEN PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (20:11): Before I speak about the local issue that I want to bring to the attention of the Chamber, I put on record my thanks to the people of Londonderry for sending me here again for another four years to fight for the many that matter to us—and there are many. I am raring to go and will continue to fight for all of the communities that I am so privileged and honoured to represent in this place. Yet again a growing community has met with some of the teething problems faced by many growing communities in western Sydney. This time it is Marsden Park, at the very northern part of the Londonderry electorate. In the previous term I spoke many times in this Chamber about the lack of a primary school in the suburb of Jordan Springs.

Here I am again, this time talking about the lack of a primary school in Marsden Park. The suburb is split in the middle by Richmond Road. On one side of that major road is a small primary school that until 18 months ago had 64 students. On the other side of Richmond Road is the rapidly growing suburb of Elara that has been developed by Stockland. Recently Stockland representatives told me that they are building 10 homes there per week—that is the rate of growth in the community. There is no school within the suburb, so parents are sending their children across the main road to Marsden Park Public School. In 18 months the school has gone from 67 students to 215, which has obviously put a lot of pressure on it.

Local parents have received some news that has made them disappointed and quite anxious. It is my responsibility to advocate on their behalf. The department said that from term two children from kindergarten to year 2 will stay at Marsden Park Public School but children from year 3 to year 6 will go to a pop-up school at Riverstone Public School. That is causing a lot of anxiety for parents. I recently wrote to new Minister Sarah Mitchell and I am awaiting her reply. I could not miss the opportunity to speak about it in the first week of the Parliament. Local parents are asking me and I am asking the Minister to please get back to our community on why there was no prior consultation about the fact that when you enrol your child at Marsden Park they are suddenly going to Riverstone.

Have any other options been considered? Surely at an earlier point the department was aware of the fact that there were too many enrolments for the school to take and adequately service. This was not communicated to families at the time of enrolment. Allegedly parents are being told not to drive their children to Riverstone because of the parking and traffic issues around that school. This is going to cause problems for many parents, particularly if they have a child in kindergarten, year 1 or year 2 at Marsden Park and another child in year 4 or year 5 now going to a pop-up school at Riverstone. Will they be forced to use out-of-hours school care?

Obviously there will be a lot of flow-on impacts for local parents. No-one is denying that Marsden Park Public School in its current state is beyond capacity. Neither I nor the parents are denying this, but can we fast-track the completion date for the current plan for Marsden Park Public School on the Elara side? That is the same old Jordan Springs issue. More homes are being sold, so let us get this primary school built more quickly as this decision will impact on lots of local parents. We were not advised of this earlier. I am very disappointed that I was not informed of this as the representative of the local community. Interestingly there was a meeting held a week after the election but I will not make a comment about that. I will appreciate the Minister getting back to the local community through me about how we can make this process easier for parents living in Elara/Marsden Park.

MULGOA ELECTORATE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (20:16): Mr Temporary Speaker, congratulations on your return to this place and your ascension to the Chair. It is a pleasure and an honour to be here in the House again, in the oldest Parliament in Australia, returned as the member for Mulgoa in the Fifty-Seventh Parliament for my third term. I congratulate the Premier and my colleagues on a record-breaking election result. It was a strong endorsement of the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals vision for New South Wales. Never before in the history of this nation have we seen the breadth and depth of the infrastructure pipeline, improvements to services and funding for our roads, schools, hospitals, sporting facilities and local communities that we are currently experiencing.

During early voting in the lead-up to the election day a group of tradesmen came to me and told me that for the first time ever they would be voting Liberal because of the unprecedented infrastructure pipeline and building that was taking place. The people of my community are the beneficiaries of this prosperity our State is now experiencing. That is only because of the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals and our ability to manage a strong economy and encourage businesses to flourish and investment to take place. This is only possible because of our strong financial management. I congratulate the Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier for their hard work in ensuring New South Wales is in its strong financial position so that we can provide and deliver the infrastructure and services the people of New South Wales need and deserve.

I sincerely thank the people of Mulgoa for returning me as their local member to continue to serve that wonderful community. I am humbled by this great result and the 3.9 per cent swing towards me achieved on the day. I thank the 145 volunteers who gave up their valuable time to help on early voting centres, booth set-up, polling day and scrutineering. Across every booth in the electorate were many friendly faces wearing the Liberal blue, standing in front of a backdrop of Liberal blue corflutes and wrap. It was a fantastic sight. I thank my SEC chairman, Steve Simat, for his tireless work throughout the campaign and for organising an army of people on polling day. You have earned the nickname "Corflute Commander" for the way you plastered the electorate with my corflutes.

I thank my campaign committee for the hours spent organising, planning and working on the campaign. I thank especially my talented, humble, power-walking, letterbox-dropping champion, Meagan Skinner: Your political expertise and dedication are second to none. I thank Angela Maltese, Katheryn Bratusa, Brian Cartwright, Jessica Neale and my other campaign team members for their hard work during evenings and weekends. I thank booth captains and all the other volunteers—I could not do it without you. My priority now in this place on being returned for my third term is to get back to working hard for the people of Mulgoa and delivering on the election commitments that were made.

As the member for Mulgoa and as part of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government I can deliver a Service NSW for Glenmore Park so that people from Glenmore Park no longer have to travel into Penrith to find out the more than 40 cost-of-living measures that our Government is making available; a new performing arts and learning centre for Glenmore Park at Glenmore Park High School, which will benefit the seven local public schools that are part of the Glenmore Park Learning Alliance, as well as the wider Glenmore Park community; a \$220 million upgrade of Mamre Road stage one will commence, which will see two lanes each way from the M4 to Erskine Park Road. Although this work is underway, increasing the capacity on Mamre Road will also include a new M4 westbound on-ramp for Erskine Park and St Clair residents at Roper Road.

A new primary school at Mulgoa Rise will be built to accommodate the growing Glenmore Park suburb and the families calling this wonderful community home. The Mulgoa Road stage two upgrade will commence, a \$260 million upgrade to Mulgoa Road from Jeanette Street in Regentville to Glenmore Parkway in Glenmore Park. We are the first New South Wales Government to support the Assyrian community in facilitating their New Year festival. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is proud to come alongside the Assyrian community with funding of \$80,000 over the next four years to support them in their New Year celebration.

On two matters that concern my community greatly, I reiterate the following commitment. Throughout the election campaign I emphatically made it clear that I am opposed to the Catholic Metropolitan Cemetery Trust's plan to build a cemetery over the Wallacia Golf Club that will destroy this facility and severely damage the wider community of Wallacia. I thank the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, for meeting with my community leaders Jane McLuckie and Penrith Mayor Ross Fowler, and for her response in commissioning the greater Sydney Commission to find suitable solutions to Sydney's cemetery needs that will not destroy essential recreational and social infrastructure. Secondly, I reiterate to my community my continued opposition to an incinerator at Eastern Creek. As I have fought against this proposal, I will continue to fight it. Over the next four years I look forward to delivering these projects for my community and ensuring the fair share to the people of Mulgoa. Thank you to the people of Mulgoa for their faith in me and trust given to me to continue to serve them for another four years. *[Time expired.]*

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:21): It is great to be back! Following the recent State election it is an enormous honour and privilege to be once again in this Chamber representing the people of Port Stephens. I am deeply grateful for the trust my community has once again placed in me to be their voice in State Parliament. The election in Port Stephens was hard fought and I was honoured to receive increased support from my community at the ballot box. It was a humbling result from a community that I love. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Liberal candidate, Jaimie Abbott. Two of the most challenging times in my life were having my first child, and campaigning for Parliament. Jaimie did both at the same time, which is no small task. I wish her well in life's next adventure.

During the election, many promises were made to my community by the Liberal Government. For the first time Ministers showed a lot of interest in local projects and local issues, including the Premier, who visited Port Stephens more in a few months than she did in the previous four years. Despite her Government's continuing failure to duplicate Nelson Bay Road, the Premier again committed to getting it done; this time within two years. For a quick recap—in 2015 the Government promised full duplication of Nelson Bay Road for \$70 million, to be done in four years. The latest promise is worth \$275 million for a smaller stretch of the road to be duplicated in two years. Let's see how it goes. I will hold the Government to account on this promise and we will see what happens.

The Coalition Government also committed to building a "brand new state-of-the-art TAFE campus" in Nelson Bay. This announcement was made, despite this Government destroying TAFE across New South Wales, sacking thousands of TAFE teachers and cutting courses left, right and centre. It seems if you are a kid in the bush or in the suburbs trying to learn new skills, this Government is happy to tear down your opportunities and tear down your TAFE. But if you happen to live in a marginal seat, it will promise the world. Again, I will hold this Government to account on this promise, and even more, I will fight for better TAFE facilities for all people in this State.

During the election, the Coalition Government promised to reduce the school maintenance backlog in Port Stephens to zero. This announcement was made despite this Government neglecting schools for years and allowing the backlog to grow to record levels, with crucial maintenance requests being left for years without repair. Students across New South Wales deserve better than this. The Coalition has promised to clear the backlog entirely, and we will hold them to account on this as well. The Coalition Government promised to upgrade the Tea Gardens, Karuah and Lemon Tree Passage police stations, but despite the Premier promising \$1 million for the Tea Gardens upgrade a year ago, not a single cent has been spent and still the local police and our community are totally in the dark about what is happening. It is not good enough.

Most remarkably the Coalition Government promised to spend \$188 million building a second access road for the 1,300 residents who live in Fingal Bay—\$140,000 per resident. It was an absurd announcement for a project that is simply not deliverable. The Government's own Catherine Cusack admitted as much straight after the election in an opinion editorial published in the *Newcastle Herald*, but the Premier has recommitted to building the road. We will see how long that promise stands.

During the election the Liberal Government made a number of other commitments to my community, and I will hold it to account on each and every one of them. One of the glaring absences from the commitments was Medowie High School. That is something my community needs and it is something I will continue to fight for. Unfortunately, in their desperate attempt to stop me returning to this place, the Liberals lost their moral compass. Their candidate and their parliamentary staff were caught setting up fake Facebook accounts to troll me, spread misinformation, attack me and promote themselves. I could not care less about whether the Premier was dux of her school or whether she misled people by making that claim. What I do care about is the shocking lack of decency this Government has shown throughout the election campaign and during its entire term.

People with a disability have been thrown on the scrap heap. Their services have been privatised and now there are too many people with nowhere to turn. They cannot afford another four years of Liberal Government. People who have been injured at work are unable to get the support they need because of this Government's awful changes to the workers compensation scheme. They cannot afford another four years. Young kids have been left in harm's way because this Government has gutted Family and Community Services and the majority of serious risk of harm reports are not even investigated. Those kids cannot afford another four years. Women fleeing domestic violence and young people with mental health issues cannot afford another four years of this Government. We will continue to hold the Government to account and we will fight for decency and fairness in New South Wales. [*Time expired*]

TERRIGAL ELECTORATE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:26): I thank every single lifesaver who patrolled our beaches and made our community safer over the 2018-19 summer season. My electorate is fortunate to be home to seven amazing surf lifesaving clubs: Killcare, Macmasters Beach, Copacabana, Avoca Beach, North Avoca, Terrigal and Wamberal. Only the member for Pittwater has more surf clubs in his electorate—he has 11. I also note that the member for Myall Lakes has six. Surf clubs—wherever they are—are fantastic and make such an incredible contribution to the New South Wales community. More than one million locals and visitors came to Central Coast beaches during the 2018-19 summer season, and it is a credit to our lifesavers that not a single drowning occurred on a patrolled beach—I emphasise that point. The dedication, professionalism and vigilance of each surf club patrol is second to none, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognise them today.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge Chris Parker, who until recently was the chief executive officer of Surf Life Saving Central Coast. Chris lives in my electorate and I am his very proud member of Parliament. Chris has filled this role for a number of years, during which time the clubs in our region have gone from strength to strength. On a personal note, Chris has become a great friend and a staunch advocate and great ally of all the surf lifesaving clubs, from one end of the Central Coast to the other. He should be commended for his passion, dedication, drive and enthusiasm. I am particularly proud of his work with the Liberal-Nationals State Government in securing the additional funding that our surf clubs—many of them in my electorate—have received.

During the election campaign I was proud to announce new oxygen resuscitators for each surf club on the Central Coast. This funding was announced by Minister Hazzard and is a \$200,000 investment from the New South Wales Government that will fund 129 OTK oxygen resuscitation kits for every surf lifesaving club in New South Wales. Providing these latest-model oxygen resuscitator kits will ensure that our fantastic volunteer first responders are equipped with the most advanced gear when they are saving people's lives. This is equipment that ambulance paramedics already use, and there is no reason that trained surf lifesavers should not be able to use it as well. It will ensure they have the best chance of helping anyone who gets into trouble at the beach and requires the emergency assistance that surf lifesavers so ably provide. Oxygen Therapy Kits are easily portable and will replace the older models currently in use. I thank Minister Hazzard for the statewide investment of \$200,000 to make it possible for this new equipment to be deployed to each beach along our extensive coastline. More than 1,000 surf lifesavers have been trained in advanced resuscitation techniques, including many on the Central Coast.

I pay tribute to the team from Surf Life Saving Central Coast—an amazing group of people who work diligently and passionately as a united team. They do an amazing job supporting the local clubs on the Central Coast through logistics, administration, accounting processes, corporate governance—you name it. Surf Life Saving Central Coast has set a fantastic benchmark in professional performance. I also congratulate the hundreds of volunteers across all 15 surf lifesaving clubs on the Central Coast, including the seven fantastic surf clubs in my community. They do an amazing job and deserve our thanks for patrolling the beaches and saving lives every weekend over summer.

It is always a pleasure to visit these clubs to show support, whether at a medal presentation or by providing funding for upgraded roller doors or sun-smart uniforms for the Killcare Surf Life Saving Club. It is our duty to provide what the clubs need to deliver extra services for the fantastic volunteers at surf lifesaving on the Central Coast. These volunteers do an amazing job. They deserve our thanks for patrolling beaches and saving lives every weekend over summer. I say to every volunteer at each of the surf lifesaving clubs a wholehearted thank you for the services they provide to all people on the Central Coast.

MAITLAND RAILWAY STATION ROUNDABOUT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (20:31): Mr Temporary Speaker Singh, I congratulate you on your election and your appointment to this role. Tonight I commence my contribution to the new parliamentary term by raising Maitland's number one transport issue: the ongoing peak-hour traffic congestion centred on the Maitland Railway Station roundabout. Every person attending our pre-poll and every person who engaged with us in a roads survey before Christmas mentioned the congestion. It represents a mistake by this Government, which has cut our city literally in two. Today I requested a meeting with the Minister for Transport and Roads in relation to roads in my electorate, and he has agreed verbally to meet with me. I put these comments on the record today as a starting point in that conversation and to lay out what happened before he took on this portfolio. There is much more to say and I note that I applied for information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act process just before the election. This application was delayed by the Government. It is interesting to consider the impact of this delay on the election.

It is just more than two years ago since I called in this place for the Liberals and Nationals to attempt to address this problem. I showed then that the Government's first attempt had been an unmitigated disaster. There have been many discussions on this topic since then, with the Government, Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], councillors and others. The wasteful, half-hearted solution of a \$50 million one-way overpass to take some of the New England Highway's traffic out of the roundabout has only created daily frustration for thousands of motorists travelling to and from work each day.

I wrote to the former Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight in March 2017 asking her to visit at the earliest opportunity to see what was happening. It was an inspection that never happened. Frustrated by the lack of answers and the inaction of this Government, I recently used the Government Information (Public Access) Act process to try to get some clarity about what was being done to address this frustrating congestion. What I have read has only confirmed my earlier concern that the one-way overpass was always a bandaid solution. Reports

from RMS indicate that the upgrade failed within six months of opening to traffic. So much for the wait-and-see approach!

Despite RMS' traffic modelling, more vehicles were coming out of the Maitland CBD during the evening peak than forecast, which has impacted the efficient operation of the roundabout. The flow-on effect has been a bank-up of westbound traffic that has stretched nearly one kilometre—900 metres—along the New England Highway. To avoid joining the gridlock scores of motorists leave the highway daily to use nearby Maitland Park as a rat run, despite a childcare centre, sporting facilities, the local swimming pool and war memorials being located within the park precinct. Now after two years of investigation the Government is finally preparing to start work on its first fix. During the election campaign it announced a \$1.5 million commitment—which was already budgeted so it was not a "commitment"—to include some traffic lights for eastbound vehicles approaching the roundabout and traffic queue detectors for westbound vehicles with the aim of creating more gaps so that traffic can flow.

The Government did not say that this also has an unannounced second component, which could include the upgrade of the New England Highway-Louth Park Road intersection with traffic lights. This is also being considered and will cost \$5 million. The Roads and Maritime Services documents cannot show the cost that that will shift onto our local community—to residents who live in Louth Park, who will then have to change the way they access their homes. There will be also costs to our council. This term I am expecting much more from the Government because on the eve of polling day in March, well after money had been spent by this Government, the Liberals' Maitland candidate told *The Maitland Mercury* that she had used her candidacy to pressure the New South Wales Government for a solution. Her solution—the answer that the majority of respondents to my road safety survey in January gave me—was to build a westbound overpass over the roundabout.

Tonight I renew my invitation to the Government. This time I ask the Minister for Transport and Roads to come to Maitland, see the problem and focus on a proper and adequate traffic solution. Maitland is the fastest growing city outside Sydney, with a growth rate of 25 per cent since the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census. It is now home to 80,000 residents. The warning about the infrastructure needs, especially roads, was made in 2008. At the time then Mayor Peter Blackmore told us:

... our traffic is pretty bad. But when you look at our projected growth figures, it's going to be a lot worse.

Those words were prophetic indeed. Minister, come to Maitland, see the roundabout and please fix it.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (20:36): The people of New South Wales took to the polls on 23 March for the State election. I stand here today, representing the most diverse and multicultural community in New South Wales, because the people of Cabramatta have once again bestowed upon me the honour and privilege of representing them for another term in the oldest Parliament in Australia. I thank the electors of Cabramatta. Whether they voted for me or not, I thank them for taking part in a democratic process that a lot of us would not have been granted in the countries we came from originally. Being elected as a member of Parliament is no easy feat. It is an office that demands the highest level of integrity, the highest level of accountability and the highest level of transparency, which I plan to uphold until I am no longer fit to do so.

Being elected as a member of this place would not be possible without the mountains of support and trust from volunteers. In saying that, I acknowledge my campaign team and the many volunteers who stood by me in the heat and rain throughout the election campaign. To the rank and file members of the mighty Australian Labor Party and to community leaders who have always entrusted their faith to me, I thank you. I also thank my partner, Del. I thank the mother of my children, Barbara, and my children and grandchildren for their support during my election campaign. Without their support, energy and love, things would not have run as smoothly as they did.

I also reiterate the issues that surfaced commonly throughout the conversations I had with voters in my electorate: the families who are deeply concerned about the rise in the cost of living; the many parents who are concerned about the quality and standards that their children are subjected to in our schools; our train service that takes longer today to reach the city than it did 20 years ago; the high cost of running their appliances; the tradies who are concerned about workplace safety standards; and the retail workers who are concerned about not being given a fair go.

The election has sent a clear message not only to me and my colleagues on this side of the House but also to all of us in public office: There has never been a more crucial time in our history to put the people of New South Wales first and at the heart of every decision we make. Regardless of whether you are young or old, living in the east or west or north or south, studying or working, renting or owning, the Labor Party will always be there with you every step of the way. I look forward to representing my community for the next four years in this place and I pledge to do my utmost to hold this Government to account.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:39 until
Thursday 9 May 2019 at 10:00.**