



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 29 May 2019**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bills .....	1
Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 .....	1
Second Reading Debate .....	1
Members .....	12
Inaugural Speech.....	12
Committees .....	16
Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy .....	16
Establishment.....	16
Visitors.....	16
Visitors.....	16
Bills .....	17
Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 .....	17
Second Reading Debate .....	17
Consideration in Detail .....	26
Community Recognition Statements .....	29
Gordon Rugby Club.....	29
Bellambi Dune Reserve Bushcare .....	29
Wingham Beef Week .....	29
Dapto High School.....	29
Youth Week .....	29
1st Blaxland Scout Group .....	30
Wanda Surf Lifesaving Club .....	30
North Entrance Surf Life Saving Club.....	30
Willie Middleton .....	30
Prince of Wales Hospital .....	30
Cootamundra Electorate Bravery Awards .....	31
Macquarie Fields Biggest Morning Tea .....	31
Lamrock Committee .....	31
Amitabha Buddhist Association of New South Wales .....	31
Mulgoa Electorate Salvation Army Red Shield appeal .....	31
Fairfield Electorate Biggest Morning Tea .....	31
Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club .....	32
Chaldean Youth Union .....	32
Tribute to Aileen Mary Mutton.....	32
Maple Court .....	32
Gordon Allan .....	33
Ramadan .....	33
Tribute to Ian McGregor.....	33
Redfern Islamic Society.....	33
Clean Up Australia Day .....	33

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

BreastScreen NSW.....	34
Breakout.....	34
Turool Kore.....	34
Bonalbo Show.....	34
Visitors.....	34
Visitors.....	34
Question Time.....	35
Minister for Customer Service.....	35
Sydney Night-Time Economy.....	36
Minister for Customer Service.....	37
Regional Manufacturing.....	38
Minister for Customer Service.....	39
TAFE NSW.....	39
Ministerial Code of Conduct.....	40
Water Security.....	41
Northern Rivers Public Transport.....	42
Transport Infrastructure.....	43
Business of the House.....	45
Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Reordering of General Business.....	45
Committees.....	45
Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy.....	45
Membership.....	45
Petitions.....	45
Petitions Received.....	45
Motions Accorded Priority.....	46
NSW Labor.....	46
Consideration.....	46
Minister for Customer Service.....	46
Consideration.....	46
NSW Labor.....	48
Priority.....	48
Bills.....	53
Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019.....	53
Consideration in Detail.....	53
Members.....	55
Inaugural Speeches.....	55
Bills.....	62
Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019.....	62
Consideration in Detail.....	62
Third Reading.....	67
Matter of Public Importance.....	68
Australia's Biggest Morning Tea.....	68

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Private Members' Statements .....	70
Job Creation .....	70
Australian Man Cave Support Group .....	71
Taree Rescue Squad .....	72
Mosman Fire Station .....	73
Canterbury Electorate Schools .....	74
Guyra Pipeline Project .....	74
Miranda Electorate Australia Day Honours .....	75
Newcastle TAFE .....	76
Cootamundra Electorate Volunteers .....	77
Oatley Electorate Community Events .....	78
Ku-ring-gai Electorate Railway Station Accessibility .....	79
Macquarie Fields Electorate .....	80
Assyrian New Year .....	81
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation .....	81
The Sisterhood Community Network .....	82
National Reconciliation Week .....	83
Tribute to Aunty Kathleen Miller .....	84
Ramadan .....	84
Suicide Prevention .....	85
Foundation Broken Hill .....	86
Wollongong Hospital .....	86
Camden Electorate Anzac Day Commemorations .....	87
Emily's List Australia .....	88
East Hills Electorate .....	89
Tribute to Robert James Lee Hawke, AC, A Former Prime Minister of Australia .....	90
Wollondilly Electorate Infrastructure .....	91
Committees .....	92
Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy .....	92
Messages .....	92

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 29 May 2019

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019

#### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 8 May 2019.**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (10:10):** I am delighted to make a contribution to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. Those who know me intimately know I could reflect on this bill both personally and privately, but I will not be doing that today. I will be reflecting on some of the issues that affect those in our communities and regions who have a disability or who require appropriate levels of service and, indeed, this bill. From the outset, as the member for Canterbury, shadow Minister for Ageing and shadow Minister for Disability Services, Ms Sophie Cotsis has said, Labor will be supporting the bill but we will also be proposing a number of amendments—I will elaborate on them shortly. I noted yesterday when the shadow Minister was speaking that the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services acknowledged those proposed amendments. The Minister is a decent man. I trust he will give the amendments due consideration for the benefit of not only those with a disability but also those who are ageing.

I turn now to a number of points, including why an Ageing and Disability Commissioner is needed and the difference this will make to the lives of those with a disability and those who live in aged care. Labor is seeking to address the shortcomings of this bill through our proposed amendments, including extending the commissioner's jurisdiction to cover children as well as adults; strengthening the enforcement powers of the commissioner; and empowering the commissioner to refer matters to the police and the Department of Public Prosecutions. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 40,000 older people and 90,000 people with disability experience violence each year in our State. Earlier this year the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety uncovered that in 2017-18 there were 3,773 reportable assaults in nursing homes across Australia, excluding incidents of residents attacking each other.

That in itself explains why we support this bill; it is also why our proposed amendments make sense. Those statistics are scary at best, but they are horrifying as well. It is far too easy to get caught up in the numbers and forget about the human side of this crisis. Numbers are one thing but this is something that affects people—probably the most marginalised and at times disadvantaged people in our community. I refer to the tragic story of Bob Spriggs, who passed away while he was a patient at an elderly person's mental health facility. Bob was 66 years old. He was admitted to the facility due to a series of crippling illnesses such as Parkinson's disease and dementia. After arriving at the facility his family immediately noticed his health deteriorate. His wife was told he had been given 500 milligrams of antipsychotic drugs instead of the prescribed 50 milligrams.

Of course, there is an element of human error that we could go into more deeply but this matter highlights the need to focus specifically and directly on those in care. When his family came to visit Mr Spriggs they found him lying on the floor unattended and covered in unexplained bruises, which it later became apparent were likely caused by physical restraints. I note that these were only allegations in that circumstance. The family raised complaints about his condition and treatment with the staff but sadly their complaints fell on deaf ears and I feel did not get the attention that they required. The family received a letter of apology for the standard of care provided to Bob. Frankly, that simply was not good enough and I agree with the family about the hurt that caused them.

Mr Spriggs and his family should never have had to undergo such an ordeal. This bill will go some way towards protecting people like Mr Spriggs, and Labor's foreshadowed amendments will add more teeth to make the bill even better. Indeed, this is just one story of a family left hurting; there are thousands more across the State and country. These are the ones we know about; what about the ones we do not know about? As a society we simply must do better at protecting vulnerable people. Establishing a commissioner is a welcome start and that is why Labor supports the bill. However, as we and anyone of decent mind knows, it is regrettable that it has taken the Government three years and multiple reports before introducing this bill. Furthermore, while the bill is a start, it has a number of shortcomings that are concerning and I shall go through them for the benefit of the House.

We are concerned that the bill does not go far enough with regard to enforcement powers, which is the reason for Labor's foreshadowed amendments. The bill provides the new commissioner with powers to investigate allegations of abuse but it does not provide the commissioner with any specific powers if a complaint is substantiated. The deliberate exclusion of children from the scope of the proposed commissioner is deeply concerning. The Minister clearly needs to consider and adequately explain why this is necessary and how he can guarantee that children with a disability will not fall through the cracks. If what the Government says is true that the commissioner does not need jurisdiction over children with a disability because they are covered by the child protection system, then the Government is saying that the current child protection system adequately and perfectly protects children with a disability; no parent or carer would suggest such a thing.

Labor will move amendments to ensure that the bill covers all people with disability regardless of age. I am deeply concerned that the bill lacks the explicit power for the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to refer matters to the NSW Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions, adding more validity to support Labor's foreshadowed amendments. The horrific treatment of these vulnerable people and the abuse that they are suffering is simply not right, and indeed in many cases is criminal. The Government should not propose to create a commissioner who when faced with undeniable overwhelming evidence of criminal behaviour will be hopelessly powerless to bring the perpetrators to justice. Given that in 2016 the Ombudsman found that only 18 of 1,140 allegations of abuse against people with disability resulted in prosecution, this bill must be amended to ensure appropriate charges can be pursued in those circumstances.

In conclusion, I fully support the introduction of an Ageing and Disability Commissioner, as do my colleagues. Indeed, the shadow Minister, Sophie Cotsis, spoke at length in relation to that matter. I believe it is a crucial step to protecting the welfare of our most vulnerable. I hope the Government will put politics aside and will genuinely take our sensible amendments seriously to ensure that this bill protects children with a disability and empowers the commissioner to take strong actions against those who commit deplorable acts against the defenceless.

I urge those on the other side to read carefully the amendments that my friend Sophie Cotsis, the member for Canterbury and the shadow Minister for Ageing and shadow Minister for Disability Services, has put forward. They put people before politics. This bill is beyond the boundaries of politics. It is about giving a voice to the silent and giving strength to those who cannot stand and fight for themselves. There are not too many more important things that we must do in this place than be the voice of the silent and the strength for those who cannot be strong. I urge members to consider the amendments. We support the bill but we have to get it to where it needs to be.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (10:20):** The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 will create the position of a New South Wales Ageing and Disability Commissioner as well as establish an Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. I thank my colleague the member for Canterbury for leading the Labor Party's response to this bill. I also thank her for her diligence as shadow Minister for Disability Services in consulting widely with the sector and with her colleagues. Throughout 2018 I was honoured to act in the member for Canterbury's big shoes as shadow Minister for Disability Services while she faced—and thankfully won—her own battles. It is good to have her back in our ranks healthy and bringing to her role her passion and deep sense of responsibility for the most vulnerable people in our community.

During the past term of Parliament, I was also a member of the Health Care Complaints Committee and, prior to entering this place, I was a lawyer specialising in health law. I worked closely with the Stockton Hospital Welfare Association, which advocates for the welfare of the residents of the Hunter's large residential centres. The centres include Stockton Hospital, Kanangra at Morisset and the Tomaree Lodge in Port Stephens, all of which are home to people with complex disabilities. All of these homes are closing and I will have more to say later about these residents and these services.

Needless to say, I have a strong and longstanding interest in the topic of this bill, as do many people here today. The creation of a New South Wales Ageing and Disability Commissioner is welcome but painfully overdue, and it comes as this Government appears to be trying to address the impacts of its privatisation and defunding of disability services in New South Wales—something that ought to have happened long ago. Who could not see that we would need robust oversight to protect vulnerable people when the main provider of disability services in New South Wales, this Government, stopped providing support to people? The answer is, everybody could see it. Everybody was asking for it.

The inaugural Ageing and Disability Commissioner will face a busy task from day one. The disability services system has been stripped back and privatised by this Government since it came to power in 2011. It has created a system that has many cracks, that is unresponsive to those who once depended on it and that is hostile to criticism. The commissioner will pick up a legacy of years of struggle and neglect by this Government. Will the commissioner also be expected to undertake the existing work of approximately 50 disability advocacy

organisations that are shortly to lose their Government funding? While the creation of the role of commissioner is welcome, the simultaneous axing of funding for disability advocacy services across New South Wales shows this Government's true colours.

I plead with the new Minister for Disability Services—who I know is in this Chamber today—to reconsider his Government's position on axing ongoing funding for disability advocacy services. The new commissioner cannot be expected to carry out the important work undertaken by disability advocacy services. Disability advocacy services should be viewed as vital to the success of the commissioner's role, which is undertaking important advocacy, providing information and fighting for a fairer and more inclusive community. The work undertaken by the services prevents the abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with a disability.

We simply cannot afford for these services to cease, otherwise the commissioner's task will be impossible. I call on the Minister to explain to disability advocacy service providers across New South Wales how he will support them and their important work into the future—as a Labor Government would have done. Many of the issues with which the commission will deal no doubt will relate to the Government's agenda to privatise New South Wales Government-run services and shift all New South Wales funding to the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS].

Of course the NDIS has the potential to be as life-changing as Medicare and other important safety net programs, but the scheme is in its infancy. Moreover currently it is facing hostile treatment from the Federal Government through an arbitrary staffing cap and a \$1.6 billion underspend in its most recent budget. It is disgraceful that the current Federal Government would rather see budgeted money returned to Treasury than it being spent on improving the lives of people with disabilities. Yet this is where the New South Wales Government's sole contribution to disability services has been redirected. Last year New South Wales contributed \$3 billion to the NDIS only to have the Commonwealth benefit from the \$1.6 billion underspend. This is the context in which the Ageing and Disability Commissioner will commence.

Many of the members who have contributed to today's debate have outlined the powers that will be conferred on the commissioner by virtue of this legislation so I do not intend to repeat them. During my contribution to this debate I will focus on the impacts upon people with disabilities. The commissioner also will have an important role in relation to aged people and the exploitation that they experience. By my not addressing those issues today I do not mean to minimise the importance of the role of the commissioner, which applies to aged people and people with disabilities. However, this legislation creates a number of important limitations upon the role of the commissioner. Labor will seek to redress those limitations by moving amendments.

The now defunct New South Wales Ageing, Disability and Home Care unit was a leading provider of services for disabilities in New South Wales. The unit has been employing highly trained staff and delivering a quality level of service. By virtue of one of the most draconian pieces of legislation, the so-called enabling Act—introduced to this Parliament by the current Government—the staff have been forced to transfer to the private sector with few protections. They will shortly face the brunt of corporate greed as their two-year job protections expire. Unfortunately, the powers of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner will not extend to investigating the treatment of staff who are working in the ageing and disability sectors—those who have been treated so poorly by this Government.

The commissioner's powers are restricted to adults with disabilities, which ignores the many families who are struggling to get care for their children from a fragmented system of private providers and changing rules for funding. Labor will be moving an amendment to widen the jurisdiction of the commissioner to cover people with disabilities of all ages—as the coverage should. The exclusion of children with disabilities is particularly disappointing because the NDIS agreement requires the New South Wales Government to fund out-of-home care for children with disabilities.

The current Government's approach to its changes to the disability services sector in New South Wales will mean that the concept of oversight will take a back seat in its push to privatise everything. From the outset, when this Government was embarking on its complete privatisation of the sector—while the NDIS was in its infancy—there was a loud call for oversight, protections and quality controls to be put in place. That outcry happened because everyone could see the looming risks as the entire sector's landscape shifted both in terms of funding and the provision of services. This lack of oversight has not been without terrible consequences.

To be clear, the consequences have not been felt by the people who made poor decisions at the behest of this Government. The consequences have been worn by the most vulnerable people in our communities. In the Hunter there have been at least two deaths of residents from the Stockton Centre who were transferred to group homes. The deaths were investigated by the NSW Ombudsman's standing inquiry into the deaths of people with disability in residential care. The Ombudsman's report into the deaths of the former Stockton Centre residents found:



... a range of significant problems relating to... the adequacy of the actions of the provider to ensure an informed and safe transition of residents with known complex health needs from the large residential centre to the group home. The information indicated that group home staff did not receive adequate practical training and induction before supporting the residents, despite known risks associated with the residents' complex health needs. Those people died from neglect. There was no oversight of the process or the decisions being made. The residents with complex intellectual and physical disabilities and complex health problems lost their lives. There was no oversight of the forced transfers. Just weeks before, I had met with the Minister and had pleaded on behalf of residents that this Government do more. The fears of families and advocates had become a reality. Everyone who had been involved from the beginning had predicted this would happen and we had been powerless to stop it happening.

To this day no-one has been held accountable for the deaths of those residents—not the department that transferred them, not the person who decided that the residents did not need a medical model group home or qualified nursing staff onsite, and certainly not the former Minister for Disability Services, who had ultimate responsibility. The residents of the Stockton Centre, Kanangra and Tomaree Lodge, their families, loved ones and advocates deserve answers. They are fearful that no lessons have been learned because no-one has ever acknowledged their error. [*Extension of time*]

Even the poor staff in those group homes who were put into a position of caring for people they did not have the skills to care for deserve an apology from this Government. And here is the thing: the majority of the residents in these services are under the guardianship of the Public Guardian, another agency of this Government that does not have the resources or the will to fight for these people. As a member, I only hear of people who have fallen through the cracks when they have family, an advocate or a loved one who is capable of raising their plight with me. The big question in many people's minds in our communities is what is happening to those people who do not have a voice, who do not have a family, a loved one or an advocate who is in their corner? I dearly hope that this is an answer that this commissioner can provide. There is a world of pain out there that I and many of us have had only a glimpse of, which is why it is so important that we get this right today and why the Government should take heed of the amendments Labor will move today.

We cannot afford for there to be more cracks between different levels of oversight and accountability, services and funding. We must ensure that people have somewhere to turn and that their rights are being protected. When so many Government members have come into the House during the course of this debate and have beaten their chests and said how good this Government has been and how good the Government will be with the implementation of this legislation and the commissioner—which has been a long time coming—I cannot help but see the hypocrisy and feel the weight of responsibility on behalf of those people who have been experiencing the sheer neglect of this Government for eight years and the pain that they have felt. Government members can come into this place and beat their chests and say how good they are because they are doing this, but it is far too late. However, I hope it works. I commend Labor's amendments to the House and I hope that when they are adopted the Ageing and Disability Commissioner can be given the powers he or she needs to make a genuine difference for the people who need it most in New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:34):** I support the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019, which will establish an Ageing and Disability Commissioner, and I acknowledge that the Opposition will move a number of amendments put together by the good member for Canterbury who, as other members have said, is, and continues to be, a strong advocate in this area. Like other members, I will not go through all of the provisions of the bill because they have been covered in great detail. However, I will mention a few things that affect constituents in my electorate and why this commissioner is so necessary, particularly with the current flux in the disability sector.

I believe we all support the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS], but we also acknowledge, through people who are contacting our offices on a regular basis, that the transition has been less than smooth and that many people are slipping through the cracks in the transition from the previous system to the new system. That is why it is important that there is someone at the State level who has the power and ability to intervene on behalf of people who are ageing, have a disability or both. It is so important. As other members have mentioned, there are many vulnerable people in our community who do not necessarily have anyone advocating strongly on their behalf to look into their issues. I acknowledge the new Minister, who is in the Chamber. I appreciate that he is sitting in the Chamber throughout the whole debate. That shows his strong commitment to the issue, which I know he is very passionate about.

In my electorate there is a facility called Casuarina Grove. The facility was opened in 2011 to replace Peat Island, which was very dated. It is a 100-bed state-of-the-art, purpose-built facility for people with a specific disability who are, in most cases, ageing. As part of the transition under the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] that facility is being moved to the not-for-profit sector. At the end of last year it went out for tender but, unfortunately, nobody tendered for it and it was put on hold. It is now up to the new Minister to decide what the future of Casuarina Grove will be.

When I was the local member between 2007 and 2011 and the facility was still only a greenfield site I was involved in this issue, along with member for Liverpool. We spoke to the families of the clients who were going to move to Casuarina Grove when it opened. There was great concern that the residents would be moved from Peat Island to somewhere further away from Sydney. I was happy that when they saw the facility and it opened they were very pleased with what happened. Now we have another transition where there is a great deal of uncertainty. That is why we need a commissioner. Not all organisations are up to the same standard and the transition leaves gaps for exploitation and the mistreatment of vulnerable people. The clients at Casuarina Grove are high-needs people with disability.

One of the great things about medical advancement is that people with disability are living a lot longer—that is a positive. But one of the unfortunate consequences is that they are now, in most cases, outliving their family members. Parents are very concerned that when they pass on their children will be left without proper supports. I hope that the commissioner position, with the powers that it has been given—and hopefully the Government will support some or all of the amendments—will mean that we are able to ensure that those people have long-term certainty that their loved ones will be looked after in the system. As the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance stated, people with disability are sometimes viewed as a problem rather than people. There is a view that we need to solve those "problems" all the time. This sector is all about people. It is about individual people and the quality of their lives.

I want to see Casuarina Grove looked after for the clients who live there, who are part of my community. People in my electorate have raised some other issues with me. I will state some quick facts for the benefit of the House. In 2016, 21,083 people in the Central Coast—or 6.4 per cent of the population—needed help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. That is a significant number of people. In Australia, 18.6 per cent of females and 18 per cent of males have a disability. I have a lot to do with people who advocate on behalf of people with disability, through both personal relationships and the people I meet through my role as the local member.

I will mention two cases that highlight the need for the new commissioner to be able to look at systemic issues. That is important. Daniel, who has cerebral palsy, asks the question, "The bill looks at abuse, neglect and exploitation. Will it be able to inquire into disability providers, systems and outcomes?" For example, providers that supply very basic services for high fees but do not meet individual life outcome programs over a broad range. This is about exploitation. People who may not have the necessary experience and skills to service people are moving into the sector. They are being led down the garden path.

An example of this exploitation was raised by Lee-Ann, who suffers from cerebral palsy. Lee-Ann uses an electric wheelchair. The family applied to have the family car converted so that it could be used with the wheelchair. They obtained quotes that indicated it would cost \$30,000 to \$40,000. The service provider replied with, "You do not need that. What you need is a \$100,000 van [that does X, Y and Z]". The family did not need that van and were happy with the lower cost solution because it met their needs. They felt bullied into applying for the higher cost solution. They fought that recommendation and received the lower cost solution. What is the motivation to not meet the needs of the family? [*Extension of time*]

The new commissioner must have the power to look at systemic issues. Another issue is the relationship between Housing NSW and clients with disability. Lee-Ann is 45 years old and lives with her mother in social housing. Previously Lee-Ann's name was on the lease, but it has now been removed. Lee-Ann's mother is worried that if something happens to her or she is not able to stay in the house Lee-Ann could become homeless. Even though it is a home they share, Lee-Ann is not included on the lease and she may be forced to move if something happens to her mother. These issues happen regularly and people worry about them. Lee-Ann and her mother have been negotiating with Housing NSW for a long period and have not resolved the issue.

They are currently negotiating to have the shower modified. Lee-Ann has to sit on the floor when she bathes because her chair does not fit in the shower. The one-panel door simply needs to be replaced with a three-panel door. This negotiation has been going on since the end of last year. An occupational therapist visited the House and took photographs and recommendations were made by the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. Finally, on 2 May they reached an agreement but they have heard nothing since. There are many types of abuse; some abuse is horrific. Lee-Ann is still forced to bathe on the floor of the shower and I would say this is a form of abuse. Human rights should enable people to access the services they need when they need them. Having to wait this length of time and not knowing who to approach to take action is not good enough. I support this bill. I hope the commissioner's powers are wide enough to look into issues such as this. Government departments and private providers need to be responsive. My electorate is lucky to have Central Coast Living Options and other disability organisations that do a fantastic job. They have had to transition from the old model into the new model, which has presented a range of issues. The main issue is that those good organisations want to be responsive to their clients' needs. That is not always the motivation of new providers.

Some examples are Casuarina Grove and the questions that young Daniel had, and the problems that Lee-Ann is experiencing. These are day-to-day problems that these wonderful people have to put up with that the rest of us do not. As I said, when their parents can no longer advocate on their behalf who will do so? Who will protect their interests? People with disabilities are living longer, which is a good thing, but the inadequate funding of advocacy groups is a real problem. This legislation is needed because the move to a Federal system is significantly eroding the role of the State. I hope that the commissioner will have the power to do whatever is necessary to support those who suffer abuse, both intentional and unintentional. If a person has to shower sitting on the floor because they lack the proper equipment, that is abuse. I commend the bill and the amendments.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:48):** As the member for Ballina has indicated, The Greens support this bill, but we have some minor concerns. Some of those concerns may be addressed by the Opposition's amendments; however, I hope the Minister has heard them directly from key stakeholders. I hope that we can resolve them collaboratively and establish an ageing and disability commissioner in New South Wales, which is long overdue. We all have countless stories of why this is so important.

In appointing an ageing and disability commissioner responsible for some of the most vulnerable people in New South Wales, it is crucial that we move to a model that addresses some of the systemic problems faced by people with disability in our community. We must not wait until abuse and suffering occurs as a result of the most inappropriate behaviours and a failure to protect an individual's dignity, or for the individual to have to seek justice and change. It is crucial that we move to a model where we protect and positively recognise people's rights, including their right to live with dignity. We must take a systemic view, recognising that there are fundamental problems in the way that we roll out services, public housing, public transport systems, and in the failure to ensure that all people participate equally. We must address those problems at a systemic level to ensure that people do not suffer abuse and pain, are able to participate, and are not left to advocate for themselves. I hope that is the result of this change.

As other members have mentioned, advocacy is a key issue. Advocacy achieves incredible things in the disability sector by recognising a problem being experienced by one individual. But we know the problem is being faced by maybe tens, hundreds or even thousands of other people. When we fund disability advocacy services, we should learn that one instance of disadvantage, discrimination or abuse to change our policy settings and our systems so that no other people experience that form of abuse, discrimination or hurt. That is what we want.

In support of this bill to establish the office of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, we should talk about how we fund disability advocacy services to assist and provide support to civil society organisations or non-government organisations to identify problems and help the Government to address issues so that nobody else has to experience similar disadvantage in the future. That is one positive step that we can take. I welcome the commitment to extend the funding for disability advocacy services, although as it currently stands that funding is not ongoing.

We know full well that while the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] will provide much welcome relief and support to many people with disability, only a tiny percentage of people living with disability in our community will be eligible for the NDIS. We know that a whole lot of other people who require advocacy and support will not be eligible for this scheme. These individuals should be protected from suffering as a result of discrimination or abuse. Advocacy services are crucial. Sometimes these services say things to governments that governments do not want to hear. But we should remember that these services provide a level of support to change policy and practice so that people do not experience abuse, devastation or discrimination in the form of unintended consequences from public support.

The Greens have been very supportive of the Stand By Me campaign. We stand by the Disability Advocacy Alliance NSW. I particularly want to acknowledge a group of young people I met in the basement room of the Redfern Community Centre in 2017. The alliance runs a local intellectual disability rights service peer support group. People with disability come together at Redfern station and one of the key things they raised with me was the fact that this is not an accessible station for people with disability. I am pleased to say that during the State election campaign there was an announcement to upgrade almost all of the platforms at Redfern station—heaven forbid that the Liberal-Nationals actually deliver what we need, which is to make the whole station accessible!

I point out that platforms 11 and 12 are still not accessible. Come on! We got excited by getting one accessible platform and then we got more excited by getting more accessible platforms under the \$100 million upgrade, but platforms 11 and 12 have been forgotten. Anyway, we hope that the Liberal-Nationals remember that it is possible to get to the eastern suburbs from Redfern and that some people commute from the eastern suburbs to Redfern. Contrary to what those opposite think, there is a good connection between the folks of the eastern suburbs and Redfern. Those using Redfern station might also like lifts at their station—I get distracted by

the fact that it is exciting that the station is being made accessible and we want to celebrate, but then the reality hits that platforms 11 and 12 are still not accessible.

I was distracted because one of the things that the young people at the peer support group wrote to me about was the fact that they wanted Redfern station to be upgraded. I am pleased to note that, provided they are not commuting from the eastern suburbs, they will be happy. The station has been upgraded and people with disability will be able to use the new lift at some point. These young people talked about the challenges they face on a daily basis, but because they are members of a peer support group they identified challenges that other young people with intellectual disability would face. By working with the advocacy services and the intellectual disability rights services they shared those experiences so that the services could advocate for policy changes to ensure that other young people did not face the same challenges. That is the type of advocacy we should encourage, and that is why establishing the role of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner is crucial. It gives us the potential to look at systemic problems.

I want to give a massive shout-out to the fact that the Disability Advocacy Alliance has held multiple rallies and events. People from across the State have come together at these events in support of the alliance. One was held in Redfern in December 2017. In the lead-up to the election, in February, a large crowd turned out at Martin Place to support the idea of disability advocacy in our State. The huge turnout was in no small part a result of the incredible community activists, campaigners, individuals, families and carers who came together to raise these issues. That is why there is now a focus on the need to protect disability rights in this State. I hope that as part of these changes we will see an ongoing commitment and a recognition by the disability commissioner of the need for ongoing advocacy funding for those who fall outside of the NDIS.

I conclude by raising one more issue relating to disability rights and protections that I hope the new disability commissioner will take up, and that is the real challenge faced by people with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). Even the name makes it difficult to engage with and discuss. The hashtag "Millions missing" has been appearing on Twitter in the past few weeks as part of a global day of action. People may know it as chronic fatigue syndrome and it is important we recognise that it is an ongoing challenge. Those who suffer from ME/CFS are not automatically eligible for the NDIS, which is a real challenge. The Greens are committed to a clear pathway for people with ME/CFS to be able to participate in the NDIS. I urge members who do not know about this illness to look at the "Millions missing" hashtag.

ME/CFS has an impact on a lot more women than men. If I dare put on my feminist hat in this Chamber, which is always risky, I would say that maybe the reason why this chronic illness has not been taken seriously is that four out of five sufferers are women. We need to look at the impact that it has on women's lives and the lives of all who are suffering from this illness and we need to put a lot more research and support into it. I put that on the record as part of this debate with the hope that the new commissioner, when appointed, will be able to look particularly at the issue of ME/CFS. I commend the bill. The Greens are supportive of the new commissioner and I look forward to seeing it in action.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (10:58):** I am particularly interested in this legislation, having worked in the disability sector—in Family and Community Services group homes some years ago, as well as for what was then the Spastic Centre in the Northern Beaches, now the cerebral palsy centre. I had a great deal of experience in working with disabled people and their families and seeing the specific problems that they addressed on a day-to-day basis. I also have a particular interest given that I am the member for Newcastle. The Stockton Centre is a very large institution, whose numbers have been decreasing as the Government gets those disabled people out into group homes. Tragically, as part of that process not only were a whole house full of disabled people hospitalised, but also there were two fatalities. Two people died and the investigations revealed that the care they received was not adequate.

Given those two particular pieces of information and the interest that I have, this is very important legislation. There is a third factor, and that is the fact that the State disability advocacy service, Disability Advocacy NSW, is based in Newcastle. It does a fantastic job and Mr Grierson, who heads the service, puts in an enormous effort to fight very hard for disabled people. The tragedy in that regard is that this Government does not see the long-term benefit of this organisation, given that the funding it has provided is only for two years. We are committed to funding disability advocacy in New South Wales for as long as possible.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Hear, hear!

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** I know the shadow Minister, Sophie Cotsis, is very strong on this issue. I am very supportive of that, as is the rest of my party. Those are three important factors that express my keen interest in this legislation. The commissioner will cover not only disability but also ageing. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has brought forward a lot of issues which really need to be addressed. Having an Ageing and Disability Commissioner is a positive step, although we are concerned that the bill does not go far

enough. I acknowledge that the Minister has been making some efforts recently. ThHe visited the Stockton Centre and I was very glad to see him making the effort to meet with local residents and families, seeing how the transition into group homes can be improved and what can be done for the most disabled people. But the Minister needs to do more work on this legislation.

The Opposition has foreshadowed a number of amendments that should be considered thoroughly, taken on board and inserted into the legislation. While the primary function of the new commissioner will be to deal with allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with a disability and older adults, we believe more needs to be in this legislation. It is estimated that 40,000 older people and 90,000 people with a disability experience violence every year in New South Wales. In October 2018 the Commonwealth Government established the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and, in 2019, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Those royal commissions were established following other inquiries, including the inquiry into violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability conducted in 2015 by the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs, and the inquiry into elder abuse conducted in 2016 by the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2. It is all well and good to have a lot of inquiries, but we need good legislation. The bill must be strengthened in specific areas, such as enforcement powers. The bill does not go far enough in that regard and we are concerned that it will be a toothless tiger.

The bill gives the new commissioner the power to investigate allegations of abuse but it does not provide specific powers for the commissioner to use if a complaint is substantiated. It is also restricted to adults. The Opposition believes that is a restriction. We do not object to the definition of "older adults" in the bill, but we do not support the bill's restricting the jurisdiction of the commissioner to adults with disability. It is recognised that this restriction comes from a desire to address the gap in the framework, but restricting it primarily to adults will create new gaps. It will mean the commissioner will not be able to investigate and report on issues affecting children and young people with a disability. It will be very frustrating for parents and carers of children and young people with a disability if the commissioner cannot investigate their claims because of a legal technicality.

Further, the bill does not address referral power to police and the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP]. Such power is needed. The abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and people with disability are crimes that may involve violence, sexual assault, theft and fraud—amongst other things. 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. But it does not contain explicit power to refer matters to the police for investigation.

Relating to offence provisions, under clauses 16, 29 and 30 the monetary penalty of \$5,500 is imposed if a person commits an offence such as obstructing the commissioner. Labor will move amendments to include the possibility of imposing a sentence of 12 months imprisonment for offences under the bill. At present the bill is a bit of a paper tiger and this will help to strengthen it. Labor also believes the bill should be amended to allow public inquiries into systemic issues that affect people with disability and older people. Under the bill, the commissioner has no express power to hold public inquiries.

As stated, Labor supports the bill. We regret it has taken so long for the Government to get to this point. However, I commend the Minister for bringing the bill forward and I hope the Government will consider the Opposition amendments that are designed to strengthen the bill. I point out to the Minister that I made some complimentary statements about him while he was deep in conversation. I welcome his reaching out and trying to work with residents on the Stockton issue, in particular.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (11:06):** It is an honour to speak in debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. It is no surprise that the first Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services who has a disability has been able to so expertly craft and inform the bill, which will see the establishment of a dedicated independent Ageing and Disability Commissioner for the first time in the history of New South Wales and the nation. The Government recognises the importance of diversity and lived experience in reforming and creating policy for the benefit of the people, and I congratulate the Minister on making history and on the bill.

The commissioner will protect the most vulnerable in our society: the disabled, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 50, and all other Australians over 65 years of age. Our population is aging. Nowhere is this more apparent than in country New South Wales. In 2016 in the Cootamundra electorate 23 per cent of the population was aged over 65—a number that we know is projected to swell in the coming decades. That is more than 16,000 people in the Cootamundra electorate—the current populations of Junee and Cowra combined—who will be better protected and enjoy higher degrees of respect and care thanks to the introduction of this bill.

As we have heard, the independent Ageing and Disability Commissioner will protect and promote the rights of adults with disabilities and older adults, and protect them from abuse. They are our mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, and grandparents. Unfortunately, that does not always mean they are treated with care, respect and dignity. The bill is intended to fill gaps in the regulatory oversight of those adults. It gives the commissioner the power to deal with allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of those vulnerable to mistreatment in their homes or in community settings by people whom they know and trust. Those people deserve to feel safe and they deserve to feel protected.

The powers of the independent commissioner will be wideranging—from the ability to execute search warrants on premises with reasonable grounds, to entering into information-sharing arrangements with government and private agencies for the benefit of older adults and those with a disability. These powers are necessary to ensure the success of the commissioner in both investigating and preventing abuse. There is no toothless tiger here. The creation of the role adds to the work that the New South Wales Government's has done already in this space. I look forward to seeing collaboration between the commissioner and the new, proactive elder abuse prevention officers who are being rolled out across our police local area commands as part of the Government's record commitment of 1,500 additional boots on the ground. Together, we must send the united and loud message to those who think they can get away with this shameless and abhorrent abuse that they will be found out. The bill is widely supported by the disability and ageing sector. Deputy Chair of the Disability Council NSW Professor Eileen Baldry said the announcement is a critical step in the right direction. She continued:

This is an important step to ensure people with disability and seniors in our community are protected from any form of mistreatment. We look forward to working with the Commissioner to support health and wellbeing outcomes for our community's most vulnerable.

I am proud to speak in support of this landmark bill and look forward to the positive impact the commissioner will have on the lives of those living with disability and older Australians from 1 July. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (11:11):** I support the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I will refer to the foreshadowed Opposition amendments that will hopefully further improve the bill. I commend the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services for introducing this great bill; it is obvious why members on both sides of the Chamber support it. The shadow Minister for Disability Services has not only addressed our caucus about the bill but also gone through it with members to improve a number of elements. We are being very straightforward because, even if our amendments are not agreed to, the Opposition will support the bill because we need to move forward in this area.

I will refer to examples of abuse of vulnerable adults over which the bill and the commissioner will have jurisdiction. On 2 November 2018 the NSW Ombudsman tabled a report entitled *The abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in NSW—the need for action*. This special report was presented to Parliament. I will provide some examples to demonstrate the importance of this bill and the work of the commissioner. The Ombudsman's inquiry recognised the seriousness of the increasing number of matters being reported to it that raised concerns about the safety and welfare of adults with disability in the community, in the absence of any other agency with powers to investigate allegations that do not reach a criminal threshold or would otherwise require a coordinated interagency response.

It is astonishing that unless a significant criminal activity has been occasioned towards a vulnerable person it does not show on the radar and no agency can help those vulnerable individuals. It is a real issue in our community that the concerns of adults who are subjected to abuse and minor crimes are not addressed and that the perpetrators are not dealt with. We need justice in this area. I refer to page 5 of the report, which states:

A young man with intellectual disability lives at home with his parent. He shows signs of neglect, including poor hygiene, weight loss, and limited access to food. He has unexplained bruising, does not have access to medical treatment for his health issues, his parent has stopped him from seeing his psychiatrist, and he turns up to his day program in a sedated state. The young man does not have any access to his own money, and it is suspected he is exposed to domestic violence and drug use in the home.

That is a terrible state of affairs for this young man, and I have no doubt that this example is repeated time and time again in relation to other people in a home. Not only are they vulnerable but also the parents and other family members are vulnerable and completely overburdened by mental health problems, property issues and so on. I hope that this bill and the commissioner will assist them. I refer to another allegation reported to the Ombudsman. The report states:

A young woman with a cognitive impairment and who is reliant on full support for all daily activities lived in her own home. She received in-home support from an NDIS provider, with additional support from her brother, her informal carer. The woman's daughter reported abuse of her mother by her uncle, including verbal abuse, threats, and causing bruising to her breasts, face and body. The daughter and in-home support workers reported that the woman showed fear in the presence of her brother.

Obviously in this instance there was a significant amount of domestic and family violence. Once again, this was reported to the Ombudsman but it probably did not warrant action by the police. There is no solution for vulnerable people living in family units where there is stress and other problems. We must find a way forward for people

such as that vulnerable woman. The next example in the report demonstrates the level of abuse suffered by a vulnerable person. It states:

A day program provider contacted us with concerns about a young man with intellectual disability. Several months earlier, the young man had presented at the day program with a black eye, and said that his stepfather had punched him. The provider had discussed the allegation with the young man's mother, who told the service to ignore the disclosure as he tended to make things up. We advised the provider to make a report to police.

In response to the report, police attended the day program and spoke with staff and the young man, but were unable to obtain a statement from him. Police arranged for the young man to attend the police station with his stepfather and mother, and reached the view that the young man was unable to make a statement due to his disability. They spoke with his mother, who told police that the young man could become 'attention seeking', and said that he had previously made allegations against others, which had been investigated by FACS and found to be false.

I have heard families use the excuse of "attention seeking" and "making it up" in relation to abuse towards children. The royal commission into institutional child abuse and other inquiries have revealed the truth behind such claims, which had been hidden. The report continues:

We reviewed the child protection database and identified multiple child protection reports in relation to the young man, relating to significant injuries on numerous occasions over several years—including facial bruising, a large scratch that appeared to have been made by a pen on his back, and bruising to his legs. The young man had indicated that all of the injuries had been caused by his stepfather; there were no reports of the young person attributing the injuries to any other person. None of the reports had been reported to police. Following discussion with our office, FACS provided information to police about the allegations that pertained to a potential criminal offence.

The young man could not provide a police statement because of his disability and the police accepted that he was attention seeking. However, if police had made further inquiries they would have found that there had been reports to the child protection database and that the young man had suffered significant injuries as a child. No-one could protect that young man and step up and look after him. The Government failed him. Hopefully, this bill will bridge the gap. The commissioner will be able to communicate with a person about the abuse that has been occasioned upon them and improve the lives of vulnerable people.

The shadow Minister has foreshadowed Opposition amendments to the bill, the first of which will replace the phrase "adult with a disability" to "adults with a disability" wherever it appears throughout the bill and "person with a disability" to "people with disabilities", as appropriate. An amendment will seek to ensure the bill includes children, not just adults. A further amendment will insert "or imprisonment for 12 months, or both" for the maximum penalties provided in clauses 16, 29 and 30. An amendment will insert a new division into part 3 of the bill and clauses regarding public inquiries, which is significant and important. Finally, another amendment will insert new clauses in regard to the actions of the commissioner in the opinion of reports, parts of reports and the annual report. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (11:21):** The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 will establish a new Ageing and Disability Commissioner whose primary function would be dealing with allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of the elderly and adults with a disability. Like my colleagues, I state from the outset that Labor does not oppose this bill. However, it will propose amendments that include children and young people within the scope of bill, impose tougher penalties for obstruction and allow for the commissioner to conduct public inquiries. I also note the history and context of the bill, which was created in response to a number of State and Federal reports and inquiries into the current constraints and limitations within the sector.

A Legislative Council inquiry into elder abuse in 2015 recommended that a public advocate be created to investigate complaints and allegations about abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. The NSW Law Reform Commission and the NSW Ombudsman also recommended the creation of a new, independent statutory position to oversee the sector. Labor, as a party, will always be committed to protecting the most vulnerable citizens in our society. As a member of the Labor Party and an elected representative in this House, I reflect often on our heavy responsibility every time we enter this Chamber. As a Parliament, we have the opportunity to better the lives of those who have experienced abuse, neglect or exploitation, or all three. We also have a unique opportunity to tell stories and speak on behalf of those who do not have a voice.

We know that older persons and adults with disability are vulnerable to abuse. From 2014 to 2016 more than 1,000 incidents of abuse and neglect were reported to the State Government, yet only a tiny fraction were prosecuted. In addition, 40,000 older people and 90,000 people with disability experience violence each year in New South Wales. Abuse, as we know, is the violation of a person's human rights. For people with intellectual disabilities this is often widespread, normalised and manifested in various ways. I believe it is important to speak on the bill to be a voice for not only older adults and those with disability but also ageing and disability organisations, a number of which are located in my electorate. Those organisations work tirelessly, yet their stories often go overlooked.

For this reason I bring to the attention of the House the work of one such disability organisation in my electorate, Eurella Community Services, which is a National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] provider in Sydney's inner west celebrating 65 years of supporting children, young people and adults with disabilities. Eurella offers supported employment, early childhood intervention services, behavioural support, community and social support, lifelong learning, and supported independent living. I believe when commenting on bills such as this it is important to highlight and emphasise the knowledge and firsthand experiences of organisations and individuals that the bill affects. Eurella's business service at North Strathfield provides employment to people with intellectual disabilities and those with mental health issues.

At the beginning of this year I had the opportunity to visit the amazing service to present awards to employees for their dedication and hard work. Eurella is known by employees as a great place to work and, importantly, a safe place to work. The group of employees, whilst assessed as having lower needs, are one of the most vulnerable groups. Twenty per cent of supported employees live alone, often marginalised and socially isolated, and they struggle to meet the cost of daily living. Many do not have family, advocates or circles of support, which makes navigating government services quite difficult. Fifty per cent of them have long-term histories of abuse. Supported employees have shared their accounts of the abuse that takes place in licensed boarding houses and affordable housing complexes, in the main.

Twenty per cent of Eurella's supported employees with intellectual disability live in such dwellings and complexes. They are vulnerable to the physical, emotional and financial abuse that is often perpetrated by other tenants. I was informed that in winter last year one supported employee left the boarding house he was living in as he did not feel safe from abuse and thought that his safest option was to sleep on the street. Following the advocacy and support of Eurella staff and his social worker, that man was provided with practical assistance and received suitable and safe housing. That instance is one of many highlighting the compassion and dedication of Eurella staff, who understand the complexity of each situation and provide the care needed to support individuals with a disability. Such organisations are valuable assets, and their work must be acknowledged when speaking on bills such as this.

As I said, I am lucky enough to visit Eurella regularly and I am blown away constantly by the resilience and determination of the organisation and supported employees, who are committed to Eurella's vision. Recently I also held a roundtable with the shadow Minister for Disability Services, Sophie Cotsis. Eurella Community Services and a number of other disability organisations in attendance spoke about not only issues with the NDIS, but also housing issues that their clients were experiencing. We must address social and community housing and our responsibilities in that area, because often the most vulnerable are affected. The example of the person who lives in my electorate highlights some of the issues that many people with disability face.

It is crucial, therefore, that we work in the best interests of all people and provide them with protection and avenues to address instances of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Not only will the new commission be a place for people to have their grievances and abuse recognised and dealt with, but also it will give many families and individuals in the community who know of those instances the courage and the encouragement to report them. Many families, carers and organisations—some of whom joined the roundtable that I hosted with the shadow Minister—understand from firsthand experience the devastating effects that abuse, neglect and exploitation can have on an individual and a community. Yet such complex issues are still not fully understood by the broader community. I hope that the third function of the commissioner—to raise awareness and educate the community about issues facing the elderly and adults with disability—will begin to address it.

The shadow Minister, Sophie Cotsis, has been leading on our side of the House in highlighting the important issues. I congratulate the Minister on bringing the bill to the House as one of his first tasks as Minister for Disability Services. It has been a long time coming and I congratulate the Minister sincerely on making that a priority of his portfolio. I note that Labor has foreshadowed several amendments to the bill and, in doing so, I again acknowledge the work of the Minister and our shadow Minister for Ageing, and shadow Minister for Disability Services, Sophie Cotsis, who has been a strong advocate for those with a disability.

The first amendment that Labor will propose seeks to include children and young people with a disability within the scope of the commissioner, which is an issue that another disability organisation in my electorate raised with me. If we are serious about the role of the commissioner in protecting vulnerable people then we have to look at all ages: not just adults who we know are susceptible to violence and exploitation, but also young people. While I understand that there are other avenues to deal with those issues, it is important that young people are included within the scope of the commissioner's role. That sends a very strong signal to the community. It is important that, as part of the commission's role in education and raising awareness, it talks about that cohort as well.

In closing, I point out that the effectiveness of the bill cannot exist in isolation. Every member in this House, particularly members who have spoken in debate on the bill, recognises that we have a collective



responsibility to raise awareness of and engage with our ageing and disability organisations and the people that they serve. We are political representatives but we are also members of the community so we must think about how we can give a voice to those people who do not have a voice. We must consider how we can support everyone in their daily lives. That is the focus of the bill and that is why I commend the bill to the House.

**Business interrupted.**

*Members*

### INAUGURAL SPEECH

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to the guests of the member for Barwon, who is about to deliver his inaugural speech. Those guests are, among others, Ms June Lake, Ms Viktoriya Butler, Ms Abygael Rushton-Butler, Master Gabe Rushton-Butler, Ms Aniyah Rushton-Butler and Mrs Jenny Rushton.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:32):** I congratulate the Speaker on his appointment and I congratulate the Premier and her team on winning the election and forming Government. I look forward to working with members from all sides of this House and I thank them for their warm welcome since arriving here. I will turn the clock back now and tell the story of how I came to be standing here before the House today. I went to boarding school when I was 11. At boarding school I learned a lot about myself, other people, friendships and networks. Even today, I still have some of those networks and friendships that were formed in my six years of boarding school. Many of them were helpful to me during the election campaign.

After leaving boarding school at 17 I went straight to the Australian Army; I had to be signed in by my mum. I trained at Kapooka, completed an IT training course and then went to the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, where I was in the reconnaissance sniper platoon. I learned a lot there about teamwork and resilience, and I learned that people are capable of much more than they think. People can do amazing things and most people do not realise just what they are capable of. After the army, I went to university for the first time. After a couple of years I worked out that it was not the right time for me to go to university. Instead, I worked in hospitality around Bathurst for a few years. Then I decided to return to my studies. I completed a postgraduate diploma in addictions counselling and group psychotherapy. It was an interesting qualification. For three months I lived as part of the treatment population and participated in one-on-one counselling as a counsellor and as a person receiving counselling. I also participated in group psychotherapy as a facilitator and as a member of the group.

I went straight from that qualification to working in Corrective Services NSW. I worked in three prisons in New South Wales as a drug and alcohol counsellor and group psychotherapist. After that I delivered and coordinated offender management programs across the Sydney metropolitan area and in western New South Wales. I learned a lot from working with prison populations and offender populations. I saw people at their lowest, people who were struggling to engage with the service system and I saw people who were at high points in their lives as they managed to achieve things post-release. I saw many interesting things there. In 2004 I began working for the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care as a manager of community access. I had teams of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, psychologists and case workers across western New South Wales who all delivered services to people with intellectual disabilities. Again, I observed how these folk interacted with the service system. Sometimes it worked well and sometimes it did not. This experience has taught me what happens in the service system.

In 2009 I was appointed as regional manager of the Western Region of the NSW Police Force. At that point I thought I had the best job in New South Wales. It was fantastic. The Western Region covers 64 per cent of the State and has 1,400 fantastic men and women, both sworn police officers and civilian staff. I count many of them as good friends. That job was a good opportunity for me not only to see their bravery and commitment to communities but also to appreciate the contribution they make to community life. In many communities policing is the only remaining 24/7 service. These officers and staff become community leaders in so many ways, such as by coaching football teams and running pool competitions. I know that sounds like a minor thing, but in a small town it is a big deal. In 2014 my family and I moved onto a property where we have been breeding and raising beef cattle.

In 2012 and 2013 I was fortunate to go back to studying and I completed a Master of Public Administration through the Australian New Zealand School of Government with people from jurisdictions all around Australia and New Zealand. It gave me insight into how other jurisdictions work and into other cultures within the public service. All in all, it was a good learning experience. I have worked with many people—some great leaders—and people from whom I have learned how to be a great leader. I am not suggesting that I am a great leader, but I do aspire to be one. I have also worked with some people who are not-so-great leaders. I have learned from them what I do not want to do or say to people and that I do not want to treat people in the same way that those leaders did. Most recently I have had just one boss, Geoff McKechnie, Assistant Commissioner of the

Western Region of the NSW Police Force. Having one boss is much easier than having more than 70,000 bosses. I have found that those 70,000 bosses often have competing priorities and different ideas. Sometimes those conflicting ideas can make negotiation challenging, but I am embracing the challenge.

Jenny is my amazing and beautiful wife. I have been with Jenny for 19 years. We did not get married early—we got it round the wrong way. We were married last year in Las Vegas on a whim. While we were out to dinner with some ex-pats, they asked us, "Why aren't you married?" We said that we were going to do it in Thailand the previous year, but there was too much bureaucracy—yet, here I am. My friends said, "Let's go do it now." I was wearing a pair of shorts and my work boots when we went to the Clark County Marriage License Bureau, got a marriage licence, visited a 24-hour chapel and got married. I suspect that for some of the people there, who were lined up on benches like members in this Chamber, it was not their first time around.

While I was on the campaign trail covering a huge chunk of New South Wales, Jenny looked after the property, the cattle, our other animals and our family whilst maintaining full-time employment. I can only take my hat off to her. Jenny, I love you and you do me proud—very proud. I have three gorgeous kids. Abygael, you are about to become an adult. You are a good, kind person and you do the right thing. You make me proud. Gabe, you are 16. You are a good man. You make good decisions and treat people well. That is all I can ask for, mate. You are a good fellow. Aniyah, aka Nino, you are a little ball of energy. You are going to do great things. Again, you are a great person and I am proud of you. Well done, sweetheart. In the past five months of travelling around Barwon, which as people know is a large electorate, I had about seven nights in my own bed. For the rest of the time my wife was on her own looking after everything. I take my hat off to her and acknowledge how amazing she is.

On election day we went to Broken Hill—we had to pick somewhere because there are that many towns within 10 hours' drive across the electorate—and my kids worked tirelessly all day. They delivered water, insect repellent and sunscreen to people from any party, it did not matter. We kept buying water and delivering it from polling place to polling place. In fact, it got to the point that everyone was expecting us to show up and they were looking forward to the water. So kids, well done. You are great! My children and the kids in Barwon are a major reason that I am standing here today.

People often ask me why I decided to run for Barwon. It is a good question. Some people say it in a different way, which I will get to later, but I could see that no-one else from a major party was going to win the electorate. After 17 years of travelling the electorate with three different agencies I had seen what was going on. For example, a lot of the jobs were being centralised into towns like Dubbo. I do not think the member for Dubbo is in the Chamber. Dugald does not need any more jobs in Dubbo; we need them out west. I watched jobs disappear from our community, I saw shopfronts close and the population decline. It was clear to me that meeting with my local members, both State and Federal, was not going to change things. The only opportunity to change things was to be an unrestricted voice in this place, and that is why I am standing here today.

It is a great honour and privilege for me to serve the people of Barwon. At this point I will restate my election commitments, which I gave prior to the election—no highways, no buildings. Nothing. My election commitments were simple—namely, to work hard and be honest. People accepted those commitments and I intend to maintain them. In the 2019 election the people of Barwon were asked to review the actions of government, to reflect on the reality of the present, to cast their minds forward to future generations and the world we are creating. They have to ask the question: Do we have the settings right? I say to all members of this House and in the other place that we have work to do. It is my absolute intention to leave a legacy of improved quality of life for people living in Barwon and regional New South Wales. To that end, I have invited people in non-Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party electorates to contact my offices to find out if we can help them.

The people of Barwon voted with their hearts and their heads. This is the first time since before 1950 that the electorate has not been held by the Country Party or The Nationals. That represents a massive change in sentiment. The people I have met all across Barwon do not expect government to solve all their problems. They know they have to work hard—and they are already doing that. If one goes to any community across Barwon they will meet passionate people who want to work with government to ensure a better quality of life and a brighter future for the next generation. As I said, people do not want government to solve all their problems or to simply throw money at an issue. They want recognition from government that at this moment in the history of New South Wales we stand faced with a choice: We continue to treat the communities of western New South Wales in the same manner we have been or we change our policy settings and reinvigorate the bush.

I often use the analogy that when you need to move a cart you look for a willing horse, and when you find a willing horse you put a harness on it. Across Barwon we now have a lot of willing horses. We have a lot of willing people who we can put a harness on and they will pull the cart. We need to make sure that we do not assume we know best. We need to engage with local government and local community representative groups to ensure that we are acting in a way that is consistent with what they want. We need to work with the community,

listen to people, change our priorities and build a future where every child in Barwon has the same opportunities as a child in Sydney. We must ensure that those living in far west New South Wales do not continue to have their life expectancy decreased, and we must start opening doors for communities to thrive. We must create opportunity that is open to all.

The people of Barwon know that the people in this House can do better for them. They are over political correctness and minority groups trying to steer public opinion. We need to work together. I will work with anyone in this Chamber or the other place to improve outcomes in Barwon. By working together across the political divide we can solve problems and make decisions that will improve our collective future and, most importantly, our children's future. I have talked a lot about quality of life during the campaign and since. In Barwon we do not have many of the things that city dwellers take for granted. We do not have comprehensive public transport, the level of public amenity or 24-hour services—people cannot buy fuel or go shopping at midnight in most of our communities.

We also have a very large Aboriginal population; they gave me great support through the campaign. I thank them for their support. Let us work on closing that gap and reversing the current health outcomes for Aboriginal people. Let us support Aboriginal people to gain traction on the issues that are important to them. We need to provide equitable educational opportunities for all people in the Barwon electorate. We have heard a lot of talk about drought. Drought is a very simplistic way of describing what is going on in western New South Wales. We have gone well beyond meteorological drought, which is a lack of rain. We have gone beyond hydrological drought, which is a lack of water in our river systems, water storages and aquifers. We have gone deep into a socio-economic drought, which is a drought that is impacting all aspects of our communities.

Businesses totally unrelated to agriculture are suffering the same thing. I often tell the story of speaking to a hairdresser in Narrabri who said, "Roy, people still get their hair cut but instead of coming every four weeks they are coming every six weeks." So all aspects of business across society are suffering. In order to provide equality of opportunity to people in western New South Wales, we need to bolster our TAFE. We need to make sure that when our kids finish school there are options for local tertiary education, which do not involve them leaving our communities. I have heard many stories from parents about their children attending university or TAFE in another town and then not coming back. They start a life somewhere else and do not come back. We have to keep people in our communities if we stand a chance of growing or maintaining our populations.

We need business incentives. I would love to see a five-year waiver on stamp duty for commercial property and commercial vehicles. I would also like to see payroll tax removed in regional New South Wales. Last week I was in Broken Hill speaking to some people at a dinner. They said that the decision to put an extra person on is an easy one, because if they do it will cost more in tax so they are better off not employing that person. A tax on employing people does not make a great deal of sense to me. We need to support people so they can reach their potential and to create an unfair advantage for businesses in regional New South Wales. I acknowledge the work of the former member for Barwon and those who contested the electorate: Andrew Schier, Darriea Turley, Eve-Lyn Kennedy and Phillip Naden. They all worked very hard. I honestly believe they all had the best of intentions in trying to represent Barwon and to improve outcomes in Barwon. It takes a certain kind of person to commit their lives to serving the public. Very few will ever put their hands up to enter public office. Indeed, as I learnt during the campaign and during the days since being sworn in, it is a life like no other.

The electorate of Barwon covers 44 per cent of New South Wales and its communities often have the same issues but they manifest differently. For example, water is an issue in every Barwon community. In Tibooburra, a town of about 60 people, there is no such thing as local government; it is an unincorporated area. The domestic water supply system in Tibooburra was operated by Dan Hough, who worked for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Glenn Lackenby, who was a police officer. Glenn has retired and Dan has moved back to Broken Hill. I cannot say who is running the water system in Tibooburra at the moment. The difference between Tibooburra and Sydney is vast. In Tibooburra, people actually know who runs their water system because they have other roles in the community. In Sydney, people probably do not know the people who work for the utility providers.

Broken Hill has a good hospital and good health services but it is geographically isolated. For specialist services people often have to travel to Adelaide or Sydney. In Broken Hill the issue is not necessarily about primary health care, but about specialist services and accessing those services. People in Broken Hill have lower average incomes, so the costs of travel and staying overnight impacts them more than others who have higher incomes. Lake Cargelligo Hospital has become little more than a first aid post. There people can get a Panadol and a band aid, but if they need stitches, a fracture set, are expecting a baby or need their appendix removed, they will need to travel up to four hours away. Twenty years ago all those services were provided.

We need to look at home care for people after being discharged from hospital. I have heard too many stories about people near Hermitdale and Cobar who have gone to Dubbo in an ambulance but have been told they

have to find their own way home when they are discharged from hospital. A lot of our people do not have the discretionary income to pay \$100 for fuel or to pay for someone to come and get them. If we are to reinvigorate communities, we should not have to ask or lobby for the things that everyone needs. People should not have to ask for the necessities of life. They should be able to reach for aspirational goals. They should be aided by the people in this House. We should not be told what we want or need—it should be up to communities. In Barwon we have not lost our sense of community; it is stronger than ever. We have passionate campaigners and very strong community groups. People commit their time to make sure that our communities are good places to live.

The 25in25 is a Broken Hill group with the aspirational goal of raising the population of Broken Hill to 25,000 by 2025. It is a willing horse we want to put a harness on. The group is currently seeking a small amount of seed funding for an executive officer or research officer to amplify the involvement of its 30 volunteers. Other examples of community groups include Foundation Broken Hill, Great Artesian Basin Protection Group, Narrabri Chamber of Commerce, and health consultative committees across the electorate. Other groups include Rotary and Lions and branches of all political parties. Those groups have been in contact with me and they all want a better future for Barwon. They are willing horses waiting for a harness.

I now talk about the campaign, supporters and volunteers. I had no campaign manager. I did not have a driver or a minder, and I had no major party machine. I had to learn about media, social media and I became a video editor. It was a steep learning curve. I have zero political experience. I dislike the word "campaign" because it sounds disingenuous. The way I look at it, I spent time travelling and building relationships with people. I think my poor caravan is a write-off; there were too many dirt roads. Parts have fallen off it and I bent an axle. On one occasion when visiting Tilpa, I drove through a dust storm coming from Wilcannia. I was staying the night in Tilpa and when I arrived I announced to the publican and other people who were there to meet me, "You don't need to worry about the dust storm anymore. I've got all the dust inside the caravan." After driving for six or seven hours and then meeting with people that night, I was so exhausted that I just dusted off a bit of the bed, lay down in my clothes and went to sleep. There was nothing else I could do.

The nature of the people of Barwon is so trusting that I have a collection of keys to people's homes and an open invitation to use those homes as my own. When people discovered I was coming to their area they took days off work. They would actually forego work days, using their leave to take me around their area, introducing me to business people and locals. Such is the generosity of the people of Barwon. Many times through the campaign I would go to pay for a drink at a bar or for fuel after filling up the vehicle and it had been fixed up by someone else. Such is the support for change in the Barwon electorate. The vehicle is marked up and it was pretty obvious it was me. I could not hide but I have not had any driving complaints yet. After finishing a meal at a pub, a cafe or even a succulent Chinese meal I would often try to pay, only to be told the account had been settled by a previous diner. Such is the personal support I enjoyed from the people of Barwon.

After working across western New South Wales for 17 years I know thousands of people. When I needed to raise an army, people came forward and assisted in many different ways. Some people endorsed me to their networks, some shared content on social media, others plastered their property, trucks or children with my corflutes. There is a story about the corflutes that emerged as a result. The corflutes started disappearing off trees and appearing in pictures. People were sending me pictures captioned, "Roy at the beach", "Roy at Lake Glenbawn waterskiing", "Roy on the mower", "Roy sitting under the air conditioner on a hot day with a can of Coke". It turned into a bit of a competition and I was getting phone calls from people outside the electorate saying, "Look, I'm not from Barwon, but I'd really like to get some of your corflutes". It was fantastic. It was a good game and obviously there was a level of endorsement. I have a mate who is an interstate truck driver and he had my corflute on his back door for months.

We raised an army of more than 150 people who volunteered their time. People put their personal credibility on the line. There were big personalities in the community standing alongside me, endorsing me. I thank the Shooters, Farmers and Fishers [SFF] Party for their support and confidence in me as a candidate. I mention some people because of the massive contribution they made in coordinating my campaign or for their effort: Mark Hoath, Anne and Neil Kennedy, and Mal Unicombe in Coonabarabran; Diana Ferry in Broken Hill; John Ridley in Narrabri; John Clements in Wee Waa; Greg Martin in Cobar; and June Lee in Broken Hill. June sat out the front of the polling booth for three weeks—she is a cracker. I also mention Mal Brown and Stan Single in Lightning Ridge, Joan Hamilton and Enid Coupe in Walgett, Dave McKechnie in Mendooran, Tony Gavan and Spuz Hogden and his family in Dunedoo, Oliver Jacques who helped with media, Cheryl Yow and Bill in Quanda, Mark and Susan Hall, Cec Hargraves and his family in Lake Cargelligo, Jeff and Nicole Bourman who drove up from Melbourne to help out on election day in Broken Hill, and Ray Zell and Nat and Brian Mudford in Gilgandra. To the many people I did not mention now, I will thank you personally so if I have not called you yet, I will.

I also need to mention my mum and dad and my sister and brother-in-law. Mum said to me early on, before I went to boarding school, that she would rather give my sister and me an education instead of an

inheritance. She worked her guts out as a single mum to do that. My dad was a totally and permanently incapacitated Korean veteran. He died in 2003 on his own terms. He rejected medical treatment because he thought dialysis would cramp his style. He would be very proud that I am standing here but would possibly question my sanity for walking away from the best job in New South Wales. I want to acknowledge the work of my sister, Steven and Boyd for looking after all the volunteers and keeping them fed on election day in Broken Hill.

In 2017 Phillip Donato ended his inaugural speech by stating that he hoped to introduce more people to this Chamber. I make the same statement. In 2023 I intend to have more SFF members representing electorates in New South Wales. You may not know this but I am a keen yachtsman. I live in the wrong part of New South Wales to be a keen yachtsman—I get that. When sailing with a limited number of crew or on your own, the phrase used is "short-handed sailing". I intend to assist the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to teach others how to run a short-handed campaign so that they can run their own one-person campaign and be prepared for the 2023 election. As long as I have the honour to represent the people of the Barwon electorate in this place, I will work my hardest to address their priorities and ensure that their voices are heard. Thank you for your trust and confidence.

**The SPEAKER:** I too congratulate the member for Barwon.

*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

### *Committees*

## **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

### **Establishment**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** By leave, I move:

That

- (1) A joint select committee, to be known as the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy, be appointed.
- (2) That the committee inquire and report into Sydney's night time economy, including any measures required to:
  - (a) maintain and enhance community safety;
  - (b) maintain and enhance individual and community health outcomes;
  - (c) ensure existing regulatory arrangements in relation to individuals, businesses and other stakeholders, including Sydney's lockout laws, remain appropriately balanced; and
  - (d) enhance Sydney's night-time economy, and any other directly relevant matters.
- (3) The committee will consult with key stakeholders as required.
- (4) The committee to consist of five members of the Legislative Assembly, including three Government members and at least one crossbench member, and five members of the Legislative Council, including two Government members (one of whom shall be Chair) and at least two crossbench members.
- (5) The Honourable Natalie Ward, MLC, be appointed to serve as Chair of the committee.
- (6) All Legislative Assembly committee members be nominated in writing, by the Government and Opposition Whips, to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by 4.00 p.m. on 29 May 2019.
- (7) That at any meeting of the committee, six members shall constitute a quorum, provided that the committee meets as a joint committee at all times.
- (8) The committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales.
- (9) The committee report by 30 September 2019.
- (10) A message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting the Legislative Council agree to the resolution, nominate five of its members to the proposed Committee, and to fix a time and place for the first meeting.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Visitors*

## **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** The Parliamentary Education Unit's Secondary Schools Leadership Program has a number of representatives here today and we welcome them to the gallery. I hope you enjoy your time here in the Parliament.

*Bills***AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (12:00):** The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 will establish an office of Ageing and Disability Commissioner, with the aim of providing educational services and advice to the public, reporting on systemic issues in both the ageing and disability sectors and, most importantly, tackling allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with a disability and older Australians. The bill also seeks to establish an Ageing and Disability Advisory Board to advise and guide the work of the commissioner.

As noted by the Minister in his second reading speech, while a number of national and State bodies already exist to assist those with a disability or the elderly, there remains a significant gap in services that puts vulnerable people at risk. The NSW Law Reform Commission has acknowledged this gap and has recommended that a new Act establish an independent statutory office to fill an advocacy and investigative role. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey in 2016 estimated that 40,000 older people and 90,000 people with a disability experience violence each year in New South Wales. Those are appalling statistics that should give each and every one of us pause for thought. To paraphrase others, the moral test of any society must be in its treatment of its most vulnerable.

The NSW Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit notes that the majority of alleged elder abusers are trusted people known to the victim. As such, while I welcome this bill's intention to tackle allegations of abuse and neglect of elderly Australians, the bill does not go far enough in that it does not provide specific powers that can be used by the commissioner if a complaint is found to be true. The bill lacks the explicit power for the commissioner to refer relevant matters to the police and to the Director of Public Prosecutions. It is also true that the bill cannot address the root cause of elder abuse in aged care in New South Wales: the lack of staff.

Like many members, I have been contacted by many of my constituents about the allegations exposed by the recent ABC 7.30 investigation and by the royal commission into aged care. These stories include that of Michelle McCulla whose father, Terry Reeves, was strapped to a chair in his Sydney nursing home. On one particular day Terry was tied up alone in his room for 14 hours. Michelle McCulla believes her father was also chemically restrained without her family's knowledge or consent as he regularly showed signs of over-sedation.

The royal commission into aged care heard testimony from multiple aged-care professionals who pointed to a complete lack of staff and of seeing nurses run off their feet, which resulted in the use of chemical restraints and sedation of the residents. That testimony includes that of a Wollongong aged-care worker who works 16-hour days several times a fortnight and who stays back after finishing work to relieve pressure on staff in the facility. Ageing Australians deserve far better than this. As one of the fastest-growing demographic groups in this country, they deserve to know that they will be protected. They deserve adequate protections from abuse and neglect both through the ability to report abuse and to know that the body that they report to has the power it requires to refer an issue. They deserve to know that if they are in an aged-care facility they will be supported and cared for.

The bill also establishes protections for those in our community living with disability. It is safe to say that each of us in this Parliament shares a commitment to ensuring people living with disability are afforded respect, freedom from discrimination and, above all else, basic human rights and dignity. Despite the best intentions, this is far from the reality for too many people living with disability in our community. The gap between intention and reality could not be starker than in the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. The NDIS is a game changer for people living with disability, their carers and their families.

I was lucky enough to work for Australia's first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and I saw upfront the need for a scheme to protect and properly fund care for people with disability. The NDIS was bold policy, hard-fought and won by Prime Minister Gillard working across the aisle and after a long campaign by people with disability, their carers and their advocates. It captured the imagination and the hearts of many Australians and it was such an important move for our country. Unfortunately, the reality has not been what those people had hoped for nor what was promised. As is the case with many members in this House, I am sure, my office deals with many calls for help as the sector transitions to the new scheme. It has been a very difficult and bumpy road.

I have spoken with a single mum in her late 60s who was desperate to find respite care for her adult son after it was omitted from his NDIS plan—the lack of respite made more intense by her need to advocate for her son at the same time as taking on full responsibility for his care. I am deeply concerned for the many parents and carers who are managing their own health and financial pressures as they enter retirement and old age whilst balancing the needs of their adult children with disability. I have spoken with a representative of a disability care

organisation who sat in tears in my office; she and her staff were at their wits' end with the pressure of bureaucratic reporting to meet the Government's deadline for disability services.

I have spoken with families like the Adderleys, whose children are long-term residents of the Summer Hill Centre in my electorate. The New South Wales Government recently transferred the centre to a not-for-private provider, despite the strongest objections of parents and carers with family members at the centre. For the Adderleys and other families of residents in the centre, ensuring the highest standards there was not a matter of politics or ideology; it was literally a matter of life and death. Their children are profoundly disabled. For them the centre is foremost their home and their sanctuary, but it is also a provider of last resort, more closely resembling a hospital given the complex medical and support needs of residents. I was first contacted by families at the centre in 2016 following reports that the New South Wales Government would close Ageing, Disability and Home Care [ADHC] and transfer responsibility for the centre to a private provider.

This caused understandable concern for families, who were worried that any reduction in the quality or extent of care would put their children's lives at risk. Over the next two years, they lobbied and advocated strongly for the centre to be kept in public hands, only to be rejected by the Government. Since the decision was made to transfer the site, families have faced more worries and uncertainty. At all stages they have felt sidelined by a process they believed was about the State Government washing its hands of responsibility for the care of their children. The families were invited to participate in consultations, but they believe their objections and concerns were ignored. They were subject to delays in the establishment of NDIS plans, only for critical medical needs, such as rubber gloves, to be forgotten as the State Government and the National Disability Insurance Agency [NDIA] engaged in a tug-of-war over responsibilities.

It is these bureaucratic difficulties that have plagued people's lives for several years now. I take the opportunity to thank my colleague the member for Port Stephens, Kate Washington, who supported the Adderleys and other residents at the centre. The member for Port Stephens' commitment and tireless advocacy for the Summer Hill Centre community meant the world to those residents, their families and their carers and I know it will not be forgotten. Those families were forced to fight for their children. They also took up the fight for those residents at the centre whose parents and carers could not, including families from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] backgrounds where there is a language barrier to engagement in the process. It is a story I have heard time and again. The shortfalls in the implementation of the NDIS are perhaps most starkly shown through the statistics concerning enrolment in the scheme by multicultural and CALD communities. [*Extension of time*]

Earlier this year, Settlement Services International reported that at the end of 2017 only 7 per cent of NDIS participants were from a CALD background despite representing an estimated 23 per cent of the Australian population. They also noted that a vast majority of people from CALD backgrounds that they interviewed had no idea that the NDIS even existed. More worrying still, the National Institute of Labour Studies recently evaluated the NDIS and determined that the scheme had left people from CALD backgrounds no better off and sometimes in an even worse position. This gap is so often filled by organisations such as the Ethnic Communities Services Co-operative, based in the Addison Road Community Centre in my electorate. They do the hard work of educating their community about accessible services, including the NDIS.

They are a lifeline for families who might otherwise be unaware of the safety net that is available to them. The NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance is at the forefront of the Stand By Me campaign calling on the Government to reverse cuts to disability advocacy organisations. I am so proud of the Ethnic Community Services Co-operative and all organisations that have fought hard and forced the Government to retreat from the funding cuts to the sector. I recognise that the primary intent of this bill is to provide protections for adults in family and community settings who are not covered by existing schemes.

But the restriction of the bill to adults creates new gaps for the carers of children with a disability. They will be heartbroken if their concerns cannot be investigated by the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. I welcome the Government's commitment to raise awareness and educate people through the bill. It will raise awareness of the obstacles and barriers for people living with disability. It is of great importance to raise awareness of the plight of those facing discrimination whether in schools or the workplace. We must champion a more inclusive environment within which those with a disability and the elderly can live and work. I commend the Minister.

Finally, I welcome the commitment in the bill to pursue research-based projects and the commissioner's ability to prepare special reports on any issue, as requested by the Minister. I believe this is critically important to the bill. At the root of recent policy failures affecting those with disability and the elderly is a lack of research and understanding to underpin policies to support and protect those communities. The investigation by 7.30 and reports from the Law Reform Commission and the Aged Care Royal Commission will go some way towards resolving the lack of research. We must endeavour to fulfil the potential of this bill for those disadvantaged communities. This bill will set us on the right path and I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson):** I acknowledge and welcome to the Parliament and the Legislative Assembly Chamber student leaders from high schools across New South Wales. They are part of the secondary schools leadership program conducted by the Parliamentary Education Unit. Thank you to the team that organises this and many other education elements for people across New South Wales. I understand you have observed a speech in the Legislative Council. Presently in this House we are debating the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. You have heard the member from Summer Hill. The Minister who has carriage of the bill is the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and the member for Kiama. You will hear further debate on this bill while you are in this Chamber.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:14):** I welcome the young student leaders to the Chamber. I am honoured and proud to speak before them. The Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services was previously the Parliamentary Secretary for education. I am sure he is proud. You can do anything you want; just believe in yourself and work as hard as you can. It is good to see you in the gallery. You will notice that the debate is not always argumentative, we do try to achieve good things in a respectful way. I wish all those studying for the Higher School Certificate good luck.

The Labor Opposition welcomes and supports the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. We are concerned that the bill does not go far enough and we will propose a number of amendments. My key concern is the intentional exclusion of children with a disability from the legislation. In my mind no good reason has been offered for this exclusion. My understanding is that this bill will establish a new independent statutory office, the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. The primary function of this 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. Sadly we have seen many cases being discussed in the media. I have been horrified to see examples of the poor treatment of elderly people, some with disabilities, and other possibly younger people with disabilities that leave them very vulnerable. I have visited aged care facilities in my own electorate and have been impressed by the care provided. I have also noted how frail many people are, both physically and emotionally. It hurts me to think that anyone would cause them, or people like them across New South Wales, harm—either through neglect, outright abuse or violence.

In 2016 the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey estimated that in New South Wales 40,000 older people and 90,000 people with disability experience violence each year. What a shocking statistic. Sadly, I think we are possibly only seeing the tip of the iceberg with this issue. These figures do not reflect the financial exploitation, neglect or emotional abuse which many older people and people with disability experience. As members of Parliament we often have people, especially older people, visit our offices with problems that have clearly arisen because someone has taken advantage of them. It can occur for a variety of reasons: They are old, they are unfamiliar with key administrative processes or they do not speak English well enough to understand a fraud is being perpetrated against them.

Thankfully, the problem of elder abuse and the abuse of people with disability is increasingly being recognised. In October last year, the Commonwealth Government established a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. In April this year, the Commonwealth Government established a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. My observation is that both of these royal commissions resulted from the diligence, deep concern and fear of families who have trusted the care of loved ones to organisations that have clearly let them all down. Current and former staff of some of these facilities have been prepared to speak up for their clients.

The genesis of this bill appears to be a recommendation made by the Legislative Council elder abuse inquiry. The elder abuse inquiry was chaired by Labor's Greg Donnelly. My Labor colleague the Shadow Minister for Ageing and Shadow Minister for Disability Services, Sophie Cotsis, was a member of the inquiry. Sophie's electorate neighbours mine and we often visit aged care centres together. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Saint Basil's, Lakemba, aged care centre. They run an outstanding program. To introduce a little humour: I joined the residents on gym day and I must say I was embarrassed by my lack of fitness. The staff do an amazing job looking after people with genuine care. One of the recommendations made by the elder abuse inquiry was the establishment of a public advocate; that is, an independent statutory advocate with clear investigative powers and the mandate to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

Since then the Government has responded by postponing its response until after the completion of the Law Reform Commission's review of the Guardianship Act. The latter was provided to the Attorney General in May 2018 and tabled in Parliament in August 2018. The Law Reform Commission recommended the establishment of a public advocate with "investigative functions to obtain evidence about neglect, abuse and exploitation" as well as "advocacy functions to complement the current work of community groups". I think that is an important and excellent recommendation. This was echoed by the Ombudsman in a special report to



Parliament regarding the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in New South Wales. In that report, the Ombudsman called for the creation of a public advocate.

In December last year, Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 2 ended its inquiry into the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the provision of disability services by recommending that the New South Wales Government create a public advocate with the powers to investigate cases of potential abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disabilities. It seems that many learned people and committees have recommended the very same thing, the creation of an independent public advocate for some of the most vulnerable people in our society. This process should not have taken so long; the Government should have responded with urgency.

As a member of the Opposition, I welcome the Government's decision to create the Ageing and Disability Commissioner but I regret that it has taken three years and multiple reports for the Government to introduce this bill. I wonder, with concern, how many more people have become victims while the Government has slowly worked its way through these reports. Beyond the issue of the delay in bringing the bill to this place, we have a number of issues with the substance of the bill. I will run through them before coming back to my main concern. First, we are worried about the commissioner's lack of enforcement powers. We are worried that this bill has the potential to create a toothless tiger, as my colleague said. It is not enough to have the power to investigate. What happens when a complaint is substantiated? We think the commissioner should have the power to respond to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Secondly, we are 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. In many cases we are talking about crimes involving violence, sexual assault, theft and fraud. As it stands, the bill does not contain any explicit power to refer matters for investigation to the police or to the Director of Public Prosecutions. We believe it should. Thirdly, we are concerned about the penalty provisions for offences under the bill. Clauses 16, 29 and 30 of the bill provide a monetary penalty of \$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 12-month imprisonment sentence for offences under the bill. This will show that Parliament is serious about stopping violence, neglect and abuse of people with disability. We need to send a strong message about this.

Fourthly, we are concerned that, as the bill stands, the Ageing and Disability Commissioner has no express power to hold a public inquiry. We believe the commissioner should have this power, especially if it is a power to hold public inquiries regarding systemic issues that affect people with disability and older people. While I am very concerned about the matters I have raised, my greatest concern is that the bill restricts the jurisdiction of the commissioner to adults with disability and older adults. While we do not object to the definition of "older adults" provided in the bill, 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 a gap in the existing framework to protect vulnerable people. Specifically, we recognise 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 restricting the bill to adults will create new gaps. It will mean the Ageing and Disability Commissioner will be 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 unable to have their concerns investigated by the Ageing and Disability Commissioner because of a legal technicality.  
*[Extension of time]*

Like many members of Parliament, I have had parents come to my office, both as a local MP and as the shadow Minister for Education to raise the cases of their children or teenagers with disability who they fear or suspect are being harmed. These matters arise in relation to disability support in education where I have had many meetings with a range of stakeholder groups representing students with specific needs. We discuss how best to support these students. Some are at school, some in group homes. These parents spend their lives caring for and worrying about their children. Besides worrying about the day-to-day care of their children, they worry about their futures. They worry about what will happen to them after they themselves need care due to old age. Who can they trust?

Can members imagine the depth of their worry when parents suspect that their children or teenagers are being neglected, or possibly worse, by individuals within organisations who ought to be providing professional and trustworthy care for them? These parents are like warriors for their children; they have to be. Often they are battling the system on their own. This is where I see an important role for the commissioner. I strongly support Labor's efforts to move amendments to ensure this bill covers all people with disability, regardless of age. As I have stated, the New South Wales Labor Opposition supports this bill, although we regret that it has taken so

long for the Government to get to this point. I understand that the bill will be referred to an inquiry by a Legislative Council committee. We hope that process will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to have their say on this important bill. I sincerely hope that committee's findings will be listened to.

I acknowledge the role of the Minister in bringing this bill before the House. I also acknowledge the shadow Minister, Sophie Cotsis, and the member for Port Stephens, Kate Washington, for the work they have done in advocating for disability groups. I also acknowledge all advocates for and carers of the vulnerable, those with specific needs, those with disability or older people. The best society is one where all people care for each other. A very pertinent and often-used quote comes to mind, one spoken by Mahatma Gandhi:

The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.

I hope the Government will consider our amendments so that this bill may be strengthened. People with a disability and older people deserve protection so that they can live dignified, healthy and fulfilled lives. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (12:26):** I contribute to debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I am glad that the shadow Minister is in the House for this debate, because I acknowledge and thank her and the Minister for demonstrating bipartisanship on this legislation concerning disability services. The time when people with disability in this country gained significant advancement with regard to support systems for them was when the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, The Nationals, The Greens and Independents worked together. When I was shadow Minister, I was proud to work with former Labor disability services Ministers John Della Bosca, Kristina Keneally, Paul Lynch and Peter Primrose. When the Coalition came to power, as Minister for Disability Services, I worked closely with Barbara Perry. Over the years, we worked together to advance this worthy cause.

The system was never going to be perfect. We had a State-based system struggling to cope with the needs of people with disability in the community. The system did not have adequate funding and its models of service delivery were wrong. I note that the Independent member for Lake Macquarie, Greg Piper, is in the Chamber. He knows only too well, having worked in the sector, the impact of large residential centre-based care of older people and people with disability in centres run by large corporations such as Stockton. In many ways the growth of this model of care meant that we were unable to put in place some of the barriers required to prevent the abuse of these vulnerable people.

We realised the advancement of people with disability through bipartisanship. Bipartisanship is important and I am pleased to note that there is bipartisan support for this bill. We must remind ourselves, as members of this place, that we are not here to point score. This legislation is really important and it is being watched very closely by the disability sector. For instance, some concerns have been expressed about advocacy services, but that is not what this bill is about. This bill is about the establishment of a commissioner to deal with abuse.

Unfortunately, on occasion you cannot stop abuse in our community. Yes, we can try to deal with systemic abuse, but it is important to have oversight in this area. As a former Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services, I know that the former Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care was aware of issues of abuse. Some matters were referred to police. At the time the system had established roles for the Ombudsman and the Community Visitors Scheme. Having a standalone commissioner is an excellent idea, and I hope that the commissioner's workload will be reduced. No-one wants to see the most vulnerable in our community in circumstances where they are exposed to the actions of another person that breach their human rights and, in some unfortunate cases, are criminal acts.

No doubt the Legislative Council will have the opportunity to review the proposed amendments. That is an important part of the process. But we must not lose sight of the cornerstone step forward in regard to the establishment of this body. When a national system is established, as occurred with the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] and the National Disability Insurance Agency, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal has the important role of reviewing any decisions that are made. Sometimes there will be arguments about the funding of person-centred plans and the like. Moving forward, when there are faults with the NDIS and the way it is being administered nationally, a key element of the commissioner's role will be ensuring that those concerns are brought to government.

The State has not walked away from providing disability services. Substantial funding is allocated to the national system. Having worked closely with Jenny Macklin, I reiterate that whatever is done with disabilities involves choice and control. It is a fundamental human right to be able to make decisions about one's life with the support of a carer, in cases where the carer has that role and guardianship responsibilities. Abuse can take many forms. Another important element of the commission's role is the provision of community education: What is acceptable and what is unacceptable in this area? People must be able to understand and identify abuse across the sector and report it. We must not lose sight of the overall wellbeing of those in the caring sector. Incredible

pressures are brought to bear on carers, who may suffer high levels of depression or marriage breakdown as a consequence. People do not enjoy the same supports in their caring roles across our community. We cannot lose sight of that in establishing the commission, which has a responsibility to look more broadly at the overall health and wellbeing of carers. Having been involved in this sector in a community-based role as a politician, I am conscious of that across the board.

As the member for Bega, I reiterate that the commission is important for regional areas. Bega has wonderful community disability support services on the ground but the tyranny of distance and the geography of regional New South Wales can also impact on people's ability to work through these types of processes. I urge the commission, once established, to look closely at its regional outreach across the community. It does not matter if it is Wilcannia, Lismore, or Bega; it must ensure that it has a regional focus moving forward. Whilst the disability sector has focused on key issues—be they advocacy or the establishment and workings of the NDIS—we must not lose sight of the fact that State-based jurisdictions have a role and a responsibility to provide ongoing support for people with disability across all services, such as transport, health and education.

While inclusion plans have been established across agencies over a long period, the State has a responsibility to ensure that human rights breaches do not occur by delivering everyday services to the wider community. All too often those without disability take for granted their quality of life compared with that of some in the disability sector. We must never lose sight of that. I commend the bill to the House. It is the right step forward. I commend the bipartisanship that has been seen in the Chamber, and I urge that it continue under the leadership of the Minister and the shadow Minister moving forward.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:36):** I speak in debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 and to the proposed amendments. First, I congratulate the Minister and the Government on introducing the legislation and also the Leader of the House on his comments. As other speakers in this debate have noted, this is an important development in protecting the vulnerable in our State. It is a positive sign that this is the first legislation to come before the Fifty-Seventh Parliament. I will comment on two of the Opposition's proposed amendments and make two points regarding the legislation's implementation. The amendments proposed by the Opposition are well meaning and I join all speakers in being horrified by the accounts of abuse that we have heard. However, I believe the introduction of requirements for referral as proposed and the potential for prison sentences will diminish the operation of the commissioner.

According to the evidence presented, in the vast majority of cases there are families under stress who need support. The community needs to be aware of this and to know how to refer matters and seek assistance. We do not want people to fear referral because of the perception that it will lead to criminal action. That will simply stop people bringing forward their concerns. Families are complex. It is hard enough for some to understand their situation and navigate the system without adding the judgement of an outside agency that is investigating whether or not they are criminals. Instead, I believe we need to work with families, carers and the community, focusing on education and support. In my view, the report of the upper House inquiry understood the complex nature of the issues involved, which is why it recommended:

That the NSW Government embrace a comprehensive, coordinated and ambitious approach to elder abuse with the following elements: a rights based framework... a major focus on prevention and community engagement...an ambitious training plan. In particular, I am concerned that introducing the concepts of mandatory reporting and criminal offences will alienate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, whose memory of other Government interventions that broke up families will rightly make them fearful. Feedback from my electorate has indicated that this issue must be handled carefully.

That brings me to two additional points I wish to make. First, the commissioner must communicate carefully with the community. Discussion of reporting and making reports may have the effect of preventing concerns being raised or, worse, it may mean the commissioner becomes an unwitting tool in family disputes. Instead, we want our community to be aware of how to recognise signs of abuse and seek help and support for those affected. Secondly, there must be ongoing funding of our disability advocacy services beyond 2020. The public statements and actions of the Prime Minister since the election indicate an acknowledgement that all is not well with the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I believe it will be some time before that is fully addressed. We should not rely on government bureaucracy on its own to look after our most vulnerable citizens; ensuring that our vulnerable citizens have strong independent advocates is crucial. I strongly encourage the Government to consider that point.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:40):** I support the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. This is one of the most significant pieces of legislation to come before this House, and it is noteworthy that it is the first bill to be debated in the Fifty-Seventh Parliament. As members have said, it refers to some of the most vulnerable people in our society. It is appropriate that those of us who have so much do what we can to help those who are in great need. The bill will create the position of Ageing and Disability Commissioner to oversight the interests of a particular cohort of people who are aged or adults with disability. The cohort of ageing people is growing and it is in all our interests to put the right systems in place to ensure that our caring and wealthy

community does what it can to look after them. People with disability have also needed this support for a long time. The delivery of a solution in the form of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner is a good step forward.

I commend the Government and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the shadow Minister and members of the Opposition who have contributed to this debate, all of whom have indicated support and great compassion for these vulnerable people. Sadly, we know there are many people in our communities who, for various reasons, do not live in a nurturing, caring and safe environment. In some cases, they live in an environment of wilful neglect. Some are exploited, threatened and abused, whether it be in group homes, nursing homes, hospitals, hostels and, most sadly, in their own homes—a place where they should feel safest. I note the comments by the Leader of the House. He referenced the fact that I come from an area of care, having worked for 26 years in the nursing sector in mental health and for the past 10 years in developmental disability.

I engaged with the Leader of the House in his former ministerial role and with other members over the years, all of whom had the best interests of these vulnerable people at heart. It is a very complex issue that must be addressed, and I think this bill is a very good initiative that focuses on it. We can legislate and regulate but if society does not truly believe and acknowledge that there is a problem then change will not happen. Some fantastic campaigns have been built on creating awareness of issues such as the impact of domestic abuse with the White Ribbon Campaign. Through the work of courageous people who do things, we get change—although sometimes it is too slow. Having a commissioner who is focused on elder abuse and the abuse of people with a disability will drive change. I am sure that a big part of the role of the commissioner—whoever that may be—will be to raise the profile of this insidious problem.

In the past few years the media has exposed some shocking and horrifying circumstances to the community and to members in this place. Unfortunately, it had to be led by people who courageously came forward as whistleblowers—who, I note, will be protected under this legislation. Inquiries such as the royal commission into institutional abuse and the royal commission into ageing have revealed that much of the problem has been hidden and, in many cases, wilfully ignored. People are often subject to systemic or wilful exploitation. This bill is not only a response to that, but also an opportunity to talk about this issue in a much more open and constructive way. Royal commissions create a forum to shine a light on these issues and develop conversations about them, raising awareness of the abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people as has been done with other important social issues, such as White Ribbon Day for domestic violence.

The role of the commissioner is well defined in the bill. It is not the commissioner's role to take over the responsibilities of other agencies such as the Health Care Complaints Commission, Family and Community Services, the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] or even the police or the legal system. I note the amendments foreshadowed by the Opposition. I am concerned that they will cause the role of the commissioner to be too broad to be fully inclusive, especially when other forums and agencies already practise in this area. But that is not to say there is no merit in other suggestions or amendments the Opposition may put forward. The amendments will be considered if not in the lower House then in the upper House.

This is important legislation that is of great moment in this Parliament. The Minister has obviously approached this matter with the right attitude, and I am sure he will be very proud when the bill is passed. But we should not then rest on our laurels. I believe, as with the NDIS, we should always respond to and address problems in the system through regulation or a referral back to this House if needs be. I note that the bill will have a three-year review period, which is very important for advocacy groups. I will not touch on the issue of advocacy as I know many people have spoken about funding for it. I will simply throw in my two bob's worth and say that it is not a big amount; let us just provide it. The bill also addresses other matters. I commend the Minister and the Government for introducing the bill and acknowledge the great input of the Opposition and other members of the House.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)**  
**(12:49):** In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Canterbury, Wallsend, Holsworthy, Orange, Ballina, Mulgoa, Maitland, Castle Hill, Charlestown, Ku-ring-gai, Gosford, Sydney, Albury, Campbelltown, Port Stephens, Wyong, Newtown, Newcastle, Cootamundra, Prospect, Strathfield, Summer Hill, Lakemba, Bega, Lake Macquarie and Wagga Wagga for their contributions to debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I also thank all members for their support on this important bill. I am heartened by the support of all sides; there is no politics in this. The fact that so many members spoke about their personal experiences, their families and the service providers in their communities was a reflection that, no matter what side of the House one is on, when it comes to issues like this sometimes there is not a Liberal thing to do or a Labor thing to do; there is just the right thing to do. And this is certainly the right thing to do.

In mid-December 2018 the Premier announced that the New South Wales Government would introduce a powerful and independent statutory role, the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, and that the role would

commence on 1 July 2019 to combat the abuse, neglect or exploitation of older people and adults with a disability. That is what this bill will do, and we have wasted no time in going about it. The key aim of the bill is to cover the gaps in the regulatory oversight of adults with disability and older adults who are being, or are at risk of being, abused, neglected or exploited principally in residential premises by friends, family or unpaid carers.

I acknowledge the suggestions by the member for Canterbury and the member for Campbelltown to extend the operation of the commissioner's ambit to all persons with disability, including children and young people. However, it is neither necessary nor appropriate to do this. There is appropriately a number of national and State agencies charged with responsibilities to promote and protect the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people, including children with disability, not least of which is the child protection agency—the Department of Family and Community Services—and the system of mandatory reporting of abuse of children under which it operates. There is also a number of agencies that have oversight of and responsibility for promoting the best interests of children and young people, including the NSW Ombudsman, the Office of the Children's Guardian, the Advocate for Children and Young People, and the Kids Helpline.

Extending the jurisdiction of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner beyond its intended remit to children is unnecessary and would have the effect of diluting the ability of the commissioner to focus on critical gaps in the services that we have in place. It could also create confusion over responsibilities for children, duplication of resources and competition for available funds. To reassure the member for Canterbury, the New South Wales Government is committed to a comprehensive evaluation of the new statutory office of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, to be undertaken three years after commencement of the Act. The evaluation will assess whether the Act is meeting its policy objectives, assess the effectiveness of the provisions in achieving those objectives and identify areas of legislative, policy and operational improvements. A shorter time frame to conduct a review will not allow for any issues to emerge in a meaningful way.

I do not want a situation where a duality of organisations results in gaps that mean children could potentially fall through the cracks. I know that is not what the Opposition intends either but, by supporting the foreshadowed amendments and extending the remit of the commission, that could well be a consequence—a dangerous one that I do not think it would be appropriate to proceed with. The establishment of the commissioner addresses concerns raised in several recent reviews and inquiries, as I flagged in my second reading speech and as many members also pointed out. I acknowledge the numerous stories shared by members from their local communities and families. The reviews and inquiries highlight areas of poor regulatory oversight of the safety, welfare and wellbeing of adults with disabilities and other adults, particularly in relationships of family, friends and unpaid carers in homes and communities.

The most critical function of the commissioner, after any preliminary inquiries or requests for further information, is targeting incoming reports by either conducting an investigation, referring the report to a more appropriate person or body—such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission, the Commissioner of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission or the Health Care Complaints Commission—or declining to take any action on the report if appropriate. I note that it has been proposed to amend the bill to provide explicitly for the referral of criminal matters to the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force or the Director of Public Prosecutions. I respectfully draw the attention of members representing the electorates of Canterbury, Campbelltown and Charlestown to clause 12 (1) (b) of the bill, which gives the commissioner wide and general powers to take further action following an investigation into a report, including making an application to a court or tribunal.

The commissioner may apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a guardianship order or a financial management order, or for review of any such existing order. The wide power also enables the commissioner to refer matters to appropriate bodies. I state again for the benefit of the members of the House: It allows the commissioner to refer matters to appropriate bodies, including the NSW Police Force, when the commissioner believes the matter should be referred for criminal investigation and, possibly, prosecution. It is also important to note that, like all of us, the commissioner has general obligations under section 316 of the Crimes Act to report serious indictable offences to appropriate law enforcement agencies. To ensure full compliance with such obligations, there will be clear and robust guidelines and policies in place to assist the commission and its staff about the matters that are referred to the police.

Many members reflected on the independence of the commissioner. That is, in fact, a critical and fundamental component of this bill. The member for Sydney and the member for Ballina should note that the bill will provide that the Governor may appoint the commissioner to hold office for a maximum term of five years, with eligibility for one reappointment. Significantly, the commissioner will not be subject to the Minister's control or direction in relation to exercising their functions relating to conducting investigations, advising or making recommendations to the Minister, or preparing annual or special reports to the Minister or Parliament. I can give

all members the assurance that, without this independence, the commission cannot do the job that we all intend it to do.

Of interest to the member for Ballina, the commissioner will have a well-considered, strong power to investigate allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation on the basis of reports received. I emphasise that in order to conduct an investigation the commissioner must obtain the consent of the vulnerable adult who is capable of giving consent, unless the commissioner considers that the allegation of abuse, neglect or exploitation is so serious that consent is not necessary. The member for Canterbury asked rightly for an example of where the commissioner might override the consent of an adult or older adult or a person with a disability. For the benefit of the member for Canterbury and other members of the House, if the commissioner formed the view that a vulnerable adult was withholding consent because of abject fear, because they did not feel able to speak freely, were afraid of negative repercussions or were being unduly influenced or pressured, the commissioner would, at this point, work with the vulnerable adult and, if the risk to their safety, welfare and wellbeing was so serious, then the commission may take action despite the absence of consent.

I make it clear for the members of the House that that will be a high threshold. We do not want to investigate matters without consent unless they are of the utmost seriousness. But I am sure members will agree that there are instances where people feel trapped by their situation and it would be inappropriate not to have this power to act swiftly. The commissioner's power to investigate will arise where reports are received from reporters who have reasonable grounds to believe an adult with disability or older adult is subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation and, after making any preliminary inquiries or requesting further information, the commission decides that the subject matter of the report cannot, or should not, be referred to the body or person. If the commissioner decides to initiate an investigation of an allegation of abuse, neglect and exploitation of a vulnerable adult, the commissioner will be able to require a person to attend a meeting with, or produce relevant documents or things to, the commission.

A penalty will apply to anyone who does not comply without reasonable excuse, makes false or misleading statements or alters or destroys a document or thing. Penalties may apply to a person who obstructs or hinders the execution of search warrants without reasonable excuse under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act. The member for Canterbury asked how information sharing would work. Under an information-sharing agreement between the commissioner and relevant agencies, information can be exchanged only where the commissioner or the relevant agency considers it reasonably necessary to assist in the exercise of their respective functions.

Personal information given to or obtained by the commissioner in relation to its investigative functions will be covered under amendments to the Health Records and Information Privacy Act and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act, in line with other investigative agencies. Exclusions to public access to information of the commissioner relating to its report handling, investigative and reporting functions, including relating to official community visitors, will be allowed under an amendment to schedule 2 of the Government Information Public Access Act in line with similar agencies such as the Ombudsman. These are not unusual provisions. Generally, the disclosure of information obtained in connection with the administration or execution of the bill will be prohibited and a penalty will apply. Specific exceptions will exist. The usual exemptions include if the information provider consents, if disclosure is allowed under the bill for the purposes of any legal proceedings arising from it or for any other lawful excuse.

In response to the member for Ballina, an Ageing and Disability Advisory Board will be established to advise the commissioner on any matter relating to abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults with disability and older adults that the board considers appropriate, or any matter that is referred to the board by the commissioner. The board will be drawn from persons with relevant knowledge and experience in matters relating to adults with disability and older adults. The composition of the board must also reflect the diversity of the community. The bill will provide greater safeguards for vulnerable adults in our community. They are appropriate and proportionate measures which will improve the lives of vulnerable adults in New South Wales.

I have been heartened by members' contributions to this debate. I appreciate the support I have received both inside the Chamber and from friends and colleagues outside the Chamber. There is no doubt that a piece of legislation like this does not just come about. A lot of people worked on the bill. I commend Family and Community Services staff Francesca Di Benedetto, Paul O'Reilly, Tanya Smyth and Catherine Gray. I also acknowledge my staff who are present in the Chamber, particularly the hard work of Anne King, James Bolt, Mitchell Clout, Jordan Matthews and James Malin. They have all worked incredibly hard. I realise that members often talk about their staff, but I must stress that what we have been working on is groundbreaking and will change people's lives forever. No matter what any of my staff do in future, they will know that they have been part of something great and that they have improved the lives of vulnerable people in this State. They should all be proud of that. I hope we are all proud. I know that there are amendments to come and I welcome the opportunity to

discuss the bill. I hope that all members will take some pride in the good we have done here today. I believe that the bill will improve people's lives now and for a long time to come. I thank the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Ms Sophie Cotsis and Mr Phil Donato.**

### **Consideration in Detail**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 33 be agreed to.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:03):** By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 9 and Opposition amendment No. 15 on sheet c2019-003E in globo.

**No. 1      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Pages 2 and 3, clause 4, lines 37, 38 and 42 on page 2 and lines 1, 3, 5, 9, 13, 23 and 24 on page 3. Omit "adult with disability" and "adults with disability" wherever occurring. Insert instead "person with disability" and "persons with disability", respectively.

**No. 2      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Page 3, clause 4 (3) (b), line 15. Omit "an adult with disability". Insert instead "a person with disability".

**No. 3      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Page 3, clause 4 (3) (b), lines 19, 21 and 22. Omit "adults" wherever occurring. Insert instead "persons".

**No. 4      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Page 3, clause 4 (4), line 25. Omit "the adult". Insert instead "the person".

**No. 5      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Pages 6 and 7, clauses 12 and 13, lines 5, 6, 10, 15, 17, 21, 25, 34 and 37 on page 6 and lines 4, 23, 31, 32, 34–36, 45 and 46 on page 7. Omit "an adult with disability" and "adults with disability" wherever occurring. Insert instead "a person with disability" and "persons with disability", respectively.

**No. 6      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Pages 6 and 7, clauses 12 and 13, lines 11, 13, 35 and 38 on page 6 and lines 24 and 25 on page 7. Omit "the adult" wherever occurring. Insert instead "the person".

**No. 7      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Page 9, clause 17, lines 19 and 26. Omit "an adult with disability" wherever occurring. Insert instead "a person with disability".

**No. 8      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Page 9, clause 17 (3), line 42. Omit "adult with disability". Insert instead "person with disability".

**No. 9      Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Page 9, clause 17 (3), line 4 (3) Omit "adult concerned, examine the adult". Insert instead "person concerned, examine the person".

**No. 15     Application of Act to all persons with disability**

Page 15, clause 27, lines 5 and 9. Omit "adults with disability" wherever occurring. Insert instead "persons with disability".

I acknowledge members from across politics for their contributions to the bill. All of their contributions were well considered, detailed and heartfelt. We all want the same thing. I commend the Minister for bringing the bill to the House. I also acknowledge the former Minister. My colleagues and I have been working on the bill for the past couple of weeks and I acknowledge their efforts. I also acknowledge the crossbench members who have made important contributions. I acknowledge the contributions of many people in agencies and stakeholders such as Ageing Alliance, Disability Alliance and the unions. In particular, I acknowledge the workers. They do an amazing job across the board and they do not get enough credit for their work. Millions of carers across New South Wales do not get the recognition they deserve and many of them are not formally paid.

I moved those amendments in globo because their purpose is to expand the jurisdiction of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to all people with disability—not only adults. The bill currently excludes children and young people with disability from the jurisdiction of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. The Government has not clearly stated why children and young people with disability are excluded from the commissioner's jurisdiction. I note that the Minister provided an explanation in his speech in reply, which related

to various agencies such as child protection services and Family and Community Services. When we are talking about people with disability, we are also talking about children and young people with disability. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get it right.

The Opposition assumes—and stands to be corrected—that the exclusions in the bill are an attempt to avoid duplication with the child protection system. The problem with avoiding duplication is that it can lead to silos. A silo can form when a body has a narrowly defined jurisdiction which prevents it from dealing with complex or novel situations. In 2015 the Senate community affairs inquiry into violence against people with disability stated that:

... a "siloed" approach to complaints handling ... made it confusing for individuals to know where to lodge complaints.

I have thoroughly considered this issue with a number of my colleagues. We believe that excluding children and young people with disability from the jurisdiction of the new Ageing and Disability Commissioner will create an arbitrary barrier and prevent parents and carers of children with disability from making complaints to the new commissioner. We also believe that this barrier will prevent the Ageing and Disability Commissioner from investigating matters relevant to children and young people with disability, such as the use of restrictive practices in schools or the treatment of children with disability in an early childhood setting. That is my reason for these amendments.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (13:08):** The Government opposes Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 9 and Opposition amendment No. 15, which seek to apply the Act to all persons with a disability. A number of recent reviews and reports have highlighted a critical gap in the management of abuse both to adults with disability and older adults. The reviews that have led us to this point were focused on that critical gap, and the bill seeks to address it. The Ombudsman's special report to Parliament entitled *Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in NSW—the need for action*, which was tabled in November last year, recommended the establishment of an independent body to investigate and respond to the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults. In May 2018, the NSW Law Reform Commission released its final report on the review of the Guardianship Act 1987, recommending amongst other things the establishment of a public advocate with investigative functions. General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 in its 2016 report entitled *Elder abuse in New South Wales* likewise recommended the establishment of a public advocate with powers of investigation.

The bill embodies the Government's timely response to those recommendations. We have called the new statutory office the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to better identify the focus of the office. A number of national and State agencies have already been charged with the responsibility to promote and protect the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people, including children with a disability. Not least of these is the Child Protection Agency, the Department of Family and Community Services and the system of mandatory reporting of abuse of children under which it operates. A number of agencies have oversight of the responsibility of promoting the best interests of children and young people, including the Ombudsman, the NSW Children's Guardian, the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People and the Kids Helpline. Extending the jurisdiction of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to children is unnecessary and would have the effect of diluting the ability of the commissioner to focus on the critical gap in the service system. It would also create confusion over responsibilities for children, the duplication of resources and competition for available funds.

I urge all members to familiarise themselves with the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act. That very important piece of legislation vests the responsibilities for vulnerable children to the Department of Family and Community Services. I would hate to think that these very well-intentioned amendments could result in duplication and lead to gaps that could result in children not receiving support at a critical time. A review function has been built into the bill for a reason. It is fine if the independent commissioner wants to look at that but that has not been the pathway that has brought us here. I would hate to think that by voting for these amendments with the best of intentions we end up with the worst results—namely, vulnerable children not being seen when they need to be. That is what could happen. I know the amendments come from a very good and decent place, but I do not want to deal with some of their consequences and the Government will not support them.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:11):** I speak in debate on Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 9 and No. 15 on sheet c2019-003E. The Greens have listened to the reasons and concerns advanced for strengthening the protections for vulnerable children and young people. However, we are also aware of previous recommendations that have attempted to split those responsibilities within different parts of the public service. The Greens will not be supporting these amendments. We hope that in the inquiry—which may or may not be held this Friday—and in the ongoing work being done in this space that there will be scope for the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, if it was felt that vulnerable children and young people with disability in particular were falling through gaps, to report back to this place as a matter of priority.



It is crucial that key stakeholders be consulted and allowed to provide input. Obviously the timeframe will be short if the inquiry is to be held this Friday. In the past we have seen the unintended consequences of children and young people with disabilities being treated in the aged care sector and in other totally inappropriate caring institutions. We need to make it very clear that if the gaps are not being addressed then they need to be looked at. Hopefully the inquiry will provide a response to the concerns that have been raised by the Opposition. I repeat, the key stakeholders responsible for engaging with young people and children with disability need to be part of this process.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 9 and No. 15 on sheet c2019-003E be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....35  
Noes .....55  
Majority.....20

**AYES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Finn, Ms J  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Saffin, Ms J  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dib, Mr J  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D (teller)  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

**NOES**

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Donato, Mr P  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
Marshall, Mr A  
Parker, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Smith, Mr N  
Stokes, Mr R  
Upton, Ms G  
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Davies, Mrs T  
Elliott, Mr D  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Leong, Ms J  
McGirr, Dr J  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Piper, Mr G  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Taylor, Mr M  
Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J  
Butler, Mr R  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Lindsay, Ms W  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D  
Singh, Mr G  
Speakman, Mr M  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Williams, Mr R

**PAIRS**

Lalich, Mr N

Toole, Mr P

**Amendments negatived.**

**Business interrupted.**

*Community Recognition Statements***GORDON RUGBY CLUB**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:21):** Gordon Rugby Club is an important club in my electorate of Davidson. The club is dedicated to promoting rugby at all levels so I was pleased it received a Government grant of \$11,250 to promote the game, improve players' skills development and upgrade playing and training gear. Last month the grant helped fund the Gordon Festival of Rugby at Chatswood Oval. I was delighted to be asked to toss the coin for the first grade game. The festival was organised by Sven Graham, the club's vice-president, and not only did it help encourage young people to experience and enjoy the world of rugby but it also highlighted the club's strong spirit and engaged enthusiastic supporters who make rugby happen on the North Shore. Under the banner of Gordon Rugby, the club currently fields four first grades and three colt sides as well as representative junior sides from the village clubs of Chatswood, Hornsby, Killara West Pymble, Lane Cove, Lindfield, Roseville, St Ives and Wahroonga. I wish them all the best for the 2019 season under the leadership of president Matt Glascott and club captain Nick Olive. Go the Highlanders!

**BELLAMBI DUNE RESERVE BUSHCARE**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (13:22):** It is my pleasure to pay tribute to Carol Nance and the Bellambi Dune Reserve Bushcare group of volunteers who donate their time and effort to regenerating and caring for the sand dunes adjacent to Bellambi Beach in the beautiful electorate of Keira. This picturesque coastal area is of enormous value to our community and it is a place of cultural significance to the local Aboriginal community. I was privileged to watch a demonstration from the group and it became clear to me how important their ongoing commitment is to keep invasive species at bay in this fragile area. The Bellambi Dune Reserve Bushcare group meet weekly to remove weeds and the volunteers collect seeds of native plants ready for replanting to ensure the diversity of species is maintained. The painstaking and, at times, backbreaking work is performed by volunteers and supplements the efforts of Wollongong City Council. I express my sincere gratitude to the Bellambi Dune Reserve Bushcare group and other volunteer bushcare groups in the Keira electorate.

**WINGHAM BEEF WEEK**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:23):** In mid-May the thirty-second annual Wingham Beef Week kicked off with the Wingham High School's agricultural show team hosting a record-breaking year. More than 500 competitors from 35 schools around New South Wales took part in the event at Wingham Showground—not just to showcase their steers. Team Wingham competed with 10 head of cattle raised on the school's farm. A black coated Limousin-Angus steer was donated by Paul and Janelle Relf from Warrigal Limousins to raise money for the Mark Hughes Foundation and was featured as the charity steer of the thirty-second annual Wingham Beef Week. The Manildra Group was the event sponsor and it donated pellets to feed the steer. The successful purchaser at auction bought a meat package and all processing costs were donated by Wingham Beef Exports. I congratulate the Wingham Show Society for organising another record-breaking thirty-second annual Wingham Beef Week.

**DAPTO HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:24):** I bring to the attention of the House an incredible local reading initiative from the staff at Dapto High School. Recently Ms Gleeson, a new teacher and librarian at the school, had an inspired idea to help spark an interest in reading in the school's students. After seeing *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in Sydney, Ms Gleeson launched a Golden Ticket reading program at the school. Five golden tickets were placed in various books around the library and, if found, could be traded for a Wonka candy pack. Thanks to the initiative, more than 1,200 books were borrowed in the past school term, which represented an increase of more than 70 per cent on the average 700 books over the same period in the previous year. I thank Ms Gleeson and the rest of the incredible teachers at Dapto High School for working so hard to inspire a love of reading in students. Keep up the great work.

**YOUTH WEEK**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:25):** Once again I was honoured to be invited to officially kick off the Futsal 4Good Tournament during Youth Week at ShoreShocked in North Sydney. I thank Phoenix House Youth Services for hosting the successful event at St Leonards Park and to all the community supporters for their generous donations. One in eight young people aged between 15 to 19 years in the northern Sydney area is not in education or employment. For the past 30 years Phoenix House has provided early intervention and support services to the most challenged young people living in northern Sydney and has delivered life-changing outcomes. Each year Phoenix House Youth Services support programs for more than 500 young people to ensure they unlock their potential and achieve their goals. All proceeds raised on the day went to programs that will continue to assist youth in our community by supporting their successful journey into

adulthood. I congratulate the 2019 tournament winner, the East Coast Strikers, and all the team members who participated, including our beloved North Sydney Bears.

#### **1ST BLAXLAND SCOUT GROUP**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:26):** I congratulate Claire Dunning and Tessa Hitchens from the 1st Blaxland Scout Group on receiving the prestigious Queen's Scout Award. On 12 February 2019 I was privileged to attend the Blaxland Venturer Scouts group for the Queen's Scout Award ceremony when I had the honour of presenting the award to Claire and Tessa. As their local member, I was very pleased that the Governor of New South Wales formally presented the girls with the award. Those girls will cherish that very proud moment forever. It was pleasing for me and both the scout and Blue Mountains community to see the award presented to those two remarkable young women from the Blue Mountains. The achievement of such an award speaks highly of their efforts and I congratulate the girls on their service. Well done.

#### **WANDA SURF LIFESAVING CLUB**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (13:27):** I congratulate Wanda Surf Lifesaving Club for winning the coveted Club of the Year award at the Surf Lifesaving Sydney Awards of Excellence last week. The club also received an award for Patrol Efficiency Per Operational Area and the 2019 Branch Open Championship Point Score award. I also congratulate the club's individual recipients of awards: Jayden Wilde for Patrol Captain of the Year, Ali Najem for Surf Sports Athlete of the Year, Hayden Allum and Nathan Smith—who made the Open Men's Board Rescue Tea—for Surf Sports Team of the Year and Zara Lammers for JD Athlete of the Year, ages 13 to 14.

#### **NORTH ENTRANCE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:28):** On 25 May 2019 I attended the North Entrance Surf Life Saving Club presentation night. The club—the youngest on the Central Coast—was established in 1978 in response to an increased use of Tuggerah Beach following the opening of the road between North Entrance and Norah Head in the early 1970s. The club dedicates itself to training and developing its members, with a focus on everyone being equal and having fun in the process. I particularly acknowledge the services of Colin Laing and his 60 years of service at the club and the wider surf lifesaving movement. Colin assisted in the establishment of the club and he still does his regular patrol duties. I also acknowledge the president, Peter Cooper, and secretary, Amanda Bone, who are vital in the organisation of the club's operations. I recognise Bob Mulvey and Janet Lindsay for their close work with my office and all the recipients who received awards on the night. I thank the club for its service to the community in keeping North Entrance Beach and Tuggerah Beach safe.

#### **WILLIE MIDDLETON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:29):** I congratulate Willie Middleton from Narromine who is an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer based at Dubbo. Willie was recently awarded the New South Wales Police Medal, the Commissioner of Police Long Service Award and the Orana Mid-Western Police District Commissioner's Certificate for almost 20 years of service to the force. He provides advice and support to police who are often tasked with responding to complex Aboriginal issues across the region in a culturally appropriate and effective way. Willie is both respected and revered by young people across the community and that, no doubt, is helped by the fact that he can still hold his own on the football field. Willie is in his fifties but still regularly runs out in first grade for the Dubbo Macquarie Raiders in Group 11. Well done Willie. I thank him for his continued important work.

#### **PRINCE OF WALES HOSPITAL**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (13:30):** On 10 May I had the pleasure of attending the Prince of Wales Hospital International Nurses Day awards ceremony, a fantastic event put on by the Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation, recognising the amazing work that all of our nurses do every day. I take this opportunity to thank all of the nurses at Prince of Wales Hospital, as well as nurses at the Sydney Children's Hospital and the Royal Women's Hospital and everywhere across the State for playing such an important role in our community.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the 2019 Prince of Wales Nurse of the Year, Sarah Dunn, for her invaluable contribution to the hospital and to our community. I also congratulate Jane Stedman, the Heart of Caring Nursing Award winner; Lisa Graaf, the Inspirational Leadership Award winner; Lisa Neilon, the Clinical Innovation and Research Award winner; and Briony Van Galen, the Nurse Wellbeing Innovator Award winner, for their amazing contributions. Thank you.

### COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE BRAVERY AWARDS

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:31):** I draw the attention of the House to the heroics of two Wiradjuri men from Gundagai who have finally gained the recognition they deserve. During the 1852 flooding of the Murrumbidgee at Gundagai, Yarri and Jacky Jacky used bark canoes to rescue at least 49 people from the raging waters, which tragically killed a quarter of the population. Recently, after years of sustained community advocacy, Yarri and Jacky Jacky received posthumous bravery awards. Thank you to the Brungle Tumut Local Aboriginal Land Council elders, leadership and community members, the Yarri and Jacky Jacky Sculpture Committee and the *Gundagai Independent* for fighting for this important recognition and acknowledgement. Congratulations, we have done it.

### MACQUARIE FIELDS BIGGEST MORNING TEA

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (13:32):** Today I acknowledge the outstanding community spirit and generosity on show at the Biggest Morning Tea hosted at Campbelltown PCYC at Minto on Thursday 23 May. The fundraiser was organised by the Gentle Exercise Group and supported by the PCYC staff and members. About 100 people attended the event and many got into the theme of the day, donning pink outfits, hats and even pink hair in support of the Cancer Council.

Hats off to the organisers of the rock 'n' roll themed trivia contest, which proved to be quite challenging but lots of fun. A great talking point of the day was an incredible cake in the shape of a teapot complete with drinkable tea being poured into a cup. I am in awe of the incredible baking skills needed to create such a masterpiece. The fun was all for a good cause, raising \$1,346 for cancer research. I congratulate all those involved for organising the event and thank them for having me on what was a very enjoyable day.

### LAMROCK COMMITTEE

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:33):** I acknowledge the hard work and continued dedication of the Lamrock Committee at St George Hospital, a group of ladies who give their time and effort to raise money for vital hospital equipment, and who recently held a very successful monster garage sale at the Oatley Uniting Church hall. The sale boasted a range of homewares, books, toys, sporting goods, small furniture, collectibles and plants, along with a range of food from their barbecue and cake stall, and tea and coffee. All funds raised from the sale directly benefited the St George Hospital. The Lamrock Committee, formed in 1991, was named after Dr James Lamrock who became one of the founders of the St George Cottage Hospital, which was opened by his wife, Margaret, in 1894. Dr Lamrock was the hospital's first senior medical officer. On behalf of all members of this House I thank the Lamrock Committee for their commitment to serving the community for over 28 years and for playing a positive part in the recovery of many patients in the St George area. On behalf of my electorate I thank them for their contribution.

### AMITABHA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:34):** On Saturday 25 May I had the great pleasure of attending a site visit of the Amitabha Buddhist Association of New South Wales premises at Bankstown. I thank the general manager, James Cheng, and all the members for their kind invitation and for hosting me. It was a pleasure to have the chance to address and meet the children and their parents, attend their classes and see their work firsthand. Some of the Amitabha Buddhist Association's activities include teaching their children respect, values and life skills and they work closely in providing a range of support and services to hospitals and prisons on a weekly basis. I commend the association for the important and valuable community work they undertake and I wish them great success in the future.

### MULGOA ELECTORATE SALVATION ARMY RED SHIELD APPEAL

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:34):** I congratulate the five Penrith Anglican College students who assisted the Emu Plains Lions Club in their partnership with the Salvation Army Red Shield Doorknock Appeal on Sunday 26 May. Students collected donations and assisted with the administration of the appeal throughout the day. Well done to the students who volunteered their time—Amber O'Connor, Kate Berwick, Sienna Aurisch, Emma Tarbet and Jack Berwick.

### FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE BIGGEST MORNING TEA

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:35):** On Thursday 23 May I had the great honour to attend a very special Biggest Morning Tea, which was hosted by club Triglav Mounties in conjunction with the Cancer Council NSW. The Biggest Morning Tea was very well attended and honoured all cancer victims, survivors and their families in such a beautiful way. Everyone has been impacted by cancer in one way or another, be it themselves or a loved one; cancer does not discriminate.

I had the wonderful privilege of meeting local residents Brenda and Jenny who told me an incredibly moving story of their mother, Mrs Alice Tant, a long-time member of Triglav Mounties, who sadly passed away four years ago after her battle with cancer. Together we can work to support the Cancer Council through its various initiatives to help those affected and to continue the fight against cancer. I give thanks and acknowledge the tremendous efforts of all dedicated staff and volunteers who helped make the event a tremendous success and to Millie & Co. for graciously contributing to the Biggest Morning Tea at Triglav Mounties.

#### **WAMBERAL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:36):** I recently attended Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club's annual presentation. I congratulate the following award recipients: President Award, Max Camden; Senior Club Person of the Year, Craig Adams; Associate of the Year, Chris Jones; Rower of the Year, Helen Paver; Most Improved Masters, Tiffany Molloy; Senior Competitor of the Year, Craig Adams; Rookie Competitor of the Year, Sheridan Thew; Senior Patrol Person, Matthew Walter; Rookie Patrol Person, Andrew Mann; Heroes of the Surf, Gary Skow and Richard France; Humby Award, Paul Winspear; Five Year Service award, Craig Adams, Jodi Clements, John Elliott, Trevor Hodges, Sean O'Hara, Geoff Pearce, Colin Pearson, Shawn Stephens and Wayne Young; Ten Year Service award, Toni Jennar, Anthony Hall, Christopher Jones, Adam Phillips and Wayne Walsh; 20 Year Service award, Toni Jennar; and Five Year Age Manager Service, Kelly Adams, Nicole Douch, Justine Ella, Scott Montgomery, Stephen Naven, Geoff Pearce and Shanan White. I congratulate all of them on keeping our beaches safe again this season.

#### **CHALDEAN YOUTH UNION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:37):** On 19 May I had the honour to join the Chaldean Youth Union in celebration of the Chaldean Flag Day Festival. The community shared their history and tradition through speeches, songs, dance and art. The word Chaldean originates from the native people of ancient Mesopotamia, who are nationally Babylonian and proudly Catholic. The Chaldean flag comprises two blue vertical lines which represent the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The sun represents the Babylonian symbol of law and justice, the two internal circles are yellow symbolising the sun and blue symbolising the moon. These represent the Chaldean Babylonian cultural contributions to human history, in particular to astronomy and maths. The Chaldean Youth Union's vision is to "empower the youth and support the ideas to unite the Chaldean Society to achieve bigger milestones". Congratulations to Radhda Aziz, Julian Polis and Danny Qajar for organising this fantastic and successful event.

#### **TRIBUTE TO AILEEN MARY MUTTON**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (13:39):** Aileen Mary Mutton was a truly remarkable human being who is remembered for what she did for her community and for her devotion to her family and friends. Aileen passed away peacefully on 17 April following a battle with Parkinson's disease. Aileen was the loving wife of Robert and the mother and mother-in-law of Kate, Stephen and Julianne. She was the grandmother of Makayla and Annalise and a much admired sister and aunty of many, described by all as a beautiful, kind and successful woman, and a strong and independent woman who was ahead of her time.

Aileen travelled extensively overseas, returning to Australia to study nursing. She became the youngest duty matron at Royal North Shore Hospital, where she met her future husband, Rob. In 1968 the couple opened Kumbaingeri, later known as the Coffs Harbour Zoo, on the Pacific Highway at Moonee, one of the Coffs coast's earliest tourist attractions. The Muttons sold the zoo during the 1980s development boom and later ran the cafe at the pet porpoise pool before semi-retiring to their banana plantation at Sapphire. Aileen Mutton died two days before what would have been her and Robert's fiftieth wedding anniversary. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family at this sad time.

#### **MAPLE COURT**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:39):** Maple Court in Railway Street, Woy Woy, is home to many proud local residents. Today in the New South Wales Parliament I commend Frank Giese for his leadership in reuniting residents in the lovely Railway Street units. After scandals and crime, isolated residents are coming together under Frank's leadership to rebuild their warm and caring community. I was honoured to attend a meeting with the residents at which they expressed their initial concerns and I was delighted to return a month later to hear the warm and caring steps taken to reunite the group of people who live in Maple Court. From crime and isolation we now move towards a new supported community executive, "biggest morning tea" gatherings, donated haircuts, gardening support and volunteering with local community organisations. Whilst everyone has the right to live, it is important that the behaviour of a few does not limit the potential greatness of many. I thank Frank and Anne for their contribution. I acknowledge NSW Housing and commend all residents. I express once again that "positively united we can achieve more".

**GORDON ALLAN**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:40):** A massive congratulations to Lalor Park local Gordon Allan on achieving a silver medal at the Union Cycliste Internationale [UCI] Para-cycling Track World Championships in March this year. Gordon is 21 years old and competed in The Netherlands with a very impressive time of 1:12.873 in the C2 one-kilometre event. With this time, Gordon broke the world record and was close to clinching the gold for Australia. Unfortunately, the final rider in the event was Colombia's Alejandro Perea who just eclipsed Gordon's time by 0.035 seconds. This incredible achievement sets Gordon in good stead for his next competition on the international stage at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games. He is hungry to chase down the top spot. Gordon is a para-cycling advocate and remains heavily dedicated to the sport and his community. Again, a big congratulations to Gordon on this terrific achievement. He is a young man who is making his local Lalor Park community and the Seven Hills electorate very proud.

**RAMADAN**

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:41):** I take this opportunity to recognise the hard work undertaken by many volunteers in our local community. Over the course of Ramadan they bring together and feed so many local residents—whether friends or strangers—as part of the break of fast, iftar, dinners. I acknowledge the work of Bhanin El-Minieh Sayaran, the Gallipoli Turkish Cultural Foundation, the Gallipoli Mosque, Australian Malayalee Islamic Association, Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School, Sacred Outreach, the Austra Lanka Muslim Association, Tamil Nadu Australia Muslim Society, Auburn Girls High School, Granville Boys High School and Affinity. I particularly acknowledge Kevin White and Natalie Pyhor for inviting me into their home. All of these organisations work hard to bring the community together throughout the month of Ramadan. Many other community organisations in Auburn are opening their doors to the public for iftar and creating a real sense of belonging and community in the Auburn region. I recognise their hard work and openness over the month of Ramadan.

**TRIBUTE TO IAN MCGREGOR**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (13:42):** I join the Warialda community in mourning the passing of McGregor Gourlay's stalwart, Ian McGregor. Ian was a third-generation McGregor, whose family was the founding principal stock and station agent, JA McGregor Livestock and Property, in Warialda way back in 1897. Over the years JA McGregor Livestock and Property grew to become one of the most respected and well-known agents in the north-west. The business has gradually expanded into machinery, cropping inputs and farm merchandise. Ian worked in the business for 48 years, living and breathing every aspect. When he returned home to join the business in the early 1970s there was a single branch in Warialda. Over the years he oversaw the rise of the business to become one of the largest rural independents in Australia. Ian was a justice of the peace in this State for over 50 years. Ian was a huge asset to Warialda and will be missed by many.

**REDFERN ISLAMIC SOCIETY**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:43):** I was pleased to join the Redfern Islamic Society on 12 May 2019 for their annual community Mar at Eastlakes Community Centre. I was joined by my parliamentary colleague Matt Thistlethwaite, and honoured by the presence of the Consul General of Turkey, Mr Melih Karalar, the religious attaché of Turkey, Mr Bilal Aksoy, and the director of the Australian Turkish Maarif Foundation, Dr Murtaza Yetis. It was a great joy to join with the many Turkish Muslim members from the communities of Eastlakes and Mascot, who always make me feel so welcome. It was a chance to learn more about the very impressive work that the society quietly goes about in ministering to the Turkish Muslim community. I extend my thanks to Ms Ergul Uybadin, secretary of the Redfern Islamic Society, for the invitation. I wish all members a safe and happy month of Ramadan. Ramadan mubarak.

**CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:44):** It was fitting to spend Clean Up Australia Day out on Sydney Harbour where Ian Kiernan, AO, first kicked off this now global phenomenon. It was the first event since his death last year. The idea of a clean-up day ignites an enthusiasm and desire among the community to get involved and make a difference to their local environment. The focus now on Clean Up Australia Day is as much on preventing rubbish entering our environment as it is removing what has already accumulated. In 1993 Ian's passion for a clean environment also inspired 30 million people in 80 countries to become involved in the Clean Up the World campaign. Thank you to the 1st North Sydney Scout Group for taking me on a kayak trip from Sawmillers Reserve across Berrys Bay to Balls Head to make sure that the harbour and quarantine station are free from rubbish. Everyone involved on the day did a tremendous job—including my Federal colleague Trent

Zimmerman—to ensure that the local environment remains clean and pristine for everyone to enjoy. Thank you to all the volunteers on the North Shore who gave up their time to contribute to Clean Up Australia Day.

#### **BREASTSCREEN NSW**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:45):** On Sunday 26 May the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs supported BreastScreen NSW by opening Belmore Stadium to the mobile mammogram screening truck. I thank the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs and, in particular, Saree Boutro. This is a great partnership between BreastScreen NSW and the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs. I was encouraged by the number of women who were screened. I represent a large multicultural community that has low rates for screening in the Greek, Arabic and Chinese communities. I am passionate about increasing the number of women who are screened for breast cancer. Breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer-related death in Australian women, behind lung cancer. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, deaths of women aged 50-74 have fallen. But we have more work to do.

#### **BREAKOUT**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:46):** Congratulations to Cowra artist and new resident Wayne Miles, who has been commissioned to create an informative piece of work for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Cowra prisoner-of-war breakout. The work will focus on the daily life of the camp and feature five steel panels, with the entire piece designed and made locally. A nod also to the Cowra Breakout Association, Cowra Gallery, Cowra Shire Council and Chernco Engineering for their involvement in and support of this exciting project. I cannot wait to see it completed.

#### **TUROOL KORE**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:47):** I congratulate Turool Kore Indigenous men's group for hosting an outstanding men's health day on 10 May. Ten years ago Turool Kore began to improve the overall health and wellbeing of all men the Koori way. Following a quiet time they are looking for a site for a men's shed. Engaging with the ancient traditions of Australia's first peoples, Turool Kore wants to help men build a better future on the foundation of strong links to the past. The logline of this event was "What's your health worth?" The answer is simple: Our health—physically, emotionally and mentally—is worth everything. When we lose our connections to home, society and each other, our health becomes harder to maintain. Without each other, without knowing who we are and where we come from, we start to fall apart. Too often men feel that they cannot come forward with health problems for fear of seeming weak. I know that this concern can be compounded due to other social factors. It is great to see Turool Kore engaging proactively with their community to combat these insidious problems.

#### **BONALBO SHOW**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (13:48):** The Bonalbo Show Society Inc. held the ninety-first Bonalbo show on 3 and 4 May at the Bonalbo showgrounds. It was as always a very successful event despite the unusual, and most welcome, rain. There were many great events, but the working dog trials are always a big hit. Dogs and their owners come from far and wide. There were horse events, led cattle judging, bush pony classes, pen cattle judging, show jumping, young farmers challenge, poultry judging, a Zed8 Motorsport performance and the pavilion judging—all features of our wonderful country shows. I congratulate the committee comprising president David Whitney; vice presidents James Fraser and Donald Johnston; secretary Michelle Malt; treasurer Todd Weston; and committee members Merlene Allen, Darryl Amos, Jenny Gowan, Paul Johnston senior, Ellen Lowe, Colleen McQueen, Clive Newtown, Owen Osborne, Neal Taylor, Sharon Tucker, Chris Whitney and Joy Whitney, on their wonderful voluntary contribution to community.

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

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to His Excellency Gu Xiaojie, Consul General of the People's Republic of China, as well as Deputy Consul General Zhao Wenfei, Consul Wang Hongbo, and Vice Consul Jia Xiaopan. Those in the Chamber may notice I am wearing a red dragon tie. Indeed, outside the Parliament today the Chinese flag was flying alongside our flag in recognition of our visitors, who joined a number of parliamentarians for lunch in my dining room. I welcome them to question time. We can be on our best behaviour to show them how well this Chamber operates.

I welcome to the public gallery year 10 student Ashley Potter from Abbotsleigh Girls High School, who is completing work experience at the Hornsby electorate office and is a guest of the Minister for Energy and Environment, and member for Hornsby. I welcome the Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Councillor Greg Conkey, OAM, guest of the member for Wagga Wagga. I welcome Atul Kumar and family, who are guests of the member for Blacktown. I also welcome the students and teachers participating in the Mulgoa Senior School Leadership Forum from Caroline Chisholm College, Cecil Hills High School, Emmaus Catholic College, Irfan College, Penrith Anglican College and St Clair High School, guests of the member for Mulgoa.

*Question Time*

**MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:24):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Did the Minister declare to the Premier at any time his family's interest in e-conveyancing in accordance with the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Code of Conduct) Regulation 2014?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:24):** I thank the member for his question. I can inform the House that I have adhered to the highest levels of integrity required by this place. I have complied with all my disclosure obligations and continue to do so in relation to this matter and other matters. But whilst I am on my feet, I reference the benefits of e-conveyancing, because that is what is at the heart of this question. In 2017 the New South Wales Government introduced electronic conveyancing, which will be fully rolled out by 1 July 2019.

Those in the industry are taking up e-conveyancing before the official rollout date because it is a good reform, not because they have to. For example, in March 2019 more than 80 per cent of eligible lodgements in New South Wales were electronic, including more than 74 per cent, which were transfers. The main benefits of e-conveyancing are that it eliminates almost all risks associated with human error, it generates up to 75 per cent time savings per transaction and it results in funds from proceeds of sale being available much sooner. Since e-conveyancing began in New South Wales in 2013 there have been no related fraud cases.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: It is very simple. Did the Minister disclose to the Premier his family's interests in e-conveyancing or not?

**The SPEAKER:** I take it that the point of order is in relation to relevance, because that is the best I can ascertain from what you have just said. I note that the Minister has answered the question directly. I give him the freedom to make further comments relating to e-conveyancing as he sees fit.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Through e-conveyancing the legal cost of buying and selling property has reduced significantly. E-conveyancing has enhanced the integrity and security of the titling system, which is an essential feature and the basis of public confidence. Since 2013 the New South Wales Registrar General has paid more than \$2.1 million for errors made in paper transactions and more than \$7.3 million for fraud. In comparison, during the same period not one single payment has been made to compensate any of the more than 360,500 electronic lodgements, so we have essentially eliminated fraud and error through the e-platform. The platform has enhanced the productivity of lawyers and conveyancers, making their businesses more viable in an intensely competitive market, and that has driven down fees.

Many people would not really understand what e-conveyancing is. The term is a misnomer. It is not conveyancing from the beginning to the end. E-conveyancing is essentially the last part of the conveyancing transaction—that is, the settlement. It enables the lodgement of titles. That is why we have to get it right. At its heart e-conveyancing is about the lodgement of titles—the point at which the banks and lawyers exchange title deeds, cheques and so on to finalise the last piece of the transaction. One of the critical elements of e-conveyancing is interoperability. Interoperability means an ability for various stakeholders in that network to talk to each other. I might have an opportunity to talk more about interoperability later on.

Imagine you have a Gmail account and you can only send an email to another Gmail account holder. That does not make sense. With interoperability in a competitive market, you can use Gmail to send an email to a Yahoo! account or another type of account. If there is no interoperability, if there is no network through which to communicate with one another without friction, then monolithic structures are created, which is bad for competition and ultimately bad for the customer. If we want to drive innovation and efficiency and look at the long-term interest of the people of New South Wales then competition is absolutely essential. We saw what happened with Nokia. Companies get fat, they get lazy and they focus on profits rather than focusing on their customers.



**SYDNEY NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:29):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government striking the right balance between community safety and maintaining a vibrant night-time economy for Sydney?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30):** I thank the outstanding member for Manly for his question. I appreciate that all of us in this place have an interest in community safety, balanced with all the other things that make our great city and our great State the place it is. Our Government has always sought to strike a balance between limiting alcohol-related violence and maintaining a vibrant night-time economy in Sydney and across New South Wales. In 2014 this Parliament introduced new laws in response to some tragic cases of alcohol-fuelled violence. Those families most impacted by alcohol-related violence have been and remain in my thoughts as we consider whether the current settings remain appropriate. Also in our thoughts are the frontline police and health workers who sacrifice their own safety and wellbeing for the safety and wellbeing of all of us.

The laws we introduced in 2014 included the establishment of a 1.30 a.m. lockout and 3.00 a.m. last drinks measures in the CBD and Kings Cross entertainment precincts, a statewide prohibition on the sale of takeaway alcohol from 10.00 p.m., and various rules around the service of alcohol in these precincts. Those laws have been reviewed a number of times, including by Ian Callinan, AC, QC, who found that the laws had made the community safer. He also stated that the Government could consider relaxing some aspects of them. After considering the Callinan review the Government moved to relax aspects of the laws by such measures as extending trading hours for bars and clubs for major events and making it easier for small bars, restaurants and cafes to start up and operate. Now is the time, five years after the introduction of the laws, for us to take stock and examine whether any further changes should be made. In doing so, we must ensure that we consult with the many stakeholders and that we have all the facts on the table.

There is no question that the laws we introduced in this Parliament in 2014 have been successful in reducing the incidence of violence. Statistics from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research demonstrate that lockout laws have significantly reduced violent non-domestic assaults in the Kings Cross and CBD entertainment precincts. Following the reforms, statistically significant reductions in non-domestic assault incidents occurred in both Kings Cross, which was down 49 per cent, and the CBD entertainment precinct, which was down 13 per cent. There have also been direct demonstrable improvements to community health. According to a report in *The Medical Journal of Australia*, in the two years after lockout laws were introduced the emergency room at St Vincent's Hospital experienced a 10 per cent reduction in the incidence of fractures that are often caused by a punch to the face. Every person in this place and in the community would welcome that increase in community safety and health. Any changes considered should keep those considerations front and centre.

As I mentioned earlier, following consideration of the Callinan review the Government moved to extend the lockout time to 2.00 a.m. and last drinks time to 3.30 a.m. for venues offering live entertainment. We also moved to extend bottle shop opening times by one hour to 11.00 p.m. across the entire State. We have also made it easier for small bars to operate and increased their maximum capacity from 60 to 100. Clearly, striking the right balance between limiting alcohol-related violence and maintaining a vibrant night-time economy both in Sydney and in our regions is complex and will require further careful consideration.

Interestingly, last year a nationwide council of lord mayors issued a report that compared the night-time economies of Australia's major cities. The report found that Sydney's night-time economy is actually growing; that Sydney has the strongest and most concentrated night-time economy in Australia, with more than 180 core night-time economy establishments per square kilometre; that Sydney's night-time economy employs more than 35,000 people, an increase of 6.2 per cent on the previous year; that the turnover of the night-time economy is \$4 billion, demonstrating growth of 6 per cent in that year; and that there are now more than 4,800 night-time economy businesses, up by 1.8 per cent in a year.

I believe there is strong support for the existing laws across New South Wales. They have been right for their time and have served us well. As Premier, I feel a deep responsibility to keep the community safe always and, of course, to prevent alcohol-fuelled violence. However, after five years of operation of these laws it is appropriate to take stock and consider all sides of the issue. The night-time economy of Sydney is very important, both locally and for our international reputation. The Government is keen to ensure that the Opposition and crossbench is included in the deliberations to ensure that all complex issues receive comprehensive cross-party consideration. [*Extension of time*]

I ask that the committee we have established this morning in the lower House be comprehensive and consider all of the evidence. I also ask that everybody in the community who has strong views on these matters conduct themselves in a respectful and considerate manner. The committee will report to the Parliament by

30 September this year, and the Government will consider the recommendations in detail after receiving the report. I encourage community, business and interest groups as well as individuals to join with us and work together to deliver the best balance between improving community health and safety and maintaining a vibrant night-time economy throughout Sydney and New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** In all my time in this place I think that was the quietest the Chamber has been during a response to a question. I commend everyone for that, except the person whose mobile phone rang. I ask that every member makes sure that their mobile phones are turned off during question time.

#### MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:36):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Would the Minister inform the House of any and all interactions he has had with his cousin in relation to changes to e-conveyancing in New South Wales?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:36):** I share the Speaker's observation about the quiet conduct in the Chamber during the Premier's previous answer. For the benefit of the students in the gallery: We are normally quiet like this, particularly around Christmas time. As I said in my previous answer, at all times I have complied with my duties with integrity and have fulfilled my obligations of disclosure in this House. I have maintained that and I will continue to maintain that. I return to the issue in question. In relation to e-conveyancing there is, in my view, a desperate need for competition.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** No, it is a yes or no answer.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have answered the question. I am just providing more information in relation to competition. I think that earlier in the day I addressed some of the students who are now in the gallery. We were talking about the requirement to set things up in order to face the world ahead. Competition is an essential element of that. That also applies to e-conveyancing. I have a letter from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission dated February this year. It said in relation to e-conveyancing—

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** Read it all.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will not read the whole letter; I will spare you that. I will read a couple of paragraphs. It says:

In the context of electronic conveyancing, the ACCC considers interoperability to be an important pro-competitive feature.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: Fascinating as e-conveyancing is, my point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister's answer has nothing to do with the question that he was asked. It has nothing to do with his cousin and the interactions that they had.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant to the question, but I remind him that it was fairly specific. I expect that he will address the question in more direct terms in the course of his answer.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The ACCC letter continues:

Interoperability is essential to facilitating the entrance of new ELNOs into the market and can prevent an incumbent from becoming further entrenched as the dominant service provider in the market due to network effects.

It goes on to say:

The ACCC considers that in order to facilitate competition between providers, it is important that it is easy for customers to easily switch between providers. Ensuring switching is as 'frictionless' as possible will drive efficiencies in a market as end users are able to identify and move to the best service.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We have been very respectful. This is a serious matter involving an issue where the Government changed the way it did e-conveyancing and there was an interaction between the Minister and his cousin.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not want to hear argument. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Ryan Park:** It relates to Standing Order 129. We asked a very specific question. All we are asking is that the Minister inform the House of interactions he had with his cousin and whether or not they were disclosed.

**The SPEAKER:** I reiterate my earlier comments. The Minister is being relevant, but the question was very specific. It is not unreasonable to expect that the question be addressed in more direct terms.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I received an email from my cousin, who is one of about 34,000 lawyers in New South Wales. She sent an email that contained a complaint in relation to a frustration that she has had with the network, with Property Exchange Australia and with the bank. It is a frustration that many people share. I sent the email to the agency and the agency responded accordingly.

## REGIONAL MANUFACTURING

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:41):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its plan for advanced manufacturing in regional communities?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:41):** I thank the member for Cootamundra. She is a fantastic member. Only 18-plus months ago, she faced a by-election. She held the seat for The Nationals and was returned in the 2019 election. Hers is now the second safest seat in the State, which is a testament to her hard work. I congratulate her on her promotion to Parliamentary Secretary to the good Deputy Premier. It was an outstanding choice—the Deputy Premier, that is!

I also acknowledge in this House the Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Councillor Conkey, because this question is about regional New South Wales and how the Government underpins the prosperity of the regions. Wagga Wagga is one of those city centres that are growing. It is a powerhouse centre that will possibly be the first city in regional New South Wales to reach of population of 100,000. The Government is doing what it can to support Wagga Wagga, where a special activation precinct was recently announced. The mayor and the council led the charge in relation to investing in industrial land in Wagga Wagga to promote it as an industrial and business hub. I am excited about that and I welcome the mayor to Parliament today.

The question was about what the Government is doing in regional New South Wales to build prosperity and to drive diversity in our local economies. Members will have heard me talk about the impact of drought. The regions are doing it tough. The lessons that come from the experience of droughts and the decline in the mining sector are about the need for diversity in local economies and the need to insulate against downturns so that communities do not feel the impacts on local economies and jobs.

When thinking about jobs in regional New South Wales we need to consider what drives the economy. If a company closes and 50 jobs are lost it is possible that 50 families will leave a community, which could mean the difference between a school remaining open or closing, or a hospital losing a doctor. The ripple effect on communities goes beyond economic aspects to social aspects. That is why it is so important for the Government to focus on building diversity in new and growing sectors and concentrating on the foundations of the jobs that are important to regional New South Wales. When I talk about jobs I am not referring to normal jobs. I want to see great, high-paying jobs not just in Sydney but also in regional areas—the kinds of jobs that we hope our children can aspire to.

Following an announcement about 12 months ago, I recently revisited the new aerospace and defence precinct site close to Newcastle Airport. I acknowledge the mayor of Port Stephens, Ryan Palmer, and my favourite Labor mayor, the mayor of Newcastle, Nuatali Nelmes, who along with the member for Port Stephens—and I acknowledge the member—spoke about the New South Wales Government's investment of \$11.7 million in this precinct on the edge of Newcastle Airport. I congratulate the CEO of Newcastle Airport, Dr Peter Cock, on his airport's investment of around \$8.7 million. I acknowledge the two councils, which are shareholders of Newcastle Airport. This investment is about growing diversity in jobs. We know that in Williamstown there is a strong RAAF base, where companies like BAE support our defence infrastructure and, more importantly, the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter program.

This investment is about creating the jobs of the future. These fantastic jobs will exist for the next 50-plus years. Kids who are in school today in the Hunter region can focus on getting a high-paying quality job in aerospace, in defence, in engineering and in anything to do with technology. These jobs will be underpinned by our investment in growing these industries in regional New South Wales. I hate to tell my city-dwelling friends in this House that not all the smarts, not all the ideas, exist here in the city. In regional New South Wales we have economies, businesses and start-ups, including businesses that build on the back of strong sectors like mining. These businesses have the advanced manufacturing capabilities and could become not only a large domestic employer but also exporters in areas of niche manufacturing. Australia cannot compete with some countries that manufacture white goods—what I call low-end manufacturing—but when it comes to advanced manufacturing, Australia can lead the way in areas like aerospace, defence and technology. This exciting investment by the New South Wales Government is designed to unlock about 70 hectares to attract more investment. *[Extension of time]*

On the sod-turning day BAE Systems Australia signed a memorandum of understanding with Newcastle Airport to become the first anchor tenant for that site. Once the first tenant has been secured, often we see other fantastic businesses lining up to join it. This investment is about driving 5,500 jobs and growing opportunities for our kids. This is an example of what this Government is doing through the Regional Growth Fund and the Growing Local Economies fund. These funds were a focus of the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government in

our last term of government. We will carry over in this term of government \$300 million, which was set aside to build the infrastructure that attracts industry and businesses to regional New South Wales to unlock developments like the aerospace precinct and other industrial precincts. We are making similar investments in Wagga Wagga and Parkes as well as in the Upper Hunter, where we have backed in a fantastic ethanol research facility.

This is a \$4 million investment and the member for Upper Hunter was with me when we did the sod-turn for that facility. The sod-turn at the Williamtown precinct was very different from the usual gold shovel in the ground. I arrived a couple of hours early and I did an induction, then I went through a training process. As I have said before, I have spent a lot of time playing with timber, but despite this I received training and got my tick of approval to drive a 25-tonne excavator to do the sod-turn with the excavator. I know the member for Port Stephens videoed me, hoping I would stuff it up. I can say that there was enough of a buffer zone between the machine and the onlookers. It was a fantastic day and the sod-turn was all ticked off by SafeWork. It was an exciting day and I look forward to more opportunities to announce investments in similar developments. Perhaps I will be given an opportunity to fly in one of the jets at the RAAF base.

#### MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:48):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Given that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] can award damages of up to \$40,000 for the disclosure of personal information held in a public register, is the Minister aware if anyone whose information was leaked has initiated proceedings in NCAT?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (14:49):** I thank the member for Cessnock for his question. I am not aware.

#### TAFE NSW

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (14:49):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its plan for TAFE and tertiary education?

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (14:49):** I thank the member for East Hills for her question. I congratulate the member on her stunning election victory. We heard a great example of a member who cares about and represents the ideals of the residents of East Hills in the member's stunning inaugural speech last night. As a past TAFE teacher I know the importance of TAFE to deliver skills and training in New South Wales. In fact, my father was a TAFE teacher for his whole life.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Shame on you.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Shellharbour is close to being called to order. Members will come to order.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** The member for Shellharbour's interjection is insulting to not only my father but all the other TAFE teachers. I do not understand why those opposite want to insult TAFE teachers. Members on this side of the House support our TAFE teachers and students. I will proceed with my answer despite the awful interjections of those on the other side of the House. Members on this side of the House are above denigrating and insulting our wonderful TAFE teachers. It was wonderful to visit Liverpool TAFE with the fantastic member for Holsworthy. I cut my teeth at Liverpool TAFE because it was the first TAFE I worked at. It was a fantastic opportunity and I saw firsthand the power of education in changing people's lives. I am excited about the opportunity to continue to build TAFE as a gold standard in vocational education and training [VET] not only for teachers but for students.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Have they still got students there?

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

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** I update the House on some wonderful initiatives being delivered by this Government for TAFE and higher education. I commend the Premier and the Deputy Premier for their commitment to provide a world-class education for all, no matter where they live and their personal circumstances. Education is a true enabler for people, communities and families to realise their dreams. This Government is prioritising building a skilled workforce for the twenty-first century. We are prioritising creating dynamic, meaningful jobs in diverse industries. We are proud that we are delivering 100,000 fee-free TAFE and VET courses over the next four years. These are in addition to the 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships over the next four years.

We are also investing \$18.5 million to recruit up to 253 new TAFE teachers. We will only recruit the best teachers for our TAFEs because members on this side of the House support our TAFE teachers. We do not insult our TAFE teachers, unlike those on the other side of the House. They should be ashamed of themselves and

hang their heads in shame for their abuse of TAFE teachers. The good news continues. We are investing \$180 million in capital works programs right across the State. We are also investing \$80 million in a super campus in western Sydney to teach subjects in construction for the jobs of the future.

The good member for Ryde should be proud of his advocacy for and support of \$125 million to be invested in new TAFE facilities in the Meadowbank education precinct. Nobody is more passionate about education than the member for Ryde and I thank him for his advocacy in this area. The good news keeps going. We are also building another eight new Connected Learning Centres in rural and regional New South Wales on top of the 14 already delivered. I know the Deputy Premier is very excited about these learning centres. From all reports, they are widely accepted and loved by the whole regional and remote areas. The Government is also committed to delivering two new vocational high schools in western Sydney and the North Coast.

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

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** The Government is also delivering more support for our most vulnerable to access life-changing education. [*Extension of time*]

The Smart, Skilled and Hired Youth Employment Program assists young people to overcome barriers to employment. This regional vocational, education and training pathways initiative supports 15- to 19-year-olds who are not studying or in a job to find pathways into education, training and work. In conclusion, I thank the Premier, the Deputy Premier and members on this side of the House for their wonderful support to build TAFE as a world-class institution to deliver the skills of the twenty-first century and for the future generations. As a past teacher, I know the importance of education. It is a life-changing experience not only for the students but for the families and the wider community, allowing people to lead the lives that they choose to live and giving everybody the opportunity of a world-class education. On this side of the House, we are focused on skilling the next generation for jobs of the future. We are the party of 100,000 fee-free TAFE and VET courses. We are the party of 100,000 apprentices fee-free. We are the party of the workers.

#### MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (14:56):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the privacy obligations of ministerial staff under the code of conduct, what steps has the Premier taken to ensure that all her Ministers and their staff have had the appropriate level of training in data protection?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:56):** I thank the member for Wollongong for his question and say that my expectation is every single staff member should know their obligations under the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct or the code that relates to their activity. Every Minister, every Parliamentary Secretary and every member of Parliament should know their obligations under the code of conduct and I expect at all times those standards are kept. I appreciate the importance of this issue and I appreciate the Opposition's questions about these issues. But I would also hope that whether it is the acting interim leader or other members those opposite would also ask questions about other matters that impact the community and the people of New South Wales. As the Premier of this State I am yet to be asked a question this week on jobs, on the economy, on health or on education. The issues raised are important. They can be asked a few times but repetitiveness does not assist. It is incredibly important for the future of New South Wales to have a strong and vibrant Opposition.

**Mr Ryan Park:** We do.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They do. It is important for there to be an active and vibrant Opposition. I note the acting interim leader—

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order: The Premier was asked what training she has ensured in relation to her responsibilities. She has not answered the question about the training that she has ensured.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is relevant thus far, but she may want to address that specifically at some stage.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I hope my statements at the beginning of my response adequately addressed the importance with which all of us should take privacy issues and will continue to do so into the future. I was commenting on the importance of a vibrant and effective Opposition. The acting interim leader interrupted to say that they were extremely vibrant and interactive. It was surprising for me when I read a release, not put out by the acting interim leader but by the interim leader in the other place, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, on 21 May.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** If it is the same point of order I will hear further from the Premier first.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** To the point of order: I would like to know about training.

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy to hear further from the Premier. It has only been about 20 seconds since the member's last point of order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I appreciate that those opposite like to put a silver lining on every situation.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** And you don't?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I appreciate the interjection by the member for Liverpool, but this goes beyond a silver lining. The press release was headed up in relation to the leadership woes for those opposite, "Historic New South Wales Labor leadership election commences". Who would put out a press release commenting that what they are going through is historic? It is historic for the wrong reasons.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Given the question was about what training staff and Ministers have undertaken around privacy, clearly the issues around the Labor leadership have nothing to do with that question.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard the point of order. I ask the Premier to come back more directly to the answer. I acknowledge that she did address the question at the beginning of her response, albeit not as directly as the Opposition would like. I ask her to come back to the same topic.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Only the Labor Party would think what they are going through is historic for the right reasons. We know it is historic for the wrong reasons. They put Bill Shorten ahead of the people of New South Wales. They do not have a leader. They are squabbling amongst themselves and as a result, the people of New South Wales are suffering.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 59, tedious repetition.

**The SPEAKER:** The answer has been concluded.

#### WATER SECURITY

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:01):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its plan for water security, including water restrictions?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:01):** I thank the member for Dubbo for that question. I know that he has shown true leadership in his community by having conversations with the people of that region about water, and Dubbo City Council going straight to level 2 restrictions on Saturday. There are conversations now across the entire State of New South Wales. Almost 98 per cent of the State is in drought and many areas have experienced 18 months or more of extremely dry conditions. The current mid-term outlook for rainfall suggests that there is less than a 50 per cent chance that much of New South Wales will receive average rainfall.

Like most of New South Wales, Sydney is currently experiencing severe drought conditions. For the past 18 months the Government has been closely monitoring Sydney's rainfall and weather patterns so it can respond swiftly to a continued decline in Sydney's dam levels. At present dam levels in Greater Sydney are 53.5 per cent. In the past 18 months dam levels have depleted by more than 30 per cent. The rate of depletion of the Greater Sydney catchment has never been so quick. This rapid depletion is a result of record low rainfall and continued hot and dry conditions. These inflows are the second-lowest on record, behind the 1940s drought.

The Bureau of Meteorology's forecast for May to July is hotter than average and no better than average rainfall, which means that dam levels are likely to continue to decline. Due to this, the Government has made the decision to introduce level 1 water restrictions on 1 June. These restrictions will be introduced ahead of the 50 per cent trigger in the Metropolitan Water Plan. The Government is taking this precautionary approach and acting early to buy the city more time for it to rain. This prudent approach is in line with the Metropolitan Water Plan which was released by the Government in 2017.

This is an adaptive plan. Trigger levels are meant to change in response to changing conditions such as the record low inflows that Sydney is currently experiencing. Level 1 water restrictions will commence in Sydney on Saturday. The restrictions are expected to save 36 gigalitres of water each year, which is approximately four weeks of supply. There will be a three-month grace period for people to adapt to these changes. People who water outdoors for business purposes will need to apply for an exemption through the Sydney Water website. The Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans, the member for Drummoyne, raised this matter with

me earlier. There will be no cost for the application and the process will be easy. These restrictions will target outdoor water use, but the Government also wants to help residents save water indoors.

The New South Wales Government has been extremely proactive in its efforts to safeguard long-term water security for Sydney and the State. A drought options study was commissioned to review existing and new options needed to respond to the current drought. This study is currently being considered by the Government. In January we switched on the Sydney Desalination Plant once dam levels reached 60 per cent, as outlined in the Metropolitan Water Plan. The plant is operating exceptionally well. It is at half its capacity and we expect it to be at full capacity, which will be 15 per cent of Sydney's capacity level, within about four to six weeks. Full production was expected to be reached around August, so it is roughly one month ahead of schedule.

While the plant is operating we require less from Sydney's dams, and the water savings will be shared across the entire supply network. We have continued to transfer water from the Shoalhaven river into Sydney's dams when available. The Minister for Health and Medical Research, the member for Wakehurst, and I recently talked about water tanks and he will be interested to know that in the past 20 years more than 112,000 rainwater tanks have been installed in Sydney which together save approximately 4.3 billion litres a year, approximately three days of water supply for Sydney. And we are producing as much recycled water as possible to reduce demand on our precious drinking water supplies. In 2017-18 Sydney Water supplied almost 43 billion litres of recycled water across its 23 schemes: 9 billion litres went to residential, commercial and industrial uses and replaced the need for drinking water; and 10 billion litres went to environmental flows to enhance river water quality. *[Extension of time]*

Twenty-four billion litres was recycled for other purposes including irrigation of parks, sports fields and agriculture. This includes 15 irrigation schemes that contribute to urban greening and cooling of Sydney. Sydney Water has also enhanced its water efficiency programs by optimising its current recycled water schemes and increasing recycled water use in community parks and golf courses. Private water utilities licensed under the Government's Water Industry Competition Act are also continuing to produce recycled water for residential, commercial and industrial use. In 2017-18 across New South Wales, 19 private recycled water schemes recycled approximately 3,300 million litres of water. Sydney Water and Water NSW have implemented multiple operational measures to conserve water. And Sydney Water has invested heavily in a public water conservation communications campaign called Love Water, which has reduced demand over the summer period by 7 per cent.

I encourage all Sydney residents to be water wise in their daily behaviours because small changes can make a major difference to Sydney's water security. As many of our country residents have been doing for the past 18 months, being water wise can ensure that there is enough for towns, communities and stock. We are very proud of the ongoing work through the drought conditions. In fact, in regional New South Wales the Government spent \$11.4 million on capital to ensure the ongoing security of local water supplies. The Department of Industry closely monitors the drought situation and its impact on towns and communities throughout regional New South Wales. I acknowledge the Government's appointment earlier this year of James McTavish as the Regional Town Water Supply Coordinator who is doing a great job travelling around our communities to hear firsthand where and how we need to respond. We are in this together and all we need is for it to rain.

#### **NORTHERN RIVERS PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:09):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Given the billions of dollars the Government is spending on Sydney and metropolitan public transport, will the Minister commit to develop a 50 years public transport master plan for the Northern Rivers region?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:09):** I thank the member for Ballina for her question. And yes, the New South Wales Government is investing billions of dollars in public transport across the Sydney area in projects like the Sydney Metro Northwest, which will leave a lasting legacy for generations to come and will change how people move in that part of the city. I know the kind of excitement I saw on the faces of people last Sunday will be replicated in regional parts of New South Wales when some of our major projects are unveiled to the people across this State. These projects in regional and rural areas will change the lives of the people and will transform communities. We will continue to provide that kind of investment into our areas.

While this Government is spending billions of dollars in metropolitan areas it is also spending billions of dollars on public transport and roads in regional New South Wales. This Government has created a Regional Transport and Roads portfolio, which is a reflection of this Government's commitment to a big, bold vision for a connected transport and roads network in regional and rural New South Wales. It will increase the focus on the specific need to address regional communities, including the northern rivers. The Government recognises that

public transport is not just about helping people to get to where they are going but also about unlocking opportunity, increasing connectivity and the importance of our regional communities.

Future Transport 2056 is the Government's strategic vision for the next 40 years. It is a vision for a safe, efficient and reliable network of transport services and infrastructure that recognises and reinforces the vital role of regional cities like Lismore as hubs for services, employment and social interaction for their surrounding communities. The Future Transport strategy was built on input from more than 500 submission and a community roadshow that visited more than 60 regional and metropolitan locations. In addition to the overall future transport strategy, this Government released in March 2018 the Regional Services and Infrastructure Plan to support livable regional communities and productive economies.

The plan proposes a hub-and-spoke network that connects regional customers to their nearest regional city or centre, improving connections to jobs, education, shopping, health services, cultural and recreational activities. It connects some of our outlying towns and villages with larger regional centres. It also focuses on improved east-west connections between inland and coastal areas to open up tourism and trade connections. This Government is committed to supporting rural and regional New South Wales. Our strategy contemplates the development of a region-specific plan for the north coast incorporating the northern rivers.

As I said, our Future Transport Strategy proposes a hub-and-spoke network. Some of the key hubs identified will be on the north coast, including Ballina, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Lismore, Port Macquarie and Tweed. This Government is always looking to improve regional transport services in order to better serve our local communities. An example of that approach is the Lismore to Byron Bay commuter bus service, which began as a trial in 2017 and has been incredibly successful. We are trialling on-demand services throughout the State and delivering more bus services in our major regional centres. This Government is also investing \$2.8 billion on a project that will deliver a new first-class regional rail fleet. This project will inject billions of dollars into regional New South Wales and open up a new era for regional rail travel in this State, including through the north of the State.

This is also an opportunity for me to talk about our investments on the north coast, specifically the Pacific Highway. This is a multi-billion dollar investment by State and Federal governments that represents the largest road infrastructure project in the country. Duplication of the Pacific Highway between Hexham and the border is now 80 per cent complete and already the number of fatal crashes has halved on the Pacific Highway. We are excited about the vision that we have, not just for public transport but also for an integrated public transport and road network across regional New South Wales.

### TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:14):** My question is addressed—

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will revert to the quieter state I mentioned earlier.

**Mr MARK COURE:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on key transport projects and any other related matters?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:15):** I thank the member for Oatley for his question. I wish him well for the recovery from his leg injury. It is an excellent and timely question in the week we opened Sydney Metro Northwest. It is an incredible success. Metro mania has hit town and it is absolutely fantastic. I can confirm to the House that 280,000 people have ridden the Metro.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

No, you are banned. There is a lifetime ban on anyone from the Labor Party riding the metro. From what I saw on the weekend at the ribbon-cutting, there is no doubt that people are loving it. I acknowledge the Premier, who stared down the disbelievers of this project, of which there were many. It was her vision to see a driverless single-deck train for the people of this State. One great benefit of the metro is the automatic sliding doors. The member for Strathfield loves those sliding doors. The great thing about it them is that the gap is only yay big so no-one can fall through the cracks. There is no doubt that this project will go from success to success. We are running the trains every six to seven minutes, ironing out glitches as we go. In the next few weeks we will run a train every four minutes. That will have an incredible effect. I also acknowledge Sydney Trains who have worked around the clock to make sure that their system works alongside the metro's.

We know that members opposite who opposed the metro took to the last election a campaign of wanting to rip up contracts. It did not matter whether it was scrapping the metro, the stadiums, the F6, the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link—the list goes on. You have to hand it to the member for Strathfield, the



look-at-me-look-at-me candidate for the Labor leadership. Only a month ago she said the Government was focused on building stuff. That is absolutely right. That is one thing that we will continue to get on with and do.

The other great element to the metro is that it was delivered slightly ahead of time but \$1 billion under budget. Whilst we are getting on with it, what is going on on the other side? There is more and more infighting. Look at the conduct of members opposite this week: Their heads are down, there is no energy, they are treating the lower House like the upper House. There is absolutely no doubt that the leadership contest is going to heat up over the next few weeks. I know that those opposite have certainly been in disarray—

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** —since the member for Wallsend declared that she was not contesting the Labor leadership. There is absolutely no doubt that when we see the member for Kogarah running away from the meat workers union who want to stab him, the knives are out. We can bet that the member for Strathfield is not too far away.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: Predictably, my point of order relates to Standing Order 129 about relevance. The question is about transport infrastructure in New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That is an excellent ruling, Mr Speaker. One of the great things about the Labor Party is that they have got this leadership contest. I note that the member for Newcastle is going to have a leadership forum. When he brings them up, he will be able to disclose to the—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear the point of order, but I hope it is not the same point of order. I allow a slight transgression from what has been a highly relevant answer, so if the member's point of order is about relevance again, it is much too soon since his last point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I can suspend standing orders and give myself another 10 minutes if the member likes. One of the key things that I like about Newcastle—the member for Newcastle will be able to show off the light rail to—

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

But guess what? About 365,000 other people have got on it. *[Extension of time]*

There have been 365,000 trips but I still have not had an answer from the member for Newcastle as to whether he has been on the light rail. He is saying no. Mate, I am going to look through months of closed-circuit television footage and prove that you were on it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If members do not remain silent I will start calling them to order. The member for Fairfield will come to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The member for Newcastle is going to have a leadership forum. I was interested to read in the *Newcastle Herald* that Jodi McKay said, "Newcastle and I have split, permanently." I do not know how Jodi is going to come to Newcastle.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat.

**Mr David Harris:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 74. The Minister is being deliberately quarrelsome with the member for Newcastle and he should cease to do so.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The Minister will continue.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Anyway, 365,000 people in Newcastle have made trips. I am very pleased that we are soon going to open the first of four tunnels of the WestConnex project. That will particularly please the member for Strathfield because she has property near the tunnel. The Parliamentary Ethics Adviser has already hollowed out a few issues around that.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to make personal reflections or imputations about the member for Strathfield, he should do it by way of a separate substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will continue. He is going close to the line, but has not overstepped it.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The point is the first of four WestConnex tunnels is opening in the next few months. It is great news for everybody as thousands of trucks will go off Parramatta Road. It is another example of why this Government is able to build public transport and roadways at the same time. It is because we manage the finances and we get on with the job. And to members opposite: Michael, welcome back. We thank you for your service.

*Business of the House*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: REORDERING OF GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that the general business notices of motions (general notices) given by the member for North Shore [Vivid Sydney] and the member for Wyong [National Reconciliation Week], that were to be subject of a motion to re-order for tomorrow, have precedence on Thursday 30 May 2019 in the order they were given.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Committees*

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

**Membership**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the resolution of 29 May 2019, I announce receipt of correspondence nominating Mr Kevin Conolly, Mr Geoff Provest and Ms Felicity Wilson as Government members, Mr Guy Zangari as the Opposition member and Mr Alex Greenwich as the crossbench member on the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I move:

That a message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the Legislative Assembly members' appointment to the committee.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Petitions*

**PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Sydney Metro Pitt Street Over-station Developments**

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

**The Star Casino**

Petition opposing construction of a proposed residential and hotel tower on The Star casino site, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Inner-city Ferry Services**

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

**Oxford Street Clearway Removal**

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

**Low-cost Housing and Homelessness**

Petition requesting increased funding for low-cost housing and homelessness services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Social Housing Maintenance**

Petition requesting that the Government retain and properly maintain inner-city social housing, 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**.

### *Motions Accorded Priority*

### **NSW LABOR**

### **Consideration**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:26):** The once-great New South Wales Labor Party has no permanent leader. Labor claims that an historic New South Wales leadership election has commenced. However, the only thing historic about this election is that Labor has had no leader for two months. Labor put Bill Shorten before the people of New South Wales, and I ask those opposite how exactly that worked out for them. In case they have forgotten, I take this opportunity to remind them: Shorten was smashed by the Messiah from The Shire and NSW Labor was left showing that it had been derelict in its duties as an Opposition and had neglected the people of New South Wales for nothing. The people of New South Wales are sick of Labor's lack of leadership, which has carried on for 65 days. So what is NSW Labor's proposed answer? The member for Kogarah is a creature of NSW Labor HQ, having played a key role as assistant general secretary in Labor's disastrous 2011 election campaign.

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

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** The member for Kogarah has minimal parliamentary experience other than working for two Labor Ministers and a Premier during the former failed Labor Government.

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

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** Although he claims to have a bad relationship with the unions, the member is reportedly attempting to improve his relationship with union groups so that he can become leader—and obviously to appease "boss lady". In the November 2018 leadership contest the member for Kogarah received little support. Remember those two Suzuki Swifts? The other option for those opposite is the member for Strathfield. She does not necessarily want to be Labor leader, but Kaila Murnain and Labor HQ want an alternative to the water boy. The member for Strathfield was a player in one of the most corrupt governments in Australia's history, holding numerous portfolios in its dying days. She is not the answer to Labor's problems; she is a constant reminder of its troubled past. During the election campaign she simply promised to cancel transport projects and take the State backwards. On 28 May this year *The Australian* reported her as saying:

I have Labor values that I will never sway from.

Yet in 2016 the member for Strathfield met former Liberal frontbencher Mike Gallacher and discussed the possibility of running to the Liberals in the seat of Port Stephens. Again, on 24 May this year *The Australian Financial Review* reported her as saying:

... right now I believe I can beat Gladys Berejiklian.

I ask the member for Strathfield to clarify whether she is running for leadership of the Labor Party or the Liberal Party. Further, if we did not want her then why would they want her now? Irrespective of who is chosen to lead it, the Labor Party is clearly facing an identity crisis. On 22 May this year *The Daily Telegraph* wrote "Let the Left's soul searching begin." While we on this side of the Chamber call on NSW Labor to start putting the people of New South Wales first, we know that the State is safe in the Coalition's hands.

### **MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE**

### **Consideration**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:29):** One of the most precious responsibilities of a member of Parliament is to maintain privacy. This code of confidentiality is not abstract or vague; it is explicit in our responsibilities. That is why this motion must be accorded priority for debate in the House today. There is no Minister in New South Wales with access to a more diverse and wideranging collection of our personal and private details than the Minister for Customer Service. In order to interact with the New South Wales Government, every citizen in the State has to provide multiple layers of personal and private details. This data collection begins with our birth and ends with our death. I do not think too many members in this Chamber would like their personal information handed out to some media outlet.

Several months ago the Minister's office was provided with a table of private information about several hundred individuals and their interactions with Revenue NSW. It is completely unreasonable to pretend that a Minister or a Minister's office would not know that this data and detail were sacred and should never leave the sanctity of the office. The issue of privacy is dealt with by various pieces of legislation, codes of conduct and the privacy commissioner. Yet, despite the obvious, this information did leave the Minister's office in the most neglectful of ways: It was provided directly to a media outlet. In this instance it seems that the chance of a small political gain from leaking private information was worth the legal and moral sacrifice of all other responsibilities. The Chamber must deal with that issue today.

What happened next is possibly the most shocking element of this sad tale—the cover-up. Many questions have been asked in this Chamber but the Government still has not provided an explanation as to why and how this breach occurred and what steps have been taken since it happened. It is strange that this particular Minister would not take steps to prevent leaks from happening as he has proudly proclaimed the sanctity of privacy in this Chamber on many occasions. While speaking in support of a number of pieces of legislation in this place, the Minister has gone to great lengths to explain how the private details of citizens must always be protected and never breached. We share a unity ticket on this issue. The Minister even wrote an opinion piece on this very issue on 17 September 2015, when it was clear that a private company called Vodafone had breached the privacy of its customers. In that column he wrote that personal privacy is a fundamental human right and went on to describe the privacy breach as "an attack on our democracy". He also said:

Vodafone's failure to take appropriate action at the time of becoming aware of breaches, to alert the police and individuals concerned, demonstrates the flagrant disregard for privacy by the organization.

The Minister has in this Chamber and in the mainstream media set an appropriately high standard for privacy. That is why this motion deserves to be accorded priority today.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....48

Noes .....40

Majority.....8

#### AYES

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

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

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

#### NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Finn, Ms J  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
O'Neill, Dr M

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dib, Mr J  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Parker, Mr J

## NOES

Piper, Mr G  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

Scully, Mr P  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

**Motion agreed to.****NSW LABOR****Priority****Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:40):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the acting Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly for his outstanding efforts since his appointment.
- (2) Notes that New South Wales Labor put Bill Shorten before the people of New South Wales.
- (3) Notes that 65 days after the New South Wales election, the Opposition still does not have a leader.
- (4) Calls on the Opposition to start putting the people of New South Wales first.

It has been three weeks since this place debated a rather similar motion. Yet, while NSW Labor has not moved forward in choosing a leader and demonstrating to the people of New South Wales that it values them and wants to represent them to its utmost ability, the people of Australia have spoken. They have demonstrated that there is no confidence in the Labor brand. Today we will look at some of the leadership options in this Parliament. We will start with the member for Kogarah.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Pick me!

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** The member for Port Stephens has put up her hand. I note that a few weeks ago we were talking about the member for Port Stephens and the member for Swansea but they seem to have fallen off the list. I also note that the member for Maitland is rather upset that we are not talking about her right now. As part of his leadership pitch to Labor members the member for Kogarah sent out an email saying, "Privatisation is a failed model and we cannot allow the fire-sale of our State assets to continue." When he was chief of staff to John Robertson, the then Minister for Corrective Services, the member for Kogarah was all for the privatisation of Parklea prison. He helped stitch up a Labor Party committee to overturn the party's ban privatising prisons. At the time *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Labor members complained, "It's a complete stitch up, sending it to a dodgy committee run by a Minister's brother, an MP's son and a key apparatchik's wife."

Who was on the committee? It was the brother of Joe Tripodi, the son of Noreen Hay and the wife of the member for Kogarah. The member for Kogarah is a hypocrite on privatisation. He supported it at Parklea prison and now rejects it when he has to suck up to the unions. Do the proud Labor Party rank and file really want this political gymnast as their leader? Meanwhile, talking about political gymnastics, we have already established that the member for Strathfield likes to shop around for political parties. The member for Strathfield said, "I felt very strongly about what Newcastle needed to do and the journey it needed to go on." The member for Strathfield felt so strongly about Newcastle that she journeyed to the rather regional seat of Strathfield to continue her political aspirations.

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

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** On Friday the member for Strathfield was so worried about the perception of her being a career politician that she sent an email boasting about never being involved in Young Labor or working as a staffer or union official. As quick as she is to change electorates, she is just as quick to throw the entire Young Labor movement, the union movement and party staffers under a bus. How many of those opposite fit into that category? Former Iemma Minister Cherie Burton said that the member for Strathfield is "someone who has no history with the party" and that she attacks and degrades "the people who are a large part of the heartbeat of the Labor movement."

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on one call to order.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** Her former party members in the Hunter area said that she is the "NSW MP ... the human face of donation rorts".

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. The member for Miranda will be heard in silence.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** An article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 30 August 2016—I am quoting from public record—reported, "Shadow frontbencher Jodi McKay is the human face of the havoc wreaked on our democratic process when political donation laws are so brazenly flouted."

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

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** Another quote about the member: "At one of her branches, in the old dockside suburb of Carrington—

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: The member should cite the source of the quotes. Members cannot randomly repeat what people have said without citing the source and the date on which the quote was made.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** To the point of order: If members wish to make imputations against another member they should do so by way of substantive motion.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** They are not imputations; they are quotes from a public source.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will rule on the point of order. I uphold the point of order with regard to quotes. A member should cite where quotes are from. The member's time has expired.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** I actually did; I cited the paper and the date.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Miranda will resume her seat.

**Ms LYNDa VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:45):** I agree with one point in this motion: I think the member for Keira is fantastic. I, too, think he is a really good bloke. In fact, I think he is so good that I will move an amendment to the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraphs (2) to (4).

I think that is appropriate and I think we can all agree how wonderful the member for Keira is and what a good job he does. Quite frankly, I am pleased that the member for Miranda sees the worth of the member for Keira. But I am a bit disappointed with the member for Miranda because I thought she would support democracy in the party system. I know the member for North Shore does. Certainly the former member for Warringah, Tony Abbott, led a conference in 2017 at which there were a whole raft of Warringah motions about democracy at the grassroots, that the rank and file should decide on executive positions, and that Federal and State members of Parliament should be selected. That was until Grant Schultz came along and got preselected for the electorate of Gilmore. Then apparently grassroots democracy went out the door. In fact, I am sure that Grant Schultz understands why the member for Miranda—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order: The member for Auburn is not being relevant.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Oatley will wait for the member for Auburn to resume her seat.

**Mr Mark Coure:** The point of order is relevance. The member is not speaking to the motion that has been moved by the member for Miranda.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Auburn has the call.

**Ms LYNDa VOLTZ:** After Grant Schultz was dumped by the Liberal Party as the candidate for Gilmore—by the way, the electorate has spoken and said what it thinks about the Liberal Party—he said:

I cannot be a member of a party that does not support democracy or act with integrity.

I am surprised at Grant Schultz. He should have known because how does the Government side of the Parliament—

**Mr Mark Coure:** This is about the Labor Party; it is not about the Liberal Party.

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

**Ms LYNDa VOLTZ:** How does the other side of the Parliament deal with leadership? On the Government side of the House they get Michael Photios in a room with Mike Baird and the Premier and they do a deal. That is how those opposite deal with leadership. I have another quote and I will tell Government members who it is from. I was going to ask "Guess who?" but it is Alan Jones—one of their favourite sons. He said:

Before Mr Baird's announcement was made, the Gladys Berejiklian forces were already ringing up and doing deals so that this would all be a fait accompli. It's all being stitched up. The public won't cop it. There is no democracy.

Again, Grant Schultz should have been paying attention to that.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Auburn will resume her seat.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Since members opposite were very concerned about where quotes were coming from—

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

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** I ask that members opposite also cite the source of their quotes.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is the member's point of order about relevance?

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** I ask that members correctly cite the source of references they put on the record.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Auburn has the call.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** They have a very thin skin on the Government side of the Chamber. As for democracy in the party, they have thrown out their Warringah motions and their candidate in Gilmore. They tried to get rid of their candidate Craig Kelly in Hughes.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. The member for Auburn is not being relevant. She is not speaking to the motion moved by the member for Miranda. I ask that you draw her back to the leave of the motion.

**Mr David Harris:** To the point of order: It is Standing Order 76 because the member is not yet a Minister. But she soon will be.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Auburn has the call.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** I understand why members opposite are probably not so keen to talk about Michael Photios now. He did donate \$22,000 to the Labor Party. Perhaps when the member for Miranda was talking about people supporting Bill Shorten, she meant Michael Photios, because he gave us all that money. I am not sure, but if we are going down—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. The member for Auburn is not being relevant to the motion.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Standing Order 129 relates only to questions, you fool.

**Mr Mark Coure:** The member is not being relevant to the motion. She is talking about Michael Photios.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Auburn was talking about leadership in the latter part of her contribution. The member's time has expired.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:50:4):** I commend the member for Miranda for moving this motion because it gives us the opportunity to highlight what has happened to the great Labor Party. What has happened to it? Members opposite remind me of when a farmer goes out to the swamp in the back paddock, throws in a small stick of gelignite and all the stunned mullet rise to the top. That is what Opposition members are like: stunned mullets. They have gone 65 days with no leader and it will be another month before they decide who their leader will be. Let us consider the candidates. Candidate number one is the interim, temporary leader, the member for Keira. He is the man who wants to be the alternative Treasurer. During the election campaign when *The Australian* newspaper asked him about the education department's share of the budget, he said, "I think it's 40 per cent".

The journalist had to point out that it is 28 per cent. That is the member for Keira—the interim, temporary, acting leader. Then we have the member for Kogarah, Chris Minns. Did he not get the unions on side with his maiden speech? What a beauty he is! How well did he go in the last leadership spill? I think he got two votes. The problem for the member for Kogarah is that more than 50 per cent of the caucus is already backing Jodi McKay. I am worried for the member for Kogarah. Then we have the member for Strathfield. I have a soft spot for Jodi. But there are two things that a member needs to be Leader of the Opposition and the alternative Premier: integrity and honesty. However, I have to say that integrity and honesty are not part of her make-up.

**Ms Kate Washington:** What are you trying to say?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on two calls to order.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** Look at her duplicitous nature. There are three examples. First, she was courting the Liberal Party and the Labor Party at the same time—and that has come from two sources,

Andrew Clennell and Alex Mitchell, who put it in the paper—until the eleventh hour, when Labor said it would give her Newcastle without any preselection. Secondly, the member failed to declare her interest in WestConnex. When confronted about why she did not disclose it to Parliament, she said, "But I told the WestConnex board". No, she did not; there is no record of it. Of course, she was a member of and a Minister in the previous corrupt Labor Government. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:53:5):** On behalf of the entire New South Wales Labor Party, I say to everyone out there who was listening to the debate for the past three minutes, we are deeply, deeply sorry. All that has been proved so far in this debate is that Barry Collier—the best member Miranda has ever had—should be brought back as a matter of urgency and that there is more depth in the toddlers' pool than in the back bench of those opposite. This motion is about leadership, and I applaud the member for Auburn for amending this motion in her first contribution because it is a motion that should be amended. I have to agree with the member for Auburn; I think the member for Keira, an acting Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, is a great guy—I should know, I grew up with him. For 40 years we have been mates; I have seen him develop and mature in a way that members opposite would envy—the leadership qualities, the potential that this guy has wrapped up in his little finger, are better than those of that lot opposite.

Those opposite want to talk about leadership. Members opposite have concentrated a great deal on the Federal election. They won—good work. But if they want to talk about leadership and what is happening federally let us look at the rollcall of people who ran away because they were scared and did not want to be around a Scott Morrison Prime Ministership anymore—Julie Bishop has gone, Christopher Pyne has gone, Julia Banks went before they even got to the election because she was bullied out, Grant Schultz did not even get there, Kelly O'Dwyer has gone and now, most recently, Senators Arthur Sinodinos—

**Mr Stephen Bromhead:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. This motion is purely about the leadership of New South Wales Labor; it is not about leadership at a Federal level. I ask you to draw the member back to the leave of the motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have heard enough on the point of order. The member for Myall Lakes should look at paragraph (2) of the motion, which specifically refers to the Federal Labor leader. I direct the member for Wollongong to continue.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I appreciate that we are seeking to remove the second paragraph but I did not expect members opposite to speak in support of our amendment, which is what we have just heard. Nonetheless, if we return to New South Wales let us go back to what Ross Cameron said several years ago when he accused the then Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian of sabotaging the party's prospects of democratic reform. The Arab Spring is trying to break out in the Liberal Party in New South Wales but it is being killed off very quickly by those members who refuse to accept democracy.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:57):** In reply: A lot has been said in this debate today. I am really glad that those opposite finally took the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution made by the current acting interim Leader of the Opposition—if I got that right—because when we last had a similar debate those opposite tried to amend the motion by removing the clause that was commending their leader. Thankfully, they realised what they were trying to do and it did not go through, but this time they are acknowledging the work of the member for Keira.

The most curious thing that has been said so far came from the member for Wollongong, who reflected on some of the reasons Federal members were leaving. I ask the member for Wollongong to quietly reflect on what he said when he commented on former Minister Kelly O'Dwyer and her reasons for leaving. This woman put on the public record that she miscarried in the bathroom of Parliament House. I say shame on him for going down that path. But this motion is not about the Federal Parliament; it is about the Labor leadership and why those opposite have no leader at present. Given the calibre of this debate I am not surprised they do not have a leader at present. The people of New South Wales deserve so much better than what those opposite have put forward for the past eight years, but not having a leader is a new low. Hopefully the month goes quickly for all those opposite and that they will find a leader who can at least try to do the job of an Opposition party.

Thankfully for the people of New South Wales this Government has continued to govern for the past eight years and will continue to govern in its best interests despite the Opposition's lack of interest. I take this opportunity to thank the member for Auburn, the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Wollongong for their contributions to this debate. I say to the Labor Party that hopefully after both a Federal and a State loss, both involving boss lady, that Labor reflects and tries to do better for the people of New South Wales. We all know that deep down each member in this place wants to do the best he or she can for their communities, and I know that applies equally to those opposite. I hope that they encourage their party to do better and to look after the people of New South Wales.



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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....38

Noes .....46

Majority.....8

**AYES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mehan, Mr D  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Saffin, Ms J  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dib, Mr J  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McGirr, Dr J  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Finn, Ms J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Piper, Mr G  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

**NOES**

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Lindsay, Ms W  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Smith, Mr N  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Elliott, Mr D  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Saunders, Mr D  
Singh, Mr G  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Williams, Mr R

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47

Noes .....40

Majority.....7

**AYES**

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

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

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

## AYES

Lindsay, Ms W  
 Pavey, Mrs M  
 Preston, Ms R  
 Saunders, Mr D  
 Singh, Mr G  
 Stokes, Mr R  
 Tuckerman, Mrs W  
 Williams, Mr R

Marshall, Mr A  
 Perrottet, Mr D  
 Provost, Mr G  
 Sidgreaves, Mr P  
 Smith, Mr N  
 Taylor, Mr M  
 Upton, Ms G  
 Wilson, Ms F

O'Dea, Mr J  
 Petinos, Ms E  
 Roberts, Mr A  
 Sidoti, Mr J  
 Speakman, Mr M  
 Toole, Mr P  
 Ward, Mr G

## NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
 Barr, Mr C  
 Catley, Ms Y  
 Crakanthorp, Mr T  
 Doyle, Ms T  
 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  
 Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E  
 Butler, Mr R  
 Chanthivong, Mr A  
 Daley, Mr M  
 Finn, Ms J  
 Haylen, Ms J  
 Kamper, Mr S  
 Lynch, Mr P  
 Mehan, Mr D  
 O'Neill, Dr M  
 Saffin, Ms J  
 Tesch, Ms L  
 Washington, Ms K

Bali, Mr S  
 Car, Ms P  
 Cotsis, Ms S  
 Dib, Mr J  
 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  
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019****Consideration in Detail**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 to 33 be agreed to.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:16):** By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 10 and 14 on sheet c2019-003E in globo:

**No. 10 Referral of criminal matters**

Page 7, clause 13. Insert after line 19:

- (9) If the Commissioner is of the opinion that a report, or part of a report, may provide evidence of the commission of a criminal offence, the Commissioner must refer the report, or the part of the report, to the Commissioner of Police or the Director of Public Prosecutions.

**No. 14 Annual report**

Page 14, clause 24. Insert after line 9:

- (3) An annual report by the Commissioner must include information about the number of referrals made by the Commissioner under section 13 and the outcome of each referral.

The purpose of amendment No. 10 is to provide an express power for the commissioner to make referrals to the police and the Director of Public Prosecutions. This addresses an anomaly in that the bill provides an express power for the commissioner to refer matters to some bodies but not to others. 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. I note that in his reply the Minister mentioned that the commissioner would refer to the abovementioned bodies for advice on where to refer matters. However, we believe it is important that this power be expressed in the bill.

As it stands, the bill does not contain an explicit power to refer matters to the Director of Public Prosecutions. While the Government might argue that it is unnecessary to provide such a power, we believe it is

necessary to make clear the intent of Parliament that allegations involving criminal conduct will be referred to an appropriate law enforcement body for investigation and prosecution. Crimes against older people and people with disability are generally underreported. Often, even if a report is made, the allegation is not prosecuted. This has happened time and again, according to reports published over the past few years. For example, the Ombudsman found that in 2016 only 18 of the 1,140 allegations of abuse against people with disability resulted in prosecution.

That is why amendment No. 14 would require the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to provide statistics regarding outcomes of referrals. It is important, when starting a new commission, to note that data collection will help the Government to determine where to direct resources in the future. These statistics would provide a means to understand how referrals are being addressed and whether additional resources or changes to legislation are required to ensure crimes against vulnerable people are prosecuted.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:20):** The Government opposes Opposition amendments Nos 10 and 14. Clause 12 (b) of the bill provides a wide general power for the commissioner to take further action following an investigation or a report, including making an application to a court or tribunal. The commissioner may apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a guardianship order or a financial management order or for a review of any such existing order. This wide power also enables the commissioner to refer matters to appropriate bodies including the NSW Police Force.

There is no proclivity on where the commissioner can refer a matter. When the commissioner believes a matter should be referred for criminal investigation or possible prosecution, the commissioner already has the power to do that. We need to make clear that this is not a court; this is a commission that seeks to resolve issues for older persons and people with disability. Quite rightly, the legislation empowers the commissioner to make that decision independently, should the commissioner wish to forward a matter. There will be clear and robust guidelines and policies in place to assist the commission and its staff about what matters are referred to the police. Those guidelines and policies will also address the obligations of the commissioner to meet the general obligations under section 316 of the Crimes Act to report serious indictable offences. The legislation the Government has proposed already covers the matters the Opposition intends to address.

The commissioner could review penalties should he or she wish to do so. As part of the commissioner's annual report suggestions could be made as to penalties. It is up to the commissioner what is included in the publication of annual reports. There will be hundreds of complaints and, essentially, the Opposition is asking for every complaint to be included in annual reports with stipulations about what is included. There are privacy concerns in relation to those matters and I would have thought that we, again, should leave these matters up to the commissioner to decide, rather than prescribing terms in the legislation. At the moment, for very good reasons, as members of the House would know, we intend to bring things like the elder abuse hotline under the purview of the commissioner. The Opposition is asking for a very resource-intensive exercise for every complaint to be presented in the annual report.

In achieving this outcome of providing detailed information in the annual reports, I would be concerned about what level of detail and resources were being taken away from the Ageing and Disability Commissioner when doing his or her very important job. If the commissioner wants to provide that level of information, he or she can do so. That is why we have decided to make this position independent and give the commissioner the opportunity to make these decisions. The Government does not support the Opposition amendments and we oppose the amendments as proposed.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:23):** On behalf of The Greens I thank the Minister for his approach to this. There are merits in both of these amendments, in particular to make it mandatory for the commissioner to report to the Commissioner of Police or the Director of Public Prosecutions where there is evidence that may lead to the conviction for a criminal offence. The Greens are of the opinion that the mandatory nature is something that should be seriously considered. There is also merit in amendment No. 14, regarding the annual report to ensure there is the maximum amount of transparency to allow for the type of analysis of the referrals made by the Commissioner under section 13. That would be important information. The Greens understand that this may well be going to an inquiry and hope that the inquiry examines these issues in more detail. But as it stands, The Greens support the amendments.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:24):** In response to the member for Balmain, the Government welcomes the opportunity for the inquiry on Friday. I understand amendments will be proposed and the Government welcomes the opportunity to consider those amendments as part of that inquiry. I thank the member for his comments.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that amendments Nos 10 and 14 on sheet c2019-003E be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....42  
 Noes .....50  
 Majority.....8

**AYES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
 Barr, Mr C  
 Catley, Ms Y  
 Crakanthorp, Mr T  
 Dib, Mr J  
 Finn, Ms J  
 Haylen, Ms J  
 Kamper, Mr S  
 Lynch, Mr P  
 Mehan, Mr D  
 O'Neill, Dr M  
 Saffin, Ms J  
 Tesch, Ms L  
 Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E  
 Butler, Mr R  
 Chanthivong, Mr A  
 Daley, Mr M  
 Donato, Mr P  
 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  
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S  
 Car, Ms P  
 Cotsis, Ms S  
 Dalton, Mrs H  
 Doyle, Ms T  
 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  
 Zangari, Mr G

**NOES**

Anderson, Mr K  
 Berejiklian, Ms G  
 Conolly, Mr K  
 Coure, Mr M  
 Dominello, Mr V  
 Gibbons, Ms M  
 Gulaptis, Mr C  
 Henskens, Mr A  
 Lee, Dr G  
 McGirr, Dr J  
 Perrottet, Mr D  
 Preston, Ms R  
 Saunders, Mr D  
 Singh, Mr G  
 Stokes, Mr R  
 Tuckerman, Mrs W  
 Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S  
 Bromhead, Mr S  
 Constance, Mr A  
 Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
 Elliott, Mr D  
 Greenwich, Mr A  
 Hancock, Mrs S  
 Johnsen, Mr M  
 Lindsay, Ms W  
 O'Dea, Mr J  
 Petinos, Ms E  
 Provest, Mr G  
 Sidgreaves, Mr P  
 Smith, Mr N  
 Taylor, Mr M  
 Upton, Ms G  
 Wilson, Ms F

Barilaro, Mr J  
 Clancy, Mr J  
 Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
 Davies, Mrs T  
 Evans, Mr L.J.  
 Griffin, Mr J  
 Hazzard, Mr B  
 Kean, Mr M  
 Marshall, Mr A  
 Pavey, Mrs M  
 Piper, Mr G  
 Roberts, Mr A  
 Sidoti, Mr J  
 Speakman, Mr M  
 Toole, Mr P  
 Ward, Mr G

**Amendments negatived.***Members***INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery the many guests for the inaugural speech of the member for Goulburn. I also welcome to the gallery the former member for Goulburn. It is lovely to see you again.

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to the guests of the member for Goulburn, including the former member for Goulburn, Pru Goward, and the former member for Southern Highlands, Peta Seaton, who is president of the Moss Vale Branch of the Liberal Party. We all look forward to hearing the inaugural speech of the member for Goulburn who I now call.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:34):** I begin by acknowledging that we are meeting on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people who are the custodians and traditional owners of this land and I humbly pay my respects to their elders past, present and future. I stand here before you today very proud to be representing the people of the Goulburn electorate. The electorate covers all the communities along the Hume Highway from Berrima to Yass with the largest centre being Goulburn. It also includes Moss Vale, Robertson, Gunning, Murrumbateman, Binalong, Crookwell and all of our communities and primary producers in between, and

importantly, the people of Boorowa, who gave me the confidence to enter politics and who have continued to support me and believe in my ability to make a difference for our communities.

The Goulburn electorate features heavily in the history of Australia and the State of New South Wales. From the first inland city of Goulburn to the historical towns and villages throughout the electorate, each with a rich and colourful history of our early explorers and pioneers and some of the most magnificent architectural history equal to anywhere in Australia, the electorate is home to some of the leading experts, researchers and practitioners in the field of agriculture whether it is producing the finest wool and beef in the world or producing an array of crops to feed the world.

Our landscapes provide a tapestry of colour and experiences for tourists, or simply a trail of the many award-winning vineyards or boutique products from the farm gate to explore. I stand before you as a newly elected member of Parliament who has been entrusted to represent this proud electorate: to ensure that the region thrives; to make a positive difference to the quality of life for our communities of today and those of our grandchildren; to realise the benefits that can be achieved through exploring and embracing the opportunities that being part of our great State of New South Wales can bring to our region; to ensure that our ideas are current and are keeping pace with our changing world and in touch with emerging generations; to ensure investment in regional and rural communities; to ensure the resilience of our communities in the face of adversity; and to harness the strength of agility and resourcefulness that is demonstrated every day in regional New South Wales.

In this, my first speech in this place, I wish to pledge to all my constituents that for as long as I have the honour and privilege to represent them in this place, I will always put the communities and people of this electorate first. I will dedicate the next four years and beyond to prove to my constituents that their trust in me is well placed, because for me, first and foremost, politics is about people and community. Millicent Preston-Stanley was the first woman elected to this House, in 1925, some 94 years ago. In the words of Millicent, "Women have a contribution to make to the life of the nation that only women can make". I am proud of being a female role model in my community. I hope to inspire, encourage and support young girls and women to chase their goals, to serve their community and, most importantly, to believe in themselves.

Throughout my journey to this moment, I, too, have been supported by some inspiring and talented women from whom I continue to learn every day. I congratulate New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian on being the first woman to be elected Premier by the people of New South Wales. I acknowledge the Premier's presence in the Chamber and thank her for her support since arriving in the House and particularly during the election campaign. I also acknowledge in the gallery today my predecessor, the Hon. Pru Goward, and the former member for the Southern Highlands, Peta Seaton, and also from the other House, the Hon. Natasha McLaren-Jones. I indeed have formidable role models to emulate and I look forward to their counsel as I make and establish my own pathway in this House.

The electorate of Goulburn, just like the State of New South Wales and the country that is Australia, is the sum of many parts. I acknowledge that every person I represent has their own aspirations and their own challenges. To me, it is important that every person has a voice and every person has opportunity. Having started my career as an investigator with the Australian Federal Police, I have engaged with people from all walks of life and have witnessed the best and worst of human behaviour.

My experience impresses on me the importance and strength of community: The mothers group that lends support as the new mum struggles with the demands of a new baby; the farmer next door who offers his ear and a shoulder to cry on as his neighbour struggles to keep afloat; the local football coach who hits the right spot with a troubled youth and sets them on the right path; the Rural Fire Service volunteers who risk their lives to save the lives and livelihoods of others, and those who support them. Individuals come together to create communities—individuals from many different backgrounds, experiences, skills and beliefs. It is this diversity within any community that creates its vibrancy, strength and opportunity. It is our humanity, our kindness, our joint values and aspirations that create a sense of community. I take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers across the electorate who provide social opportunities and raise funds for important community projects and people in need.

As the member for Goulburn, I will harness the sense of community that exists within my electorate to ensure that our strengths are identified and opportunities are created just as I have done during my years in local government. As a young mother of two, I became interested in local government and I was keen to represent my community as I thought I could make a difference. In 2004 I was elected to council, and three years later, in 2007, I became the first female mayor of Boorowa Council, a position I held unopposed for nine years prior to being appointed Administrator of Hilltops Council.

In my role as Mayor of Boorowa Council I was surrounded by many passionate community advocates without whom I would not be here. Progress can be made only when you are surrounded by a team that shares

your belief in what is possible, a team that has the courage to create a vision that is greater than the here and now, a team that is willing to push beyond their size or stature to create new expectations in community leadership.

I acknowledge those in the gallery who have stood by me through the many challenges and contributed to solutions that will ensure long-lasting benefits. To former mayor Chris Corcoran; former councillor Jack Ryan; previous general managers, Therese Manns and Anthony McMahon; and my former executive assistant Deidre Johnson: I thank you. My role in local government inspired me to aspire to the role of member for Goulburn. It is this role that will provide a great foundation for my success. I have always believed that the greatest form of respect is listening to what others have to say.

One of my proudest moments in community leadership was hosting more than 20 per cent of my community who had each given over two hours of their time to tell us about their hopes for the future, what they saw as some of our opportunities and challenges as a community. As the RSVPs began to build, I was taken aback. I always knew our community was proud, but at this moment, this lightbulb moment, I watched a community put their trust in me and my fellow councillors—a trust that we would listen, a trust that we would work with them to meet our challenges and rise to opportunities.

Over the course of those few hours, our community was not stuck in the mindset of roads, rates and rubbish. Surprisingly, there was little focus on our collection of potholes. Health, education and prosperity were high on the minds and hearts of all. Our community's aspirations were not unreasonable, nor were their concerns. Every level of government plays a part in the quality of life enjoyed by a community. I identify with the real outcomes of government services and infrastructure in contributing to the social and economic fabric of our community: library services that help build imagination in children, leading to creativity in adults; footpaths that are maintained to prevent falls and ensure the longevity of our ageing population; roads and bridges that connect our neighbours and provide a safe path for the transport of natural resources and produce to feed and clothe our country. As a Government, we must support our communities.

I want to ensure that we have adequate services to meet the needs of our ageing demographic and our most vulnerable. I will fight for a world-class health system that provides for the sick and infirm, to be delivered by the best skilled practitioners, and support and access no matter where people live. I am proud to be a part of a Government that, like me, wants the children in schools of the electorate to have access to quality educators and to be afforded environments that will afford them every opportunity. As the saying goes, our children are our future, and with a new generation just kicking off in the Tuckerman family with the recent birth of my granddaughter, Letty, it could not be more front and centre in my mind.

As regional and rural New South Wales endure the most debilitating drought, we must continue to ensure that our communities are supported. Our farmers and communities are doing it tough and many are volunteering their time and support by providing a helping hand, a smiling face or a shoulder to cry on. No greater than now is our resilience being tested. As a State, we must never forget the hand that feeds us. I will fight to ensure that the small businesses of my electorate are afforded world-class technology and connectivity just like in the city. It is no longer acceptable that due to inadequate services and lack of connectivity, our businesses cannot compete in open markets. Job creation through investment in infrastructure, as well as new and emerging technologies, are essential to ensure that our communities continue to thrive and remain relevant in an ever-changing environment.

I want the businesses of our communities to have access to the people and skills needed for them to grow and prosper, and an education system that provides and targets those skills. Our electorate is perfectly positioned with great opportunity right at its doorstep. As a Government, we must continue to work with local government in regional and rural areas to ensure the policy platform for incentive to attract new business and investment and business relocation not only from interstate but also within the State to our regional and rural communities. I support a sense of community across New South Wales that encompasses metropolitan, regional and rural New South Wales and acknowledges the importance of working together using our individual strengths to the benefit of the entire State.

The provision of safe, secure, efficient and sustainable water services and waste services is paramount to ensuring livable and sustainable communities. My career choices in life have always been to protect and serve the community, to help and protect the most vulnerable and to make a difference in the lives of others. Through this experience, I understand the work that our emergency service personnel endure and it is important to me that they receive the best support and equipment to do their job. None of this can be achieved by one person alone. As I stand here before you, I do so with a community behind me and a Government by my side.

I am a strong believer that it is not what is said but rather what is delivered that is important and I stand before you ready to take on this new life challenge, grounded in my community and ready to make them proud. As I take the next step, I do so with my greatest supporter by my side—my husband, Michael. It has only been your constant love and support, along with your genuine care for your community, that has given me the strength,

time and confidence to put myself forward to serve as mayor and now member of Parliament. I am not sure when we first met as young police officers we would ever have expected to be in this place. It has not been without its challenges, but we have done it together. I thank you for the many hours and long days you endured during the campaign. We make a great team and I look forward to continuing our journey.

It goes without saying our greatest achievement together is producing two wonderful children in Thomas and Bradley and watching them grow into the men they are today. We are both proud of both of you and who you have become. As I said before, our family continues to grow with the birth of our first grandchild, Letty Maya Tuckerman, on 2 May. I was very fortunate to have a special bond with both my grandmothers, Kathleen Mason and Kathleen Porter. I admired their strength of character and loving disposition. I feel very blessed to be Letty's grandmother and I look forward to realising our own special bond. I admire Brittney who at eight months pregnant still managed to hand out voting cards on election day—now that is commitment. Thank you, Brittney and Katie, for your wonderful support. I look forward too many more grandchildren—too soon?

I also acknowledge my parents, William and Pamela Porter, who are present in the gallery today. They are hardworking and loving parents who supported my choices and provided a wonderful childhood. My love of sport, hockey in particular, and my drive to represent my State and country was always supported by my parents. It was not till later I realised the sacrifice they made to ensure that I met my representative commitments and excelled at the sport I loved. From these beginnings to today, my parents have loved, guided and supported me and have been the most wonderful role models to aspire to. To my siblings, Stephen, Michael and Susie: Our upbringing together gave me a great grounding for tolerance, for fighting at the right time and getting away with it—skills that I continue to use to this day. To my parents-in-law, Ron and Norma, and to the whole Tuckerman family: Thank you for your love and support.

A big thank you to those family members who gave their support and especially those who travelled from interstate. Teresa, Trish, Catherine, John, Curly, Brad, Katie, Tom, Britt and Kurt Barton, thank you for your support every day and particularly during the election. Each member of my family holds a special place in my heart and I thank you all for your love. As I look to the gallery, I bring members' attention back to my immediate predecessor, the Hon. Pru Goward—small in stature but big in reputation and mighty big shoes to fill. She achieved much for the electorate of Goulburn and worked tirelessly for her constituents. She was accessible and listened, but, more importantly, she delivered. Pru, I am grateful for your support, guidance, endurance and strength during a difficult period. There were many who doubted and much was at stake, but Team Goulburn did it and my victory was also yours.

To all the members of my campaign team, led brilliantly by Damian Jones, who I note is also present in the gallery, and to the Hon. Natasha McLaren-Jones: I really do not know how to express my gratitude for the many hours of work you both endured to successfully navigate, guide and win what many pundits were telling us was the unwinnable seat. Thank you for your expertise and guidance. To all the members of my local conference who got behind me and worked tirelessly to ensure that I became the member—Nick Tyrrell, Grant Pearce, Peta Seaton, Frank Conroy, Graham Brown and the entire conference, members of Yass, Moss Vale, Goulburn and Bowral branches and the enormous contributions by the Young Liberals from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory—this victory could not have been achieved without you. Thank you.

I particularly thank some very special people who went above and beyond such as Mr Jim Picker. At every turn, Jim, you were there. Val Henderson, thank you for your enduring commitment and dogged determination. I owe a debt of gratitude to the many pre-poll workers; in two weeks of rain, hail and shine—as you know, Goulburn weather is very unpredictable—you were there by my side. Grant, Jim, Irene, Val, Kerry, Faye, Jim, Daniel, Ken, Margaret, Jarvis, Nigel, Bob, Gordon, Frank, Lou, Louise, David, Alice, Trish and the many volunteers who manned the booths or scrutineered on election day, I am humbled by your support and contribution. Peta Seaton, thank you for your guidance and counsel.

Thank you to those in the campaign office—Lorraine and Val—and for those behind the scenes, particularly Amy Firmstone. Thank you for all your support. Thanks must go to the hardworking State director Chris Stone and the team at Liberal headquarters. Thank you to the Liberal Women's Council, particularly Mary Lou Jarvis. Your support is very much appreciated. I thank the many members of Parliament who visited the electorate and offered their support, the Hon. David Elliot, Don Harwin, Brad Hazzard, Rob Stokes, Andrew Constance, Sarah Mitchell, Matthew Mason-Cox and Jim Molan. To the member for Hume, the Hon. Angus Taylor and Team Taylor: Thank you for your support during the campaign. I thank my local team, led by the grand poobah Jack Ryan. There were so many community members that rallied and supported me during pre-poll and election day. I thank you.

Special mention go to the Thursday golfers. In particular, I acknowledge the Labor voter amongst them who voted Liberal for the first time. I know it hurt. Your sacrifice has been noted and the precedent has been set; I thank you. To my good friends—you know who you are—my world is a better place because you are here.

I thank you for your love and support. Behind every good local member is an outstanding staff. I thank my team: Alicia, Cheryl and Paige. I am blessed to have inherited such a great team. I regard them all as part of my extended family and I am excited by what we might achieve together for the electorate in the years ahead. Gina Carey once said:

A strong woman looks a challenge dead in the eye and gives it a wink.

Go, Team Winks! For me, the essence of liberalism is giving people the opportunity to pursue and achieve their life goals, irrespective of their background and then give something back to society by ensuring that this opportunity is created for others. Once again, to the people of the Goulburn electorate: I am with you. I look forward to giving my all with you, building our strength and fostering a great sense of community that will take us forward. Thank you for believing in me.

*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to the guests of the member for Hawkesbury, including Julian Leeser, MP, Federal member for Berowra. I also welcome Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells and the Hon. David Clarke, a former member of the other place. I acknowledge Bruce McCarthy, former member for Strathfield, and the Hon. Kevin Rozzoli, AM, former Speaker of this Legislative Assembly. Finally, I welcome councillors from the Hawkesbury City Council and The Hills Shire Council, all guests of the member for Hawkesbury.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:07):** Life is a journey of stepping stones that create experiences that craft a person's opinions, beliefs and passions. The road I have travelled has had its challenges and many of those here today have been beside me through good and bad times. I am the girl from Fairfield in Sydney's western suburbs. My father, Colin Reid, died suddenly when I was 17. He died of a heart attack, which was smoking related. My dear mother, Hazel, raised my two brothers and me as a single parent. Nothing was gifted to us, yet I never felt as though I was deprived of anything—except the love and the strong bond I had with my father. His passing has left a wound in my heart that will not heal. Dad was the sort of man who could fit in anywhere and people immediately warmed to him. He could walk into a room of strangers and within minutes he would make everyone feel very much at home. He used to whistle tunes better than anyone I know. Just like me, music gave him so much happiness and he brought happiness when he played his banjo, ukulele, harmonica or accordion.

My journey in life has given me many "life lessons" from which I can draw strength. But I shake my head knowing that something I did 39 years ago—a modelling assignment—has been continually used as a tool to discredit me, and every time I have run for a position in politics those who would like to see me fail have rolled out the story on cue. I asked myself: Why is it that some would seek to shame me whenever I wanted to enter politics? Why weren't they celebrating my accomplishments: a decade on council, two years as deputy mayor, a career spanning the private, public and not-for-profit sectors, small business, almost two decades of volunteering as a proud Liberal, and my greatest achievement—the one of which I am most proud—as mother to my two beautiful children, Kelly and James?

Women bring such a wealth of skills to politics, as they do to many other working environments. Shouldn't we embrace that? Shaming is a cowardly trait that has, at times, manifested itself not just in politics but in the work place, social media and the school playground. It takes a strong and determined female to rise above the mudslinging, to stay focused and determined, and to not listen to the white noise out there. We need to stop defining people by the little things they do. Do not judge people by one moment in their life. Let's encourage authenticity in politics. The bringing together of minds that collectively provides experience from different backgrounds and across the generations has to be good, don't you think? That was the foundation upon which Australia was built.

The opportunity to stand here today was due to a classic *Game of Thrones* episode. However, my journey into politics really started when I met Charlie Lynn, a former member of the Legislative Council. He encouraged me to join the Liberal Party, 19 years ago today, when I was a charity advocate. Is Charlie in the room? I acknowledge Charlie Lynn as well. I immediately related to the Liberal Party's values: freedom of speech, individualism, the right to worship, support of small business, less regulation, lower taxes and giving people a leg-up rather than a handout. Giving back to the community was engrained in me from an early age. As a young child on a Saturday morning I would see my dad welcome neighbours to his garage to repair children's bikes, billy carts and scooters, all for the cost of a smile. Dad had the best-equipped shed in the area—a little bit like *The Castle*. He was a handyman who built our home at Fairfield.

He was a small business man who owned a truck in which he took great pride. He would service the truck, rebuild cars, utes, motorbikes and push bikes all from that garage. Those skills transferred to my brothers when they grew up. My cousins would come to our home to play and at the end of the day, courtesy of dad's hair



clippers, they would head back home with a new, very short haircut. There wasn't anything my father would not do for anyone; he always found the time to give back. My mother, who is here today, is the quiet achiever. She is happy to work away in the background without wanting the attention that others seek. She has always had a great affection for her seven sisters and brother. There is nothing she would not do for them. Her loyalty and love for her children, their wives and husbands, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren is beyond compare. Mum, you have been the perfect example to me of how we should treat others. You are my rock and my compass, and I love you dearly.

I am sure my perseverance comes from my mother. Whenever something really challenged my mum she would say, "I won't let it beat me!" She would never give up and always achieved her goals. Sometimes that persisting trait has been at my own peril: I have had to learn the hard way that you can't fix everything in life. You have to walk away when there is nothing left to give. It is nothing to be ashamed of; it is not about being a failure. I see it now as being a life lesson. I am fortunate to be delivering this speech in such an historic week. It is a week when such accomplished leaders of this State have delivered the largest infrastructure project since the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, which took 25 years to complete at a cost of \$820 million.

On Sunday I was delighted to accompany the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian; the Minister for Transport and Roads, Andrew Constance; my fellow councillors and parliamentarians; and also Hawkesbury locals on the first official trip on the Sydney Metro Northwest passenger service. I think there was "metro mayhem" at the time. This project was delivered 10 months ahead of time and \$1 billion under budget. It is on Hawkesbury's doorstep and I think one of the best ways to encourage Hawkesbury locals to include the Sydney Metro Northwest as a preferred means of transport is to make it easy and affordable to access. Commuters are already familiarising themselves with new connective bus links and I am advocating for park-and-ride solutions around Hawkesbury. My vision is to have large car parks built on designated land where commuters will drive to, park their vehicle and catch an express bus straight to the Sydney Metro Northwest, which gives the traveller the choice of catching a train departing every four minutes.

The metro will get more cars off the roads, especially during peak periods, and it reduces toll, fuel and parking expenses, and the headache of sitting in traffic. If we can achieve this it will make moving about on the Hawkesbury road network so much easier, especially for the many trades men and women who live and work in the area. Hawkesbury territory is "tradie territory". That is the number one occupation in Hawkesbury and I can easily relate to this group of workers because both my brothers, Bill and Michael—who are here today—are tradesmen too. It is not just tradespeople who want to get around the electorate in a timely way; it is the working folk who want to get home in time to have dinner with their family and friends, parents and carers taking their children to and from school, and those people travelling across town to medical appointments. Everyone should be able to move about at a reasonable pace.

That is why I was thrilled last year when the Treasurer, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, announced funding for a business case for a third river crossing at Richmond-North Richmond. That news received more than a round of applause from those who have been subjected to long traffic queues on the Bells Line of Road or Kurrajong Road approaches to the current bridge. On top of that, the Morrison Government has already budgeted \$200 million for this crossing and I know that Sarah Richards, the Liberal candidate for Macquarie, was instrumental in securing this Federal funding. This project is a key link to the small and family businesses that have grown and evolved in Hawkesbury. I want to ensure that the community has input into where this crossing should go. I believe it needs to be well canvassed.

Let us bring the community along with this project so that there is a sense of pride and ownership for this significant piece of infrastructure in Hawkesbury—just as I have seen with the Sydney Metro Northwest and how the community embraced that project as well. Another key piece of infrastructure that I want to see completed is the new Windsor Bridge. This has been a difficult project, thwarted by protestors who pitched a tent on Thompson Square at Windsor in a public space for almost six years. This year's State election result in Hawkesbury delivered a thumping mandate for the Liberal-Nationals Government to continue with the project and, with that result, the protestors pulled down the tent and restored the public space. I am now having conversations with the objector groups to find some consensus.

I respect the fact that they are passionate about protecting the heritage of the area but I am also conscious that Hawkesbury residents have been denied a better option for managing the traffic in that area because of the objections, court hearings and upper House inquiries that have delayed this project. I am excited about the support this Government has bestowed on Hawkesbury, with \$13 million already budgeted by the Treasurer to build a new PCYC to support and mentor our youth. Hawkesbury City Council has identified a suitable site for this much-needed project. We should now get on with the job of providing a safe space where our youth can engage with role models and mentors. It will be a location where our youth can learn the skills to become productive

members of our community through participation in sport and group activities that build confidence, self-esteem and values.

Projects such as the Pitt Town bypass are already in progress and I will be diligently ensuring that the work continues. The Pitt Town community has made representations to me on issues that are still outstanding and I want to work towards an outcome that deals with matters from many years ago. In my recent conversations with Hawkesbury City Council, The Hills Shire Council and many residents I am aware that there are some infrastructure issues that are still unresolved. Know that I am determined to have these matters sorted and will be approaching relevant Ministers to see a way forward for parts of the Hawkesbury electorate, including Lower Portland, Mulgrave and Windsor Downs.

I want to touch on a topic that I see is a growing area of need for Hawkesbury, and that is aged care. Like many other electorates, Hawkesbury has an ageing population. Of course, my bias would be to declare that it must be the "youth juice" contained in the beautiful Hawkesbury River that continues to make our locals look like they are drinking from the fountain of youth. That said, there are not enough facilities to care for our seniors. Locals are telling me that they want to remain at home as long as they possibly can. They want to lead an independent life and they want to be given choices on how they care for their loved ones. Respite is an important consideration as well as understanding the real health challenges with dementia, heart disease, cancer and Parkinson's disease. Considering a centre for excellence in dementia and aged care is something I would like to escalate in conversation. But we cannot stop there.

Mental illness is an ever-present reality. I would like the Hawkesbury population, especially the youth of our electorate, to have better access to mental health services. I do not want Hawkesbury residents to feel isolated because they cannot access proper care and treatment. Mental illness is often a silent illness. Clinical depression, anxiety, autism, bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder are more frequent diagnoses now in our society. How well we deal with these conditions remains a challenge. I am keen to look at ways to improve the support and care of Hawkesbury people because these are the people whom I am to advocate on behalf of, just as I have advocated for those residents who belong to The Hills Shire Council local government area. I am proud of my track record as a local councillor with The Hills Shire Council. This third tier of government is a real grassroots connection and I get great satisfaction in finding solutions to people's problems. I have learned that very small issues can escalate a resident's fears and anxiety unless the problem is fixed for them. I saw that as my primary role on council and it has been so rewarding to see the results.

Many of the friends I have met over these years are here today in this Chamber—it is wonderful to see a very busy Chamber. Thank you for coming. I want to acknowledge especially the two mayors whom I served under as Deputy Mayor of The Hills Shire Council. To Mayor Michelle Byrne, who gave me her apologies very late today because she is not well, and former Mayor Yvonne Keane: Thank you both for encouraging me to shine. To my fellow councillors and general manager: You have supported me in so many ways and I have been proud to work with such a stellar team for the leading council in New South Wales. I look forward to working with you until the end of the current term.

Today is a special occasion because I am honoured to be in the room with several members for Hawkesbury. First, there is me as the new member for Hawkesbury—and that is such an honour. Then the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, who was a former member for Hawkesbury. Ray Williams, the member for Castle Hill, was also a former member for Hawkesbury. Kevin Rozzoli, AM, was a former member for Hawkesbury. I acknowledge Kevin, who is here tonight. I can assure the House that the recent mention in this Chamber of his passing was greatly exaggerated and I am sure that Kevin would be pleased to have the record corrected. It is wonderful to have you join me today, Kevin. Thank you so much.

I want to take a moment to speak of my two children, Kelly and James. You have both made me proud. I love that you care for each other and contribute to my happiness in so many ways. Your tenacity, determination, sense of humour and appreciation of the Australian way gives me a deep satisfaction. Kelly, thank you for your insightfulness and love. I am your greatest fan forever. Know that I will love you dearly always. James, your caring and protective nature has been so reassuring for me. I am blessed to have you as my son. Wyvern, thank you for the respect, love and patience you show me. You are always there for me and I know that you care. I thank the people of Hawkesbury for placing their trust in me. My first responsibility will always be to them. To the Treasurer of New South Wales, Dominic Perrottet: I have watched you grow from a young man just entering politics to a talent well beyond your years. This Government is well served by you. Thank you for this opportunity.

I also thank Damien Tudehope, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Tanya Davies, Greg Smith, Anthony Roberts, David Clarke, Kevin Conolly, Teena McQueen, Aileen MacDonald, Charles Perrottet, Dallas McInerney—the list goes on. I also acknowledge David Elliott and Mark Taylor, and Julian Leeser and Alan Cadman in the gallery. I have drawn great strength also from women within the Liberal Party. I make particular mention of a few very special women who have been beside me for the whole journey. To Liberal

Women's Council President, Mary-Lou Jarvis, and Liberal Women's Council Past President Chantelle Fornar-Orsmond: Thank you for your unwavering support. Your advice, resilience, loyalty and friendship will always be with me. You are both very talented women. Your time will come.

To Ann Youl: You were always there to console me after every preselection loss—and there were more than a dozen; I have had 18 preselections in my time. Ann, you are the quintessential loyal Liberal. Thank you for being here today. To Natalie Ward: Your guidance as I have entered Parliament has been most appreciated. I thank you for the time you give me. I thank the Liberal Party and, in particular, the Hawkesbury State Electorate Conference, and my friends and supporters. Many of you have travelled great distances to share this evening with me and I thank you. A special mention goes to Jill Reardon and John and Margaret Berenschot for their fantastic effort in the campaign. Thank you so much. To my campaign team—Rick Alloggia, Patrick Conolly, former member for Strathfield Bruce "Mac" MacCarthy, Sean Fannin and my wingman and campaign manager Brooke Collins, OAM—thank you for an outstanding effort.

To Paul Osborne: Thank you for travelling on this bumpy road with me. Today is a day of celebration, but know that I still carry the sorrow in my heart for your boy Noah, just as I pine for my nephew Colin, whose life was cut short. I give special mention to Peter Higgins, Tony Jeffcott, James Butler, Ross Colosimo, Kenthurst Rotary, Friends of Glenhaven, Mick Mathers and Lester Vincent. I thank my electorate office team—Adam, Marko, Laura, Mark and Nathan and my colleague David Rossi. Now the next chapter begins. I conclude with a short quote from Winston Churchill—you have to throw in a quote every now and again. He said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." Thank you.

**The SPEAKER:** I also congratulate the member for Hawkesbury.

*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

### *Bills*

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

### **Consideration in Detail**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 to 33 be agreed to.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:33):** By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 11 and 13 on sheet 2019-003E in globo:

**No. 11     Public inquiries**

Page 8, Division 2 of Part 3, line 35. Insert "**and public inquiries**" after "**Investigations**".

**No. 13     Public inquiries**

Page 10. Insert after line 13:

**19     Public inquiries**

- (1) For the purposes of an investigation of a report, the Commissioner may conduct a public inquiry, if the Commissioner is of the opinion that a public inquiry is in the public interest, having regard to:
  - (a) the seriousness of the allegation of abuse, neglect or exploitation, and
  - (b) the wishes of any person with disability or older adult to whom the report relates, and
  - (c) the privacy of the persons who will be affected by a public inquiry.
- (2) For the purpose of conducting a public inquiry under this section, the Commissioner has the functions, protections and immunities conferred on a commissioner by Division 1 of Part 2 of the *Royal Commissions Act 1923*.
- (3) The provisions of the *Royal Commissions Act 1923* (except section 13 and Division 2 of Part 2) apply, with necessary modifications, to a public inquiry and to any witness or person summoned by or appearing before the public inquiry or providing material to the inquiry, but section 11 (2) of that Act shall have effect subject to subsection (4).
- (4) Nothing in this section requires any person to give any statement of information, answer any question or disclose any document if the person can claim privilege not to do so.
- (5) A witness summoned by or appearing before the Commissioner is to be paid such amount as the Commissioner determines, but not exceeding the amount that would be payable to a witness that is a Crown witness subpoenaed by the Crown to give evidence.

- (6) For the purpose of conducting a public inquiry under this section, the Commissioner is not bound by the rules of evidence and may be informed on any matter in issue at the public inquiry in such manner as the Commissioner considers appropriate.
- (7) The Commissioner may give directions as to the procedure to be followed at or in connection with the inquiry.
- (8) The Commissioner may appoint an Australian legal practitioner to assist the Commissioner for the purposes of an inquiry held by the Commissioner and the Australian legal practitioner may appear before the inquiry.
- (9) In this section:  
*disclosure* of a document includes the provision of copies of the document, the granting of access to the document or the disclosure of the contents of the document.  
*document* includes a part of a document.  
*privilege* means privilege based on a claim by a person that evidence or other information about a matter or document:  
  - (a) might tend to incriminate the person or make the person liable to any forfeiture or penalty, or
  - (b) could not be required to be adduced in proceedings before a New South Wales court by reason of the operation of Part 3.10 (Privileges) of Chapter 3 of the *Evidence Act 1995*. The purpose of these amendments is to allow the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to hold public inquiries. Clause 12 (1) (e) of the bill provides that one of the commissioner's functions is to inquire into and report on systemic issues regarding matters in relation to which the commissioner may conduct investigations. The bill provides that the commissioner has the power to inquire and report on systemic issues, but it does not provide an express power to hold an inquiry. The power to hold a public inquiry is generally expressed in legislation. In the last term of Parliament the Government was forced to enact the Charitable Fundraising Amendment (Inquiries) Act 2017 to provide such a power after it was discovered that an inquiry established to examine the RSL lacked the power to hold public hearings. Indeed, it is worth repeating the comments made by the member for Hornsby during debate on the Charitable Fundraising Amendment (Inquiries) Act 2017. On 3 August 2017 he stated:

There is truth in the old saying that sunlight is the best disinfectant. By holding a public inquiry, transparency is assured and the public has greater visibility of the conduct of the inquiry and confidence that no stone will be left unturned, and that any issues and behaviour of concern, and the consequences of that behaviour, will be revealed.

The Opposition agrees with that statement. We ask the Government to consider giving the commissioner the power to hold public inquiries. The proposed amendment is modelled on several existing schemes. The commissioners of the Independent Commission Against Corruption are able to commence a public inquiry on their own initiative if they consider it to be in the public interest to do so. Other Acts such as the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016 and the Judicial Officers Act 1986 provide those holding an inquiry with the powers of a royal commission. Finally, Labor notes that the NSW Ombudsman has the powers of a royal commission and it is intended the Ageing and Disability Commissioner will fulfil some duties currently performed by the Ombudsman. I will leave my comments there.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:36):** The Government opposes the Opposition amendments Nos 11 and 13. The commissioner's main function is to support individuals and families and to provide them with timely and appropriate assistance to ensure the safety and welfare of older adults and adults with disability. Additionally, the bill gives the commissioner a specific power to inquire into systemic issues arising from the commissioner's investigations and as part of that inquiry present a report to Parliament on such issues. The Minister may ask the commissioner to undertake an inquiry into any matter relating to abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults with disability or older adults and make recommendations.

There is a reason for leaving open the fora and manner in which the commissioner may do that. This is an independent statutory office. The commissioner can seek to conduct whatever inquiry he or she wants. What we have heard from the Opposition, as well intentioned as it may be, does not change the fact that this particular commission has every right to conduct its affairs as it wishes and report to Parliament. The Government agrees with the comment that sunlight is the best disinfectant. That is why the commission acts independently and may

provide advice to Parliament should the commissioner wish to do so on that particular matter. Nothing is stopping the commissioner from doing that.

I caution the shadow Minister from likening this commission to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC], which has a totally different *raison d'être* and totally different operation and function. The nature of the private and public inquiry process for the ICAC, and the proposals as set out by all of the inquiries that have been the forerunners to this particular piece of legislation, make clear that the commission's role is to resolve matters quickly for people with disability, not to drag them out. As I said, the reason we have intentionally mentioned systemic issues is so those inquiries can take place. I assure the Opposition and allay its fears, which I am sure are genuine, that those inquiries into systemic abuse can take place in significant detail. The Government does not think the amendments are necessary and will oppose them.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:39):** I wish to clarify that I am not likening the ICAC to this new independent statutory body. I said that the proposed Opposition amendments will provide for the same model as set out in the provisions of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act and the Judicial Officers Act, which explicitly state that those bodies can hold public inquiries. I understand what the Minister is saying and take his assurances at face value. I know the Minister is passionate about this issue. The Opposition's concern is that we have had a number of reports from both Senate and upper House inquiries in the lead-up to the bill. The independent commissioner will identify the systemic issues and may, on occasion, identify a particular issue that requires an urgent inquiry. We have the opportunity in the other place to hold inquiries but I think that the commission should have its own powers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that amendments Nos. 11 and 13 on sheet c2019-003E be agreed to.

**Amendments negatived.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:41):** By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 12, 16 and 17 on sheet c2019-003E in globo:

**No. 12     Penalty for failing to comply with direction of Commissioner**

Page 9, clause 16 (2), line 7. Insert "or imprisonment for 12 months, or both" after "50 penalty units".

**No. 16     Penalty for disclosure of information**

Page 15, clause 29, line 41. Insert "or imprisonment for 12 months, or both" after "50 penalty units".

**No. 17     Penalty for obstructing Commissioner**

Page 16, clause 30, line 4. Insert "or imprisonment for 12 months, or both" after "50 penalty units".

The purpose of these amendments is to ensure that a maximum penalty of 12 months imprisonment is available for all offences in the bill. Currently the bill contains four offences: clause 16 prohibits a person failing to comply with a notice for production, clause 23 prohibits retribution against a person who makes a complaint to an official community visitor, clause 29 prohibits the unlawful disclosure of information and clause 30 prohibits a person obstructing the commissioner from carrying out an investigation or other functions.

Each of those offences has a maximum monetary penalty of 50 penalty units, \$5,500. Only clause 23, which protects people who make a complaint to an official community visitor—I acknowledge official community visitors for their amazing work—contains a maximum penalty, which could include a term of imprisonment for up to 12 months. I have had discussions with my colleagues and the Opposition believes that there should be a maximum of 12 months imprisonment for all offences in the bill. This will ensure that the maximum penalty provisions are consistent for all offences in the bill. Further, the possibility of imprisonment provides a deterrent in circumstances where an offender would not be deterred by a monetary loss of \$5,500; when I say "offender" I am talking about organisations.

Finally, the offences in clauses 16 and 29 relate to obstructing an investigation. There are equivalent offences in other Acts and these generally contain a maximum penalty that includes a term of imprisonment. For example, the maximum penalty for obstructing an Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation is 50 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months or both. A person who destroys documents or things required by a royal commission shall be liable to imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years. The maximum penalty for hindering an investigation under the Crimes Act is seven years' imprisonment. The maximum penalty for the general offence of perverting the course of justice is 14 years' imprisonment under the Crimes Act 1900 NSW section 319.

Labor believes the possibility of imprisonment is appropriate and necessary given the seriousness of the offences provided for in the bill. Contributions to this debate by members show that we believe that these are serious offences. I want to make clear that Labor's proposal for tougher penalties is absolutely not intended to

punish individuals who make an honest and reasonable mistake, but the bill covers offences that are serious. These offences require a person to intentionally act in a way that interferes with the commissioner's functions in protecting vulnerable people. Given the seriousness of these offences, we believe the option of a term of imprisonment is appropriate. We trust that a judicial officer in sentencing a person convicted of such an offence would exercise appropriate discretion in deciding whether or not to apply such a penalty. I am not disparaging any organisation by giving the following example. In 2017 the Ombudsman investigated Lifestyle Solutions in relation to multiple deaths of people with disability. The Ombudsman found that key records relating to those deaths had been destroyed. This impeded the Ombudsman's investigation. I quote from a report by ABC News on 27 March 2017:

The NSW Ombudsman has already found that the death in November 2014 of one of those clients—Julie Jacobson—was potentially preventable.

...

Alarming, Four Corners has established that in the days after her death, amidst a flurry of internal panic about what had occurred, critical records—which documented failures in the organisation's care for Ms Jacobson—suddenly went missing.

Insiders who spoke to Four Corners on the condition of anonymity said a formal inquiry was conducted by the organisation's own investigators into what happened to the files, before finally a set of documents was handed over to the authorities.

[Deputy NSW Ombudsman] Steve Kinmond said when the documents concerning Ms Jacobson's care finally arrived in his office there were a set of progress notes missing—Lifestyle Solutions told him it could not locate them.

He said that the documentation he was given was, in any case, evidence of "very significant shortcomings in practice".

"One of the concerns that I had in the middle of last year, which caused me to escalate this matter, was the fact that we were, on occasions, receiving a lack of information in relation to critical issues," he told Four Corners.

[The organisation] did not answer questions put to it by the program regarding the provenance of the records it produced.

This is an example of the kind of conduct we hope to deter by including tough penalties in the bill. The way the offence provisions in the bill are currently drafted makes clear an individual could not be punished for an honest or reasonable mistake, which has always been my intention. It is important that we deter cover-ups of abuse of people with disability and older people. The current maximum penalty for obstruction or failure to provide information is \$5,500, which we consider to be insufficient. One can imagine a circumstance in which a person commits elder abuse by abusing a power of attorney or financial authority. I was a member of the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 Inquiry into Elder Abuse in New South Wales, which meant I read submissions and heard evidence given at committee hearings.

Much of the testimony was heart-wrenching. It was distressing to read and hear about what people do to vulnerable people by abusing a power of attorney. Many older people were defrauded of hundreds of thousands of dollars. The way the bill is currently drafted, if that person destroyed documents and obstructed an investigation by the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, that person would be liable to a penalty of only \$5,500. It is important for the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to have the power to hold to account people who intentionally impede investigations. That is why we are calling for tougher penalties to protect vulnerable people.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:50):** The Government opposes Opposition amendments Nos 12, 16 and 17 as circulated. The claim that non-disclosure penalties are somehow not comparable is wrong. The bill provides for a higher financial penalty than comparable non-disclosure provisions in other Acts. I draw to the attention of the shadow Minister the Guardianship Act, which provides for a financial penalty of just 10 penalty units. The bill provides for a financial penalty of 50 penalty units which, for the benefit of the shadow Minister, is quite considerably higher. A penalty unit is worth \$110, so 50 penalty units is worth \$5,500, which is not an insubstantial amount. In terms of the obstruction offence, the penalty is consistent with penalties applying across the statute books for comparable offences. The Government opposes the amendments.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that amendments Nos 12, 16 and 17 on sheet c2019-00E be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....37  
Noes .....50  
Majority.....13

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Butler, Mr R

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P

Barr, Mr C  
Catley, Ms Y

## AYES

Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Cotsis, Ms S  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Finn, Ms J  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Dib, Mr J  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Saffin, Ms J  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

## NOES

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
Marshall, Mr A  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Piper, Mr G  
Saunders, Mr D  
Singh, Mr G  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Elliott, Mr D  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Leong, Ms J  
McGirr, Dr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Smith, Mr N  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Wilson, Ms F

Barilaro, Mr J  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Lindsay, Ms W  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G

## PAIRS

Bali, Mr S

Preston, Ms R

**Amendments negatived.**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (18:00):** I move Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-002A:

No. 1      **Funding for disability advocacy**

Page 16. Insert after line 11:

33      Funding for disability advocacy

It is the intention of Parliament that the government provide \$20 million funding each year (adjusted annually for inflation) to non-government organisations approved by the Commissioner to enable them to provide advocacy services to adults with disability.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: I seek a ruling in relation to Standing Order 243 in regard to this amendment. I do so reluctantly as I can see the intention of the member opposite is to raise awareness around disability advocacy, but the bill as it relates to the commission is a separate issue. Standing Order 243 says:

The House shall not pass any vote, resolution or bill for the appropriation of any part of the Consolidated Fund, or for any other tax or impost to any purpose which has not been first recommended by message of the Governor during the session in which such vote, resolution or bill shall be passed. This provision does not apply to a bill introduced by a Minister or to a vote or resolution proposed by a Minister.

That is an important standing order for the purposes of the Treasury benches. I note that the member opposite is not a Minister. The bill before the House relates to the commission. The Government notes the campaign being waged by advocates across the State. The Minister will deal with that separately. Standing Order 243 is a very important standing order that does need to be adhered to and I seek a ruling from the Speaker.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** To the point of order: The Minister referred to Chapter 18, Financial Procedures, Standing Order 243. I refer to Chapter 13, Amendments, Standing Order 161 which states:

Amendments shall not be considered if:

- (1) Inconsistent with a previous decision on the question.
- (2) A later part has been amended.
- (3) A question has been proposed on an amendment to a later part unless the proposed amendment has been withdrawn by leave of the House.
- (4) It is to words already resolved should stand part of the question or which have been inserted or added, unless it is an addition to those words.

It is my submission, notwithstanding what the Minister for Transport and Roads said in relation to Standing Order 243, that Standing Order 161 is the appropriate standing order relevant to this matter. It does not exclude anything in relation to a motion or an amendment in relation to financial issues. Standing Order 243 is under a completely different heading and section and is not relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy to hear the Minister further, but before I make a ruling I observe two things: First, Chapter 13 appears to relate to general amendments rather than bill amendments where there is a separate section. Second, Standing Order 243 is based on section 46 of the Constitution Act. If the member has anything further to say in relation to both of those matters I am happy to hear them.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** I do. In relation to section 46 of the Constitution Act I note that the legislation uses the word "shall", which contains a discretionary intent. It does not use the word "must", for example; it uses "shall", so a general discretion can be exercised. In exercising that general discretion the public interest can be considered in relation to this matter. The public interest in relation to this matter is very serious, significant and high profile. In the scheme of things we are not talking about a lot of money per year to take into account 20 per cent of the population who have a disability. This issue has a significant public interest, I would respectfully submit, and it is a matter that should be considered. I ask that you exercise your discretion in terms of those issues and the public interest and allow this amendment to be heard.

**The SPEAKER:** Do you want to address Chapter 13 being in relation to general amendments, not bill amendments?

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** It says "amendments". I cannot take this matter any further than what I have already submitted.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Further to the point of order: We do not have a message from the Governor to proceed. In terms of both the intent of the standing order and section 46 of the Constitution Act it is very clear about a message from the Governor, which is absent in this case. I give credit to the member for Orange for raising this matter but it is outside the leave and purpose of the bill. At the same time we have a very clear intent in terms of a message from the Governor. I seek a ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** I note that the amendment that has been moved raises a number of important constitutional provisions in relation to the ability of private members to move amendments that propose financial measures. I acknowledge that the amendment involves public interest matters. However, I note that on previous occasions where similar provisions have been proposed in legislation they were private members' bills that had lapsed and did not proceed. Consequently I do not consider that this House has previously agreed to such provisions within proposed or actual legislation. In those circumstances, particularly noting the relevant provisions of section 46 of the Constitution Act and Standing Order 243, I rule that the amendment is not in order.

The question is that clauses 1 to 33 be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 to 33 agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that schedule 1 be agreed to.

**Schedule 1 agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I move:

This bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**



*Matter of Public Importance***AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:11):** My matter of public importance is Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. Many members in this Chamber are aware that the Cancer Council recently kicked off one of its signature fundraising events, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. I will take a few moments to reflect on the impact of cancer on our community and the significance of this event. Far too many people in our State and in Australia are affected by cancer. This year alone, more than 47,000 people in New South Wales will be told they have cancer and there will be more than 15,000 cancer-related deaths. Just yesterday, the State's cancer control body, the Cancer Institute NSW, released its annual cancer control report. The report highlights the progress that has been made in cancer control across New South Wales and the impact this is having on outcomes for people diagnosed with cancer.

There is some great news: Survival rates have continued to improve for most cancers, as has the number of people taking part in life-saving cancer screening. It is clear that we have some of the world's best cancer outcomes, and we are doing more to build on this. The New South Wales health system works collaboratively to achieve better outcomes for people affected by cancer. One of the ways we are doing this is by investing about \$187 million each year through the Cancer Institute NSW to drive improvement in cancer control in New South Wales. In February this year, we also announced a \$10.9 million boost for research into new cancer treatments.

Funding innovative cancer treatment will ensure the work of our top researchers will continue to have a tangible impact on the community of New South Wales. This brings me back to the Cancer Council's fundraising event, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. I acknowledge the member for Oatley, the Assistant Speaker, who hosts one of the largest Australia's Biggest Morning Tea events every year in his community and welcomes us all to join him. I thank him for his work for the Cancer Council NSW. I know he has been personally touched by cancer, and he makes an incredibly significant contribution.

My own community of North Shore holds a number of different local events to support Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. Last week I attended Australia's Biggest Afternoon Tea at the Neutral Bay Club. I acknowledge the work of Virginia Ware, the ladies' bowls team, and Amanda De Boire who, along with the club staff, organised a fantastic day and fundraiser. There was a lot of cheer in the room but predominantly it was all about raising awareness, support and funds to ensure that we continue to seek a cure for the various cancers and provide support services that people living with cancer need.

We also know that the Mosman Lawn Tennis Club hosts a Biggest Morning Tea every year and we have a number of organisations locally in the electorate of North Shore. I acknowledge the work of Lily Gubbay, my local advocate for Cancer Council in New South Wales. She is very actively engaged with me and we do a lot together. We sell daffodils on Daffodil Day every year as well. I know she will be here at the Speaker's Biggest Morning Tea in Parliament, which is a longstanding tradition. I congratulate the new Speaker and the Cancer Council on continuing it. I look forward to seeing my fellow members supporting the Cancer Council at that Biggest Morning Tea.

Last year the broader Biggest Morning Tea initiative raised \$11.9 million for people impacted by cancer across our country. It is crucial for us to support events such as this because they are vital not just in raising money but also in bringing people together for this benevolent purpose. We need to continue to nurture the goodwill in our community. We need to continue to support and encourage people to care about one another as fellow human beings to ensure that any individual, family member or loved one experiencing cancer is seen not as a number or a statistic but as an individual who needs all of us as a community to provide them with the care and support that they need.

The beauty of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea is that anyone can take part, whether at home or work, and every morning tea—or, in the case of the Neutral Bay Club, afternoon tea—makes a difference. The event encourages people across the State to gather their friends, family or workmates for a cup of tea and a bite to eat whilst raising money to support those affected by cancer. Together with its volunteers, supporters, stakeholders and staff, the Cancer Council works to reduce the impact of cancer on individuals and the community and to lessen the burden on people affected by cancer. I am sure my colleagues have been eager to participate in this event. I commend the Cancer Council for championing this wonderful cause on behalf of the many people impacted by cancer across New South Wales and Australia. It is an insidious disease in all its forms and many types of cancer have too-low survival rates. This is an opportunity for us to think about all those people in our community and to support them every year.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:16):** I support the matter of public importance brought forward by the member for North Shore about Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. An estimated 145,000 new cases of cancer

will be diagnosed in Australia this year, with that number set to rise to 150,000 by 2020. As we know, cancer is the leading cause of death in Australia: It is estimated almost 50,000 deaths from cancer will occur in 2019. One in two Australian men and women will be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85. Cancer costs more than \$4.5 billion in direct health system costs. That is an astronomical figure. A way to fight that is with the Biggest Morning Teas, which are hosted throughout the country and the State with volunteers from all walks of life coming together to help make a difference while working towards a cancer-free tomorrow. The Cancer Council does a phenomenal job working with communities throughout the country to raise awareness and vital funds, and garner support in the fight against cancer.

I acknowledge some champions in my electorate and its surrounds who do a great job in volunteering their time for not only Relay For Life but also the Biggest Morning Tea. I thank all those volunteers who commit so much time and energy, supporting our local Fairfield Relay For Life, which is currently spearheaded by two juggernauts, Michael Tran and Kelvin Tran. Those young men are doing a great job in our area, engaging with the youth throughout the community and increasing youth participation in the relay and cancer events locally. I also thank a wonderful local woman, Ms Jan Dhu, who was strongly motivated by the passing of her sister Pat, from breast cancer. Her involvement in Relay For Life and Biggest Morning Tea events is legendary in our area. Over the years she has been at the helm of numerous fundraising campaigns and her contributions have had a tremendous impact on our local community. Jan and her wonderful rainbow relay team do a great job with their fundraising at Canley Heights RSL every year.

Another champion in our community is none other than Mrs Sinilia Radivojevic. In 17 years her morning teas alone have raised approximately \$50,000 at various venues, but most recently at the Fairfield Youth Centre Biggest Morning Tea. That is an astronomical amount of money. Collectively, Sinilia and Jan have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars throughout their local community through Biggest Morning Tea and Relay For Life events and a variety of smaller, community-focused fundraisers. Their tireless advocacy in fighting cancer is truly commendable and the Fairfield community is better off because of their efforts.

I also pay tribute to the crew at Club Triglav Mounties for their recent Biggest Morning Tea event. It could not have happened without the enormous contributions of the volunteers. I acknowledge the great efforts of Bryan Kavanagh, marketing coordinator at the Mounties western sites, and Mumma Draz's Kitchen and Millie & Co. for their donations of some wonderful cakes and sweets. I also acknowledge the efforts of Kayla McGregor, Tahlia Zangari, Loridana Zangari and Natasha Shakir for baking cakes and sweets all weekend and the donation of their hard-earned cash towards the effort. I thank them sincerely for not only baking the great sweets and cakes but also making a mess of the kitchen, all for a worthy cause. I can report that the kitchen was cleaned up after their event. Well done to the girls and their friends. I also thank everyone who attended on the day and showed support for such a fantastic cause.

It is been said in this Chamber many times before that cancer impacts on individuals, their families and the wider community. We as a community need to come together to fight this and to raise not only money but also awareness. Far too often we take things for granted when it comes to the preventive side of cancer. I thank my colleague the member for North Shore for bringing this matter of public importance before the House this evening.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:21:4):** I also thank the member for North Shore for bringing this important matter to the House. As we know, New South Wales has some of the best outcomes in cancer care, no matter where in the State people are treated. Sadly, cancer continues to be the leading cause of premature death and illness. Reducing the incidence of cancer while continuing to provide the best care and outcomes for those who experience it are key priorities for the New South Wales health system.

Cancer research is a key aspect to ensuring that these outcomes continue to improve. We are proud to partner with non-government organisations such as the Cancer Council to further this research. One recent example was a \$7.5 million joint New South Wales Government and Cancer Council NSW grant that supports two innovative research projects to do with personalised radiotherapy and chimeric antigen receptor T-cell immunotherapy, known as CAR T-cell immunotherapy. The projects will make treatments more accessible and cost effective for people with cancer. We are proud to lead the way internationally by funding the development of cutting-edge treatments together with organisations such as the Cancer Council. In the past eight financial years, the New South Wales Government, through the Cancer Institute NSW, has provided about \$2.7 million to the Cancer Council NSW to continue its quality work. The funding has gone towards collaborative initiatives, competitive research grants and projects, particularly in tobacco control and skin cancer prevention.

The funding includes Evidence to Practice Grants awarded to the Cancer Council NSW for the Tackling Tobacco program that aims to reduce smoking amongst disadvantaged groups. The Cancer Institute NSW's grants were used to develop evidence-based e-learning modules for the not-for-profit community sector. The funding also includes an Innovation in Cancer Control Grant for 2017-2019 of \$100,000 to the Cancer Council NSW. That involves the development of a toolkit of resources to support New South Wales primary schools to implement the

SunSmart policy hat recommendation, in which 20 schools in Greater Western Sydney are participating. The funding also includes \$1.2 million in competitive research grants awarded to researchers at the Cancer Council NSW.

We will gladly continue these partnerships for the benefit of people impacted by cancer. On a local level I also acknowledge what we are doing locally with the Liverpool Hospital redevelopment. The investment into the cancer care centre will make the lives of our locals that little bit easier and smoother as they can get better treatment closer to home. Australia's Biggest Morning Tea officially occurred this year on Thursday 23 May. I encourage everyone to get involved throughout the month of May or June to help raise funds for the Cancer Council. This Friday I will attend a local Biggest Morning Tea in my electorate at Chen's Pharmacist Advice in Hammondville. The team at the pharmacy do an amazing job in putting this morning tea on every year. I cannot wait to attend it.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:24):** In reply: I thank the members for Fairfield and Holsworthy for their contributions to this matter of public importance. I congratulate the member for Fairfield and his family on their personal contributions and support. If any more wonderful baking happens in his home, I hope that he will bring in some treats for us. I would be happy to contribute some funds as a donation in return for some treats. Everyone knows I am always happy to pay for some treats. I thank him for telling us about all the work that is being done in Fairfield to support the Cancer Council, particularly with Relay for Life. The constituents of Fairfield have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars over many years and have had a profound impact on people's lives. I thank the member for Fairfield for sharing that with us this evening.

I thank the member for Holsworthy, who spoke about everything the Cancer Council of New South Wales does to prevent cancer, prevent skin cancer and deal with tobacco control. The member for Holsworthy has done amazing work in her community with the Liverpool Hospital redevelopment and Liverpool Cancer Therapy Centre. I am sure she will enjoy her local morning tea this Friday. As the member for Holsworthy mentioned, the Cancer Council encourages us to celebrate and recognise its biggest morning on any day in May or June. If any members have not yet organised or attended one of these wonderful events, I encourage them to put something together with their colleagues and friends. It is a great opportunity to bring people together to raise funds, to raise awareness of cancer and to support the people in our community who need it. I thank the House for supporting this matter of public importance.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I will be attending an Australia's Biggest Morning Tea this Saturday at 10.30 a.m. at Oatley RSL and expect almost 150 people to attend.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **JOB CREATION**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:26):** Helping to facilitate the creation of jobs is a rewarding part of being a member of this Liberal-Nationals Government. Since 2011 we have created more than 600,000 jobs—more than any other State. We also smashed our last four-year jobs target of 150,000 by adding more than 420,000 new jobs. Earlier this year New South Wales was able to boast the lowest unemployment rate on record of just 3.9 percent. This is a monumental achievement. During the recent election campaign the Premier announced that the Liberal-Nationals Government will create 250,000 new jobs over the next four years.

The Government will support this growth by ensuring that all community members, especially younger community members, can access the tools and skills necessary to attain a job. Helping young people to get a trade is the Government's priority. It will do this through the boot camp program and by giving young people with the ambition to learn a trade the opportunity to do so through new vocational high schools. The vocational high schools will be located in western Sydney and on the North Coast. Up to \$17 million is earmarked for each site to fund construction of specialist training facilities at two existing schools. These two schools will train students in skills that are both industry requirements and are in demand by local employers.

Students will be able to study a trade while completing their Higher School Certificate. Courses may include construction, electro-technology, hospitality, primary industries, and metal and engineering. The successful Productivity Bootcamp program will also expand to two more locations in western Sydney and the South Coast. The program already operates at Quakers Hill and Penrith and provides fully subsidised skills training to help young people secure a career in the construction industry. The Government has also committed to building a new \$80 million state-of-the-art TAFE campus for western Sydney, which will train the next generation of trades in carpentry, construction, electrical and plumbing. I am proud to see the Liberal-Nationals Government's continued commitment to providing more local jobs in the Liverpool and Sutherland Shire regions.

On Monday 6 May I hosted Minister for Family, Community and Disability Services Gareth Ward and Attorney General Mark Speakman in Liverpool at the opening of the Liverpool Family and Community Services

[FACS] Service Hub. I had worked on this project for some time, helping to advocate and secure new jobs for the Liverpool region and the building associated with it. Since the Coalition came to power in 2011, more than 500 FACS jobs have been relocated to Liverpool. The new building provides a modern and purpose-built space for FACS staff to work and to assist members of our local community. These FACS staff do so much for the south-west Sydney community and I am proud to have them working in our local area.

Another important investment this Government is making to promote jobs growth in our region is the \$12.5 million investment in the Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO] Innovation Precinct. Just last week I visited ANSTO with the new Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, Kevin Anderson, and the member for Heathcote, Lee Evans, to view the facility, meet with staff and teach the Minister about the new innovation precinct. The member for Heathcote and I are regular visitors and it was wonderful to take the Minister around our innovation precinct. This investment will help to accelerate medical and technological breakthroughs and it will also assist in the generation of an estimated 5,000 new jobs.

The funding will be used to help facilitate the creation of a new world-class precinct for businesses, scientists and start-ups at Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation in Lucas Heights, which is already working on cutting-edge treatments for cancers and other diseases. The New South Wales Government will deliver \$12.5 million of funding to the ANSTO Innovation Precinct over four years. This funding will create incubators for nuclear medicine and technology businesses and give start-ups access to cutting-edge technology and some of the best science in Australia. It will help establish a graduate institute, including 25 new scholarships for PhD students. It will also drive collaboration between start-ups, researchers and industry to grow advanced technology businesses in New South Wales.

ANSTO is making Australia a global leader in the supply of nuclear medicine. This funding boost from the Liberal-Nationals Government will not only generate 5,000 new jobs over the next decade but it will also boost innovation in the region. ANSTO's work has the potential to change the lives of thousands of people around Australia and around the world. We have just finished a discussion on the Cancer Council NSW and the research and investment it carries out. ANSTO uses that research and investment to change the world. I am proud of the work that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is doing to help provide new jobs across the State, especially in the Holsworthy electorate.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:32):** It was an absolute pleasure to be shown around ANSTO by the member for Holsworthy and the member for Heathcote. It was my first time at this remarkable facility and my first time seeing its cutting-edge technology, its world-leading capabilities in the field of medical research and the start-ups that reside there. Those 15 or so small businesses are run by young entrepreneurs with brilliant ideas who have come together in this start-up hub. It is a place where they can come together, start their business, continue to develop it on the cutting edge of whatever field they are a part of and all in a like-minded environment. I congratulate those young entrepreneurs and wish them every success. I thank the member for Holsworthy for her private member's statement.

#### **AUSTRALIAN MAN CAVE SUPPORT GROUP**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I welcome Johan and Yolanda from the Australian Man Cave Support group to the gallery tonight. They are guests of the member for Fairfield.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:33):** I am here to spread the good word and commend the tremendous efforts of The Australian Man Cave support group. I acknowledge Dr Johan Hausoul, a doctor of social ecology and secretary of the Australian Man Cave support group, and his partner Yolanda who are in the gallery this evening. For members who are unfamiliar with the Australian Man Cave support group, it is a small yet incredibly effective outreach and support service with a no-nonsense approach to assisting people in need. The Australian Man Cave support group was incepted only a couple of years ago by Pastor Lou Greco and Pastor Agostino Gattellari following the tragic death of one of Agostino's good mates, Mark Brown.

That was the push that Agostino and Lou needed to stop talking about getting things done and instead dive in head first to do something to assist men who are suffering and going through hard times. Agostino and Lou have openly admitted that they did not exactly know what they were in for with this venture, but the suicides of men close to them steadied their resolve. They understood that standing idly by was not an option for them. The primary goal of the Australian Man Cave support group is to do all they can to help men in need and ultimately reduce the suicide rate amongst men of all ages.

What better way to get men to opt in to openly chat and vent about their thoughts or issues at the man cave—a symbolic name indeed. Lou and Agostino are the first to say they are not professional in any sense of the word; however, they are two top blokes dedicated to helping other men overcome life's challenges and they are doing a bloody good job at it! Each and every month the "man cavers", as they like to call themselves, get together

to chat over some fun social activity. The average attendance of these gatherings is 30 to 40 people, with men from all walks of life getting involved and having a good time. The gatherings serve as a great way to cut through the mustard and help men spend quality time listening, chatting and supporting one another without judgement or prejudice.

The gatherings are not just sitting around; they are always focused on some type of communal task. So far the man cavers have had a pretty wide varieties of gatherings, including gelato appreciation, tomato sauce making and sausage making. I understand June's gathering will focus on a talk on mental health first aid—the aim is to empower man cavers to do a further course on mental first aid. July's group is going to be focused on salami making, and in August they will be bringing in a dog whisperer for an insightful session. The name of the group and their gatherings may sound a little tongue-in-cheek, but these men are passionate about supporting one another and their dedication to assisting other fellow brothers during their time of need is truly commendable.

Statistics indicate that on average six men in Australia will take their lives every day—that is, 42 men each week, 182 a month and 2,184 men a year. Support groups like the Australian Man Cave are invaluable to our communities and I wish more men would turn up for help when they are in need. The man cavers have a saying: "We don't promise to solve all your issues, but what we do promise is that you won't face them alone." These are wise words that will help bring hurting men into the fold and will stand as a testament to the ethos that will continue to save lives. Despite only being active for a relatively short time, the support that the Australian Man Cave has garnered throughout the community is a true reflection of the tremendous work they do.

On Friday 8 March 2019 I had the great honour of attending the inaugural Australian Man Cave support group black tie evening at the Penrith regatta centre. The dinner was very well attended, with approximately 250 guests packing into the venue. More than \$22,000 was raised on the night to continue supporting those in need. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Lou and Agostino for their hard work and tireless dedication to support men in need. I commend everyone involved for making a real difference to the lives of men who would otherwise remain silent. I also acknowledge Australian Man Cave Secretary Johan Hausoul for his outstanding work and commitment to the cause, and the sisters of the Australian Man Cave for their support to their men. If someone is in need of support and they are not sure where to turn then the Australian Man Cave support group is a pretty good place to start.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Fairfield for educating the House about the Australian Man Cave support group. I congratulate those involved who are seated in the gallery. We hope you enjoy your visit to Parliament House.

### **TAREE RESCUE SQUAD**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:38):** Tonight I inform the House about a fantastic organisation. The Taree Volunteer Rescue Association, now known as the Taree Rescue Squad, was formed in November 1975 after a public meeting held in Taree at the request of the Taree North Rotary Club. At that meeting it was agreed to establish a self-contained professional rescue service for the Manning district. It was further agreed that the organisation would attend rescue call-outs from the town of Kew in the north to Bulahdelah in the south. The organisation was affiliated with the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association [VRA], which at that time had 37 other units across the State. The squad received generous donations from sports clubs, local businesses, schools and individuals. This allowed the newly established service to purchase basic rescue equipment, which would be carried in a box trailer donated to the organisation.

After the commissioning of their first rescue vehicle in 1977, the organisation set out to build a new headquarters in Muldoon Street, Taree. Construction of the building commenced in 1978 and was officially opened on 25 August 1979. On the night of 9 August 1981 the squad was requested to attend what is now one of Australia's greatest aviation mysteries: missing flight VH-MDQ. The Cessna 210 is believed to have crashed in the Barrington Tops National Park, 80 kilometres south-west of Taree. Despite a 10-day aerial search and initial ground search by the squad in the immediate aftermath, no sign of the wreckage has ever been found. In 1996 the squad celebrated 21 years of service in the Manning district. During that time the squad had responded to more than 800 call-outs, commissioned three vehicles and implemented a rescue dive team. They built not only a local headquarters but also the foundation of a highly regarded and professional rescue service for the district.

Almost 44 years on, the Taree Rescue Squad remains the primary rescue agency for the Manning Valley, with three fully equipped rescue vehicles, a boat, vertical rescue trailer and 16 operational members. The squad is activated to over 140 call-outs per year and will continue to provide the Manning district with a reliable, professional rescue service for many years to come. They continue to work effectively with other services, including the NSW Police Force and the Ambulance Service of New South Wales, and over the past 12 months that assistance has occurred 33 times. They also assist the local State Emergency Service and the Rural Fire Service when called upon.

The squad today is headed by President Allan Sheldon, Secretary John Chick and Treasurer Patricia Trotter. Its current membership totals 35, 16 of whom are active emergency operators or trainees. Of the 138 incidents recorded for the period 2017-18, 49 were involved motor vehicle accidents, two floods, 33 to assist other services, one vertical, one providing emergency lighting, three involved traffic control, nine call-outs to domestic/industrial issues, one aircraft, four event supports, five first aid, eight rescues involving animals, including dogs, cows and horses, eight fundraising events, 12 public relations and two exercise events. Total operational man hours recorded were 1,065, and that did not include any public relations activities. During those 1,065 hours, 50 people required assistance, 20 people were rescued, two animals were rescued and 10 people were deceased. A further 883 hours were spent on general and accredited training, with an amazing 91 per cent attendance at training. For the same period there were a further 2,830 non-operational man-hours for the same period, which included working bees, administration, VRA debriefs and the like.

On the weekend I was pleased to attend the VRA Weekend on Wheels at Taree Showground. The event was opened by Chaplain David Freeman and Mayor David West also attended. Over 2,000 people attended, including entrants, vehicle owners and stalls. Close to \$10,000.00 was raised, which was particularly pleasing because this year the event was moved from the Jack Neal Oval to the Taree Showground. That total was on a par with previous years and it is hoped when all the money comes in it will be the best ever. The funds will go towards a new 4 x 4 rescue vehicle and fit-out. Virtually everything they get is through fundraising activities and community support. I commend the Taree Rescue Squad and thank the community for supporting them.

### MOSMAN FIRE STATION

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:43):** Last month the world woke to the horror of seeing the Notre-Dame Cathedral in flames. It was only days later that I attended the Mosman Fire Station centenary. At that time we reflected on the profanity of watching Notre-Dame Cathedral in flames and what it meant to the work that firefighters had done for so long to keep our communities safe. It was about not just our own lives and wellbeing but the material possessions that create our culture and identity and the artefacts within Notre-Dame Cathedral that so many firefighters risked their lives to preserve for our community and for the world.

It was a profound opportunity of reflection for us as we thought about the 100 years of service to the community of Mosman Fire Station. I was honoured to represent the Government and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliot, MP, at that service. I thank Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner Paul Baxter, Superintendent Kel McNamara, Station Officer Harry Nasko, Superintendent Norman Buckley, Brendan Kerin, Major Lyndsay Smith, Mark White and Mia Gittany-Prini for their contributions on the day. Accompanying me on the occasion were the member for Warringah, the Hon. Tony Abbott, MP, and Mosman councillors Corrigan, Bendall, Cook and Willoughby.

The Centenary Service was about not only acknowledging an incredibly rich 100 years of history of the Mosman Fire Station but also recognising just how far it has come in providing a world-class firefighting service. The land on which the station is built was purchased in 1916 and although construction was completed in 1918, the station was not occupied or operational until 1919. Today the profession of firefighting bears little resemblance to that of 1919 when firefighters wore shiny steel helmets and heavy woollen coats and they used a horse and cart. Mosman Fire Station is now home to a dedicated crew of permanent firefighters who are available 24-7 to protect our community during emergencies.

It was wonderful to join with a number of past firefighters from our fire station at the service, including Billy King AFSM. The name "Billy King" is synonymous with Fire and Rescue NSW and more specifically the Mosman Fire Brigade. In 2014 when Billy King retired aged 75, he held the title of the oldest and longest-serving permanent firefighter in New South Wales. Billy concluded his final Fire and Rescue NSW shift at Mosman Fire Station on Christmas Eve 2014, ending 53 years of incredible service to our community. To top off a stellar career, Billy's final shift ended with crews from the Manly, Crows Nest and Neutral Bay fire stations joining the brigade from Mosman to form a guard of honour down Military Road.

Mosman's Field family was also represented at the service by multiple generations and they have a long history with fire services in New South Wales and the Mosman Fire Station. In 1901 Charlie Field became the first and only Captain of Mosman Fire Station and he remained in the brigade until 1927. Charlie's son Ernest "Buck" Field was also a member of the brigade from 1912 to 1965. In 1950 Buck's son Ernest Field joined the brigade after serving in the Fire Brigade Reserve Corps and anti-aircraft gun crew during World War II. Bookending a long family tradition at Mosman Fire Station, Ernest became the last retained firefighter at Mosman when he retired in 1985. Just a few months after he retired, Ernest's son Peter Field joined the brigade as a permanent firefighter and is currently a senior firefighter at Narellan Station. It was wonderful to see so many members of the Field family at the centenary service, including young Oscar Field, the fifth generation of the family who we hope may one day also go into the service.

The team of firefighters at Mosman Fire Station are highly trained and equipped with state-of-the-art protective clothing and firefighting appliances. Our residents should feel assured knowing they have a world-class fire service looking after their community. I am proud that we, as a government, have been able to invest in the equipment that our community needed, including a new truck that was unveiled last year. Mosman firefighters know how to deal with a wide range of emergencies, standing side-by-side with other emergency services personnel. They work closely with representatives of NSW Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, NSW Ambulance and the NSW Police Force.

Our firefighters in Mosman also play a vital role in educating the community about how to prevent fires and other emergencies. We know there are great initiatives such as "Keep Looking When Cooking". I attended my local fire station at Mosman for its open day as I am sure many members did in their communities. Firefighters are able to provide our community with the best information in fire prevention. Mosman firefighters well and truly live up to the Fire and Rescue NSW ethos of assisting anyone, anytime, anywhere with all manner of emergencies. Congratulations on your centenary of service to the people of Mosman and surrounding communities. This station and its firefighters have done our community proud and will continue to do so well into the future.

### CANTERBURY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:48):** I wish to speak about the outstanding work of teachers and staff in schools in my electorate of Canterbury. More than 12,000 children attend a primary or secondary school in my electorate and approximately 7,000 of these students attend a public school, while 5,000 attend a non-government school. The teachers and staff at schools in my electorate are exceptional. Every day they dedicate themselves to helping students learn new skills, gain new knowledge and develop into thriving young adults. I pay particular tribute to the hard work of staff at Canterbury Boys High School. Canterbury Boys High School is one of the most exceptional schools in our State. Its alumni include former Labor member of the Legislative Council Ron Dyer, former Liberal member of the Legislative Council John Ryan and former Prime Minister of Australia John Howard. I acknowledge that Mr Howard and the other former members attend the school functions.

On 30 July 2019 Canterbury Boys High School will celebrate the benefits of public education by hosting the first Canterbury Academic Challenge. The Canterbury Academic Challenge will see teams of four students from participating schools compete in fun game-based activities. The students will compete across four disciplines: maths, science and technology, English, and human society and its environment. Students will be awarded prizes for participation and the winners will be presented with the Canterbury Academic Challenge Trophy at their Education Week assembly.

This year I have visited the school on a number of occasions and I am proud to support this new event. I am also grateful to the principal, Mr Ross Dummett, for inviting me to be the patron of the challenge. I look forward to seeing the students from my community participate in this event. I am also calling on all the local primary schools to participate and get involved. I thank the teachers and staff of Canterbury Boys High School together with the parents and carers of the students—they are amazing young men. Often when I am walking near Canterbury Railway Station the students will recognise me from my campaign posters and my attendance at the school and they will ask me, "How are you going, Soph?".

I am proud of the work done by the school and its very multicultural environment. I have written to the Minister for Education about a number of issues including a proposal for a new school hall at Canterbury Boys High School. The small building that originally housed the school hall is now a library. A new hall for the school is on my agenda and it is something I will pursue in this place. I thank the Principal of Canterbury Boys High School, Ross Dummett, and Megan Kelly, Director, Educational Leadership for the Canterbury network of schools, for their hard work and leadership in making the event possible. I would also like to thank all of the teachers and staff in schools across my electorate for their tireless and selfless dedication to their students. Teachers are exceptional, and we simply cannot thank them enough.

### GUYRA PIPELINE PROJECT

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:53):** The devastating effects of drought currently gripping New South Wales have well and truly spilled beyond the farm gate. The lack of water is now being directly felt by residents in country towns and villages right across the bush. In the Northern Tablelands communities such as Guyra, and its 2,500 residents, are faced with the serious prospect of running out of potable water within the next 100 days. If the severity of this drought has shown us anything, it is the need to plan and develop infrastructure—water infrastructure in particular—which will support our rural communities through more consistent and prolonged dry periods.

Last week I joined Armidale Regional Council Mayor Simon Murray and fellow councillors Dorothy Robinson, Andrew Murat, John Galletly and Peter Bailey to at Malpas Dam—the city of Armidale's water supply—to inspect progress on the construction of a new \$13 million water pipeline from Malpas Dam to the Guyra community's depleted water supply dam.

This project, which has been funded almost completely by the State Government, has seen a 15-kilometre below-ground pipeline laid, which will allow water to be pumped from Malpas Dam to Guyra's town supply during periods of below average rainfall. This project is an absolute game changer for Guyra. It is expected to not only droughtproof the town but also allow local residential developments and, importantly, industry to continue to thrive and grow, creating jobs and more opportunities for the small rural community. As of this week Guyra Dam's water level sits just above 30 per cent, while Malpas Dam, supplying Armidale, is at around 51 per cent. As a means of extending the life of what water is left in both supplies, Armidale Regional Council has introduced level 4 water restrictions for both the City of Armidale and the township of Guyra.

I congratulate all the work teams that have been working very hard over the past few months trying to get the pipeline project finished as soon as possible. It is now ahead of schedule. While the construction will see that project completed and delivering water to Guyra by mid-August, it looks very likely that, without any intervention, the township will run out of water before that pipeline is constructed. I acknowledge Armidale Regional Council for the plan it has developed to truck water as an interim measure from Armidale to Guyra—the first time this has ever had to happen—to ensure that the township does not run out of water before the pipeline is complete and can deliver water. This will mean people will have good potable water when they turn on their taps and, importantly, local industry will not have to shed jobs or close down completely.

I thank the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Melinda Pavey, for her quick response to my calls on behalf of the community to have the State Government provide emergency funding to cover council's costs of carting water as an interim measure from Armidale to Guyra. It is absolutely essential that Guyra does not run out of potable water. While the Malpas Dam pipeline is a revolutionary project for Guyra, in my firm view it should only be the start of a more ambitious plan to grow our region's capacity to store more water. To that end, I have begun a conversation with Armidale Regional Council and the State Government about the viability of raising the wall of Malpas Dam by five metres to double storage capacity at that dam.

Malpas Dam was built in 1968 and, like many dams of that generation, those who engineered it had huge foresight. The 13,000-megalitre reservoir was designed so that its capacity could be increased one day—in fact, doubled—to account for what they anticipated would be Armidale's growing population. By adding five metres to the wall's height the dam's capacity can be doubled to 26,000 megalitres, which, if we had that right now, would well and truly ensure a long-term water supply for both the Armidale and the Guyra communities. After making this concept public, an opinion piece was written in Tamworth's local newspaper *The Northern Daily Leader*. It stated:

Most of the solutions have been large in scale, perhaps to match the severity of the situation we face. But bureaucracy is often a slow-moving beast—and the bigger the weight to bear the slower it moves. Rather than putting forward these massive "home-run" developments, that cost in the tens and hundreds of millions, perhaps we should be looking to hedge our bets with multiple smaller proposals.

I could not agree more. As droughts become more prevalent and severe we should stop seeing water storages as expanses of water that belong solely to one town and explore the potential to increase regional water storages to service a region—multiple towns. Armidale continues to grow, as does Guyra, and now more than ever we need the foresight that our forefathers had. We should lift the dam wall and increase water storage for everyone in the Armidale and Guyra region.

#### MIRANDA ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:58):** I acknowledge today the recipients of the 2019 Australia Day Honours across the Miranda electorate. I acknowledge Emeritus Professor Michael Knight, who received the Member of the Order of Australia—AM—award for significant service to scientific education. Throughout his distinguished and long-serving career in hydrogeology and groundwater management, Professor Knight has received 14 academic and professional awards, published 120 articles and a number of books, and has contributed to 188 consultancy reports and 32 other works. His career involves extensive aid-related research and consultancy work in developing countries.

From 1974 Professor Knight pioneered the development of hydrogeology postgraduate education in Australia at the University of Technology Sydney and the University of New South Wales [UNSW], which led to his appointment as the country's first Professor of Hydrogeology at UTS in 1995. Subsequently Professor Knight taught at UTS for 12 years and at UNSW for 18 years, where he was also appointed professor and Director of the National Centre for Groundwater Management from 1991 to 2004. Between 1996 and 2000 Professor Knight was



World President of the International Association of Hydrogeologists and received a Woolley Award for lifetime achievement in hydrogeology.

In 2017 Professor Knight was named a Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International in recognition of his volunteering work in Uganda in 2016. He provided technical development and management expertise to install a groundwater supply for a high school and for local villages. Prior to the project's completion, 400 Ugandan children used to walk up to two kilometres a day with 20 kilograms of polluted water from rivers on their shoulders. I commend Professor Knight for his lasting and notable contributions to the field of groundwater and hydrogeology.

I also commend Ms Carol Harriss, Ms Julene Mangelsdorf and Ms Patricia Wade, who each received an Order of Australia Medal [OAM] for their dedication to hockey. Recipient of the 2016 Women's Masters NSW Player of the Year award, Carol Harriss was awarded an OAM for her contribution to hockey in the Sutherland shire. Carol has been a life member of the Sydney South Hockey Association since 2002 and held the role of senior vice-president from 1984 to 2014. As well as being involved behind the scenes, Carol has played hockey for more than 50 years and recently became a Tartans Hockey Club life member after joining the club in 1999.

Julene Mangelsdorf also received an OAM for her commitment and contribution to hockey. As a Hockey NSW life member, Julene has served as honorary treasurer of the Central Coast Women's Hockey Association, NSW Women's Hockey Association and Tartans Women's Hockey Club for a combined total of more than 40 years. Her dedication to the sport also led her to receive the Australian Sports Medal in 2000 and a 25-year service award from the NSW Women's Hockey Association in 2002.

Patricia Wade is another fierce hockey supporter from Miranda and a recipient of the Australian Sports Medal in 2000. Patricia has been a member of the Sutherland Shire Women's Hockey Association for 60 years and a life member since 1982. She has previously served as secretary of Hockey NSW and the NSW Women's Hockey Association where she received a Meritorious Award for her dedication and commitment to the sport. I congratulate these wonderful women on their outstanding contributions to hockey and thank them for the many years of service to the shire in the sport they love.

I acknowledge the late Mr Ken Herbert, who received a posthumous Member of the Order of Australia for his dedicated service to the sport of sailing. Ken was the founding member of Kogarah Bay Sailing Club 70 years ago, which is a non-profit club that caters for sailing enthusiasts of all ages. During his tenure he held nearly every voluntary role on the committee, including as club secretary from 1965 to 2016. Ken demonstrated his deep love and passion for the sport through mentorship, and he enjoyed passing on the skills and knowledge he had learnt in his many years of sailing to inspire younger generations within the community.

During his time at the club Ken helped to establish the Sailability program. Sailability is a very important program, which helps to enrich the lives of those living with disability by teaching important life skills such as teamwork, comradeship, discipline and respect. Ken passed away in August 2018 at the age of 86. I thank him for his extensive contribution to the community, and I wish Kogarah Bay Sailing Club the very best in its future endeavours. I trust that the club will successfully carry on Ken's legacy for many years to come. I am honoured to be able to acknowledge the hardworking members of the Miranda community and to recognise their contributions to our society.

## NEWCASTLE TAFE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:02):** This Government's record on TAFE speaks for itself. From the second those opposite came to power they have waged war on public technical and further education in this State. They have cut funding, slashed staff numbers and conditions, and undermined the system to benefit private providers who often fall far below the world-class standard set by TAFE. Back in January, a TAFE teacher told the Newcastle Herald that "teachers are at breaking point even before students return—it has never been this bad". The attacks on TAFE have continued as this Government commences its third term.

On 9 May I gave notice of a motion calling on the Premier to intervene after it came to light that the days and hours of work allotted to cleaning staff at Newcastle TAFE were being slashed from five days to two. I was informed of this the week before Parliament returned and I was told that the reduction was planned to commence at midnight on Sunday 5 May. In the dead of night, cleaners were to lose hours. I was informed on Monday that the cuts had been pushed back a week and, together with United Voice, I moved to do what I could to fight this reckless decision. The decision by private contractor Broadspectrum was a continuation of what seems to be this Government's favourite pastime: attacking vocational education and workers in New South Wales. With their hours reduced, it would be impossible for cleaners to get to all areas they need to clean, including hairdressing instruction rooms and woodworking workshops. I was immediately reminded of a report received in January

stating that a lift at the Hamilton campus had been broken for months. Teachers Federation official Rob Long said there are similar problems at other TAFE campuses that he attributes to a lack of funding. He told the Newcastle Herald, "Funding from the State Government is not adequate for TAFE to maintain its facilities and there is a backlog."

The elevator had been utilised by students with disability on a daily basis and yet was still left in a state of disrepair. With TAFE being neglected to that extent, is it any wonder that this Government is comfortable with preventing cleaners from maintaining hygienic facilities? If it is comfortable preventing students with disability from accessing their classes, is it any wonder it is happy to have low-paid cleaners thrown under the bus in the name of profit? It is a blatant attempt to cut costs by cutting corners. It would have left staff, teachers and students at Newcastle TAFE working and learning in unhygienic conditions. What is more, trying to increase profit margins by reducing the working hours of some of the hardest-working and lowest-paid people in the State is fundamentally indefensible.

These people have families. If their hours are cut and their take-home pay goes down, what happens to their kids? Cost-of-living pressures are getting worse, with housing and food insecurity increasing. The New South Wales and Federal governments are pursuing policies that make life on the margins even more difficult for the most vulnerable. Luckily, thanks to the efforts of United Voice and its members, I was in a position to shine a light on this grubby decision and the planned cuts were quickly reversed. This is a win for the hardworking cleaners, a win for TAFE staff, teachers and students, and a defeat for a government that has committed to undermining TAFE for more than eight years. It is a win that would not have happened without unionised workers committed to their jobs and willing to stand up for themselves.

Workers often feel powerless against powerful, entrenched interests such as the Government and a large corporation like Broadspectrum. Thanks to committed delegates and organisers, workers have a way to fight back. After so much damage has been done to TAFE and after the rights and conditions of workers have been so eroded, it is good to have a win. In opposition, wins such as this do not come along all that often. It shows the power that a member of Parliament has to shed light on bad decisions that are made in the dead of night. They say sunlight is the best disinfectant and I was glad to have the chance to see this decision exposed in the harsh light of day for the bad idea that it was.

I assure the Government and Broadspectrum that, moving forward, United Voice and I will keep a close eye on this issue. If they think this attack can be delayed rather than called off, be warned that we will be watching and I will be right back in this Chamber raising these concerns. We will not let further attacks on TAFE go by without notice and response. I have always been committed to TAFE and to workers, and I stand by those commitments. This win will not make me, United Voice or the cleaners complacent. I promise the Government that we will fight to protect workers' rights and we will always stand up for TAFE.

### **COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:07):** Across my electorate of Cootamundra the communities are small, but do not be fooled: We make up for what we lack in numbers with generosity. In our part of the world every week is volunteer week. The strength of community spirit and the desire to help those of us in need is palpable. But that does not make those who consistently put up their hand any less special. Last week New South Wales formally celebrated its volunteers. In New South Wales more than 2.1 million people volunteer and contribute 240 million hours of their time—and time, in today's busy world, is a precious resource. The Friday before last the day began early for me. I picked up lamingtons from Christine Slarke on the main street of Cowra for the hospital auxiliary. These lamingtons are amazing, and feeding me on the road is a vital community service!

Donations to Cowra Hospital from 1988 to 2017 totalled \$411,193.17. Volunteers raise an average of \$30,000 every year and in 2019 it won the Cowra Shire Council 2019 Community Group of the Year award. I say thank you to the Cowra Hospital Auxiliary. On the same day I had the pleasure of opening the climbing spider at the Cowra Nature Based Adventure Playground. The committee, under the leadership of president Patrick Charnock has taken on an immense task for the joy of their children, grandchildren and all the kids of Cowra. It has been working towards this for five years and I am thrilled that the hours spent planting, developing master plans, and working with council and the local Indigenous community are paying off. To the Cowra Nature Based Adventure Playground Committee, I say thank you.

On Monday I was able to celebrate a win with the Ariaiah Park Community Projects Group, which volunteers countless hours like many community groups across the electorate, for the betterment of our towns and villages. Sometimes governments and departments make it difficult for volunteers to give. I am thrilled that together we have been able to untangle some of the red tape and allow this great group of volunteers to maintain Ariaiah Park's beautiful heritage rail station. To the Ariaiah Park Community Projects Group, I say thank you.

On Wednesday I raced back from Orange to spend Wear Orange Wednesday with fellow members of the Junee State Emergency Service [SES] unit. It was with great pride that I watched the training they were doing with SES units from Wagga Wagga, The Rock and Coolarnon. It is an honour to be part of the unit. This is an area where we all support each other. Thank you to Junee and to all the incredible SES units across the electorate of Cootamundra. On Thursday night I addressed the Cowra Rotary Club, which recently celebrated 80 years of service. The club is one of many throughout the electorate that are collecting eligible drink cans and bottles as part of the Return and Earn scheme. They raise money for local causes and community projects. To chairman Ian Brown, president Bill Murphy and all Rotarians present on the night, I say thank you for having me and for all that you do.

During a normal week running around my electorate I interact constantly with volunteers. It comes as no surprise that the NSW SES Young Volunteer of the Year is also one of us—22-year-old Peter Christensen has been recognised at the highest level. Since joining the local SES in 2016 he has gained skills in land search, participating in a rescue operation, communications equipment operations and first aid. He is a qualified skills trainer and teaches storm and water damage and communications equipment operation. He has overcome learning difficulties to become exceptionally qualified and capable when disaster strikes. Harden SES Unit Deputy Commander Ros Bickford nominated Peter for the award. She said, "One day he will make unit commander". He does it to help his community and proves that age is no barrier to participation or achievement. Our volunteers come in all shapes and sizes. Without volunteers our small communities would cease to exist. They are the driving force that propels us forward.

### OATLEY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:13):** I highlight a few recent community events in my electorate of Oatley. Earlier this month I had the privilege of attending the Club Grandviews Women's Bowls charity day. This year the club was raising funds for the cochlear implant program conducted by the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children in memory of former club patron Betty Moses, who sadly passed away late last year. Betty was a well-respected and much-loved bowling member who benefited from cochlear implants. Moving forward, the ladies have informed me that they will be joining with men's bowls to host a barefoot bowls day to raise funds for leukaemia research in memory of one of the club's members, Sandra McCartney, who unfortunately lost her battle with cancer on 1 April. At each Club Grandviews event I have had the privilege of undertaking the important role of barrel duty—believe it or not. This is a role I look forward to each time and would like to thank Grandviews for its continued support of such important charities. I congratulate all the members of Club Grandviews Bowls on their hugely fruitful charity day and wish them many years of continued success.

I also had a chance to support the Kareela Lady Golfers Trivia Night, which was held in the Sutherland shire earlier this month. The trivia night was held in aid of the Australian Lions Children's Mobility Foundation. The event was a great success. The foundation empowers children who cannot walk unassisted to reach their potential by funding walking devices that get kids out of their wheelchairs and onto their feet so they are able to walk, explore, play, work and socialise. This makes them stronger and healthier physically, emotionally and mentally. The foundation's ongoing goal is to provide a walker to every child in Australia who needs one. I thank the Kareela lady golfers for their organisation of the night, including the arrangement of raffle prizes, and wish them many more years of successful events. I encourage anyone in my electorate, those who enjoy golf and those who might not, to support this great organisation so that it can continue its amazing fundraising activities.

Earlier this month I also had the honour of attending the St George Lions Club appreciation night. The St George Lions Club is my local Lions club, of which I have been a member for more than 12 years. At the event we were privileged to hear about the recent charity golf day that the Lions organised when more than \$14,000 was raised to support three significant Lions projects. Of that, \$5,000 was generously donated to the CEO of Club Rivers, Stuart Jamieson, who has always supported local community projects, including the annual Share the Dignity Campaign that my office runs.

The golf day held at Beverley Park Golf Club raised money to benefit the Spinal Cord Fellowship, which supports StepAhead Australia in funding Australian scientists and clinicians to study the latest techniques that are being researched for the repair of spinal cord injury. The second project was the Lions Kids Cancer Genome Project. Lions committed \$4 million to fund the whole genome sequencing of 400 children with high-risk cancers in Australia over three years. Finally, the event also sponsored the Lions Australia Operation Smile, which provides reconstructive surgery to children and young adults born with facial deformities in developing countries such as Papua New Guinea. I congratulate the Lions on their amazing achievement.

While on the subject of Lions clubs, this month I had the privilege of attending the annual Lugarno Lions appreciation night. The theme for the night was "The role your gut microbiome plays in preventing diabetes". The guest speaker for the night was Professor Emad El-Omar, Director of the Microbiome Research Centre from St George Hospital, representing the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation. This foundation is

at the cutting edge of finding links between gut microbes and many of today's diseases and is a world leader in the study of host genetics of gastric cancers. These diseases include gastrointestinal and liver cancer, bowel disease, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes and arthritis, along with other diseases caused by inflammation.

The Australian Lions N3 Diabetes Foundation has contributed more than \$8 million to promote awareness of the dangers of diabetes. Currently about 10 per cent of the population in Australia are affected by diabetes, which is a leading cause of heart attacks, blindness, kidney failure and limb amputations. I am proud to be associated with the Lions Club of Lugarno, whose members committed on the night to continue being regular supporters through screening and education. On behalf of all members of this House, I congratulate the Lions Club of Lugarno on its fantastic night.

#### KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE RAILWAY STATION ACCESSIBILITY

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:18):** The T1 North Shore line and the T9 Northern line historically have been two of the most heavily patronised lines on the Sydney rail network. However, when I became a member of Parliament only Gordon and Turramurra—two of the eight railway stations on those lines within the Ku-ring-gai electorate—were accessible by a lift. The railway stations in Ku-ring-gai represent some of the best examples of early 1900s Sydney suburban railway station architecture and design, set in most cases among beautiful gardens maintained by the councils and local community. Little has changed at these stations since the line was electrified in the late 1920s. Wahroonga railway station, in particular, is listed on the State Heritage Register and it is one of the best preserved and most attractive island platform and station buildings in metropolitan Sydney. But it is only accessible by quite steep stairs. The Government has made a commitment to making public transport more modern, safe and accessible.

The Ku-ring-gai electorate has many less-mobile residents who would benefit from an accessibility upgrade to their local railway station. As a consequence, since I have come into Parliament, I have made personal representations to the Premier, Treasurer and transport Minister for funding to upgrade these stations. I was delighted to announce in June last year that funding was approved for an accessibility upgrade at Wahroonga station to commence with a new lift; upgraded access pathways and ramps; a new family accessible toilet and unisex ambulant toilet; a new kiss-and-ride zone; new accessible parking; and improvements to closed-circuit television [CCTV] and lighting to increase safety and security. As part of the planning process, consultation was undertaken with the local community in November and December last year.

There was an opportunity to meet representatives from the Transport for NSW project team at Wahroonga station and, like several Wahroonga commuters I was able to provide feedback and have my questions about the project answered. It will be undertaken in a way that is sensitive to the potential impact on the heritage features and village atmosphere of the station and its surrounds. The invitation to tender closed in February 2019 and the contract is expected to be awarded next month. While the Wahroonga upgrade will be very welcome, I knew that Ku-ring-gai deserved much more and that I would have to persist in my campaign to ensure that Ku-ring-gai was given its fair share of the train station upgrades across Sydney.

I must acknowledge that many people in the community, including the Waitara social justice group, have been very vocal in asking the Government to secure a lift for these stations. At all of the stations without a lift in my electorate it is very difficult, if not impossible, to access the train services for those with children in prams, seniors and the disabled. In January I was ecstatic to announce at Waitara station, amongst a group of very happy members of the community, that Waitara was earmarked for an upgrade in the coming months. I also announced that three more stations in Ku-ring-gai—Normanhurst, Pymble and Warrawee—would get lifts.

I am frequently asked when all these lift upgrades will be completed. The lift installation process includes design, community consultation, finalisation of the design, invitation to tender, awarding of the contract, and construction. The process takes a different length of time for each railway station as they each have their own unique heritage and engineering considerations. I have been advised that Waitara and Pymble stations are more complex projects than the others. At Waitara station, preliminary investigations are being undertaken to identify the required upgrades, which, in addition to two new lifts, may include accessible pathways and new accessible amenities. The upgrading of the stairs and regrading and extension of the platform are also being considered. Once again, consultation will be undertaken with the local community and key stakeholders as part of the planning process.

The plans for Pymble station and Normanhurst station are similar to Waitara: Pymble station will require three lifts and there is a proposed family-accessible toilet, upgraded stairs and platform. Normanhurst station will have two lifts added to the existing footbridge while a strategic business case is being prepared to link the project to the Epping to Thornleigh third track works to ensure that the construction takes place as efficiently and effectively as possible. As it is anticipated to be the most straightforward of the four railway stations announced

in January 2019. Community consultation in relation to the Warrawee station accessibility upgrade has already commenced. At Warrawee it is proposed that a new lift will be accompanied by a canopy, upgraded access pathways and ramps, accessible parking, new kiss-and-ride zones, accessible toilets, CCTV cameras and additional lighting.

The New South Wales Government has now invested more than \$2 billion in the Transport Access Program. I am proud to be part of a Liberal Government that can manage its budget so that local infrastructure is provided that will dramatically improve the quality of many people's lives. The five Ku-ring-gai railway stations that I have spoken of today are just examples of the local infrastructure improvements that the Government is making all across the State. It is a great privilege to be part of a government that is looking after the communities because it is able to manage its budgets so well.

### MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (19:23):** It is fitting that my first private member's statement in the Fifty-Seventh Parliament sets out exactly what my constituents and I expect from this Liberal Government to ensure we get our fair share. We have great expectations that promises will be met and common sense will prevail. First, I am honoured to serve another term and continue to fight for our community's fair share. The first election promise was for a new commuter car park at Edmondson Park train station, an issue that I, along with my Federal colleague, Ms Anne Stanley, who is the member for Werriwa, had campaigned on well before the Liberals thought it was needed. The ridiculous lack of parking at Edmondson Park station is untenable. Commuters should not have to risk a parking fine just to catch the train on time to get to work or where they need to be. Before the election, the member for Holsworthy boasted that construction of 700 new spaces would start this year. Accordingly, my constituents and I expect to see the promised \$40 million in June's budget. Anything less, of course, will be a broken election promise.

My constituents could be forgiven for doubting the Liberal-Nationals Government's commitment to infrastructure, given its appalling record in my electorate. It is appalling that my constituents have been repeatedly overlooked in relation to fair access to railway stations, in particular, a lift at Macquarie Fields train station. There has been a blatant politicisation of station upgrades under this Government. Upgrades have been committed to other stations, despite data and evidence showing a greater need for a lift at Macquarie Fields station. I note that in his private member's statement the member for Ku-ring-gai outlined funding at a number of stations in his electorate for the provision of a lift. What about my electorate?

And let us not forget the skulduggery in funding a lift at Hawkesbury River station, which barely has 1,000 trips per week, compared to Macquarie Fields, which has many thousands more trips. I expect the transport Minister to stop playing games and give Macquarie Fields its fair share and fund a lift at the train station. Only weeks ago in this Chamber the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces proclaimed the importance of open spaces and green corridors. He said that open spaces and green corridors were "important for physical and mental health and wellbeing in our communities", and "they enhance and preserve our biodiversity, our bushland and Sydney's beauty". My challenge to the Minister is, if he believes what he said about green open space, stop the sale of the valuable land at Hurlstone Agricultural High School. He should not sit back and do nothing as this Government sells the valuable land to greedy developers. The constituents in Macquarie Fields expect nothing less from a Minister who purports to value green open space.

This Liberal-Nationals Government also promised to open a new Service NSW Centre in Prestons or Edmondson Park. In one of the fastest growing areas of metropolitan Sydney, this is a must for my local community. The Liberal-Nationals Government has made our lives harder by closing both Ingleburn and Campbelltown motor registries, and quite rightly people in my local community are unhappy. My local community expects a new Service NSW Centre to be located in the Campbelltown local government area, which has more than 150,000 residents and is growing, to better serve local residents. I know that this request will continue to fall on deaf ears. The Liberal-Nationals Government has a woeful track record on this issue and I am sure it will continue to ignore the needs of my constituents.

I have set out a very clear set of expectations for this Government. This is not an exhaustive list. There are many issues facing the people of south-west Sydney that this Government ignores: the need for a fairer timetable and better train services, the destruction of the Scenic Hills, the long overdue heritage listing of the extended curtilage at Varroville Homestead and the overdevelopment of our area, which has only resulted in more congestion and turned our suburban charm in a developer's dumping zone. It is crucial for the Liberal-Nationals Government to meet those expectations, sooner rather than later. We have waited far too long already. I truly hope we are not left disappointed by this Liberal-Nationals Government, but I am wise enough to know that I should not hold my breath.

### ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (19:28):** I am pleased to bring to the attention of the House the recent celebration of the Assyrian New Year, which is a momentous occasion in the life of each and every Assyrian. It is a symbol of love, friendship and community, and it is reflective of the spirit of all Assyrians who gather every year to participate in the Assyrian New Year celebration. On 31 March it was my pleasure to attend the Assyrian New Year at the Fairfield Showground to celebrate with the Assyrian community and beyond with other members of the community and welcome in the year 6,769.

The Assyrian New Year festival is hosted by the Assyrian Universal Alliance-Australian Chapter in cooperation with the Assyrian Australian National Federation. I wish to extend my thanks and congratulations to them for this terrific celebration. The amazing all-day event featured Assyrian singers, folkloric dancing, various foods, rides, games and fireworks. It was a terrific event. I wish all the Assyrian community a blessed new year as they continue to celebrate the rich, enduring and resilient history of the Assyrian people. I congratulate the Assyrian Universal Alliance and the Assyrian Australian National Federation on leading the celebrations for the twelfth year at the Fairfield Showground. I am fortunate to have joined my Assyrian friends at previous new year festivals, as well as on Assyrian Genocide Remembrance Day.

This new year festival was no exception. It was a memorable and enjoyable celebration. A couple of weeks earlier it was my pleasure to have provided \$10,000 to the Assyrian Universal Alliance to help make this day possible. This year I also announced, with my parliamentary colleague and then Minister Ray Williams that, thanks to the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, the Assyrian Universal Alliance will receive \$80,000 over the next four years to continue to make the Assyrian new year festival a terrific celebration for the whole community. It was the first time that any government in New South Wales had funded this celebration in the community. It was also my pleasure to announce \$50,000 for the Assyrian youth association for their youth of the south-west Sydney project, which seeks to support newly arrived Assyrians into the community.

I extend my thanks and congratulations to those who have organised the festivities this year. I congratulate Deputy Secretary General of the Assyrian Universal Alliance, Hermiz Shahan, and President of the Assyrian Australian National Federation, David David, for their tireless work in making Assyrian new year celebrations possible. I thank Hermiz and David for their efforts and advocacy on behalf of the Assyrian community in south-west Sydney. I also congratulate the Assyrian Universal Alliance, the Assyrian Australian National Federation and the Assyrian Australian Association on their tireless work and advocacy on behalf of the Assyrian community in Australia and beyond.

I congratulate the President of the Assyrian Australian Association, Nabel Karim, and other members of the Assyrian Universal Alliance and the Assyrian Australian National Federation, including Mr Joseph Joseph, Mr Albert Shlimon, Ms Angela Nisan, Ms Shamiran Shahan and Councillor Paul Azzo, the Young Assyrians' Nirari Shahan, Assyrian Khabour Social Association's Mr Charles Shimon, Assyrian Baz Association's Mr Arman Yousif, Assyrian Democratic Organisation's Mr Dinkba David as well as other members of the Assyrian community, including my very good friend and strong advocate Carmen Lazat, Khanna Barouta, Sargon Zomaya, Namroud Slewa, Redmoon Zomaya, Nabel Shimlon, Atra Mirza, Atur Mirza, Nagham Shalal, Reva Khamis, Jaklin Bityou, Milad Naisan, Marlin Shawool, Nagham Orou, Yacob Barhi and Hanna Bessie for their advocacy on behalf of the Assyrian community.

I thank Vince Foti, the President of Club Marconi, who has led the board of directors to make Club Marconi an inclusive and open community space for all in western and south-western Sydney to enjoy. I thank him for his hospitality and continued support of the Assyrian community. I pray that this new year will usher in a year of peace and prosperity as we continue to strive to achieve peace, especially in their homeland. As we celebrate, we must reflect upon the difficulty and challenges that our fellow Assyrians still face today in other regions across the globe. We must always speak up for those who cannot and never give up fighting for what is right and just.

I am continually inspired by the unity, strength and friendship of the Australian Assyrian community. I look forward to my continuing involvement with, and support of, the Assyrian community in the days, months and years ahead. I look forward to the Assyrian new year in 2020. Happy Assyrian new year and may God bless them all. I also foreshadow that the parliamentary friendship group of the Assyrian community will recommence shortly. We look forward to hosting an event in the theatre in this place to continue to make the community of parliamentarians aware of the challenges and issues still facing our Assyrian community.

### AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (19:33:2):** I have long been a supporter of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, known as ANSTO, situated at Lucas Heights in the Heathcote electorate. I am

amazed by its work that is continually developing. ANSTO is a strong community partner, currently employing more than 1,200 people on campus. In February this year the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government announced a \$12.5 million investment in ANSTO to support its vision to create a new nuclear medicine and technology precinct. This investment will accelerate medical and technological breakthroughs while generating 5,000 jobs for the community and beyond. It will be used to create a new world-class precinct for businesses, scientists and start-ups at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation. This investment will fund world-leading nuclear facilities that will use groundbreaking technologies to develop particle therapy, create new medical treatments for inoperable cancers, and monitor the progression of diseases. One of the highlights of ANSTO's work is the open-pool Australian light-water reactor, which is one of only six nuclear reactors in the world that can produce commercial quantities of radioisotopes.

The funding provided by the New South Wales Government will be used to create a globally connected and inclusive community for researchers, start-ups and industry alike. A key initiative of the new project is a next-generation nuclear medicine cluster where businesses will collaborate and share knowledge to fast-track the development of advanced diagnostics and therapeutics such as personalised medicine for the treatment of cancer and other diseases. I thank Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and previous Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation Matt Kean for backing this important initiative. I commend ShireBiz on its unrelenting advocacy and on working alongside ANSTO to showcase the importance of this investment by the Government.

Last week the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, Kevin Anderson, visited the ANSTO precinct to see how the New South Wales State Government's \$12.5 million investment will be used. It was great to visit with the Minister and the member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbons, to see firsthand the innovation that is happening at ANSTO. ANSTO Chief Executive Dr Adi Paterson and founding members of the nandin deep technology incubator showed us some of their work. The opening of the nandin deep technology incubator marked the first stage of the ANSTO Innovation Precinct project. The New South Wales Government's investment has allowed for expansion of the nandin deep technology incubator—the first nuclear science and technology incubator in the world. This funding will help nandin to evolve into a full service innovation hub and enable research by design, collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The New South Wales Government's commitment to the ANSTO Innovation Precinct and the nandin deep technology incubator is a reflection of the importance of technological advancements in health improvements and the growth of industry and jobs. The nandin deep technology incubator will establish a new environment for research translation, knowledge exchange and technology commercialisation, and it will have the potential to house 30 businesses or up to 75 employees. Funding from the New South Wales Government will also support the establishment of a graduate institution which will match young researchers and start-ups that wish to benefit from working alongside each other at one Australia's most recognised science facilities. The aim of the facility is to bring the community and global field experts together. This will allow the greater community to share knowledge, advance the development of diagnostics and therapies and progress the treatment of many diseases. The graduate centre, which includes 25 new scholarships, aims to grow advancing technology businesses in New South Wales.

This precinct will bring unprecedented benefits to New South Wales. Southern Sydney does not currently have a university campus teaching hospital or a significant technology park to serve as a high-tech employment hub. With the right partnership, ANSTO will be in a unique position to significantly increase its contribution to the New South Wales economy and to high-tech job creation by leveraging its concentration of research infrastructure, its intellectual capital and its links to universities and other research institutions across Australia and overseas.

### THE SISTERHOOD COMMUNITY NETWORK

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:38):** It is with a deep appreciation that I update the House on the activities of one of the most inspirational groups in the electorate of Manly that has brought together an inspirational community of women. Since 2009 The Sisterhood has been operating across our community bringing about positive change. Whether it be through holding evening gatherings at which they discuss domestic violence and hear directly from on-the-ground workers or through hosting a luncheon in support of Community Northern Beaches, these women are a powerhouse for good. Andrea Hogan, who was recently named 2019 Local Women of the Year for Manly, founded The Sisterhood after discussing with friends how blessed they all were living life and enjoying the beautiful surrounds of the northern beaches.

Four Sisterhood community networks have now been established in Balgowlah, North Balgowlah, Clontarf and North Manly. Those groups comprise like-minded women whose vision is to build thriving local communities by supporting the vulnerable. The Sisterhood platform provides grassroots support to charities and raises awareness of community issues. What started as a social justice platform that allowed Andrea and her

friends to give something of themselves to the community has grown into a network of local women all wanting to put action behind their concern and support for those who are doing it tough.

Quarterly each Sisterhood community gets together with its own local members to support each other, have fun, raise funds for its chosen charity and provide a platform to raise awareness of community issues. The Sisterhood delivers a platform that empowers women to collaborate and come together as a group to make a difference in communities throughout Australia. It also provides opportunities to educate, inform and inspire women, and allows them to make new like-minded friends, to have fun, to socialise and to be supported in an informal, friendly environment. The core of The Sisterhood is made up of a number of locally well-known and respected women, including Lesley Drakakis, Kate Conners, Andrea Hogan, Megan Campbell, Alli Rayel, Jayne Gerrie, Alexandra Tucker, Clare Wise, Sarah Skinner, Nicole Nortmann, Rachel Newham, Rachel Vincent, Angela Kennard, Bonnie Redman, Sarah Day, Meriel Frost, Pippa Stuart and my friend Carmel McCarney—the list of names continues to grow each year.

The Sisterhood provides the opportunity for women to assist in their local community as and when they can. As members of Parliament we have a unique opportunity to see a community as a whole, and to see people who volunteer their time and who, through their volunteering, will leave a long-lasting legacy. The women who make up The Sisterhood, while having fun a lot of the time, are making lasting change of which they can be proud. In conclusion, while the perception of Manly and its surrounding suburbs is one of wealth and a relaxed lifestyle, I inform the House that issues like domestic violence, suicide and depression do not discriminate based on postcode. They do not care how much money someone does or does not have in their bank account. It is for that reason and many others that I am so grateful for the work of The Sisterhood. I commend their work to the House.

#### NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:41):** Sorry. Sorry that we are not there yet. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation and the magnificent land on which this Parliament sits. I acknowledge the Darkinjung and Guringai peoples, whose land is home to the Gosford electorate and the beautiful Central Coast. I honour custodians who have cared for the land since the Rainbow Serpent from the Dreaming, and the elders and future elders. I am proud to celebrate 2019 National Reconciliation Week beside my Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal brothers and sisters. On that note, I say sorry.

On Sorry Day, at our regional art gallery, I was privileged to be beside Aboriginal people from many nations who now call the Central Coast home. There were so many incredibly talented artists and creative minds from across the coast. Sorry, at the entrance to our regional gallery in Gosford we have greetings in English and Japanese to acknowledge the relationship with our fabulous sister city Edogawa. Where is the acknowledgement of the Darkinjung and Guringai peoples whose land we wake up on every day, who honoured and lived so perfectly within the resources of Mother Earth and who have cherished and protected the lands of the Central Coast since time immemorial? In this Parliament we have so much to learn and we need to open our hearts and minds for more than one week a year to do that.

Tonight I honour Uncle Tex Skuthorpe, an important custodian of culture in our community who recognised how the Aboriginal people built a sustainable society in our fragile landscape. I acknowledge Tex's passing and pass on the thanks of this Parliament for his life's work. Tex was co-author of *Treading Lightly: The hidden wisdom of the world's oldest people*, which takes us on a journey, revealing how traditional Aboriginal stories and paintings were used to convey knowledge from one generation to the next about the environment, law and relationships. It reveals the hidden art of four-level storytelling and discusses how these stories, and the way they were used, formed the basis for an incredibly sustainable society. The book explains ecological farming methods and how the Aboriginal style of leadership creates resilient societies.

Uncle Tex, a Nhunggabarra man from Nhunggal country in north-western New South Wales, gave so much to our community, recognising the importance of providing cultural teachings to young Aboriginal men in custody in the Gosford electorate. He was a painter, educator and custodian of traditional stories and was awarded Aboriginal Artist of the Year by NAIDOC in 1990 to 1991. He reached out and gave culture, recognising the importance of storytelling and art in connecting young men to culture and growing the spirit within.

The Nhunggabarra recipe for sustainable society offers a non-competitive, collaborative process where the corporate greed we see bringing shame to leaders today would be impossible in a society where people respect each other and community is valued far greater than ego. Tonight I commit to ensuring that the generous, humble spirit of Uncle Tex continues in our electorate, our community and beyond. He leaves a legacy we must continue on every level, and part of that legacy is doing better by our Aboriginal people in custody. I am sorry for the high number of Aboriginal people in our prisons.



I am sorry we had to have the "Bringing them home" report and now we have even more children in care than during those times that we consider are behind us. We know that the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care has continued to grow since the release of the first *Family Matters* report in 2016. More than 800 Aboriginal children in New South Wales could be adopted without parental consent under the Berejiklian Government's controversial changes to the State's child protection legislation. We, as legislators, must listen to and work with Aboriginal people. Grandmothers Against Removal have said that Aboriginal children already have a forever home. "Our children are not orphans," said Hazel Collins, one of the Grandmothers Against Removal founders. She said:

They have grandmothers, aunts, uncles who want them and love them. We are questioning Pru Goward as to what right she has to dictate what happens with our children when she can't even sort out the dysfunction in her own department.

Today we have a Premier bragging about not needing legislation to govern, but that just means that the people this Government has forgotten struggle even harder to have their voices heard in this place about decisions that will affect their lives. This evening I reluctantly leave with the words of Ronnie, whom I chat to when I stay in Sydney for Parliament. He lives down in Woolloomooloo. Ronnie waved his bottle at me and said, "Education. Education is the answer." We must learn to listen.

### TRIBUTE TO AUNTY KATHLEEN MILLER

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (19:46):** I take this opportunity to inform the House of the passing of an Indigenous elder known as Aunty Kathleen Miller. Aunty Kathleen Miller was born on 23 January 1929 at 61 York Street, Singleton, at her grandmother's house. Aunty Kathleen Miller was Singleton's oldest living Koori person until her passing at the Singleton Hospital on 25 April 2019 aged 90 years of age. Fittingly, her funeral procession passed by her birthplace on Friday 10 May 2019. Aunty Kath, as she was fondly known, grew up in Whittingham throughout the 1930s before relocating to the Sydney suburb of Redfern with her mother, Jean Miller, in 1940. It was at Redfern when Aunty Kathleen was taken by the Aboriginal Protection Board. James Wilson-Miller, proud son and author of *Koori: A Will to Win*, stated:

My mother and her siblings were stolen by the Aboriginal Protection Board in December of 1940 making them acknowledge as (what is referred to today) Stolen Generation children.

In fact, all of Aunty Kathleen's siblings were taken away from her mother, Jean Miller, in the space of two years. Aunty Kathleen was placed at a home in Glebe with her sister Dorothy and she was separated from her brothers. From Glebe Aunty Kathleen and her sister were moved to Cootamundra Girls' Home for a period of time. Over the years Aunty Kathleen moved back and forth from Singleton for work until finally settling back in Singleton. Earlier this year I had the pleasure of meeting Aunty Kathleen Miller at the official opening of the Singleton TAFE NSW Connected Learning Centre [CLC]. In the CLC a magnificent painting, *Minimbah—Teaching Place*, painted by Carol Cunningham in September 2018, was unveiled on opening day.

Carol was inspired by Laurie Perry, a nephew of Aunty Kath and James Wilson-Miller, son of Aunty Kath, and she designed the artwork around the story of this wonderful Aboriginal lady. The outstanding piece is one of many stories associated with the Wonnarua people and, in particular, with Singleton-born resident Aunty Kathleen Miller. Aunty Kath's Connection to Country is one of many notable stories associated with the Wonnarua people. The painting highlights Aunty Kath's journey near Redbournberry Hill, an unreserved mission on the outskirts of Singleton, and at the St Clair Aboriginal Mission in Carrowbrook.

The painting is rich in symbolism. The Ka-wul or eagle is the spirit totem to protect the Wonnarua people and guide them over Wonnarua land. The makroo or fish, becan or playtpus, womboin or kangaroo, Kunki-Kukan or echidna and the wombat are the local animals in the district along the Myan or Hunter River and were all part of the essential food chain that nourished and cared for the Wonnarua people of their lands. I encourage anyone who is passing through Singleton in the Upper Hunter electorate to call into the CLC centre and see the wonderful artwork that is on display.

Aunty Kathleen Miller is survived by her two children, James Wilson-Miller and Sandra Miller, her nine grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and a great-great-grandchild to be born in June. Aunty Kathleen was an integral part of the Singleton community and a proud Wonnarua Elder. Aunty Kathleen Miller had a richness and wisdom and knowledge that was most likely formed by the period of adversity she experienced and throughout her life. She is certainly a beacon to all members of our community and will be sadly missed. Vale Aunty Kathleen Miller.

### RAMADAN

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (19:51):** This year 6 May marked the start of the month of Ramadan, which is the holiest season in the Islamic calendar. During this time Muslims across Australia and the world fast during daylight hours. Each day the fast starts after the pre-dawn meal known as Suhoor and it is broken

with an evening meal after sunset, known as Iftar. Iftar literally means "break of fast" and commences at sunset with prayer followed by a communal meal. It is truly a community event and a time for friends and family to gather, pray, reflect and, of course, enjoy fine cuisine. Ramadan is also a time when people come together and open their doors to their loved ones, their friends and their neighbours and make generous donations to the needy. Ramadan is celebrated by a number of people as a very special time in many parts of south-west Sydney. In my electorate of Bankstown more than a quarter of my constituents practise the Islamic faith and in Lakemba we hold night markets during Ramadan.

As the member for Bankstown I had the opportunity to attend Iftar dinners with many of my colleagues and councillors. Many schools now have wonderful community Iftar dinners. A few weeks ago I was able to attend Iftar dinners at Bankstown Girls High School and Bankstown Public School. On both occasions it was wonderful to be able to address the parents from the Parents and Citizens Associations, students and relatives, teachers, the school principals and many members of the wider community who had come to enjoy the special occasion of the Iftar dinners. A number of schools in my electorate, including Wattawa Heights Public School, Birrong Boys High School and Yagoona Public School celebrated with Iftar dinners. I acknowledge the many community organisations such as the Lebanese Muslim Association [LMA], which held its annual Iftar dinner last Friday. A number of community organisations under the LMA auspices were also in attendance as well as Samier Dandan, President of LMA.

Two weeks ago the Islamic Charity Projects Association had its Iftar dinner in Liverpool and many other community organisations were in attendance. The El Dunnieh Association in Bankstown also had its Iftar dinner and many councils have had Iftar dinners. We are now seeing a wonderful religious event bringing communities together not only in the electorate of Bankstown but also in many parts of Sydney and nationally. I acknowledge New South Wales police, police youth clubs and other community organisations that have opened their doors to organise Iftar dinners. It is a wonderful way to bring the community together. Particularly following the Christchurch incident we know that our Islamic community in Australia is very sensitive. They are looking for leadership and support from the broader community. I pay tribute to all levels of government and our emergency services, such as the police. They have played a very significant role in ensuring that Islamic communities in Sydney and surrounds have a nurturing and safe place in which to pray and come together.

I acknowledge that Ramadan is a very specific and special time—a sacred month—for many Islamic communities across the world. I also acknowledge we will shortly have the Eid Festival. Next week many different festivals that celebrate Ramadan will come to an end and there will be many different community events in that time. I wish everybody who practises the Muslim faith Ramadan kareem and Ramadan mubarak. I look forward to celebrating the Eid Festival with my community.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Bankstown. Before I call the member for Keira, I acknowledge the many Muslim families in my electorate of Oatley who are celebrating the month of Ramadan.

### SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (19:56):** Suicide and suicide attempts are some of the most devastating consequences of mental distress in our community. Over the past few months people, particularly members of Parliament, probably have been easily distracted by elections, campaigning and even leadership challenges. But in recent weeks my community was shocked by an occurrence that certainly gave a whole lot of things greater relevance. We heard about a young German woman named Tanja Ludwig and her daughter being found dead at the bottom of beautiful Mount Keira, which is one of the most iconic mountains in the Illawarra. Investigators treated the incident as a murder and suicide, but it brought home to the Illawarra community that suicide is an issue we need to talk about.

As a community leader I believe it is important that challenging issues, topics and concerns that are not always easy to talk about in the general community are discussed by leaders in our community. Tragic incidents almost give permission and validation to these issues not being hidden or put aside: They should be discussed. At the outset I acknowledge the member for Hornsby, the Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, for referring in his inaugural speech to the issue of youth suicide. It was a very powerful speech and it resonated with me. We know, for instance, there is a very high prevalence of suicide among young males. We know we have to do more to have the conversation about self-harm and to ensure that people who are thinking about it are able to access the support and services they need.

When exploring Australian suicide data it is important to remember that behind the numbers are the people, families and communities like mine that are impacted by suicide. The rate of suicide among young men is more than three times greater than that of females. For males and females the highest rate of deliberate self-harm occurs among those aged from their teens to middle age. We know that in our respective communities mental

disorders, such as major depression, psychotic illnesses and eating disorders, are associated with an increased risk of suicide, especially after people are discharged from hospital or when their treatment has been reduced.

One of the things that I have been very proud of in my local community is working with the *Illawarra Mercury* to set up training for ordinary citizens to be able to recognise when someone is doing it tough and to provide them with the support and guidance they need to get help. The program is called Illawarra Care to QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer. Following a discussion with Minister Hazzard, the Minister took it upon himself to work with the Department of Health, me and the Federal member for Whitlam, Stephen Jones. From a New South Wales perspective, we were able to secure \$10,000 in funding to train people across our great region to become more aware of and to provide help to someone who has suicidal thoughts or who is looking at self-harm.

I acknowledge the *Illawarra Mercury* editor, Julian O'Brien, for his advocacy and support for this program. Julian and I met on several occasions to discuss this important initiative. I am very pleased that the caring nature of our community has been at the forefront. I encourage all members to ensure that as community leaders we not only talk about this issue but also give permission for people who are suffering to talk about it with their friends, loved ones and those close to them. This is an issue we all have to deal with in our respective communities. By talking about this issue and discussing it we can continue to make a positive impact on people who are suffering.

### FOUNDATION BROKEN HILL

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:01):** Tonight I speak about Foundation Broken Hill. Broken Hill is Australia's oldest mining city; some of the most iconic companies associated with the nation's mining industry have their roots in the town. Economically the region has been sustained by more than 130 years of continuous mining. At one time 15 companies employed 6,500 people to work the rich seven-kilometre orebody. Arguably it is the site of Australia's first terrorist attack—on New Year's Day 1915. Broken Hill is a vibrant community, rich in culture and history; however, the region is widely identified as being in high need. The community needs to make a transition from a mining economy to a diversified economy.

Broken Hill is currently faced with an ongoing population decline, ageing throughout the region, minimal job opportunities outside of mining, high rates of unemployment, a low median income and various other social and economic issues common to many regional communities. In the face of all this, rather than sit back and watch the slow decline of Broken Hill, a dedicated group of locals has worked together to turn an injection of funds from part of a mine closure in 1999 into a successful community foundation, Foundation Broken Hill.

Foundation Broken Hill is a credible, sustainable community capital fund that facilitates employment opportunities and encourages social development. Since its establishment the foundation has contributed more than \$1 million to the local community. The support to the community has been broad. In the past 10 years 40 businesses and 88 community capacity-building projects have been supported. Recently Foundation Broken Hill has joined with 25in25, a group of 20 passionate locals with members from health, education, real estate, retail, agriculture, business, international law, community groups and tourism. They have the aspirational goal to grow the population of Broken Hill to 25,000 by 2025. The group represents great diversity, skills and expertise. Above all, this group is committed to ensuring the future economic and population prosperity of Broken Hill.

I recently met with Foundation Broken Hill and 25in25. We had a great night and I was surrounded by motivated locals with drive, experience and passion. It is important that we recognise groups such as Foundation and 25in25 and their members' commitment to their community and willingness to get involved for the greater good. They do not make money out of this. Currently the foundation and 25in25 are seeking funding for the appointment of an executive officer to accelerate the work of the foundation. The foundation has worked tirelessly for the community and it is time the Government supports its vision and ambition by providing funding for an executive officer.

The foundation, 25in25 and Broken Hill City Council have a vision of Broken Hill being a self-reliant, strong regional community with an active, vibrant residential population. It is time that we recognise the importance of providing support for the project that organisations such as Foundation Broken Hill and local government bring forward. The projects are well researched, professionally presented and in line with the aspirations of local communities. As I have said before, it is so important that we connect with what local communities want. It is time we worked together to ensure our regional communities are good places for people to live.

### WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:05):** Wollongong Hospital needs a budget boost in the June budget. The hospital is groaning under the pressure of treating more patients than ever before. There is a disconnect between the Ministry of Health budget allocation model and the growth of Wollongong service

delivery. This disconnect needs to end. Budget allocations must keep up with demand, patients in Wollongong must get the level of service that they deserve and staff at our local hospital must get the support and resources they need. Recently the Minister for Health and Medical Research has been making a big deal of the fact that the Government has promised to spend \$8.4 billion on health infrastructure throughout New South Wales over the coming term of Parliament. To many people that is a large figure. Unfortunately, once again under this Government Wollongong misses out.

There are two hospitals that have been largely left out: Wollongong and Port Kembla hospitals. When I asked about the planned capital works for Port Kembla Hospital over the period 2017 to 2019 I was informed that only maintenance capital expenditure would be undertaken. Basically the hospital, which opened in 1965 and is now providing aged care, palliative care and rehabilitation services to approximately 8,000 patients per year, is being left to deteriorate. Wollongong Hospital is also being neglected by the Government, with not one specific commitment in the Government's health infrastructure commitments for the largest hospital in the Illawarra region. Wollongong Hospital is the Illawarra's largest referral and treatment hospital. It is part of the principal referral peer group, alongside hospitals such as St Vincent's, Nepean, Prince of Wales, Westmead and John Hunter, to name a few.

Wollongong Hospital treats nearly 50,000 patients a year and houses the busiest emergency department, which accommodates more than 60,000 presentations a year. It also houses the Illawarra Cancer Care Centre, which was funded by former State and Federal Labor governments. Recent additions to the hospital include the elective surgical services unit and a multistorey car park. I note that the elective surgery unit was developed, funded and commenced by the former State Labor Government, while the car park is the only notable addition in the eight years of the current Government. Wollongong Hospital is a big and important hospital in the region but it is at breaking point. The staff do an incredible job with the resources they have but they are stretched. In fact, there are very few occasions where I hear anything but high praise for the staff at either Wollongong or Port Kembla hospitals. But the praise is usually quickly followed by the comment that they need more support. That is the request I make of the Government today.

In the June budget Wollongong Hospital must have a budget boost. I first raised concerns about Wollongong Hospital in 2017 after a trend started to emerge and pressure was building in the system. At that stage of the second term of the Liberal Government the number of patients waiting for elective surgery had grown by more than 40 per cent to a record 2,287 patients, according to independent statistics. Emergency department presentations had risen by 14 per cent to more than 17,000 for the quarter. In part that was driven by a bad flu season but the trend was clear. Since then things have worsened. The number of patients waiting for elective surgery at Wollongong Hospital recently hit a new record high of nearly 2,600 patients at the end of December last year, an increase of more than 60 per cent over the last term of government.

Emergency department presentations continue to grow, reaching nearly 18,000 presentations for the quarter ending 31 December 2018. That is an increase in presentations of 17 per cent over the term of the last Government. Worse still, emergency department waiting times continue to deteriorate. Today, if you are looking to have a hip replacement, knee replacement or have your tonsils removed at Wollongong Hospital you will wait almost a year. We still do not have the thoracic surgeon that was promised prior to the 2015 election. This must change in the upcoming budget. Wollongong residents want a budget boost for Wollongong and Port Kembla hospitals. They want to see a comprehensive workforce strategy that means staffing in every part of the system is improved.

Medical staff should be available when patients need them and those staff need sufficient support staff around them to make sure the system is running efficiently, effectively and in the best interests of patients. They also want to see a plan that will not allow funding streams to again get out of step with future demands and needs. It is not too much to ask, and the June budget is the time it must be delivered. Why? It is because patients at Wollongong and Port Kembla hospitals matter and they deserve their fair share of the State's Health budget.

#### **CAMDEN ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (20:10):** Tonight I will speak about the Anzac Day services that I attended recently. On 24 April I attended an Anzac Day service held at Carrington Care, a non-profit, charitable public benevolent institution that provides state-of-the-art services for independent living, residential care and community care. This service gives the residents of Carrington a chance to attend an Anzac Day service, especially those who are unable to attend events on Anzac Day. Further, many Carrington residents are either returned service men and women or war widows so this service is especially important to them.

On Anzac Day the dawn service was held at the Camden Bicentennial Equestrian Park—known as BEP. The service is held at the memorial garden, which contains three pillars representing the three services of the Australian Defence Force [ADF]. A walkway has also been established that is 8.13 kilometres long, representing

the distance from the beach to the escarpment of Gallipoli. The dawn service was attended by over 15,000 people and the atmosphere at the BEP at dawn on such a sombre occasion was simply magnificent. Local Camden resident Major Lachlan Slatyer gave a very moving speech about the Battle of Long Tan. It certainly gave attendees a true insight into what our soldiers endured during that battle and all battles during war.

Later in the morning the troops assembled for the march through the town to the BEP for the next service. Sadly, as the years go on the number of veterans is dwindling but family members step up and proudly march. Troops from the 7th Light Horse Regiment also rode their horses in the march. Local residents Len Carter and Steve Wisbey teamed up to form the regiment to pay tribute to the soldiers who trained in Menangle from 1900 to 1921. Many local community groups also joined the march, including local schools, the State Emergency Service, the Rural Fire Service and service clubs. At the 11.00 a.m. Anzac Day service Ben Hardie, a student from Wollondilly Anglican College, gave the address. Ben's speech was outstanding. It is clear that our younger generations will continue to commemorate the past, current and future members of the ADF.

On Monday 29 April I attended the Anzac Day service at Macarthur Anglican School. On 1 May I attended an Anzac Day service at Elderslie Public School. This service also included the opening of the school's new Anzac memorial. Both the ceremonies were outstanding, and I thank the schools for giving me the opportunity to attend. Finally, I take this opportunity to thank some very important people who each year commit their time to make sure the services in Camden are so successful: Iain Richard-Evans, President of the Camden RSL Sub-Branch, and his committee, who organise the services and the march; Tash Hodges, who leads the singing of hymns, accompanied by local bands the Camden Community Band and the Campbelltown/Camden District Band; and the local Scout groups who assist with setting out and packing up the seating. Thank you to all residents who attended and to everyone who gave their time to make all the Anzac Day services in Camden so memorable.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:14):** I commend the member for Camden for his private member's statement about Anzac Day services across his electorate and his involvement in his local community. His contribution demonstrates his strong connection with the community. I commend the people of his electorate for their participation in Anzac Day ceremonies. The member said that 15,000 people attended a local ceremony. He also raised a number of important issues concerning young people and their recognition of the history of our nation. It was pleasing to hear him identify many young people of Camden who attended ceremonies and will never forget the great history of this country.

#### EMILY'S LIST AUSTRALIA

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:14):** I praise EMILY's List Australia and its efforts to ensure equal representation of women in Australian politics. In particular, I acknowledge the implications of the work of EMILY's List for the young women of my electorate whose opportunities to be progressive representatives of their communities continue to improve. Modelled on the United States EMILY's List launched in 1985 by Democratic Party women, Australia's EMILY's List was launched in 1996 by Labor Party activists, including Joan Kirner, to assist Australian progressive women candidates to be nominated and to win elections.

I am a beneficiary of EMILY's List endorsement and support. I am also the first woman elected to represent the New South Wales electorate of Coogee. My sincere thanks, appreciation and acknowledgement must be extended to the members of EMILY's List whose work helped me to be here today: Trish Doyle and Helen Westwood as co-convenors of NSW EMILY's List, and our National Chief Executive Officer Maree Overall. I am joined by first-timer and EMILY's List endorsed candidate Janelle Saffin in this place and first-timer Rose Jackson, MLC, in the other place. We have proudly joined the returning 11 EMILY's List members in this Parliament: Trish Doyle; Sophie Cotsis; Jodie Harrison; Julia Finn; Jennifer Aitchison; Kate Washington; Jodi McKay; Jo Haylen; Penny Sharpe, MLC; Yasmin Catley; and Anna Watson.

Those who supported the establishment of EMILY's List Australia in the early 1990s understood that after almost a century of suffrage in Australia women's participation in State and Federal parliaments fell far short of equal representation, with women constituting only 14 per cent of the national legislature and less than 10 per cent in some States and Territories. They were committed to addressing this imbalance between the paramount role played by women in society and the limited contribution of women within the Parliament. They understood that equal opportunity for women within the political sphere would occur only if the forces that support male dominance in the political arena were redressed.

EMILY's List is committed to increasing the number of women in our parliaments. It successfully fought to change Australian Labor Party rules to enshrine affirmative action and to ensure that 50 per cent of endorsed Labor candidates would be women. The impact of such affirmative action is evident in this Parliament. Of the 93 members of this House, the Government—the Coalition—with no affirmative action requirements has only 13 women out of a total of 48 members, or 27 per cent. In contrast, the Labor Party, which has progressive,

enlightened and aspirant affirmative action requirements, has 17 women out of a total of 36 members, or 47 per cent.

The support of EMILY's List is needed because clearly women face great barriers to gaining, first, endorsement and then election. If it were an even playing field, women would already occupy more than half of all membership and leadership positions in this Parliament. According to the 2016 census, more than 52 per cent of the Coogee electorate is female and 48 per cent are under the age of 35. I belong to that demographic and with the support of EMILY's List I am privileged to represent them and the rest of my electorate in this Parliament.

I know it makes a difference for young women in particular to witness a society in which they are able to attain public office. There are so many factors undermining community belief in democratic principles. There are too many people who have experienced feeling cut off from equal opportunities and experienced marginalisation and disadvantage. I hope that my election to this House—and that of all female representatives in parliaments throughout Australia—helps to elevate the confidence and self-esteem of young women in my electorate and everywhere else. It is only right that I acknowledge the important role performed by Kristina Keneally as the first female Premier of New South Wales and Gladys Berejiklian as the first woman elected to the position.

Although the symbolism of and meanings attached to greater female participation in the Parliament are important in themselves, the implications for the development of much-needed policies and laws is even more significant. Unfortunately, history has shown us that men will not generally prioritise women's issues. Even when they do, it is inevitably through the filters of a caring or enlightened male, a protector, but not a woman herself. We need female voices in Parliament to ensure that women's concerns are clearly and forthrightly expressed, addressed and prioritised in Parliament. Democracy requires that women speak for themselves and act to enshrine in legislation the rights of women in all aspects of their lives.

There are the issues of great concern to women that have not been adequately addressed in this place, issues that impact daily upon the wellbeing and safety of women. One such issue is domestic violence. In my own electorate last week, Gihan Kerollos was murdered by her husband outside the Prince of Wales Hospital. It is absolutely crucial that more women are encouraged to run for Parliament and to put themselves forward for leadership positions. We believe democracy is enhanced through the diversity of people participating in it. More women in Parliament, on corporate boards and in our courts leads to greater diversity of views and therefore better public policy outcomes.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I thank the member for Coogee for a very enlightening and well-considered contribution, one that I agree with.

#### **EAST HILLS ELECTORATE**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (20:20):** A real legacy of this Liberal-Nationals Government, and something the people of East Hills were conscious of when they went to the polls on 23 March, is that it keeps its promises and delivers for its communities. If we say we are going to build it, we build it. We only need to look at the opening of the Sydney Metro Northwest this week to see that this Government takes its promises to this State seriously. That is why, when I stand here talking about the things we committed to build during the recent election, I am talking of not just empty political promises but rather things that I am confident will be delivered. This is on the back of a strong track record of delivery over the past eight years of Liberal representation for the first time in our local area.

There is no doubt in my mind that before Glenn Brookes at a State level and David Coleman at a Federal level became the first elected Liberal parliamentary representatives of our area, Labor took East Hills for granted. The historic Labor neglect of East Hills changed when Liberals like my good friends the former member for East Hills, Glenn Brookes, and David Coleman were elected to the State and Federal parliaments. Let us look at some of the commitments that we will deliver. It was Glenn Brookes who initially had the vision for the major upgrade to our local hospital—in fact, a total rebuild of Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital.

During the State election campaign, nobody was happier than Glenn and I were to have been able to achieve the commitment to spend a massive \$1.3 billion on rebuilding Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. That is the single largest amount promised to be spent on a hospital in New South Wales and it will ensure the very best possible medical treatment for the people who live in our area. That investment is on the back of previous improvements to Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital led by Glenn, such as the construction of the cardiac catheterisation lab and expansion of the dialysis unit. As each stage of the planning process for the new hospital proceeds, I will be keeping our community informed about the rebuild that both the community and I are very excited about.

Traffic is an ongoing issue in East Hills and so the commitment of \$100 million to upgrade Henry Lawson Drive will allow the people of East Hills to spend less time on the road and more time with their families and loved ones. The upgrade will certainly help. I apologise in advance to the Minister for Transport and Roads, but I have a list ready of many more projects across our area to keep the transformation going in and around East Hills. Another of the highlights of the East Hills campaign for me was attending St Christophers Football Club at Marco Reserve with the Premier to announce that the Government would fund a new clubhouse. That was a great announcement not only for the football club but also for many other organisations that use the space such as Oztag, touch football and cricket groups and the many NSW Primary Schools Sports Association teams that rely on the facility. My thanks go to President of St Christophers Football Club Stephen Michael and all of the families in attendance that day for making Gladys and me so welcome.

Since the closure of the Roads and Traffic Authority office in Padstow, the residents of East Hills have enjoyed the improved efficiency and far more customer-friendly and outcomes-focused Service NSW office at Bankstown. But naturally they have wanted a service like that returned to their local area. During the election campaign, the Government committed to provide a new Service NSW in our local area. A site first has to be found and then the office fitted out, but I will be working with Minister Dominello to ensure that it can happen as soon as possible. One reason that our people love to live in East Hills is its great proximity to the beauty of our area including the Georges River. But East Hills is also very convenient by rail to the CBD. As a consequence there is great demand for more parking spaces near the railway station. The Liberal election commitment of 400 new commuter car spaces at Revesby was warmly welcome by our local community.

We have fantastic public schools in East Hills. In March this year I visited Milperra Public School with the then Minister for Education to announce that the Government had committed to build a new school hall. That news was greatly welcomed by the teachers, parents and students. I hope that I have been able to show the exciting improvements for East Hills that have been promised by the Liberal Government and what I intend to deliver on for our community.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:24):** I commend the member for East Hills for her private member's statement regarding delivery by the New South Wales Government, particularly in the area of infrastructure. I note the member's commitment and dedication to the rebuilding of her local hospital. She identified succinctly that good infrastructure comes from good economic management. Whether it is hospitals, roads or local sports clubs, the member has identified through her private member's statement a commitment to meet her election promises. East Hills is in very good hands.

#### **TRIBUTE TO ROBERT JAMES LEE HAWKE, AC, A FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (20:25):** Along with many of my parliamentary colleagues from this side of the House, I pay homage to the twenty-third Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke. Bob Hawke was a man whom many would describe as a revolutionary; a man who modernised Australia and its economy; a man who united Australia like no other Prime Minister has since his time. It is beyond doubt that Prime Minister Hawke helped Australia to stand on its own two feet and led the country with the highest levels of pride, patriotism and integrity. Bob was a union man, a fighter for all working Australians and a fierce advocate for giving all Australians a fair go. He offered opportunities that we could never have dreamed of.

Universal health care, foreign policy reforms, advancing women in modern Australia and enacting protections for Australia's environment are some of the many achievements that Bob Hawke accomplished during his time as Prime Minister. Many in my electorate are saddened by his passing. Many constituents have told me that without Hawke's reintroduction of Medicare and passing of crucial reforms in the 1980s, they would not have had the opportunities to excel in life as many do today. Who can forget Bob's famous comment when Australia won the America's Cup in 1983? He said:

I tell you what, any boss who sacks anyone for not turning up today is a bum!

Then he added—to be fair to the bosses—that you would have to work a little bit harder the next day to make it up. Bob always believed in a fair go, but a fair go for all. I conclude by saying that members on this side of the House will never forget the courage and honour with which Bob Hawke led during his time in office. We will do everything we can to hold this Government to account and to reinstate the fair go for all Australians living in New South Wales. It is the least we can do to honour Labor's greatest son. Vale Robert James Lee Hawke, AC. Rest in peace.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I thank the member for Cabramatta for his significant contribution on the passing of inarguably a great leader of Australia and of the Australian Labor Party.

## WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (20:27):** As this is my first private member's statement, I will give the House some details about the electorate of Wollondilly. Since my election I have seen the great diversity of landscapes, locations and people in my electorate, and the issues that affect my electorate—from raising the Warragamba Dam wall in the north to mining subsidence in the centre and health care for an ageing population in the south. The provision of transport infrastructure across the electorate is a key issue that I will pursue as a matter of importance.

During the election campaign announcements were made in relation to transport. First, Melinda Pavey—then roads Minister—announced that a number of regional roads in my electorate would revert back to State Government control, thereby taking pressure off the local council. Secondly, there was an election commitment to examine the provision of rapid bus services from key locations in the Wollondilly shire and the Southern Highlands. Those services will be in addition to current train services on the Southern Highlands rail line. They will give commuters choice and ease pressure on commuter parking at Macarthur and Campbelltown stations. I will be talking with Minister Constance and Minister Toole to expedite this. In addition, complex planning issues need consideration to ensure that the semi-rural character of sections of the electorate is balanced with the need for growth in housing and the creation of local jobs. I will work closely with the two councils in my electorate to ensure that this balance is considered.

I have met with a number of constituents in the first few weeks and attended a number of events. The Anzac Day service at Picton was particularly memorable, with several thousands of locals in attendance. I thank and congratulate Ray Law and the Picton Anzac Day Committee on organising this exceptional service. The following week, I attended the Anzac Day assembly at Picton High School. This was a solemn and memorable service with the whole school in attendance. A stirring Anzac Day address was given by one of their senior teachers, Maurice Capps. Picton High School is being upgraded to the tune of \$102 million. Picton High is one of two public high schools in my electorate. I am looking forward to the new K-12 public school in Wilton Junction being built as part of infrastructure provisions in Wilton New Town. The Mittagong State Emergency Service is one of the busiest in the State and I recently had the pleasure, with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, David Elliott, to hand over the keys to a new state-of-the-art rescue vehicle. The vehicle is equipped with the most up-to-date technology. I even tried the jaws of life.

At that same visit to the Southern Highlands, the member for Baulkham Hills, in his capacity as Minister for Police, hosted an event in Bowral known as Coffee with a Cop. This was a great opportunity for the locals to sit down and talk through various law-and-order issues affecting them. I look forward to continuing that event throughout the electorate. The Southern Highlands sector of my electorate has a history of having a thriving cultural focus and I am looking forward to working with the local community to deliver the Southern Highlands Regional Art Gallery to be located at the old Fairfax estate in East Bowral. The New South Wales Government has granted \$2.49 million to enable the commencement of this project. We are fortunate to have artists of the calibre of the Archibald Prize winning Ben Quilty as part of the group that will be steering this project. I am thankful for the continuing interest and support of the Hon. Don Harwin of this great project.

Sport plays a very important part of community life in the Wollondilly electorate with clubs and associations such as the Wollondilly Netball Association, Group 6 Rugby League, teams such as the Thirlmere Tahmoor Roosters, Picton Magpies, the Oaks Tigers, Appin Dogs, Bargo Bunnies, Bowral Blues, Mittagong Lions, Oakdale Workers and the Warragamba Wombats. In rugby union we have the Wollondilly White Waratahs and my team, the mighty Bowral Blacks. The Picton Rangers Football Club [FC] and Wollondilly Knights Australian Football League are thriving in their respective codes.

During the election I was able to secure funding of \$1 million for the provision of all-weather courts for the Wollondilly Netball Association, located at Tahmoor Sports Ground. This association caters for more than 700 netballers from minis to masters. In addition, \$1 million was secured to complete stage two of the Picton Sports Ground. This will greatly benefit Picton Rangers Football Club. Wollondilly Little Athletics were also provided with \$35,000 to upgrade their equipment to meet updated standards. The men's sheds in the electorate provide an invaluable service to the community as well as assisting men to deal with issues that they have. In particular, the Menangle Men's Shed provided great assistance to me during the recent election campaign. I thank Ray Smith, Charlie Copeland and his team for their support. I look forward to working with the men's sheds to assist them in the future. And, yes, in my inaugural speech last night I said, "Toot, toot, all aboard!" The Picton-Mittagong Loop Line is creating a head of steam in the electorate. This project will fast track a tourism-powered economic boost to our regional economy.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:32):** I commend the member for Wollondilly for, as he says, his first private members' statement in this Chamber. The member has identified important issues within his electorate, including roads and bus services. The member has made a commitment to work with his local council



and I am confident that he will do a fine job. I note the member's extensive involvement with his local community, whether it is attending Anzac Day ceremonies, functions at local schools or events with his local emergency service workers. Wollondilly is in good hands. The member has vision and commitment for his electorate and I am confident he will deliver.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I congratulate the member for Wollondilly. He will not always get the Parliamentary Secretary to speak with such kind words, but I am sure he will be making many more private members' statements in the future.

*Committees*

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

**Messages**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council regarding the establishment, membership, and time and place for the first meeting of the committee.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:35 until  
Thursday 30 May at 10:00.**