



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday, 28 May 2019**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday, 28 May 2019**

*Presiding Officers*

## ABSENCE OF THE SPEAKER

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

**The Deputy Speaker (The Hon. Leslie Gladys Williams)** took the chair at 12:00.

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

[*Notices of motions given.*]

*Private Members' Statements*

## SYDNEY METRO NORTHWEST

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:10):** It gives me the greatest of pleasure to advise the House of an historic moment in the delivery of infrastructure for the people of New South Wales and, importantly, the people of north-western Sydney and my electorate of Castle Hill. Early yesterday, 27 May 2019, at around 4.00 a.m., the first passenger metro rail rolled out of Rouse Hill to Chatswood to deliver high-quality automated services to communities in my electorate and neighbouring electorate. I note that people in many other electorates along the line will benefit from improved services. It is a great outcome for the people of north-western Sydney. I place on record my appreciation to Premier Gladys Berejiklian, the former transport Minister, for her conviction, determination and vision to push on with the project.

There is quite a lot of history relating to a north-west rail line. As I remind people, on my first day in Parliament, almost 12 years ago today, I advised Coalition members in the party room of an important and integral piece of infrastructure for my area known as the North West Rail Link. To his credit, the newly chosen Opposition leader, Barry O'Farrell, walked into my office after that party meeting in 2007 and on behalf of the Liberal-Nationals said, "If we are elected in 2011 it will be our signature policy. We will make a commitment to that straightaway". Barry O'Farrell was true to his word. He visited my electorate and the front page of the *Rouse Hill Times*—I still have a copy—shows us standing on the side of Old Windsor Road, shovels in hand. The article reports the clear statement that if the Coalition is elected to government in 2011 it will immediately commence to build the North West Rail Link. The rest is history.

Yesterday the first passenger service rolled out of Tallawong station through Rouse Hill and onto Chatswood. It complements the great bus services that have been available for many years. It provides a world-class public transport system that moves people seamlessly and at great speed. This morning I used the service. I got on a train at five minutes to 8.00. It took 20 minutes to travel to Epping station and 31 minutes to travel from Rouse Hill to Chatswood station. I was able to connect smoothly with the service that arrives every three minutes and travels to Wynyard station. The entire trip from Rouse Hill to Wynyard took just on an hour. It is a wonderful outcome for the community and supports the massive growth in population in the north-west sector. Since the early nineties hundreds of thousands of people have moved to the north-west.

Sadly, the area was neglected by the previous Labor Government, which, incidentally, promised to build the rail link as far back as 1998. Incredibly, that 13-year period of broken promises from 1998 to 2011 went on for twice as long as it took to actually build the North West Rail Link. We committed to the project in 2011 when we came to government. We got out of the massive debt that was left to us by the very inadequate and corrupt former Labor Government, and the rest is history. We now have a debt-free State. We are now rolling out infrastructure to the tune of \$87.9 billion. Importantly, we have a great piece of infrastructure, which our Premier committed to when she was the transport Minister. On Sunday morning the Premier, transport Minister Andrew Constance and I shared the first trip with 350 of our closest friends and my parliamentary colleagues from Baulkham Hills, Riverstone, Hawkesbury and Seven Hills. It is a great piece of infrastructure and as a government we are very proud of it. Our communities can be proud of our commitment to public transport.

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (12:16):** I echo the words of the member for Castle Hill, a passionate representative of north-west Sydney. There is no greater proof of his dedication to his community than his strong voice and advocacy for the delivery of the Metro Northwest. The project has literally changed the community, and not before time. It took too long and

should have been delivered years earlier, but it took the Liberal-Nationals Government to commit to it and deliver it. I echo the member for Castle Hill's words about the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, and her steadfastness when it came to this project, and the work done by Minister Constance. Barry O'Farrell took the project to the people of New South Wales when our message was, "Let's start the change", and it is very apt that our message today is, "Let's get it done".

### KEMPSEY CANCERIAN BALL

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (12:18):** Last Saturday was a night of nights in more ways than one for the longest-running Cancerian committee in the country. My husband, Warren, and I were delighted to attend the sold-out event, along with 272 other guests, at the Kempsey Macleay RSL Club. It was themed the "Million Dollar Night". This year's Cancerian ball was a special one for the Kempsey Cancerian Committee in its effort to raise more than \$1 million from our valley for cancer research. The committee was formed 32 years ago and in that time has raised \$982,000. On Saturday night, thanks to the hard work of a string of volunteers, the amount reached \$1,030,500, with \$48,500 raised at the event.

I thank everyone for their amazing generosity. As I have told the House on many occasions, the Macleay Valley is home to some big hearts. The Kempsey Cancerians give it their all and show their generosity. The Kempsey Cancerian Committee was formed in 1987 to raise funds for and awareness of the Australian Cancer Research Foundation for medical research. Its first sponsor ball was held that year. The committee has raised funds for the ovarian cancer research lab at St Vincent's Hospital and a cancer laboratory at Westmead Hospital. Those are just two of the many hospitals that have benefited from the group's fundraising efforts over the years. Last year's grant helped to establish 15 diagnostic skin cancer scanners to improve the rate of early detection of melanoma across New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. Given the mid North Coast's superb climate—the world's best—melanoma detection is particularly important to our communities.

The auction included a handmade quilt by Cheryl Filby; a National Rugby League jersey signed by the wonderful Greg Inglis, who hails from our valley, and Sam Burgess; accommodation at a resort; a golf voucher; a 2015 limited edition Holden watch; a voucher for the Kempsey Macleay RSL Club; an oil painting by a local artist; and much more. It is hard to remember and record the names of all the participants in the endeavour; however, the 2019 committee included Jenna Lees, Samantha Dyet, Helen Packwood, Jo Oram, Kerrie Sheridan, Alison Mavin, Carolyn Duff, Maree Hayes, Chris Shaw, Vivian Kyle, Kay Irvine—I love her—Jess Fortescue, Rachel James, Lucinda Reid, Max Packwood, Kathy Langham, Maree Tyne, Michelle Arndell and Natalee Riedel.

The master of ceremonies was Mark Morrison and speeches were made by Jenna Lees, Kempsey Cancerian President; Professor Ian Brown, CEO of the Australian Cancer Research Foundation who lives on the mid North Coast; David Simon, a fantastic local who was born and educated in the valley and who is a veterinarian and instigator of the original sponsors' Cancerian Ball; and Brielle Parris, an amazing woman, the full package—a doctor of philosophy candidate at the University of Queensland Thoracic Research Centre and the Australian Cancer Research Foundation Centre for Lung Cancer Early Detection.

Brielle, who spoke beautifully on the night, has a local connection. She is the second cousin of Alison Mavin who with her son Dean are amazing contributors to the valley with their heavy vehicle company. These wonderful people joined us on the night to work towards a wonderful outcome, which was a delight to all. The auctioneer was Ken Tassell, from South West Rocks, and the delightful hostesses were Natalee Riedel, Claudia Banks and Chloe Bryant. Again, on behalf of the broader community, my profound thanks to the Kempsey Cancerian Committee for organising such a fabulous event that brought the community together and for reaching the \$1 million fundraising mark.

I congratulate Elaine Leader, who for decades has been ringmaster and announcer at the Bellingen and Dorrigo shows. The Bellingen Show was held at the weekend; it was a magnificent event. I am blessed that the four valleys each has its own show. Elaine Leader is a special type of person, who is involved in equestrian events throughout the Bellingen Valley. She has raised her family and worked in our region. She is an extraordinary individual, who deserved to open the show. Elaine was a worthy recipient of a commemoration of her 30 years of work, awarded by Charlie Hook, who now lives locally, a delegate of the Royal Agricultural Society. Elaine Leader has been ringmaster and announcer for the equestrian events for 20 years and I have known her for nearly 20 years. She is an incredible person and represents the very best of what show societies contribute—in fact, they contribute 3.5 million volunteer hours putting on agricultural shows across Australia. Thank you, Elaine Leader.

### CAMPBELLTOWN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:21):** I am disappointed to draw to the attention of the House a recent ABC article that analysed the number of residents who fell within the highest income bracket in



local government areas [LGAs] throughout Australia and ranked those LGAs based on those results. I draw to my colleagues' particular attention those LGAs that were low in the rankings. I was disappointed but frankly not surprised to note that Campbelltown came in at 492 out of 574 LGAs throughout this great nation. I feel there are a number of factors for Campbelltown's low ranking, but I think it is mainly a reflection of the State Government's neglect of creating jobs and thus boosting prosperity in our growing region.

Members of all persuasions have been heard crowing about the State Government's economic credentials while patting themselves on the back. Ultimately, these credentials mean nothing to many people in the Campbelltown LGA and the Campbelltown electorate who are on very, very low incomes. We talk about economic disparity faced by areas like Campbelltown—and, of course, many other areas across our great nation, but it would be remiss of me not to draw specific attention to the good people of Campbelltown.

I put those opposite on notice that when they talk about economic credentials, prosperity and such matters they should take a holistic, inclusive approach and take into consideration every level of the social economy and the effect the economy has on communities, families and, importantly, workers. The word "worker" is not mentioned enough in this place—what about the worker? When I think about workers I think particularly about my father, who was a hospital maintenance man on a reasonably low income, meaning he had to work a couple of other jobs as well. I know how hard these people work in this great State. The investment—or, more accurately the lack of investment—in job creation in Campbelltown over the past eight-plus years has simply been inadequate. Take the experience of train commuters and the lack of investment in creating local jobs for local communities.

We cannot be bound by the arguments that we create in this space and the outcomes provided for local families. I have had countless conversations with residents in my community who cannot make ends meet. We have seen higher taxes and wage growth reduced to a level that is simply not sustainable for a local family or for working people to earn an appropriate living. In fact, I know many people whose livelihood is inadequate and whose wellbeing is poor. We must be fair dinkum. Is it not the role of each one of us in this place to continue to pursue prosperity for every man, woman and child, not only in our own electorates but also across this great State? It is just and right to have a holistic view of achieving that goal.

It has become apparent to me that this is not the objective of the conservatives, nor is it this Government's objective. Its objective is to improve the economic prosperity of its mates at the big end of town. Members opposite can say no, and they can rail against that, but we see it, we read it, and we hear it every day. I know my colleagues on this side of the House are forever mindful to ensure that we have that holistic approach to economic sustainability. We do not know what those opposite actually stand for, unless we read certain editorials. Government members crow about their prosperity and that of their friends down the road. That is fine—we all like to look after our mates—but we must be serious: It is the duty of every member of this House to pursue equal prosperity for every man, woman and child in this great State. I urge members opposite to consider that and to prioritise the economic prosperity of everyone in New South Wales.

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (12:26):** I would have let the member for Blacktown's contribution go by, but the last minute of it tipped me over the edge. We recently experienced an attack of democracy in New South Wales called an election. An election campaign involves taking our economic prosperity agenda to the people of New South Wales and the Opposition does likewise. The electorate then decides who has the best plan. The people of New South Wales—and overwhelmingly the people of Western Sydney—fully endorsed this Government's agenda. They clearly endorsed an agenda that includes investing in infrastructure like Narellan Road and the Sydney Metro Northwest, a commitment to delivering and working with the Commonwealth Government to deliver the Western Sydney Airport, and a long-term commitment to the North South Rail Line that will link the north-west of Sydney through the greater Penrith region and into the Campbelltown region. These are the plans for economic prosperity that only a Liberal-Nationals Government can deliver to the people of New South Wales.

#### **STROKE FOUNDATION AMBASSADOR PRIYA SHARMA**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (12:27):** Surviving a stroke is not something most 24-year-olds think about. This frightening experience forever changed the life of Priya Sharma, a fit and healthy Serco Asia Pacific customer service agent from West Pennant Hills in my electorate. Nearly four years ago, Priya's parents rushed her to an emergency department after she experienced severe weakness in her left arm and foot. She suffered a seizure in the emergency department at Wahroonga's Sydney Adventist Hospital. A scan revealed a stroke caused by a blood clot in her brain. Priya stayed in intensive care for nine days before going through five weeks of rehabilitation during which she retrained her body to accomplish basic tasks such as walking, talking and even handling a knife and fork again.

Now 28 years of age, Priya looks back and describes her luck in substantially recovering while in rehabilitation without long-term physical effects. In addition to working full-time for Transport for NSW, Priya voluntarily dedicates her time to the Stroke Foundation. I had the privilege of meeting her in her capacity as an ambassador for the Stroke Foundation and discussing the future direction of stroke care in New South Wales. On 7 May I informed the House that Priya was nominated as a finalist in the Improving Life After Stroke award at the 2019 Stroke Awards hosted by the Stroke Foundation in Melbourne. This is the second year in a row Priya has been nominated as a finalist for this award, but she did not win this year. The finalists comprised stroke survivors, carers and members of the public who "voluntarily dedicate their time to improving the care and support of stroke survivors in the community".

For members who are unfamiliar with the work of the foundation, the Stroke Foundation develops the national stroke guidelines, monitors adherence to these guidelines via the national stroke audit and promotes education and resources for health professionals to champion the delivery of best practice stroke care and to eliminate the evidence-practice gap. As part of her volunteering with the Stroke Foundation, Priya has been trained to give talks that raise awareness and inform how to identify the symptoms of a stroke and how to best prevent strokes by way of a healthy lifestyle. Strokes can happen to anybody; they do not discriminate. Strokes kill more women than does breast cancer and more men than does prostate cancer. Stroke is the leading cause of acquired disability.

However, with increased public awareness and education, stroke is treatable and beatable. The crux of the public awareness campaign is the message that stroke is a time-critical and life-threatening event that is caused by a disruption of blood supply to the brain. The primary cause of strokes is the occlusion of a blood vessel by a clot in the brain. Without blood and oxygen, brain cells become strained and die at a rate of 1.9 million every minute. Once neurons die they do not come back, with their loss ultimately jeopardising co-ordination between the brain and other parts of the body.

Since 80 per cent of strokes can be prevented, we should all know the signs of a stroke. The signs are easy to learn and knowledge of them can save the life of someone we love or even our own life. FAST is an easy-to-remember acronym to help us to recognise the signs of stroke and take appropriate action. "F" stands for "face": Has the victim's mouth drooped? "A" stands for "arms": Can the victim lift their arms? "S" stands for "speech": Is the victim's speech slurred and do they understand instructions? "T" stands for "time critical". As I have said, time is critically important. If anyone shows any of these symptoms call 000 because it is an emergency and it is essential that the victim is transported to a hospital immediately. The importance of stroke awareness and prevention and early access to organised stroke care cannot be emphasised enough.

As a community, we must all take an active part in doing everything we can to curtail lifestyle activities that can cause a stroke. Over the past two decades, the decline in the number of deaths as a result of stroke has been guided by improvements in addressing significant risk factors such as high blood pressure and smoking, by progress in medical treatment and other advances in medical care and by increasing access to high-level care in dedicated stroke units in hospitals. In the Government's most recent budget, a record \$150 million has been committed over the next 10 years to help researchers tackle Australia's biggest killer: cardiovascular disease. I applaud the Premier's energetic show of support for biomedical research and I acknowledge the hard work and dedication of clinicians working in stroke care across New South Wales.

It was my father's death by stroke in August that led me to give a fair bit of time to Priya. I was delighted to hear of the advancements that could have assisted my father in his dying days and even could have prevented his death. I am confident that we will inspire other Australians to look at what they can do to prevent, treat and beat stroke. I pay tribute to Priya, whose stroke of inspiration has gone a long way to supporting the more than 475,000 stroke survivors living in our communities across Australia.

#### ***ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS: RECENT RESEARCH AND REFLECTIONS PUBLICATION***

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:32):** As it is National Reconciliation Week, I acknowledge the recent publication of *Aboriginal Heritage of the Blue Mountains: Recent Research and Reflections* and the intense, crucial work that was done in its creation. This tome was authored by Bruce Cameron, Michael Jackson, Evan Yanna Muru Gallard, Grace Karskens, Wayne R. Brennan, Jim Smith and Eugene Stockton; edited by Kelvin Knox and Reverend Dr Eugene Stockton; and published by the Blue Mountains Education and Research Trust from Lawson. Its design and layout was by Allan Walsh of Hazelbrook and it was printed by Bennetts of Leura. This is indeed a truly local publication.

I acknowledge also that this book honours and respects the people who first inhabited the Blue Mountains and their descendants who continue to do so. In essence, this is the third volume accomplished by the Blue Mountains Education and Research Trust that focuses on Aboriginal history and archaeology. The first volume,

*Blue Mountains Dreaming: The Aboriginal Heritage*, was published in 1993 and the second volume was published in 2009. As Reverend Dr Stockton says in his preface:

Given the great antiquity of Aboriginal presence in Australia, by far the vast majority of Australians who have ever lived have been Aboriginal people. Borrowing a biblical analogy, Romans 9:11, they can be likened to a venerable olive tree, deeply rooted in the soil, while the newcomers of the last few hundred years are like the branches of wild olive shoots, come from across the sea, now grafted on the old stock, sharing its roots and sap, so that the two form a single living entity on this continent.

Reverend Dr Stockton goes on to say:

These days there is growing concern for Aboriginal reconciliation. I believe genuine reconciliation will come about when we recognise and accept that both indigenous and non-indigenous history is part of Australia.

I was honoured to be asked to address attendees at the recent launch of this publication. I spoke of the requirement for compassion, respect and protection to be central to our acknowledgement of Indigenous heritage, particularly in a political climate in which legislation is passed for the flooding of wild rivers and the destruction of Aboriginal heritage by raising the Warragamba Dam wall, which has gone ahead without conferring with Aboriginal peoples. I ask my colleagues in this place to acquaint themselves with the words of Taylor and Kazan Brown and their Indigenous ancestors. I note the deep concern and distress that they spoke about at this launch and their distress at this Government's lack of consultation with the Aboriginal community about protecting heritage in the Burratorang Valley.

I pay tribute to the many authors who pulled together this fabulous publication. People have inhabited Australia for thousands of years. At the foot of the Blue Mountains, human occupation dates from up to 50,000 years ago. In 1788 the way of life for Aboriginal people living in the mountains irrevocably changed. However, their cultural heritage, handed down from ancient generations, has remained in the form of occupation sites, arts, artefacts, axe-grinding grooves, scar trees, stone arrangements and other traces of their presence in the landscape. That heritage also includes language, stories, memories and ceremonies. It is a beautiful, rich area and I pay tribute to the Aboriginal heritage of the Blue Mountains and the people telling those important stories. Finally, I pay tribute to the great Eugene Stockton. His pioneering archaeological investigations between Blackheath and the Nepean River have laid the groundwork for understanding the Aboriginal history of the Blue Mountains. He is a remarkable man and this is a remarkable publication.

#### **TAMWORTH VIADUCT PARK YOUTH RECREATION HUB**

##### **Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (12:37):**

I inform the Parliament of a fantastic new facility that has opened in Tamworth: a \$1.7 million skate facility located at Viaduct Park in Tamworth. The new Viaduct Park Youth Recreation Hub was opened on Sunday 26 May. It was a red-letter day, with hundreds of people turning out to have a look at this magnificent facility. Everybody was there, whether they were involved in skateboarding, scooters or BMX riding or just to have a look at what was on offer. Keen young skater Anaky Palmer did the honours of opening the park.

The driving force behind the skate park was Dianne Case, whose story is humbling and caring. Over time Dianne forged a relationship with skaters at the old skate park, which was located on the other side of the road from her office in Darling Street, Tamworth. This is an excellent example of the community and local and State governments working together. The \$1.7 million skate park is an investment in the youth of Tamworth. The park includes an active space where kids can play, learn and have fun outdoors in a safe and stimulating environment. The general consensus of the park users is that is the new benchmark and meets the standards to attract regional skating competition events. It is the only one of its kind in the New England north-west area of New South Wales. This facility includes a modern skate place, an events hill and terraced seating for viewing opportunities, park furniture, LED lighting, irrigation, landscaping and closed-circuit television for park safety.

We want to see our young people get off the couch and get outdoors. We want them to move away from their iPad, Xbox, play station and phone, and enjoy the great outdoors by being active and energetic at Viaduct Park. They have no excuse to say they have nothing to do in Tamworth. This park will bridge the gap between locations like Newcastle, Dubbo and Coffs Harbour, and will enable Tamworth to host regional and national competitions. It will be a great economic boost for our region. The Viaduct Park Youth Recreation Hub received \$999,308 from the Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund, with Tamworth Regional Council contributing \$738,000. This is magnificent facility highlights that community action is at work. I thank many staff of Tamworth Regional Council for their driving force, including Grant Reeckman and his team who did an outstanding job.

We need to continue to provide facilities in regional New South Wales to ensure our young people are active and mobile, and participate in sport. They could be involved in soccer, netball, rugby, rugby league, hockey, skateboarding or a BMX riding, which may ultimately take them to the very top in their sport—representing Australia at the Olympics. This park has provided a pathway for young Anaky Palmer, who said that because she

is from Tamworth she can now go a lot further with her skateboarding. Who knows? She may make a debut appearance at the Tokyo Summer Olympics in 2020. We have worked with the community, and the Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund has funded much-needed facility to give young people a pathway to excellence. I congratulate everybody involved on this magnificent park. I invite anyone who has an interest in skateboarding, BMX riding or scooter riding to come to Tamworth, as they will be amazed by this facility. We look forward to seeing Anaky on the world stage.

### WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:42):** I acknowledge the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and especially the Wiradjuri and Ngarigo people, the traditional custodians of the lands of the Wagga Wagga electorate. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I take the opportunity in my first private member's statement of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament to share some of the key issues identified across the Wagga Wagga electorate. These issues were brought to my attention during the two recent election campaigns. I thank the people of the Wagga Wagga electorate for placing their trust in me again. And I thank my family, and those who supported me and assisted in my campaigns. I also congratulate my fellow MPs and the Government on its re-election.

Since the time of the by-election in September 2018 there has been an unprecedented level of interest in the Wagga Wagga electorate. The presence of an independent voice in the Parliament has meant, I believe, a significant rise in energy and enthusiasm in the region. The commitments made in the elections have been welcomed and I thank the Premier for again committing her Government to delivering the promises made to the electorate. The commitments include: the Tumut Hospital redevelopment, with a timeline predicting work will commence at the end of this year; Bomen Business Park, Wagga Wagga, now a special activation precinct, with funding for an intermodal hub and the potential to be a world-class business centre; the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital car park with advice from the Minister for Health that this is set to get underway at the completion of stage 3 of the redevelopment in 2021; and upgrades to the Gobbagombalin Bridge and Marshall's Creek bridges.

The State Government made a range of additional announcements and I am pleased to report that one of them, the early intervention program Youth on Track, was launched in Wagga Wagga this month. After speaking with Mission Australia's area manager, I am looking forward to seeing the benefits of this program. There is a renewed vitality across the region and it is now time for us to lift our eyes, look ahead and chart a direction. Gone should be the days of simply catching up. There are three key priorities that I believe should guide our direction: responsible growth, safe and supported communities and an independent voice. I spoke about these frequently during my campaign and I want to speak briefly about them now.

The first priority is responsible growth. Under the New South Wales Government's 20-year plan for regional New South Wales, Wagga Wagga was identified as a location of significant growth, with the population set to increase by 100,000 within 20 years. Growth is integral to our future prosperity. Developments like the Bomen industrial hub, Tumut Hospital, Snowy Hydro and the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital within the health precinct will not only provide services but will assist in attracting individuals and families to the electorate. I will continue to push for further opportunities, including the expansion of the Charles Sturt campus in Wagga Wagga, our softwoods industry at Tumut, renewable energy at Lockhart and a sustainable future for Lake Albert. I would also like to see further payroll tax reductions for regional businesses. I will work with local councils so that the State Government provides the necessary support for their priorities.

While growth is key to our future prosperity, we must make sure this happens in a way that is right for us. Our growth must be environmentally sustainable. To support the predicted population boom, we need modern hospitals and schools, local jobs, clear opportunities for all young people to reach their full potential, safe roads and affordable public transport solutions. For example, I draw the attention of the House to the lack of appropriately skilled medical services at district hospitals such as Tumut. This is a nationwide issue, but I believe in New South Wales we have the means to begin appropriately training the doctors we need in our regions. Other important concerns include education facilities, the significant rate of homelessness and the need for an alternate road bypass in Wagga Wagga.

Hand in hand with this anticipated growth comes the need to ensure communities across my electorate feel secure. This is my second key priority, the need for safe and supported communities. For this to happen, Wagga Wagga needs sufficient police numbers, drug treatment and rehabilitation facilities, and a strong approach to crime prevention. I congratulate Wagga Wagga City Council on the launch of its crime prevention committee, which will bring together members of key services, government representatives and the wider community. Having met with many newly appointed Ministers, I am confident these issues can be addressed and the many opportunities for growth can be embraced. Finally, the third priority is that of having an independent voice for the electorate. I intend to ensure the people of my electorate feel directly connected to government so that their concerns are heard and we maintain our new-found energy as we build our future.

## REID ELECTORATE

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (12:47):** As member for Drummoyne, I often have the privilege to attend local events held throughout the year to support the various community groups in my electorate. For the past six years I have been attending these events with my Federal colleague the Hon. Craig Laundy. I would like to take the time to acknowledge Craig in this House and recognise his tremendous contribution as the Federal member for Reid. He has faithfully and humbly served our community since 2013. Craig and I like to joke that he is my Italian brother; in more ways than one he is. Prior to entering Parliament we both worked in the hospitality industry in our respective family businesses. Working in that environment has certainly taught us about hard work. And what a work ethic Craig has. He took the seat of Reid from the Labor Party, which it had held for 91 years. He did so with fierce determination and lots of doorknocking—I know this because we did some of it together.

Working constructively with different levels of government is paramount in developing and delivering services and facilities for our community. Together, Craig and I have been able to secure funding from our respective governments to support local community projects. These include upgrades to St Lukes Oval in Concord for the local AFL teams, Campbell Park for the Abbotsford Juniors soccer club, Concord soccer club, Ron Routley Oval, Concord and Five Dock baseball, and a state-of-the-art hockey field, just to mention a few. In his valedictory speech Craig recounted a story about having to miss out on his daughter's end-of-year presentation night as it conflicted with a presentation night held at a different high school in the electorate. Craig may have missed some important moments with family and friends, but his contribution to the community will be remembered for a long time. Thank you, Craig. I wish you all the best in the next chapter.

I also congratulate Dr Fiona Martin, who won the electorate of Reid at the Federal election. She is a mother, an accomplished psychologist and a small business owner. Over the course of the campaign I saw Fiona's passion for the community. Having grown up in the area, she clearly has strong local ties. That is invaluable as she will be able to understand the unique local matters in the electorate. I look forward to working with Fiona as we continue to deliver local infrastructure for the community.

During the campaign Fiona pledged \$5 million towards the new Centre of Excellence for the Wests Tigers. The New South Wales Government has also pledged \$5 million for this project, as well as \$30 million for the redevelopment of Concord Oval, which will house the Centre of Excellence. The transformation of Concord Oval and the Centre of Excellence is a visionary project that the whole community can be proud of. It will service elite sporting players as well as local sporting clubs including the West Harbour Rugby Football Club and Inter Lions Soccer Club. It will also include a new indoor recreation centre, open spaces, rooms for community groups, as well as match facilities. It is a textbook example of local, State and Federal governments working together to deliver the very best outcome for the community.

## NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:50:4):** Last week I was honoured to attend the Koojay Corroboree at Coogee Beach to usher in Reconciliation Week. This year the theme is "Grounded in Truth: Walk Together in Courage". Reconciliation Week occurs every year and takes place in between the landmark dates of the 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision. The historical dates serve as a reminder to the broader Australian community that we should actively try to sustain national unity and the championing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights in Australia. The *New South Wales Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report 2018* illustrates a Government approach that does not promote national unity or a real conviction to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The Liberal Government has not shown any kind of leadership in closing the gap. In fact, all we have seen is indifference and an inability of the Government to meet COAG targets.

The Liberal-Nationals Government has failed to close the gap on life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in New South Wales. The closing of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in reading, numeracy and writing is also not on track. Halving the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities does not appear to be on track either. There has been no evidence to suggest that the unemployment rate for Indigenous people has changed since 2004. That is well over a decade of unemployment sitting between 15 per cent and 22 per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is simply not acceptable that a Government can do nothing on an issue as serious and pervasive as this one.

The overwhelming message I heard at the Reconciliation Week gathering at Coogee was the need for unity and togetherness between the broader Australian people and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Liberals' actions and behaviours, or lack thereof, would indicate that they do not want to be part of this national unity. They have not given their outright support to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's voices in Parliament. It is yet another example of the Liberal Government not including itself in this move to

champion Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights in Australia. I have been given this voice in Parliament by the people of Coogee, and after viewing the crowd on Friday at the Koojay Corroboree it was obvious to me that I needed to make this statement.

This Parliament has the means and ability to change the quality of life for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of New South Wales. The Liberals' inaction on closing the gap is a conscious choice that they are making. It is demonstrated by the increasing inequality that continues to exist in our Indigenous communities, such as the fact that the suicide rate amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is more than double the national rate; that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are nearly 11 times more likely to die due to assault than non-Indigenous women; that the unemployment rate of Indigenous people is more than four times higher than that of non-Indigenous people; and that Indigenous Australians are twice as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to have severe or profound disability.

Additionally, the life expectancy for Aboriginal Australians continues to be almost 10 years lower than that of non-Aboriginals. While Indigenous Australians are estimated to represent 3.3 per cent of the total Australian population, more than 28 per cent of Australia's prison population is Aboriginal. It is a conscious choice to not support including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in Parliament. The very real consequence of not including a diverse range of voices limits the ability of policy to create positive and long-lasting change—change that could, in fact, close the gap.

Reconciliation Week calls on us to confront our past and ensure we learn for the betterment of our future. Indigenous history is our heritage and until we properly acknowledge and teach all of our history, as painful as it may be, we will not be able to move forward as a country. It is my hope that this Government and the broader Australian community reflect on the historical achievements of the Indigenous rights movement, and aim to sustain this change and promote national unity into the future. Too much is at stake for our First Nations people to have another four years of inaction.

#### **BALLINA ELECTORATE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:54):** I start my second term in Parliament as the member for Ballina by recognising the Arakwal people of Cape Byron and the Bundjalung nation celebrating the fact that, after almost 20 years, their native title claim has been approved, providing legal recognition of pre-existing rights of the traditional owners. It is only the second time in New South Wales that native title sea rights have been recognised. I thank the people of the Ballina electorate for placing their trust in me to represent their interests in this place for a second term. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of over 100 amazing volunteers and my campaign team: Bec Talbot, Jacob Miller, Craig Mason and Max Pollard. As well, I acknowledge my office staff for shouldering the office load: Camille Clare, Ria Keenan, Kim Simpson, Holly McQueen and Patrick Flanagan.

In this my second term it is time to get so much more done. There are some critical issues for the Northern Rivers that I took to the election, which includes transitioning to renewable energy and action on a warming planet. A rapid transition to renewables will minimise the destruction of the security of our food and water. It is disappointing that in the latest Federal election environmentalism and concerns about a warming planet are concepts that are losing all resonance with the community. I think all of us—particularly those on the Left—need to look at that to determine why that is happening, because every farmer in my community tells me that rising temperatures are affecting their livelihoods. On and on there are examples of the ways that rising temperatures are affecting us all.

Another critical issue in my electorate is housing and the need for homes for all. I keep talking about this but it appears to be groundhog day. I am committed, in this term, to making sure that housing stock is increased and that it is genuinely affordable. I am committed to seeing that there is more social and government-supported housing. We need good quality public health and education services. Members of my electorate are sick and tired of having second-rate services. We need safe ratios for nurses in regional hospitals and aged care facilities.

We also need fair funding for our region's infrastructure. I have said—and I will keep saying it for four years—that 2.5 million tourists a year come to the Ballina region but there is a very small cohort of ratepayers. We cannot sustain services through rates. Tourism is resulting in wear and tear on roads, parks, camping grounds and public facilities. Because the region is such a desirable place for Airbnb and the share economy there is incredible housing stress and lack of affordable rental accommodation. The region has become a heavy lifter for the Government in respect of stamp duty and land tax. The electorate needs sustainable, recurrent funding or to be allowed to have a bed tax; the electorate needs to be able to put the kibosh on the present situation. The region needs a 50-year public transport strategy to provide for the disruptive technologies that are coming. Sustainable and regenerative agriculture is needed to preserve our farming soils—some of the best in the world. Our region is blessed, and we want to support innovative farming practices that will take us into the future.

I will be holding this Government to account for the more than \$150 million in spending it promised the people of Ballina if it was returned to government. This includes \$25 million to fix the worst of the impacts of tourism, including on Byron shire's roads; \$80.4 million for the much-needed redevelopment of Ballina District Hospital; \$5 million for a new on-off ramp to the Bruxner Highway to improve road safety at the Alstonville intersection; \$300,000 to The Buttery to help veterans who have post-traumatic stress disorder; \$200,000 for the Mullumbimby Mini Hydro project; \$240,000 to support Northern Rivers food tourism; and more than \$8 million for various sports fields and facilities in the electorate. We welcome those pledges and commitments, and we look forward to them being delivered. I am honoured to serve the people of the Ballina electorate again, and every single day for the next four years in this House I will speak about matters that concern them.

### CYSTIC FIBROSIS

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (13:00):** Genetic conditions do not often rise to prominence in our communities. We are aware of cancer, heart disease, diabetes and so forth—and rightly so, given the morbidity and mortality associated with those conditions. Yet we need to be aware that a host of genetic conditions also impact significantly on individuals and families. Members have probably heard of cystic fibrosis, but did they know it is the most commonly inherited life-limiting condition affecting Australians? In fact, one in 25 people in Australia carry the gene change that causes cystic fibrosis. If both parents carry the cystic fibrosis gene change there is a one-in-four chance that they will have a child with cystic fibrosis. In Australia today there are 3,500 people living with the condition.

There is, as yet, no cure. Cystic fibrosis—or CF, as it is known—was my first meaningful encounter with genetic conditions, with a local farming family losing a son in childhood to the condition. Cystic fibrosis is a complex condition that affects the respiratory, digestive and reproductive systems. It is a difficult condition to live with, and in Australia the life expectancy of a person born today with CF is only 38 years. The condition brings with it a regular round of treatments, from ongoing physiotherapy to taking multiple medications—up to 60 medications daily in some cases—and potentially frequent hospitalisations.

I can readily see how disruptive this can be to the lives of all who are touched by CF. The more we in the broader community know about CF, the more we can offer support and understanding. With this in mind—indeed, quite clearly at front of mind for me today in my first speech in the New South Wales Parliament on behalf of the electorate of Albury—I invite other members to support 65 Roses Month this May. Members can wear the lapel pin or mention cystic fibrosis in newsletters or social media; or they might have a more direct opportunity as they move through their electorates and communities. The rose lapel pin is promoted this month and helps make the issue more visible, encouraging us to talk about the condition and the need for well-funded research and support within the health system.

Funds raised through sales of the lapel pin help to support Cystic Fibrosis Community Care. This is not a huge organisation. Indeed, within New South Wales it is a small, not-for-profit organisation taking on a mighty challenge. Albury and the border region have been home to their own support group, Border Cystic Fibrosis Incorporated, for the past 28 years. Helen Aylward, a founding member of Border Cystic Fibrosis and parent to a son with CF who is now 33 years old, reminds us of the challenges in regional and rural Australia. "We feel a bit isolated," she says. "It is not feasible to go to Sydney so you have to travel every three months or so—depending on your health—to Melbourne or Canberra for treatment."

Border Cystic Fibrosis not only helps with information and personal support but also aims to provide financial assistance with practical things like the cost of accommodation when travelling to receive medical attention and treatment and the cost of equipment like nebuliser pumps, which can be used with antibiotics. Monthly sausage sizzles and an annual fundraising event in May are all part of the magnificent efforts of Border Cystic Fibrosis and volunteers like Helen. We need to look to the future. More than 94 per cent of children diagnosed with cystic fibrosis are born to parents who are unaware they carry the gene change that leads to the condition.

Together we can work towards a time when research develops better detection of carriers, treatments, and eventually a cure or protection for those at risk of developing CF. Just last week the local paper ran an interview with Tyson Hubbard, a 19-year-old with CF, who is one of the first to benefit from a new medicine that has life-extending potential. Tyson said the new drug has changed his life. "It only costs me \$6 a month", he said, instead of the huge cost it carried before being placed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme [PBS]. Tyson's conclusion is very succinct and clear: "I feel normal again." His mother and Border Cystic Fibrosis member, Lillian, added:

This is the longest he has ever gone without being admitted to hospital. His last visit was in November and that is just incredible.

Coming from a medical background, I see both the benefits for the individual from medical advances and, in this case, the immediate impact on our health system. Lillian recalls when the drug made it onto the PBS:

I remember when I got home that day, Tyson gave me a hug and whispered in my ear, "Mum, I am going to be here longer." I didn't realise how much this has affected every part of him. It has changed his life.

## RAMADAN

### LAKEMBA NIGHT MARKETS

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (13:05):** I have been thinking about a number of things, as I often do: Easter, which was a little while back, and Orthodox Easter, the week after that. Not too long after that I joined my colleague and friend the member for Heffron at his house for Passover and shortly after that the month of Ramadan started. As a practising Muslim, I participate in Ramadan and I take this opportunity to speak about it in Parliament—as I often do. It is the holiest month in the Islamic calendar: the month that the *Koran* was revealed. During this time Muslims undertake a fasting process—so if I am a little bit grumpy at any stage it is because I have not had enough coffee in the morning. Between the hours of sunrise and sunset Muslims abstain from food and drink, and try to do the best they can as individuals. The month is defined by iftars. "Iftar" is the Arabic word for the breaking of a fast. A number of colleagues on both sides of the House have participated in iftars. On the second day of Ramadan the member for Holsworthy and I attended iftars together in Liverpool. I understand that the member for Oatley and I will also attend the same iftars, together with colleagues on my side of the House, and The Greens and crossbench members.

Iftars are great opportunities to learn about community. The other night I attended a most impressive interfaith iftar dinner hosted by the Grand Mufti. I sat next to Father Shenouda Mansour, the General Secretary of the NSW Ecumenical Council and a decent human being, as well as a Maronite bishop and Father Rod Bower, who everybody knows is a social media superstar. Most significantly, it was a way of bringing people together. It is not just about the fasting and those sorts of things; it is about what is really important in any society: How do we bring people together? Every night there is a feast of some sort and it is a chance for people to come together. I say a special thank you to those people who support the Muslim community during this time and who open their doors—whether they are neighbours or friends—and understand that this is an important time for Muslims. The challenge for me is to encourage Muslim families to open their doors and invite friends to break the fast and have iftar with them. As the old saying goes, if we break bread together we are on the right path to making a meaningful connection.

Many schools and community groups are hosting iftars. It is very special to see a school community participate. Last week I attended iftar at my old school, Punchbowl Boys High School. I was also at Kingsgrove North High School, where I enjoyed the best salmon I have ever had in my life—I wanted to put that on the record. It could have been super salty—I had not eaten all day—but it was the best salmon I have ever tasted in my life. The chef did a terrific job. I also attended Burwood Girls High School's iftar, and of course the Premier's Iftar dinner. Campsie Police Station was the only police station in New South Wales to host an iftar, which was most impressive. There was also the Giants' iftar, and the list goes on. Another thing I want to mention is the Lakemba Ramadan Night Markets, which I have attended for the past three years.

**Mr Mark Coure:** They are fantastic.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I thank the member for Oatley for his ringing endorsement. At the markets two kilometres of street food stalls are presented. It is absolutely unbelievable. People come from all over Sydney and there is such a great family atmosphere. The markets have one week to go and I recommend them. I must confess that I have not tried a camel burger—I just cannot bring myself to eat one—but not long ago I had a really enjoyable hamburger and lovely pancakes. There is plenty of food. It shows the very best of Australia.

If we can get to know one another, spend time together and break bread together—celebrate with each other—then we will understand the things that make us individuals and we can go about creating the best possible Australia. I will stand here, again and again, and say that the best Australia we can create is one where we have a recognition of one another and respect for one another. We should accept that we are all different but that ultimately, as human beings, the same things are important to us. They include making sure that each of us has the best life we possibly can. I thank not only my colleagues but also the community and the friends who have sent me Ramadan messages. I also wish everyone Eid Mubarak for next week.

### RAINBOW CLUB AUSTRALIA

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (13:10):** I am delighted to update the House on the work of Rainbow Club Australia. I am privileged to be a co-patron alongside Olympic gold medallist Daniel Kowalski and Paralympic gold medallist Louise Sauvage, OAM. Rainbow Club Australia was founded by Ron Siddons in 1969. Ron was a Sutherland Shire lifeguard and had spent his life in and around the water—swimming was a big part of his life. One day Ron met a father struggling to teach his child to swim. The task was made all the more difficult by the child's disability,



which meant that the child could not participate in other swimming lessons. Ron offered to help the father teach his child to swim and he met with the child's family at the local pool in Cronulla each week. Other children then came to join the lessons and the Rainbow Club was formed.

The club's mission is to give children with a disability the opportunity and confidence to extend their abilities through swimming. Families are given an affordable weekend activity for their disabled child. The subsidised lessons are individualised to suit each child's ability. Rainbow Club teachers are passionate, dedicated, qualified and nurturing. Rainbow Club Australia is the umbrella organisation for 24 clubs in New South Wales that help those with disabilities learn to swim and to stay safe in the water. Rainbow Club has more than 100 dedicated swimming teachers and approximately 70 volunteer members.

The Rainbow Club Australia membership has grown over the past five years by 57 per cent to around 700 children and the number of clubs has expanded from 14 to 24. There are now clubs at Bexley, Bondi, Byron Bay, Campbelltown, Cronulla-Miranda, Cherrybrook, Hornsby, Hurstville, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Maroubra, Newington College, Orange, Penrith, Revesby, Seven Hills, the Southern Highlands, Sutherland, Tamworth, The Ponds, Tuggerah, Villawood, Warriewood and Warringah. Rainbow Club is registered as a National Disability Insurance Scheme provider and can support its members with goals including increasing social participation and building their skills and independence.

A great event on the calendar for Rainbow Club is the annual Murray Rose Malabar Magic Ocean Swim. It was established in 2009 by the late Olympic swimmer Murray Rose and Rob Lloyd. Approximately 200 swimmers took part in the first swim. After Murray's death in 2012 the swim was renamed Murray Rose Malabar Magic. The event offers a one-kilometre swim and a 2.4-kilometre swim and allows swimmers of all skill levels the chance to participate with hundreds of others to raise money for a great cause. Last year was the tenth anniversary swim and the launch was attended by Dawn Fraser, the Premier and Matt Aboud. In February 2019—in perfect conditions—a record-breaking number of more than 1,200 swimmers participated in the event. One of the greatest accolades for the swim event is the way it encourages swimmers with a disability to participate. James Pittar, a blind marathon swimmer, is an ambassador for Rainbow Club. After the 2018 swim he wrote: It was an historic day for ocean swimming in relation to the fact that amongst the 800 or so swimmers over the three swims of 250 metres, 1km and the 2.4km every disabled person was involved.

I don't know of any other swim in the world to date where on the one day in an ocean swim that a deaf, a blind, an amputee, a wheelchair, a cerebral palsy, a Special Olympian, an autism and a Downs syndrome person swam in the ocean together on the one day.

I thank the sponsors and supporters of the event—Macquarie, Woolworths, Randwick City Council, Ottomin Foundation, Fugen, Liftronic, 13CABS, Captain Cook Cruises, Snap Norwest, Coates Hire, Koppers, Ocean Swims and all volunteers. I implore all members of this House to support the club and I particularly encourage those members who have Rainbow Clubs in the areas I identified a little while ago to get involved with their local club. It is a great way not only to teach children with disability how to swim but also to give them confidence to participate in a much more effective way in our community.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **MS YASODAI SELVAKUMARAN**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (13:15):** I ask the House to join me in recognising and commending one of Australia's best educators, Ms Yasodai Selvakumaran, or, as she is more affectionately known by her students, Ms Selva. As humanities teacher at Rooty Hill High School, Ms Selva was recently named as a top 10 finalist in the Varkley Foundation Global Teacher Prize for her outstanding work and dedication in educating the youth of western Sydney. As the only Australian teacher to be listed as a top 10 finalist in a competition that had over 10,000 nominations from 179 countries, Ms Selva has cemented her name in Australian history as one of our best educators. An accomplished teacher, Ms Selva has won the Commonwealth Bank Teaching Award, was part of the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement, and has participated in a study tour throughout Singapore to improve student experience. I congratulate Ms Selva. I am sure we will continue to see great things from her in the future.

#### **MID NORTH COAST PREMIER CRICKET LEAGUE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:16):** I inform the House that an unbeaten partnership between veterans Josh Ferris and Danial Stone steered United Cricket Club Taree to a thrilling win over Wauchope RSL in the mid north Coast Premier Cricket League grand final played at Chatham Park. Ironically, Wauchope had the game's top run scorer with Parker and the most successful bowler with Smith. I congratulate United on winning the mid north Coast Premier Cricket League grand final. I inform the House also that B-grade minor premiers Wingham met Great Lakes in the grand final match at Taree's recreation round 3 on Saturday 6 April. Great Lakes won the toss and chose to bat but that is where their winning streak ended. This is the second year in

a row that the Wingham team has taken out the B-grade premiership. I congratulate the Wingham B-grade cricket team on winning the grand final.

#### **RIANNA LE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:17):** I bring to the attention of the House the most recent recipient of the Illawarra Young Volunteer of the Year Award, Rianna Le. Rianna is just 21 and received the prestigious award for her work with Camp Quality, the autism-specific service provider Aspect, CatholicCare's Sibling and Support Program and the University of Wollongong's Learning Labs program. She balances that busy schedule with her teaching studies at the University of Wollongong. Rianna is a shining example of volunteering in the Illawarra and should inspire us all to give back to our community in whatever capacity we can. On behalf of my entire community I say a huge thank you to Rianna for all her volunteering. Her selflessness and civic-mindedness is so admirable and her efforts have had a huge impact on our community. I wish her the best of luck in her studies at university.

#### **JOHN BOURNE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:18):** After six decades of patrolling Killcare Beach, veteran lifesaver John Bourne has finally clocked off. John was first recruited to the club in the 1950s during a football trip to the Central Coast. He lived in Erskineville and made the trek on a steam train each weekend to patrol the beach. John received his bronze medallion in 1959 and has been keeping swimmers safe ever since. Over John's surf lifesaving career he has also been a trainer and coach of club members, earning Killcare a place in the Australian hall of fame for strong performances in beach relay events. I wish John all the best in his retirement and thank him for his long service to the community. I take this opportunity to thank all of our surf lifesaving volunteers at Killcare Surf Life Saving Club who have patrolled the beach or been involved with nippers this summer season. I was delighted to support their work when recently I announced three grants totalling \$25,000.

#### **MARY AND FRANK BONFANTE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:19):** Mary and Frank Bonfante have run Frank's Fruit Market on Ramsay Street, Haberfield, for 45 years. That is 45 years of waking up at 1.30 a.m. to head to the markets, 45 years of offering their customers the best produce Sydney has to offer and 45 years of raising their children and grandchildren while balancing the pressures of running a small business and giving back to their community. Mary, with very solid support from Frank, has worked incredibly hard to support the Haberfield community, including through the Italian Food Fiesta, the Carnival of Cultures, upgrades and business improvements and the Haberfield Community Bank initiative. When news broke that Mary and Frank were retiring and closing their shop, my office was flooded with emails and calls from loyal local customers. There is so much love and respect for Mary and Frank in the Haberfield community. They represent the very best of our inner west and I offer our gratitude, deepest respect and best wishes to them and their family for the future. We will miss them.

#### **TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL JONES**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (13:20):** On Monday I was shocked to hear the news that Bondi Public School Principal Michael Jones had unexpectedly passed away over the weekend. Michael was a visionary educator and community leader. He positively shaped the identity of Bondi Public School and created an open, inquisitive, unique and supportive place of learning and community in which so many students thrived. Michael worked tirelessly in the best interests of the students at the school during his 12 years there and he introduced a variety of forward-thinking initiatives. I was happy to visit the school for Chinese New Year festivals, Halloween fetes and Presentation Days and see amazing performances by the kids. I visited the school yesterday to pay my respects and show my support. The grief amongst the students, the staff and the parents was palpable. I thank local principals who came to support the staff. There is really nothing left to say except that I send my heartfelt condolences to his loving partner Tom and his three children—little Clementine, who is in year 1, and his twins Dashiell and Rafe. He will be greatly missed by all of us. Vale Michael Jones.

#### **LACHIE RIGGS**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:21):** I acknowledge Lachie Riggs and the South Wallsend Junior Soccer Club. When Lachie was diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome he thought his time on the field had come to an end. Northern NSW Football and Newcastle Football worked together to help Lachie find a new team and South Wallsend Junior Soccer Club jumped at the chance, according to club secretary Angela Jordan. That helped Lachie get back on the field and they are working very hard to raise awareness of Tourette's. I congratulate Lachie for sticking with soccer and thank Northern NSW Football, Newcastle Football and South Wallsend Juniors for helping him out and for their inclusiveness.

### NATIONAL WALK SAFELY TO SCHOOL DAY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:22):** Before an anterior cruciate ligament [ACL] tear, on Friday 17 May I had the pleasure of lacing up my walking shoes and joining the students of Mortdale Public School, including my son James, for the National Walk Safely to School Day. The event aims to raise awareness of the health, road safety, transport and environmental benefits that walking—especially to and from school—can provide for the long-term wellbeing of our children. Many schools in my electorate and across the State participated in the National Walk Safely to School Day and I am proud that many students have continued this healthy lifestyle choice.

Apart from the physical benefits, regular walking has also had a favourable impact on their academic performance. This year the annual event celebrated its twentieth anniversary. The event has encouraged countless students over those years to build walking into their daily routine. I thank the Pedestrian Council of Australia for its continued promotion of improved diets, positive environmental action and better use of public transport with reduced car dependency and for a vitally important road safety message that, until they are 10, children must always hold the hand of an adult when crossing the road.

### ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:22):** On 31 March I had the honour of joining the Assyrian Australian National Federation and the Assyrian Universal Alliance to celebrate the Assyrian New Year at Fairfield City Showground. This year more than 20,000 people attended the celebration. Assyrian New Year is also the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, which Assyrians celebrate to establish harmony with nature. This year marks the 6,769th year for the Assyrian community. The Assyrian community shared their history and traditions through speeches, songs, dance and food. I acknowledge Hermiz Shahan and David David for their work and commitment to the Assyrian community in Australia and for hosting another phenomenal festival.

### BINYA PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:23):** Recently I had the pleasure of attending tiny Binya Public School's centenary celebrations. Congratulations to the current students, Principal Jaimee Damini, and the fabulous teaching team, the P&C President, Danae Conlan, the committee and entire community of Binya for a spectacular weekend of entertainment and fellowship. More than 300 people travelled from right across the country to celebrate their school's milestone and reminisce on the good old days. This really is a very special school community. The hundreds who travelled to be a part of the day are testament to the lasting impact of a quality education.

### SYDNEY ELECTORATE RETURN AND EARN COLLECTION POINT

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:24):** On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I congratulate the residents of 254 Crown Street in Darlinghurst, in particular David Chivers and Mark Demal, for their community building and environmental action. David and Mark set up a local Return and Earn collection point to encourage residents in their building to reduce waste and recycle and raised more than \$500 in just a few months. They used this money to buy equipment and materials for their community room and community garden, host special events and provide a gathering space for residents.

Residents made small gardens and planters to create a welcome green space, peaceful retreat and fragrant garden in the building common areas, with vegies, flowers, herbs and spices. Residents' efforts created a welcoming environment, brought people together, encouraged social activity and supported people who live alone and who may be away from family. I am inspired by this community action and residents' combining recycling education, waste reduction and environment awareness with building a stronger community.

### KAY VAN NORTON

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:25):** Today I recognise and thank Mrs Kay van Norton. The realisation of Australia's first hospice for young adults has taken a giant leap thanks to the generosity and drive of one woman in Manly. The incredibly generous contribution of \$5 million from Kay brings the building of the hospice closer. Together with her husband, Mr Gregory Poche, AO, they have donated more than \$100 million to charity, including funds required to establish the Poche Centre Indigenous Health network.

The community of Manly, and indeed, people across New South Wales, owe a great debt of thanks to Kay van Norton for her support of the hospice. Kay embodies the compassion, willingness to share the beauty of Manly and pride in our area that the people of Manly are known for. Kay does not seek public acknowledgement for her philanthropy. However, in this instance it is something that must be done as the positive impact of her

generosity will be profound and long-lasting for young adults and their families across New South Wales. I hope all members in this place will join with me in acknowledging the efforts of Kay van Norton.

#### **MACQUARIE FIELDS RED SHIELD APPEAL**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (13:26):** Australia is, of course, well known for its volunteering spirit, community generosity and for always helping others in need. All of these inspiring values were on display at the Salvation Army's Macquarie Fields Red Shield Appeal on Sunday 26 May. I very much enjoyed attending the fundraiser that helps the Salvos continue their great work in every local community across New South Wales, particularly my electorate.

It was especially wonderful to see so many young faces at the event. I think it is invaluable for the youngest among us to see firsthand the positive influence that fellowship and generosity can have on the community. As the fun selfie signs on the day made clear, anyone donating to the Red Shield Appeal not only was giving money but also was giving hope. I look forward to the Salvos continuing to provide hope to all in our community who rely on their services. I congratulate the ministries and outreach coordinator, Rachal Mills, and all the Salvation Army staff and volunteers who made the Red Shield Appeal such a successful event.

#### **NORTHMEAD ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:27):** Two weeks ago I had the pleasure of visiting the Northmead Anglican Church to inspect the finished renovations of the Ministry Centre at the parish. I was delighted to be invited along by Mr Harry Bailey on behalf of the Parish Council of Northmead and Winston Hills to visit the new facilities provided with the help of the New South Wales Government. Harry is one of 10 wardens who devote their time to the Northmead Anglican Church that was rebuilt during the 1970s. In November 2018 the Northmead Anglican Church successfully applied for a grant of \$30,000 from the Government to upgrade facilities. The new facilities include new toilets in the Ministry Centre for women and people with disabilities as well as kitchen facility upgrades. I thank Harry and all the other wardens and volunteers for the tireless work they do for their community and parish and wish them all the best in the future.

#### **MISSION AUSTRALIA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE MOUNT HUTTON**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:28):** This being National Reconciliation Week, with the theme "Grounded in Truth: Walk Together with Courage", I take this opportunity to commend Mission Australia Early Learning Mount Hutton for its unwavering commitment and contribution to a more inclusive and understanding community. Mission Australia Early Learning Centre Mount Hutton instigates recognition and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture among the young children in their care through their five learning goals: a strong sense of identity, connections with the world, a strong sense of wellbeing, confidence and involvement in their learning and effective communication skills. The centre is embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into daily practice through involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the staffing and programming. I especially commend the centre's director, Paige Smith, and educator Marion Taylor for their leadership in driving this cultural practice. Hopefully their work will bring us closer to full reconciliation.

#### **PENRITH ANGLICAN COLLEGE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:29):** When a number of his friends suffered unexpected illnesses, year 10 Penrith Anglican College student Mark Nielsen decided to help by raising money for the Children's Hospital at Westmead. To raise money, he came up with the idea of Fun Sock Day. I congratulate the students at Penrith Anglican College who in April this year pulled their socks up to raise money for a good cause. Students came to school wearing their craziest socks or odd socks and made a gold coin donation to support Westmead Children's Hospital. I congratulate all the students at Penrith Anglican College on this terrific achievement as well as principal Felicity Grima and her leadership team on encouraging and supporting Mark's initiative. Mark's dream now is to have all schools across New South Wales participate in this simple, fun and effective fundraising activity. I look forward to working with Mark and the working group he is establishing in order to make his dream a reality.

#### **DR ELLEN DOWNES**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (13:30):** Today I recognise Dr Ellen Downes of Canowindra. Ellen is a thoroughly deserving finalist in the NSW/ACT AgriFutures Rural Women's Award. She is an inspiration to all rural women. Ellen is a farmer, a mother of three and a practising rehabilitation specialist in Orange. For the past 12 years she has been actively involved in AgEDGE, which is an independent and volunteer-run farm business program. Ellen entered the AgriFutures awards to highlight the potential benefits of the AgEDGE, a program that acknowledges the importance of women in farming businesses. Women are under-represented in leadership within the agricultural sector, despite the fact that they make up 41 per cent of the agricultural

workforce and contribute 48 percent of real farm income. Farming families remain the predominant business model in Australian agriculture and our rural communities depend upon viable and thriving family farms, where women play a vital role. Ellen has demonstrated her ability to multitask and achieve success. She has emerged as a role model for rural women and farming families. I wish her the best in her endeavours.

#### **JAMES CLEAVER**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:31):** I take this opportunity to congratulate James Cleaver, who hails from Nyngan. While Nyngan falls outside the boundaries of the Dubbo electorate, James works in Dubbo. Recently James was announced as the winner of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW rural achiever program. When James recently opened the Dubbo show, he spoke of the main drivers of ag shows and agriculture in regional areas. James grew up on his family's farm before moving to Armidale, where he studied economics and law. He is a true son of rural New South Wales. He is currently employed as a rural support worker for the NSW Department of Primary Industries, which, I am sure, all members will agree is a particularly vital role during the current drought. James has a bright future and I congratulate him on his recent success.

#### **CORAL KEARINS**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:32):** I am delighted to speak today about a tireless community volunteer, advocate and organiser in my community of Port Stephens, Coral Kearins. Coral is the type of community-minded person you would hope lives in your town. I am pleased to announce that Coral Kearins is the 2019 Port Stephens Local Woman of the Year. Within the Port Stephens electorate some areas are more geographically isolated than others and residents in those suburbs can struggle to have their voices heard. Coral has ensured that the people of Boat Harbour are never far from mind. As a leading member of the Boat Harbour Recreation Club, Coral was instrumental in ensuring the local tennis facilities were saved from a council sell-off. The facilities have been restored and the club has been boosted by a school tennis program that is organised every year by Coral for Anna Bay Public School students. I love having a hit of tennis with the kids each year. Coral is involved in a push to create an all-abilities playground in Port Stephens to support all local children and their families. I thank Coral and her husband, Greg, for their tireless efforts to make our community stronger.

#### **HAMMONDVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:33):** Today I congratulate Hammondville Public School on its Easter hat parade. It was a great pleasure to be invited to the end-of-term celebration, where I saw colourful, creative and fun hats. There were hats with bunny ears, bright cone hats, hats shaped like Easter egg baskets and even Easter bunny masks. I specifically congratulate the Hammondville Public School P&C for organising this Easter hat parade. I acknowledge the work and effort that is involved to ensure a successful fundraiser for the school and a lot of fun for the kids. It is always wonderful to witness the pure joy and anticipation shown for the Easter break, especially by the students of Hammondville Public School. I again congratulate Hammondville Public School and its P&C for putting together such a wonderful Easter hat parade.

#### **MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL ABORIGINAL REFERENCE GROUP**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:34):** I commend the seven Aboriginal people who have stepped up to form Maitland City Council's inaugural Aboriginal Reference Group. The group aims to build stronger links with the First Nation people in our community, improve communication, advocate on their behalf and raise awareness of and celebrate our rich local Aboriginal heritage. The formation of the group has been a long-term goal of Maitland's 2019 Woman of the Year and the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council CEO, Tara Dever. It is great to see that she has joined the reference group. I have had the great pleasure of working with a number of other members on various projects, including Stevie-Lee Molina, a Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program advocate with Carrie's Place; Rhys Callaghan, a passionate and enthusiastic Regional Youth Development Officer and advocate for young people in Maitland; and Deb Barwick, CEO of the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce. I also congratulate Phil Cliff from the Maitland Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Cheryl Kitchener from Aboriginal Affairs NSW and Andrew Fernando. I look forward to working with them all to strengthen bonds across our community.

#### **COFFS HARBOUR MEN'S SHED**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (13:35):** The main aim of the Coffs Harbour Men's Shed is "to provide a safe, friendly and inclusive environment where men are able to gather and work on meaningful projects at their own pace, in their own time and in the company of other men". The men's shed occupies a special place in the Coffs Harbour community. On 3 May I was honoured to join the large crowd that attended the official opening of the new shed on Howard Street in Coffs Harbour. Official duties were performed by the Mayor of Coffs Harbour, Councillor Denise Knight. The Coffs Harbour Men's Shed mission statement states that the shed

is "a place for men to meet, have fun and do things". Importantly, it is all about physical and mental health and wellbeing, networking, tinkering and camaraderie.

The shed identifies loneliness and social isolation as major issues to address, and it is doing just that in the important outreach it provides every day. I congratulate the Coffs Harbour Community Men's Shed's 170-strong membership, led by president Ken Ryan, vice-president Tom Skinner, treasurer John Gregory, secretary Bob White and shed manager Robert Houston, who was bestowed honorary life membership at the shed's official opening. I am proud that in 2012 the State Government provided a Community Building Partnership Program grant of \$67,500 towards the building of a permanent men's shed in Coffs Harbour.

#### **WEZ SAUNDERS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:36):** I thank and acknowledge Wez Saunders, who is retiring from ACON after more than 30 years of extraordinary service to the Newcastle community. At the height of the AIDS crisis Wez stepped in to help some of the most vulnerable and stigmatised members of our community, many of whom had been abandoned by friends and family in the face of an illness no-one understood and few wanted to address. When governments failed, Wez and his allies came to the aid of dying people, bringing families together and offering solace. Wez told the *Newcastle Herald* he remembers exactly when, in 1996, HIV/AIDS stopped being a death sentence. Since then he has utilised his experiences as a trans man to support younger transgendered people and to advocate for vulnerable members of the community. Wez is an icon of the Newcastle LGBTI/Q/A community and his compassion and love for all is a great example. I thank Wez for his thirty years of service and wish him all the best for his retirement.

#### **GREEK ORTHODOX PARISH OF ST GEORGE ROSE BAY**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (13:37):** On Sunday 5 May I visited the Greek Orthodox Parish of St George Rose Bay for the annual St George barbeque and community day. Dozens of attendees from the local Greek community gathered together, despite the stormy day which tried to ruin the festivities. Earlier in the day the children participated in an Easter egg hunt to celebrate Orthodox Easter. There was also Greek dancing performed by the St George youth and an amazing souvlaki barbeque. To finish we all gathered in the church hall to watch a screening of *My Greek Odyssey*, hosted by Peter Maneas, where we learnt about the many reasons to visit the beautiful Kythira and Mount Athos.

In February this year I was happy to support that wonderful community by presenting Father Gerasimos, secretary Rosie and vice president Nick with a Community Building Partnership grant of \$40,000 to expand the church foyer and upgrade the staircase. Since 2011 I have helped the church secure \$120,000 in funding, including \$20,000 to renovate the toilets and \$60,000 for a safety upgrade. I thank Father Gerasimos, the board and president George Confos for always extending a warm welcome to me as the local member.

#### **ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:38):** Fairfield recently welcomed a delegation of Italian parliamentarians as part of their eight-day tour across Australia, where they met with a number of Italo-Australian politicians, community leaders, businesses and community members. It was a pleasure to have met and hosted the Hon. Ettore Rosato, Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, the Hon. Maria Chiara Gadda and the Hon. Marco Di Maio during their visit. I had the opportunity to enlighten them about the tremendous contributions made by Italo-Australians not only in Sydney over the past 60 years but also locally throughout the wider Fairfield Local Government Area. I would like to give a special mention to Hon. Nicola Care and Senator Francesco Giacobbe for hosting the delegation during their visit to Australia.

#### **ST CLAIR UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:39):** What better way to enhance this information to the community than to quote from the local paper an article by journalist Nathan Taylor, who broke this news to our communities with these words:

In the year 1979 *Alien* and *Rocky II* were dominating the box office, while *My Sharona* and *Boogie Wonderland* had people hitting the dance floors. On the sporting field, however, a new soccer club was born that would one day become one of the most revered in the district.

Congratulations to St Clair United Football Club, which is celebrating its fortieth birthday this season and to celebrate will host a huge birthday bash on Saturday 27 July. With more than 60 teams ranging from under-5 to over-35, the Strikers is one of the larger clubs competing in the Nepean Football Association. It has enjoyed some very successful seasons over the years and was the first Nepean club to win the women's Champion of Champions tournament. St Clair United's fortieth birthday celebrations will see players, coaches, administrators and life members past and present invited to St Marys Rugby League Club for a night of entertainment, a three-course dinner and more. Happy birthday to St Clair United.

### RUSSIAN VICTORY DAY

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (13:40):** On 9 May I had the privilege of attending Russian Victory Day, a day dedicated to honouring the Russian soldiers who fought against fascism across Europe in World War II, which was one of the most tragic pages in the history of mankind. It was only through the contributions of so many countries that the scourge of Nazism was defeated. I take this opportunity to remember those who died on the front lines, those who died of wounds in hospitals, those who spent time in concentration camps and those who survived the war, but not the trauma of it. I also take this opportunity to remember the enormous cost, and to give my sincere appreciation to the Russian soldiers and to all of those who sacrificed so much during World War II. They will never be forgotten.

### SURF LIFE SAVING CENTRAL COAST

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:41):** Chris Parker, who has served our community for many years as the CEO of Surf Life Saving Central Coast, announced his resignation earlier this year. I take this opportunity to welcome Narelle Duggan, who has been announced as the new CEO. Narelle has extensive experience across a range of areas: club development, not-for-profit volunteer management, marketing, and business development. She is also a member of North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club in my electorate of Terrigal. Each of the seven surf clubs in my electorate did a fantastic job over the summer season that has now wrapped up. The Central Coast is a year-round tourist hotspot, but particularly during summer. Over the past season it is estimated we had close to one million visitors to local beaches, which just goes to show how important surf lifesaving is to our community. I am sure Narelle will do a fantastic job working in the best interests of the 15 clubs on the Central Coast, and I wish her all the best.

### WYONG FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:42):** I recently had the pleasure of joining the Wyong Family History group to launch its new book, *The People of Wyong*. This project grew from the work of Ann Cooke and John Selwyn, and is a series of works that documents the people who have developed Wyong and overseen its growth since its founding. The work includes the stories of station masters, police sergeants, dentists, postmasters and farmers who have overseen generations of growth in our community. This was a collaborative effort that included help from Marilyn Cridland and Roger Lewis as well as other contributions from members of the group. Wyong Family History group does this important work that ensures our history is not forgotten. We have only a limited time to record much of our local history or it is forgotten. Thank you for the opportunity to launch this important book. I understand that a fourth book is underway, looking at important people like lighthouse keepers and other important people from right across our community.

### SOUTH WEST SYDNEY DISABILITY EXPO

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:43):** Today I recognise the South West Sydney Disability Expo that was held between 5 and 6 April in Liverpool. It was wonderful to visit the South West Sydney Disability Expo again this year, especially in my new role as Parliamentary Secretary for Families, Disability and Emergency Services. The South West Sydney Disability Expo displays the latest products, services, technology, aids and equipment for people with a disability. It is great for product and service providers to connect with the community and share what they can offer people with a disability, their families and their carers. Events like this help strengthen the disability community by keeping them informed of the latest technology, products and services. It was fantastic to see that this year's expo turnout was larger than the previous year's attendance. Once again, I acknowledge another successful South West Sydney Disability Expo and I look forward to attending many more in the future.

### SOUTH WEST SYDNEY LEGAL FAIR 2019

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:44):** On 2 May I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural South West Sydney Legal Fair 2019, which was organised by the Vietnamese Australian Lawyers' Association and Legal Aid NSW. The association and Legal Aid do a fantastic job in providing legal advice to constituents in my community, in particular those who are vulnerable. In saying that, I particularly recognise the Vietnamese Australian Lawyers' Association and its work in providing legal education, awareness and assistance to disadvantaged members of the Vietnamese community, including refugees and victims of human rights abuse. Without key organisations like the Vietnamese Australian Lawyers' Association and Legal Aid NSW, many in my community would fall victim to injustice. I thank them for their continued service to communities like mine.

### KEIRA HINE

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:45):** I congratulate Keira Hine, a year 11 student from Holsworthy High School, on being awarded the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship for 2019. This scholarship

is awarded to 20 modern history students each year, giving them an opportunity to tour Germany, France and Belgium to learn about the world wars. Students will visit the battlefields where Australian troops fought. Tours such as these are important for keeping the Anzac memory alive and fostering a sense of gratitude for the sacrifices made by those brave men and women. In the application, students had to submit a piece of work concerning the role Australians played during wartime. Keira submitted a piece of creative writing in the form of diary entries made from the perspective of a First World War soldier. The Office for Veterans Affairs subsequently chose Keira to be one of the 20 students to travel to Europe on this study tour. I again congratulate Keira on this outstanding achievement.

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

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** We have various guests with us today, among them the previous Deputy Speaker, Thomas George. I particularly welcome not only the illustrious former Deputy Speaker but also some of his guests, who are also my guests today. We extend a very warm welcome to Raymond George, Ray Daly and Pat Doyle, who are here to celebrate the contribution of our previous Deputy Speaker. I also welcome Caroline Speakman, the Attorney General's wife, and Hugh Cross. Mr Cross is holidaying from the United Kingdom and has been an intern with Chatham House, the Royal Institute for International Affairs and the members of the House of Commons, the right honourable Philip Hammond and Stephen Hammond, MP. They are guests of the Attorney General and member for Cronulla.

#### *Announcements*

#### **NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform the House that Mr President and I on behalf of the members of the New South Wales Parliament have sent a message of congratulations to the newly elected Speaker of the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands, Mr John Patteson Oti, on his appointment. We have a strong relationship with our twin Parliament in the Solomon Islands.

#### **AUSTRALIAN FUTURES PROJECT PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS PROGRAM**

**The SPEAKER:** I encourage all members and those in the other place to consider participating in the Australian Futures Project Parliamentary Leaders Program. The Parliamentary Leaders Program is a world-class course to help politicians govern effectively and lead according to the values and aspirations of the citizens we all represent. I undertook that course last year and personally strongly endorse it. Even more significantly, the program patrons are the President of the Liberal Party of Australia, the Hon. Nick Greiner, and the President of the Australian Labor Party, the Hon. Wayne Swan.

The program aligns with my goal as Speaker to facilitate and encourage personal development opportunities for members to best serve the public, as mentioned when I took on this role. There are not that many relevant opportunities for members of Parliament to do that. There have been a number of acceptances for an information session this Thursday from 1.00 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. hosted by myself in the Preston Stanley Room. It is a great opportunity to ask questions and learn more over a light lunch. Two emails have gone out with a disappointing half a dozen responses to date. Please register any interest as soon as possible and I hope to see many of you there on Thursday at least to find out some more information, if not to seriously consider doing the course.

#### *Personal Explanation*

#### **NEWSPAPER ARTICLE**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:19):** By leave: I give a personal explanation in relation to a newspaper article published this morning that included incorrect information being held by former Liberal Minister Chris Hartcher, who was found to have engaged in corrupt conduct. Thirteen years ago when these issues—

**Leave withdrawn.**

#### *Governor*

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages regarding the administration of the Government.



*Members***COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER THE PLEDGE OF LOYALTY OR OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**The SPEAKER:** I report that Her Excellency the Governor has issued Commissions authorising the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Assistant Speaker to be persons before whom any member of the Legislative Assembly may take the pledge of loyalty or the oath of allegiance. [*During the giving of notices of motion.*]

*Notices***PRESENTATION**

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: The Government notes that there was a raft of inferences and imputations in that notice of motion which are completely out of order. Whilst we will debate it, I draw your attention to the motion.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy to take your point of order in a moment, but not during the taking of another point of order. The Leader of the House will be succinct in his point of order.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** It was very clear in various points in that notice of motion—

**The SPEAKER:** What is the member's point of order? Do not debate it.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** I am not debating it. The motion of which the member is giving notice is clearly out of order. We are happy to debate it but the member should not make imputations and inferences and refer to judicial matters and police. It is out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. I am happy to hear the point of order of the member for Cessnock if he wishes to continue.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** In response to that point of order, it may have some relevance if it were in a question, but this is actually a motion. Those matters can be debated—

**The SPEAKER:** I allow the motion as it stands.

*Question Time***MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:26):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Given that the private information of hundreds of New South Wales citizens was leaked by his office, when did he become aware of a request from Revenue NSW to destroy all records and log entries that he should never have had in the first place?

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 128 (2) (c). That question is clearly out of order and I ask for it to be reworded.

**The SPEAKER:** The question contained an unacceptable inference. The acting Leader of the Opposition has made an assumption and an inference in terms of the leaking by a particular person. If he rephrases the question I will accept it.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Is it true?

**The SPEAKER:** I asked if you want to rephrase the question.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Is it true?

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

**SYDNEY METRO NORTHWEST**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (14:27):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government delivering to New South Wales by opening the Sydney Metro Northwest?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the acting Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. The member for Riverstone will restate his question.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government delivering for New South Wales by opening the nation's first-ever metro?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27):** I am pleased to accept a question in order by the member for Riverstone. I acknowledge that Sunday was a proud day for the people of New South Wales. I also acknowledge all the residents of the north-west region of New South Wales and everyone else across the State who cares passionately about public transport. On Sunday we saw a project that we committed to from the day we got elected. In fact, when we were in Opposition we committed to build this project. Eight years later with hard work, discipline and focus that project is now a reality, and I could not be more pleased. I take this opportunity to thank the 22,000 workers. The best brains and minds from around Australia came together, as well as those from overseas jurisdictions with expert experience in how to deliver metros, to plan, design and deliver this project. I especially thank all of our workers for their amazing contribution that has resulted in a life-changing experience for residents. I also acknowledge the Minister for Transport and Roads, whose stewardship in the past four years has ensured the project opened on time and a billion dollars under budget.

Officially more than 200,000 trips have already been taken in the past few days. Given the feedback we have had from residents who have already used it, people are speaking with their feet and their Opal taps and we could not be more pleased. In addition to the workers and the Minister for Transport and Roads and his team, I acknowledge Rodd Staples, who from day one headed the metro team and saw the project to fruition. I acknowledge Director General at Transport for NSW Les Wielinga and his capable team, including Tim Reardon, who was also a key part. Most importantly I acknowledge the Premier of the day, Barry O'Farrell, who supported the project, and the Treasurer of the day, Mike Baird, who found the money for it. This project demonstrates the result of a strong team effort and what can be achieved when good people come together to deliver a project.

I do not expect people to necessarily believe what elected members of Parliament say about this project—I will not read all of the tweets because it will make me blush—but I have been especially touched by the feedback I have had from residents in the past few days. I highlight a tweet from someone who used the service yesterday and today. On day one she wrote, "Travelling on the metro to work today. Left Castle Hill at 7.31 a.m., arrived at Central at 8.24 a.m. A trip that usually took one hour and 45 minutes and \$110 in parking, tolls and petrol just took 53 minutes and \$5. Absolutely life changing." Today on day two the same resident said, "Metro delivers again. 7.35 a.m. train from Castle Hill and sitting at desk in Surry Hills with coffee in hand by 8.35 a.m. No stress from traffic, no angry drivers, no 100 stops on the bus, pure joy. It's the small things in life."

I am especially pleased that yesterday as I was travelling through different parts of Sydney, not just the north-west, people have a buzz in their step because they have seen what is possible when government, community and business come together to deliver an important project. I am excited because this is just a taste of things to come. It also allows us to compare ourselves in stark contrast to those opposite. I noted during the campaign that former Premier Carr was very sensitive about his lack of infrastructure delivery during his tenure. That is no surprise because he promised the North West Rail Line in 1998, did nothing for seven years, promised it again in 1995. It was then promised by subsequent Premiers—

**Mr Ryan Park:** 2005.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Yes, 2005. I thank the deputy director general of transport at the time for the correction. Subsequent Premiers and transport Ministers promised it but never delivered it. But then after 16 years of not even a sod being turned the Opposition suddenly changed tack. [*Extension of time*]

From supporting it for 16 years in government but doing nothing, when we were elected we promised it and started doing things but they decided to oppose it. Apparently it was not a good project. The acting interim leader and a former director general was one of the first to say in 2013, "We have done calculations from just about everywhere where someone would begin the trip to the city and, except for Cherrybrook people, there would be a significant saving in time by sticking with the bus". He would rather people caught two or three buses than the metro. One of the leadership aspirants who has already been very active today in question time, the shadow Minister, stuffed it up, but that is nothing new.

**Mr John Barilaro:** Give her a "C" for trying.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Exactly. There are always marks for trying. Not back in 2013 but just a month ago she said that the New South Wales Government "cannot boast about the metro being on time and on budget when we have no idea when the metro is actually scheduled to open. They have made massive commitments to metro services opening in May and now they seem to be backing away from it". She made those comments at the end of April. I say to all of the colleagues of the member for Strathfield: be warned because she never gets her facts right. She makes stuff up and this is proof in the pudding. There is one person among members opposite who supports the metro—the other leadership aspirant, the member for Kogarah. There is only one problem. Last week the member for Kogarah said:

[...] it would be ridiculous for me or anyone else in the Labor Party to ... say this is a bad project.

He said it is a good project and one that Sydney needs. But then it all went downhill when he said:

What's the next project?

As he would know, we are already building the Chatswood to Sydenham line, the extension to Bankstown, and the Sydney Metro West—the list goes on. I will have more to say about this later.

#### MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:34):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. When did the Minister become aware of a request from Revenue NSW to destroy all the records of the individuals that he never should have had in the first place?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:35):** I thank the member for his question. As I have indicated previously, this matter is being investigated by the appropriate authority and that should be allowed to take its course. As I indicated previously, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on this matter until the investigation has concluded.

#### MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:35):** My question is also directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Following the request from Revenue NSW to destroy all records of personal information, what action did the Minister take to ensure the security of the information?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:35):** I thank the member for his question. As I have indicated previously, the matter is being investigated by the appropriate authority and it would be inappropriate for me to comment further on this matter.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (14:36):** 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 stronger regional communities?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:36):** I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. I congratulate him on his victory in the electorate that I believe exemplifies the quiet Australians—the guys and girls who turn up in their high-vis uniforms and go to work every day in an important sector such as mining. After two elections there was a swing towards the member for Upper Hunter because he was pro-mining, supporting his community and understanding the jobs that are created off the back of a strong mining sector. Of course, that leads into other sectors such as advanced manufacturing that service the mining sector and has gone on to become its own little sector. Some advanced manufacturers and businesses are now exporting globally.

The contrast is the Federal member for that region who received a significant swing against him because he sat on the fence. As the shadow Minister for Agriculture, he attacked farmers on land clearing, but at the same time he would not back the community of miners that recognise how important mining is. It was a great contrast between a member who was prepared to stand up for his community and for a sector that backed that community versus a member who sat quiet and was instructed by the Executive—people like the former Labor leader Bill Shorten—to stay quiet on mining. Hasn't that sector and the conversation about mining changed over the last week since the Federal election!

We know members opposite have never really bought into a strong mining sector and the prosperity that it brings to regional communities. I will give an exception to that. The member for Cessnock and the member for Port Stephens have been quite vocal in supporting the mining sector. But we do not hear much from other members. We have heard former Labor leaders say that we should end coal mining. Other leaders of the Opposition have refused to pick one side or the other. We have heard them talk about mining being a viable and strong sector in regional New South Wales in the future. I ask the two aspirants to explain their views on mining and where they stand on the strong mining sector for regional New South Wales. In excess of 29,000 jobs are created directly and 115,000 are created indirectly off the back of mining. Its contribution to the State economy is roughly \$27 billion, of which \$1.8 billion goes into royalties, which fund our fantastic schools, hospitals, teachers, nurses and police. Mining is an important sector not just for local jobs but also for underpinning the State economy.

No greater program underpins those mining communities that benefit from the mining sector than the National Party's Resources for Regions program, which was designed and delivered by the National Party when it came to power in 2011 and continues today. The program has provided \$300 million and 65 projects right across those communities that are the beneficiaries and supporters of mining and contribute to the State economy. That

is exactly the sort of investment we want to see in regional New South Wales. The last time we were in this place, I spoke about the impact of the drought on our communities and the loss of jobs in regional New South Wales. We need diversity in our local economy and that is why the mining sector is so important in underpinning those programs. That is why it is important that the New South Wales Government has a strong voice when it comes to mining.

But we have a balanced approach. We have some of the most rigorous processes in place for making sure that we protect the environment, that we protect the independence of decision-making through the Independent Planning Commission and that we use science and evidence to back the mines and investment in them. I know there have been some conversations reported by the press recently about the coal seam gas project in Narrabri. It is undergoing a rigorous process that will see no political interference. There are a number of other mines—new mines and extensions to mines—in regional New South Wales because it is important. Again, they are free of political interference. We should not talk down the mining sector because it is important for the National Party in traditional strongholds like the Northern Tablelands, Orange and Bathurst where mining has always been a big part of our community. We know the impacts. Sometimes mining and agriculture have some conflict but we have also seen the success of coexistence in those communities. That is why on our side of politics we rarely pick a side. We do not try to wedge one against the other, unlike members opposite. We saw how debate on the Adani mine played out in the Federal election. [*Extension of time*]

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order No. 131 (3), which relates to the extension of time. The Minister spent approximately two minutes having a go at the Federal member for the Hunter in the recent election—

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. I am satisfied that an additional two minutes is warranted.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** It is important that a sector such as mining has a strong voice in regional New South Wales and regional Australia. All I talked about was that the contrast between one side of politics versus the other. There are those that are afraid and prepared to sit quiet during an election campaign. Federally, Bill Shorten talked down the Adani mine. What happened on the Monday after the election? Premier Palaszczuk said she had found a new home for the black-throated finch. There is no problem with the endangered black-throated finch anymore. She has rehomed it and has now put a timeline on Adani. We want the same sort of conviction from members opposite who want to support a sector that is so important in the regions.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: As much as I would like to hear the Deputy Premier talk about the importance of coalmining in New South Wales, he is now talking about the Premier of Queensland.

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

**Ms Kate Washington:** It is relevance. I fail to see how—

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** That is a fair question. I will clarify that the Premier of Queensland, Premier Palaszczuk, is a Labor Premier. The former Labor Leader of the Opposition stayed quiet on mining and then there was silence from members opposite. The member for Kogarah, in his journey to become leader, has an opportunity to get the unions such as the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union on side. That union is strongly supporting mining and jobs in New South Wales. That is what I want to hear from the aspirants across the political aisle. Most importantly, I want to make sure that we do not use the strong mining sector as a political football because it is important for the prosperity of regional New South Wales and jobs. The mining sector is accepted and embraced by communities in regional New South Wales. Communities in Cessnock and Orange receive dividends and royalties from programs such as Resources for Regions. Recently we made announcements in those regions about the benefits of mining across regional New South Wales.

#### MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (14:44):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Given the Information and Privacy Commissioner's advice that individuals affected by a breach should be notified as soon as practical, when did he inform the individuals affected by the data breach?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:44):** I thank the member for his question. As I have indicated previously, this matter is being investigated by the appropriate authority. I respect that investigation. It needs to run its course and I will not make any comment until it is concluded.

**STATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (14:45):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How is the New South Wales Government showing leadership by delivering vital infrastructure, and are there any other alternatives?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:45):** I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question, congratulate him on his election to this Parliament and look forward to his first speech later today. It is pretty quiet in the House today. There are a lot of quiet Australians on the other side of the House. How is the little election going? Who is backing the water boy?

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: I would assume there is a rule about disorderly conduct in the House. Inviting interjections from members on this side of the House would be disorderly conduct.

**The SPEAKER:** From memory Standing Order 72 deals with keeping order in the House, and it is my role to do that. I ask the House to maintain order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There is the news reader. There is Kaila typing it into the autocue.

**The SPEAKER:** Stop the clock. The Treasurer will wait just a moment. Standing Order 52 states.

When a Member is speaking other Members shall not converse or make any noise or disturbance.

I uphold the point of order. We are tolerant within certain limits, but there is too much noise and disturbance in the Chamber. I thank the member for Auburn for her point of order. I ask members to show the Treasurer a little bit of respect.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I love the Speaker's new regime. I will be logging in tonight on Facebook Live with the member for Strathfield. She has some questions to answer. I thank Chris Minns for helpfully drafting them for me. It has been a great couple of months for the quiet Australians who have re-elected two Liberal-Nationals Governments. I congratulate the newly elected Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, for his great election victory. It was never in doubt. The people of this State and this country have now rejected the far Left agenda of the Labor Party twice in two months. The people have said no to higher taxes, no to class warfare, no to attacks on people of faith and no to the politics of envy and division. Never before in the history of the New South Wales Labor Party has it been rejected so much by so many in such a short period of time.

These elections are important and they are great news for the people of our State. This is what the people of New South Wales have voted for over the past two elections: a strong economy, lower taxes, more freedom, better infrastructure and more jobs. They voted to unite our communities, not divide them. That is exactly what they will get with the Coalition at both State and national levels. While those opposite are having their little vote, we are getting on with the job. We have already opened 22 new and upgraded schools just this year. We have opened the new Western Sydney Stadium. I know the member for Granville loves that.

We opened the Sydney Metro Northwest on the weekend, which the Premier should be congratulated on. This was her project when she was Minister for Transport and it is now under the portfolio responsibility of Minister Andrew Constance. This project will stand the test of time as a testament to the difference between this side of the House and the Labor Party. Under Labor, the metro was promised four times, but never delivered. Under us, it was promised once and now has been delivered. What do I love about the metro? It is efficient, fast, runs on time and, like the New South Wales Labor Party, it is driverless.

Our Government is delivering infrastructure right across the State. Recently released Australian Bureau of Statistics construction data for the March quarter confirms that New South Wales is leading the nation. Non-residential building grew by 9 per cent in the March quarter, delivering a 24.4 per cent increase in non-residential buildings over the past year. That is the strongest growth in that sector for the past five years. This data also shows our record investment in public infrastructure. We will invest \$90 billion over the next four years, which will help to drive jobs and economic opportunity for families right across our State. Importantly, this data underpins New South Wales as the jobs powerhouse of our country, with the lowest unemployment rate in the country. New South Wales is unlike the other States, which have increased taxes in their recent budgets. That is always the Labor way when there are challenging times. We saw the Federal Opposition run on a platform of increasing taxes. And here, right on cue, the member for Keira also ran on a platform of increasing taxes. *[Extension of time]*

But one job's vacancy is putting pressure on the unemployment rate—the Leader of the Opposition. By the time those opposite have finished, this will be the longest time in the history of New South Wales that there has not been a Leader of the Opposition. While those opposite have their little process, I will read out some of the things that have been said by new journalist Jessica Kidd, who has just started here. She is from the ABC, my favourite public broadcaster. What is she saying about the contestants in this battle?

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: My point of order is obviously on relevance. Whatever the Minister is about to say, it is now totally unrelated to the question he was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has the call.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Is that leadership? They say that the member for Kogarah is a political apparatchik, not a team player and not a hard worker. And that is from his supporters. Then we go to Jodi McKay, the member for Strathfield, who has quite positive comments about her. She has a natural ability—to put people offside.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order—.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It is the decoy. The decoy is here.

**Ms Kate Washington:** My point of order relates to relevance. There is no way that is relevant to the question as asked.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will try to make his answer a little bit more relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I am getting there. This is important for the future of our State. Anyway, the most honest person on that side of the House described this battle as a battle of who is the least hopeless. Who was that?

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Me.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There you go: Honesty, strength and integrity. [*Time expired.*]

#### MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:53):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Given the Minister's previous comments about breaches of privacy being "an attack on our democracy", why has he not sacked any staff member involved in the leaking of personal information?

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order. My point of order relates to Standing Order 128 (2), (c) and (d). It relates to inferences and imputations, which have gone on all day. I ask for that question to be reworded.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear the question again as it was stated originally.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I am quoting the Minister. Given the Minister's previous comments about breaches of privacy being "an attack on our democracy", why has he not sacked any staff member involved in the leaking of personal information?

**The SPEAKER:** The question assumes that a staff member in the Minister's department is responsible for the leak, which is currently the subject of a police investigation, but that has not been established. Therefore, the question contains an unacceptable inference. If the member for Swansea would like to rephrase the question without that inference, I am happy to hear it again.

#### WESTERN SYDNEY SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:54):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its plan for western Sydney sports infrastructure?

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (14:55):** Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your ascension to the Speaker's chair. I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question and congratulate him on his re-election for a second term. The member for Seven Hills is an example of a passionate local member who shares this Government's vision for western Sydney. He is also a sports tragic and fan of the mighty Parramatta Eels, Greater Western Sydney Giants and Western Sydney Wanderers Football Club.

In 2016, when we announced the NSW Stadia Strategy, the Liberal-Nationals Government committed to the people of New South Wales that we would take Sydney into the future. But, as members well know, the road to deliver our strategy has not always been an easy one. Those opposite also tossed in their fair share of potholes with the former Labor leader, the member for Maroubra, declaring the March election would be a "referendum on stadiums"—ooh! That said, members for the electorates of Coogee and Granville attended the first major event staged at Bankwest Stadium and both seemed to thoroughly enjoy the experience—some would even say it was an endorsement of good policy.

The people of New South Wales are not fools. On 23 March 2019 they voted; they want their stadiums to be world-class facilities that offer world-class experiences and world-class events. It is an honour to stand here

today as the newly appointed Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans to inform the House that the Government has officially laid the first foundation stone in its stadia policy—Bankwest Stadium. In fact, it is being dubbed the "people's stadium" because it is truly a stadium for all people. This magnificent multi-purpose facility is capable of delivering sport, entertainment, business, community and cultural events. The people of New South Wales can be rightly proud of this unique facility, which they will enjoy.

Bankwest Stadium will be Sydney's first in a generation of world-class facilities. It was designed with the fan experience front of mind and the end result is absolutely amazing. The fans are so close to the on-field action that they can almost feel every tackle and pass. They are truly involved in the event. On 22 April I was privileged to be part of history when 30,000 people watched the first-ever sporting match at the stadium, which was between the Parramatta Eels and Wests Tigers. To see firsthand parents with young children sharing in this history-making experience was really special. I am extremely proud to be a member of the Government that delivered this investment to the people of this great State, the memories of which will last a lifetime.

The good news does not stop with Bankwest Stadium. The new stadium symbolises an exciting future, full of opportunity, with the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government committed to working for the people of New South Wales. If this stadium is anything to go by, our stadia strategy will change the way people in this State and this country will experience sporting and entertainment events. It will also provide jobs and boost the visitor economy. This is the largest investment in sport and major event infrastructure since the 2000 Olympics. Indeed, it will cement New South Wales as the premier destination for international sporting and entertainment events in this country. Our transformation of the Sydney Football Stadium and Stadium Australia will keep the National Rugby League grand finals in Sydney for at least the next 25 years. This investment will ensure that we will be eligible to compete on the world stage for events such as the FIFA 2023 Women's World Cup, the 2025 British Lions Tour, the 2027 Rugby World Cup and top music events. [*Extension of time*]

Our investment in new stadiums is critical for the long-term success of the visitor economy in New South Wales. This will mean more jobs for the tourism and hospitality sectors.

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** I encourage members on both sides of the House and the people seated in the gallery to head to Bankwest Stadium to experience it for themselves. New South Wales has a new generation of men and women who, in years to come, will represent our State and country because they have the facilities to help them reach for their dreams. I am excited to be the Minister tasked with delivering the NSW Stadia Strategy for the people of this great State. Next year the British rock band Queen is scheduled to perform at Stadium Australia and, in the immortal words of Freddie Mercury, "we are the champions of the world"!

#### **MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:01):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Given the Minister's previous comments about breaches of privacy being "an attack on our democracy", why has the Minister not sacked any staff member?

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** That is a duplication.

**The SPEAKER:** I accept the question.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (15:01):** I thank the member for her question. As I have indicated previously, the matter is being investigated by an appropriate authority. It is really important that the investigation be allowed to play out. Once it has been concluded we will make some statements. Until then, I have nothing further to say.

#### **MYUNA BAY SPORT AND RECREATION CENTRE**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:02):** My question is directed to the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. With the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre closed without warning during the caretaker period at the behest of Origin Energy and on the basis of a non-peer reviewed risk assessment of the Eraring ash dam wall, what is the Government doing to support the affected staff and community, and to reopen this centre?

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (15:02):** Mr Speaker—

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

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question and congratulate him on his re-election for a fourth term. I am sure I speak on behalf of all members of this House. The member for Lake Macquarie is respected by all members of this House because of his hard work on behalf of his constituents.

**Mr Greg Piper:** That is a great start, John. Thanks.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** I am trying hard. Indeed, I have witnessed this as we have been working closely together for the past couple of weeks on issues surrounding the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre. It is important to note that the Office of Sport received formal advice from Origin Energy during the caretaker period about the potential safety risk to the Myuna Bay centre should the stability of the Eraring power station's ash dam wall be affected. What the sudden closure of the centre means for the people in his community is not lost on this Government. Not only is it a place that community groups and schools can visit, but also it is an employer of people in the area. That is why since I was sworn in as Minister and made aware of this issue, I have worked side by side with the member to reach the right outcome for the community he represents. From the outset, I have met with affected parties to understand the issues surrounding the closure, including Origin Energy. I also spent the day with the member in Lake Macquarie to meet with affected stakeholders and listen firsthand to their concerns.

Before any further decisions are made about this vital community facility, it is important to be aware that I have commissioned an independent review of the technical advice that the New South Wales Office of Sport relied upon when making its decision to close the centre. The New South Wales Dams Safety Committee has been tasked to facilitate this independent review of the technical reports. The ongoing staff remain on full pay until the future of the centre is determined. I have given the member for Lake Macquarie and the local community my absolute assurance that the review will be totally independent and will guide any further decision-making. I expect to receive the independent review in the near future. Once again, I sincerely thank the member for his respect and cooperation. I will keep working with him to get the right result for everyone involved, particularly the good people of the Lake Macquarie community.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:05):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its plans for community safety?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:06):** I thank the member for Albury for his question. The member joins this place from a great city in the tradition of the Liberal Party. In December 75 years ago Sir Robert Menzies established the Liberal Party in that city and we are grateful for his leadership and vision in providing responsible government to political parties right across this great nation. I also note that in the member's electorate the Murray River Police District welcomed three new probationary constables into the ranks, following the most recent Police Attestation Parade in Goulburn.

Community safety is the foremost priority of the New South Wales Government. The brave men and women of our Police Force are at the frontline of the war we wage against those who seek to do us harm. It is critical that we equip our frontline police officers with resources and technology to keep our streets safe. Our strong economic management of this State—led by the Premier and the Treasurer—has allowed us to resource the Police Force in a way that has never been seen before. We had 261 new probationary constables join the ranks of the NSW Police Force in Goulburn and I was delighted to join the Premier, the new Governor, Her Excellency Justice Margaret Beazley, and the newly elected member for Goulburn, Wendy Tuckerman, in watching those young men and women join the "force of blue".

I am sure that members representing the electorates of Campbelltown, Granville and Fairfield are pleased that each of their local area commands received 11 new police officers. Since 2011 approximately 1,000 officers have been added to the ranks of the Police Force. Last year we announced more than \$583 million over four years to deliver 1,500 new frontline police. That is the biggest single increase in police numbers in more than 30 years. We have worked hard to get the budget into the black and now we are making the investment that is required. We also know, as a community, that keeping our police safe and well is a top priority. That is why when I became the Minister I identified the welfare and safety of our officers as one of my priorities.

An amount of \$19.6 million will deliver almost 11,000 new light armour vests for police officers across the State. These vests provide the best possible ballistic and stab protection equipment available, and will allow for a more mobile and agile Police Force. The Government is committed to providing police with the facilities they need to get on with the job of protecting our communities. Members representing the electorates of Bega, Goulburn and Monaro will be thrilled to know that they are receiving brand-new police stations in their electorates as part of our \$100 million investment to upgrade police stations and training facilities. We are supporting the Police Force of today to plan for the Police Force of tomorrow.



The \$100 million Policing for Tomorrow Fund is futureproofing the NSW Police Force, ensuring that officers have access to the latest and most innovative ways to prevent and respond to crime. The fund has delivered 4,850 body-worn video cameras and mobile technology to allow officers to access police systems instantly while they are on the beat. Approximately 1,000 fingerprint scanners to enable police to take and identify fingerprints in the field will be rolled out by mid-2019. The fund has also provided 69 portable drug-testing devices, assisting police in the identification of unknown chemicals and drugs in the field; enhanced intelligence-sharing systems for operational police commands; and a virtual firing range in a box for training police officers to deal with active armed offender threats. Remotely piloted aircraft and trained pilots, audiovisual link facilities in additional police stations and new kits to help police identify, extract, preserve and present evidence of crimes from digital devices to combat cybercrime have also been provided.

The Government is committed to giving local communities the tools they need to keep community spaces and small businesses safe. Earlier this year we announced \$5 million for the rollout of closed-circuit television [CCTV] cameras, which will help at least 1,000 community organisations and small businesses across western and south-western Sydney upgrade their security. Community groups and small businesses in Blacktown, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith and Wollondilly will be eligible for up to \$5,000 per organisation under the Community and Small Business CCTV Fund. [*Extension of time*]

This Government's record stands in stark contrast to that of those opposite. During their tenure crime rates across the State soared. Between 1995 and 2009 assault rates increased by 79 per cent, arson increased by 128 per cent and weapons offences increased by 108 per cent. During that period the number of Labor members in jail went from zero to five, and the number of police officers protecting the community was fudged and overstated. The Auditor-General found that the NSW Police Force was actually understaffed by 489 officers, and approximately 50 police stations were closed during their last term. The New South Wales Government is going above and beyond to keep the community safe, with a record investment in frontline police, training, equipment and technology to combat crime.

#### *Documents*

### **INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 39 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, I table an erratum to the report of the Information and Privacy Commission entitled *Report on the Operation of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009: 2017-2018*. I order that the report be printed.

### **INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 111 of the Water Act 2014, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *WaterNSW Operational Audit 2018, Report to the Minister, Water—Compliance Report*, dated February 2019, received out of session on 10 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.

### **BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 438U of the Local Government Act 1993, I announce receipt of the report of the Public Inquiry into the Blue Mountains City Council established under section 438U of the Local Government Act 1993 entitled *Public Inquiry into the Blue Mountains City Council: Interim Report: Term of Reference 4*, by Commissioner Richard Beasley, SC, dated 7 May 2019, received out of session on 10 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.

### **NSW STATE CORONER**

#### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 37 of the Coroners Act 2009, I announce receipt of the report by the NSW State Coroner into deaths in custody/police operations for 2018, received out of session on 14 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.

**MULTICULTURAL NSW****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 14 of the Multicultural Act 2000, I announce receipt of the report of Multicultural NSW entitled *Community Relations Report 2017-2018*, received out of session on 14 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.

**VARIATIONS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2018-19**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Variations of the Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2018-19 under section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, arising from the provision by the Commonwealth of Specific Purpose Payments in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates—Ministry of Health, Transport for NSW, Department of Industry, and the Department of Finance, Services and Innovations, dated 10 May 2019, received out of session on 15 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Reports of the Auditor-General entitled:

- (1) *Wellbeing of secondary school students*, dated 23 May 2019, received out of session on 23 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) *Managing growth in the NSW prison population*, dated 24 May 2019, received out of session on 24 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.
- (3) *Engagement of Probity Advisors and Probity Auditors*, dated 27 May 2019, received out of session on 27 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.

**TECHNICAL EDUCATION TRUST FUNDS****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 11 of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, I announce receipt of the report of the Technical Education Trust Funds for 2018 received out of session on 23 May 2019 and authorised to be printed.

*Members***PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES****Appointment**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** On behalf of the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that on 10 May 2019 the Hon. Benjamin Cameron Franklin, MLC, was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Energy and the Arts.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Orange and Central West Rail Services**

Petition requesting improved rail services for Orange and the Central West region, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

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

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

**Route 389 Bus Services**

Petition requesting more reliable 389 bus services, 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**.

#### **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**.

#### **Pet Shops**

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

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

#### **Powerhouse Museum Ultimo**

Petition requesting the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the expansion of museum services to other parts of New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

#### *Motions Accorded Priority*

### **SYDNEY METRO NORTHWEST**

#### **Consideration**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:16):** It gives me great pleasure to seek the support of the House for this priority motion, which recognises the opening of what is the largest infrastructure program ever undertaken in this country. Last Sunday we opened the Sydney Metro Northwest, which provides seamless automated rail to the north-west of Sydney. This metro is a testament to our Premier, the former Minister for Transport, who had the courage, conviction, tenacity and vision to see this project through to its opening on Sunday. I had the greatest pleasure in joining the Premier and the Minister for Transport and Roads standing at the front of the train as it exceeded speeds of 100 kilometres per hour and travelling with 350 of our closest friends on that first rail line movement from Tallawong station to Chatswood. We were joined later by 140,000 of our wonderful supporters in the north-west as people from all areas, stretching from as far away as Sydney right through the north-west and up past the areas of Rouse Hill and Tallawong, supported those members who stood shoulder to shoulder in their support for appropriate infrastructure for the people of the north-west.

Hundreds of thousands of people have poured into electorates such as mine in Castle Hill and in Baulkham Hills, Riverstone and surrounding electorates. The only thing missing—due to the neglect of the former Labor Government—was an adequate public transport system. If that was not bad enough, sadly there were broken promises time and time again from as far back as 1998, when former Premier Bob Carr promised to build a rail line to Rouse Hill, saying it would be completed to Castle Hill in 2010. History shows that not only was the rail line not completed but also we did not have so much as a train ticket because the project was never started. We did not have so much as a railway sleeper embedded in the ground in 2010; the project had to wait until we were elected in 2011 and committed to it.

But what is important—and I acknowledge not only Gladys Berejiklian but also the tenacity and the foresight of former Premier Barry O'Farrell—is that we announced this project when we were in opposition. That is pretty ambitious when one considers that it was a \$7.3 billion project, which we have delivered on time and \$1 billion under budget. We were committed to this signature project as far back as 2007. I stood proudly with Barry O'Farrell on the side of Old Windsor Road when we announced that in government we would build it. And today we celebrate that fact—it is done.

## PERSONAL INFORMATION SECURITY

### Consideration

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:19):** Yet again I speak about an extremely disturbing matter that has been raised on the front page of *The Australian* today—a matter the Opposition pursued during the previous sitting week of Parliament and that this Government seems to treat as a joke. The Government wants to sweep it under the carpet and is desperately hoping it will go away. It will not. The more we look into this issue, the more serious it becomes. It shows not only a blatant disregard for State and Federal privacy laws but also a fundamental breach of ministerial responsibility. The fingerprints of this Government are all over this issue. That is serious enough, but it gets worse.

It turns out that once Revenue NSW realised that private data was in the hands of Minister Dominello's office, it gave the Minister's office very clear instructions to destroy the information that revealed not just the speeding offences of hundreds of New South Wales motorists but, worse, who they are, where they live, what else they had been fined for and where the offence took place—the whole box and dice. Revenue NSW took the matter very seriously—as it should—and did what it knows it is obliged to do: It self-reported to the New South Wales privacy commissioner. That should have been the end of it, but it was not.

The file ended up being shown to a journalist in the middle of an election campaign for the purpose of smearing a political opponent. Mr Dominello, who, as Minister for Customer Service, holds more data about New South Wales citizens than any other person in this Chamber, should answer a few very simple questions. What did Minister Dominello do as soon as he heard about the data breach? Did he disclose the breach of data to the privacy commissioner as he should have under New South Wales privacy laws? Has he done the right thing and informed affected motorists whose data has been leaked? Did he launch an internal investigation into how such sensitive data got into the hands of a journalist with the purpose of smearing a political opponent?

Perhaps the most pressing question, however, is for the Premier: Does she stand by her promises made during the campaign that she has "absolutely no tolerance for corruption ... tough new measures will help ensure that members of Parliament never forget that they have been elected by the community, and always remain accountable to the community". Parliament deserves that accountability now. Hundreds of innocent New South Wales residents deserve that accountability now. Most importantly, the people of New South Wales demand that accountability now.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion of the member for Castle Hill be accorded priority.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....49  
Noes .....37  
Majority..... 12

#### AYES

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Elliott, Mr D  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
McGirr, Dr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Smith, Mr N  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Lindsay, Ms W  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Piper, Mr G  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Williams, Mr R

Barilaro, Mr J  
Butler, Mr R  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Dominello, Mr V  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D  
Singh, Mr G  
Stokes, Mr R  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

#### NOES

Aitchison, Ms J

Atalla, Mr E

Bali, Mr S

## NOES

Barr, Mr C  
 Chanthivong, Mr A  
 Daley, Mr M  
 Harris, Mr D  
 Hoenig, Mr R  
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
 McDermott, Dr H  
 Mihailuk, Ms T  
 Park, Mr R  
 Scully, Mr P  
 Voltz, Ms L  
 Zangari, Mr G

Car, Ms P  
 Cotsis, Ms S  
 Dib, Mr J  
 Harrison, Ms J  
 Hornery, Ms S  
 Leong, Ms J  
 McKay, Ms J  
 Minns, Mr C  
 Parker, Mr J  
 Smith, Ms T.F.  
 Warren, Mr G

Catley, Ms Y  
 Crakanthorp, Mr T  
 Doyle, Ms T  
 Haylen, Ms J  
 Kamper, Mr S  
 Lynch, Mr P  
 Mehan, Mr D  
 O'Neill, Dr M  
 Saffin, Ms J  
 Tesch, Ms L (teller)  
 Washington, Ms K

## PAIRS

Gibbons, Ms M  
 Taylor, Mr M

Finn, Ms J  
 Watson, Ms A

**Motion agreed to.**

## SYDNEY METRO NORTHWEST

## Priority

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:31):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that the Sydney Metro Northwest officially opened on Sunday, with hundreds of thousands of passengers having already used the new service.
- (2) Notes that the project was delivered on time and \$1 billion under budget.
- (3) Notes that the Opposition criticised the project at every step instead of putting the people of north-west Sydney first.
- (4) Notes that this is just the start of the Government's ambitious Sydney Metro program, with further lines underway or planned.
- (5) Calls on the Opposition to support this ambitious program, including the Bankstown Metro upgrade.

The Bankstown line upgrade is the second stage of the Sydney Metro Northwest and is presently underway.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! Members who are leaving the Chamber will do so quietly.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** It is an incredibly important motion and I thank members for their support. This motion deserves priority. A clear message has been sent by the community that if a Government treats them with contempt it will pay the ultimate price. That is certainly what happened to the Labor Party at the 2011 election. The Labor Party promised this project in 1998. It cancelled the project and then announced it once again. Labor announcing the Sydney Metro Northwest project prior to an election was a repeating theme. Labor originally promised to open the station at Castle Hill in 2010 but the Labor Party was removed from government in 2011 and the project was not started.

One of the obstacles the Liberal-Nationals Government faced was convincing people that we would build the Sydney Metro Northwest. The people of the north-west had been lied to so many times they did not believe us. We announced the project while in opposition. It was not until the skytrain component of the Sydney Metro Northwest was under construction that people would contact my office and ask, "What are you building alongside Old Windsor Road?" It was with great pleasure that I replied, "That is the Sydney Metro Northwest." People would then say, "You are not going to build that project." But the works were proof positive that it was happening. For the last couple of years the construction of the sky rail component and the tunnels was hugely successful. They are the longest tunnels that have been constructed in this country for a project of this type. There is more steel in the North West Rail Link than was used in the Sydney Harbour Bridge. On Sunday no fewer than 140,000 people were amazed by the efficiency of the seamless, automated, driverless trains on this service. Of course, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

I have littered my contributions to debates—some 650 in *Hansard* since I came to this place in 2007—with references to the need for the North West Rail Link. As a member of this place I feel it is very important that I practise what I preach. Therefore I took the greatest pleasure this morning in joining many members of my

community in jumping on a train just before eight o'clock at Rouse Hill. The service is very efficient and it took just 20 minutes to get to Epping. It took 31 minutes to get from Rouse Hill to Chatswood, where we disembarked and crossed the platform in 10 steps to get on a three-minute service to the city. To be fair, I could not get on the first train; I had to wait another three minutes before I rolled another efficient train coming from further north. I got a seat and travelled to Wynyard in just under an hour from Rouse Hill, with the slight delay at Chatswood.

It is an incredible service, at some stage travelling up to 100 kilometres per hour. It is almost like a bullet train, it is just so efficient. You do not realise how quick it is until you get onto the standard rail services operating across Sydney, which feel like they are almost in slow motion. This service will be an absolute game changer for the people of the north-west. This service will not be just a public transport option for the people of north-west Sydney; the service will change their lives. No longer will we be people who do not use public transport, mainly because we did not have public transport. Our dependence on our cars was the greatest of any community in metropolitan New South Wales, if not in Australia. That will be changed with the opening of the Sydney Metro North West. *[Time expired.]*

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:36):** I have been the shadow Minister for Transport and Roads for the past four years, so I think I am pretty well equipped to speak to this motion.

**Mr Ray Williams:** You opposed it.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** What I have seen in the four years I have had responsibility for this portfolio is that the Government talks big but it cannot deliver anything. We know that our infrastructure projects in this State are some \$14 billion over budget, which reflects not only a disrespect of communities right across Sydney but that projects are running late and are over budget. I want to go through those facts, but let me start my contribution by picking up on what the member for Castle Hill said. We have never actually said we oppose the Sydney Metro Northwest.

**Mr Ray Williams:** Yes, you have.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** No, we have not. I have said many times that we support this project, but we have issues with the way it is being delivered. We also have issues with some of the elements of the metro project. Let me say that a budget blowout of some \$14 billion is significant. It represents taxpayers' money that is being wasted by this Government. I turn to the WestConnex project. The Premier has stood in this House and said, "I am incredibly proud!", but the Premier, the Minister for Transport and the member for Castle Hill must take responsibility for what they have done on these projects across the State. The WestConnex project was to cost \$10 billion and it is now \$15.8 billion. Residents right across Sydney have been disrupted during the construction phase of this project. In my area there is cracking in houses, but the Government will not take responsibility for the damage. We know that residual land is being sold even though that land could be used as public space.

Let us talk about the CBD and South East Light Rail project, because this project is not going very well for those opposite. This project is quite possibly \$1 billion over budget and is more than a year late—in fact, we do not know when this project is going to be finished. Those opposite have said it will be finished perhaps at the end of this year, but the contractor has said that it could be finished in May next year. We have not been able to get a straight answer on this project's completion date. Then there is the NorthConnex, a project that we also supported. But that project is possibly also a year late. Again, we cannot get a completion date on that project. The Government keeps pushing the answer back to the contractor to explain, and the contractor keeps pushing it back to the Government to explain. As a result, we have absolutely nothing.

The member for Blue Mountains would be disappointed if I did not talk about the Intercity Fleet. We know that on this project the trains do not even fit the track. Whichever way we look at those projects, there has been utter mismanagement. When talking about the metro, we are very supportive of the Sydney Metro West, the service from the CBD all the way to Parramatta. We stand by what we said during the election campaign, and that is that we want to see that project fast-tracked. It is a good project, because currently we have no rail transport—apart from the spur to Olympic Park—to Sydney Olympic Park. If the Government prioritised the Sydney Metro West over many other projects, including the CBD and South East Light Rail, there would be better transport options for people heading to Parramatta for work and from Parramatta to home.

It is important to say that the Government's priorities for infrastructure delivery are all wrong. The majority of the Government's infrastructure projects are currently over budget—massively over budget. The Newcastle light rail project has blown out by \$35 million. The M4 project has blown out by some \$20 million. Of course, the schedule for the M4 East—and remember there are tolls on both the M4 and the M4 East—has blown out by about five months. Time and again we have seen that the Government simply cannot manage these projects. The Government boasts about these projects, with the Premier standing in this place saying she is "incredibly proud". There is not a lot to be incredibly proud of. Those opposite went into the last State election without one

project having been completed. I will acknowledge that the Sydney Metro North West is now completed, but it is the only project to have been completed in this Government's ninth year in power.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:41):** I would encourage residents of the north-west to look at *Hansard* and read the contributions of the member for Strathfield to find out exactly how much Labor thinks about the welfare of people in the north-west. There was barely a word in that contribution about the North West Metro, even though it is a historic project. It is the largest public transport project in Australia, but what did the shadow Minister have to say? Virtually nothing about the people of the north-west. However, the people of the north-west have a very different view. We know that because during the first morning peak 21,000 people used the metro service to get into town. This number was above estimates, which ranged from the mid-teens to perhaps 19,000, and yet 21,000 people used the metro on day one. This number will only grow.

The people who use the metro service did not drive their cars into the CBD. There are many reports of how much the commute on the M2 has improved in the days since the metro opened, because people had been waiting for the chance to get out of their cars and onto a train. Many have done just that. We have also heard lots of reports from people who have saved time by catching the metro. They are getting to work and back home more quickly, saving time otherwise spent stuck in traffic, even on a bus stuck on the M2 in traffic. Those people are benefiting from the massive investment made by this Government, originally under Premier O'Farrell, then under Premier Baird and now under Premier Berejiklian. These Premiers led the way on this visionary project to make sure we have delivered for the people of the north-west, about whom the Liberal Party does care.

There are improvements in this project for people with disabilities. The service is so much more disability-friendly than existing rail networks. We have taken the opportunity to get it exactly right. People with disability have access at all 13 stations on this line. There are safety improvements. There is no longer a gap between the train and the platform into which people may fall. Sliding doors prevent people from being stuck in closing doors as they rush for trains. We have eliminated many of the hazards that may be encountered on the existing rail network and we have taken the opportunity to ensure that it is a better, safer service for all people of the north-west.

When I was first elected, I felt the cynicism in the community about our commitment to build this project. People said, "I'll never see that. It'll never happen." It took until there were physical works in front of them before those people believed us, even though the boring machines had been in the ground and had finished their task. People had been misled for so long that it was not until something could be seen above ground that they believed it was happening. I could go on about the number of car spaces, the bicycle parking, the kiss and ride zones, the extra bus services at stations and particularly the on-demand bus services that have been introduced. It is all about providing better service for the people of the north-west.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:44):** It takes a lot of hide for the Government to crow about its public transport record. I acknowledge the excellent case made by the member for Strathfield about the Government's woeful and horrible public transport record in this State. I note that the member for Riverstone is delighted about the Sydney Metro Northwest, but I speak on behalf of the residents in Bankstown, Lakemba, Canterbury and west of Bankstown who are concerned that this Government is proposing a two-tier metro system that will provide an inferior shuttle service from Sydenham to Bankstown. We will end up with the metro tracks being dumped on top of the heavy rail, the platforms will not be replaced and there will be mechanical gap fillers between the platform and the metro.

I can only imagine the level of maintenance required along the Sydenham to Bankstown line that will plague this system for years to come. I am delighted that Minister Roberts, the former Minister for Planning, is here because this is all about the Government's plan to build hundreds of thousands of units across the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor. The Government is not replacing the heavy rail, it is dumping the metro on top. There is no plan to invest in replacing the bridges, underpasses or walkways along the train track. The Government is going to compulsorily acquire council and community land and there will be a turnback somewhere in Yagoona, the location of which is shrouded in secrecy. There will be a 450-metre interchange at Bankstown station where people will have to walk to change from the heavy rail to the metro.

The stations west of Bankstown are still without a train line. That inner west train line was removed by the Premier in 2013 when she was the Minister for Transport. Now residents in Chester Hill, Leightonfield and Villawood have to take three trains to get to the CBD. Many times I have asked the Premier to come and look at what has been done to communities west of Bankstown, but she never has, and neither has Minister Constance because they do not care about our communities. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (15:47):** In reply: It is appalling that the Labor Opposition continues to carry on in such a backward manner after years of refusing to acknowledge the needs of our communities in the north-west of Sydney. It approved the construction of hundreds of thousands of new residential

homes in my electorate in areas such as Kellyville and Rouse Hill, the Riverstone electorate, The Ponds, Bella Vista and Baulkham Hills. It then neglected to provide a basic service—the provision of a rail line. Today we hear the Opposition crowing, crying and accusing this Government of not providing what is undoubtedly a world-class public transport system.

As the member for Riverstone said, by 10.00 a.m. yesterday 21,000 people had utilised the North West Rail Link from Tallawong to Chatswood. By 4.00 p.m. that number had grown by another 45,000. It could be that in the first full day of operation there may have been upwards of 80,000 people who used the service. These figures are enormous. They are double what was expected and yet the train line has completed those services with flying colours. There were a couple of glitches on the first day when 140,000 took up the offer to ride the rail line free of charge to experience the automated world-class public transport. We can just turn up and go. There is no such thing as a timetable on this mode of public transport. Anyone can catch the first train that rolls in, but if they cannot they can get a cup of tea and four minutes later the next train will arrive. This service is matched by an equivalent service at Chatswood, where North Shore trains are now rolling out at three-minute intervals to cater for the increase in patronage on the North West Rail Link. This is being done in an admirable fashion.

I give full credit to every member of the Liberal-Nationals Government because the Government not only has built this infrastructure but, importantly, has also restored the economy of New South Wales, which was struggling after being left with billions of dollars of debt by the Labor Government. Not only did it not provide the necessary infrastructure for New South Wales when it was in power for 16 years, but our State was also left in ruin and in debt. The Liberal-Nationals Government has restored the economy. New South Wales is now completely debt-free and has world-class infrastructure such as the North West Rail Link. Long may it continue.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....49  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....13

#### AYES

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Davies, Mrs T  
Elliott, Mr D  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Lindsay, Ms W  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D  
Singh, Mr G  
Taylor, Mr M  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Ayes, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Petinos, Ms E  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Smith, Mr N  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Williams, Mr R

Barilaro, Mr J  
Butler, Mr R  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Donato, Mr P  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
McGirr, Dr J  
Piper, Mr G  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

#### NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T.F.

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dib, Mr J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D (teller)  
Park, Mr R  
Scully, Mr P  
Voltz, Ms L



NOES

Warren, Mr G

Washington, Ms K

Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Perrottet, Mr D

Stokes, Mr R

Toole, Mr P

Finn, Ms J

Minns, Mr C

Watson, Ms A

**Motion agreed to.***Bills***CRIMES (ADMINISTRATION OF SENTENCES) AMENDMENT (INMATE BEHAVIOUR) BILL  
2019****First Reading****Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anthony Roberts, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading Speech****Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections)  
(16:00):**

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Amendment (Inmate Behaviour) Bill 2019. Correctional Officers fulfil a frontline role which is essential for a safe and a just New South Wales. It is important that they have the tools necessary to manage inmate behaviour in order to ensure the safety and security of correctional centres as well as their own safety. Privileges are tools that can be used to incentivise good behaviour and removed following a regression in behaviour and allow an immediate response to an inmate's behaviour. Withdrawable privileges are defined under section 51 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act and listed under clause 163 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation, including pursuit of a hobby, access to CDs/DVDs, keeping of personal property, contact visits, telephone use and leave permits.

Different types of inmate behaviour can affect the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act management, good order and security of a correctional centre. Certain behaviour or misconduct may also constitute correctional centre offences, criminal offences, or both. A correctional centre offence means any act or omission by an inmate while in custody declared to be an offence under the regulations. Schedule 2 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation sets out a list of correctional centre offences, which currently range from failing to keep property tidy or orderly at clause 47 to assault at clause 141 and damage or destroy property at clause 142.

In scenarios where an inmate's behaviour could also constitute a correctional centre offence or criminal offence, such as assault, a recent District Court decision has cast doubt on what immediate lawful responses are available to corrective services staff. In *Hamzy v R*—unreported, District Court of NSW Criminal Jurisdiction, Graham J, 21 February 2019—the court found that it is unlawful to use incentive-based schemes to remove withdrawable privileges in response to inmate conduct that may also constitute a correctional centre offence where it is done otherwise than in accordance with the process set out in division 6, part 2 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act. The court quashed the inmate's conviction for assaulting a correctional officer and ordered a permanent stay of the prosecution.

The bill will provide clarity and certainty to corrective services to ensure that there can be an immediate lawful response to address inmate behaviour without affecting the outcomes of any disciplinary proceedings or criminal proceedings. The bill fulfils the Government's election commitment to strengthen the legislation and enhance correctional officer safety. The proposed amendments will ensure that Corrective Services has the flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to incidents involving inmate misconduct, regardless of whether the incident later results in formal disciplinary proceedings or criminal prosecution.

I now turn to the details of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill inserts a new section 65A into division 6, part 2 of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act. The new section 65A (1) allows the Commissioner to adopt policies to manage the behaviour of inmates, referred to as behaviour management policies. The new section 65A (2) permits a behaviour management policy to include any matter relating to the management of the behaviour of inmates in accordance with the Act. It also allows behaviour management policies to specify circumstances in

which the withdrawable privileges provided to an inmate may be modified. Importantly, the new section 65A (3) clarifies the interaction between the modification of withdrawable privileges under a behaviour management policy and the existing provisions of division 6, part 2 of the legislation.

First, it clarifies that the modification of withdrawable privileges is authorised even if the circumstances which cause the modification relate to an act or omission that is a correctional centre offence or a criminal offence. Second, it states that withdrawable privileges may be modified at any time, regardless of any proceedings or process underway, or any penalty imposed in relation to a correctional centre offence or criminal offence. Finally, section 65A (3) makes it clear that the modification of privileges under a behaviour management policy does not prevent the commencement or continuation of proceedings for a correctional centre offence or criminal offence.

The provisions will ensure that incentive-based behaviour management policies can operate alongside existing mechanisms as a legitimate and effective means of modifying privileges in response to inmate behaviour, whether or not that behaviour may constitute a correctional centre offence or criminal offence. Let me make it quite clear that the hardworking Corrections officers of New South Wales work under most dangerous conditions and our heartfelt thanks goes to them for the work that they do. This Government and this Premier have made sure that this new legislation enables them to have the tools to carry out their tasks safely, efficiently and with authority. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 8 May 2019.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:07:5):** I lead for the Opposition on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I state for the record that NSW Labor Party supports the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. However, we are concerned that this bill does not go far enough. I acknowledge Minister Gareth Ward for introducing this bill at this time. It has taken many years for this bill to be introduced, after the Opposition has done a lot of work in this area. We have been involved in a number of inquiries and a huge body of work has been created to get to this point and to highlight some of the deficiencies and gaps in the system. There have been a number of reports—the Law Reform Commission report, the Ombudsman's report and the standing inquiry that the Ombudsman is currently running—but it has taken this new Minister to come to this place to introduce this very important bill.

I acknowledge the Minister for providing the member for Gosford and me with a briefing a few weeks ago. This bill will establish the new statutory office—the Ageing and Disability Commission. The primary function of the new commissioner will be to deal with allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older adults. The abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability and older people are serious problems. The problems can take many forms, including violence, neglect and emotional, financial and psychological abuse. Unfortunately, there is not enough information regarding the prevalence of elder abuse and abuse of people with disability.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' *2016 Personal Safety Survey* estimates that 40,000 older people and 90,000 people with disability experience violence each year in New South Wales. However, these figures do not capture the full extent of the problem because they do not include instances of financial exploitation, neglect or emotional abuse, which many older people and people with disability experience. The problems of elder abuse and the abuse of people with disability are increasingly being recognised. In October last year the Commonwealth Government established a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which we very much welcome and commend, and argued for prior to it being established. In April this year the Commonwealth Government established a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. I am very happy about that because a couple of years ago I wrote to the Federal Government. I wrote to former Minister Williams about urging the Coalition Government to establish this royal commission. There was a Senate inquiry a number of years ago. It was the prelude. This should have been done years ago. The two royal commissions were established after the inquiries I mentioned.

The genesis of this bill appears to be a recommendation made by the Legislative Council elder abuse inquiry, which was chaired by my colleague in the upper House the Hon. Greg Donnelly. I was also one of the members on the inquiry. One of the recommendations made by the elder abuse inquiry was the establishment of a public advocate. In June 2016 the committee recommended that the public advocate have powers to investigate complaints and allegations of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults to initiate its own investigations when it considers this warranted, and to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse. In January 2017 the Government provided a response to the elder abuse inquiry in which the Government

noted that the Law Reform Commission was examining the Guardianship Act 1987. The Government stated that legislative change in this area should be deferred until the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission guardianship report can be considered.

The Law Reform Commission's review of the Guardianship Act was not provided to the Attorney General until 21 May 2018, and it was not tabled in Parliament until 15 August 2018. The Law Reform Commission recommended the establishment of a public advocate with investigative functions to obtain evidence about neglect, abuse and exploitation and advocacy functions to complement the current work of community groups. It took that long. It is on record that the shadow Attorney General, Paul Lynch, and I raised this a number of times. The acting shadow Minister for Ageing, Kate Washington, was also involved in this last year in advocating strongly for a public advocate. It is such a shame that the Government has waited until now. Establishing the public advocate was so important and the Government has wasted so much time and so many older people who have been abused have fallen through the cracks.

In November last year the Ombudsman published a special report to Parliament regarding the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in New South Wales, in which the Ombudsman again called for the creation of a public advocate. This was the third time it was recommended. In December last year Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 2 ended its inquiry into the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] and the provision of disability services by recommending that the New South Wales Government create a public advocate with powers to investigate cases of potential abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disabilities. While the Opposition welcomes the Government's decision to create the position of Ageing and Disability Commissioner, we regret that it has taken this Government three years and multiple reports to introduce this bill.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** I have been Minister for six weeks.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I acknowledge Minister Ward's interjection, but unfortunately, despite our urging and despite the body of evidence, his predecessors have done absolutely nothing. All they had to do was establish a public advocate, but they did not do it. And so here we are today. The Labor Party is disappointed that it has taken the Government three years to introduce this bill. It is concerned that the bill does not go far enough. The Labor Party is absolutely supportive of the bill, but does not want this commission to be a toothless tiger. One of our main concerns is that while the bill provides the commissioner with powers to investigate allegations of abuse, it does not provide any specific powers that the commissioner can use if a complaint is substantiated. Division 1 clause 12 (b) states that the commissioner may take further action, including by making an application to a court or tribunal. However, the bill does not specify which applications the commissioner is empowered to make. We hope that the Government will review this legislation and consider providing express powers to the commissioner to respond to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

My Labor colleagues have been very involved in their response to this bill, and we will hear many of their contributions today. We are passionate about this issue. We are concerned that the bill restricts the jurisdiction of the commissioner to adults with disability and older adults. Labor members support the definition of older adults provided in the bill. However, we do not support restricting the jurisdiction of the commissioner to adults with disability. We recognise that this bill has come about from a desire to address the gap in the existing framework that protects vulnerable people. Specifically, we recognise that the primary intent of this bill is to provide protection for adults in family and community settings who are not covered by existing schemes such as the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission or the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

However, we believe that restricting the bill to adults will create new gaps. It will mean the Ageing and Disability Commissioner is unable to investigate and report on issues affecting children and young people with disability. We believe it will be heartbreaking and frustrating for parents and carers of children and young people with disability if they are not able to have their concerns investigated by the Ageing and Disability Commission because of a legal technicality. Labor will move amendments to ensure that this bill covers all people with disability, regardless of age.

I am also concerned about the lack of an explicit power for the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to refer matters to the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions. The abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and people with a disability are crimes. These crimes may involve violence, sexual assault, theft or fraud. As it stands, the bill provides an explicit power to refer matters for investigation to the Health Care Complaints Commission, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. However, the bill does not contain any explicit power to refer matters for investigation to the police. The bill also does not contain an explicit power to refer matters to the Director of Public Prosecutions. We believe the bill should contain an explicit power to refer matters to the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Crimes against older people and people with disability are generally underreported. Often even if a report is made, it is not prosecuted. In 2016 the Ombudsman found that only 18 of 1,140 allegations of abuse against

people with disability resulted in prosecution. At the time we asked many questions of the Minister at budget estimates and there were many reports in the media holding the Government to account. However, absolutely zero action was taken. We believe it is important that the commissioner refer criminal matters for prosecution and that data be gathered regarding the outcomes of those referrals. By gathering data on referrals for prosecution, the public and the Parliament will be able to understand what additional resources or changes in the law are required to ensure that vulnerable people who are victims of crime receive justice. I do not have much time, but I will read a case study from the Ombudsman's special report to Parliament on the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in New South Wales, which was tabled last year:

A member of the public contacted us to raise concerns about the circumstances of a young man with intellectual disability and autism who lived next door.

The young man lived in a converted garage at the back of his family's house, and the neighbour reported that the young man was left at home unsupervised and extremely distressed for most of the day. The young man was observed to wander the backyard for hours, slapping his face, biting himself, crying out, and banging on the door to the main house. The man's family was seen by the neighbour to hit him with a broom to move him away if he approached visitors to the home.

The neighbour told us that the room the young man lived in was squalid, attracting blowflies; the stench of human faeces reached the neighbouring properties; and the accommodation had been assessed as requiring forensic cleaning. The neighbour reported that the young man was not allowed inside the family home and his family would leave food outside on a table for him, where the dog would access it. We were told that this situation had been going on for many years; even as a child, the young man would be dropped home from school by bus and locked in the backyard unattended. The neighbour had previously made complaints to FACS and the police about this young man's living conditions.

We checked the child protection and police intelligence systems and found a long history of concerns—including multiple reports of domestic violence, allegations of unexplained bruising and sexual abuse of the young man, and child protection reports relating to concerns of neglect. Police, Community Services, and Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) had identified concerns about the living environment and provision of care, and police officers had sent photographs to Community Services of the young man's living conditions, including cockroach infestations and faeces in his bed and on the walls.

While Community Services and ADHC had previously discussed the potential need for a guardianship application, they held the view that there was insufficient evidence to warrant this action. This is just one of the case studies that has been reported to the Ombudsman not only under the standing inquiry, but also under reportable incidents of abuse and neglect in residential care and disability services. There are many of these case studies. The Opposition will do whatever it can to make sure that these people are prosecuted. If they have to do jail time, they will do jail time. They are doing the wrong thing to the most vulnerable people in our community. I have just read out one case study; there are thousands of these case studies. Labor is also concerned about the penalty provisions for offences under the bill. Clauses 16, 29 and 30 provide a monetary penalty of only \$5,500 if a person commits an offence such as obstructing the commissioner. We foreshadow that we will move amendments to include the possibility of a sentence of imprisonment for 12 months for offences under the legislation. This will show that the Parliament is serious about stopping violence, neglect and the abuse of people with disability.

Labor believes the Ageing and Disability Commissioner should have the power to hold public inquiries regarding systemic issues that affect people with disability and older people. Clause 12 provides that one of the functions of the commissioner will be "to inquire into and report on systemic issues". However, the commissioner has no express power to hold a public inquiry. We foreshadow also that we will move amendments to give the commissioner that power. I can inform the House that Labor and The Greens have made an application for the bill to be referred to an upper House standing committee for review. I have had discussions with the relevant ageing and disability stakeholders—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** If that is the case, why do we need the inquiry?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** They have many, many concerns.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** But you said you have been consulting for years.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** And you have done absolutely nothing.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Gareth Ward:** What were the issues in the bill?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** You have done nothing.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will come to order.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** You have done nothing for years. I have consulted with key stakeholders. They have issues with the bill.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** So why do you need the inquiry?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Because we have to scrutinise this bill. As it stands, it is a toothless tiger. It does not have the express powers to prosecute.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Neither does the ICAC.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** We hope that this process will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to have their say on this important bill.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The Minister will come to order.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** These people are committing crimes. They have to go to jail.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Then they should be prosecuted.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** They have to go to jail.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will come to order.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** We need a strong commission. Don't be afraid of scrutiny; it is an important part of this process. If we are going to support this commissioner—and we do wholeheartedly—then we want to make sure that it has the appropriate powers. Nevertheless, we feel it is important for the Minister to provide clarity regarding certain aspects of this bill. I have three questions for the Minister, which I hope he will address in his speech in reply. First, clause 18 removes restrictions on providing information that would apply under other Acts. How will that provision apply to laws of the Commonwealth? Second, how will the exemption provided to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 in schedule 1.3 affect non-government organisations or individuals who wish to scrutinise decisions made by the Ageing and Disability Commissioner? Third, part 3, division 1 clause 13 (10) (b) states that the commissioner must gain the consent of a vulnerable adult to conduct an investigation unless "the allegation is so serious—

*[Business interrupted.]*

#### *Members*

#### **INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:27):** Mr Speaker, for the first time I address the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales in delivering my inaugural speech, conscious of the great privilege and responsibility bestowed on me by the people of Wollondilly. It is incredible to stand here as a member of a government led by Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Deputy Premier John Barilaro. The faith placed in me is sobering, the trials ahead are formidable and the opportunity to do what is best for my electorate is inspirational. In the Gospel of Luke it is written "to whom much is given, much will be required". I thank our Heavenly Father for the capabilities he has given me, for the upbringing and guidance that has allowed me to develop my abilities, and for the opportunities that he has presented to me throughout my life to this point.

The State electorate of Wollondilly was established in 1904 and dissolved in 1981. After a redistribution it was re-established in 2007. Since then it has been represented by Mr Phil Costa from 2007 to 2011 and Mr Jai Rowell from 2011 to 2018, who represented the community with commitment and distinction. Two former members for Wollondilly have been Premiers of New South Wales: the Hon. Tom Lewis, who was the member from 1957 to 1978, and Sir George Fuller, who was the member from 1915 to 1928. Further, the Hon. John Fahey, when the southern end of the Wollondilly electorate was recognised as the State electorate of the Southern Highlands, was also a former Premier. Each of those men represented our community and the people of New South Wales with excellence.

The electorate of Wollondilly covers 3,327.48 square kilometres. It ranges from Burradoo in the south, Warragamba in the north, Appin in the east and the Nattai wilderness and Burragorang Valley in the west. There are 52 towns and villages, and each has its own unique character and charm. In the coming years my electorate will face enormous opportunities and challenges, including future growth in residential dwellings, the aerotropolis, the provision of infrastructure, the impact of mining subsidence and the desire to keep our local rural character. Throughout the recent election campaign I presented my vision for the electorate. I ran a positive and high-energy campaign focused on improving the liveability for my now constituents. To deal with future growth in the region the Government is delivering in the key areas of roads, transport, tourism, education, health, cultural development, open space and sporting infrastructure.

In health, the Government will spend \$120 million on the stage 1 and 2 redevelopment of Bowral and District Hospital—the biggest infrastructure spend in a generation for the Southern Highlands—and, as my first official act as the newly elected member for Wollondilly, I had the honour of turning the first sod. I thank Minister Hazzard for this announcement and look forward to working with NSW Health to get the best outcome for my constituents. In education, the Government is currently re-developing Picton High School to the tune of \$102 million and planning a new public school from kindergarten to year 12 at Wilton Junction. In culture, I thank the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC, for his strong support of the Southern Highlands Regional Art Gallery and renowned artist Ben Quilty for his leadership.

Sport plays a major role in Wollondilly. During the campaign I made it a priority to build strong relationships with sporting clubs across all the codes and, as a self-identifying sports tragic of many years standing, it was an enjoyable task. I recently made a comeback to rugby for the mighty Bowral Blacks. I walked away with two cracked ribs, a torn hammy and general soreness all over. Yes, I am looking forward to the next game with the golden oldies. During the campaign we delivered and committed significant funding for several projects across the electorate to improve facilities for players and supporters, and in the years to come I will continue to fight for more funding. The importance of sport for the development of our youth is well known; it is one of the best investments we can make for future generations.

Wollondilly has the potential to be the tourism hub of New South Wales. The Southern Highlands is already a highly sought after tourism destination. However, close to the centre of my electorate lies a sleeping giant, which is about to be woken—namely, the re-opening of the Picton to Mittagong loop line for heritage trains between Thirlmere and Colo Vale. That is right, Mr Speaker, toot, toot, all aboard! Also during the recent campaign, through hard work, a successful petition, great public support and a strong media campaign, I was able to secure \$5.5 million to bring this dream alive. The loop line, which is a 34-kilometre single track, was built in the 1860s, but it has not been in use for 44 years. It also has the deepest rail cutting in the Southern Hemisphere, located at Hill Top. This funding will allow heritage trains to use the entire length of the track between Thirlmere and Colo Vale. This will deliver an amazing tourist experience and, more importantly, help to drive more customers to local businesses and create more employment opportunities.

Each year the NSW Rail Museum at Thirlmere, which is one the best museums in the country, welcomes around 60,000 patrons. This project will value-add to the museum and it is hoped that in the future it will rival, and eventually topple, a similar steam train attraction in Victoria, located in the Dandenong Ranges just east of Melbourne, known as Puffing Billy. This attraction currently attracts around 480,000 patrons each year. By 2027, due to current State and Federal Government investment, this attraction is predicted to receive 730,000 patrons, which represents a huge economic benefit to the region. I want Wollondilly to exceed the Victorian tourism numbers, and today I call on our State and Federal governments to invest in stage two and bring steam all the way to Mittagong.

In my electorate there are two local government areas, being Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shire councils. Both have received much criticism in recent times. I want to work with both councils to improve the community perceptions as they work through the challenges they are facing. As a member of this Government, I believe we need to look at giving councillors more of say over the operation of their organisations, considering that they are the democratically elected representatives of ratepayers. To achieve this we may have to make amendments to the Local Government Act. My role is to improve community confidence in councils, just as they have confidence in our State Government.

My idea is to create more local jobs so that my constituents do not have to spend hours in a car or on a bus or train getting to and from work—valuable time that could be spent with their family—by creating an economic development State environmental planning policy [SEPP]. This economic development SEPP would assist to turbocharge job opportunities in my region and greater New South Wales, and would enable a more rapid response to business development proposals for employment areas by going straight to the State Government as the consent authority. Clearly, this will need consultation and I am sure we can find goodwill on both sides of the House to consider this option.

I have been fortunate in life to come from a loving and generous family, which gave me every opportunity to achieve my goals. I am the third and middle child of five children. Growing up in the 1980s was an absolute joy. Malcolm Fraser was Prime Minister, followed by Bob Hawke—may they both rest in peace. The Tigers made two grand finals. Australia won the America's Cup. *Crocodile Dundee* featured around the globe. Australia was on the world map. It was a great time! Like any young man I had dreams of rugby and cricket glory. I played at a good level, won a few premierships, scored a few tons but ran into a couple of injuries.

At 16 I took up a plumbing apprenticeship. I went on to become a tradesman, leading hand and foreman, and then to eventually run my own small business. Things were going well in my twenties until April 2008. I was a leading contractor on a large development site in north-west Sydney. Business was good; I had plenty of work. While working on site I had a split-second lapse in concentration, which led to an accident that nearly severed my left index finger—I nearly lost it. The doctors said the injury was almost irreparable and I would lose some function in my left hand. I feared that my business and livelihood would never be the same again. I had the operation later that night. Within days, I was stitched up and back at work, taking care and pressing ahead. As many of you know, when you run a small business—when you are the small business—you bear all the responsibility and the risk. It is all on the line and sometimes unexpected events like that happen. I was determined not to let it set me back. I made a full recovery.

I mention this experience because from it I learned a lot about myself—which was that, with tenacity, determination and perseverance, anything is possible. Not long after this I was given an opportunity to join a public relations and marketing firm, in which I worked with businesses and governments at all levels for around 5½ years. I thank Bill, who is up there in the gallery today, for giving me this opportunity. During this time I furthered my education by attaining a graduate certificate, graduate diploma and finally a Master of Arts in Organisational Communications at Charles Sturt University. I then took up a role in running a Federal Senator's office in Wollongong: Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, who is also here today. Connie has been a great mentor of mine for many years, and still is to this day. Thank you, Connie, for the role that you played in my political journey.

Just before being preselected as the Liberal Candidate for Wollondilly, I was an adviser to the Hon. Anthony Roberts, MP—commonly known in this House as "Robbo". Minister, it was absolute honour working for you and I thank you for the countless hours of doorknocking and visits during the campaign. It gives me great joy to serve with you in this House. My involvement with the Liberal Party started in 2003 when I joined the NSW Young Liberals. I was first encouraged to join by our now Treasurer and Deputy Leader, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, MP, who convinced me to get involved.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** Sorry!

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** Yes, he's to blame. As a tradie, I was a bit different from your typical Young Liberal. I moved up the ranks quickly, from Young Liberal branch president to a State conference president and a campaign director on many local, State and Federal campaigns. I was then elected as a member of the New South Wales State Executive. During that time there were many highs and lows, which is part and parcel of political life. The greatest high was talking my father into running for Parliament in 2006, along with a few others. He was not a member of the party, due his position at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. He said no at first but then eventually said yes—he still blames me for it to this day. One of my greatest joys was sitting in a seat in the advisers' area 12 years ago to hear him deliver his maiden speech on the opposite side of the House. Now I am standing here delivering my maiden speech on this side of the House and he is sitting in the public gallery with mum.

Family, flag, freedom, faith, free enterprise—this framework underpins the values I stand for. I stand for limited government, lower taxes and less regulation. I believe Australia is at its best when it focuses on what unites its people, not what makes its people different from each other. Political correctness in this country has gone too far. We saw that during the recent Federal election campaign. Citizens of this great country rejected the extreme left-wing agenda that was being imposed on every Christian, Catholic and independent school across the country. We saw a war on the coal industry just to appeal to the latte-sipping lefties who live in inner-city seats, with no regard for regional areas such as my electorate.

The farmers, tradies, small business owners, mums and dads who work their guts out, day in and day out, with the ambition to get ahead and the self-funded retirees, who are not relying on the public purse, rejected Bill Shorten's extreme left-wing agenda. This agenda can only be defeated when it is confronted and called out, and that is exactly what happened on 18 May 2019. I know the pressure on small business owners to put food on their family's and employees' tables. Small business does not need help from government; small business needs government to get out of the way. I support the citizen in the battle against big government and I do not believe that the wages of the State should grow faster than the wages of the people who fund it. I support the farming and livestock industry because animal protein has been vital to human development. The role of government is to provide a helping hand when people cannot help themselves and to enable people to be their best.

Energy must be affordable and reliable. I support the construction of more high-efficiency, low-emission coal-fired power plants to keep power prices low for our citizens. I believe in renewables—I used to install them—but they are not at a level to replace baseload power at this stage. The technology exists to consider the introduction of waste-to-energy plants and I will be encouraging our Government to look at this as an additional means for power generation. I believe childhood is a period of innocence. I want to see schools teach core skills, not agendas. I want my children to learn about history, geography, mathematics, Western civilization, science and the arts; not Safe Schools, gender fluidity and other forms of Marxist brainwashing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have been lenient with visitors in the public gallery, but they should clap only at the end of the member's speech.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** So much of our intellectual tradition comes from our Judeo-Christian history. We need to recognise this, embrace it, and make sure it has a place in our classrooms and curriculum. I want to see communities that care for our elderly in a compassionate and dignified way; infrastructure that enables us to move quickly and efficiently; paths that are well lit, with space for a pram; open spaces that enable everyone to participate in their favourite pastime; and trains that run on time, and often. I love the unique character

of the Wollondilly electorate. I will be a champion for my electorate, its amenity, history and vitality for years to come.

Today I would not be standing here if was not for those who supported me to this point in my life—people such as Jerome Cox, Suzanne Fairhall, Zorica Kaye Smith, Ross Barwick, Andrew Brown, Rod Bosman, James Rigney, Stephen Sim, Councillors Paul Sedrak, Petros Kalligas and Ron Bezic, John Ruddick, Justin Owen, Ross Cameron, Liberal Party Federal Vice President Teena McQueen, Damien Pace, Edwin Nelson, James Flynn, Naji Najjar, Charles and Matthew Camenzuli, Gab Habib, Dee Zagarac, Matthew Murphy, Daniel Assaf, Andrew Selwyn, Steve Simat, Jeffery Wang, Christopher Holcroft, Patrick Doherty, Charles Perrottet, Michael Hughes, Christian Ellis, Robert Assaf, Paul Kim, David Clarke, the Hon. Damien Tudehope, MLC, and Kevin Conolly, MP—to name just a few.

I would like to single out those who mentored me, people like David Hayman, Tim James and Michael Cooke. I am thankful for their advice and encouragement. To those I worked with in Federal and State government—Wade McInerney, Janet Gray, Callum Fountain, Camillus O'Kane, Harry, John, Andrew Lewis, Robert Vellar, Doug Reuette, Sue Clark, Alex Fraser, Norm Lipson and Simon Babbage—I say thank you.

During the campaign my support reached far and wide, with events and announcements. I thank the Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, for her ongoing support and leadership, Deputy Premier John Barilaro, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, Ministers Harwin, Ayres, Roberts, Stokes, Hazzard, Upton, Williams, Constance, Kean, Speakman and Pavey, and the Hon. Matthew Mason Cox, MLC, for their commitments and assistance. But there is one person whom I must single out, and that is my great mate the Hon. Lou Amato, MLC—your knowledge of the region was invaluable to my campaign, and I say thank you.

To the Federal member for Hume and Minister for Energy, the Hon. Angus Taylor, I thank you for your commitment to my campaign and, more importantly, for your ongoing advice. I thank Liberal Party HQ, Chris Stone and his exceptional team for running a magnificent campaign both in March and at the recent Federal poll. To my SEC president Russell Matheson and branch presidents and loyal party members, I say thank you. In particular, I thank Bowral branch president Frank Conroy for his leadership and commitment throughout the campaign.

I thank my campaign committee: Kyle Kutasi, Dallas and Zoe McInerney, Jennifer Martin, John Rigden, Lionel Rodriguez, Jeff Gray, Darron Fenton, and especially Dylan Whitelaw—thank you, mate. The team was led by my fearless campaign manager, and my now senior electorate officer, Peter McLaughlin, who had great support from his wife, Patricia. I say a special thank you to them. I thank my hardworking campaign volunteers for putting up corflutes, letterboxing, manning street stalls and assisting at pre-poll and on polling day. I also thank John and Janine TaWeehel, Tina Bishop, Jan Conroy, Margaret Osborne, Janet Rigden, Colleen Rodriguez, Ryan Clarkstone, Hilton Gibbs, Councillor Michael Banasik, Michael and Toni Baume, Jo Down, Tim and Kelli Bennett Smith, Karl Klein, Cloe Brown and Bruno Lopreiato. I give special mention to Lorri and Richard Harrison for their boundless energy, commitment and prayers during the campaign.

To Charlie and Elwyn Di Francesco: Your friendship and generosity to my family and me was extraordinary. I thank you. The support of my brother-in-law, Christopher, and my in-laws, Maurice and Michele, has been legendary—they miss the kids so much they are currently moving to the Southern Highlands in the coming weeks, and I welcome a couple more primary votes. To my immediate family, my older brother, Benedict, and his wife, Julianna, with their six children—yes, they are Catholic—who are wonderful nieces and nephews in Tasmania; my older sister, Dominica, and her husband, Matthew; my little brother, Jerome, and his wife, Siobhan, and my nephew and niece, William and Adelaide; and my little sister, Philomena, and her husband, Adrian, who are in the process of adopting a son, WooSol from South Korea, and I look forward to meeting my future nephew: Your support, love and friendship has helped forged the man who stands before you in this House today.

My parents have been the main influence throughout my life. My mother has put God and her children at the centre of her life; her devotion to us has been beyond measure. To my father: Unlike you, Dad, I will not be singing in this House, or in the corridors of Parliament, but I will be following your advice throughout my life—to always act with integrity and be the best husband, father and MP that I can be. In your valedictory speech in late 2014 you finished with the following quote from St Thomas More: "I die the King's faithful servant, but God's first." My parents have always taught my siblings and me to put God at the centre of our lives.

To my two little angels, Charlotte and Chloe: You are both growing up so fast and, even with this busy role, I will make sure that I do not miss out on seeing you grow into strong, faithful and beautiful women like your mother. And finally to my wife, Christine: You have sacrificed so much for me to be standing here before you all today. You are the best wife and mother any man could ever ask for. You are my inspiration and the love of my life. I love you and I thank you for supporting me through the highs and lows, and the good times ahead. Thank you all and God bless.



*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

**The SPEAKER:** As members appropriately congratulate the new member for Wollondilly, on behalf of the House I extend a warm welcome to the guests of the member for Wollondilly, particularly the Hon. Greg Smith, former Attorney General of New South Wales; Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells; his Most Reverend Excellency Richard Umbers, Auxiliary Bishop, Sydney Archdiocese; and Teena McQueen, Federal Vice-President of the Liberal Party of Australia. I also acknowledge His Worship the Mayor of Wollondilly, Councillor Mathew Deeth; and the Hon. David Clarke, former member of the upper House.

**The SPEAKER:** We will now hear the inaugural speech of the new member for Camden. I extend a warm welcome to the guests of the member for Camden who are present in the public gallery today: his wife, Amy Sidgreaves, and his four children; his mother-in-law, Cheryl Brown; his parents, Mr and Mrs Sidgreaves; and his brothers and sisters. I also acknowledge the staff from the Camden electorate office. I am sure they all rejoice in what we are about to hear from the member for Camden.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:56):** Mr Speaker, I congratulate you on your appointment to the role. I am honoured and privileged to present my inaugural speech this afternoon in Australia's oldest Parliament in front of my family, friends and colleagues. I am here as the member for Camden, elected by the people of Camden. The Camden electorate is located in the south-west of Sydney and is steeped in history, heritage and natural beauty. At the same time, Camden is one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia. In 1856 when New South Wales first gained self-government Camden was an important agricultural district for Sydney. In 1859 it returned two members to the first Parliament.

In 1920 the Camden electorate was abolished with the introduction of proportional representation and did not reappear as an electorate until 1981. Since the second incarnation of the Camden electorate you could say that it has been a swinging electorate, with Liberal winning seven times and Labor winning four times. It is true that Camden generally swings based on the redistributions. When the redistributions move south towards Wollondilly, Liberal tends to win. However, when the redistributions move to the east towards Campbelltown, Labor tends to win. My plan is to buck this trend by working hard, engaging with and listening to the people of Camden and delivering on the commitments that I make.

The Camden electorate currently covers 331 square kilometres and includes suburbs such as parts of Luddenham and Badgerys Creek in the north, Austral and Leppington in the east, Camden South and Camden Park in the south, and Cobbitty and Greendale to the west. The 2016 Census states the population of the Camden State electoral division as 88,202. It would now be over 100,000 and is expected to grow to 250,000 by 2036. Given the forecast growth, it is clear that the delivery of roads, rail, education and health infrastructure, and services is required—and it should be delivered before or at the same time as the growth in population arrives. The census data also reported that the median age of people living in Camden is 34. Children aged zero to 14 make up 23.5 per cent of the population, which is higher than the State and national median ages, and people aged 65 years and older make up 11.1 per cent of the population, which is lower than the State and national median ages.

Given the growth in population expected in Camden and the fact that almost 25 per cent of residents are children, it is incumbent upon this Government to continue to build more schools and upgrade existing schools in the Camden electorate. Further, the data also reported that 15 per cent of people aged 15 and older living in Camden completed school to year 12. This is comparable to the State and national completion rates for year 2. However, only 15.6 per cent of people aged 15 years and older reported that they had completed a bachelor level degree or above, which is well below the State and national completion rates. Having said that, 30.5 per cent of people aged 15 years and older reported they had completed an advanced diploma, diploma, certificate IV or certificate III, which is higher than the State and national completion rates. The data demonstrates significant opportunities for tertiary education options, including universities.

The data also demonstrates a high level of demand for TAFE services by people aged 15 or older in Camden. This is why I wholeheartedly support the Government's campaign commitment to build a new \$80 million state-of-the-art Western Sydney TAFE campus that will train the next generation in trades including carpentry, construction, electrical and plumbing. The 2016 Census data reported that, of the people living in Camden who reported being in the labour force, 64.2 per cent were employed full time, 26.5 per cent were employed part time and 4.1 per cent were unemployed. The percentage of people employed is above the State and national employment numbers, while the employment numbers for part-time employment and the unemployed are lower than the State and national employment numbers. The data also reported that people aged 15 or older living in Camden had personal, family and household median incomes higher than State and national median incomes.

This suggests to me that Camden has a strong local economy. Further data shows that 65 per cent of workers leave the region to attend work. This suggests to me that Camden needs to create more local and diverse

jobs. That is why I moved a motion in Camden Council in 2013 to establish the Camden Region Economic Taskforce. The goal of the taskforce is two-fold: first, to create an environment where existing businesses can thrive and grow, and employ more locals; and, secondly, to attract new investment into Camden that will create local and diverse jobs above and beyond those created by the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport located in the north of the Camden electorate.

The 2016 Census data also reported that 73.5 per cent of people living in Camden travelled to work by car, either as a driver or a passenger, which is higher than State and national numbers. Only 7.8 per cent of people living in Camden travel to work by public transport, which is below State and national numbers. Given the population of Camden will grow to approximately 250,000 by 2036 and given the number of registered motor vehicles, coupled with the knowledge that 73.5 per cent of people living in Camden travel to work by car, it is clear that Camden needs road infrastructure. This is why one of my main priorities is to see further investment in local roads. The data also shows the need for better public transport, particularly rail.

I know that this Government has committed to building the North South line between Badgerys Creek and St Marys by 2026, when the airport opens. I would like to speak to the Ministers about the possibility of delivering the continuation of this line down to Narellan and beyond to MacArthur sooner than what is currently planned. While the 2016 Census data is comprehensive, it must be complemented by continuous feedback from residents. This is why I will be out in the community talking and listening to as many people as I can on all matters.

Camden has a number of historical, cultural and natural assets including, to name a few, the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan; the Alan Baker Art Gallery at the historic Macaria House; Belgenny Farm; the Camden Museum; Camden Bicentennial Equestrian Park; and the Camden Town Farm. Camden also has a number of historical houses and homesteads including Camden Park House, circa 1835; Harrington Park House, circa 1817; Orielton House, circa 1815; Gledswood Homestead, circa 1830; and many more. I strongly encourage people from Sydney and beyond to come and visit. This is also why one of my main priorities is to preserve the history, heritage and natural beauty of Camden.

Now a little bit about myself: I was born on the lower North Shore of Sydney and I am the sixth child of nine children. For the first 10 years of my life, my family lived in Castle Cove. My memories of Castle Cove include playing rugby for Roseville from the age of five and then for Chatswood; sneaking into Innisfallen Castle, which was a private residence at the time; being taught to ride a bike by my brother who simply took me to the top of a steep driveway and then let me go; and our family of 11 living in a four-bedroom house for a couple of years while our next house was being built.

Our family then moved into our new house in Pymble. The only problem was that there was no electricity and therefore no hot water for the first six weeks or so. I am sure this was not easy for Mum, who had to cook, shower and wash clothes for the family at a friend's house. Our family spent the next 10 years at Pymble, although I spent much of this time boarding at St Joseph's College, Hunter's Hill, as did my father before me and my brothers. My memories of Pymble include spending a lot of time outside swimming and playing cricket and tennis with friends and brothers and sisters. I think our being outside was the only way Mum coped.

After finishing school I went to the Australian Catholic University and studied a Bachelor of Business, Marketing and International Studies. I completed two years of the three years before I decided to take some time off. Unfortunately, I never returned and for a long time, this was my greatest regret. Shortly afterwards, I started working at my father's business, where I worked with my brother Michael and my sister Louise for the next few years. While I only spent a few years working there, I learnt a lot about what it takes to own and operate a small business. I also learnt that not only do you work long hours but also the work never leaves your thoughts—day or night, weekday or weekend. Further, I also learnt that small business owners put their livelihoods on the line and while there are rewarding times, there are also tough times.

And there was even the recession we had to have. While I was only 15 at the time, I still vividly remember the stress in my father when that ominous announcement was made. One of the things I am most proud of is the fact that my father's family business has now been operating for 102 years. Next, I moved into information technology, where I have spent the last 19 years. I spent four years working with multinational IT organisations Compaq and Hewlett-Packard. For the past 15 years I have worked with Sydney Catholic Schools, first as an IT engineer and for the last 10 years as an IT manager. I also managed to complete a Masters of Management in Information Technology at Charles Sturt University, which relieved me of the regret I mentioned previously.

In September 2001, I met my wife, Amy. Eleven months later I proposed to Amy and we have been married for 15 years. We have four beautiful daughters: Lani, who is eight; Kaiyah, who is six; and twins Brielle and Zara, who are three, all of whom we love with all of our hearts and are extremely proud of. While Amy was born and bred in Camden, our decision to establish our home in the area represented the opportunities we could see for our future family. Amy, I sincerely want to thank you for your support. Without it, I would not be standing

here today. I know the 12 weeks of the election campaign were particularly difficult for you. I want to thank you for your dedication and perseverance looking after our family almost single-handedly. Thank you for being here today. I love you.

Lani, Kaiyah, Brielle and Zara, I also want to thank you for being here today and for making the day more special for me. Girls, I want you to know that all of you are a big reason why I entered politics. Firstly, by being elected to Camden Council almost seven years ago and more recently to State Parliament. Given the growth of Camden, I want to ensure that everything that is great about Camden today is there for you as you grow up. I love all of you—and Lani, happy ninth birthday for Thursday.

I have spoken about how Amy looked after our family almost single-handedly. I would now like to thank Amy's parents, Gary and Cheryl Brown, for all the help and support you have given Amy and the girls. Your help and support have not only been during the election campaign, rather ongoing for years. I would especially like to say a big thank you to Mum and Dad. Thank you for everything that you have done for our family. Both of you have unconditionally loved and cared for us. Thank you for the many sacrifices made and the lessons taught for the betterment of your children. My core values of honesty, diligence and compassion are because of the way you raised us. I thank you for this and I love you both dearly.

To my brothers and sisters, Donna, David, Louise, Nicole, Michael, Jacinta, Daniel, and Virginia, thank you for everything you have contributed to my life. It is because of you that I have such a strong sense of family. When I look back on our times growing up together, two thoughts always come to my mind. The first thought is that if you do not make sure you are heard at the dinner table then no-one will listen; and my second thought is that at any given point in time you may be fighting with one of your siblings; however, you always have several others to play with. I would also like to thank my lifelong mates. I would especially like to thank Ash, Dave, Nick, Matt and DG. We have been good mates for more than 25 years and we have helped and supported each other for that time. I want to thank each of you for your friendship. I would also like to thank Father David Catterall, my friend and parish priest at St Mary MacKillop Catholic Parish, Oran Park.

Even though I was raised a Catholic, attended Catholic schools, attended Mass every Sunday—or almost every Sunday—and prayed the rosary countless times with my father, these were all done because I was asked or told to. Similar to our parents, Amy and I wanted to raise our girls as Catholics. However, it was not until we took the girls to mass with Father David that I felt I was attending mass not only for our kids, but for me as well. Father David, your contemporary style is engaging and our parish is testament to this. Thank you for engaging me and my family and for restoring my faith.

I now thank my campaign team. The campaign team consisted of Teresa Fedeli, Debby Dewbery, Diana Zammit and David Tricca. Your individual campaign experience, knowledge, and skills in your own specialised areas is greatly appreciated. Without each of you I do not think I would be here today. Thank you. I also thank all volunteers who helped during the election campaign and on election day. Whether you volunteered by putting a poster in your front yard, doorknocking, letterboxing, attending street stalls, assisting with phone canvassing, pre-poll, setting up booths, working on a booth or in any other way, I sincerely thank you for taking the time to help me get elected. I will not name you all; however, I am sure each of you know exactly who you are. I am grateful for your help. I say a special thanks to Christian Martinazzo, Julia Kokic, Rebekah Cromie and Romel Tallow, who each volunteered countless hours during the campaign and on election day, supporting me. I am extremely grateful for everything that you have done.

I now thank my predecessor. Thank you Chris for stepping down. Chris believes that he belongs to a rare and distinguished club. That is a club of members of Parliament who stood down on their own terms. Seriously, on behalf of the people of Camden, I thank you for your 17 years of service, first on council and, up until recently, State Parliament. Personally, I thank you Chris for your continuing advice—whether I wanted it or not. Chris, you should be proud of what you have achieved during your time in council and Parliament and I wish you the very best in your future endeavours.

I now thank the people of Camden who put their trust in me and elected me to be their representative in this House. I commit to the people of Camden that every decision I make as the member of Camden I will make with the people of Camden at the forefront of my mind. I pledge that I will work hard to achieve the priorities I campaigned on and will humbly serve the people of Camden. To reiterate, as the elected member for Camden, my priorities are preserving the history, heritage and natural beauty of Camden, building new schools, investing in local roads, easing the cost of living and creating more local and diverse jobs. In conclusion, as part of this Government, I will use my core values of honesty, diligence and compassion to serve the people of Camden. I will fight hard to deliver the local infrastructure and services needed to make Camden an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

**The SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for East Hills I extend a warm welcome to her guests in the public gallery. I welcome her husband, John Lindsay; her daughters Lori and Ruby; her father, Colin Fullagar, and his partner, Sandra; and her mother, Janet Hamilton, and her partner, Robert. I also welcome her grandmother, Myrtle Fullagar; her sister Narelle Randall and her husband, Kevin; sisters Any Broome and Yvette Douglas; and parents-in-law, Ian and Yvonne Lindsay.

I acknowledge the former member for East Hills, Glenn Brookes and his wife, Karen, as well as Dr Peter Phelps, who was formerly a member of the Legislative Council. He has seen the light and come over here. I also acknowledge John Shields, Vietnam veteran and local East Hills resident; Emani Alaalatoa, President of the La'u Samoa Association; and Paul Burgess, the Senior Vice-President of the Canterbury-Bankstown Tennis Association. I welcome Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells and Mary-Lou Jarvis, Vice-President of the New South Wales Liberal Party and President of the New South Wales Liberal Women's Council, as well as Deputy Mayor of Woollahra Municipal Council. I know all of us are special to the member for East Hills and I am sure that you will join me in welcoming her. I now call on the member for East Hills to give her address.

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:30):** I welcome my guests and thank them for coming, especially those who have come from interstate. In my youth, I spent many a cold frosty morning playing competition tee-ball and softball in Kelso Park, representing Revesby Heights ex-servicemen's club. I begin my speech today by reading a piece from *Our Fairyland*, written by John Kelso in the 1920s:

East Hills, a district fair  
Happy homes are located there  
It's green fields, fertile soil  
Reward the worker for his toil.  
We have historic fame,  
We bear Sir Joseph Banks' name.

East Hills is indeed a district fair. The electorate is diverse in its ethnicities, its economies and its geography. The indigenous population consists of the Darug people of the Eora Nation. Historically it was a farming area with many market gardens and chicken farms. Now there are the industrial areas of Padstow, Revesby, Milperra and Condell Park. There are retail spaces amongst our villages and there is also still some farming left in the area, with one of the last equine and produce stores in the Sydney metropolitan area, located in Condell Park—a business that has been established for nearly 60 years and my father-in-law Ian has been a customer for at least 50 of those years.

Almost 50 per cent of the people in the East Hills area have a parent who was not born in Australia. Women outnumber the men; however, most households consist of families who are undertaking the great Australian dream of owning their own home and paying off a mortgage. East Hills is about 30 kilometres south-west from this place and is indeed unique. We have our own airport, horseracing track, hospital, river and national park. I grew up with the bush as my backyard—well, via the gate in the back fence of my best friend Jo-Ellen's house, who lived across the street anyway. With my annoying younger sister Narelle in tow, whose legs never seemed long enough to keep up with us, we jumped over rocks, caught lizards and watched birds. My sister would pick flowers to take home to our nan and if we ventured as far as the Georges River, which was actually out of bounds, we would go in search of tadpoles and hope that the older boys that lived in the street did not give us too much of a hard time in the process, or dob us in for being out of bounds.

That is the East Hills that I grew up in: the bush, the river, the kids in the street, the neighbours, all the aunties you had that were not really your aunt and when everyone that was the same age as your parents was referred to only as a Mr, a Mrs or an aunt. When the older boys would let us, we would play cricket on the street with them. The days of street cricket have largely gone. Most people in our area can afford a car now, if not two, and getting your feet burnt on the road during summer because you were not wearing shoes is a thing of the past, as is having to move the cardboard box—that is the wicket—so that the annoying 21-year-old up the road driving the Monaro does not run it over for kicks. It was a great place to grow up. It was a tough place to grow up. It was the hood. My grandparents were one of the first couples to build a house on Sandakan Road in Revesby Heights and moved their young family there after World War II. My grandfather was a gunner in the Australian Air Force during the war. I never heard him speak of it—ever. Many of the streets in Revesby Heights are named after significant World War II sites. This, in turn, gave the area its nickname, Hero's Hill.

My grandfather was always a hero to me. He could fix anything with a two-inch nail and a piece of string. He may not have fixed it very well but it would do, because he always made do with what he had. He had a big booming baritone voice and he didn't like greedy kids. So we never asked for anything extra; we didn't need to, because he spoilt us anyway. My grandparents grew vegetables, kept chickens, had a big mulberry tree that all the other kids in the neighbourhood were happy about so they could keep silkworms and nan would make mulberry pies—the best. The mulberry tree is gone now, but my nan, Myrtle, still lives in the same house in Sandakan Road, still grows vegetables and she turns 90 this year.

**Government and Opposition members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY:** But don't tell her I told you. I went to Revesby South Public School and Picnic Point High School, as did my father, Colin, before me. I always enjoyed school. I was a pretty good student and was vice captain at both schools. I had a great social network through school and to this day I am still in contact with many of my fellow students. Several of them are here today. Three couples from my year at Picnic Point High ended up getting married—the Dalys, the Walshs and the Lindsays. All of us still live in the area. I met my husband, John, at Picnic Point High and we have been married for 23 years. We have travelled the world together and have two beautiful girls, Lori and Ruby. John is one of the most genuine, funny and kind humans you will ever meet. He has now been aptly named by his mates the First Bloke of East Hills.

The gravity of being the first female elected in the seat of East Hills did not really hit me until writing this speech. It is an absolute honour to be able to represent the area I love and to be the first woman to do so. I have always said to my girls that they can achieve anything they want to in this world if they are prepared to work hard for it. Their future opportunities have been forged by the groundwork of the many women before them, who have paved the way for a fairer and more equal society where women can have as many opportunities as men. As I stand here in this place, the oldest Parliament in Australia, we are led by the first elected female Premier of this great State, Gladys Berejiklian.

I have been fortunate to have many fantastic female role models in my life: my nan, who is the solid foundation of our family; my aunty Rhondda, who has always been there for me and is the epitome of patience with her work with special needs children; my aunty Lyn—one of those aunts who isn't really an aunt, but was one of the first females in the ANZ Bank to be "allowed" to be a part of the foreign banking team—and my mother-in-law Yvonne, who is the Aussie version of Carol Brady. She married John's father Ian, after he lost his first wife, Pam, to cancer when John was only four years of age. That merger consisted of four girls and two boys, and Christmas lunch is now a minimum of 36 people. That's a lot of salads, hey!

All my mother's sisters have had successful businesses and careers, as has my own mother, Jan, who was named one of the top 50 female entrepreneurs in Australia in 2015. It is a tough act to follow but with mentors such as these, I have always strived to emulate their successes and strengths in everything that I do. Having these role models taught me how to be brave and give anything a go, and they eventually led me to where I am today. I have studied, lived and worked overseas, managed teams of people in the corporate worlds of information technology and insurance, toughed it out in the construction industry and also worked in the not-for-profit sector in community radio. My work in community radio and the many years spent volunteering for Padstow Park Public School P&C, Panania RSL Youth Swim Club and Bankstown Theatre Company has forged great connections in my local community and brought me into contact with many different cultures, religions and people from vastly different socio-economic backgrounds. These connections strengthened my resolve to run as the candidate for East Hills, as I always felt that I would be the best local voice to represent them in this place.

My connection to the Liberal Party is largely due to both of my parents having their own businesses. My parents showed me how hard the owners of small businesses work. Small business is the backbone of our economy and our success within those family businesses was often determined by who was in government. Only the Liberal Party understands small businesses and what they need, and appreciates the way in which they put food on the tables of so many families in our country. My great uncle Jack was a triplet in one of the first sets of triplets to be born in the Crown Street Women's Hospital. There are photos of the triplets with Billy McMahon holding them, so my family's connection to the Liberal Party goes way back to then. Uncle Jack was a master craftsman, a small business owner and built the original lifts in the new Parliament House in Canberra. He was an avid supporter of the former member for Hughes, Danna Vale, and she was often at functions that he held in his home in Yowie Bay. Uncle Jack is no longer with us, but I know he is looking down on me today, with a glass of wine in his hand and a big Uncle Jack Hicks Liberal loving smile on his face.

Music has been a big part of my life. I have trodden the boards for decades here in Australia and internationally. For the past 12 years I have portrayed June Carter Cash in the Johnny Cash show *Cash Only*. It is a seven-piece show, with a crew totalling 10 and we have travelled the country performing. The show is a testament of true friendship and musicianship and the large majority of those 10 people have performed and worked together for the good part of a decade. It is not only a testament to friendship but also our respect for each other, as a band is not an easy dynamic to get right—a bit like a political party, really. You have your members from the Left, the centre and the Right, and as long as everyone gets their turn in the spotlight, everyone generally stays pretty happy. There was much speculation that I would sing a song instead of say a speech at this auspicious occasion—so I won't. I turned to June Carter for words of inspiration:

June was a wildwood flower,  
with waving brown hair,  
with roses so red,

and lilies so fair.  
The myrtle was so bright  
with the emerald dew,  
and she was cherished  
and loved by all that she knew.

June penned the lyrics that when bound by wild desire one would fall into a ring of fire. She walked the line with Johnny Cash and their story has added much to my own over the years. I was 14 when the music teacher, Jon Smith, at Picnic Point High School discovered that I could sing. He was a great advocate for musical theatre and due to his dedication our school was well known for the shows that we performed, including the Australian premiere of *Dear World*. The genre has always been a passion of mine and led to the creation of a radio program that I hosted named *CHOOKAS*. It was funded by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and promoted community theatre in Sydney and was syndicated to Adelaide to promote theatre in that region too. It has afforded me great friends amongst that vast community and my long association with Bankstown Theatre Company. Musical theatre has taught me many things. You are never fully dressed without a smile and, in my case, without a pair of heels. It's all politics, and what's that got to do with us? And if just one person believes in you deep enough and strong enough then don't be anything less than anything you can be.

There was one person who believed in me enough for this journey: Glenn Brookes. He watched the local girl with no political experience make every mistake you could in the 2017 local council elections running as an independent. She was ungrouped, below the line, had no budget and not much campaign time. She had, however, read many council meeting minutes, had a small army of letterbox droppers, dedicated locals who were happy to have her face in their space, and showed true grit showing up to pre-poll on her own every day. With the odds against her, by some miracle—and who in the Liberal Party doesn't love a good miracle?—she managed to achieve over 4 per cent of the primary vote, whilst only being able to man five booths on election day.

It was not enough on that occasion to get her over the line, but Glenn could see in me the same East Hills heart as himself, with the best interests of our local community always at the forefront of our intentions. I will be forever grateful to him for his belief in me and breaking the 58-year-old Labor stronghold on our area and forging a new path for our electorate where significant outcomes are achieved. Brooksey never blew his own trumpet—he never did—so I am thrilled to be able to do it for him now. His achievements were many, including a new commuter car park for Padstow; a complete train station upgrade at Panania including a new covered walkway, ramps and lifts; countless projects at schools and associations with outcomes such as my personal favourite, new kitchen classrooms at Sir Joseph Banks High and Padstow Park Public School; new clubhouses and resurfacing of tennis courts; and a cath lab and five new dialysis machines for Bankstown Hospital.

The new hospital for Bankstown was part of Glenn's big picture vision for our area. He fought hard for it. I look forward to bringing his vision to life and being a part of this Liberal State Government's plans for the largest ever spend on a public hospital in New South Wales. The hospital project, the widening of Henry Lawson Drive, a new Service NSW centre, more commuter car spaces for Revesby, a hall for Milperra Public School and a new clubhouse for Marco Reserve are just some of the fantastic things planned for East Hills by the Berejiklian State Government. I have no doubt that these projects, as well as the everyday concerns of the constituents of East Hills, will keep my staff and me busy over the next four years. I hope you are ready, guys. It is going to be big.

Besides Glenn, there are many people who helped me get to this place. They include Richard Noonan, my right-hand man and campaign manager, and the unflappable Ruth Le Bas, my left-hand girl. We spent many an hour together in 2017 on pre-poll at those ill-fated council elections and many more at the Revesby Young Men's Christian Association pre-poll in 2019 with a much better result. My A-team were the completely reliable Clayton Hopper, Dom Bondar, Gebran Habib, Harry Fuelling, William Derederanalagi, Alex Mishalow and Fouad Karam. We walked many miles door-knocking, spent many hours at train stations together and put up and pulled down many A-frames.

Early on in the campaign I had a couple of weeks with the guru, Peter Phelps. Peter literally taught me how to knock on a door and we spent some of the hottest February days ever out on the streets of Panania. We learnt that we made a great trivia team called The Camels but we also learned never to gamble all our points to take out the final win. Lou Amato also did some pretty hot days of door-knocking with me in our hometown of Padstow. He was with me on one of my less happy days on the campaign trail and gave me the most unorthodox advice. That advice was: At all times, never sound like a politician.

My flak jacket and fellow candidate was Councillor George Zakhia. I cannot thank him, his wife Mirielle and George's campaign manager Nick Smerdeley enough for their support throughout the campaign. George was my protector, my greatest advocate and an understanding soul who knew the pressure I was under, running in the most marginal seat in New South Wales. He knew how important it was for the Liberal party to hold the seat of East Hills. His team threw as much effort into his campaign as my team did with ours. It was an outstanding and commendable effort.

Another fellow candidate was Alister Henskens, alias Mr Smiley. Once Peter and Lou were occupied elsewhere Alister took up the East Hills flag with a smile and ran with it. Many more miles were door-knocked with Alister and he kept me focused at pre-poll whilst under attack from the nurses' union, other union members, Labor councillors, former Labor councillors, Labor State members, former Labor State members, former Labor Premiers and anything else Labor could find to throw at us. We were always outnumbered, but we were never outclassed. Alister's dedication to the East Hills team and his focus on the greater objective was exemplary.

Many others helped out throughout the campaign and during pre-poll, manned booths on election day and scrutineered afterwards. There were far too many to mention them all by name. I thank our Premier Gladys, the Upper House members and many Ministers who visited East Hills, my small army of letterbox droppers, and everyone that helped at pre-poll—particularly David Elliott, Robert Hamilton and the unstoppable Ivy Estaphan, who was absolutely outstanding. I thank those people who manned booths on election day and scrutineered afterwards. I also thank Eddie Nader and Kharen Brookes, who drove around on election day ensuring not only that the Liberal Party volunteers were fed and watered, but also that volunteers from the other parties were. On the day of the election it was fantastic to visit as many booths as I could in the electorate and see so many smiling volunteers wearing Liberal and true local T-shirts. I will be forever grateful for their support. I also thank Stephen Julian, who crunched the numbers, and my number one fan, my dad, who put up many a corflute. [*Extension of time*]

The Young Libs were fantastic and always seemed to show up right when I needed them the most. Nagendra Prasad Adhikari helped also, which was remarkable considering he was managing two other campaigns. Councillor Nancy Liu sent us people for pre-poll when we really needed them. I am grateful for the way that Emani Alaalatoa, Ranjeet Singh, Mr Lin and Michael Hong rallied their communities. I also note my great friends Pallavi Sinha, Mary Lou Jarvis and Natalie Ward. I thank them their contributions, encouragement and great big smiles. David Coleman and Vanessa Gaucci, David's campaign manager, have always been great supporters and were always confident that I could get it over the line. I thank them for their belief in me.

No Liberal election campaign in East Hills would be complete without the Walther family. Their dedication, passion and tenacity are what wins votes, as well as the fact that they are all very smart and can talk policy until the cows literally come home. I thank master campaigner Jim Daniels for everything that he did behind the scenes. Along with Michel Heloui, he manned what we affectionately called "Club Med", the Revesby pre-poll booth with water views. Last but not least, I give a big shout-out to Sandra Hawkes, who kept my family alive and still continues to deliver lasagne to our house at regular intervals to ensure that we have a home-cooked meal every now and then.

I have always been a great believer that one person can make a difference and be the catalyst for change. In the Chamber today is a special lady all the way from the Gold Coast—Dian Hammond. Many people would know her as Di Underwood. She founded Grandparents Rights Needs Support. Di was a champion for grandparents who, during the unfortunate circumstance of divorce, would lose access to their grandchildren. Di began the long hard fight through the family court system to secure rights for grandparents. I am sure she would say that there is much more to do in this space. However, without her initial campaigning at great personal sacrifice many grandparents would have lost contact with their grandchildren through no fault their own. In conversation with Di late last year, I told her that I was going to run for the seat of East Hills and give it my best shot. She turned to me and said, "No, Wendy. You are not going to give it your best shot; you are going to do better than your best." She was right.

East Hills has changed a great deal since my grandparents first moved there and it has changed a lot throughout my life. It is no longer full of Anglo-Saxon Christians; it is now like a mini United Nations with just about every religion and ethnic group possible. But a few things have not changed. East Hills is still peaceful and harmonious, it is still a great place for families and it is still full of aspirational hardworking battlers who want a good life and a better life for their children. As a true local, I understand them and will always do better than my best for them. Thank you.

*Members and officers stood in their places and applauded. [Business resumed.] [Business resumed.]*

#### *Bills*

### **AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019**

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:56):** Before continuing my contribution to debate I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam Deputy Speaker, on your promotion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Earlier today I foreshadowed that Labor will be introducing a number of amendments. I want to clarify that one of those amendments concerns the lack of explicit power for the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to refer matters to the police and to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It says "any other body".

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Why do you not just say "police"?

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Do you want me to name everybody?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister will come to order.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Minister, that is very important. As I said earlier, I had three questions for the Minister. I was outlining the third question when debate was interrupted. My third question is: Clause 13 (10) states that the commissioner must gain the consent of a vulnerable adult to conduct an investigation unless "the allegation is so serious that it is not necessary to obtain consent". Could the Minister provide an example of an allegation of abuse, neglect or exploitation of a person with disability or an older person that is not so serious that the obligation to obtain consent would be waived? I repeat, the Opposition supports the bill but we have a number of concerns. We do not want this to be a toothless tiger. I also urge the Minister to provide members with a timetable to review this—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It is in the bill: three years.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Three years. What about an interim report in, say, the next 18 months?

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It is called the annual report of the commissioner; it comes to Parliament.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Within the next 18 months to two years the commissioner will be doing a body of work and he will make a number of referrals to those bodies. I know we will have the annual report but it would also be good to have a report from the Minister about how the commission is operating. There will also be the transfer of the official visitors to that office. I can see from the work already done—not that I am a clairvoyant—and from the reportable incidents already on the public record that this commissioner is going to be very busy. I hope the Minister will look at this again in the next 12 to 18 months to ensure that there is budget capacity to increase these resources. Labor urges the Government to listen to our concerns. I am also hopeful that the upper House standing committee inquiry will report back within the week. I thank the House for the opportunity to make this contribution.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (18:00):** As the Minister for Seniors I am proud to support the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. This bill is the culmination of a number of strategies introduced by this Government over its previous two terms in office to support older people in our community and to ensure they can live safely and independently. Our ageing population has been a priority of this Government. We have continued to improve outcomes for older people through the implementation of the NSW Ageing Strategy 2016 to 2020, which creates opportunities for older people in New South Wales to participate in, contribute to and be included in their communities. The proportion of the population over the age of 65 is growing. In the 2017 census there were almost 1.3 million residents in New South Wales over the age of 65, and by 2031 that number is expected to increase by another half a million people.

The life expectancy of older Australians is also increasing, so the Government has a responsibility to assist this expanding cohort to live healthy, productive and fulfilling lives as they age. As people age they may acquire illness or impairment that limits them in managing their own lives. They become more reliant on the support of others to have their needs met and to manage their affairs. Unfortunately, for some older people the factors that make them vulnerable to abuse also contribute to their inability to disclose the abuse. It is kept hidden and unreported. They may be neglected, abused or exploited. Some may even have their life savings or their homes stolen by people who they know and trust. This is elder abuse and the new Ageing and Disability Commissioner will seek to tackle this.

Reports such as that from the 2016 parliamentary inquiry into elder abuse in New South Wales and the New South Wales Law Reform Commission's review of the Guardianship Act 1987 have highlighted the range and extent of elder abuse in our community. But the Government recognised the need for action before the release of those reports. It commenced a number of initiatives to support older people in our community and to address the issue of elder abuse. In the NSW Ageing Strategy 2016 to 2020 one of the key strategies was to extend funding for the Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit. This vital service, which was established in 2013, provides a



confidential point of contact where people who are experiencing abuse, concerned family members and friends, or professionals can seek guidance and referral.

The Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit also provides training and a suite of resources for communities and professionals across New South Wales. This important resource will now support the new Ageing and Disability Commission in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect. The New South Wales Government was actively involved in the development of the national plan to respond to the abuse of older Australians launched by Commonwealth Attorney-General Christian Porter in March this year. It will continue to work collaboratively to develop a comprehensive implementation plan.

By definition elder abuse can take various forms, such as physical, psychological, emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect. What is most alarming is that elder abuse often occurs in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. In a 2016 study the Australian Institute of Family Studies [AIFS] reported that between 2 per cent and 14 per cent of older Australians may experience elder abuse in any given year. The Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit is responding to this. Since its inception in 2013 the helpline has received more than 10,000 calls. The highest reported types of abuse are psychological and financial abuse. In 2017-18 the helpline received some 2,943 calls regarding alleged abuse of older people, which is an increase of almost 40 per cent from the previous year. Under the new commissioner the helpline will expand its services to become the NSW Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline.

Each day the helpline receives multiple calls of a harrowing nature. These calls include allegations of psychological abuse, threats, intimidation, humiliation and harassment. The allegations also involve the elderly being denied access to see family and friends or being prevented from making their own decisions. Many reports relate to financial abuse, where the elderly have had family and friends take money from their bank accounts, sell belongings without permission and force them to change a will. The helpline receives reports of neglect, including people not having their health needs met or being prevented from accessing medical services. Sadly reports are also made regarding instances of older people being physically or sexually abused by someone known to them. The report also notes instances of the elderly being hit, pushed and restrained or having unwanted sexual approaches, including being forced into sexual activity against their will.

This Government has no tolerance for such abuse and recognises that these reports must be adequately investigated and responded to to keep older people safe in New South Wales. The commissioner will have the power to investigate a report on matters such as these and will be able to refer matters for an appropriate response, including from the police. The role of the commissioner is broader than the investigation of reported matters. The commissioner will also be responsible for promoting community awareness of elder abuse and raising matters of concern with the Government. The aim is to ensure that over time the awareness of elder abuse is raised and the prevalence of abuse across the community declines. We all have a responsibility in this area. It is a responsibility to report abuse and neglect if we see it occurring.

This bill and its approach to elder abuse is informed by the Law Reform Commission's *Review of the Guardianship Act 1987* and General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2's parliamentary inquiry into elder abuse of 2016. The relevance and the timeliness of this bill is further highlighted by the establishment of the Commonwealth Royal Commission into Age Care Quality and Safety. This bill sets the scene for long-term cultural change. The reform is an opportunity to protect older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation in their homes or community by people they know and trust. The commissioner will provide a more consistent, efficient and robust approach to responding to and investigating allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of our older community.

The commission will work with carers by linking them to services that support them in continuing to provide effective and supportive caring environments. The New South Wales Government is determined to ensure that people not only live longer than ever before, but also live better than ever before. We want older people to live healthy, active and happy lives as they age. This vision is set out in the Government's NSW Ageing Strategy, which was released in 2012. The establishment of the position of commissioner strengthens the Government's protection of the most vulnerable adults in our community, including building a robust, protective system to prevent elder abuse. I welcome the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 to the House and I offer the Minister my congratulations and support on bringing forth this most important legislative reform and for his intense work in the area.

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (18:09):** Fletcher local Lachie Riggs is an absolute soccer tragic. When he was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome last year, 13-year-old Lachie was worried that he would not be able to play this season. Thankfully Northern NSW Football and Newcastle Football worked together to find a new side for Lachie to play in—the South Wallsend Junior Soccer Club stepped up. His mother, Janelle, told the *Newcastle Herald*:

There was a lack of education and willingness to be educated about Lachie's condition...we're hoping to spread the word as far as we can because the more people that know the more accepting they're going to be.

This week, noting that we have just celebrated Tourettes Awareness Week and with Lachie in mind, I asked the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans and the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning about awareness programs and systems to help young people diagnosed with the syndrome. Lachie would not be covered by the provisions of this bill, which aims to protect and promote the rights of adults with a disability and the elderly, but his case is illustrative of why we need to have these sorts of the protections. With the support of Janelle and his community Lachie's story had a happy ending. But not everyone who is diagnosed with a disability is so lucky nor are those in aged care.

Estimates from the Australian Bureau of Statistics state that 40,000 older people and 90,000 people with disability experience violence each year in this State. Those are staggering numbers but the prosecution rates remain low. Older Australians and people living with disability are some of the most vulnerable members of our community. They deserve protection against violence and exploitation. We need a professional government organisation in their corner, advocating for them without fear or favour. The abuse suffered by the elderly and those living with disability is coming to light thanks to greater community awareness and groundbreaking journalism. Still not enough is being to redress the harm that has been done.

This bill, and the establishment of the commissioner's office and advisory board, will go some way to doing something about this. One of the stated purposes of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner is to provide for community education and general advice and assistance to the public. The commissioner would also be in place to help people with disabilities and the elderly deal with allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The mandate to inquire into and report on systemic issues with aged care and disability services in New South Wales will ensure that the issues impacting elderly people and people living with disabilities are kept front and centre for this and all future governments.

A Cardiff resident, Julie Robinson, wrote to the *Newcastle Herald* about the experiences of her mother and mother-in-law in local aged care facilities. She said: There is some good and a lot wrong with life for people in aged care facilities...my mother lived in hostel care in a church-based facility. The food initially was reasonable but deteriorated over time. The meals, I was told, were adequate nutritionally but were chilled and brought in. There are big profits in bulk cooking but it is not good for residents who have to live on reheated food. It is cooking smells that give you an appetite and make you look forward to eating. She went on to say:

My mother-in-law was in a private facility which left a lot to be desired. During all the years she was there, first in low and then high care, she never had one outing. In fact, I doubt they had a bus. It was a little better than being in prison. The treatment of my loved ones didn't change in death. When my mother died they wanted her room cleared as quickly as possible, that is, the very next day. My mother-in-law's personal possessions were packed up into cardboard boxes by staff when she died. The elderly deserve a whole lot more than they are getting now.

As Julie said, part of this collapse in the standard of care can be linked back to the privatisation of aged care and disability care. When protecting and caring for the vulnerable becomes a money maker, companies will cut costs—and the standard of their services—to keep their profit margins strong. I have heard from workers in the sector who have reported that the standard of their employment, and of the care they are able to provide despite their best efforts, has dropped due to privatisation of services like Ageing, Disability and Home Care and a drop in funding. I am proud of my record on this issue, fighting to keep the Wallsend Aged Care Facility in public hands. I support efforts to add protections for the elderly and those living with disabilities. Although we will support the bill, I regret that it has taken so long for the Government to get to this point. I hope the Government will consider the amendments we offer so that this bill may be strengthened and people with disability and older people can be fully protected by this new commissioner.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:16):** I speak in favour of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019, introduced to this place by the Minister for Disability Services, the Hon. Gareth Ward, as his very first bill. The bill is designed to improve the protection of adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation in New South Wales. Older adults and people with disability face unique disadvantages that can make them more susceptible to exploitation.

This Government is committed to the protection of the most vulnerable in our society. This must include the responsibility to protect adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation. As someone who had a grandmother in aged care, as someone with a family member with a disability and as a member of Parliament, I know just how much this bill is needed. In the wake of the Federal Government's introduction of a royal commission into aged care, it has become even clearer that further attention must be paid to the protection of our most vulnerable from serious mistreatment.

The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 sets out to promote the rights of adults with disability and older adults and to protect those adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The bill puts someone in their corner with the establishment of the office of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner and an Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. There are a number of existing State initiatives and bodies focused on the protection of older people and people with disability and they are carrying out their respective responsibilities effectively. However, there are still individuals who are unable to receive the help that they need through the existing channels and safeguards. Notably, older people and people with disability experiencing abuse in the home or in a community setting historically have been overlooked.

The bill seeks to ensure that support for older people and adults with disability is sufficiently comprehensive so that no victim of abuse flies under the radar. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Families, Disability and Emergency Services, it is my conviction that the introduction of an independent Ageing and Disability Commissioner will be of great assistance in the New South Wales Government's efforts to address the needs of our most vulnerable. Part 1 of the bill addresses the name of the Act, the date of commencement, which is 1 July 2019, and it clarifies important definitions, including the definitions of "disability" and "older person". The definition of disability has the same definition as in the Disability Inclusion Act 2014, which states:

Disability, in relation to a person, includes a long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others.

The definition of older person means a person who is aged 50 years or over in the case of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, or 65 years or over in any other case. Clause 4 of part 1 of the bill articulates the objectives of the Act, which are to protect and promote the rights of adults with disability and older adults, and to protect adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This clause also outlines the principles that should guide the commissioner in the execution of his or her role. It encourages the consideration of the commissioner for members of certain groups who face unique barriers and disadvantages in addition to being an older person or an adult with disability.

Clause 4 of part 1 does not create or confer on any person any right or entitlement enforceable at law, but intends to give guidance to the administration of the Act. Part 2 of the bill stipulates the terms of appointment of the commissioner. The Governor will appoint the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. They will serve their term for a maximum of five years, and may be reappointed to serve a second term. Part 2 also outlines the terms of employment of the commissioner, and the conditions under which the office of commissioner becomes vacant.

Part 3 stipulates the main functions of the office of the commissioner. In summary, the commissioner is expected to deal with allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation not under the jurisdiction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme or other official bodies for older adults and adults with disability; to follow up allegations according to the commissioner's discretion; to raise awareness concerning the issues facing older adults and adults with disability; to provide advice to the public regarding abuse, neglect and exploitation of older adults and adults with disability; to inquire into and report on systemic issues relevant to the work of the commissioner; to consult with the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board; and to advise the Minister on matters relating to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of older adults and adults with disability. It is important to note that the commissioner is not subject to the control of the Minister in the exercise of conducting investigations, advising or making recommendations to the Minister, and preparing annual reports and special reports.

Part 3 also deals with making a report to the commissioner, the agency of the commissioner in exchanging information and the protections of persons who make reports. Many people who know of a case of abuse, or are a victim of abuse, are afraid to come forward in case their identity is revealed and they become the subject of harassment. Clause 15 of part 3 has been put in place to protect people who make reports. The identity of a person who makes a report to the commissioner in good faith, or information from which the identity of that person could be deduced, must not be disclosed by any person or body unless the disclosure is made with the consent of the person who made the report, or is necessary for the purposes of law enforcement, or is necessary for any other purpose prescribed by the regulations. Within part 3 the commissioner is granted the power to summon any person to attend a meeting and to compel them to produce certain documents for the purposes of an investigation. Penalties apply if the person refuses to comply without reasonable excuse. The bill also endows the commissioner with the authority to apply to an authorised officer for a search warrant on reasonable grounds for the purposes of an investigation.

Part 4 gives the commissioner the responsibility to oversee and coordinate Official Community Visitors, previously a responsibility of the Ombudsman under the Community Services (Complaints, Review and Monitoring) Act 1993. Under clause 20 of part 4 the Minister may, on the recommendation of the commissioner, appoint an Official Community Visitor. Appointees are expected to have appropriate knowledge in matters relating to adults with disability. Within clause 21 of part 4 the functions of Official Community Visitors are

outlined. Clause 23 of part 4 provides protection against retribution so that people can be secure in making complaints to an Official Community Visitor.

Part 5 requires the commissioner to provide annual reports to Parliament, which may include recommendations for administrative action or changes in the laws of the State that the commissioner considers necessary. Part 5 also allows the commissioner to prepare a special report to give to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament at any time. Part 6 of the bill contains miscellaneous provisions. First, part 6 establishes an Ageing and Disability Advisory Board to advise the commissioner on any matter relating to the abuse, neglect or exploitation of older adults or adults with disability. The board will be composed of people with relevant expertise and should reflect the diversity of the community, as ensured by the Minister. Part 6 also outlines provisions for personal liability, the disclosure of information and proceedings for offences, and binds the Crown. Importantly, a person must not without reasonable excuse, resist or obstruct the commissioner or other person in the exercise of a function under this Act.

Finally, under proposed part 6, section 33, the governor has the authority to make regulations not inconsistent with this Act. This proposed legislation is needed in New South Wales. This bill empowers people to come forward if they are victims, witnesses, or suspect the abuse of an older adult or adult with disability. Most importantly, this bill prioritises the safety and welfare of older adults and adults with disability in New South Wales. This bill will work alongside the people and organisations in our community who already do so much to assist people with disability and our ageing residents.

I would like to quickly and publicly thank some of the amazing Holsworthy electorate organisations who continually go above and beyond in helping these sectors of our community: Grace Fava, OAM, the Autism Advisory and Support Service; Sean Langshaw, OAM, Disability South West; John Eastwood and Buffy McDonald, Young Adult Disabled Association; and the entire team at HammondCare. My speech tonight has been dry and focused on ensuring that the bill has been correctly set out in each clause because each clause is there for an important reason. No matter a person's age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or any other feature, every person has inherent worth and dignity as an individual. As such, no-one should ever have to experience abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation cannot be tolerated and should be stamped out. Victims must have someone to turn to. It is these beliefs which underpin the creation of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I thank the new Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, Gareth Ward, for introducing this bill as his first bill. I know it will make a difference and I am proud of him for presenting this bill. In my inaugural speech in this place I said that I wanted to help people and make the lives of people with disability a little easier. I am proud of what this bill proposes. I am pleased to commend it to the House.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (18:26):** I thank the Minister for introducing the important Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I can indicate that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party support the bill and its objectives. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party does have some amendments that I understand will be put before this House at the relevant time. I listened carefully to the speech of the member for Holsworthy. At the end of her speech she touched upon the role and duties of a member of Parliament to help people with disability, who often come to us for help as a last resort. One of the most satisfying and fulfilling parts of my role is to help those people who are at their wits end and have come to a dead end in terms of advice, help, support and assistance.

As a regional member of Parliament, often the tyranny of distance becomes an issue. Madam Deputy Speaker is also a regional member of Parliament. I applaud any movement by this Government to facilitate and enable people with disability to access resources, services and the oversight of these organisations, agencies and support networks that play a significant role in disability support. I note and support the objectives of the bill. It will establish an independent oversight body that will inquire, investigate, advise, make recommendations and where necessary refer reported cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation of the aged and adult disabled. The bill aims to protect and promote the rights of the aged and adult disabled.

At present advocacy services are significantly underfunded. They cannot provide the requisite broadly accessible protection and promotion that is required throughout our community for the disabled. It is at present too sparse for accessibility across regional and rural New South Wales further disadvantaging a geographically challenged cohort. Funding must be increased to at least \$20 million per annum adjusted annually for inflation to provide the minimum advocacy services across New South Wales. It must provide a broader advocacy network to allow local one-on-one advocacy for those who face discrimination, exclusion and poor treatment in many areas of society including, but not limited to, education, health, justice, transport, employment and equitable access to services, activities and opportunities.

This funding should be distributed to non-government organisations approved by the appointed commissioner. The aged and disabled are among the most vulnerable in our society and represent approximately 20 per cent of the population. The amendment that I will move tomorrow, for completeness and for the record, will in essence ask the Parliament to implement \$20 million of funding adjusted annually for inflation to non-government organisations approved by the commissioner. That will allow non-government organisations to provide advocacy services to adults with disability. In relation to the overview and objectives of the bill, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party supports the bill and congratulates the Minister on his first bill to be debated in the House. It has the support of the Parliament. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:30):** On behalf of The Greens I make a contribution to debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I am a spokesperson for older people. I acknowledge the incredible work that the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services has done in this space. I mark the occasion. It is an issue dear to his heart, passion and work. It is the result of talking to many stakeholders. The Greens support the bill. The Greens will raise some questions for clarification and those will be explored in the other place through my colleague Abigail Boyd. Ms Boyd just gave her inaugural speech. She leads for The Greens in the area of people with disability.

The purpose of the bill is to establish an Ageing and Disability Commissioner. The role of the commissioner is a very special one. I join the member for Orange in asking for clarification about exactly how much funding will be provided. I encourage the Minister to go for it. We want to make sure that it has teeth and every power available to it. It will protect adults who are living with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation in home and community settings. This new position has been established following Federal and State level inquiries that exposed the lived experience of people living with a disability. It is not good enough. I was moved to read the firsthand accounts given at the Federal inquiry concerning the barriers already present—let alone the vulnerability. This bill is a monumental inroad for the Government into the disability sector.

In 2016 General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 recommended in the report resulting from its inquiry into elder abuse in New South Wales that a public advocate position with the power of investigation be established. The 2018 NSW Law Reform Commission review of the Guardianship Act 1987 recommended establishing a new statutory office, a public advocate, to carry out new advocacy investigative functions. It is been a long time coming. A report into how the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] is being implemented in New South Wales and a NSW Ombudsman report entitled *Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in NSW—the need for action* also recommended that more should be done to protect older adults and adults living with disability. This bill is the Government's response to those recommendations. It is worth noting that the statutory office has been calling for an Ageing and Disability Commissioner to better identify the focus of the office for many years.

The bill establishes the office of Ageing and Disability Commissioner and sets out the commissioner's functions, which include: dealing with allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults with disability and older adults; community education and general advice and assistance to the public; inquiring into and reporting on systemic issues; and advising and making recommendations to the Minister administering the proposed Act. The bill also establishes an Ageing and Disability Advisory Board and provides that the Official Community Visitor program, to the extent that it relates to visits to accommodation provided to adults with disability and certain boarding houses, is to be administered by the new commissioner instead of the Ombudsman, as is currently the case.

The Ageing and Disability Commissioner is appointed by the Governor for a term of five years. Provisions relating to remuneration, band, allowances, employment benefits and contract of employment of an executive come under the Government Sector Employment Act. However, the office of commissioner is a statutory office and the provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 relating to public service employees do not apply to this office. The Governor may remove the commissioner from office but only for incompetence, incapacity or misbehaviour. The commissioner may have staff employed in the public service to enable the commissioner to carry out their functions and the commissioner may delegate their functions to any member of the staff of the commissioner.

Responsibility for the Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit will move to the commissioner. I note that the commissioner will be supported by new specialised elder abuse officers in each NSW Police Force command. These officers will work closely with the commissioner and they will have the power to investigate matters involving criminal behaviour and to undertake crime prevention strategies. We think this is a very good thing. The commissioner's focus will be on what happens to people in their homes or in the community. However, the officers will work closely with agencies responsible for protecting people when they are living with disability or engaged in aged-care services including the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. Responsibility for the Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit will be moved to the commissioner. The helpline will be strengthened by the addition of an investigative function.

Official Community Visitors may enter and inspect visitable services, talk to residents or employees at the premises, inspect relevant documents and provide information or advice on the premises or the welfare of people using visitable services. A visitable service means an accommodation service where adults with disability are in full-time care, a boarding house for people with additional needs or any other service prescribed by the regulations. Official Community Visitors provide information to people using visitable services about advocacy services to help with grievances and encourage the promotion of legal and human rights for people using the services, including the right to privacy, confidentiality and to complain.

In closing my contribution, I note that we seek clarification of several aspects of the bill. We note suggestions from stakeholders to strengthen the bill as it affects persons with disability. They would like all functions of the commissioner, as expressed in clause 12, subclauses (1) (a) to (g), to be truly independent and not subject to the control or direction of the Minister. In retaining this independence, the commissioner should have the right to employ their own staff. Stakeholders seek the addition of increased powers of the commissioner in the conduct of investigations and the addition or clarification of the commissioner's powers to uphold or act upon outcomes of any investigations, especially where an individual case is likely to be a part of a larger systemic issue. Having spoken recently to the Minister and from my reading of his briefing note about the role of the police, I believe these issues will be clarified easily.

We also seek clarification as to the pathway for referral for identified issues relating to children and young people and to ensure that the advisory board is appointed by the Minister in consultation with the commissioner. The death review team currently sits with the NSW Ombudsman, and we would like it to be moved to within the Ageing and Disability Commissioner's oversight, strengthening critical feedback on the issues surrounding the death of a person with disability and contributing systemic issues. We note our concern that specialist and disability-informed focus of the work may be diminished at the Ombudsman level, given the Ombudsman no longer takes on much of a disability role. We seek clarification of this issue.

Clause 13 (8) leaves it open to the commissioner, or others, to take a limited view of their scope. If the commissioner is of the opinion that a report, or part of a report, constitutes a complaint that may be made to any of the following persons or bodies, the commissioner must refer the report, or the part of the report, to the person or body. We imagine that there will be cases when it would be important for the commissioner to work collaboratively with other agencies in matters where they have shared interests. I note the Minister has indicated that that is entirely apparent in this legislation.

We ask for clarification of clause 13 (10), which requires the commissioner to seek the consent of the adult to whom an allegation has been made unless the nature of an allegation is so serious that it is not necessary to obtain consent. For example, will this be limited to where life or physical safety is at risk? Does clause 13 (10) (a) cover the situation where the commissioner is of the opinion that the adult is under duress and being pressured by someone else to refuse to consent? In addition, part 4 covers community visitors in relation to disability-related visitable services only. Was consideration given to expanding this to include ageing services? What is the rationale for the distinction, if there is one? In proposed section 23 (3) should the term "detrimental action" include prejudice in the provisions of any service rather than only a community service? In proposed section 27 (1) should there be a specified minimum number of people to be appointed to the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board? Finally, in proposed section 33 (2) will the regulations oblige the commissioner to facilitate the making of a report by people with a range of disabilities to make services available—for example, using braille? We support the bill and we look forward to raising these matters in the other place. We cannot wait for this bill to pass.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (18:41):** I speak in support of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 and thank the new Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the Hon. Gareth Ward, for bringing it to the House. I note that the Minister is in the Chamber as we debate this important bill. The bill epitomises the Government's ongoing commitment to protecting adults with disability and older people from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The office of the commissioner, which will be established by this bill, will provide a crucial layer of protection, advocacy and education that currently does not exist in New South Wales for our vulnerable seniors and those adults with a disability. The bill establishes the office of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to commence on 1 July 2019 to protect and promote the rights of adults with disability and older adults and protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. For definition purposes, an "older adult" means an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person aged 50 years or over, and a person aged 65 years or over in any other case.

The bill is intended to fill gaps in the regulatory oversight of these adults to give the commissioner power to deal with allegations about the abuse, neglect or exploitation of people with disability and older adults who are vulnerable to mistreatment in their homes or in community settings by people they know and trust. There is already a clear avenue for reporting concerns in relation to some adults with disability and older adults, such as the NDIS

Quality and Safeguards Commission, the commissioners of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and the Health Care Complaints Commission, which all have investigative functions. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner will not duplicate the work of those commissioners. Instead, it will fill an essential gap by investigating instances of abuse, neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults who are outside the remit of the existing commissions.

The bill allows for reports to be made alleging abuse, neglect and exploitation in a broad sense, but clearly and expressly excludes complaints made against service providers or health practitioners from the commissioner's remit to avoid overlap. The key functions of the commissioner are: to deal with allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults with disability and older adults on the basis of a report received by the commissioner or on the commissioner's own initiative, including by referring the report to appropriate persons or bodies or conducting investigations; to raise awareness and educate the community about issues relating to abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older adults; 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; to inquire into and report on systemic issues affecting adults with disability and older adults; to consult with the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board; and to advise and make recommendations to the Minister on matters relating to adults with disability and older adults.

The commissioner will begin work this year and continues our New South Wales Liberal-Nationals' journey of continuous improvement and reform in this area, along with the current suite of reporting, investigation and prosecution avenues available to the community. The need for this new commissioner has emerged after a range of recent inquiries and initiatives, including the 2016 parliamentary inquiry into elder abuse, which recommended the establishment of a public advocate. The Law Reform Commission, in its final report on the review of New South Wales guardianship laws, also recommended the establishment of a public advocate with, amongst other things, investigative powers.

The Ombudsman's report entitled *Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in NSW – the need for action* recommended that the Government establish an independent body to investigate and take appropriate action in relation to the suspected abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults. The Ombudsman currently provides some protection for these adults; however, this protection will cease from 1 July this year. That is why it is important the bill is passed by this place: so we can get moving and get the commissioner in the role by 1 July this year and ensure there is no gap or pause in the oversight of our vulnerable in our community.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has a strong record of addressing elder abuse in our community. When we came to government in 2011 we were the first New South Wales government to release a whole-of-government ageing strategy to assist and guide the work of government in addressing the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population. This side of the House also established the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit, which offers a free service that provides information, support and referrals relating to the abuse of older people living in the community across New South Wales. If someone suspects elder abuse is occurring, they can contact the helpline for assistance. Last year the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government began funding a case coordinator role at the helpline in order to provide case coordination for more serious or complex cases that were submitted to the helpline.

In October 2018 the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government announced an extra 1,500 new police officers—the biggest increase for the NSW Police Force in more than 30 years. As part of this new allocation of policing numbers, child protection and elder abuse were identified as two of the key areas requiring greater policing resources. For the first time in New South Wales policing history, every one of the 58 local area commands will have an additional officer to have greater capacity to keep a watchful eye on known offenders against children, as well as an additional specialist Elder Abuse Prevention Officer. In addition to the work the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals have championed to tackle elder abuse in our communities, the Federal Government has announced the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Never before in the history of this nation has such focus been shone on the area of elder abuse and abuse of people with a disability—and rightly so, as there is increasing community concern as well as scrutiny of the neglect and abuse of vulnerable adults within our society.

As part of our responsibilities as local members, we often receive correspondence. Sometimes we are asked to meet with members of our community who reveal awful cases of abuse. There have been instances where people have reported the abuse of someone's financial affairs—basically stealing an inheritance prematurely—that has led to legal disputes and splits in families. The abuse and neglect of people with disabilities is horrendous. These are people in our community who need society to stand up for them and defend them when their own family or those who are entrusted to care for them fail to do so. As a member of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, I am proud of its track record in this space. Some members on the other side of the Chamber have criticised the Government for a supposed delay in establishing the office of commissioner. But it was important

to allow time for the other inquiries and interviews to finish so that our response would be considered and prepared, based on all the information at hand, before taking steps in this direction.

I thank the leadership of the Government who contributed financially to the Federal Government's study that is currently being conducted across Australia in order to try to at least begin to determine the scope of elder abuse in our community, in particular, because it is a hidden and under-reported form of abuse. We need a clear understanding of the prevalence of this abuse so that we can begin to tackle the issue head on in our communities. I thank the new Minister for taking on this incredibly important role and for tackling the abuse of older people in our community and of people with a disability with the fervour and the passion that we all know him to have. The Minister will do an outstanding job in this area, and I thank him for the passion that he brings to the issue. He will handle the challenges that lie ahead but I want everyone to know we are part of a government that is absolutely serious about tackling elder abuse and the abuse of people with disabilities in our community. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:50):** As the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I support the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I thank the shadow Minister for Ageing and shadow Minister for Disability Services, the member for Canterbury, for her sensible and comprehensive work on the bill and note from the outset that I support the important amendments she is proposing to ensure we stop the abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence against older people and those with disabilities in our State. I also congratulate the Minister on the bill because it is very overdue. During interactions with government many people with disabilities and older people are failed by the system. People have come to my electorate office in Maitland to tell me stories about their interactions with the health and mental health, education, housing and Family and Community Services [FACS] systems, which have failed them terribly. In recent years in this State people have been admitted to hospital who have had difficulty accessing an enteral feeding machine. People have been at risk of losing their social housing or have disengaged from school. There are many other terrible cases.

We all need to do better when it comes to providing safe and inclusive spaces for people with disabilities in our communities, and ensuring that they can access the full suite of services from our Government. This is not a new idea. When I worked in the social justice area in the Department of Immigration in the early 1990s there was the Access and Equity Unit. Back then people with disabilities were recognised as experiencing severe barriers to accessing government services. Yet in 2019, nearly 40 years later, we are still sending people to hospitals, schools and houses that are not appropriate for their needs. That is why Labor has worked to ensure the continuation of funding for disability advocacy services that is so essential.

But our obligation does not end there. By the very nature of their disability or the comorbidities of ageing, the people who are to be protected by this legislation are the most vulnerable in our community. They are often the least able to report, end or escape abuse, neglect or exploitation. I have spoken previously about my work reviewing Australia's child migrant schemes and the horrific abuse that took decades to uncover, with completely inadequate oversight by governments of children who were in their guardianship at the time. History has proved that governments have been remiss in their obligations to those whom they profess to take under their guardianship. It can take years, decades and, shamefully, sometimes even generations before these wrongs are even acknowledged, much less addressed or compensated by governments.

The pace of change in caring for people with disabilities in New South Wales has been rapid, and the unseemly haste displayed by the Government in acting to remove its responsibilities for people with disabilities has left them more vulnerable than ever. This, coupled with the complete underfunding of the National Disability Insurance Scheme by the Federal Government, has led to widening gaps that have hurt vulnerable people in our community. These continue not to be addressed properly. In October 2015 I raised my concerns in this place about those with disabilities. Today I add my concerns for our older Australians—those who experience the comorbidities of ageing that make them more vulnerable to evil people who prey upon them. It is a foolish government that cannot recognise the increased dependence of those who are differently abled, because of age or disability, on their perpetrators. It is a naive government that fails to understand that, in their sometimes reduced capacity, people may not have the ability to report their abuse or even, like so many victims of abuse, be able to recognise it. In 2015 I asked:

What will happen to the many people with disabilities in our State who will move from government homes to facilities run by churches, community services and for-profit providers as early as July next year? Who will be responsible for them? Who will be their guardians?

The fundamental question of who will be the guardian is the most important question the Government has to answer. I understand that the Government is trying to extract itself from the disability services sector by moving functions and responsibilities to the Federal Government and the private sector. Who will advocate for these people if they suffer abuse or neglect? It has taken four years to get to this point, and the risks do not apply just to



institutional care. Just last month the media reported on the alleged horrendous circumstances surrounding the death of a woman in New South Wales whose carer literally left her to rot. The woman's fiancé, with whom she had been in a relationship for 15 years, is alleged to have left her in a recliner without food or water for 72 hours.

While her dying hours and her partner's guilty plea to manslaughter have been the subject of a recent court hearing, I ask: What about the days, weeks, months and possibly years that this woman suffered neglect at the hands of the person charged with her care and protection? What horrors did she endure, and for how long? When the woman was finally transported to hospital her spinal bones were visible. Doctors knew immediately that she would not survive, and she was placed in palliative care. As *The Northern Daily Leader* stated, the Coroner's report revealed the rotted lesion that caused her death was probably present for months. Where was the oversight? Prior to the recent State election the Women's Alliance, a coalition of 14 women's organisations, highlighted the issue of violence against women with disabilities and older women in its "Safe State" policy document, which states:

Women with disability can also be at higher risk of experiencing violence. One in five women in Australia have a disability. Over one third of women with disability experience domestic and family violence and up to 90 per cent of women with intellectual disability have been sexually assaulted. In Australia, 18.5 per cent of the total Australia population have some form of disability...

Additionally, older women and women from rural, regional and remote areas face increased rates of violence and additional barriers to addressing the violence.

I direct the Minister to the "Safe State" platform and suggest that he read it, particularly for its call on this Government to address the very complex situation for people with disabilities who suffer intersectional disadvantage. They may be women, people from a culturally and linguistically diverse community or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. They may even be lesbian, gay, transgender, queer or intersex. All those things can create even more barriers to accessing appropriate assistance. One of Labor's foreshadowed amendments to the bill will include children and young people with a disability in the legislation. This is vital. The argument against it is that these children should be picked up already by the child protection system. But that is not the case, and we know it.

We must simplify the process for keeping children safe wherever we can. We know from the Senate inquiry into violence against people with disability that narrowly defined jurisdictions lead to silos, which make it more difficult for people to know where to go for help. Children and young people with a disability are often on the cusp of the education and/or child protection system when their abuse occurs, or when they are finally able to start to articulate and report it. Their abuse may even cause them to disengage from or leave school, at which point it becomes more difficult for them. When a child or young person is transitioning out of school we must ensure that they are not limited by the silos of government from accessing the care they need. I say this with great conviction because I have seen it happen in my electorate.

We must remove the arbitrary restrictions that would limit the effectiveness of the new Ageing and Disability Commissioner. The failure of child protection for children with a disability has meant that they have been unable to access justice and escape their perpetrators in adulthood. I have seen this with my own eyes. The onus is on the Government to educate everyone, but particularly those with disabilities, about respectful relationships. Speaking specifically about women, the Women's Alliance "Safe State" policy platform states:

Improving the understanding of women with disability of respectful relationships and sexual, domestic and family violence promotes their safety and increases the likelihood of women seeking support if they are experiencing violence. Research has found that women with disability value learning from, and being supported by, their peers about respectful relationships and violence because they can relate to their experiences.

While the Government is funding a two-year pilot project for respectful relationships peer education for women and girls with intellectual disability, more needs to be done right across our society to support and encourage respectful relationships. I note that a media report today called again for all Australian children to have access to respectful relationships education at an appropriate age. In line with the suggestion by the Women's Alliance, the Minister should look to Victoria's Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program and People with Disability Australia's respectful relationships peer education training. Now that the Government has joined Our Watch, hopefully more can be done for all students in relation to respectful relationships and to empower young people to understand domestic violence, abuse and sexual assault in their personal relationships. [*Extension of time*]

This bill will address the gap that exists in current protections, where people are vulnerable to abuse and neglect in their own homes at the hands of those they know and trust. We also need to recognise that many people live in aged-care or disability care facilities—whether it is a group home or a larger institution—and these are their homes. Their relationships with their carers are necessarily more intimate, and in order to protect clients and workers we must ensure the highest levels of accreditation, integrity and ethics among those who are charged with such care. We need to be clear that oversight is an important part of protecting these people from abuse,

exploitation and neglect, and that it must, above all, be proactive. It must also cover the kinds of abuses that are difficult for police and other compliance bodies to deal with.

One of my biggest frustrations is that while we define "domestic violence" in legislation, including financial or emotional abuse, there is a very real lack of capacity in our legal system for victims of this crime to pursue their cases without having to pay for lawyers, forensic accountants, et cetera. Given that older people and people with disability are so prone to this kind of abuse, we must find better ways to address it as many of our most vulnerable do not have the capacity to deal with the issue.

In closing, I urge the Government not to stop here. As important as the commissioner is, we need to talk about empowering people with disabilities to raise their issues. Given the state of our current government systems and processes, when we acknowledge the lack of inclusion for older people and those with disabilities in our society—and things like wheelchair access, ambulant bathroom amenities, accessible information and more—we must also acknowledge the lack of inclusion in legislation and in the context of safety. We have a significant way to go in ensuring that police, child protection, family law, the courts and other parts of our legal system are fully accessible to everyone in our community.

Issues such as obtaining evidence, taking testimony and other barriers to justice must be addressed. I refer the Minister to an August 2016 article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that revealed 1,140 cases relayed to the Ombudsman resulted in only 18 prosecutions. That is a damning indictment on a system that cannot cope with these complaints. What hope do we have in terms of proactive care and protection for these people if that issue is not addressed? Perhaps the most important role for the commissioner will be to empower people with disabilities and older Australians through inquiries into the systemic barriers they face in accessing safety and ensuring that they are able to live their lives without fear of violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation.

I note that our Federal colleagues have called two royal commissions pertinent to this legislation, with reports due in April 2020 and April 2022 respectively. I know they will have more to say and I am sure that the Minister will be open to making changes. The Opposition is ready and willing to assist as we get more information about the pathways we should follow in order to fully protect people from harm. We are getting better. We recognise the problem, and the solutions we find will be many and diverse. Like everything in this place, they must also be flexible to ensure that they are useful to the most vulnerable in our community. I again urge the Minister and the Government to consider the important amendments to the bill that the Opposition has foreshadowed. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (19:03):** It is with enormous pleasure and immense pride that I speak on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. It is timely and necessary to implement this commissioner. Last year it was a great pleasure, as the then Minister for Disability Services in New South Wales, to announce the commissioner publicly together with my friend and colleague the then Minister for Ageing, Tanya Davies; the Premier; and Kathryn Greiner, who has invested an enormous amount of her time investigating issues about ageing and aged care. I acknowledge two royal commissions that are currently underway at the Federal level. I was the first Minister in this country to publicly support the royal commission into abuse of people with disability.

Enacting this bill and putting in place the Ageing and Disability Commissioner is the last piece of a very necessary puzzle to provide the appropriate safeguards and protections to the most vulnerable people not only in New South Wales but also across the nation—people with disability and the aged. To provide a little bit of history about how we arrived at this point, in 2017 when I was first appointed as the Minister for Disability Services, I met with the then Deputy Ombudsman Steve Kinmond to discuss disability issues. I had a proactive relationship with him and with the Ombudsman Michael Barnes. Early in the piece, Steve Kinmond talked about the Disability Inclusion Act. It provided an outstanding piece of legislation regarding the disability reportable incidents scheme, which mandates a requirement to report any issues of abuse, harm and neglect of people with disability. The scheme has shone a direct light on the sector, group homes and anybody working in the disability sector.

Mr Kinmond went on to say that whilst the number of referrals for reportable incidents had increased, the actual incidence of abuse, neglect and harm to people with disability had lulled. This proves that once a light is shone directly on those areas concerning the most vulnerable people, whatever harm or abuse is occurring will be exposed and the risk directly minimised. Through having a mandated requirement, people are more inclined to report incidents. Incidents of a minor or major nature were getting investigated. Therefore, the incidents of harm, neglect and abuse to people with disability had lowered significantly. That was pleasing to hear because it was this Liberal-Nationals Government that implemented the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 that included the reportable incidents scheme. As the Minister for Disability Services I used to say, and continue to maintain, that New South Wales has the strongest protections and safeguards than any other State in this country.

The Government also led the way with the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS], which members on this side of the House can be immensely proud of. Whilst it had been spoken about by other political parties and mentioned in dispatches federally, the New South Wales Government was the first State government to put its hand in its pocket and support the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It is allocating \$3.2 billion in funding each year, indexed at 4 per cent, to people with disability. The Federal Government is matching that amount with another \$3.3 billion, providing funding of \$6.5 billion to people with disability in New South Wales alone.

During those conversations in 2017 Steve Kinmond alerted me to one shortfall, which was that mature people with disability in community spaces could not be assured of the appropriate protections. Back then the much-needed and necessary term "public advocate" was used. It is fair to say that the public advocate has now been replaced with the Commissioner for Ageing and Disability. They are not just a public advocate for people with disability. A commissioner is charged with being responsible for and protecting all people but, most importantly, people with disability and the aged. Steve Kinmond said to me that in order for us to reach that point we needed to do a body of work. There needed to be intense research. We had to have discussions with various agencies to justify the commissioner being put in place because this Government will make a financial commitment worth many millions of dollars to ensure that the commissioner's role is appropriate and worthwhile, and that it will provide the protections I am talking about.

After those early discussions Steve Kinmond went away with financial support from our Government to produce what is now known as the 2 November 2018 special report of *Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in New South Wales — the need for action*. The report was handed to me last year. I was deeply disturbed by some of its content. If I remember correctly—and the report has been made public so I am not speaking about anything of a private nature—there were 200-odd cases of established abuse, neglect and harm to people with disability over the age of 18.

Some of the worst cases were those of fraud. Sadly, family members of one man with a disability had tried to defraud him of his ownership of the family home. One serious case of abuse concerned a person with a physical and intellectual disability who was cable-tied to a bed whilst their family members went out of the house. Even more disturbing is the case of a man with an intellectual disability who was not allowed to enter the family home. He was forced to live in a garden shed in the backyard of a home and eat his meals with the family dog. I acknowledge the Minister for Disability is in the House because I read this report after returning from visiting him in his electorate of Kiama. I was deeply perturbed by what had been uncovered.

What the Deputy Ombudsman Steve Kinmond brought to light was the great need that he had suggested to me in 2017. It was the need for a commissioner with the appropriate powers to issue search warrants, to investigate and gather evidence to determine whether or not a conviction was necessary. As the Ombudsman pointed out to me, in some cases it is to provide appropriate support to families. As horrific as some of those incidents sound, the fact is that there are families who do not realise that support is available to them. When confronted with that report, I immediately wanted to start locking up family members. I state for the record that in 80 per cent of the cases of those 200-odd incidents, it was reported that there was actual evidence of neglect, abuse and harm from family members such as siblings and children. However, we cannot judge people when we do not live the life they are living with people with disability. [*Extension of time*]

It is difficult to put ourselves in the shoes of the parents and loved ones who care for people with disability, especially when there can be language breakdowns. As the former Minister for Multiculturalism, I know all too well that some 200 languages are spoken in this country. There are many aspects to this issue and as much as we need similar investigative powers as we currently have with child protection, we also need the compassion to ensure that those people have appropriate support in place to care for people with disability and particularly people over the age of 18 years. The bill was informed not only by that special report of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in New South Wales, but also by the Law Reform Commission's report of May 2018 and the parliamentary inquiry into the implementation of the NDIS.

That inquiry was an opportunity for me and also for the great team I led. I acknowledge everyone from Family and Community Services [FACS], from Michael Coutts-Trotter to Samantha Taylor, OAM. I acknowledge Anne Campbell and people like Jim Breen and Paul O'Reilly. I also acknowledge Chris Leach, who has spent an absolute eternity in FACS and knows every aspect of disability services. I thank those people not only for their support and commitment to this Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill, but also for their support and insight in the rollout of the NDIS in New South Wales.

Without those people, it simply would not have happened. Their professionalism was essential and amazing. I also acknowledge some people very close to me: My former chief of staff, Rommel Varghese, is an absolutely exceptional individual who now works for the Premier of this great State. Hayley Ashburner was a senior adviser and media adviser to me and to some other great people who all worked for me throughout that

particular time. I acknowledge Stuart Bicknell, my adviser on behalf of disability services, who sat up I do not know how many hours at night reading report after report. I certainly could never have stomached the reading that he did, but he did it in such a meticulous way.

There are many people who should be credited with the great success of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in New South Wales. Everyone in this Government should be proud. It would never have happened if the New South Wales Government had not had its finances in check, or did not have the sound economy that we have. Unless we had paid down the billions of dollars of debt that was left to this Government by a previous Labor government, we would never have been able to commit \$3.2 billion to the NDIS each and every year. To this day, Barry O'Farrell continues to state that one of his greatest achievements as Premier was putting in place the National Disability Insurance Scheme on behalf of people with disability in New South Wales. It is a world first and the eyes and the ears of the world are certainly upon us. This Government has led the way in New South Wales, with the help of all of those people I have acknowledged and many others besides.

I also acknowledge the previous Minister for Family and Community Services, Pru Goward. Her great team were there every step of the way. They were a great backstop and support to my people and me. I commend everybody. I commend the bill to the House. I commend the current Minister for Disability in New South Wales. He who looks through the eyes of disability and walks every day with a disability knows as well as most people just how difficult that can be. I am sure he will be a wonderful advocate on behalf of this particular portfolio and will certainly be a great advocate on behalf of the Commissioner for Ageing and Disability.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:18):** In a perfect world, this bill would not be necessary. Most of us are lucky enough never to have witnessed or personally experienced horrific abuse and neglect, but as more and more accusations of violence, abuse and neglect of the most vulnerable people in our community have come to light, we have been moved to take strong action. We should have taken it some time ago, but I am pleased we are taking it now. This bill has come about as a result of the NSW Law Reform Commission's *Review of the Guardianship Act 1987*, tabled in August last year, which amongst many other things recommended the establishment of a new independent statutory position, known as the public advocate, to: advocate for people in need of decision-making assistance; mediate decision-making disputes; provide information, advice and assistance about decision-making; and investigate cases of potential abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The bill has been brought to this place against the backdrop of a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with a Disability, and a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Clearly as a society we have an issue that needs to be urgently addressed. The Opposition is well aware of this. Back in 2015, NSW Labor initiated a Legislative Council inquiry into elder abuse, which recommended that a public advocate be established to investigate complaints and allegations about abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. The inquiry's report was tabled in 2016. Recommendation 11 of that report is:

That the NSW Government introduce legislation to establish a Public Advocate's Office along the lines of the Victorian model, with powers to investigate complaints and allegations about abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults, to initiate its own investigations where it considers this warranted, and to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse. Further, that the operation of the Office be reviewed after three years.

Here we are three years later, and we do not have it yet. We have finally got there. In addition to the Law Reform Commission's report, an Upper House inquiry and two royal commissions, in November last year the New South Wales Ombudsman provided a special report to Parliament titled *Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in NSW—The need for action*. This report provided a shocking insight into the reality of the lives of many older people and people with disability. The Ombudsman's inquiry found that there are highly vulnerable adults living in atrocious circumstances and experiencing serious and ongoing abuse and neglect in this State and that these people are being hidden from society and prevented from accessing the supports they need. It found that there is an urgent need for better safeguards and protections for those vulnerable adults in our community. It recommended that an independent advocate with investigative functions be established as a matter of urgency.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 40,000 older people and 90,000 people with disability experience violence each year in New South Wales. These figures are a devastating reflection on the reality faced by many people in our community and perhaps some whom we love dearly. Despite the prevalence of crimes against older people and people with a disability, prosecution rates for crimes against such vulnerable people remain low. Of the 1,140 incidents of abuse reported to the New South Wales Ombudsman, only 18 people were prosecuted over the allegations. As a result, the Ombudsman has called for a specialist law enforcement unit to have jurisdiction over vulnerable people such as people with a cognitive disability and the elderly. The Ombudsman stated that this must be an agency equipped to play a lead role in addressing the critical issue of abuse and neglect of adults with a disability in this State.

The establishment of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner and its overarching board will strengthen the ability to respond to issues of neglect, abuse and exploitation, and that is certainly both good and long overdue.

However, the New South Wales Government needs to take a holistic look at why these events are occurring. I recently met with a constituent who is an aged care worker. She brought to my attention the many difficulties faced by staff in this sector. The conditions and pressure of working in aged and disability care cannot be underestimated. Top that off with minimum wages and understaffing and we have a recipe for disaster.

Staffing levels at this woman's workplace are so low that there is one registered nurse for 78 residents. The remaining staff are assistants in nursing who are not trained to monitor blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate or oxygen saturations. As a result two elderly residents have almost died because they were taken to hospital several days after they should have been. Residents get pressure sores due to a lack of staff to give them proper care. Nurses have six minutes to get each resident up, showered and dressed for the day. Six minutes simply cannot be enough to do this in any sort of caring fashion.

The centre does not have a dietitian, so it cannot properly provide for specific dietary requirements, particularly to diabetic residents. At most, there is a 15-minute handover for registered nurses and no handover for the assistants in nursing. To make matters worse, in aged care there are no staff-to-patient ratio laws to protect residents. We know that ratios save lives. Ratios will protect the elderly and less abled from abuse and neglect. Full-time centres that provide care to older people and people with disability are in crisis and, partly as a result of this, many people are choosing to care for their older loved ones and loved ones with a disability in their own homes.

This is opening a different can of worms. It is putting some older people and people with disability at risk in a hidden and disturbing way behind closed doors. I generally support this bill but it cannot be ignored that Government members who have spoken in this debate have repeatedly praised the Government's efforts in working towards a more inclusive society. At the same time, however, the Government is committed to cutting disability advocacy in New South Wales from June 2020. Judith lives in my electorate. Her son, Chris, has Down syndrome. Judith said:

We as a family have benefitted over the years from advocacy support groups, as for too long it has been a complex web of support, information and assistance that we have had to navigate to build a good life for Chris and our family. The NDIS is a great step forward, but the checks and balances which advocacy support groups can provide, ensures that government and bureaucracy do not overwhelm families, especially in the early stages of learning about your young child with a disability. In our case, for example, Down Syndrome NSW and Family Advocacy were great resources for our family. We met other parents and attended many invaluable information sessions.

Clearly, there is an essential role for the State Government to fund disability advocacy. I turn now to Labor's proposed amendments to the bill. We must not forget that adults with disability are not the only people languishing in care. Children and young people with disabilities are also in vulnerable situations, whether in a family setting or in care, so they should also be included in this legislation. I ask the Minister to please provide an explanation as to why people under the age of 18 are excluded from the jurisdiction of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. The bill should also include a maximum penalty of 12 months' imprisonment for all offences provided in the bill, as opposed to being limited to clause 23. This will ensure the maximum penalty provisions are consistent for all offence provisions in the bill.

While the bill provides that one of the commissioner's powers is "to inquire and report on systemic issues", it does not provide an express power to hold an inquiry. Inquiries are a powerful way of uncovering systemic problems. The commissioner needs to be given clear powers to convene such inquiries. Finally, the bill should also include a clause to clearly spell out the requirements for the commissioner to make appropriate referrals to the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions, and another clause to ensure that the commissioner's annual report must include statistics such as the number of referrals made and the outcomes of those referrals. This information would provide a better means to understanding those issues. The foreshadowed amendments should be adopted to remove the restrictions that will limit the effectiveness of the new Ageing and Disability Commissioner, and to provide additional powers and tougher penalties to ensure that the commissioner can create a State in which our most vulnerable are protected from abuse and violence. I commend Labor's foreshadowed amendments and ask that the Government look upon them in the spirit in which they are offered.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:28):** I am pleased to support the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. My contribution will focus on how the bill will protect and assist seniors in our community. Since becoming the member for Ku-ring-gai I have heard firsthand accounts of elder abuse in our community. Ku-ring-gai has, in proportionate terms, a significant population of seniors. Ku-ring-gai is a place where people come to raise their families, but after they come they discover how beautiful and peaceful our area is and they never want to leave. That is why we have a significant percentage of seniors in the electorate. It is a self-evident truth that the measure of any society is the manner in which it cares for its most vulnerable people. I shall now draw the attention of the House to a number of provisions in the bill to exemplify how it is protective in its nature. Part 1, clause 4 sets out the objects of the bill as follows:

- (1) The objects of this Act are:
  - (a) to protect and promote the rights of adults with disability and older adults, and
  - (b) to protect adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Part 3, division 1, clause 12 sets out the functions of the commissioner in pursuing those objectives. In summary, clause 12 (1) states that the commissioner has the following functions: to deal with allegations of abuse; to take further action following an investigation into an allegation of abuse; to raise awareness and educate the public about matters relating to abuse; to provide advice and general assistance to the public about matters relating to abuse; to inquire into and report on systemic issues regarding matters in relation to which the commissioner may conduct investigations; to consult with the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board on matters relating to abuse and the like; and to advise and make recommendations to the Minister. Part 3, division 1, clauses 16 to 18 give the commissioner important powers to properly conduct investigations. Part 4 gives the commissioner community visitation rights, and part 5 provides reporting functions.

The bill recognises that older people may be more vulnerable to abuse due to their increased reliance on others to meet their needs and make decisions on their behalf. The bill reflects this Government's understanding that elder abuse is a complex issue and it is increasingly relevant to our ageing population. Older people make up a considerable portion of Australia's population. In 2017 more than one in seven people were aged 65 and over. The number of older people in New South Wales is increasing and the proportion of older people within the total population is also growing. For example, in 1991 almost 700,000 people in New South Wales were aged 65 and over; in 2011 more than one million people were aged 65 and over; and by 2031 around 20 per cent of the population in New South Wales, or around 1.8 million people, will be aged 65 and over.

At the same time, our life expectancy is improving but there are also changes to "healthy-life expectancy"—that is, the number of years people live without a severe or profound disability or ailment. While healthy-life expectancy has increased, there has also been a proportionate increase in the number of years spent with a serious disability. The factors that make older people vulnerable to abuse also contribute to the hidden or underreported nature of that abuse. It occurs in situations where, due to disability or ill health associated with age, people are reliant on others to have their needs met and to manage their affairs. In 2016 the Australian Institute of Family Studies reviewed the prevalence and dynamics of elder abuse and reported that between 2 per cent and 14 per cent of older Australians may experience elder abuse in any given year. It is difficult to establish how widely elder abuse is experienced due to the covert nature of certain types of abuse and the dependence of older Australians on those who cause the abuse. In 2002 the World Health Organization defined "elder abuse" 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. Elder abuse can take various forms such as physical, psychological or emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect.

In its 2016-2017 annual report, the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit reported receiving over 13,000 calls since its inception in 2013. My office staff and I refer constituents to that helpline for assistance. The highest reported types of abuse were psychological, 58 per cent; financial, 39 per cent; and neglect, 18 per cent. In support of the introduction of the commissioner, the Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit provided examples of reported abuse. One example was of a man withholding food from his wife—an elderly woman with a disability who was unable to prepare her own meals—for two days because he was angry with her. A worker with the elderly in my electorate has told me of cases where seniors living in multimillion dollar homes in Ku-ring-gai are eating cat food because family members control their financial resources and will not allow them to eat better food.

The bill seeks to protect and support adults who are, in various ways, reliant on others. The Government recognises the dedicated and invaluable support and care provided to vulnerable adults by friends and families. In October 2016 the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] reported that in 2015 there were just over 900,000 carers in New South Wales. Carers must be recognised for the care and support they give. At the same time, it cannot be denied that sometimes these informal family arrangements can give rise to abuse and neglect. The situation is made all the more complex because of the interpersonal relationships between the parties.

Abuse and neglect are more likely to occur when a carer is feeling unsupported or overwhelmed or is experiencing their own medical or health problems. The ABS reported that 6.5 per cent of carers experienced profound or severe disability and that the carer role can have a significant impact on the carer's own earning capacity and lifestyle choices. An important role for the commissioner will therefore be to support carers so they can be best equipped to deal with the stressors of that caring role. This bill and its approach to elder abuse is informed by the Law Reform Commission's *Review of the Guardianship Act 1987* and the parliamentary inquiry into abuse of 2016.

The relevance and timeliness of this bill is further highlighted by the Commonwealth's establishment of the Royal Commission into Age Care Quality and Safety. The bill sets the scene for a long-term cultural change.

The reform is an opportunity to protect older Australians from abuse, neglect and exploitation in their homes or communities. The commissioner will provide a more consistent, efficient and robust approach to responding to and investigating allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people. The commission will work with carers by linking them to services that support them to continue to provide effective and supportive care environments. The New South Wales Government is determined to ensure that people not only live longer than ever before but also live better than ever before. We want older people to live healthy, active and happy lives as they age. This vision is set out in the New South Wales Government's *Ageing Strategy* released in 2012.

The appointment of an Ageing and Disability Commissioner will complement our existing commitments and deliver more benefits for older people and their carers in New South Wales. The establishment of the position of commissioner strengthens the New South Wales Government's protection of the most vulnerable adults in our community, including building a robust protective system to prevent elder abuse. I pause to compliment the Minister, the member for Kiama, on his great work in promoting this bill. It is very important that we as a compassionate, modern Liberal government look after the most vulnerable people in our community. It is only because we get the finances of the State right that we have the capacity to care for our most vulnerable people. This is a great example of true Liberal policy and I commend the Minister. I commend the bill to the House and I offer the Minister my unqualified support and congratulations on bringing forward this important legislative reform.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:38):** The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 is a start—but we are not there yet. It has taken the new Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services to put this bill in place. I commend Minister Ward. After travelling with the Minister to the inaugural meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities I can say it is a joy to work with him. More so because he too has a disability, I think together we can work to improve the lives of people living with disability across New South Wales. I congratulate the Minister on his appointment.

Federal Labor's National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] has brought people with disability into a new conversation across Australia. It has given us a new spotlight and allowed new conversations. Despite the very worthy NDIS legislative framework, we still encounter problems in converting the conceptual framework into a practical and effective day-to-day scheme that truly delivers independence, choice and control to people with disabilities. This year the Federal Government claimed to be in surplus, yet \$1.6 billion of this supposed Federal budget "saving" comes on the backs of people with disability and the non-delivery of the NDIS.

Government at all levels must be accountable to people with disability and work towards a fully inclusive society for all, free from violence, abuse and neglect. In New South Wales the Berejiklian Government has totally privatised the disability sector—and that frightens me. The Liberal-Nationals Government has used the rollout of the NDIS to entirely vacate the field as a supplier of disability and accommodation services. Alongside the rollout of the NDIS the Berejiklian Government has failed to commit to ongoing disability advocacy funding. Like its Federal counterparts, the New South Wales Government is undercutting and further disadvantaging some of our most vulnerable people.

This is a despicable decision—just ask the stakeholders in the sector, the people with disabilities and their carers and families. As a result of this decision we are slowly seeing the erosion of advocacy services and the loss of incredibly talented staff with a wealth of expert knowledge who can support us, the people with disability, who can be our voice, who can provide advice and who can lobby to build a better future not only for us but for our parents, our families and New South Wales as a whole. I thank the people in the disability sector for the work they continue to do.

The legislation before us refers to the very important role of advocacy agencies across New South Wales. It recommends that the commissioner refer back to advocacy services. Of course, the consequences of this neglect of advocacy by the Liberal Government will create recommendations for change. The agents and distributors of this information are the advocates, the providers of information and the bodies that are possibly already speaking these very concerns. Disability advocacy in New South Wales must continue to be funded and ongoing beyond 2020.

Alongside this, we now have an entire disability sector that under the current payment structures provides no space for the education and training of staff, further putting vulnerable people at risk. This is exacerbated by a rapidly expanding workforce in the disability care sector across the State. We are moving towards a disability sector that has the potential for a gig economy structure where I, as a person with a disability, can go online, describe myself and my needs and then have a capacity to link with a like-minded person who is offering to provide care, with or without paying, and hope for the best. Where does the accountability lie if the training or the care are not adequately provided? We need a backstop and consequences to protect vulnerable people who are neglected, abused and violated within this emerging space of "care". We need broad-ranging powers to conduct investigations into allegations of abuse and neglect. We need a backstop with prosecution powers.

Children and young people with disabilities should also be included in this bill. Too often they slip through the gaps in other sectors. Integration in mainstream education is considered too hard and children with disability are still segregated within our schools more often than is necessary. Too many of our kids are put in the too-hard basket at school. They are classified by what they cannot do, not by what they can do. Because of a lack of individual care and appreciation, kids with disabilities are vulnerable. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner should provide a stopgap for their protection. The inclusion within this bill of children and young people would add the wings of need above the silo of neglect that children and young people with disability suffer within other government departments.

This bill is not before time. Both the elder abuse and the abuse of people with disability have been allowed to continue unfettered for too long. A body of work clearly indicates that the neglect, violence and abuse of people with disability and older people continue. Elder abuse can include incidents of a physical, psychological, sexual and financial nature. In 2015 the New South Wales Parliament held an inquiry into elder abuse where we heard many distressing personal stories from a number of members of our communities. Following the inquiry, we saw the consequential establishment of the NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit. Yet whilst the helpline provides for the reporting of abuse and neglect, it does not guarantee action against the abusers, neglecters and exploiters. We are still waiting to see the emergence of any of the promised Federal Government trials consisting of five specialist elder abuse units, three health justice partnerships, and four case management and mediation services in New South Wales.

Today I share a story that should not be real. Ray lives in my electorate, as did his brother. Ray came into my office late on a Friday afternoon last month, absolutely forlorn, to share the story of his younger brother, Graham. Graham, who lived with disability, had lived with their dad, who looked after the middle brother of three. Of course Dad protected and supported his son. Ray's younger brother was the family contact person if there was trouble. As Dad was getting older, Graham's two brothers became concerned with their dad's wellbeing and the impact on his health of caring for Graham. After a period of unwellness, Graham was admitted to the Hornsby hospital for treatment. During his extended stay, the family sold the home, and Dad moved into an aged-care facility.

As a result, Graham was released from hospital with his medications into a men's refuge and from there into social housing under the care of UnitingCare. When Ray returned from holidays, Graham could not be contacted. Graham was found by a police officer accompanied by a locksmith once his older brother returned from holidays and realised that Dad, who is no longer good at keeping track of time and calls, realised that for a couple of weeks he had only spoken to Graham's answering machine. Graham's body was so decomposed that it could not be immediately identified. Only his very sparse collection of belongings was an indication that it was Dad's son and Ray's brother.

This legislation does not go far enough. Now we await the results of the coronial inquiry into the processes that led to Graham's death. Under this new legislation the State Coroner will inform the Commissioner of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission as well as the Ombudsman. Yet what are the consequences? When the Minister refers to "any other person or body prescribed by the regulations" I do hope he includes the police and Director of Public Prosecutions. This should be included specifically in the bill to clearly indicate the responsibility of the Ageing and Disability Commission and the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. Graham was a real human being. He was Dad's son and Ray's brother, not just a person put into the care of agencies that are contracted to support people living with disabilities.

We do not have a follow-the-money trail to examine the consequences for government funding provided to non-government organisations to provide care. We must have consequences for the organisations that take on contracts and take on this care, and yet allow the level of neglect I have cited. Not all people with disabilities have a voice or capacity to express their concerns. As a Parliament we must be accountable for neglect, abuse and exploitation in care. I support the amendments foreshadowed by the member for Canterbury. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 is reasonable. It is about time and, in the words of Disability Advocacy activists, "It's just pretty lightweight". We need more clarity around actual penalties and who will enforce those penalties.

We know that recommendations from inquires often fall flat. Who will ensure that recommendations from the Ageing and Disability Commissioner do not fall flat? We must ensure that there are consequences for people who are identified as abusers, neglecters, violators and exploiters and that the commissioner's recommendations have the capacity to cause change and improvement in the lives of people with disability and older persons in New South Wales. Alongside my amazing colleagues, the shadow Minister for Ageing, and shadow Minister for Disability, the wonderful member for Canterbury, the member for Port Stephens and all my Labor colleagues, I say that this legislation comes too late, and without the teeth it needs.



I reiterate my support for the foreshadowed amendments. This bill needs to give the power to the commissioner to refer matters for investigation to the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions. These are crimes—crimes against vulnerable people—that are currently under-reported and do not always result in prosecution. This bill addresses a specific gap to protect vulnerable people. Whilst it is a step in the right direction towards protecting the vulnerable people of New South Wales, it is a lightweight bill. I thank the Minister. I look forward to the continuation of protections.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:48):** Few roles are more important in this House than protecting our most vulnerable people. During the election campaign I heard from many constituents about State politics needing more heart in dealing with people who experience disadvantage. It is a welcome step that the first piece of legislation introduced in the Fifty-Seventh Parliament will create such a vital safeguard for such vulnerable adults. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 creates a new role of a commissioner charged with investigating reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and adults who are elderly. Gaps in the protection of this cohort of people have been widely identified in examinations by the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Australian Law Reform Commission, the NSW Law Reform Commission and the NSW Ombudsman.

All concluded that we need an independent statutory office with a clear role to safeguard vulnerable adults. I understand that one of the biggest concerns is the lack of oversight of, and protections against, abuse and neglect in the home by a family member or carer—someone who the vulnerable adult should be able to trust. Many forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation do not meet the threshold for criminal intervention but are nonetheless very distressing for the victim, contrary to community values and need to be addressed. Examples include repeatedly threatening to put an older person in a home, incurring bills for them or forcing them to sell their property.

A major problem with abuse of vulnerable adults in community settings is that many people fail to recognise it or they dismiss it as a private matter and as a result do not report disturbing events they may have witnessed. The new commissioner's education role will be vital to teach the community and service providers how to recognise abuse and neglect and where to make reports. While the bill has widespread support, the disability sector has made some suggestions that would improve safeguards within the commissioner's role, which I ask the Minister to consider. The Minister's involvement in the operations of the commissioner's office, including in administration and budget matters, does not support the full independence of the role. Independence is vital to putting vulnerable people at the forefront of all operations and I support strengthening the autonomy of the office.

There is some concern that two separate agencies will now deal with visitors' reports and death reviews, with visitors' reports moving to the commissioner, and the death review team staying with the Ombudsman. There is an overlap in issues and trends that come out of reviews of deaths and visitors' reports. Having one body responsible for both would help that body identify systemic problems more quickly. With the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to become the chief oversight body for people with disability, there is an argument to move the death review team to that office. I ask that as the commissioner's role and office develops the Minister consider whether a transfer of the death review team to the commissioner's office is appropriate.

There are concerns that the commissioner will be required to refer reports of neglect and abuse to the Health Care Complaints Commission, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, or the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission if one of those agencies is the appropriate body for the report. The concern is that this could hinder collaborative approaches between the commissioner and those agencies. Reports could be delegated automatically rather than the two offices working together to achieve better outcomes. I ask the Minister to monitor whether this requirement has such an effect. Notwithstanding those concerns, there is no question that the bill represents a big step forward in the protection of vulnerable adults in our community.

This will become all the more important as our population ages and there are fewer people to look after the elderly and frail in our community. The Australian Law Reform Commission and the NSW Law Reform Commission have recommended a suite of other important reforms to wills, enduring powers of attorney, enduring guardianship documents, assisted decision-making and the right to legal representation at the tribunal to safeguard vulnerable adults. I hope these matters are considered and that we will see additional reforms introduced in this Parliament. I congratulate the Minister on advancing the lives of our most vulnerable in his first move in the portfolio. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:53):** If there is a consistent theme in what I am told as I travel across my electorate it is the importance of tackling complex issues in more innovative and targeted ways. There is a subtext to this—an underlying current of frustration and sometimes genuine fear. It is the complexity of what happens when a family member or friend has a combination of health issues such as ageing and mental health, disability and mental health, and justice and mental health. We have our courts for justice; our hospitals for injuries

and disease; our mental health facilities for those struggling with conditions of the mind in society such as anxiety, eating disorders, and the impact of drugs and alcohol; and then there are our aged-care facilities.

Life does not always deal these conditions up on their own. This is a theme picked up in clause 4 (3) (a) of the bill, which speaks of people with "multiple disadvantages". Nolan House is the acute care facility for mental health in the Albury region. The volunteer members of Friends of Nolan House see the multi-faceted nature of the problem and have advocated for redevelopment, fresh programs and a style of residential mental health care that is sympathetic to this understanding of complexity. When I speak to lawyers I hear about the need for justice health nurses to advise magistrates and police on appropriate sanctions and treatments for those who come before the courts carrying the burden of mental health conditions. Concerned parents have come to my office to report frustrations with aspects of obtaining care for their disabled children or aged parents, who are also living with dementia. Living with stress themselves, families get overwhelmed.

There are issues arising from the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] and its implementation. The NDIS is a Federal program and we recognise that improvements and reviews will be directed by the Commonwealth. However, as some residents tell me, that does not entirely remove the State Government's responsibility to its residents. More than that, the Government genuinely wants to see the people of New South Wales live and age well. It is in this context that I see the real importance of the role of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. The bill is very much part of the State's response to the national debate on ageing and disability, with specific attention to the citizens of New South Wales and within the lines of reporting, responsibility and action within the State.

Last November, the NSW Ombudsman's special report to Parliament, entitled *Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in NSW—the need for action*, recommended the establishment of an independent body charged with the task of investigating and responding to reports of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults. The purpose of this bill is to protect adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation and to protect and promote their rights. As the Minister has identified, there is a gap in government services and advocacy that needs to be addressed. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner will fit somewhere between the Ombudsman, the elder abuse hotline, the NDIS, the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission and others.

Clause 5 of the bill establishes the Office of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. Clause 12 sets out the functions of the office, including dealing with allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults with disability and older adults; community education and general advice and assistance to the public; inquiring into and reporting on systemic issues regarding matters in relation to which the commissioner may conduct investigations; and advising and making recommendations to the Minister administering the proposed Act. The bill will establish the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board and provide for an Official Community Visitor program under the control of the commissioner in place of the Ombudsman.

Importantly, clause 13 provides that any person, "may make a report to the commissioner about an adult with disability or older adult if the person has reasonable grounds to believe the adult is subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation". The commissioner then has discretion to treat this as a report and deal with the matter. This might involve investigation and possible referral to another person or body for further action. I acknowledge and support the important role filled by clause 15, which protects the identity of a person who makes a report in good faith to the commissioner under the proposed Act. If as a society we want to confront and deal with issues of abuse—particularly abuse by those charged with the care of vulnerable people—we need to instil confidence in the community that their reports of abuse or suspicion of abuse will be treated carefully, discretely and determinedly.

The sting is found in clause 29, which makes it an offence for a person to disclose information obtained in connection with the administration or execution of the proposed Act. The maximum penalty for this offence is currently \$5,500. The following clause establishes consequences should a person resist or obstruct the work of the commissioner, placing a similar maximum fine on the offence. The objectives of the legislation, set out in clause 4, include awareness of special sections of the community under subclause (3) (b). There is much here that resonates for me, a representative of a socially and culturally diverse regional and, in many places, remote part of New South Wales. Choices can be limited. Isolation can impact on community values and perceptions in ways that may lead to abusive behaviour. The bill recognises these as compounding factors that must be understood and interpreted in their context.

The Australian Law Reform Commission discussion paper on elder abuse of December 2016 referred to a border workshop on abuse of older people focused on reaching Aboriginal clients. I find this instructive. The border's Hume River, now Riverina, Community Legal Service picked up on community education "as a strategy to make older persons less vulnerable to financial abuse". A private law firm assisted the legal service on a pro bono basis with the running of a free wills, power of attorney and guardianship workshop for Aboriginal people in the Albury Wodonga region. On day one, the law firm "provided education about legal planning and

focused on issues particularly relevant to Aboriginal people". Discussion leads to education, which leads to understanding and then to practical steps that enhance protection.

This approach demonstrates its own multi-faceted approach to protecting against abuse of the elderly and the disadvantaged, with appropriate cultural sensitivity. Again, I am reflecting here on the idea that the Ageing and Disability Commissioner will have a role in harmony with community initiatives, particularly in education, while also championing the identification of abuse in ways that lead to positive outcomes. In 2017 these issues came to prominence along the border region, led by a number of local women who were pushing for action following on from the Australian Law Reform Commission report. Their sentiment was that they were hopeful the reforms did not "come too late" for the elderly of today. "We're going to lose another generation before something gets done," said one of the women. "They're the generation where you don't complain; they may not see a person as their abuser. We don't want to blame people—we want to make this system the best it can be. That is what these people deserve."

The border's Regional Disability Advocacy Service executive officer, Martin Butcher, said at the time, "The abuse of older people in all forms is very prevalent, particularly around financial abuse." He was referring to the sale of homes, powers of attorney and keeping records of enduring powers of attorney. This Government has been actively involved in promoting these issues, working with lawyers' groups. In 2018 this was a theme of Law Week workshops, shining a light on what are often taboo topics for seniors, such as financial abuse. How do we protect older people from the risks of becoming the guarantor for their children's mortgage or personal loans? Even writing a will can become a difficult task in the context of family pressures. In October last year Estia Health Albury, an aged-care facility, held an event to focus on the need to tackle elder abuse as a community. This brought together family, friends, staff and residents with the message, "Say no to elder abuse". It was a show of unity against the abuse and suffering of older people. In introducing this bill, the Minister set the Government's heart to the task:

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.

I congratulate and thank the Minister for this bill, I concur with this most vital vision, and I support the bill.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **MOUNT DRUITT ELECTORATE**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (20:04):** I take the opportunity in my first private member's statement of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales to thank the people of the electorate of Mount Druitt for giving me the honour to represent them for another term in this place. Like many in my electorate, I am disappointed with the overall election result. However, I have thoroughly enjoyed representing my constituents and I am constantly humbled by their continued support and hope for a better future. First, I thank my local branch members, my friends and, most importantly, my family, who gave their time and energy to help me through this latest campaign. Everyone in this House will know it is not the work of a single person that wins an election but the work of many. I thank those individuals. The positive swing towards Labor in Mount Druitt is as much their victory as it is mine.

I will thank many individuals, and I apologise if I unintentionally miss out anyone. I specifically thank the former member for Mount Druitt and my campaign director, the Hon. Richard Amery, and his wife, Marie. Richard and Marie have supported me in every way possible over many years, and I am incredibly grateful for their continued efforts. Richard especially has been a fantastic mentor to me and an advocate for an area he has called home for more than 40 years. Most importantly, he has been a great friend. Words cannot express my appreciation for the Amerys, and I look forward to a great relationship continuing with both of them in the future.

I thank my campaign organisers, Philippe Desveaux and David Villegas, who both dedicated countless hours to delivering corflutes, creating rosters, calling supporters and doing all the other jobs required to get a campaign off the ground. Others integral to my campaign who deserve recognition are my State Election Council President, Gayle Barbagallo, and my local branch executives, Councillor Brad Bunting, Deputy Mayor Tony Bleasdale, Steve Sagud and Peter Clapham. I also thank the many Australian Labor Party branch members and friends and members of the Filipino groups, including Dorothy del Villar and her Australia Philippines Services League, and Sophie Young and her Filipino angels, who rallied and brought many supporters to my campaign. With their help, we were able to spread the Labor message across the electorate of Mount Druitt.

Further, I thank my staff—Sarah Hatch, Yvonne Hajgato and Montana Byers—who worked tirelessly in the office to keep the campaign under control during this busy time. I also congratulate all the western Sydney

local members on both sides of the House who were re-elected, particularly my good friend the member for Blacktown, Stephen Bali, who has massively increased his margin. Over the past four years the people of Mount Druitt and I have achieved great things. Together, we successfully lobbied for the restoration of emergency surgery services, the opening of the dialysis centre and the installation of an MRI machine at Mount Druitt Hospital.

The Rooty Hill train station upgrade has finally commenced, which will see the installation of four new lifts, a multistorey commuter car park, a family-accessible toilet, a new pedestrian footbridge and stairs, bike racks and an improved bus shelter as well as upgrades to closed-circuit television equipment and lighting. Local emergency services have also received upgrades, with Fire and Rescue NSW now settled in its new station and new construction works being completed at the Mount Druitt police station. Finally, more than \$930,000 has been allocated to local sporting and community groups within our area.

However, our work is not done. In this new term of Parliament I will continue to work hard and to lobby for the return of more essential services at the Mount Druitt Hospital and renovation of the older medical wards. I will also be advocating for the much-needed widening of the Davis Bridge overpass on Francis Road, Rooty Hill. I also intend to advocate for the installation of a footbridge rampart at Rooty Hill station, which will allow less able people to access services on both the north and the south sides of Rooty Hill CBD. I will once again stand by my constituents as we continue the fight against the toxic waste facility proposed for Eastern Creek. It is now going through an appeals process despite being rejected by the Independent Planning Commission on health grounds. Finally, I vow to continue my strong representation on behalf of the people of my electorate and I look forward to a better tomorrow for western Sydney.

### FEDERAL AND STATE ELECTIONS

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (20:08):** I speak to convey the thoughts and concerns of the people of Epping about the recent Federal and State elections. I congratulate all members, as well as those who were elected or re-elected in the other place. Campaigning is a hard business and winning an election takes time, effort, sacrifice and a bit of good fortune as well. In this place we have the great privilege of serving our communities. We also know that politics is cyclical. At different points in the political cycle one party or another may be on top—until the wheel turns once again. But time in opposition offers parties the chance to reflect on who they are and what they stand for. Much has been written about the reasons for both election results. The consensus among commentators is that the "quiet Australians" stood up and were counted, rejecting much of Labor's political agenda. In response, the Opposition—both Federal and State—has claimed that its policies are fine; it just has a "communication problem". This is only true in the sense that it still refuses to listen to the message the electorate sent loud and clear: Keep your hands off our finances and our freedoms.

There is little doubt that both Federal and State Labor were overconfident heading to the polls—not just because they felt it was their turn, but also because they were oblivious to how far their agenda has drifted from the values of mainstream Australia. This is why the people of our State and our nation rejected it. They rejected Labor's plan to tax them more because, unlike Labor, they do not think their hard-earned money is the Government's to take or that the Government is being generous when it lets people keep it. So to Federal Labor's retiree tax and State Labor's plan for \$1 billion in new taxes, the people said no. Labor's high-taxing agenda was about more than just money: It was a full frontal assault on aspiration and opportunity. It was designed to divide and to create resentment and envy. It set community against community, family against family, neighbour against neighbour. And it exposed Labor's false belief that the only way to get ahead is to pull someone else down. That is not the Australian way.

The crude socialist formulations of class warfare have never taken root on Australian soil, and they never will. But these elections were more than just a rejection of Labor's far-left economics. Beneath the sugar-coated language of inclusion and fairness, the parties of the Left pushed a litany of policies to restrict our freedoms to speak, to think and to act freely. They formulated plans to further restrict free speech. They dreamt of regulating journalists—but only the ones they disagree with. They threatened to strip faith-based schools of the freedom to hire in accordance with their beliefs and, in doing so, they arrogantly claimed the moral high ground. They were seeking to use the blunt force of the law to impose their secular dogmas on everyone else—all for our own good, of course.

I am just old enough to remember when the Left actually supported freedom of speech and religion and thought. In fact, oftentimes it championed it. But today it is more concerned with silencing opinions it disagrees with, rather than arguing the case. This new moral puritanism is deadly for democracy. It is designed to make all of us second-guess what we are allowed to say, think and believe. That should concern every member of this place, just as it concerns the people of Epping, whom I proudly represent. My constituents are ordinary, working Australians from all walks of life, and from countries and cultures around the world. Many of them are people of faith. All of them value what this nation offers: a chance to work hard and get ahead for yourself and your family.

They do not take lightly their freedoms and their livelihoods being threatened. And in recent months their concerns have echoed around the State and around the nation. They have put their faith in the Liberal-Nationals to stand up for them, and on this side of the House we always will. Recent elections have exposed a huge gulf between the political class of the Left and the mainstream values of ordinary Australians. I encourage those parties to listen and learn, and to rediscover the freedoms that have made our classical liberal democracy a haven of hope to aspirational people at home and all around the world.

### **BATHURST ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (20:13):** It gives me great pleasure to speak in this House not only about the election win but also about a commitment the Government made before the election about delivering for regional and rural parts of New South Wales. Since 23 March that has not stopped in the seat of Bathurst. We are continuing to invest in projects and programs that are going to make a difference to the lives of many people in our local community. A number of projects have progressed or been announced in the past couple of weeks. These are important projects in the local community that will touch the lives of many people, help create jobs and drive tourism in the local area.

The first is the Bridle Track. A number of years ago, a rockslide occurred on the Bridle Track around Monaghan's Bluff. Anybody who knows the Bridle Track knows that it is an historic track that connects Hill End with the city of Bathurst. Unfortunately, it has been closed for about eight years. The New South Wales Government provided an investment of \$2 million, which went to Bathurst Regional Council. That \$2 million will go towards the reopening of the Bridle Track. Why is this important? Because many four-wheel drivers use that historic track. They go there for camping; they go there for recreational fishing. It is a great opportunity to reconnect the village of Hill End with the city of Bathurst. In addition, visitors who are coming into the area will drive tourism. Over the past few days I have been speaking with Bathurst Regional Council, which is going through a land acquisition process and is looking at purchasing a number of properties around where the rockslide occurred. Once that is complete, the council will then go out for design and construction for a four-wheel drive road around that part of the Bridle Track. We all look forward to the day when the Bridle Track reopened.

Another important project in my community is the infamous Zig Zag Railway in Lithgow. In 2013 a fire went through the area and prevented the Zig Zag Railway from operating. Volunteers have been working tirelessly to fix the tracks and get it ready to be up and operating again. Last November the New South Wales Government announced \$2.3 million to restart the railway. I am sure many people in this Chamber and across the nation have enjoyed the Zig Zag Railway in the past. When it was in its prime, something like 60,000 visitors every year would use the railway. It provided a huge economic boost to the town of Lithgow and a huge boost to that community in providing jobs.

The New South Wales Government is working with the Zig Zag Railway to get it up and running again. This year will be special because in October the railway will celebrate 150 years since it opened. We wait for that day. The member for Wollondilly knows the importance of the heritage railway and how it drives the local economy. The Government also gave \$150,000 to the Zig Zag Railway to go towards improving some of the tunnels and viaducts in that area. Some of those tunnels have been there for over 100 years. We want to make sure that we preserve the craftsmanship of them for generations to come. Off the back of the Government's \$2.3 million, only yesterday I announced another \$150,000 to go towards important restoration work on the tunnels and viaducts.

Finally, I mention the Bathurst basketball stadium. We have been improving many our sporting facilities across the Bathurst electorate. Last Friday I had the pleasure of going to the Bathurst basketball stadium and announcing that the New South Wales Government is going to provide it with \$147,000. Basketball in Bathurst is growing. We will see improvements to the courts, the scoreboards, the backboards and the air conditioning in the front foyer of the basketball centre. It is not only used for basketball; it is used for other sports as well such as volleyball and indoor soccer. We are making sure that we will be able to host major events into the future and drive the opportunities for sport in our area.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (20:18):** It is fantastic to hear a local member talking about delivery in regional New South Wales. People in the regions can be reassured that The Nationals members are listening to them and delivering for them. It was great to hear the member for Bathurst talk about those important projects in Bathurst: the Bridle Track, the Lithgow Zig Zag Railway—everybody has heard of that historic railway—and the basketball stadium. I congratulate the member for Bathurst on delivering those things for his community. I know they are just three from a long list of things that the member has been delivering over the past eight years and will continue to deliver over the next four years.

## PACIFIC HIGHWAY

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:19):** Tonight I talk about something that, unfortunately, I have been talking about since 2007: the upgrade to the Pacific Highway through Wyong Town Centre. The Pacific Highway carries about 30,000 vehicles through Wyong each day. It currently has one lane in each direction. The highway runs right through the middle of the township and is bordered by the railway station on one side and retail and commercial businesses on the other. The road has been congested for a long time. When we were in government, we built the southern end of it, which is called the Tuggerah Straight and runs from Wyong Road in the south to just before the bridge over the Wyong River. We had always planned to build the next 1.2 kilometre section through the township, but since the Tuggerah Straight was finished in 2009 we have been in a planning phase. Members may be interested to know, when they are thinking about road projects in their electorates, that since 2009 some \$19 million has been spent on planning that road. It has been planned, replanned and planned again. In the last two budgets, nearly \$5 million was allocated for further planning of the road.

During the election campaign I was very disturbed to find that the Government did not mention this particular section of road. It even prioritised a road in a different electorate, saying that it had the highest priority. Unfortunately, the NRMA does not agree with the Government, because for many years in a row it has rated the Pacific Highway as the worst road on the Central Coast. Whether they are in the Wyong electorate or in Swansea, The Entrance or Gosford, local businesspeople say that it is a road that needs upgrading. Every morning there can be up to one kilometre of congestion waiting to go through. I spoke to a local business owner from Wideline Windows who has one factory at North Wyong and another about two kilometres away at Tuggerah. For his vehicles to move between those two premises takes on average between 45 minutes and an hour. He expressed to me how ridiculous that is. I ask—as I asked during the election campaign—for the Government to finally announce when it will start spending money.

There was good news in the 2018-2019 budget. On the back page it says that Restart NSW will fund programs and projects for the Wyong electorate. Wyong Town Centre was allocated \$19 million from the Regional Growth Fund, but since the budget there has not been a word about what is actually happening with the road. All the community and businesspeople are asking for is some certainty about a start date. They need to understand the plan, because we cannot just go and build a road. We have to move services and build a whole lot of things before we can start construction. The full project will cost about \$245 million. It is fairly extensive as two new bridges will need to be built and lots of services will have to be moved. It is promising that \$19 million has been allocated in the budget for planning, but that work could start now. Hopefully in the next budget the Government will allocate some of its funds specifically for work. Roads and Maritime Services already owns the land, so the Government just needs to start moving services. It can even start working on the bridges and not affect the road. It could still carry traffic while the M1 is being upgraded and while the Government starts work on the project.

I am joining with local businesspeople and the community to start a protest in the lead-up to the budget. We have all the signs made up. They clearly say, "Gladys, fix this road!" We will be working with local media and doing lots of events leading up to the budget to let people know that waiting 12 years for this work to be done and having so much money allocated for planning but nothing for construction clearly is not good enough. It does not meet the needs of the growing community and, as I said, putting "\$19 million" on a piece of paper with no start date does not cut the mustard.

## PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (20:24):** Last week was National Palliative Care Week and this year's theme is: What matters most? Indeed, palliative care is exactly what matters most to the people of Orange. In this place two years ago I debated the 10,000 signature petition, which was overwhelmingly supported by the Orange community. The petition was in response to the abandonment of the dedicated inpatient palliative care service at Orange Base Hospital when its services were transitioned to the current facility at the Orange Health Service. The initiative of the highly motivated members of Push for Palliative Orange precipitated vigorous and relentless lobbying of a government that was unreceptive to the wishes of the Orange community and remained resistant to adopting a dedicated inpatient palliative care facility.

We accept that most people want and intend to pass away in the familiarity, comfort and peace of their own home amongst loved ones. Unfortunately, however, we also know that in reality this is often not the case, especially when people are in the difficult final stages of life. Sadly this was a justification used to argue against the dedicated palliative care facility by those who ignorantly opposed it. The Government's resistance to delivering this dedicated service to Orange could not be justifiably sustained against reason and the unity of community stakeholders and representatives who joined me in lobbying this cause. Perhaps it was a coincidence that a State election loomed, but it was music to the ears of many in the Orange community when the Western NSW Local Health District called for expressions of interest from providers to deliver a dedicated inpatient palliative care service for Orange.

The contract was awarded following a two-year public campaign. On Monday 26 March 2019 the dedicated four-bed inpatient palliative care service was finally opened at Uniting Care's Parkwood hostel in Prince Street, Orange. First and foremost I thank all those passionate members of Push for Palliative Orange. If they had not initiated their petition and stood with me as I championed this cause, the facility that opened in March may never have been a reality. I also wish to thank the 23 contributing members of the palliative care working group that I formed and chaired to advance this cause.

I thank representatives from the Western NSW Local Health District, Orange Aboriginal Medical Service, Push for Palliative, Orange City Council, Orange general practitioners, Orange Health Service, Cancer Council NSW, LiveBetter, Western NSW Primary Health Network, Orange Health Council, Ramsay Health Care, and Western Care Lodge, who all provided essential support and input which led to the success of this project. I recognise the 21 respected and dedicated medical practitioners of Orange who resolutely supported the provision and delivery of this dedicated service. Their support provided indisputable credibility to this cause, which provided further and significant weight in favour of a dedicated inpatient palliative care service for Orange.

I am advised that in its first two months of service the Parkwood facility's palliative care service has admitted and cared for seven patients in their final days of life. This has meant seven families of the Orange district have been provided with peace of mind that their dying loved ones were cared for with dignity in a peaceful atmosphere while being given specialist care until their passing. Although this service is in its infancy it is far from being a permanent service. The community needs assurances from this Government that this service will continue to be funded, supported and that it will grow as the need of the community grows.

Recent advice provided to me indicated that several people who could have benefitted from this service were not referred or admitted. This highlights the need for NSW Health and the Western NSW Local Health District to promote this service to all medical practitioners throughout the Orange district and to advertise this service to the Orange community. I am committed to monitoring the delivery of this essential palliative care service for the community of Orange. I will continue to work with community stakeholders and representatives to improve on and extend this limited service.

At present the criteria set by the Western NSW Local Health Service for referral and admission to the Parkwood facility's palliative care service is for those in their final seven days of life. This is impractical and too inflexible, as many comparable facilities admit patients in their final two to three weeks of life. Patients cannot be admitted to Parkwood for respite or symptom control, as many other palliative care and hospice facilities permit. Those issues require consideration when a review of this trial service is undertaken. Western NSW Local Health District's objective is to provide a world-class health service, which the community expects to include palliative care. It is my hope that their mantra is consciously recalled in the shaping and delivery of this essential service for the people of the Orange district.

### **ERYLDENE HISTORIC HOUSE AND GARDEN**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (20:29):** Eryldene is an early twentieth century historic house and garden located in Gordon in my electorate of Davidson. Built in 1913, it is recognised as one of the nation's most important heritage properties. The house was designed by visionary architect William Hardy Wilson for Professor E. G. Waterhouse, who created its internationally acclaimed camellia garden. The name Eryldene relates to Mrs Waterhouse's Scottish heritage.

Visitors to the tranquil Eryldene house and garden in McIntosh Street, Gordon, will be struck by the modern approach of Professor Waterhouse and his architect. The home is designed to connect with the extensive surrounding garden. A number of lovely outdoor rooms are carefully furnished with trees, shrubs and flowers. The superbly proportioned oriental influenced garden structures are a notable feature. There is a temple, a garden study, the teahouse tennis pavilion, fountain, a pigeon-house and a moon gate in the tennis court fence. Waterhouse believed that a garden should represent the outside rooms of a house, each room leading visitors to wander with delight from one to the next.

The professor and his wife were great collectors of art, oriental rugs and other furnishings and some room settings retain their original furnishings and detail. The Eryldene Trust was formed as a private trust in 1977 to conserve the property for the enjoyment of the community according to Professor Waterhouse's wishes. The Eryldene Trust is responsible for the care and presentation of the house and gardens and oversees a program of open days and special events. It also manages the maintenance of the property and is responsible for its financial administration. The president of the Eryldene Trust is Jamie Bretherton and the Treasurer and secretary is Julian Bickersteth. Board members are Christopher Levins, Penelope Holden, Julie Hood, Rachel O'Connor and Helen Wallace. The manager of Eryldene is Anne Davey and the assistant manager is Denise Tart.

It was a special privilege to recently inform the Eryldene Trust that it was successful in obtaining a \$20,000 New South Wales Government heritage grant. The grant to the Eryldene Trust will fund a Conservation Management Plan for the house and the world-famous Eryldene gardens. It is very fitting that the grant comes just as the camellias are putting on their party frocks and starting to bloom in all their elegant glory. Looking after our heritage is everyone's responsibility and local communities and organisations like the Eryldene Trust play an important role in maintaining heritage at a local level.

I recognise the many financial contributions of Ku-ring-gai Council to the preservation of this important part of our heritage. Most recently council grants helped in restoration work on the tennis pavilion including mending and re-painting the pavilion's red flag poles to their intended appearance. On special days, Professor Waterhouse would raise two dragon flags—one red and one blue—and place a Chinese roof finial of a god, or a rider and horse, at the base of each pole.

The Eryldene garden has an impressive collection of ornamental camellias gathered by Professor Waterhouse over some years as a passion. He bred hybrids, and was a renowned expert on camellia classification and naming. Waterhouse died aged 96 on 17 August 1977, by which time over 700 camellia varieties had been accommodated in Eryldene's garden. Waterhouse was also responsible for planting what became the well-loved and iconic Jacaranda tree in the quadrangle of the University of Sydney—my main alma mater. Professor Waterhouse was fluent in German, French and Italian and in his eighties began studies in Japanese, becoming sufficiently proficient to talk about camellias with Japanese experts. He undertook research on all aspects of the camellia and his work brought him international acclaim and respect. He was also influential in the fields of art, architecture, horticulture and design.

During the lifetime of Professor Waterhouse, Eryldene became a lively centre for discussion attracting many well-known artists, writers, architects and designers as well as vice-regal visitors and diplomats. Eryldene is not only a focus for admirers of Professor Waterhouse's life and works but it also reflects cultured, intellectual life in Sydney from the First World War to the Modern period. It is open on the second weekend of every month between April and September when the camellias are at their best and is available for booked tours at all other times. Eryldene is next open on the June long weekend on Saturday 8 June and Sunday 9 June from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. The house and garden symbolise a genteel way of life—tranquil, devoted to culture, beauty, and good taste, which is a bit different to this House.

#### HEFFRON ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (20:34):** On behalf of the many thousands of residents in Heffron I raise my community's very stern opposition to changes made to bus services in December 2018. Without warning nor consultation the Minister for Transport made drastic amendments to bus services in my electorate, which I am also aware has affected commuters in neighbouring electorates such as Maroubra and Coogee. The first that commuters knew of changes to their bus services was when they found pieces of paper sticky taped to their bus stops notifying them that changes would occur from 2 December. As the local member, the first I knew of these changes was when constituents called to complain about this shoddy and unprofessional method of communication. I was not given so much as the consideration of an email, let alone a briefing from transport officials.

Once the new timetable was in effect, it became apparent to me and to commuters that it was a shambles. The situation was made worse by the poor communication, with many commuters caught completely unaware of the new timetable. These changes included cuts to the 301, 302 and 303 services, which now terminate at Redfern station rather than at Railway Square. Prior to the 2015 timetable they terminated at Circular Quay. There were also cuts to the 309 service, which previously ran from Matraville to Circular Quay and now terminates at Banksmeadow and Railway Square. There have been cuts to the 305 bus service, which now runs from Mascot to Redfern station instead of Railway Square. The 310 bus service was abolished entirely. The 308 service from Marrickville Metro to the CBD via Erskineville now terminates at Railway Square and the X09 and X10 services were abolished.

My office has been inundated with complaints from travellers young and old who have been so inconvenienced by these changes. I am particularly concerned about the impact on our elderly, who are extraordinarily reliant upon our public transport network to access vital services like shopping centres and doctors' appointments and social engagements. These changes risk isolating our elderly from the things that are essential to the quality of their lives. Commuters tell me they cannot understand at all why these changes were necessary.

The elderly, who could previously access the Sydney CBD and even Circular Quay with a single bus trip, are now forced off their bus services and onto trains at Redfern station. They cannot get from Redfern station to the bus stop or vice versa because the distances are too great. As well, that station only has accessible lifts to platforms 6 and 7, which are serviced by trains on the Inner West Line, not the more heavily patronised Western



Line and the Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra Line. If elderly passengers arrive at Redfern station on a different platform they cannot get up the stairs to access a bus stop and get home. Full access for the disabled will not happen until that station is reconstructed.

It seems to me that this new timetable was dreamt up to integrate it with the South East Light Rail line. That is all very well and good but the absolute shambles of the light rail means that it is still more than 12 months away from completion—probably more. How does the Government expect commuters to integrate with a public transport project that will not exist for a year or more? The incompetence really is frightening. Commuters in my electorate have made their feelings about the new timetable loud and clear to me. I have been swamped with complaints from constituents and within just a few months I have collected thousands of signatures on my petition to restore the old timetable. Residents of the former Botany Bay Local Government Area just this month voted their public transport the second worst in the State, according to the 23,000 voters in the NRMA's "Rate Your Roads" survey. Residents gave our public transport a 43 out of 100. That is a big, fat "F" on the Minister's report card. In releasing that report, Mr Peter Khoury of the NRMA remarked:

A bus from Botany to the CBD can take up to 70 minutes and can involve multiple connections. By contrast, commuters on the Manly Fast Ferry can get from Manly to Circular Quay in just over 15 minutes.

So there are salad days for those on the leafy North Shore but residents in my electorate are treated like leftovers. The Minister should pick up his act and listen to the people of Heffron. We want our bus services back.

### CENTRAL COAST FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:39):** I thank our firefighters on the Central Coast who regularly put their lives on the line to protect people and property. Earlier this month was St Florian's Day. Held on 4 May each year, this day pays tribute to the tireless work and dedication of all serving firefighters. I speak on behalf of our community in saying that we are enormously proud of their bravery and dedication. We can never take their contribution for granted and it is important to recognise the sacrifice they make to protect people and property.

To coincide with St Florian's Day, I had the pleasure of representing the emergency services Minister, the Hon. David Elliott, at the Regional Firefighter Championship at Norah Head Sportsground. Retained firefighters from as far afield as Armidale, Dubbo, Nowra, Port Macquarie, South Grafton and Ulladulla converged on the Central Coast to compete against local teams from Wyong and Toukley. The championships not only are fun and exciting to compete in and watch but they also have the more serious purpose of honing skills that are critical in real emergencies. It was amazing to see the speed at which our firefighters can operate. Some took less than 60 seconds to assemble equipment, connect hoses, climb ladders and spray a target. It was a truly impressive event.

Recently I also had the pleasure of attending the New South Wales Rural Fire Service's Central Coast Volunteer Appreciation Day. The day consisted of an awards presentation and a blessing of the fleet. It was well attended by dozens of brigades from across the Central Coast region. At the awards presentation we had the opportunity to recognise the long service of a number of firefighters. I wish to acknowledge and thank Jeffrey Smith from Mannering Park Brigade for 40 years of service and Warwick Teasdale from Killcare Wagstaffe Brigade, in my electorate of Terrigal, for 42 years of service. Warwick joined the brigade in 1976 and has held the positions of secretary, equipment officer and deputy captain from 1996 to 1999 and captain from 2009 to 2010. Warwick is the very worthy recipient of the Long Service Medal Third Clasp.

I also acknowledge Rodger Wilson from Kulnura Brigade for 51 years of service, Alistair Harding for 25 years of service, Rodger Horne for 29 years of service, Robert Sterling from Kariong Brigade for 30 years of service, Andrew Gunn from Pearl Beach Brigade for 30 years of service, David Horan from Ourimbah and Kulnura brigades for 32 years of service, and Glen Howe from Kariong Brigade for 40 years of service. There are also a number of other constituents of mine that have received Long Service Medals for their ongoing volunteering with the Rural Fire Service. I thank Christopher McInerney, John Glew, Christopher McBurney, Donald Anderson, Robert James, Leigh Pilkington and David Glover.

Finally, I highlight the work of four more constituents of mine. Stephen Biddulph joined the Killcare Wagstaffe brigade in 1998 and held the positions of deputy captain from 1999 to 2000, captain from 2000 to 2005, senior deputy captain from 2006 to 2008, deputy group captain from 2005 to 2011, group captain from 2012 to 2016 and deputy group captain in 2017. Stephen is incredible and a very worthy recipient of the National Medal and Long Service Medal First Clasp. Peter Burfitt joined the Gosford communications unit in 1989 where he held the positions of president, training officer, deputy captain, senior deputy captain and captain. When the former Gosford and The Lakes districts merged to form the Central Coast District, the separate communications brigades were also merged and Peter became the communications captain.

Peter has become a dual member with the Matcham-Holgate Brigade in my electorate of Terrigal and he is the recipient of the National Medal Second Clasp. George Slennett joined the Matcham-Holgate Brigade in 1977 where he has held the positions of president, treasurer, training officer, community engagement officer and also has served as deputy captain, senior deputy captain and captain. George is the longest serving member of the Matcham-Holgate Brigade. He is the very worthy recipient of the National Medal Second Clasp and Long Service Medal Third Clasp. Dean Roberts joined the Wamberal Brigade in 1991 and has completed 28 years of service. He has held the positions of president, training officer, deputy captain and senior deputy captain. He was made a life member in 2014 and is the recipient of the National Medal First Clasp.

Firefighters do so much more than fighting fires. They are often the unsung, humble heroes in our community, which is why I am pleased that we had the opportunity to acknowledge their service last weekend. From car crashes and hazardous material incidents to natural disasters and community education, they really are prepared for anything and they are ready to help anyone, anywhere, anytime.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:44 until  
Wednesday 29 May 2019 at 10:00.**