



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 19 June 2019**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 19 June 2019

**The Assistant Speaker (The Hon. Mark Joseph Coure)**, in the absence of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, took the chair at 10:00.

**The Assistant Speaker (The Hon. Mark Joseph Coure)** took the chair at 10:00.

**The Assistant Speaker** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country. [*During the giving of notices of motions*]

### *Notices*

### PRESENTATION

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

### *Bills*

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2019

#### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 18 June 2019.**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (10:13):** I take this opportunity to congratulate the member for South Coast on her appointment as Minister for Local Government. Based on her experience as a councillor for more than 17 years and a member of this House for 16 years, I am sure she is doing an amazing job in her new role. The Local Government Amendment Bill 2019 proposes to extend the rate freeze for a further 12 months for councils amalgamated in 2016 where the Minister has determined that the last rate path will continue to apply. The bill will give councils that amalgamated in 2016 further opportunity to consult with their community to discuss new council's strategic priorities, levels of service and appropriate rates. Extending the rate path freeze for a further 12 months simply makes sense. Councils will still also have the option to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] for a special rate variation.

The bill also proposes to extend the amount of time as to when councils have to nominate their election provider for the 2020 local government election. Given the current IPART review into the cost of local government elections, due by August 2019, councils will have until October 2019 to nominate their election provider for the 2020 local government elections. Councils will be able to resolve to enter into arrangements with the Electoral Commissioner and those arrangements must be resolved by 1 January 2020. Local government elections are a costly burden on councils and councils need to make sure they are getting good value for money. After all, the only money government has is the money of its citizens and ratepayers expect their rates will be spent wisely. For the same reason, when I was elected to State Parliament in 2019 I stood down as mayor and remained a councillor, as I did not want to subject the ratepayers of Camden to a costly by-election.

The bill proposes also to give councils that so wish the ability to share their staff and services. All governments should be about saving money and sharing staff and services is a way to achieve this. This is something that I initiated. When I was a director of the Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils I put a motion forward that the councils bring back a report outlining ways the three councils could share services and subsequently save money. I am now aware that Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, Liverpool City Council, Wingecarribee Shire Council and Wollondilly Shire Council have been granted authorisation to collectively tender and contract for waste processing services until 1 July 2044.

The bill proposes also to give councils an opportunity to address red tape by increasing the tendering threshold from \$150,000 to \$250,000. Councils will no longer be required to go to competitive tender for contracts with a value less than \$250,000. Local councils have been asking for this change for some time and this bill goes some way to addressing those concerns. The bill provides councils with other exemptions from tendering requirements for certain disability employment organisations and pre-qualified suppliers. This provision will increase local government purchasing opportunities to support businesses that employ people with a disability. It will also allow council to engage organisations approved under the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 or firms pre-qualified under the National Prequalification System for Civil (Road and Bridge) Construction contracts without going to tender.

The bill will reduce regulatory burden for councils. I was elected to Camden Council as a councillor in 2012 and elected mayor in 2018. I am all too aware of the red tape and regulatory burden on councils. The Camden local government area is the largest growing area in Australia, with over 200 new residents moving in each week. The pressure on the council due to the growth is a constant challenge. Removing regulatory burden and red tape is not only beneficial but also can save tens of thousands of dollars. The bill delivers on the Government's commitment to ensure that councils are transparent and accountable to their communities, and this is a good thing. As I have already stated, I am very supportive of the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019 and I commend it to the House.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:18):** I make a contribution to the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019. I will speak specifically to paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Overview of the Bill, which state:

- (a) to increase to \$250,000 the value of a contract at or above which a council is required to invite tenders and to provide for other exceptions from the tendering requirement,
- (b) to extend by a further 12 months the period for which the Minister for Local Government may maintain the existing rate path for amalgamated councils. As to paragraph (a), the bill increases the threshold from \$100,000 as specified in the Act—although by regulation that was increased to \$150,000—to \$250,000. The Opposition is concerned about whether or not that will allow for multiple small contracts to be awarded with limited scrutiny. This amendment has advantages and disadvantages. One advantage, particularly for rural and regional councils, is that they will be able to implement a "buy local" policy and ensure that they use local businesses for their services. That is a positive from this change. However, there is some concern about multiple small contracts because that may allow some subcontractors to fly under the radar by not having to tender.

The United Services Union has raised the issue that councils may choose not to use day labour but instead subcontract their services by letting multiple small contracts valued under \$250,000. As I said, the "buy local" policy has advantages. Given the Government's procurement policy about awarding contracts to Aboriginal companies, it may provide more opportunities for Aboriginal companies to be more competitive and create more work for them. Overall I can see the advantage of the change with the rider that existing day staff are protected in local councils.

The main issue I want to raise today is the extension of the rate path for amalgamated councils. I am not opposed to the extension; I think there is some good merit in it. In her second reading speech the Minister said she wanted to ensure that councils consult properly with their communities. The amalgamation of Gosford City Council and Wyong Shire Council into the Central Coast Council is going quite slowly and there are a few issues, one of which is that people in the old Wyong Shire Council area, where my electorate is located, currently pay a higher rate than those in the old Gosford City Council area. We have been watching very closely to see the way in which the Central Coast Council has divided its funding in its latest operating plan. It seems at the moment that although people in the old Wyong Shire Council area are paying higher rates they are getting a smaller return on capital investment. People in my area are concerned that for another 12 months they will be forced to continue to pay the higher rate.

Last week the council deferred its decision to seek an extension of 12 months until after this legislation is passed. I assume the legislation will pass because it has support from both sides of the House. However, people in my electorate will pay higher rates for the next 12 months. Last week we had a meeting with councillors and on Friday there will be a meeting with the mayor and senior staff about consultation with the community because obviously there will be winners and losers. The scenarios are that the old Wyong council rate stays where it is and the Gosford council rate is increased to that level, Wyong drops to Gosford's level, they meet somewhere in the middle or they all go up. Currently the Central Coast Council area has a high rate of non-payment. Already council is not collecting rates because people cannot afford to pay them. Further, in this growing area, particularly in my part of the Central Coast, there is not enough money to provide the services that are needed.

It is a real dilemma. I said to our councillors that they have to be very careful moving forward with this consultation. We have to get the balance right between affordability and providing the money that we need for essential services. In principle I support the extension of the 12 months. The Minister is 100 per cent right that councils should do proper consultation and bring in all the ratepayers. But I raise the issue that because of the way the amalgamation occurred, the Wyong part of the Central Coast Council area has been paying a higher level of rates for a longer period. Some sort of compromise will have to be made. I do not envy the councillors who have to make a decision about who will have to pay more. That is very difficult in times when family budgets are already very stretched.

This has to be considered in the context of the amount of cost shifting that is currently happening. I was very alarmed when the council put out its operating budget and not long after found out that the emergency services levy would be added on. That action took the council's share up to about \$680,000, which means that the council's budget is now \$18 million in the red. Originally it was coming in with a small surplus, but now it is in the red. It had not budgeted for that amount of money in its operating budget. I do support the bill but I raise those



issues on behalf of my community. We need to ensure that council workers are protected under the changes to paragraph (a) when awarding contracts without tender, and paragraph (b), acknowledging that since the amalgamation people in my area have had the pain of paying more and carrying a heavier load on the Central Coast whilst not getting the return in infrastructure from the operating budget.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (10:26):** I support the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019, introduced to Parliament by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Shelley Hancock. I acknowledge the work the Minister has done since being appointed to this important role and I commend her for her consultation with many mayors, councillors—particularly in the electorate of Goulburn—and other stakeholders to hear firsthand some of the issues the sector is facing. I am pleased this bill takes the first step to address matters that councils have identified as key priorities for the local government sector. First, the bill seeks to give councils more time to have important conversations with their communities about the conduct and cost of future local government elections and rates harmonisation in councils established in 2016. The New South Wales Government has commissioned the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to review the cost of local government elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission. The findings of that review will be available later this year and will help inform councils' decisions on the conduct of the 2020 elections.

The amendments proposed in this bill give councils an additional six months to consider the IPART findings and nominate a preferred election provider. Local councils are keen to better understand what drives their election costs and support the independent review of this issue. The outcomes of that review will affect councils' choices of election providers for the 2020 election. The additional six months gives councils the opportunity to be more informed through the outcomes of the IPART process. The bill also seeks to provide more time for councils merged in 2016 to complete their rates harmonisation processes. Whilst many councils have been working closely with their communities to prepare for the end of the rate-freeze period, there are some, due to the complexities of local government mergers, that are not as advanced and are struggling to meet the time frame currently imposed. The harmonisation of rates must be implemented with thorough community consultation. This bill seeks to give councils the choice to delay rates harmonisation for a further 12 months to allow for further community consultation.

The councils that are ready to proceed with harmonisation from 2020 would still be able to do so under these proposals. Councils that choose to wait would implement their new rating arrangements from 2021. The regulatory burden on councils is often raised in discussions with the local mayors of the Goulburn electorate. Therefore I am pleased that the bill also seeks to remove some of the current limits on local government procurement and proposes further amendments to cut red tape and reduce the regulatory burden on councils and local communities. Specifically, it proposes to increase the tender threshold for councils from \$150,000 to \$250,000 and provides sensible exemptions on disclosing fees to prevent councils from being commercially disadvantaged in procurement negotiations. Councils have been asking for these changes for some time. It is important we support these changes to enable local governments to deliver to their communities in a more timely fashion.

Thanks to good financial management and investment in regional New South Wales by our Government, there is an enormous amount of infrastructure to be delivered in my electorate. This bill will assist the councils in my electorate to do that. Options to utilise pre-qualified professional services, directly procure services from disability employment organisations and engage nationally pre-qualified road and bridge construction firms are welcome. Additionally, the bill proposes further steps to enable cost-sharing and service provision between neighbouring councils by allowing for agreed delegation of regulatory functions and mutual recognition of section 68 approvals where appropriate.

Councils have been asking for these voluntary measures for some time. They will help to provide savings and improved services for local communities. It will be up to each council to decide whether it chooses to use the provisions. The bill is important to councils in this State. I am delighted that the local government Minister is supporting and listening to local governments and, more importantly, acting on requests to enable councils to deliver for the people and communities of the Goulburn electorate and the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:31):** The Local Government Amendment Bill 2019 in its present form has been discussed in the Opposition caucus. I acknowledge that the Minister for Local Government has undertaken significant consultation, not only with the shadow Minister but also with the United Services Union and others, and I thank her for that. The Opposition supports this bill. It is a valuable piece of legislation that will assist local government in New South Wales.

I will discuss two parts of the bill. The first is the 12-month extension of the period for which the Minister for Local Government may maintain an existing rate path for amalgamated councils. The second is the extension of the cut-off date to 1 October 2019 for councils to decide to enter into arrangements with the Electoral

Commissioner to administer the 2020 ordinary council elections, and the extension of the cut-off date to 1 January 2020 for councils to enter into those arrangements. I discussed one of those matters with the Minister and I thank her for her comments and advice.

I refer first to the extension for a further 12 months of the period for which the Minister for Local Government may maintain the existing rate path for amalgamated councils. In the Prospect electorate we have three councils—Blacktown, Fairfield and Cumberland councils. Neither Blacktown City Council nor Fairfield City Council was subject to amalgamation processes over the last few years, so they are standalone councils; however, Cumberland Council was. It believes it was pushed into a forced amalgamation of the old council of Holroyd, the council of Auburn and the Woodville Ward of Parramatta. An administrator was appointed at the time. I live in the old Holroyd in the Cumberland council area, so I know it very well. Following a lot of upheaval during the administration, the administrator finally left and a council was elected from the previous councils.

That, in itself, began to bed down and sort out some things. But members can imagine that a council with the reputation, history and background of Auburn City Council was of great concern to the people who lived in the old council area of Holroyd, which did not have any scandals in the entire history of the council. There are also very diverse communities in Auburn, the Holroyd area and the Woodville Ward of Parramatta. There is nothing wrong with that. On current figures, the rates that are paid in the old Auburn area are \$787.39 on average; in Parramatta and the Woodville ward, \$878.96; and in Holroyd, \$1054.97—considerably more in Holroyd than in Auburn. That reflects those communities: The old Holroyd area is wealthier compared to Auburn.

However, that will radically change with harmonisation across the local government area. In Auburn rates will increase by \$156; in Parramatta, or the old Woodville Ward, they will increase by \$85; and in Holroyd they will drop by \$115. The Holroyd part is in my electorate of Prospect; probably the residents there will be happy about the rates drop. But that harmonisation has a major impact on the old Auburn and Parramatta areas. It is extreme because the old Auburn area was reliant on the rates from north of the M4: the Silverwater industrial estates, the Olympic Park precinct and Wentworth Point. Something like 35 per cent of the rate base was from those industrial areas, compared to their having something like 20 per cent of the population. That really needs to be considered. There are massive changes here to average rate payments for people living in the old Woodville Ward and Auburn, which are demographically low income: a lot of migrant families and a lot of unemployed people. There are significant issues there, so that is a concern.

Amongst councillors of the Cumberland Council and in the area that used to be Holroyd, there still is a massive, ongoing movement to push the de-amalgamation of those councils. These rate changes will have a major impact throughout the Cumberland Council area. We also need to look at how this council is going to survive when it loses close to 35 per cent of its rate base by taking away Silverwater, the Olympic Park precinct and Wentworth Point and adding them to the Parramatta local government area. At the moment councillors and others are seriously considering holding a referendum at the 2020 election to de-amalgamate Cumberland Council. It is a serious ongoing discussion. It is something that I would like the Minister to be aware of and that needs to be seriously considered.

I also raise the matter of cut-off dates for councils to decide to enter into arrangements with the NSW Electoral Commission to administer the 2020 ordinary council elections. I have serious concerns about this—and it is not an issue with this bill. The issue is this: Certain local government councils use private providers to run their election campaigns. That, to me, is a serious concern. I believe, as do a lot of councillors and former candidates—Labor and Liberal and Nationals and others; this is not a party political thing—that private providers should not be running election campaigns for local councils. The Parliamentary Research Service has undertaken research in regard to which councils have used private providers and has identified for me which councils conducted their own elections during the 2016-17 local government elections.

Prior to that, at the general election in 2012, 14 councils conducted their own elections. That improved, and in 2016-2017 there were six. In 2017 Maitland City Council used the Australian Election Company; in 2016 Fairfield City Council also used the Australian Election Company; and also in 2016 Gunnedah Shire Council surprisingly conducted its own in-house council election. It engaged the services of a private individual, Ian Horwood, as returning officer and Terry Curran as the assistant returning officer. Gunnedah Shire Council ran its own local government election—I do not see how that can be transparent. I am concerned about that. Also in 2016 Kempsey Shire Council, Lake Macquarie City Council and Penrith City Council all used the Australian Election Company.

I cast no aspersions on these private providers or on the councils, but I am concerned that current or future councils might use private providers rather than the NSW Electoral Commission and I very much believe that all these councils should be using the Electoral Commission. I have spoken to a number of councillors from these councils and asked them, "Why do you use a private provider?" The only argument they put to me was on

how much it costs. Then I spoke to other councils in my area who do not use private providers and I asked them, "Why do you not use a private provider?" They said, "We do not really care about the cost so much."

It is important to make sure there is transparency and independence. We want to make sure that happens and that we are seen to be having a hands-off approach, and the Electoral Commission is the best way to do that." It might be worth considering whether future New South Wales budgets should provide funding to the NSW Electoral Commission to accommodate this. Rather than have the councils pay for it themselves, maybe we need a budget that makes sure local governments and councils can have their elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission. That is all I have to say on this matter. I thank the Minister again for introducing this bill. I endorse the bill.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (10:41):** I support the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019. Through this bill, the Government is delivering what councils across New South Wales have been asking for for many years: practical and sensible changes to local government procurement that will help cut red tape and deliver better value for ratepayers. These changes make good sense and will save money for regional communities as well as metropolitan councils. I am particularly pleased that they will open the way for greater council collaboration on procurement, especially in regional New South Wales, by providing more flexibility and greater purchasing power. This will enable smaller councils to work through their regional joint organisations, if they choose to do so, to get a better deal. That means a better deal for the ratepayers as well.

Many councils are already successfully undertaking shared procurement for goods and services and getting great results for their communities. These changes will remove some of the existing barriers and help councils get on with the job of achieving savings and greater efficiencies. Smaller councils will now be able to provide more, get better deals and access a wider range of providers than ever before through shared procurement arrangements. Combined with the other practical measures in the bill to allow for the delegation of certain regulatory functions and mutual recognition of approvals, the door is wide open for local councils to build a new way of working together, a way that respects their local identity, shares expertise and delivers on more affordable goods and services to local communities.

One of the most positive changes in the bill is a new opportunity for councils to purchase services directly from disability employment organisations approved under the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912. This is indeed great news for all communities, particularly those in regional New South Wales, where councils are often the main employer in town and one of the largest purchasers of goods and services. The measure will help to promote meaningful and more sustainable employment for people with disabilities in rural areas and support this Government's commitment to growing regional economies and ensuring equal opportunities for all. Another practical measure in the bill that will help to cut red tape is the change to allow councils to enter into contracts worth up to \$250,000 without necessarily going through a full competitive tender process.

This is effectively a \$100,000 increase to what is currently permitted by the regulations, reflecting changes in costs as well as improved procurement support and practices within councils. The Government has been working with local councils to strengthen business systems and procurement practices and build internal audit programs. In fact, nearly 70 per cent of New South Wales councils have already established audit risk and improvement committees prior to the mandatory requirement coming into effect in March 2021. This is a strong show of support by the local government sector for improving its governance and financial management for the benefit of their local communities.

We are confident that councils will be ready to make the change to the new tendering threshold as provided for under the legislation. Importantly the change to a higher tendering threshold will reduce unnecessary costs and delays for many council projects and result in less red tape for businesses seeking local government work. This is a commonsense and practical approach that will create efficiencies in how councils manage their procurement. At the same time the bill will ensure that councils have access to a wider range of State Government-administered pre-qualification schemes when it comes to procuring services. Councils have been asking for this change for some time and the amendments make it clear that they can now access these schemes and benefit from the cost savings they deliver. This is a great bonus for all councils, particularly those in regional New South Wales, which often find it difficult to source highly specialised services.

While councils will continue to support local businesses for much of their work as they currently do, these changes will ensure that when specialist services are required councils in rural and regional areas can get access to the best providers at a sensible price. These measures reflect the Government's commitment to opening opportunities for local councils across the State and will help to ensure that much-needed infrastructure and services can continue to be delivered on time and within budget. I note that the bill extends council access to firms pre-qualified under the National Prequalification System for Civil (Road and Bridge) Construction Contracts. Regional councils need roads and bridges to help keep freight moving and to connect communities. These changes will provide councils with more options to provide this vital infrastructure.

The bill also enables regulations to be made to exempt councils from the requirements to advertise council fees for commercial activities in certain situations. While all members support transparency in government we know that there are some circumstances where councils need to undertake commercial-in-confidence negotiations to ensure that the council gets the very best value for their ratepayers' dollar. This provision will prevent councils from being commercially disadvantaged in relation to other service providers when negotiating contract fees. It is another change that councils have been asking for and I believe it is a sensible approach to these situations.

The Government has been listening to what local councils have told us about the changes they need to deliver quality services and value for their communities. This bill will deliver those changes. It opens the door for a more efficient approach to local government procurement while still ensuring sufficient checks and balances remain in place for probity and transparency. There is widespread support for this bill in the local government sector. Local Government NSW president Linda Scott commended local government Minister Shelley Hancock for finding "sensible solutions for local councils". Councillor Scott said:

Minister Hancock has not only listened but delivered, achieving cut-through and bringing about simple solutions to issues that impact on councils and their communities.

I note that the Minister is in the Chamber this morning listening to the debate on her bill. I commend her for her work in this space. She is a lady with a lot of direct experience in local government, having been a member of council for 17½ years and also having held the position of deputy mayor. She has extensive firsthand experience of the challenges and opportunities of local government and how the sorts of tweaks that this Government is delivering through this bill can have a long-term effect on the prosperity and flexibility of local councils. In my short four-year term as a councillor on Penrith City Council from 2008 to 2012 I too observed the incredible stretch on local council budgets to continue to deliver the services and the quality experiences that the ratepayers demand.

I am very proud to be a member of this Government which has brought forward a bill that will see councils such as my council, Penrith City Council, and other councils in the Mulgoa electorate, including Blacktown, Fairfield and Liverpool, able to take advantage of these changes. These changes will drive financial savings for councils and they will have more money available to deliver better services and to improve infrastructure, particularly footpaths, playgrounds and shade for playgrounds, in our communities. It means councils' budgets will have more money so that they can continue to deliver greater facilities and greater services for the ratepayers of our communities.

I thank the Minister for Local Government for taking on her new role with both hands and with the enthusiasm and determination to bring about practical changes quickly following the Government's return to office after the election. I know that her extensive direct experience in local government for 17½ years will hold her in good stead and I wish her well. I thank the Minister, her team and the department for bringing forward the bill that is before us. I acknowledge the support for the bill across the Chamber and I look forward to seeing the impact that it will have not only in regional New South Wales councils but also in councils in my electorate. I also look forward to seeing how much additional infrastructure and services councils can now deliver because they are saving money in the procurement of services and the delivery of projects in their areas of responsibility. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (10:51):** I make a contribution to debate on the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019. Each day residents across New South Wales are trying to manage their household budgets; mums, dads, couples and singles have to balance the money coming in with the expenditure required to live. Electricity bills, council rates, strata fees, groceries, mortgage payments, rent and child care are some of the expenses that impact on household budgets. That is why every person who pays a bill or buys goods wants to know that they are getting value for money and are making every cent count.

Most of us will research products and suppliers to make sure we are getting the best deal possible and are dealing with reputable companies. Taxpayers and ratepayers expect and deserve the same from government organisations. I have reservations about some aspects of the bill that have the potential to short-change ratepayers when it comes to value for money and, just as importantly, about the consequence of reducing the level of public trust in the management of their hard-earned money. My concerns specifically relate to schedule 1 [1], schedule 1 [2] and schedule 1 [3] to the bill.

Schedule 1 [1] and schedule 1 [2] raise the tendering exempt threshold to \$250,000. I am concerned about the need for rigorous corporate governance given the substantial increase. Contracts that are below this threshold must go through a transparent internal selection process prior to a contract being awarded. It is important that the internal selection process must also go through an independent assessment on a regular basis because we are dealing with public money and managing public trust. Ratepayers must be satisfied that a corporate governance

structure is in place to ensure that not a single dollar of public money is being wasted. Being careful and considered with public money are important variables in the public trust equation.

Issues around aggregation also need to be considered. For example, to avoid the tender process a council could have multiple contracts with the same service provider where each contract is for less than \$250,000. What is to prevent a service provider from breaking up their service contract into stages or different parts that are below the threshold? A stage one contract could be worth \$245,000, stage two \$230,000, stage three \$245,000 and so on, just as a matter of administrative convenience not of commercial reality. Suddenly there is a contract worth more than \$1 million to a single service provider with no tendering process and no oversight in determining value for money due to the absence of a competitive tendering process. Up to \$250,000 is not an insubstantial amount for local government, especially for smaller rural and regional councils, and creating a more opaque environment only increases the risk of corporate misdemeanours.

It is a sad fact that public sector procurement can be a hive of mismanagement, misconduct and, at worst, corruption. The December 2018 ICAC report titled *Corruption and Integrity in the NSW Public Sector: an assessment of current trends and events* found that more than 50 per cent of ICAC's reports that contained findings of corruption involved procurement and/or contract management processes. The report states that due diligence tended to be performed to a higher standard when part of a formal tender process or large project. However, when suppliers were sourced for smaller engagements—for example, when they required just a single quote or where there was a direct engagement—the standard of checking usually fell away.

Now we are about to legislate that contracts of up to \$250,000 should be given more executive discretion and less transparent examination. This does not seem to meet the spirit of ICAC's findings. Furthermore, the ICAC report found that agencies do not have robust systems for conducting due diligence on suppliers. I believe that the exempt threshold in the bill falls short in creating an adequate due diligence framework for contracts to ensure that our ratepayers are getting value for money. For example, in Operation Tilga—an investigation into the supply of security services to several New South Wales public authorities—ICAC recommended mechanisms such as scrutiny of low bids, consideration of previous performance, seeking referee reports beyond those provided by the tenderer and verification of case studies, as broad due diligence measures.

No ratepayer wants their council awarding a \$240,000 contract when the work is actually worth only \$150,000 because adequate internal assessment was not undertaken. If the threshold of \$250,000 were to be adopted, I would like to see contemporary publishing mechanisms—such as real-time publishing of awarded contracts online—to ensure transparency and accountability. Schedule 1 [3] to the bill indicates that councils do not have to invite tenders if a contractor is approved under the National Prequalification System or is a disability organisation under the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912.

It is imperative that the list of approved organisations remains contemporary and that all contractors have not had adverse legal findings made against them for civil or criminal charges. Only last month police made arrests of those in an alleged organised criminal syndicate accused of defrauding more than 70 people of NDIS payments. It is alleged that three registered NDIS providers fraudulently claimed more than \$1.1 million in NDIS payments to buy items like luxury cars—money that was meant to go to NDIS clients for disability support programs and equipment. Our most vulnerable were left stranded and the public was ripped off because the service provider was not properly assessed.

"Phoenix" contractors and company directors of pre-approved contractors must have a clean record and be of good and proper character. This information must be as contemporary as possible. There are myriad stories of the smallest subcontractors being ripped off by the big tenderers who win contracts only for the said company to file for liquidation, leaving many subbies and small businesses unpaid. For major contracts, some councils are increasingly engaging top-tier corporate consultants and spin doctors, which rebrand corporate images and develop glossy brochures that masquerade as planning reforms. They are essentially outsourcing work and awarding lucrative contracts to lobbyists and expensive consultants on projects that many in the community do not want, and that deliver no commensurate community value.

This bill makes it even easier for councils to continue this process without enhancing corporate governance. Ratepayers must have confidence that the system works in their best interests. I will always be on the side of the ratepayers and residents who require transparency and strong corporate governance structures. I am not on the side of the council corporate executives and their desire for increased administrative convenience and/or discretion. This bill can be improved to ensure that the benchmarks set meet community standards and expectations and to ensure that the public trust in the management of public finance only ever improves.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (10:59):** I congratulate the Minister for Local Government on her appointment and thank her for presenting the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019. Two significant purposes are to be achieved by this bill. The first is the provision of an additional six months for councils to make a decision

on how they will administer council elections in 2020. The second purpose, which is most pertinent to the electorate of Albury at this time, is an extension of a further 12 months for consultation on rating harmonisation for those councils that were formed in 2016. I will focus on this second limb of the bill, as the Albury electorate takes in three different council mergers. Tumbarumba shire has merged with Tumut to form Snowy Valleys Council, Corowa shire has merged with Urana shire to form Federation Council and, to the north-west of the electorate, Murrumbidgee shire has merged with parts of Jerilderie shire to become Murrumbidgee Council. This is not the first occasion on which the Albury electorate has been impacted by council mergers. In 2004 Greater Hume Council came into being as part of the then Labor Government's local government reform process. To quote from the council now:

The creation of Greater Hume Council was a particularly complex merger with areas of the former Hume Shire Council split three ways between Greater Hume, Albury and Corowa. Most of the growth areas of the former Hume Shire were lost to Albury and Corowa whilst Greater Hume inherited 75% of the Hume Shire road network but only 56% of the rate revenue.

Unlike in 2004 when the Labor Government adjusted regional council boundaries including those that became Greater Hume shire, this Government has facilitated the changes with substantial additional funding. The Government has provided new funding not only to manage administrative restructuring but also to deliver a generational boost to local infrastructure. Those projects, with funding from the New South Wales Government, have been welcomed by the communities of my electorate and are a positive part of the regeneration and growth experienced by many who love living in those regional areas. As may be expected when significant movements of government and administration take place, we acknowledge the challenges and the impact of change. However, importantly, there are opportunities to improve and modernise practices and processes. This contributes to sound governance and prudent financial management. It is a fact that the mergers that took place in the Albury electorate involved councils with small resident populations. Much work has had to be done and to that end I congratulate the councillors and council staff on their efforts. It is not an easy job. Their work is appreciated.

As time progresses we have to deal with the harmonisation of different rating processes for the merged councils. Rates are subject to capping and to possibilities for some extension beyond that when circumstances dictate. The processes of rate setting reflect the infrastructure needs and aspirations of local populations along with the available resources. A layer of complexity comes into the mix when you also factor into the equation the relative populations of adjacent areas and their urban centres. For example, the population of Tumut far exceeds the population of its neighbour Tumbarumba. Rating harmonisation must be done fairly but also with due transparency of process. We are dealing in this matter with local businesses and with ordinary residents who have made regional towns and communities their home.

The first phase required a freeze on all residential rates. That was set to expire on 30 June 2020. Now comes the process of harmonisation to deliver a single rating structure across a council area. Clearly, there will be significant changes in rates affecting some individual property owners. That is an area of concern, particularly in some of the councils that have been involved in the amalgamation. By a proposed amendment to section 218CB, the bill will give councils and the communities they serve more time to settle the formula that they believe will work best across their local government area. Importantly, a council may nevertheless opt out of the extension of time in order to implement its harmonisation sooner.

The bill does not impose a one-size-fits-all jacket on all merged councils. This is about giving councils room and time to move well and with appropriate consultation and consideration of their individual circumstances. However, the time frame is not indefinite. This is a process that must proceed within a timely framework. The Local Government Amendment Bill 2019 wisely limits the time for rate harmonisation to an additional 12 months. Within my electorate Councillor Julia Ham from Snowy Valleys Council has been quoted in the media expressing her support for the extension of time. When interviewed she said:

The merging of two financial systems has been complicated. It is good that the New South Wales Government has recognised that communities are struggling with change and slowing down the process a little.

This has been an ongoing concern for ratepayers.

It is pleasing when government keeps a close eye on financial changes affecting those who live and work in this State. Being able to finesse arrangements and adjust the pace of change are signs of finely tuned fiscal management. As I have outlined, that has been noted and is appreciated. Of course, councils continue to have the option to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a special rates variation if that is what they believe will best suit the needs of their residents and businesses. That too is part of the challenging rating landscape for communities and their local representative councils.

I take this opportunity to thank all council staff and councillors for their work, particularly those who have been involved in the merger process over the past three or four years. I commend the Minister for the first bill she has introduced as Minister for Local Government. I thank her for listening and for her empathy. It honours the Government's commitment to assist and support councils to carry out their tasks with the encouragement that

comes through genuine consultation, while being backed up by measures that help ease the regulatory burden. I support the bill.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:07):** During my contribution I will focus on the first two objects of the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019, which are:

- (a) to increase to \$250,000 the value of a contract at or above which a council is required to invite tenders and to provide for other exceptions from the tendering requirement,
- (b) to extend by a further 12 months the period for which the Minister for Local Government may maintain the existing rate path for amalgamated councils

I was a councillor for 17 years on Parramatta City Council and was one of only two women in the history of that council to ever be the mayor or lord mayor. That is very disappointing in a council that has existed for over 150 years and I am hopeful that it will change in the near future. Having been a councillor for such a long time, I have deliberated over many tenders. I believe that the amendment to the Act to increase the tender threshold to \$250,000 is warranted because over time the value of tenders has increased a lot. My concern from my experience is more about the use of exemptions. Looking at the Act, I do not think that is as tight as it should be. Something that particularly concerns me from my experience at Parramatta council is leases and whether they should be subject to tender.

I believe every leased council property should be subject to tender. It should go to council and there should be a council decision about who should take over the property and for what purpose. Unfortunately, it was my experience on a number occasions—particularly during my last term on council—that some rogue operators in the council's property section seemed to think they knew better than the elected councillors about what use certain council properties should be put to. They tried to get around the tender process by claiming that the annual amount for which a property was going to be rented was so far below the threshold that it did not have to go to council. That happened even though it was often a five-year lease, which meant the quantum well and truly exceeded the \$150,000 value at which point tenders must be put to council.

Public land is an important resource for the whole community. For that reason the council may choose to lease properties to an organisation even though it may not capture the highest possible return. It is entirely for the elected councillors to make that decision. In particular, community rather than commercial properties require a wide range of interests to be weighed up, not just the financial interests. On every occasion a tender should be required for the lease of property. No matter the value of the tender, it should go to the council.

The other matter I will raise is the proposal to extend the maintenance of the existing rate paths for a further 12 months. Cumberland Council is not concerned about the extension of time, but it has a number of concerns about merging the rate paths all at once. It is particularly problematic for Cumberland Council because there is a disparity of about 25 per cent between the cheapest and the most expensive rates in the merged council areas. Cumberland Council was created through the amalgamation of parts of Holroyd, Parramatta and Auburn councils. Just prior to the amalgamation Holroyd City Council had a special rate variation which had the effect of raising its rates far above that of the adjoining councils. At the moment ratepayers in Auburn are paying an average of 25 per cent lower rates than those in the former Holroyd City Council area. The potential variation is between 35 to 45 per cent. The deferral will help. It means the incoming council will have to deal with this issue. It is important that with such great disparity between rates it does not become a matter of election speculation and does not affect how well the council makes its long-term decisions.

It is important to note that both Cumberland Council and the new City of Parramatta were created right next to each other with similar sized populations to form a gerrymandered council in Parramatta that would be largely controlled by the Liberal Party for decades to come. In creating that council, the Government has also created a council that has about the same population as Cumberland but double the financial resources. Auburn council was broken up into the high rating industrial area to the north that went into Parramatta and the cross-subsidised residential area to the south, which is one of the poorest parts of Sydney, that went into Cumberland.

The Granville and Guilford areas, which do not have commercial central business districts, also went from Parramatta to Cumberland. It means that Cumberland Council will have to maintain the huge industrial area around Wetherill Park but it does not have the same commercial rate base as Parramatta to support and cross-subsidise the adjoining residential areas. The disparity is quite enormous. When it comes time to merge together the rate paths of the three councils it will be a huge hit for the people who live in Auburn and are some of the most financially disadvantaged in Sydney. In fact, the people who will face the biggest rate increases are those with the least capacity to pay.

If the changes were spread over a number of years it would make things a lot easier than if they happen all in one year. While I appreciate that it was better to defer it for a year because of the staging of the election

cycle, the huge increase will still be extremely problematic and painful for people in the council area. I raise that aspect as a concern because I am not sure it has been considered in the bill. Cumberland Council is not the only merged council with a large disparity between the lowest and highest rates, which is up to 25 per cent in this case. It will have a huge impact on families in those areas. I hope that this will be considered and that a way forward will be examined to ensure that the transition does not have such a drastic impact on the households paying the rates in the future. I also ask that the tendering process be looked at to make sure that all tenders for council properties go to council. A tender falling below the cap should not be used as a reason to prevent the elected councillors from considering the future use and occupants of properties. I thank the House for the opportunity to make a contribution to debate on the bill.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (11:15):** It is a pleasure to contribute to debate on the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019. I note that the good Minister is in the House. I commend the Minister for introducing the bill and for her work subsequent to her elevation to the ministry. The Minister has commented a number of times inside and outside this House about the consultative process she has followed in the early stages of this new term, particularly in talking to mayors right across New South Wales. The Minister has taken on board what they see as issues that concern their local government areas and communities. I have no doubt that the Minister will take those comments to heart and tackle the portfolio with gusto.

I speak in this debate with some experience in local government, although it is certainly not as extensive as the Minister's 17 years. From my short experience, I can appreciate the dedication of all councillors and mayors to their public service duties. In their positions they have large volumes of material to read, late night council meetings and masses of interaction with the local community. I know councillors like doing those things—that is why they serve—but it is time consuming. They should be commended no matter which part of the State they are from.

I will focus on the tendering and procurement measures set out in the bill. Through this bill the Government is delivering what councils across New South Wales have been asking for for many years. That is, practical and sensible changes to local government procurement that will help cut red tape and deliver better value for ratepayers and council areas across New South Wales. The changes make good sense and they will save money for regional communities as well as metropolitan councils. I am particularly pleased that they will open the way for greater council collaboration on procurement, especially in regional New South Wales, by providing more flexibility and greater purchasing power. That will enable smaller councils to work through their regional joint organisations—if they choose to do so—to get a better deal for their ratepayers.

Many councils are already successfully undertaking shared procurement for goods and services and getting great results for their communities. The changes will remove some of the existing barriers and help councils get on with the job of achieving savings and greater efficiencies. Through shared procurement arrangements smaller councils will now be able to buy more, get better deals and access a wider range of providers than ever before. Combined with other practical measures in the bill that allow for the delegation of certain regulatory functions and mutual recognition of approvals, the door is wide open for local councils to build a new way of working together that respects their local identity, shares expertise and delivers more affordable goods and services to their local communities.

One of the most positive changes in the bill is the new opportunity for councils to purchase services directly from disability employment organisations that are approved under the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912. That is great news for all communities, particularly those in regional New South Wales. Being from a regional area, the Deputy Speaker herself would be aware that councils are often the main employer in some towns and one of the largest purchasers of goods and services. The measure will help to promote meaningful and more sustainable employment for people with disabilities in regional and rural areas and support the Government's commitment to grow regional economies and ensure that opportunities are provided for all.

The change to allow councils to enter into contracts worth up to \$250,000 without necessarily going through a full competitive tender process is another practical measure in the bill that will help to cut red tape. It is effectively a \$100,000 increase to what the regulations currently permit and reflects changes in costs as well as improved procurement support and practices within councils. The Government has been working with councils to strengthen business systems and procurement practices and build internal audit programs. Nearly 70 per cent of New South Wales councils have already established audit, risk and improvement committees prior to the mandatory requirement that comes into effect in March 2021, which is a strong show of support by the local government sector for improving their governance and financial management for the benefit of their communities.

We are confident that councils will be ready to make the change to the new tendering threshold as provided for under the legislation. Importantly, the higher tendering threshold will reduce unnecessary cost and delay for many council projects and result in less red tape for businesses that are seeking local government work. It is a commonsense and practical approach that will create efficiencies in how councils manage their procurement.



The bill will also ensure that councils have access to a wider range of State government administered pre-qualification schemes for procuring services. Councils have been asking for that change for some time. The amendments make it clear that councils can now access those schemes and benefit from the cost savings they deliver. That is a boon for councils, particularly those in regional New South Wales that often find it difficult to source highly specialised services.

While councils will continue to support local businesses for much of their work, the changes will ensure that rural and regional councils can get access to the best providers at a sensible and efficient price when specialist services are required. The measures reflect the Government's commitment to opening opportunities for councils across the State and will help to ensure that much-needed infrastructure and services can continue to be delivered on time and within budget. I note that the bill extends the access of councils to firms that are pre-qualified under the National Prequalification System for Civil (Road and Bridge) Construction Contracts. Regional councils need roads and bridges to help keep freight moving and connect communities. The changes will provide councils with more options to provide that vital infrastructure.

There is no doubt that roads and bridges in regional areas are some of the most highly sought after and commented upon pieces of infrastructure. Providing them at efficient prices will bring great savings and benefits to those communities. The bill also enables regulations to be made to exempt councils from the requirement to advertise council fees for commercial activities in certain situations. While we all support transparency in government, we know that in some circumstances councils need to undertake commercial-in-confidence negotiations to ensure that they get the very best value for the ratepayer dollar. The provision will prevent councils from being commercially disadvantaged in relation to other service providers when negotiating contract fees. That is another change that councils have been asking for and I believe it is a sensible approach in the circumstances.

The Government has been listening to what councils are telling it about the changes that they need in order to deliver quality services and value for their communities. The bill delivers those changes. It opens the door for a more efficient approach to local government procurement while still ensuring that sufficient checks and balances remain in place for probity and transparency. There is wide support for the bill in the local government sector. As I mentioned in my opening comments, no doubt that is because of the efforts of the Minister and her widespread consultation with the sector. President of Local Government NSW Linda Scott commended the Minister for finding "sensible solutions" for local councils and said:

Minister Hancock has not only listened but delivered, achieving cut-through and bringing about simple resolutions to issues that impact on councils and their communities.

The bill will bring efficiency and effectiveness and provide value for money for all of the great communities across New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (11:25):** The member for Fairfield has indicated the Opposition's position on the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019. Nothing I say should be seen to be either directly, or by implication, inconsistent with the views he expressed, whatever they might have been. I note that in her second reading speech the Minister for Local Government observed that the bill "reflects the Government's commitment to assist local councils through consultation and the easing of regulatory burden." I welcome the Minister's statement. I hope that this is a beginning of removing regulatory burdens that have been imposed upon local governments since 1993, when the Hon. Gerry Peacocke enacted an outstanding piece of legislation.

Since 1993 the Parliament has constantly intruded by re-regulating local government, often as a result of either a newspaper headline or of the errant conduct of a councillor or one particular council. Towards the end of her second reading speech the Minister said that the bill delivers on the Government's commitment to ensure that councils are transparent and accountable to the communities that they serve. I ask that the Minister extend that commitment in respect of transparency and that she investigate, or have her office investigate, a practice that has developed in many councils that is inconsistent with the objects of the Act regarding the transparency with which they are required to operate.

In local government a practice has developed whereby councils are implementing private briefing sessions for councillors behind closed doors and the material provided is not subject to public scrutiny. As I said, that is inconsistent with the objects of the Act. As an example, it has reached the stage where one of my councils behind closed doors had detailed briefings on the council's budget in which they discussed the allocation of various funds in respect of their own projects. They then walked into a council meeting and in 10 minutes adopted a \$100 million budget. That is hardly acting with transparency. I am told that the practice of these briefing sessions has extended throughout the industry. The response from some general managers is that no decisions are made behind closed doors; they are all made at the council meeting. But all the deliberations and material provided to councillors is behind closed doors.

When we talk about the transparency of the decision-making process we also need to talk about the transparency of the material and advice provided to council, because the public is entitled to know what material is being provided to councillors prior to them making their decisions. That is why business papers are online or placed in council libraries. That is why the public, when they come to council meetings to speak to their council, think that all the material before the councillors is what is in the public domain. The reality of the situation is that most of it is not. Most of it is behind closed doors.

A previous Minister for Local Government legislated to ban councillors from having binding caucus meetings. The argument was that councillors should not reach binding agreements behind closed doors—those things should be transparent. Caucus meetings have been effectively abolished as a binding decision-making process but the staff are caucusing with councillors behind the same closed doors. In my view that conduct is unlawful, but if it is not unlawful then it is certainly contrary to the spirit of the Act. The proposed amendments to section 55 in schedule 1 [2] increase to \$250,000 the threshold for the value of estimated expenditure or the receipt of an amount under a contract, below which the council will be able to enter into a contract without inviting tenders. The argument is that councils should be given greater flexibility. I commend to the House the amendments proposed to section 55 (3) with the addition of the following clauses:

- (q) a contract made with a person or body approved as a disability employment organisation under the *Public Works and Procurement Act 1912* for the purchase of goods or services in relation to which the person or body is so approved,
- (r) a contract made with a person or body prequalified as a supplier under the National Prequalification System for Civil (Road and Bridge) Construction Contracts as administered in this State by Transport for New South Wales.

They are worthwhile and the House should support them. But I draw attention to the current section 55, which limits contracts going to tender for works over \$100,000. Section 55 contains a large number of exemptions already. Councils are not required to go to tender for all works beyond \$100,000. They have a regulatory power to extend that amount in certain circumstances. Section 55 (3) provides exemptions in a number of circumstances, including where a contract is entered into by a council with another council, in a contract for the purchase or sale of land by a council, in a contract for leasing or licensing or a contract for the purchase or in a sale by a council at public auction. There are plenty of exemptions in section 55 that do not limit councils by having to go out to tender.

I suggest the best way to frame the proposed amendments to section 55 is to provide councils with a discretion not to go out to tender and that that discretion be subject to a public report to a council, not in a private briefing and not as one line in a business paper, so that there is public scrutiny of a decision not to go out to tender. At the moment in a variety of procurement areas councils are required to obtain three quotes before deciding on a particular expenditure—that is a corruption deterrent mechanism. But of course seeking three quotes is no solution to prevent corruption. You can get two genuine quotes and then get the third quote from somebody that you know. Alternatively, quotes may not compare apples with apples. For example, you cannot compare three quotes for catering unless you identify the volume of food, the menu and the quality. [*Extension of time*]

The provisions requiring a tendering process are for two purposes. The first is to ensure transparency and genuine competition. The second is a corruption prevention mechanism. There are two areas in local government that the Independent Commission Against Corruption has advised are generally the source of corruption: One is planning and the second is procurement. In the area of corruption in procurement local government is only a minority in the public sector. Investigations conducted by the Independent Commission Against Corruption note that most of the procurement corruption occurs at a State level and not at a local government level. It would be unfair to accuse local government of that corruption.

I suggest an examination of section 55 be undertaken by the time this bill goes to the other place. I do not mind raising the amount. However, for contracts between \$100,000 and \$250,000 I would require the council to publicly specify reasons in a report to the council—so the councillors and the public know about it—as to why it is in the council's interest not to go out to tender. If the contents of that report contain confidential material, the council has the power under the Act to exclude that report or part of it from public consideration.

Another issue is the one-year extension for the regularisation of rating by amalgamated councils. That is a good proposal. We all know why the Minister has proposed that change. Existing councillors would thank her sincerely because it means councils do not have to increase rates in certain sections of their areas before the local government elections. I would have loved to have had that discretion. But at some point the rate regularisation, as the member for Granville indicated, will have to happen. A long-standing issue I have raised with the Office of Local Government is why we rate on unimproved capital value. I know it is historic—it has been done for 100 years—but in Victoria councils have an option of rating on improved capital value not just on the value of the land. For example, if someone has a tin shack in Bellevue Hill they might pay less in rates than someone with a five-storey mansion in Bellevue Hill because of the value of the two properties. That might be a fairer way to levy a tax on property.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** When you find a tin shack in Woollahra, we want to know about it.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** Am I talking about the member for Ku-ring-gai's house? Whether we should or should not rate on unimproved capital value requires examination. I have not been able to get to the mode of reasoning behind sticking to unimproved capital value in all the questions I have been asking for a long time. If I am wrong, I wish somebody would give me a mode of reasoning as to why I am wrong. Other than that qualification, I am pleased that the Minister is consulting widely. She herself is experienced in local government. It is important that we remove the regulatory burden. But when the Minister asks why there are so many problems in so many councils, I would suggest that it is the quality of advice to councillors who are not subject to public scrutiny in private briefing sessions that plays a big role in answering that question.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (11:40):** In reply: I thank all the members of Parliament who have contributed to debate on the Local Government Amendment Bill 2019. Obviously, many members have experience in local government and/or passion for local government, and I have appreciated every single comment that they have made. Some comments have been somewhat extraneous to the debate but most have been absolutely relevant to the bill before us. Members who have contributed to the debate are the members for Dubbo, Manly, Riverstone, Terrigal, Fairfield, Lake Macquarie, Balmain, Blacktown, Charlestown, Camden, Wyong, Goulburn, Prospect, Mulgoa, Macquarie Fields, Albury, Granville, Seven Hills and Heffron—I hope I have named all the members who contributed.

I will talk specifically about some of the comments made by some of the members of Parliament and then I will get onto more general comments about the bill itself. This morning the member for Wyong raised a matter that has also been raised by the member for Fairfield. I will be moving amendments that I think will satisfy the concerns raised by the member for Wyong in relation to protection of day staff. I have also listened to the United Services Union on this matter. The amendments that I will move come from further consultation. I have said all along, as the member for Heffron recognised, that I intend to consult with the local government sector on all of these issues. The member for Wyong also raised the issue of rate harmonisation and its complexity, as did the member for Heffron, the member for Granville and many other members. We recognise that this is a really complex matter. Therefore we have decided that in this bill we will grant a 12-month extension. That has come from the local government sector itself recognising that it needs more time to come to terms with the issue of rate harmonisation.

The member for Prospect raised a number of matters in his contribution, as he had in discussions with me. He raised the matter of private providers, as did other members, and the fact that he would prefer it if only the Electoral Commission dealt with elections. This is a matter for another conversation. I acknowledge the comments of the member for Prospect, but this matter is somewhat extraneous to this bill. However, it is a matter that I will consider, as other members have also raised it with me. The member for Macquarie Fields spoke of some councils hiring consultants and spin doctors. If the member for Macquarie Fields is concerned about that, he should refer it to his local council. Again it is a matter that is really extraneous to this bill and should be addressed to the local council.

I recognise the member for Granville's experience as a local councillor—17 years, almost as long as I was a councillor. She said that leases should be tendered out. The clauses in this bill concern increasing the tender threshold, not tendering out leases. I am happy to have a further conversation about this matter with the member, but this is a matter for another day. I thank all members who contributed to debate on this bill including the member for Dubbo, who is very committed to his local council, as are all the members who spoke on this bill. The member for Manly talked about the Northern Beaches Council with great enthusiasm. I have met with the mayor and general manager of that council and share the member's enthusiasm for the councillors. I know the member for Terrigal is enthusiastic about everything he does and has a really good relationship with his local council. The members' enthusiasm for and close relationships with their local councils are what came through in all the contributions to this debate on this bill—for example, that of the member for Riverstone.

I thank the member for Fairfield for the conversations we have had and his willingness to talk about which aspects of the legislation should be considered for amendment. As I said, those amendments will be brought forward. The member for Blacktown is an impressive person. I have met the general manager and mayor of Blacktown council and I acknowledge the wonderful things that are happening in the area, of which the member is very proud. I am very proud of the member for being proud, because I was impressed with the councillors who attended our meeting. I congratulate the member on all the things that are happening under his watch. The member for Lake Macquarie served for 21 years on his local council, eight years as mayor. Nobody can doubt his longevity and his experience. I appreciated the comments he made about the bill.

Other members spoke about the rate path freeze being necessary and the issue of the tendering process. I think the amendments I will move will satisfy some of those concerns. All of us in this place appreciate the importance of local government. Many of us have come to this place through our experience in local government.

I am pleased to note the number of members who contributed to debate on this bill. Sometimes only three or four members from each side contribute to debate on a bill, but for this bill there has been a parade of members of Parliament talking about their local government experience and showing their understanding of this bill. The bill might look fairly uninteresting—not terribly sexy—but members have taken on board the need for this legislation and the fact that we consulted widely with the sector.

Many members raised the issue of council mergers, but this is another matter that is a little extraneous to the bill. I understand that there is still some community unease and ill feeling about the merger process. But my commitment to councils is that we are moving forward in the best way we can and we are positive about the changes. The member for Balmain expressed his concern about some of the financial difficulties faced by the Inner West Council. I encourage councils, councillors and members of Parliament to make use of professional staff of the Office of Local Government, which I assure the member for Fairfield has not been and never will be abolished—it is still there.

The cost of local government elections was raised as was the issue of the Electoral Commission. A number of members spoke about their past experiences as a mayor or councillor on one or more councils across the State. In particular several members including the member for Prospect reflected on the uncertainty of some past costs associated with council elections and the importance of ensuring that councils get the information that they need to make informed decisions about who undertakes their elections and what that will cost. We have listened to the concerns of councils about the costs of these elections and the need to ensure elections represent value for money and, importantly, that councils understand the drivers of these costs. That is why the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] has been commissioned to undertake its current review into the costs of local government elections. The review is due to conclude in August 2019. I am sure the review will inform this debate even further. The review will recommend costing methodology for councils to consider. It is therefore important that councils have more time to consider the outcomes of the review. That is one of the provisions of this bill.

I wish to respond particularly to comments made by the member for Balmain that councils should not undertake their own local government elections and should be prevented by legislation from doing so. I think the member for Prospect backed up this point. It is increasingly uncommon for councils to choose to undertake their own elections or to engage a different provider to administer their elections. Any decision to do so is governed by requirements in the Local Government Act for councils to plan for their electoral arrangements and be accountable to the community. As I said, the Government commissioned IPART to undertake a review into local government elections. With that in mind, at this stage the Government would not support any proposal to amend the Local Government Act further as proposed at this time—it is premature at this time. We can have a debate and I have listened to the debate, but it is premature at this time considering the IPART report.

Additionally on the subject of the election measures in the bill, I advise members that the Premier wrote to IPART this year, which means that there was little or no opportunity for any changes to come to this House. The member for Charlestown referred to the timing of the legislation in relation to the March State election this year. Obviously we introduced it to this House as quickly as we could, and here it is. There has been some toing and froing in comments about IPART reports not yet released, and I understand those concerns. I also advise that the Government has been giving detailed consideration to the final reports of IPART provided in relation to three other reviews—one on local government rating, one on compliance and enforcement, and the other on regulatory burdens imposed by council. They deal with a range of complex matters that have the potential to significantly impact both council and the communities they represent now and in the future.

The importance of these issues and of the Government's response mean that they have required detailed consideration and review by me, my department and my staff. However, I am pleased to advise that these reports will be released this Friday 21 June and that the Government will provide an opportunity for public consideration of those reports before finalising a position. There are more than 100 recommendations in these reports. It will be good reading for the member for Heffron, who I am sure will read every one of those recommendations and come back with some comments. I have not yet talked about the issue of contract splitting and tender aggregation, which was raised by the member for Fairfield and somebody else—

**Mr Paul Scully:** Macquarie Fields.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** The member for Macquarie Fields—I thank the member for Wollongong. I state that contract splitting is an absolute breach of the Local Government Act. It should not be occurring. If anybody has evidence that there is tender aggregation or splitting occurring I make it quite clear that they should refer that matter to the Office of Local Government. I have asked some of the speakers who have raised this matter that if they have any evidence it goes to the Office of Local Government. It is a breach of the Local Government Act. I appreciate the widespread good spirit around the measures in this bill and the good views

and positive comments around local government. I see this as an endorsement of the approach that I as Minister wish to take to this portfolio, working with the sector to address issues of importance.

The measures in this bill are necessary, sensible changes that respond to issues raised with the Government by the sector. As the new Minister for Local Government I have already met with many councils and peak sector groups from around the State and will continue to do so. I have been listening to their concerns and proposals. The measures in this bill have been endorsed by Local Government NSW. In briefing stakeholders on the bill I have heard that some measures will require further consultation as regulations are prepared and adjustments to the bill may be required. I have listened to those concerns and will move to make changes that are required to respond to that feedback. I will always make changes as necessary.

The Government may also move amendments to ensure that the current tendering threshold continues to apply for contract services currently provided by council employees—we need to save the jobs of the day staff—to provide further time to ensure probity and value for money in relation to access to the National Prequalification System for Civil (Road and Bridge) Construction Contracts and to add a note to clarify how the measure enabling councils to enter contracts with approved disability employment organisations will work.

Finally I thank a number of stakeholders who have spoken to me about this bill and advised me. I have certainly listened to them. I thank the United Services Union—particularly Graeme Kelly, OAM, and Daniel Papps—for their efforts, guidance and assistance, which I sincerely appreciate. I also thank Local Government NSW for its advice, particularly the president, Linda Scott; CEO Tara McCarthy; and director of advocacy Kylie Yates. I thank the President of Local Government Professionals, Stewart Todd. I look forward to meeting all of them on Thursday night at their awards evening. I also thank all of the stakeholders who have contributed to forming this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mrs Shelley Hancock.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** By leave: I will deal with the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 2 and schedules 1 to 2 be agreed to.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (11:54):** By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2019-021 in globo:

**No. 1      Requirements for tendering**

Page 3, Schedule 1 [2], lines 6 and 7. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

**[2]      Section 55 (3) (n)**

Omit the paragraph. Insert instead:

- (n)      a contract involving an estimated expenditure or receipt of an amount of:
  - (i)      less than \$250,000 or another amount as may be prescribed by the regulations, or
  - (ii)     less than \$150,000 or another amount as may be prescribed by the regulations for a contract involving the provision of services where those services are, at the time of entering the contract, being provided by employees of the council,

**No. 2      Requirements for tendering**

Page 3, Schedule 1 [3]. Insert after line 13:

**Note.** Despite the person or body being approved under the *Public Works and Procurement Act 1912*, that Act does not otherwise apply to the procurement of goods and services by or for a council.

**No. 3      Requirements for tendering**

Page 3, Schedule 1 [3], proposed section 55 (3) (r), lines 14–17. Omit all words on those lines.

The bill provides for a range of measures to remove limitations on procurement to remove unnecessary red tape. The first Government amendment is to schedule 1 [2] to the bill. This amendment creates an exception to the tendering requirements in the Act for contracts up to \$250,000. The bill as introduced would increase the threshold for procurement under which councils will be able to enter a contract without inviting tenders to \$250,000. The

Government has decided to provide for a different threshold of \$150,000 for contracts involving the provision of services currently provided by council staff.

This effectively maintains the current threshold as prescribed in the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 since 2004. This amendment has been made after listening closely to feedback from key local government stakeholders and to protect current local government employment contracts. Importantly the increase to the threshold proposed by the bill will continue to be \$250,000 for all other contracts. I am confident that this is a sensible adjustment to the bill that will achieve the Government's objective of reducing red tape in procurement without any unintended consequences. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:55):** On behalf of the Labor Opposition and the Hon. Peter Primrose from the Legislative Council I speak to the amendments. It is not often in this place that the Government seeks to amend its own legislation but we on this side thank the Government for taking up our proposed amendment. We sincerely believe this is a sign of the Minister's exuberance to get the ball rolling on local government reform and not a sign of disinterest or a lack of knowledge about the portfolio. The Minister's amendments demonstrate that a full and proper consultation did not occur in the first place when the bill was first introduced and that some clean-up was required subsequent to the introduction of the bill.

The Minister stated that people had raised the issue of council elections being run by the Electoral Commissioner. We look forward to further action and discussion in this area for full transparency and integrity in the local government democratic process. We on this side of the House thank the Minister for meeting with us. It has been said and we would like to put it on the record to consider what we bring to the discussion. As noted in the Minister's second reading speech there are a number of members on this side of the House who have a lot of significant local government experience.

Labor will not oppose the Government amendments moved by the Minister. I speak to amendment No. 1. The Opposition was concerned that the proposal to increase to \$250,000 the value of a contract at or above which a council is required to invite tenders includes labour hire contracts. Under the 2005 regulation the amount is currently \$150,000 while the Act itself specified \$100,000. Many in the sector are concerned that this higher amount of a quarter of a million dollars will result in more contracts for labour hire at the expense of staff employed by councils who currently provide the same service.

The issue is not who should provide the service but the level of public oversight when the council is not obliged to put the contract out to public tender. To ensure full public oversight, while the Opposition supports the new limit of \$250,000 for all contracts, it believes an exception should be made in the case of contracts for the provision of services currently provided by members of staff of the council. Tendering for these contracts should be required for contracts over \$150,000. This is a fair way to ensure full public disclosure and transparency in the best interests of both existing staff and the local community.

Amendment No. 2 does not change the provisions of the bill in any way but merely clarifies a point that has already led to confusion amongst those who have read the bill as printed. Put simply, the bill proposes that councils are exempt from the requirement to invite tenders before entering into a contract if the contract is with a disability employment organisation approved under the Public Works and Procurement Act. Under the Act a "disability employment organisation" is one approved by the Minister for Disability Services—clause 5 of the Public Works and Procurement Regulation 2014—to supply goods and services to government agencies.

However, the provision of the Public Works and Procurement Act does not apply to councils in relation to their tendering activities. Tendering requirements for councils come under the Local Government Act 1993, not the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912. The amendment makes it clear that the bill references the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 merely to apply its definition of a disability employment organisation. The Public Works and Procurement Act does not preclude councils from using disability employment agencies. However, the amendments to the Local Government Act will ensure councils are exempt from the requirement to invite tenders before entering into a contract with an approved disability employment organisation.

Finally, moving on to amendment No. 3, we understand that there are a number of stakeholders who have concerns about the pre-qualification scheme. We hope that the public release of the Government response to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal report into compliance and reporting will precede any legislation for further local government reforms about red tape reduction. Returning to the Minister's interjections on the status of the Office of Local Government, I put on the record again that on page 4-76 of the Government's Budget Paper No. 3 the word "discontinued" appears in brackets next to "Office of Local Government". I ask the Minister to look at that, and at the Administration Arrangements (Administrative Changes—Public Service Agencies) Order 2019. Clause 13 of that order refers to "Abolition of the Office of Local Government" and states:

- (1) The persons employed in the Office of Local Government are transferred to the Department of Planning, Industry, and Environment.

(2) The Office of Local Government is abolished.

There you have it, Minister. They are your own Government's words in black and white. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (12:01):** As the member for Fairfield has discussed the amendments and indicated that the Opposition does not oppose them, I do not need to discuss them further. I do not think there is anything unusual about the Government amending its own legislation. It means the Government is actually listening to the stakeholders, which is a good thing. I imagine if the member for Fairfield were ever on this side of the table he would follow my lead. Regarding the abolition of the Office of Local Government, I say again that it is interesting that the shadow Minister for local government has agreed to come and visit the Office of Local Government and its staff. The shadow Minister is not reading those provisions correctly—there is an Office of Local Government.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2019-021 be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.**

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

**Schedule 1 as amended agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that schedule 2 be agreed to.

**Schedule 2 agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Governor*

### **ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

**Debate resumed from 6 June 2019.**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:03):** I will pick up where I left off when I last spoke on the address-in-reply. Since then some comments have been clarified. Members may recall that when I was last speaking on this matter I said that the Governor's Speech was noticeable for what it did not include as well as for what it did include. In particular, I was pointing to the fact that the Premier indicated in April to *The Australian* newspaper that she intended to cut some "back office" roles in the public sector. At that stage a number had not been put on those job cuts. That number was revealed in yesterday's budget. The Government made it clear that we are looking at about 2½ thousand jobs.

To put that in context, in question time yesterday the Government still tried to claim that it was the party of the worker, as we have heard it claim many times before. I do not know too many parties of the worker that set about getting rid of workers. The Premier was in full swing yesterday when she described the Opposition as getting very excited about cutting 2½ thousand back office positions over the next four years. We are excited, but not in a good way. We are not excited in the way that some members opposite seemed to be excited yesterday about those positions going because we recognise that 2½ thousand jobs is 2½ thousand households that lose income, 2½ thousand mortgages that are under greater pressure and 2½ thousand people wondering how they will provide for their families. It is not as simple as just saying, "Oh, there are some back office roles that are going to go."

When this first came up in April I wrote to the Premier. I said that under her Government Wollongong has a fluid definition of whether it is regional or metropolitan, and noted that the Government had said that regional positions would not be cut. I asked the Premier whether Wollongong is regional or metropolitan for the purpose of these job cuts. Of course, I did not hear back from her. On Monday, when it was very clear that yesterday's budget would include 2½ thousand job cuts, I raised the issue with the Premier again. I said, "I am asking you to declare one way or another for the purposes of these job cuts will Wollongong be considered regional or will it be

considered metropolitan?" The response from the Premier's office on local radio used some tricky language. It did not go to the heart of answering that question. It just said regional areas will not experience job cuts.

When you are running that on a Wollongong radio station and there is a fluid definition of Wollongong as regional or metropolitan, it would be easy for the casual listener to conclude that Wollongong may have been immune from the job cuts. This morning on ABC Illawarra it became abundantly clear that neither Wollongong nor Newcastle will be spared from the job cuts. It will not be considered regional, yet again, under a definition of convenience by this Government. The Deputy Premier has confirmed that there will be public sector job cuts in Wollongong. Those cuts may not have the same economic effect as they will on smaller regional communities, but they most certainly will have an impact. Wollongong is a large CBD and it has a relatively large economy, and any job cuts in the region will impact upon other pressures that the region is currently experiencing as the economy starts to tank.

The bigger question is: Who? Who is in the frame? All we have heard is this nebulous concept of back office job cuts. It was not clear in the Governor's Speech that there would be job cuts. It is not clear in the budget who exactly will be in the frame for the job cuts. You could only conclude that this is another example of the Government's obsession with trickle-down effects. There will be a trickle-down effect when back office roles are cut—their responsibilities will trickle down to the front office staff who will have to undertake them. Frontline staff will have to allocate more time to those seemingly lesser responsibilities—in the Government's view—of the back office to make up for the lost positions. Once again the trickle-down concept is first and foremost in the mind of the Government as the self-proclaimed party of the workers sets about cutting 2½ thousand jobs.

I again refer to another area that was not touched on in the Governor's Speech. At the outset of my contribution a couple of weeks ago I said that speeches are often noticeable for what they fail to include. The Governor's Speech mentioned neither the Illawarra, one of the larger regional areas of the State, nor Wollongong, the third-largest city in New South Wales. There was not one mention of it, which is telling because it is not the first time that the Government has left out Wollongong from the documents.

In last year's budget—not yesterday's—the regional budget statement had a little map that showed the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region. The map had an asterisk: excludes Wollongong. I notice that the Government has not repeated that mistake in this year's budget and, presumably, Wollongong has come back into the Illawarra fold. I welcome that. It is great to be back, according to the Government. It is a fact that great pressures are building on the region and they cannot continue to go ignored by this Government through its four-year term. Wollongong local government area accounts for around 3 per cent of the population of New South Wales and about 2 per cent of the Gross State Product. It is a significant contributor. The reason I raise it is that it was not mentioned. As I said, its lack of mention stands in stark contrast to the plans that I, along with my colleagues in Heathcote, Keira, Shellharbour and Kiama, took to the last election. We proposed what possibly would be the largest investment in the Illawarra that the region has ever seen.

Do not get me wrong: In the past Labor governments have been great investors in the Illawarra. Previous Labor governments have delivered projects including the electrification of the rail line south of Wollongong; the construction of the WIN Entertainment Centre—20 years ago, I might add; the construction of the Sea Cliff Bridge, which I know Temporary Speaker Evans is fond of; the development of the Innovation Campus at the University of Wollongong; the redevelopment of Wollongong Hospital; the relocation of the State Emergency Service headquarters and Pillar superannuation to Wollongong; the expansion of the Port Kembla port and the shifting of car importation to that port; support for the steelworks, whether it be through the Button plan or, more recently, through pushing for a mandated level of steel to be used in New South Wales government public works; our incredibly popular Free Gong Shuttle—recently we withstood an attempt to take it off our hands; and the construction of the Northern Distributor. I name just a few investments by past Labor governments.

However, in recent years the investment tap largely has been turned off in the Illawarra. You only need to look at yesterday's budget to see that that is the case. Over the last term of Parliament, budget commitments to the Wollongong electorate have fallen by 40 per cent. In 2015-16 capital expenditure was a little over \$64 million, but by the end of the term in 2018-19 it had fallen to a little under \$26 million. You might assume there are not any pressing needs in the Illawarra; if you assume that, you would be dead wrong. There are some serious needs, such as access issues to public transport. Yesterday the budget had no funding for the Unanderra station lifts, but I will continue to keep the pressure on the Government for those lifts over the course of this term.

The region needs real improvements in connectivity, and that includes the South Coast rail line. We are still dealing with a rail link that is on a nineteenth-century alignment with a viaduct that was built in the early 1900s. It needs serious improvements because trains have to slow right down to go through it. There also are issues around Picton Road, which is a major thoroughfare and a connection between the Illawarra and south-west Sydney, and the soon-to-be-developed Badgerys Creek airport. It is a vital link that needs to be improved, as does Appin Road. *[Extension of time]*



I am pleased that the new member for Wollondilly is in the Chamber to hear about the next bit: the Maldon-Dombarton rail link. Despite the fact that his predecessor and I were not on the same side of the Chamber, we had fierce agreement over the need to invest in that rail link. I hope that the previous member for Wollondilly has provided guidance to the new member for Wollondilly and that getting on with the rail link, which should have been finished 30 years ago and which has bipartisan support, is high on his list of priorities. He is smiling, so I can guess that he is backing it 100 per cent. I welcome him joining me with his advocacy.

But there are other pressures on the Illawarra too. Our healthcare and hospital system have been slammed: Statistics released last week show once again that our waiting lists and the time in the emergency department continue to grow, the number of people getting out within the recommended four hours continues to fall and the elective surgery waiting lists hit a new record high. There is record high after record high. Job relocation is another issue. I touched on the jobs that will possibly be lost in the Illawarra due to the budget cuts yesterday. This side of the Chamber and I are making a serious effort to advocate for jobs to be relocated to the Illawarra, given the impact that would have on the regional economy. However, that is not being backed up and was lost in the address-in-reply to the Governor's Speech.

The upgrade of the WIN Entertainment Centre is also an essential investment. It is widely recognised that the 20-year-old entertainment centre needs an upgrade. Yesterday the Illawarra Hawks scored a great coup in a new signing from the United States. The player will soon be a great new talent in the National Basketball Association, but he is a bit young at the moment. The Hawks play out of the Wollongong Entertainment Centre. The investment in the centre as a sports, entertainment and concert hub will add to Wollongong's capacity to be the entertainment and tourist mecca it wants to become. That investment needs to be a precursor to other investments and accommodation expansions in the region and is desperately needed.

Over the course of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament, we will need to deal with a number of tough issues in a range of areas. We need to be mindful that we will face increasing budget pressures over the next little while, which will limit our ability to deal with those things. We must always keep that in mind. During the election campaign the Premier said quite clearly that everyone in New South Wales can have it all. Unfortunately, Wollongong again seems to be the asterisk and finds itself excluded. Yesterday the budget indicated that we are facing uncertain times economically. There are revenue write-downs of a scale never seen before. Over the past couple of months, there has been a drop in forecasts for next year's Gross State Product, down from 2.5 per cent to 2.25 per cent. Employment growth is down and flat at 1.5 per cent. Wage price index growth, another thing that was not mentioned in the Governor's Speech, has dropped from a 2.75 per cent forecast in the pre-election update to 2.5 per cent.

Further sale of assets has been mooted, public sector jobs are being cut and Wollongong, almost alone, continues to battle with the pressures, without being listened to seriously by the other side. Those are the sorts of things that the Governor did not mention in her speech, but those are the sorts of things that we will have to tackle in the Fifty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales. I will continue to take up those issues on behalf of the constituents of Wollongong. I encourage the Government to take our concerns seriously, to listen to our needs and to help deliver for the third-largest city in the State.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:19):** It gives me great pleasure today to reply to the Governor's Speech. I will start by congratulating the Hon. Margaret Beazley, QC, AO, on her appointment as the new Governor of New South Wales. The Hon. Margaret Beazley has served as a judge of the Federal Court, as a judge of the New South Wales Court of Appeal, and as President of the Court of Appeal. She has leant her experience to others as a mentor to up-and-coming lawyers, for which she received the Order of Australia. It would be remiss of me if I did not take this opportunity to also acknowledge her outstanding predecessor, His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC, Ret. I also acknowledge Mrs Hurley. Mr and Mrs Hurley have been of great service to the State of New South Wales.

It is a huge honour for General Hurley to be appointed as our nation's next Governor General. On many occasions I have had the privilege of meeting with Governor and Mrs Hurley, as I am sure has Temporary Speaker Evans, when conducting duties as a member of this place. I am always amazed at the former Governor's ability to remember people. He has quite a photographic memory. He remembered me when I saw him at Swansea at the surf life saving championships. He has been an outstanding Governor for New South Wales. It has been a bonus for us to have him. I wish him all the best moving forward as he becomes Governor General of this great nation. Again, I thank His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC, on his service to this State.

I am extremely proud to represent the electorate of Terrigal in this place. I take this opportunity to thank all of my constituents for showing their confidence in me by returning me to this place as their representative for four more years. I also take this opportunity to put on record my thanks to the staff of my electorate office, Kerryanne Delaney, Donna Golightly and Ben Sheath, who have been tireless servants of the people of the Terrigal electorate over the past four years. As Temporary Speaker Evans would know, members are only as good as the

staff that work in their electorate office. We are very privileged to have great staff in our electorate offices. I pay tribute to the three people in my electorate office who, day to day, do great things for our community. They are the unsung heroes of what we do as MPs. I put on the record formally my thanks to Kerryanne, Donna and Ben for their sterling service to the people of the Terrigal electorate over the past four years. I thank them for what they have done behind the scenes.

A lot has been achieved, but of course there is always a lot more to do. Our Liberal-Nationals Government is working very hard to build a stronger New South Wales. Over the past eight years, our Government has worked hard to repair the economy and build a very strong budget. The fact that New South Wales is the number one State, has zero debt and has a surplus budget just goes to show how strong the economy is in New South Wales. As I have said time and time again, my mission is to ensure our community gets its fair share of our strong budget. Indeed, when the Premier visited in 2017 and spoke at an economic breakfast in Mingara, she committed to ensuring the Central Coast gets its fair share of funding.

I have to say, the Premier was warmly welcomed to that economic breakfast, which was a sell-out. The room was full, with more than 340 business operators from far and wide across the Central Coast. The economic breakfasts provided by the business chambers of New South Wales and the Central Coast, which are held twice a year, are outstanding. The Premier has been to Mingara on a number of occasions, and it was a pleasure to host her. In fact, the Premier held the very first community cabinet at Mingara after she was elected as Premier of this great State. I was very proud to host her at her first official community cabinet after her appointment as Premier of New South Wales.

The Premier's visit to Mingara was followed by a visit to Terrigal during a holiday period, which was really quite interesting. I remember it very well. The Premier's first official walkabout as Premier was in Terrigal where she was greeted like a rock star. A lot of people were visiting from interstate, and their first words to her were, "Congratulations," and, "We wish our State had a leader as good as you and that we were doing as well as New South Wales." It was reassuring to know that people on holidays from other States visiting the Central Coast could see how well New South Wales was doing, that they had the opportunity to congratulate the Premier, and to tell her firsthand what a great job this Government is doing and how they appreciate her. That was a really interesting moment. As Temporary Speaker Evans knows, we never know how walkabouts will be perceived, but when they are received as the Premier's was, it is great.

Again, I am really pleased to have the opportunity today to talk about what we are delivering. Over the past few months and throughout the election campaign, I had the opportunity to make a number of announcements for our community on the Central Coast. Each of these is only possible because of our strong New South Wales economy. Temporary Speaker Evans is only too aware of the sorts of commitments that we make both before, after and during election time. During the election campaign, I had the pleasure of announcing the investment of \$7,844,405 to deliver safer roads on the Central Coast. This will fund vital road safety upgrades through the latest round of the Government's Saving Lives on Country Roads, and liveable and safe urban communities initiatives. When you travel around the Central Coast one of the biggest key issues is roads. It is always roads, roads and roads.

In my electorate, funding also includes \$730,000 for the intersection of the Central Coast Highway and Ernest Street at Erina to upgrade the traffic signals, introduce fully controlled right-turn phasing with arrows, upgrade signals and upgrade warning signs. At the intersection of Terrigal Drive and Serpentine Road in Terrigal \$750,000 will go towards installing a raised deflective, reflective and redirective median. That is quite a mouthful. This type of funding is possible only because of New South Wales strong budget position. Under the stewardship of initially Minister Pavey and now Minister Constance and Minister Toole, \$182 million will be invested in road safety upgrades across the State during the next financial year, which includes the delivery of 224 new projects. We will invest \$141 million from the Saving Lives on Country Roads program and \$41 million as part of the liveable and safe urban communities program.

One of the biggest announcements I have made in more than four years as the member for Terrigal was a record-breaking \$387 million investment to complete the next step of the duplication of the Central Coast Highway between Bateau Bay and Wamberal. I cannot stress enough the importance of that announcement for our community. I believe it is the single biggest dollar-value investment ever in Central Coast roads. I was so proud to make that announcement with Minister Pavey at Forresters Beach, an area that is affected by that road and its congestion. That investment will result in a dual carriageway along the full route between the M1 Pacific Motorway at Kariong and Bateau Bay to make travel easier, faster and of course safer. The 26,000 drivers who use this section of highway each day will benefit from the 3.8 kilometres of duplication, which will ease congestion and improve safety. As I have said time and time again, it is thanks to this Government's strong financial management that we can invest in projects of critical importance to residents and businesses across the

Central Coast. This is the perfect example of what can be done when you manage your budget. Initial planning work will include concept designs, geotechnical investments and utility adjustments.

I thank the Hunter region Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] staff, particularly Director Anna Zycki, who is an outstanding public servant. I look forward to working with Anna to deliver this project and a number of others in my electorate. It is always a pleasure to meet up with Anna. She regularly briefs me in my office on the program of roads right across the Central Coast. I have to acknowledge her and her team at RMS for their can-do attitude to delivering projects. Over the past four years major road infrastructure projects have been delivered both on time and on budget in all the electorates on the Central Coast. These investments were so sorely needed, whether it be the Pacific Highway, Wyong Road, the Central Coast Highway, or the roundabout at Kincumber. The RMS has done this with vigour and enthusiasm. Congratulations to Anna and her team. I look forward to working with them over the next four years.

Over eight years of a Liberal-Nationals government \$4 billion has been spent on more than 2,100 road projects across the Central Coast and Hunter regions. That is a phenomenal investment in our roads, which are vital, particularly given the expected population growth on the Central Coast. In the next 12 to 13 years an extra 72,000 people will call the Central Coast home. Why wouldn't they? It is a fantastic place to live. I know that the member for Bankstown, who is present in the Chamber, has been to the Central Coast, so she knows how beautiful it is. We must ensure the provision of infrastructure, especially roads, to this area. That is why I am so proud of this record investment.

Central Coast families are benefiting from the Service NSW Cost of Living service. At the Service NSW centre at Erina, with Robyn and the team there, between September 2018 and January this year locals have made more than \$124,000 in claims savings. Robyn and her team are doing a fantastic job. I was at the centre last week and saw the service they provide to the public and the fast customer turnarounds. The average customer waiting time is about four minutes. The team is very positive about the assistance it is providing to people to deal with cost-of-living expenses. One lady who walked into the centre spent just under an hour with the team and saved almost \$4,000. People are receiving advice on electricity bills and their entitlement to incentives through the Government's 40-odd rebates. These are significant cost-of-living savings that are helping to relieve the pressure on people. One chap is saving \$1,100 a year after just one visit to Service NSW. He now has a Gold Opal card which enables him to travel on public transport for \$2.50 a day. People are benefiting in real dollar terms.

I was proud to host the Premier at Erina in January. We met many locals and encouraged families to make an appointment with a cost-of-living specialist. The cost of living is a major issue across New South Wales, including for families on the Central Coast. That is why the Government has delivered this free customer-friendly service and the more than 40 government rebates and incentives. In my opinion, one of our most significant achievements over the past eight years has been the transformation of Service NSW into a one-stop shop for household savings. The provision of this service has been made possible as a result of our strong economic management. The Government has balanced the books, cleared the debt and put our State back on track.

Another Government initiative is the free Energy Switch service, which is also available through the teams at Service NSW. Close to 200 Central Coast households have initiated a switch, resulting in an average saving of around \$400 per household. That is a real cost-of-living saving. It is putting money back in people's pockets which they can utilise for other things. Another Government achievement of which I am particularly proud is the record number of police officers being rolled out across the State. The Central Coast has two local police districts: the Brisbane Water team led by Tony Joice and the Tuggerah Lakes team led by John Gralton. I have had the pleasure of meeting those gentlemen, both of whom are doing an outstanding job. Crime rates are steady across the Central Coast because of the proactive police force.

As I have said before in this place, following my election in 2015 I had the pleasure of spending an evening with our local police officers. I suggest that every member, if given the opportunity, spend an evening with police from their local area command to see what they deal with on a daily basis. I clearly remember the Friday night I spent with local police officers; the experience was very confronting. I congratulate our fantastic men and women in the NSW Police Force and I again acknowledge the great work being done by Tony Joice and John Gralton and their teams in our two police districts. During the election campaign the Government announced that the Central Coast will share in 60 new specialist high-visibility police officers. These officers will focus on high-pedestrian areas, including transport hubs, sporting events and major local events, to keep the people of the Central Coast safe. More boots on the beat help to crack down on crime and antisocial behaviour. [*Extension of time*]

This announcement is part of the 1,500 extra police officers to be delivered over four years—the biggest increase in more than 30 years—and amounts to a total investment of \$583 million. The Government is very proud of this investment to support police in our local regions. This is in addition to all of the 58 police area commands and police districts across the State receiving a dedicated elder abuse prevention officer and a child protection

officer. An issue that is personally important to me is palliative care. On the Central Coast and in every community in New South Wales there are families with loved ones who are suffering a life-limiting illness.

In February I was delighted to announce eight additional palliative care nurses, which will provide for more choice, support and care for every patient. I am passionate about ensuring that patients can access the care they need in the setting they choose. It would be remiss of me not to note that this announcement stands in stark contrast to Labor's funding promises. Our Government is providing choice for palliative care patients, either care in hospital or support at home. Labor's track record in the past has been anything but good, with 2,000 hospital beds being closed in 16 years of the former Labor Government.

I am pleased that this Government's commitment to palliative care has been reaffirmed in the New South Wales budget. I have met with the Chief Executive Officer of the Central Coast Local Health District, Dr Andrew Montague, on many occasions, including just last week. I know that he is keen for the Government to deliver on this promise. All of this has been made possible only by our strong New South Wales economy. I was also proud of the roundtable discussion on palliative care that was held on the Central Coast. As I said, this is an issue very close to my heart for reasons that most members in this Chamber know. I am pleased that the Government initiated these roundtables so that stakeholders from across the Central Coast and the Hunter were able to come together and give ideas and feedback to the local health district, which manages palliative care on the Central Coast. I pay tribute to Dr Andrew Montague for his positive and receptive work on palliative work. I also highlight Dr Sally Carr, an outstanding palliative care clinician on the Central Coast who heads the team. They actively work with our community to ensure long-term results in palliative care.

The list of benefits goes on and on. Last year I secured from the Minister for Education \$250,000 for a covered outdoor learning area [COLA] at Kincumber High School. I congratulate the school and the P&C on working constructively with me to gain funding for that project. I was able to secure another \$250,000 for this \$500,000 project. Kincumber High School has waited a long time for a COLA and I was pleased to be able to assist in getting that funding. I thank Minister Stokes for his support of that project. I congratulate all the principals and all the schools in my electorate of Terrigal. I have the pleasure of meeting with them on a regular basis as well as with the Director, Public Schools NSW, Karen Jones, who has been promoted recently, and quite rightly so. My electorate has an outstanding team of principals, teachers and staff and it is always a pleasure to meet with them and the P&Cs to offer my assistance.

The Government has announced another 103 new nursing and midwifery graduates at the Gosford and Wyong hospitals, again reinforcing our investment in health on the Central Coast. As was announced prior to the election, the State has had the largest boost in the health workforce. On the Central Coast that equates to 51 doctors, 256 nurses and midwives, 43 allied health staff and 62 hospital support workers. We have seen a record investment in both Gosford and Wyong hospitals, which again was announced in this year's budget. The investment and the rollouts continue. When I have spoken to people on the Central Coast—at early morning train stations and street stalls, doorknocking and phone canvassing—the message from them is very clear that there is a lot more to do. I am proud to be a part of a New South Wales Liberal-Nationals government that will continue to work hard for everybody in New South Wales. For the people of the Terrigal electorate, from Killcare to Forresters Beach and everywhere in between, I dedicate myself to ensuring that the Government gets it done for four more years.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:39):** The Governor's Speech delivered on 7 May 2019 is not the first I have heard but it is the first I have heard as a member of this Chamber. So this is the first opportunity I have had to respond to a Governor's speech specifically in relation to an electorate, that is, Auburn. The Governor outlined within her speech the Government's program over the next four years. We would expect to see the issues raised by the Governor to be addressed in the budget, which was delivered yesterday. That is not the case. The electorate of Auburn should have received investment, given it has the second highest rate of homelessness in the State. It has had a 177 per cent increase in homelessness; it is not just slipping up the list. It has the second highest unemployment rate in the State. The electorate has a range of social issues, including the highest concentration of refugees in the State. Many people in the electorate have been cut off from the ability to access housing or income support. A huge number of people in the electorate, over 70 per cent, have parents who were born overseas.

We would expect that within the budget papers delivered to my office yesterday the Government would have addressed those social issues, as was foreshadowed by the Governor in her speech. It did not. The only investment in the Auburn electorate was for more prison beds. I am not sure how that will fix the social issues ruminating in the electorate but I would not have put that at the top of the list. The Government could have started with the big project it talks about endlessly, the extension of the M4 and WestConnex. This Government has addressed improving movement around Sydney through a big road project that imposes a lot of tolls and raises the cost of living across Sydney. I was interested to hear the member for Terrigal say in his speech that there are 40 rebates available. That just tells us how many government charges people are paying in our electorates.

In my area people who do not have large incomes have been hit with \$2,000. It is obvious from the Government reports that the tolls will force cars off these toll roads but there has been no planning as to where those cars will go. In areas such as Guildford and Merrylands, to the west of the seat of Auburn, there are only three ways that motorists can cross the electorate: Wellington Road, Mona Street and Parramatta Road. As members know, Parramatta Road is congested at all times, particularly at the Silverwater interchange, which is a heavy industrial area. At that point there is a large amount of movement from Bankstown to Lidcombe onto the freeway and from Centenary Drive onto Parramatta Road. Mona and Wellington streets go down to one lane crossing the Duck River. Did the Government do any planning at all on these points? There has been no planning and the result for Auburn is congestion at all times.

It is almost impossible to move around the Auburn electorate. To go from one side of the electorate to the other during peak hour takes as long as it does to cross the city. But that is the only way that motorists can cross the electorate. People give up; it is impossible to move. The Government has no plans. That is consistent with what we hear from the Government on its motherhood statements, such as the one made by the member for Terrigal about 200 households using Energy Switch. There are 330,000 people living on the Central Coast but he has managed to get only 200 households to show up. That is not a great return for a program that the Government has been arcing up about in this Chamber. The Government does not plan.

In addition to traffic congestion, I refer to the poor train service for the Auburn electorate. During the election campaign the Government promised the Granville electorate it would reintroduce express trains from Granville station. It only said that because it thought it would win the seat. It did not promise to reinstate train services at Auburn, Lidcombe, Regents Park or Berala stations. At all of those stations train services have been cut. Of a morning Regents Park and Berala are ghost towns because people do not go to those stations to catch a train. The Government says it is delivering more express trains but people in my electorate have to use their cars because there are no train services to our stations. What the Government has done to the train services in the Auburn electorate is a disgrace.

The Auburn electorate has the highest unemployment, the highest homelessness and the highest needs. The Government has stripped train services in the electorate and has forced more cars onto the road, creating more congestion and chaos. But the Government is not interested in that because it is interested only in the electorates where it might win the seat. It is not interested in growing Sydney to give everyone a fair go and have equity across the board. It is only interested in projects that get the Government what it wants. If the Government were interested in growing Sydney we would have heard at the first opportunity Government members talking about a rail project for Badgerys Creek. They did not. The first time the Government announced such a project was—surprise—a month before the election.

The Government spent five years doing a scoping project for an airport that for the last 20 years everyone has known would probably be built and for the last 10 years definitely knew would be built. It was not until one month before this election that there was talk about stage one, not of a fast train project but of a small project, of which we have not seen the full scope. That is the reality of this Government. It builds a project really quickly, such as the light rail network for Sydney with a cost blowout of \$571 million, and has cost blowouts all because it rushes the project and does not get the specifications right.

At the same time the Government is paying an additional \$571 million for light rail there are non-government organisations [NGOs] dealing with the 177 per cent increase in homelessness in my electorate. Those NGOs have not received one extra cent from the Government. This Government has not once said, "There is a huge homelessness problem in Auburn. Here is the money we can invest to fix the problem. Who is looking after the people of Auburn? We know the community groups are paid by us to look after homelessness. Let's invest more there". The Government can find money for other projects but when it comes to a crucial need in my electorate not one cent is being received by the electorate.

The Government has not provided one cent to deal with the huge underemployment—I stress underemployment, not unemployment. For a start, 20 per cent of families with children in my electorate have both parents unemployed. That is a huge number of people in my electorate. For most people in my electorate English is not their first language and they are plagued by it everywhere they go. These people constantly try to get labouring jobs. Because they do not have any English skills or the ability to get training they have to get whatever work they can. If they get one day of work a week they think they are doing alright. Where is a government program dealing with that?

At the back of the budget papers there are three pages of 12 pages about something else that deal with western Sydney. It shows one TAFE in outer western Sydney and that is a super TAFE. How are people going to get there? Where are the programs for the people who need assistance most? And the people who need it most live in the Auburn electorate. The Government said it would make sure that people get back to work. It said it had

a number of proposals including the highest quality education for people no matter where they live or what their circumstances may be.

What we know is that our kids are not doing well. The families who have the money can send their kids to expensive schools or to schools with P&Cs that bring in extra money for tutoring but that is not the reality in my electorate. This Government's response has been to put on another bureaucratic layer to which schools have to show how they spend their money and prove better outcomes. The teachers at our schools are dealing with the most difficult students in the education system. Their schools take the kids that no other schools will take. These kids cannot get into schools anywhere else and they need extra care. The schools get extra Gonski funding but they are already snowed under from the paperwork.

At the same time the Government comes up with a new scheme of paperwork and bureaucracy it cuts backroom services. I assume the backroom services the Government is talking about are performed by people who look after school administration or the human resources staff who look after the shiftwork and pay of our nurses and doctors or the people who do the paperwork for drug rehabilitation facilities. There was no mention of drug rehabilitation services in the budget even though the Government talks about reducing the scourge of ice and other drugs in our communities. Where are the extra beds and facilities? They are non-existent.

The Government has delivered platitudes and nice speeches but has given no details. Government members say that the Government is increasing police numbers. The member for Terrigal says that police numbers are being increased because the population of Terrigal will increase by another 72,000. In western Sydney the population will increase by a million people. With an increase of a million people more police will be needed on the streets to look after an area that will be increasingly congested. In the Auburn electorate currently there are 10 general duty police officers on duty for the whole of the Cumberland local government area. People die in their homes even though a welfare check has been requested. Our police do not have the capacity to undertake a welfare check. They are at 86 per cent strength, not 100 per cent. I would accept 95 per cent strength. Twenty-four hours after a request for a welfare check the police arrive and the person is dead. What if that person had been injured or needed help? There is nothing the police in our area can do about it because they are under-strength and do not have the capacity. If the area of Auburn is not entitled to have police capacity at full strength then who is?

There are a number of issues in my electorate that need to be addressed and I would have thought the Government would target this area. When we combine the unemployment rate and under-utilisation rate of 15- to 24-year-olds it equates to a figure of 30 per cent. In that cohort of young people 30 per cent do not have the work they need. We all know what that is a recipe for. Unemployment goes hand in hand with homelessness, couch hopping, drug use, boredom and crime. The Government did not mention that in its Budget Speech. There were platitudes and talk about what it wants to do, its big projects and its billion-dollar investments. The debt of \$39 billion will mean that my electorate will not get the services it needs. The Government has put not one more cent into dealing with increases in population, the unemployment and under-utilisation rates or the problems in our schools.

A year ago the Government signed a memorandum of understanding with Sydney Olympic Park to build a new school because of the huge development at Wentworth Point. That was over a year ago and it is still a line item in the budget. But underneath the line item is "N/A", "N/A", "N/A". There is no money into the future for Sydney Olympic Park high school let alone other schools that desperately need money. It is a great failure by this Government. At the start of this Government in office it said it would address social justice and be a social justice crusader. But it has not put one cent into the area of Sydney that has the highest needs. Rural New South Wales has youth officers and that is fair enough but the statistics show that the situation is worse in Auburn. Not one cent has gone to Auburn and I am told the money has been diverted away from Auburn to other areas. The bush should receive money but that money should not be diverted from Auburn. The Government has to come up with a better plan to deal with the crises looming in western Sydney. [*Extension of time*]

The lack of investment in the electorate of Auburn, an electorate with the highest needs, is concerning. I want to refer to the creation of a Minister for public spaces. The Governor said, "New South Wales now has a Minister for Public Spaces tasked with identifying and protecting publicly owned land for use as parks and public spaces". That is good because I would like to see some action around our local area. The State Government decided to move Cricket NSW headquarters to Sydney Olympic Park. It also decided to demolish its building at the Sydney Cricket Ground even though it had given a commitment that that would not occur. The decision to move the headquarters resulted in a new building being plonked on top of Newington Gunners park, despite Newington Gunners having a 30-year memorandum of understanding with the State government agency Sydney Olympic Park Authority. Its memorandum of understanding has been ripped up and it has lost two fields. It is not much of a commitment to open space and public spaces if Sydney public parks are being taken from organisations.

In Kellyville the State Government's decision to fund a centre of excellence for the Parramatta Eels Rugby club has meant that six football fields have been lost. This Government talks about getting kids active yet

everywhere one looks there is another soccer field being handed over to another organisation and kids are missing out on access to sport. It would be great if the Government could tell me where the Newington Gunners are now going to play. At Robin Thomas Reserve in Parramatta the Government is going to run the light rail across the soccer field. It is open space, so it is easily done. There are only six old Moreton Bay fig trees in Parramatta. Three will be ripped up along Robin Thomas Reserve so the Government can run its light rail across the park rather than taking the sensible course of running it down to the next line.

Based on the record of the Government, I wonder what else the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has been tasked with. With every single project of this Government, at the end of the day the victim has always been open space. The Government says it will invest in marginal pieces of land but it should hang onto some of the land it already has so as to ensure that people can play on their soccer fields. Our soccer fields are at capacity and there is no ability for them to be extended. We have heard the stories of 91 teams playing games on 1½ fields and 80 teams on two fields. That is all they have to work with and everywhere we look we are losing more fields. It is not good enough. If the Government wants to make high and medium density work it must protect our public and open spaces. It should not take the easy solution, like saying it will build the Western Sydney Stadium and then plonking it on top of a swimming pool and not tell anyone. It should not pull down the Cricket NSW building at the Sydney Cricket Ground without telling anyone and then plonk the new Cricket NSW headquarters on the Newington Gunners field without telling them.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (12:59):** It gives me great pleasure to respond to the Governor's Speech. I congratulate the Governor, the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AO, QC, on her appointment as our thirty-ninth Governor, a privilege I am sure she will embrace. As a new member of this House I fully understand I am on a big learning curve and I am not taking anything for granted. Her Excellency said in her speech that we should never forget the honour that has been bestowed on all of us here and that we need to do the best we can to represent our local community and the citizens of New South Wales; after all, they have put their trust in us to represent them.

Her Excellency mentioned the rich history of New South Wales and its Parliament. Camden also has a rich history of representatives in this Parliament. One of our pioneers in New South Wales, John Macarthur, was a member of the Legislative Council from July 1825 to December 1832. The Hon. John Fahey, AC, was a member of the Legislative Assembly from March 1984 to February 1988, when, following a boundary redistribution, he became the member for Southern Highlands, from 1988 to February 1996. It is important to note that John Fahey was the Premier of New South Wales from 1992 to 1995. Dr Liz Kernohan was a member of the Legislative Assembly from May 1991 to February 2003. I have particularly highlighted these three members because their impact on Camden during their terms is most remembered. Not a day goes by without someone mentioning Liz Kernohan's name. I did not meet Liz, but many infrastructure developments have been named after her since her untimely death in 2004.

Her Excellency mentioned throughout her speech the strong economy of New South Wales, which enables the people of New South Wales to have world-class road and rail infrastructure, public transport, education facilities and health services. In the election in March this year education and hospitals featured in the major slogan of the Opposition, but the incredible and quite unexpected resounding win by the Government clearly showed the people of New South Wales were happy to keep this Government, which is delivering the infrastructure and services they want and need, albeit as a result of catching up after 16 years of neglect by the Labor Government. New South Wales is the largest and strongest economy in the nation—coming from last position to number one—and is the envy of all other governments in Australia. Over 400,000 jobs have been created since 2015 and job creation will continue, with a predicted 250,000 jobs to be created over the next four years.

The electorate of Camden has been the recipient of approximately \$89.7 billion of investment in infrastructure. The \$134 million first stage of the redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital has been completed and I recently attended the sod-turning, on behalf of the Minister for Health and Medical Research, for the \$632 million second stage of the redevelopment of the hospital. A number of new schools will be built in Camden over the coming years including a high school in Oran Park, a primary school in Gledswood Hills, a primary school in Catherine Field and a new school at Willowdale. Harrington Park Public School and Oran Park Public School will both receive major upgrades. A school for children with special needs was opened this year, Yandelora School.

Recently it was announced that a new TAFE skills exchange will be established at the new Nancy Bird Walton airport in western Sydney. This will enable onsite training for our apprentices. Students and employees will work together in the one location, which is a similar model to the Barangaroo Skills Exchange, where a pass rate of 84 per cent was achieved by apprentices, compared to an industry average of 43.2 per cent. Clearly this model works extremely well; again, without a good economy this type of infrastructure cannot be achieved. Road

infrastructure in the Camden-Macarthur area has been moving forward since 2011. After the Government's resounding win in 2011, the Government was shovel ready to begin catching up on the former Labor Government's broken promises on road infrastructure. Camden Valley Way was the first road selected for upgrading. The road has literally progressed from being a goat track to being a major highway.

The \$152 million upgrade of Narellan Road was needed years before we won government in 2011, but we got on with the job instead of just talking about it. The much-needed upgrade of The Northern Road is currently underway. The upgrade from Camden Valley Way at Narellan to Peter Brock Drive has been completed and work is continuing through to Jamison Road in Penrith. The original two-lane road carried over 16,000 vehicles a day and that will increase rapidly with the population growth throughout western Sydney. Part of the upgrade will deliver major interchanges at intersections, giving first-class infrastructure to serve the people of south-western Sydney and western Sydney as well as those who will use the new Nancy Bird Walton airport. The opening of the Leppington train station in February 2015 was most welcome, catering for the over 200 new residents coming to Camden each week.

Sport and recreation in Camden are paramount, with all codes of all sports being played in the area. The New South Wales Government has assisted with the establishment of sportsgrounds as, of course, has Camden Council. Recently it was announced that the \$17.3 million second stage of the Narellan Sports Hub will begin. Stage one of the construction delivered 30 netball courts. Stage two will open up the hub for both State and national championships with the development of 14 additional netball courts, a rugby league field, a dedicated athletics field and walking and cycling tracks. When the extra netball courts are completed the Camden & District Netball Association, which currently uses the facility, will be able to hold major State netball competitions, which will bring thousands of dollars to the local community and businesses. It will also boost tourism as competitors find places to stay and restaurants to eat at in the area.

A Service NSW shopfront has been established in Gregory Hills, enabling over 850 government transactions to be completed at this one-stop shop. Once again, I congratulate Her Excellency on her appointment as the Governor of New South Wales.

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:08):** I am honoured to speak today in the address-in-reply to the Governor's Speech. On 7 May 2019 Governor Margaret Beazley, AO, QC, formally opened the fifty-seventh Parliament of New South Wales. Governor Beazley has had a remarkable career, growing up in the suburb of Hurstville and moving on to her role as the first woman to be sworn in as the President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal. Her remarkable 44 years in the legal profession speak volumes about her integrity in serving the people of New South Wales. In saying this, I am confident that Governor Beazley will continue to uphold the very traditions that have been set by previous Governors of New South Wales, and will do so diligently.

The Governor's Speech reiterated the agenda to which the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government committed over the next four years. As mentioned by members on this side of the House, we owe it to our constituents to hold the Government to account. In saying so, I also thank the people of Cabramatta for bestowing their trust and faith in me for another term in this place. As a long-serving member of this place, entering my fourth term, I have seen a lot. I have seen the good and the bad sides of politics. I have seen members in this House using every waking minute to work on bills that affect the life and wellbeing of thousands.

The Governor noted that the Government's agenda was designed to secure the future of New South Wales by delivering a strong economy, quality jobs and job security for the workers of today and tomorrow. However, the Government has failed to take into account culturally diverse communities such as Cabramatta. Thousands of families in my electorate come from migrant backgrounds, with many having migrated to Australia in the mid to late 1900s with little or nothing. As a migrant myself, I can say that all you want to do is to work hard to make your parents proud and to work hard enough so that your children can live a better life.

Over the course of the State election, constituents in my electorate raised three common issues. The first was the quality of train services in the area. The T2 line has had more issues than any other line on the entire New South Wales railway system. Constituents in my electorate experience frequent delays weekly and often see train services cancelled. It now takes longer than it did 20 years ago to get to the CBD, which not only inconveniences young people who are travelling to study or work but also inconveniences families who live kilometres apart. Moreover, elderly constituents in my electorate face an even greater challenge than they did 20 years ago in obtaining a ticket to travel on public transport.

The second matter that constituents in my electorate raised was the fact that local hospitals are in desperate need of urgent attention and funding. The local GP clinic, for example, which was originally based at Fairfield Hospital, has now been relocated to Liverpool Hospital. Moreover, Fairfield Hospital is in need of major upgrades to improve internal systems so that staff members can better transmit and communicate information



promptly. I add that members on this side of the House also lobbied for nurse-to-patient ratios to be legislated and increased.

The third matter that was commonly raised in my community was the fact that the cost of living was growing by the year. Families are struggling to make ends meet in my community and, when that is coupled with the issues pertaining to our public infrastructure and services, life gets even tougher for them. Whether it be making sure that their kids get to school on time or making sure that they earn enough to put food on the table, families are doing it tough. And we know for a fact that the keys to every community thriving are good infrastructure and good public services to support everyone and give everyone a fair go. This is not a captain's call, it is my community's plea and demand that this Government stand on its own two feet and put the people of western Sydney first.

I am immensely proud to represent the most culturally diverse community in New South Wales, and I am very proud also to have called it home for the past 70 years. I will do everything in my power to ensure that the people of my electorate get a fair go regardless of their living circumstances because that is the very least they deserve. I commend the Governor's Speech and look forward to working with my constituents as well as my colleagues on this side of the House to hold this Government to account on its promises.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:13):** I thank the Governor for her speech at the opening of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament in the Legislative Council recently. It was wonderful to have someone who is obviously so capable, intelligent, smart and kind taking on the role of Governor. We have had two very impressive Governors in my time in this place—Governor Marie Bashir, AD, CVO, and Governor David Hurley, AC, DSC, FTSE—each of whom has each carried out that role in their own way. They are incredible people who have brought their own flair to that role and it has continued on seamlessly. The Governor had been in that role for only a matter of days before she addressed this Parliament and it was my first opportunity to hear her. It was also an honour to meet and congratulate her on her appointment.

The Governor started her speech by urging members of Parliament to never forget the honour and trust that has been bestowed on us. To that end I will start by thanking the people of Holsworthy. I absolutely love being their representative in this place and I do respect the trust that they have placed in me. I am not here on my own: it takes a strong campaign team to help deliver our message to the thousands and thousands of people who live in the Holsworthy electorate.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **WINGHAM PROBUS CLUB**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:15):** I inform the House that the Probus Club of Wingham held its annual general meeting at the Wingham Services Club in March followed by a luncheon. Members from other Probus clubs attended the meeting as guests as well as John Dorrington, President of Wingham Rotary Club, who presided over the meeting. A new committee for 2019-20 was elected. Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Wingham Services Club Auditorium commencing at 10.00 a.m. The club also invites guest speakers to the meetings. The Probus Club of Wingham is a social club for retirees that provides the opportunity to promote healthy minds and active bodies through social interaction and activities with retirees in our community. I congratulate the Probus Club of Wingham on its continued efforts in contributing to the health of our community.

#### **MR TONY KEW**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (13:16):** It is my privilege to recognise an outstanding member of the Deniliquin community, Mr Tony Kew. During his 22-year involvement with the Rotary Club of Deniliquin, Tony has become the go-to person for many of the club's activities. His coordination and management of manpower with Rotary helps ensure the smooth running of events in which Rotary is involved. Tony is also a member of the Deniliquin Car Club and he assists with Deniliquin High School's driver training program. He is also a member of the St. Paul's Anglican Parish Council and the Deniliquin Golf Club. People like Tony are rare. He is a dedicated and hardworking member of the Deniliquin community and it is my great pleasure to recognise him today.

#### **COFFS HARBOUR RELAY FOR LIFE**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (13:17):** They walked, talked, and shed a few tears along the way at the 2019 Coffs Harbour Relay for Life. Hundreds of people wearing purple, yellow and other bright colours pounded the pavement at the Coffs Harbour Kart Racing Club for this important cause. They raised more than \$30,500 for NSW Cancer Council's research, prevention, information and support services—with more

donations still coming in. The relay allows our community to recognise and celebrate local cancer survivors, patients, and their carers, to honour and remember loved ones lost to cancer, and to raise money to help save more lives. The fact that over 500 people in the Coffs Harbour electorate were told in 2018 they had cancer makes our relay all the more vital. I acknowledge the Coffs Harbour Relay for Life Committee. I thank the chair, Tim Richmond, co-chair Trudy Jeffery, survivors' and carers' co-ordinator Linda Brookes, catering coordinator Toni Montgomerie and committee all-rounder Rianna Carmody for making a difference to the lives of so many people.

#### **MR PETER NEWELL**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (13:18):** I recognise a person that many of us in this place will be familiar with: ClubsNSW chairman Peter Newell is retiring after 15 years' service. Among his achievements, Peter Newell raised millions of dollars in foreign aid after the devastating Boxing Day tsunami. He has been chairman of ClubsNSW for the past 15 years, and started his role less than three months after the devastating natural disaster. The money that he was able to help raise went to Care Australia for water purification technology which was urgently needed. He played a key role in helping set up an orphanage in Indonesia. He is a very proud local in the region that I represent. He is a mad rugby league supporter like me and many of us in here. He loves the Dragons and the old Illawarra Steelers. He was a former general manager of the great *Illawarra Mercury*. Peter has advocated tirelessly for sport across New South Wales and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

#### **MR GARRY BROWN, OAM**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:19):** I draw to the attention of the House the longstanding service of Mr Garry Brown, OAM, as headmaster of Mosman Church of England Preparatory School. After almost 26 years in the position, Mr Brown is retiring this month. He is the sixth headmaster since the school's foundation in 1904, with long tenures being a feature at Mosman Prep. Mr Brown is a visionary educationalist and has been strongly committed to the wellbeing and development of the boys and staff. He has been an incredible role model and in 2009 was honoured in the Australia Day honours list for services to education. In 1980 he completed a Master of Education degree, and in 1993 took the position of headmaster at Mosman Prep. During his tenure the school grew by 50 per cent. This helped establish the school as a self-sustaining entity. His achievements in education were recognised in 2003, when he was the first head of an independent primary school to be given a Fellowship of the Australian College of Educators. I join Mosman Prep and the community in thanking him for his commitment and wish him well in his future endeavours.

#### **VOICELESS**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:20):** I congratulate Paddington-based organisation Voiceless on 15 years of service to animal protection. Voiceless was founded by father and daughter team Brian and Ondine Sherman, with a vision for a world that treats animals with respect and compassion. Voiceless works towards this goal by empowering the animal protection movement through grants; producing reports that expose cruel industry practices like battery hen farming and sow stalls; raising public awareness through the media; and increasing animal protection in science and technology. Education is a major part of its work, helping to make people agents of change for animals. A key focus for Voiceless is to educate and work with the legal profession by engaging lawyers in animal protection through our legal systems and running programs in law schools. I thank the Voiceless team for its tireless work and advocacy on behalf of our voiceless friends and hope to see its vision for a more humane society realised one day.

#### **REELISE FILM FESTIVAL**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (13:21):** The REELise Film Festival is an amazing annual event that allows young filmmakers to get creative and create short films about cyberbullying. This year's theme was "Seen" and was held on 18 May at Event Cinemas in Bondi Junction. Now in its sixth year, the festival was co-hosted by Managing Director Karen Hamilton, who was my 2017 Local Woman of the Year Vaucluse, and former Eastern Suburbs Police Senior Constable Yasmin London. I thank this year's students for their exceptional films. Although students from all over Australia are now entering the festival, it is still a strong local community event. Ascham School's dance troupe, Power 15, gave an amazing performance. The online world can be difficult for young people, so I commend the work of REELise Film Festival and Karen Hamilton in helping young people discuss mental health issues through the creative platform of film.

#### **STEPHANIE DE SOUSA**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:21):** I congratulate Warners Bay home cook and mother of four Stephanie de Sousa, who was eliminated on Monday night from MasterChef Australia. Stephanie made her television debut on Monday 29 April. Her dish, panipuri with chickpea marsala, tamarind paste and cucumber sauce, was given the tick of approval by judges. Although a human resources specialist, Stephanie's life revolves

around cooking. Stephanie has never seen cooking as a chore but rather a great way to de-stress after a day out or to relax on the weekend. Stephanie's husband, Neville, grew up in Goa, India, and exposed her to the world of Indian food. She has been learning about spices ever since. Now that life is getting back to normal for Steph she is looking to set up pop-up restaurants and potentially launch her own authentic Indian spice range. Well done, Steph, and I look forward to meeting with you to talk about your experience and what is in store for you from here.

#### **MAX MCINTYRE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:23):** I take this opportunity to publicly recognise a very special little man, Max McIntyre. In early 2014, at just nine months old, Max contracted bacterial meningitis and was airlifted to a Sydney hospital where his parents, Rob and Amy, were told to expect the worst. At Bear Cottage palliative care unit at Manly, Max captured the attention of William and Kate, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, during a special visit. But again his parents were given advice no parent should ever have to hear. Against all odds, Max continued to fight, and the family returned to Dubbo. The community threw their collective arms around the McIntyres and their wider family through support and fundraising. Max's little sister, Mimi, has watched on proudly this year, which has been a big one for the McIntyres. Despite being blind and suffering severe brain damage, Max started school at Dubbo Public School and recently celebrated his sixth birthday. Happy birthday, Max, and well done to the entire family. You are all superstars.

#### **NEWCASTLE BUSINESS CLUB AWARDS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:24):** My congratulations to a leading light of the Newcastle legal profession, Catherine Henry, on winning the Individual Award at the 2019 Newcastle Business Club awards, which recognise individuals and an organisation who have made significant contributions towards the Hunter region. Newcastle Business Club President Craig Wellings said the award was given for Ms Henry's "involvement in seeking to improve the business community, her profession, the plight of women and vulnerable people within the community". The award also recognises her efforts to help those who have suffered at the hands of others. "All of this demonstrates Ms Henry's significant contribution to the greater good of Newcastle," Mr Wellings said. I also congratulate Youth Award winner Joel Pilgrim, mental health advocate and founder of the surf therapy charity Waves of Wellness; and Organisation Award winner Soul Cafe, which helps the homeless and highly disadvantaged in our city.

#### **SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:25):** It is a pleasure to acknowledge two outstanding Seven Hills electorate constituents who were awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia recently in the Queen's Birthday 2019 honours list. Mr Roger Donsworth, OAM, of Northmead was recognised for his service to the community through a range of organisations. Roger has for many years held high-ranking positions within the Freemasons NSW & ACT. He also served on Castle Hill's St Paul's Anglican Church Parish Council as secretary. I also recognise Ms Sally Hetherington, OAM, of Northmead, who was recognised for service to the international community through charitable initiatives. Sally is the president of the Human and Hope Association of Australia and has previously been its operations manager. She works in the anti-poverty program creating better livelihoods across the Asia Pacific area, specialising in education and vocational training projects. Congratulations to Roger, Sally and the many people across New South Wales who were recognised for their service.

#### **SLOVENIAN NATIONAL DAY**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:26):** On 16 June I had the great pleasure of attending the Slovenian National Day celebrations hosted by the Triglav Club and the NSW Slovenian Community Awards. It was truly wonderful to celebrate this occasion with members of the Slovenian Australian community. The celebrations were very well attended by representatives from the Slovenian Embassy and Consulate, Mounties Group board of directors, Slovenian community members and my parliamentary colleagues. I acknowledge and commend the local Slovenian champions who go the extra mile to help others in need. Congratulations to: Jerica Grželj, Outstanding Senior Citizen; Emil Fabjančič, Outstanding Volunteer; Vesna Dona Maria Poch, Outstanding Volunteer; Zvonko Groznik, Lifetime Achievement Award; Vladimir Cheh, Outstanding Volunteer; and David Gojak, Australian Small Business Award. I also thank Mr Branko Fabjančič, Perina Brown and Stefanie Fabjančič for hosting and presenting the community awards, and to Mr Peter Kroke, President of Triglav Mounties Sub Committee and the Slovenian Community Awards Committee for hosting the event.

#### **CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT PHIL LINDSAY**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:27):** I recognise Casula resident and firefighter Chief Superintendent Phil Lindsay. Chief Superintendent Phil Lindsay began his journey with Fire and Rescue NSW in 1985 and has been driving the Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy. As a result of his effort,

he has been recognised in the Queen's Birthday 2019 honours list. Chief Superintendent Phil Lindsay was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal, the highest honour an Australian firefighter can achieve. It is always great to see people taking the initiative to improve their workplace with constructive programs such as the Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy. I acknowledge Chief Superintendent Phil Lindsay for his recent achievement in promoting Indigenous involvement in Fire and Rescue NSW and on recently being awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal.

### **COOGEE ELECTORATE RUGBY PLAYERS**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (13:27):** The Coogee electorate has a long tradition of producing rugby union royalty. None other than former member Michael Cleary was a Wallaby. Ben Donaldson and Will Harrison continue this tradition, as two Randwick rugby playmakers spearheading Australia's campaign at the World Rugby under-20s Championship in Argentina, now headed to the finals against France. While the two boys kicked off their rugby educations at rival Eastern Suburbs junior clubs—the Coogee Seahorses and the Clovelly Eagles—they are both products of Randwick Rugby Academy and are now playing for the Randwick Rugby Club, and both have also been signed by the Waratahs. I take this opportunity to congratulate Ben and Will on their stellar careers to date and say to them, best of luck in the finals on Sunday. "Up the Wicks!"

### **STONEQUARRY CREEK**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (13:28):** As part of my election campaign I raised the need to clean up Stonequarry Creek. I put forward a petition asking Wollondilly Shire Council, private landowners and the New South Wales Government to assist in cleaning up the creek to give businesses and residents in Picton more certainty. I am pleased to say that volunteer workers have put in some long hours cleaning up Stonequarry Creek in Picton to restore the iconic waterway to its former beauty. Three years ago when Picton was hit by a severe storm, the creek was badly damaged. Volunteers from the Bowral division of Conservation Volunteers Australia worked alongside Wollondilly Shire Council workers to tackle the much-needed clean-up and restoration. Besides general clean-up and beautification of the creek, the workers had three main objectives: reducing flood risk by removing woody weeds along the creek; removing vines to prevent native plants from being strangled; and restoring the bush tucker garden by planting native plants. The garden is used to educate people on Australian bush food. The council expects it to be up and running by spring.

### **MARTIN KLUMPP, OAM**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:29):** I congratulate one of Bankstown's dearest and most loved locals, Martin Klumpp, who was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia. Affectionately known as Marty, he has devoted his life to the sport of cricket and to helping players achieve their best. Since 1976 Marty has served on the Bankstown District Cricket Club board in various roles such as a committee member, assistant secretary, honorary secretary and, now, a life member. He has also served as assistant secretary of the Bankstown Sports Women's Cricket Club and has been a director of Bankstown Sports Club since 2013. He has seen 15 elite players—the likes of Steve Smith, Mark Taylor and the Waugh brothers—grow and develop through the club and has coached countless other junior players over many years, giving his time and effort to contribute to our local community. The development of Memorial Oval—now an elite sporting oval used by the local and broader community—has been a highlight for Marty. I was pleased to hear that Marty's dedication to the cricket community in Bankstown had been recognised with a prestigious medal. Once again, I congratulate Marty and his wife, Maureen, on the wonderful honour.

### **CENTRAL COAST QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:31):** The tireless service of many Central Coast people makes our community, State and nation great. In fact, the Central Coast has the highest number of volunteers anywhere in Australia. Their community spirit is well and truly on display and that is why a number of locals were recognised in last week's Queen's Birthday Honours List. I acknowledge the following recipients of the Medal of the Order of Australia: Mrs Karin McGann for service to the community through the Lions Club of Australia; Mrs Denise Lawrence for service to music education; Dr Michael Scobie for service to ophthalmology and to the community; Mr Donald van Keimpema for service to surf lifesaving; Mrs Patsy Edwards for service to veterans and their families; and Ms Brenda Booth for service to community health. I offer my congratulations to all recipients in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2019.

### **MODEL UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:31):** On 1 June 2019 I had the pleasure of hosting at Parliament House the 2019 Model United Nations Assembly of Rotary District 9675. It was great to hear insightful speeches on violence against women, international migration, the conflict on the Korean Peninsula, and human rights by student delegates from 19 New South Wales public and independent schools. The event was colourful

and vibrant with student delegates dressing in the national dress of the nations they represented. The student delegates demonstrated fantastic knowledge of their designated nation and displayed great public speaking and debating skills. I know that in the future the student delegates will become leaders of our community. I congratulate the teachers, parents and especially the students on a great day. I acknowledge District Governor Sue Hayward, District Governor-Elect Dianne North, International Service Chair Stephen Humphreys and New Generations Chair Cheryl Deguara for organising the successful event.

#### **ASHLEE QUINTANO AND RON ROCIO**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (13:32):** I highlight two outstanding Glenmore Park residents. In April Ashlee Quintano took part in the Memory Walk and Jog along the Nepean River to raise money for Dementia Australia in honour of her grandmother, Laura. Since she was 18 months old Ashlee was raised by her grandparents. Her grandmother is one of six sisters, three of whom were diagnosed with dementia. Ashlee cares for her grandmother and tells the story of living with the good days and bad days of her deteriorating condition. I congratulate Ashlee on raising awareness and support for dementia research.

Ron Rocio, also of Glenmore Park, is living proof that it does not matter where you study; as long as you put in hard work you can succeed. While Mr Rocio studied a bachelor's degree at a university in the Philippines, he recently completed a Bachelor of Applied Commerce at TAFE. He was offered a job at the Financial Planning Association of Australia. Since starting last year he has already received two promotions. He credits that to the knowledge and skills he picked up at TAFE. I congratulate Ron on his terrific achievement and on acknowledging the great benefits of TAFE to help one achieve one's professional and personal goals.

#### **LINKING HEARTS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (13:33):** Linking Hearts, a service of the Muslim Women Association [MWA] in Lakemba, provides domestic violence and homelessness support to women and families from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] backgrounds. Led by Maha Abdo, OAM, it has a dedicated and experienced team that delivers preventative support and early intervention and rehousing facilities. It provides intensive support for clients with complex needs. Linking Hearts is also the only CALD domestic violence specific service for women and families in the region in which it operates, further highlighting its significance.

One of its recent initiatives is the Linking Hearts program, which I am honoured to be a member of. The program involves an alliance of influential and active male ambassadors within the community who use their profile to impact positively on the sphere of domestic and family violence in Australia. Organisations such as the MWA do not have an easy job. For over 40 years, MWA staff have been dealing daily with crises and are unfortunate witnesses to the darker side of humanity. Yet that has not stopped them. They continue to be dedicated to offering a wide array of services, from community awareness and advocacy to early intervention and support.

#### **WESTS SPORTS COUNCIL**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (13:34):** On Friday night I attended the Wests Sports Council annual awards ceremony. The awards recognise local athletes and sporting groups for their achievements, commitment and contribution to local sport. Wests League Club has established a supportive relationship with 27 Macarthur clubs. It was exciting to see so many talented local athletes recognised on the evening. I will mention some of the athletes and clubs that were presented with awards. Junior Sportsperson of the Year was Brayden Brook from the Wests Hockey Club. Youth Sportsperson of the Year was Matthew Browne from the Campbelltown Magpies Cricket Club. Senior Sportsperson of the Year was Suzie Haddad from the Mount Annan Swim Club. Sports Team of the Year was 13C's Airs Lyrebirds Netball Club. Spirit of Club Sportsperson of the Year was Tiarne Martin from the Eaglevale Netball Club. Elite Sports Team of the Year was 1st Grade Women's Cricket Team for Campbelltown-Camden Ghosts Cricket Club. Elite Sportsperson of the Year was Darcey Malone. [*Time expired.*]

#### **CONNOR LINZ**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:36):** I pay tribute to TAFE NSW Apprentice of the Year and Port Stephens local Mr Connor Linz. Connor is a plasterer and apprentice with local business Matthew Campbell Plastering. He has now completed a Certificate III in wall and ceiling lining. Connor not only won the overall Apprentice of the Year award but he also was named Student of the Year in the Infrastructure, Energy and Construction category. It is fantastic to see talented young people such as Connor recognised for their achievements. Connor has already spoken about his desire to one day start his own business and put on apprentices himself so that the cycle of training and skills development can continue. Connor's recognised skills and industry knowledge are an example of the central role that TAFE plays in paving the pathway to success for young people and in supporting local economies with a skilled workforce. That is why the cuts to TAFE funding are such a threat to regional economies. I congratulate Connor on his success and wish him all the best in his career.

**NARELLE GENTLES**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:37):** I recognise the courageous spirit of Narelle Gentles from Port Macquarie in taking on the challenge to participate in Jay's Longest Melanoma March in Sydney to fight for a cure to end cancer. Jay's Longest Melanoma March is a 2,000-kilometre hike over 50 days from Adelaide to Sydney to raise awareness about the importance of checking your skin for any abnormalities or changes in pigmentation. Narelle walked part of the stretch to Sydney after realising how devastating a diagnosis of melanoma is for a family. Sadly, in 2017 Narelle lost her mother and mother-in-law to melanoma just six months apart from each other. Narelle commemorated the one-year anniversary of her mother-in-law's passing by walking on 19 May, which coincidentally fell on the same date as the melanoma march.

Narelle's ambition is to start a discussion about the seriousness of melanoma and how rapidly the aggressive cancer can spread if left unchecked. All funds raised from Jay's Longest Melanoma March will go to the world-class research team at Melanoma Institute Australia, which focuses on clinical trials and development of new treatments to make a difference in the lives of patients today and tomorrow. Narelle is an outstanding ambassador for cancer research. I wish her the best in her future endeavours.

**ERSKINEVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:38):** Last Thursday, 13 June, I had the pleasure of visiting Erskineville Public School at the invitation of Principal Dr Brendhan Haynes and the teaching staff to see its school-wide project-based learning on what makes Erskineville a great place to live. I took several hours to visit classrooms and see the individual books that students had written and illustrated brilliantly on what they loved about living in Erskineville. I was impressed with the maturity and capabilities of the children. They were even learning to code with robots, one of which drove around a map of Erskineville that they themselves had drawn. It was a pleasure to be guided around the school by school captains Zoe and Grace, and well as August and Hazel. Erskineville really is a wonderful place to live and Erskineville Public School is an excellent place to go to school. I ask the House to recognise the wonderful school community.

**BIG RIVER MILK**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:39):** I congratulate local business Big River Milk on winning gold for its cream and silver for its milk at the 2019 Australian Dairy Produce Competition, which was recently held in Melbourne. It was the first time that the business had entered the competition. Operation manager Barry Paff and production operator Gary Marsh should be extremely pleased with the result, especially considering the drought conditions that the dairy is currently experiencing. Big River Milk is a great success story. It is a local Clarence Valley dairy that decided to take matters into its own hands and, rather than be at the mercy of the supermarkets, began to process and sell its milk under its own brand. It is always wonderful to see small local businesses achieve success on the national scene against the big players.

**ELLA PARRY-JONES**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (13:40):** I recognise Ms Ella Parry-Jones of Orange. Ten-year-old Ella was motivated to raise funds for cancer research to reduce the number of people who have to endure chemotherapy in their fight against cancer after she witnessed several people close to her experiencing the process in their personal battles with the disease. This young lady launched a fundraising appeal, at the conclusion of which she would trade her lovely locks of hair for donations to the Cancer Council. Ella's campaign was well supported by the Orange community and at her recent ceremonial haircut she raised more than \$7,000. Before family, friends and a public gathering of those mustered to watch the local rugby league derby at Wade Park in Orange, Ella's head was ceremoniously shaved to great applause. The applause was for this amazing young lady's initiative, which was spawned from her sense of concern for others, and for her act of benevolence that serves as an inspiration to all. Ella's hair has since been donated to Wigs4Kids, a charity that makes wigs for children who, because of cancer treatment, had no choice about losing their hair. I congratulate Ella. She is an absolute champion.

**ANNE FARAH-HILL, OAM**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:41):** I inform the House of a great local hero, Ms Anne Farah-Hill. The Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre CEO has recently been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the community through social welfare organisations. Anne has developed a team of competent and dedicated staff members and volunteers who always go above and beyond what is required. Anne has also built a strong network of community and business organisations who have supported the centre and been supported by it. Anne has advocated strongly for all her clients over the years and in the process has secured funding from all three levels of government and the non-government sector. Anne has actively researched and identified community needs and made every effort to meet them. She has been a passionate fighter for the community and

has always carried herself in a professional manner. Her recognition is so well deserved. I congratulate Anne on her outstanding achievement.

#### **ROSIE WOOD**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:42):** I bring to the attention of the House the work of my constituent Rosie Wood of Berkeley Vale, who is the creator of the Ourimbah RSL public mural which was officially unveiled on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armistice of the Great War. The mural includes photos of two local ex-service people, Des Foster and Barbara McNab, and a photo of Light Horse troopers at Ourimbah station. It was finished off with photos of Flanders poppies and the sunrise over Tuggerah Lakes. On behalf of the community, I thank Rosie for the fine public artwork, which nicely sets off the facade of Ourimbah RSL Club.

#### **BOOROWA RUGBY UNION CLUB**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (13:42):** I acknowledge the Boorowa Rugby Union Club on its fiftieth anniversary. They say the more things change, the more they stay the same. While the faces may be different, the same passion, determination and sense of community and family has been at the forefront of the Boorowa Rugby Club for the past five decades. This year the team, affectionately known as the Goldies, celebrates its fiftieth year. Recently I attended an event with over 470 attendees to celebrate the milestone.

This is about more than just footy. I commend President Justin Fleming and his committee for hosting such a successful event. The culture, sense of community and inclusiveness of the club can be attributed to its founders such as Eddie Corcoran, Joe McGuinness and Peter Sheridan, who have put as much focus on off-field enjoyment as they have on on-field performance. The founders and those who came later—including the Gays, Corcorans, Ryans, McGraths and Merrimans—nurtured the rugby community and, because of that, the club has always been healthy and vibrant irrespective of its on-field results. The women of the club also play a major role. They have raised over \$50,000 for charities to date with the help of stalwarts such as Joanne Rowley. I congratulate all involved. Go the Goldies!

#### **CAMPBELLTOWN AND REGION FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (13:44):** I was delighted to join the Federal member for Macarthur, Dr Michael Freeland, and councillors Rey Manoto and Masood Chowdhury at the Campbelltown and Region Filipino Community Council [CRFCC] cultural event to celebrate 121 years of Filipino independence. Our two nations share the values of freedom and democracy. The CRFCC's annual event is an important reminder and celebration of the valued friendship that exists between our two peoples. The event dates back to 2005 when then Philippine Consul General Maria Theresa Lazaro and my very dear friend the late Mayor of Campbelltown, Brenton Banfield, began a partnership to foster greater understanding, inclusivity and celebration of our community's diversity. As they say, the rest is history. No Filipino event would be complete without wonderful cultural dances, singing and performances. It was most enjoyable. I take this opportunity to recognise the ongoing efforts of Lourdes Kaiser, Rey Manoto and the CRFCC's executive for their commitment to our community in organising the annual event. To them I say well done and mabuhay!

#### **HOLSWORTHY EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:45):** I bring to the attention of the House the children from Holsworthy Early Education and Care Centre, who recently shared their development ideas for Liverpool with Liverpool City Council. The preschoolers built their vision for the city out of LEGO. It is encouraging to see the enthusiasm the young people have concerning the future of their growing city. As the member for Holsworthy I am excited to have such budding future town planners in my electorate. Their creativity and imagination should be of interest to the council as it plans the future of the expanding city. Apparently, the children's ideas could be considered in the actual planning of Liverpool. It is great that our decisions will affect their future as the generation that will inherit the city. The early childhood workers at Holsworthy Early Education and Care Centre must also be acknowledged. The work they do channelling the creativity and energy of those young people is invaluable. I thank them for their efforts.

#### **5 LANDS WALK**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:46):** Best wishes and sunny skies to everybody who will be traversing the 5 Lands Walk on the Central Coast this weekend. I congratulate all who have been involved—from the few who were involved since it was a seed of an idea to the now massive organisation and population that unite to make the 5 Lands Walk one of the Central Coast's premier tourist events. From the opening ceremony on Friday evening and the dawn mandala at sunrise on Macmasters Beach, across to Copacabana, Avoca, North Avoca and the Skillion, I wish everybody a fantastic trip through nature and across our magnificent beaches and

rocky headlands. I hope they have time to enjoy the culture and arts of the Central Coast. I thank our Aboriginal community members for connecting locals and visitors alike to the ancient ceremonies and cultural traditions that have been part of those beautiful lands since long before the arrival of we the invaders who now live beside them and call the beautiful Central Coast home. To our artists young and old, galleries, choirs and dancers, spirit workers and to everyone in the organising committee I wish much love, gratitude and best wishes for a fabulous weekend.

#### **CHRIS HOLSTEIN, OAM**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:47):** I pay tribute to Councillor Chris Holstein, who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for 2019. Councillor Holstein is also the Deputy Mayor of the Central Coast and a former member for Gosford in this place. Chris received his medal in recognition of his service spanning a lifetime of commitment to local government and to our local community. Indeed, he has served as a councillor since 1991, including as mayor from 1998 to 2001 and 2008 to 2009. Chris grew up on the Central Coast and I am told he has been actively involved with Surf Life Saving Central Coast, Central Coast Vietnam Veterans Association, Central Coast Scouts, Coast Shelter and the Regional Youth Support Services organisation for many years. Chris is also a great advocate for businesses and for the economic development of the Central Coast. In my role as the member for Terrigal I have a very strong working relationship with Chris. It is my pleasure to congratulate him on attaining a Medal of the Order of Australia.

#### **GORDANA POPOVIC**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:47):** I acknowledge Ms Gordana Popovic of Mount Pritchard Public School, who is a finalist in the Interrelate 2019 "Say No To Bullying" Poster Competition. Gordana's poster is one of just 41 artworks chosen out of 3,718 posters submitted from schools across Australia. Gordana's poster features examples of positive behaviour in and around her school through drawings. Bullying should never be tolerated—not now and not ever. I commend Gordana and the staff of Mount Pritchard Public School for their work in promoting a positive and respectful environment within the school. Members from both sides of the House have commended Gordana for her hard work in putting the inspirational piece of art together.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION AWARDS**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:47):** The Public Education Foundation Awards recognise excellence in our public schools and provide scholarships to some of our most talented and conscientious students and teachers. My electorate of Auburn proudly had three students and a teacher acknowledged for their achievements. I congratulate Roba Goreishi and Amal Khan from Auburn Girls High School, Cecelia Wiredu from Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School and Andrew Stephens from Lidcombe Public School on each receiving a scholarship. I also congratulate Ahlem Bahsa and Asal Khalaf from my old school, Birrong Girls High School, on their recognition. They are all great examples of public education achievement in Auburn.

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

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to Hailey Giles, who is on work experience this week and is accompanied by her father, Andrew Giles. They are guests of the member for Castle Hill. I welcome Dustin Clare—Australian actor, chairperson of regional film body Screenworks and federally elected member of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance's National Performers Committee—who is a guest of the member for Tweed and of the Parliamentary Secretary for Energy and the Arts in the other place, the Hon. Ben Franklin. I acknowledge university student Marli Geesing, who is also on work experience and is a guest of the member for The Entrance. I had the privilege of meeting Marli yesterday. I welcome to the public gallery Eli and Annie Harris, who are guests of the member for Shellharbour. Finally, I welcome to the Chamber guests from the Sydney College of English. I remind members that I am happy to read out any acknowledgements if they are provided to my office in sufficient time for me to do so. I have a late notice that the Hon. Peter Anderson, a former member of this place, is in the Chamber today. We make special mention of members past and present.



*Bills***STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2019****LIBRARY AMENDMENT BILL 2019****Assent**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

*Motions Accorded Priority***PRESENTATION**

*[During the giving of notices of motions sought to be accorded priority]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will remain quiet. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time. I call the member for The Entrance to order for the first time. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

*Question Time***ASSET PRIVATISATION**

**The SPEAKER:** I sense a higher than normal level of exuberance in the Chamber today. I ask that members calm down before questions, as it might end nastily for somebody today.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:29):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given the Premier gave an iron-clad guarantee that there would be no further asset sales, will the Treasurer make the same commitment today that no more community owned assets will be sold?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:29):** What a great day it was yesterday for the people of New South Wales. It was a fantastic budget; I endorse it completely. The question was about sales. If I had any, I would be selling shares in the New South Wales Labor Party, as those shares would be going down, down, down. There will be a massive run on them. On this side of the House we will always act in the best interests of the people of the State. On the other side of the House members put ideology before doing what is right for the people of New South Wales. During the 2015 election the people of New South Wales backed in the Government's asset recycling regime. We have seen record infrastructure off the back of that. There have been 190 new and upgraded schools, 40 new and upgraded hospitals, motorways and metros.

This Government inherited a \$35 billion infrastructure backlog. At a time when national growth is slowing what is holding growth back in New South Wales and driving our national economy? It is our public investment infrastructure brought to the people of New South Wales by the Government's asset recycling approach. Last night, after delivering the budget yesterday, I checked every single *Hansard* in history—I had my office looking this up until 5 o'clock in the morning—and I discovered that never before on budget day had an Opposition not asked the Treasurer a question. That is what happened yesterday.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind Opposition members on the back benches, including the member for Shellharbour and the member for Rockdale, that they should be quiet.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Opposition members are one day late every single time. Budget day was yesterday. We are able to see in this year's budget papers the growing net worth of the State—soon to hit a third of a trillion dollars. That is double what it was under Labor. The Government is swapping old assets for new assets. We are looking forward to Mr Speaker's new asset coming forward at some stage. I have looked at who is backing the budget. The Committee for Sydney is. It said yesterday:

Overall, the Treasurer has achieved no mean feat in balancing the Budget whilst committing to record levels of infrastructure spending. The Budget further enhances NSW's reputation as the best run and most dynamic state economy in the country.

Well said, Committee for Sydney.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** She is coming, member for Cessnock. I remind the shadow Minister for education about the year one phonics check for New South Wales students—I know those opposite do not like phonics—which is a great step forward to ensure all students learn vital decoding skills in the early years. The Illawarra Business Chamber said, "How bad is Ryan Park!" No, it likes him. It is disappointed that he is not running for the position of Leader of the Opposition. The Illawarra Business Chamber has said that it welcomes

the delivery of promised payroll tax threshold increases and ongoing investments in the Illawarra. How good is the Illawarra under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government! It is amazing.

**Mr Ryan Park:** They love us.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The Government just wanted to help you become the leader, Ryan. The Government's action on payroll tax enabled 1,800 small and medium sized businesses—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time. I warn the Leader of the Opposition about his behaviour.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The Opposition member has asked a question. I am trying to answer it. They should quieten down. Mr Zarth from the Illawarra Business Chamber said:

The government's action on lifting the payroll tax threshold will enable the 1,869 small-to-medium sized businesses in the Illawarra to employ additional staff and save on average around \$10,000 in administration ...

Mr Zarth is objective. It goes on. The New South Wales Business Chamber is backing the Government in.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

They do not like the business community, do they? They certainly do not like Mr Tax, on the other side of the Chamber. He would put a tax on farmers and a tax on business. I will tell members who backed the Government in: David Borger. David Borger loves the budget. We have got David Borger, John Robertson, Paul Keating, Neville Wran and Ben Chifley. The light on the hill is on this side of the House. All the quality Labor people are now backing the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government.

#### STATE BUDGET AND HEALTH AND EDUCATION

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:34):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How does the budget deliver for health and education?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:34):** I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. We know how passionate he is about health and education. Today I was pleased to be joined at Westmead Hospital by the member for Seven Hills, the member for Parramatta, Minister Lee, as well as the Minister for Health and the Treasurer, to oversee the \$1 billion redevelopment of the hospital. That 14-storey building has topped out. Today we were told that by the middle of next year we will have a functioning hospital. This is an outstanding achievement. This year's budget on health is a record \$27 billion in both recurrent and capital expenditure.

Yesterday in the budget it was very exciting to announce that the Government's infrastructure program in health will increase by 25 per cent over the next four years. The amount this Government is spending on health infrastructure has gone from \$8 billion to \$10.1 billion. We know it is not just the bricks and mortar in the hospitals we are building across New South Wales—whether in the bush, our regions or the cities. As well as ensuring our hospitals function well, we are also investing in our nurses and allied health professionals, in those people who ensure that our patients have the best care possible. This morning at Westmead Hospital I met with a number of nurses and had the chance to thank them on behalf of the people of New South Wales for the outstanding work they do in supporting the New South Wales health system. We also met a very happy patient and suggested to her that she not come back to the new hospital—we hope she has a healthy couple of years ahead.

The acting interim Leader of the Opposition will be giving the reply to the budget tomorrow. As members know, he was the shadow Treasurer during the election campaign. It is timely to note while talking about the health budget that when he was asked during the election campaign what proportion of the budget was dedicated to health, apparently he took 18 seconds to respond. He would have been trying to Google the numbers up on his phone. The answer he gave was, "Oh, it is around 40 per cent of the budget." In fact, it is around 28 per cent of the budget. But do not worry, what is about \$9 to \$10 billion amongst friends? What the shadow Treasurer—who is now the acting interim Leader of the Opposition—should have done was call the member for Cessnock. He actually reads the budget papers. The member for Cessnock would have known.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We are investing record amounts in education. This example indicates what has happened to the grand old Labor Party of New South Wales. Its acting interim leader, who was the shadow Treasurer, did not know what proportion of the budget was dedicated to health. In addition to outlining the record amounts the Government is investing in the health system, I commend the Minister for Health, who has a very difficult job but one he does admirably. He put a very strong case to the Treasurer for the extra dollars in both recurrent and capital expenditure and we will ensure we deliver that.

This Government appreciates that if we are serious about delivering on our belief of equality of opportunity—not equality of outcome, but equality of opportunity—to give every person, every student in this State the chance to be their best, we have to ensure that we make record investments in our education system. I am absolutely thrilled that our recurrent and capital budgets in education have been given a huge boost. I acknowledge the Minister for Education in the other place, as well as her predecessor in this place, for not only ensuring that New South Wales signed up to Gonski, but also ensuring that it was the first State to do so. The Victorian Government still has not signed up to the next tranche of Gonski. I say to the shadow spokesperson on education: do not just read out motions which are full of misleading information. [*Extension of time*]

We are incredibly proud not only of the dollars we have been able to dedicate to education in this State, but also what the dollars go towards. For many parents and students the struggle with mental health is a big issue. It is an incredible achievement that every high school across New South Wales will have access to a counsellor and a mental health social worker—two staff dedicated to supporting our student bodies. I acknowledge the importance of before and after school care. It is important that we provide that balance for families who are attempting to cope with the stresses of modern life. We are also incredibly proud that we are investing in early education. New South Wales is the first State to provide subsidised support to three-year-olds going to preschool. In the future we want to see that boosted.

We are also proud of our contribution to non-government schools. Parents have the right to choose where they send their children. It is important for us to support the non-government sector as well as the public education system—of which I am a proud graduate. No matter where you look in New South Wales, you see that our schools and hospitals are receiving record investment. Those opposite should be embarrassed by their record in government. They were closing down hospital beds and schools and racking up debt, with nothing to show for it. They left the State in deficit, with nothing to show for it. What did they do for 16 years? Not much. The Government made a commitment to the people of New South Wales that we will ensure record investment in our schools and hospitals. I am proud that the Liberal-Nationals will deliver.

#### ASSET PRIVATISATION

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:42):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Treasurer has refused to rule out further privatisations, will the Premier promise today, as she did before the election, not to privatise any more community-owned assets?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:42):** I was asked this question yesterday. Has the Opposition run out of questions already? How long did it take us to put the budget together, how many volumes? But I cannot wait to hear the reply to the budget tomorrow. Let us rule out all the things Labor members do not believe in. They do not believe in asset recycling—we get that. They do not believe in any debt—I do not know anyone who buys a house and pays the full amount on day one. They do not believe in surpluses—because they did not deliver any. There is one thing they believe in very strongly: tax. That is something they believe in.

It is important to remember the acting interim Leader of the Opposition was given one job during the campaign. Then it turned into a different job. Colleagues will remember this—the one job he had was to explain the so-called luxury car tax. Every day he was asked by the media, "Please explain?" Every time the Leader of the Opposition was asked he would say, "I refer that to the shadow Treasurer." When it was realised that he could not explain it, he was given a second job. Do you know what the second job was? The first job was explain the tax. When he could not explain the tax, the second job was not to be seen for the rest of the campaign—witness protection.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. It is two minutes into the Premier's answer and she has not gone anywhere near the issue of privatisation.

**The SPEAKER:** I believe the Premier referred to the answer she gave yesterday. The Premier will return to the leave of the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I was asked about our approach to the budget and our revenue. This is all relevant. I will make it clear.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I have to give the member for Keira credit where credit is due. Even though he could not explain the luxury car tax, which affected farmers and tradies, and even though he was in witness protection he still managed to announce nine other taxes. He could not explain the luxury tax which impacted farmers in drought and tradies who are trying to increase jobs. Then he was in witness protection, but he did manage to announce nine other taxes. Shall I go through them?

**Government members:** Yes!

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Okay. First of all, he announced that he would cancel the payroll tax cuts we are giving small business. Shame!

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question clearly asked whether the Premier was going to rule out any further privatisations. She has not gone near answering that question.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear further from the Premier.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I want to stress that members opposite do not believe in surpluses because they did not deliver any. They do not believe in debt, they do not believe in asset recycling, but they believe in taxes. I got to number two: cancelling payroll tax cuts. From witness protection he managed to announce cancelling stamp duty cuts. Shame! He managed to announce a retirement village tax. He managed to announce a parking tax, a boat tax, a strata tax, a vacant property tax and an increase in car registration. Members opposite have no leader and no clue about what it takes to run a State budget. After 86 days we are still waiting for them to elect a leader. All they believe in is taxes and cancelling projects—that is it. I say well done to the acting interim Leader of the Opposition; he managed to announce nine taxes from witness protection.

**The SPEAKER:** For the benefit of members, in response to some of the points of order I deem the Premier's answer to be generally relevant. There has been some discussion among the Standing Orders and Procedures Committee about whether answers should be more directly relevant, which may result in a reform after the winter break. I mention that by way of clarity, but I point out that the Premier referred to the answer she gave yesterday.

#### AUSGRID PRIVATISATION

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (14:48:1):** My question is directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Does the Minister support the privatisation of the remainder of Ausgrid, given the chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Rod Sims, said that privatisation is severely damaging our economy?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:48):** That is a great question from the member for Wyong. It is a question on energy policy. Let me outline exactly what I support in energy policy: Reliable and affordable power for citizens right across New South Wales. We will do whatever it takes to put downward pressure on power prices in this State, which is exactly what we have done. For the benefit of the member for Wyong, electricity prices are regulated in New South Wales. I have just been going through these briefings, and there are regulations on power prices in this State.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the second time.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I am delighted to talk about energy prices in New South Wales and about electricity and energy companies. It brings me to the Empowering Homes scheme, which is a \$7.9 million allocation in yesterday's budget to help with the rollout of solar panels and batteries right across New South Wales. It will help home owners to access solar panels and batteries.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. This is a critical question for this State. Does the Minister support the privatisation of the remainder of Ausgrid? It is not about electricity prices. It is about privatisation. The Minister should rule it in or out.

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

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Members on my side of the House all love the member for Strathfield. I think it is a matter of public record that she loves us as well.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Bega to order for the first time. I am about to hear a point of order. If members continue to interject and cause me to have to stand up they risk being removed from the Chamber straightaway.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129 again. It was a very clear question to the Minister about privatisation. It requires a simple yes or no answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the point of order.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Is it any wonder that the member for Strathfield is talking about privatisation? She voted for Morris Iemma's privatisation of the electricity assets.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat so I can rule on the point of order. The Minister is being generally relevant to the question, which, at this stage, is permitted under the standing orders.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I am happy to talk about privatisations, because the member for Strathfield supported the privatisation put up by former Premier Morris Iemma. In fact, it is a bone of contention for half the members who are looking to support the member for Kogarah in the leadership ballot. Members opposite are the same people that supported the privatisation of this State's electricity generation assets. They prorogued the Parliament to do it without going to the people. We will go to the people, we will talk to people and we will make sure that we are putting downward pressure on power prices. We will make sure that we deliver reliable power in New South Wales. I have outlined a plan to do exactly that. That is what I am focusing on as the Minister for Energy and Environment.

As I said before, members on my side of the House love the member for Strathfield. It is a matter of public record that she loves us too. In fact, we were thinking of other members who we might be able to send from our side of the House to the other side to run for the Labor Party leadership. The member for Kiama is someone we might volunteer for such a role. We thought that might increase the IQ on both sides of the House.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Is it the same point of order? The Minister continues to be relevant to the question.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** This is the fourth time the Minister has been asked about whether he will privatise the remainder of Ausgrid.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. I rule as I did earlier, that the Minister is being generally relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I am not going to engage in hypotheticals. The member for Strathfield wants to play word games and put forward hypotheticals. We have got no plans to do that. This is just a silly word game by the member for Strathfield, who is having a leadership contest with the member for Kogarah. What we have is a Liberal sympathiser up against a union hater. They will do anything to not talk about the problems on their own side. We are happy to talk about our positive plan for New South Wales in the energy space. It is all about delivering reliable and affordable energy to citizens across New South Wales. I have spoken about the Empowering Homes program, a \$7.9 billion program announced by the great Treasurer in this budget, that will roll out solar across New South Wales with batteries. There is a lot to do. More than 900,000 families in New South Wales are benefiting from our rebates package, such as the Family Energy rebate and the Low Income Household rebate, which is putting downward pressure on power prices. We know that about 300,000 New South Wales families could benefit also and we are encouraging them to jump on the Service NSW website.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 59. The Minister is teetering on irrelevance.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** We have got no plans to privatise Ausgrid. The only person with plans is Ryan Park. On the ABC this week he said to Wendy Harmer, "The situation is very simple: We are not opposed to privatisation as a general rule." [*Time expired.*]

#### STATE BUDGET AND REGIONAL ROADS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:56):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. How does the budget deliver for regional roads?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:56):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. Like others on this side of the House, she understands that having strong regions ensures that we have a strong economy in New South Wales. This side of the House knows that for more jobs and more opportunities for people living in the bush we need more roads and better roads. This side of the House has a big, bold vision for regional New South Wales. We are proud of our delivery over the past eight years. We are not just building for now, we are building for the next generation. We are building significant projects in this State, projects that will transform lives and projects that will change communities forever. This side of the House knows what strong, stable leadership means. The other side of the House, after 86 days—almost three months after the election—still has no Opposition leader.

I am glad that those opposite want to hear about roads because this side of the House and the people of New South Wales know what good leadership is: It is about setting a benchmark for what is going to be delivered for this State. Yesterday's budget was exciting for the people of this State, especially for the people in regional New South Wales. The budget announced an investment of \$94 billion in infrastructure and \$55 billion for roads and public transport, and for those people living in the regions \$6.7 billion will be rolled out in the next 12 months—and there is more in the pipeline.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** What about Canterbury roads?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** What about Canterbury? Canterbury is not even in the regions. You do not even know where the regions are.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury is on another warning. If she continues to interject I will call her to order for the second time.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** We have committed \$1 billion to upgrade local roads and replace timber bridges across the State. We will ensure that regional and rural communities maintain access to towns and essential services. I note that the member for Port Macquarie was interested in the budget yesterday because her electorate will receive an upgrade of the Waitui Road, \$17 million for the Maria River Road between Port Macquarie and Crescent Head. In the west of the State \$12.5 million will be provided for upgrades to Pooncarrie Road and in Oxley \$10 million will be provided for upgrades to Armidale Road. In Albury \$4.4 million will be provided for upgrades to Federation Way and \$10 million for Captains Flat Road near Queanbeyan. Those are just a few projects that we announced in the budget yesterday. When I woke up this morning I read the newspapers including my second-most important newspaper—the *Daily Liberal*. There on the front page is a photo of the Treasurer and the member for Dubbo holding the budget papers, and what does the headline say? "Boom Time", because it is a boom time for the regions.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: Speaker Ellis ruled in 1970 that reading a newspaper during a session is disorderly. The Minister is reading the newspaper. Speaker Ellis made that ruling on 19 March 1970, the year before I was born.

**The SPEAKER:** I clarify a ruling on that point of order. It is permissible to read from a newspaper extract. It is also permissible to briefly hold up a newspaper article, but I suggest that the Minister was going beyond brief and that he should not hold up the newspaper again.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Can I just clarify if that is briefly?

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The headline is "Boom Time" above a photo of the Treasurer and the member for Dubbo. Members will note that even their mothers probably cannot tell them apart. [*Extension of time*]

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Point of order: I do not know whether we have a standing order that covers holding up fake news in the Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Gosford makes a clever comment, but I call her to order for the first time.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** While it is a boom time we have also announced the start of our \$2.5 billion duplication of the Great Western Highway. This 31-kilometre section of road from Lithgow to Katoomba will ensure a faster and safer route through the mountains. We have also announced \$1.2 billion for the Princes Highway and \$1.5 billion for the Pacific Highway—the largest road infrastructure project in the State. Also announced is \$145 million for upgrades to the Newell Highway, which will have 30 overtaking lanes. The Silver City and Cobb highways will be sealed over the coming years. While those opposite do not care about regional parts of New South Wales, we know that it will make a difference to the lives of those communities. We know that strong regional roads will connect our towns and our communities.

This side of the House welcomed yesterday's budget because under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government we are delivering roads for the people of New South Wales, especially for those people living in regional parts of New South Wales. We know that the people of this State will rest easy knowing that they have not got an opposition and that we on this side of the House are going to deliver a strong budget. We are speeding full steam ahead to making sure that we are going to drive the State of New South Wales by providing better roads for those people living in this State.

### INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:04):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How is the New South Wales Government delivering infrastructure and services for the people of New South Wales and are there any alternatives?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (15:04):** Well, I have made it, Mr Speaker: front page of the *Daily Mail*. It is all downhill from here.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

Sorry—*Daily Liberal*. I think the Premier was a bit harsh. I think Ryan has done a really good job. Do you think he has done a good job? To go through this for the three months, 87 days—

**Mr Ryan Park:** Without pay!

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —without pay. I am talking to the union about it, do not worry. Because I lose Industrial Relations now as part of this budget, so this is my last little gift. I think he does deserve to do the budget-in-reply speech. I think he has earned it. He does not deserve to write it but he deserves to give it. In fact Kaila has written it. I have a copy: "Ten things I hate about Chris," is what she will be writing. I noticed yesterday that there was a lot more activity down the far end of the Chamber. It was not just the member for Kogarah. The member for Summer Hill was very excited yesterday. I know she loves budget day. This little duo has got some internal polling and they are worried about their effort in this place. But Chris should look at what dignified leadership is down at this end of the table.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** I have two points of order: The use of the word "Chris" rather than the member's title is a breach of Standing Order 75. In addition to that, we are two minutes into the answer and the Treasurer has not got anywhere near the question that he was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the Treasurer of the standing orders.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I accept that. But if you look at the two leaders from my perspective—I know it has some impact—I think Jodi has been calm, collected, dignified. That is what new leadership is. But I make this point: When it comes to John Setka she is being way too quiet. John Setka needs to be called out. Here is a bloke—and I do not have much in common with Sally McManus—but what I will do is call out—

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: It is obviously Standing Order 129 because I do not understand how this relates to anything anywhere near the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I warn the Treasurer that his leeway has expired. If he wants another two minutes to complete his answer, he should be highly relevant.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I accept that. But this bloke Setka has pleaded guilty to charges of harassing women. And look at the sisterhood opposite. They all go very quiet when there is a bloke here from the "cocaine union"—

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: It is still Standing Order 129. He is flouting your ruling now.

**The SPEAKER:** I have warned the Treasurer that he will not receive another two minutes to complete his answer unless he is highly relevant. He is making a choice.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I guarantee there is no money in the budget for John Setka. This type of behaviour should be called out. Harassing women should be called out and people like that should be called out. The Labor Party has an obligation to its members. I commend Anthony Albanese for his leadership on this. I commend Sally McManus on her leadership on this. I commend the member for Kogarah for his leadership on this and I say to the member for Strathfield that you should call out and say that you will not accept support from Mr Setka or the "cocaine union".

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to deliver whatever it is he is saying about me, he can do it by way of substantive motion. John Setka is a grub. Now please talk about infrastructure—Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no breach of Standing Order 73.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Momentum is coming Chris' way fast. What a great budget it was. It is a testament to the strong financial management of those of us on this side of the House driving our State forward. We do not run surplus for the sake of it. To come off that revenue downfall and still be in a strong financial position is a testament to those of us on this side of the House who will continue to drive our State forward. We will continue to build infrastructure to make a real difference to people's lives right across our State.

**TAFE NSW**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:09):** My question is directed to the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education. Given that the Government has already sacked thousands of TAFE teachers and staff, can the Minister guarantee there will be no further job losses at TAFE?

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (15:10):** I thank the member for that question. I congratulate the Treasurer on a wonderful budget—best budget in the world. I know he is the number one supporter of TAFE and I thank him for his investment in TAFE for the future. I also recognise the Premier. The Treasurer was exactly right: You are the best Premier in the whole wide world. You are a legend. It is very exciting to be the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, something those of us on this side of the House really appreciate. This Government is getting on with delivering for TAFE. We have something like 140 different locations throughout the State where we are delivering on TAFE. The 2019-20 budget delivers \$1.85 billion funding to TAFE. That is an increase of 3.1 per cent on the 2018-19 forecast expenditure. Additionally, we are delivering \$137.2 million on capital expenditure for TAFE in the next financial year.

**Ms Prue Car:** The teachers? The jobs?

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** The member mentions teachers. I should update the House. It is a great disappointment that the last time I spoke about the wonderful teachers in TAFE those opposite were denigrating teachers. The member for Shellharbour knows—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Give the Minister a fair go.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** It gives me great sadness to say that to my 84-year-old father. It is very hard to explain why Labor does not support TAFE teachers. He was a TAFE teacher all his life. It is absolutely abhorrent. But on this side of the House we support them.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: Standing Order 74 (2). The Minister is being deliberately quarrelsome across the Chamber. He knows his Government has smashed TAFE.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** As I was saying, we support TAFE. With a record \$1.85 billion total funding, that is a 3.1 per cent increase. I thank the Treasurer and I look forward to the same increase next year. In the budget we commit \$79.6 million to deliver a new TAFE super campus—

**Ms Prue Car:** Point of order: Standing Order 129. It was a very simple question. Yes or no: Will there be any further job losses or not?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** As I was saying, we are delivering a new super campus in western Sydney with a focus on construction. More teachers mean more students. We have 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships and traineeships and we are very proud of that—100,000 fee-free TAFE and VET courses—over the next four years. It is fantastic—I thank the Treasurer for that. In this budget we have committed another \$61.7 million for an additional eight connected learning centres in rural and regional areas. We are very excited about the connected learning centres.

Connected learning centres are particularly important to deliver education into the heart of rural communities to advantage those students dealing with the tyranny of distance. We are very proud of that. As part of the 100,000 fee-free TAFE and VET courses the Government is funding 30,000 scholarships at TAFE with \$10.6 million to help mature age workers looking to reskill and get back into the workforce. That is a great result for the people of New South Wales. I thank the Treasurer for a fantastic budget. The whole world seems to be in admiration of his skill and dedication. I recognise the Premier for her great leadership. On this side of the House we support students and teachers in New South Wales while on the other side of the House they run TAFE down—shame on them.

**STATE BUDGET AND WATER SECURITY**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:15):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. How does the budget deliver for water security?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:15):** I thank the member for Upper Hunter for the question. The Upper Hunter was the first part of the State that went into drought in late 2016 and early 2017. The Upper Hunter region has been facing the many challenges we face across New



South Wales. It is important that we have delivered a budget that guarantees the supply of water across New South Wales. We have real challenges across the board in cities, in small country towns and in big regional cities. There are many challenges but we will work through those challenges with communities. We have an economy that is able to support those communities through emergency situations. Those situations are emerging every day, but we have the resources and money to support the councils who have control of the town water supplies across New South Wales.

It is important to ensure the supply of water to towns and farmers, but also to industry and the blue collar workers working in food processing and production. Everybody is coming together to ensure that those jobs are secure, the town economies are secure and we can continue to ensure the viability and security of water to all residents. Water infrastructure does not come cheap but we have managed the budget and there is \$1.4 billion allocated to ensure water security across New South Wales. That money and support ensures that we have water throughout the emergency drought situation and to invest into the future. The budget allocates \$35 million to drought security.

The member for Cootamundra is excited because that means we can put shovels into the ground at Wyangala Dam on a short timetable. We are working with the Commonwealth to ensure drought security into the future. One example is the support provided to the member for Dubbo with the Macquarie Valley river system. The inflow into the river system is 33 per cent lower than the lowest ever reported. We are only receiving 1.5 per cent of the normal inflows into the northern rivers system. There are challenges everywhere we turn. We will support those communities. On Friday I will travel to Tamworth with the member for Tamworth. The area is facing serious challenges and Tamworth Regional Council has been working with WaterNSW for the past several months to extend the water supply for as long as needed to support not just the townspeople but the chicken producers, the abattoirs and all the workers in the community.

WaterNSW and this Government have delivered a water pipeline to Broken Hill within two weeks of that city running out of water. We delivered a \$500 million project at a point when the community had only two weeks' water supply left. We are working with the Walgett and Bourke communities to ensure supply to those towns. There is \$10 million set aside to ensure those towns have the water they need to get through the current drought cycle. It is not only affecting smaller towns but also the city. For example, there have been water restrictions for nearly three weeks and over the last 10 days we have enjoyed between 30 and 70 millimetres of rain across Sydney.

Unfortunately, most of that rain has not fallen within the catchment area. In fact, that 30 to 70 millimetres of rain has resulted in the dam level falling to 52.4 per cent. We are in this together—city and country—as we experience a drought that is worse than the millennial drought. The drought records for communities such as Tenterfield, where there is no irrigation and no other pull on the town supply, show they are potentially 200 days away from running out of water. We will stand with those communities because we can. We have managed the economy. We have done the right thing. The Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer have delivered a budget for New South Wales.

### WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:20):** My question is directed to the Premier. Considering it has been over one year since the Government committed to reforming the Public Interest Disclosure Act, when will the Government finally act to reform the State's laws to increase protection for whistleblowers?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:21):** I thank the member for Balmain for his question. I must confess I do like the member for Balmain. I know I have just ruined his reputation so I will take it back. There is one other thing I could say, but I won't. You know there are blue Greens, green Greens and red Greens, but I will not comment further—the member knows where I am going. Levity aside, this is a serious issue that the member for Balmain has raised. I assure him the Government is getting on with the job of meeting its commitment to bring in legislation in relation to this important issue. I know the member for Balmain has raised this issue previously and I thank him for being vigilant on this matter.

I take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee on the ICAC and the members of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission for the work they have done on this issue. Our Government is committed to ensuring whistleblowers receive appropriate protections now and into the future. The member is correct: In 2017 the parliamentary Committee on the ICAC released its report. In the Government response we committed to preparing a bill to deal with these matters. The committee noted a number of issues raised during deliberations including to ensure that individuals are protected from reputational damage from disclosure of what could be vexatious or untrue claims.

The committee noted that the some of the recommendations may lead to overlap with the public interest disclosures regime which applies to public officials under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. This could lead to different treatment of a disclosure by a public official under the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act and the Public Interest Disclosure Act. Clearly you do not want that double meaning. That is why it has taken us time to get it right. I am pleased to say, as members might be aware, we are also reviewing the Public Interest Disclosure Act following the recommendations. Guided by the work of the committees we are preparing the bill and anticipate it will be introduced into Parliament by the end of the year. I am advised that consultation will start shortly in relation to this matter.

### STATE BUDGET AND HEALTH

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:23):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. How does the budget deliver for hospitals and health care?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:23):** I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question. She is a fantastic local member who worked in the mental health area as the Minister. She understands the great challenges for delivering health care in New South Wales. The member for Mulgoa and the member for Penrith, Stuart Ayres, have done amazing work to ensure that the Government delivered—in this budget and the previous budget—for the people in and around the Nepean, in particular delivering about a billion dollars' worth of funding for Nepean Hospital. I thank the medical staff council and chair Dr Nhi Nguyen for working with me, the member for Mulgoa and the member for Penrith. I also mention Dr Eddy Fischer, a medical specialist who, despite a recent accident, is still hammering us to make sure we deliver services to the people of the Nepean. Before I answer the question in its entirety, there is another person in the gallery I acknowledge and that is Peter Anderson, the former Labour police Minister and Labor health Minister. He did an extraordinary job in both portfolios.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** The greatest Opposition leader they've never had.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I am trying to be nice. I thank him for his work, visiting hospitals and other medical facilities around New South Wales to look at their security. He told me today that he has been to over 40 hospitals and medical facilities across the State as he tries to come to the grips with the challenges of security, which reflects the fact that hospitals are part of the community and the community has had increases in violence, particularly through the use of drugs and other matters. This budget is an extraordinary budget. It has delivered big time for the people of New South Wales. It comes at an appropriate time because in the last quarter we have had the best part of a quarter of a million people going through our emergency departments [EDs] across New South Wales. In fact, while the amazing hospital doctors and nurses in our emergency departments have seen a quarter of a million people through our emergency departments, this lot on the other side have not even been able to get one person to go into their leader's office.

A quarter of a million people through the doors of the EDs and not one person has been selected as the Labor leader. It has been 87 days. I have to say that tells us how incompetent the Labor Party is in New South Wales. It is also a message to the doctors and nurses through New South Wales. We say, "Thank you because you are much more competent than the Labor Party in New South Wales. You are delivering for New South Wales". This year's Health budget totals \$26.7 billion. Never in the history of New South Wales has there been a Health budget such as this. This Government has budgeted \$24 billion for recurrent expenses. Over the next four years we will see an unprecedented amount—I might check with my colleagues because I have not done this for a while. I did not prime them, but they probably know. What do you think the Health infrastructure budget will be over the next four years? Will it be one billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be two billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be three billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be four billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be five billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be six billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be seven billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be eight billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be nine billion?

**Government Members:** No!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Do you think it will be 10.1 billion?

**Government Members:** Yes!

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I looked after you. Sit down and look after those love birds. I do not mean these two.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: Allowing the Minister to carry on like that is clearly creating an unsafe workplace for him. I would appreciate it if you could ask him to—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. Does the member have a serious point of order?

**Mr Clayton Barr:** No, I don't.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time. The Minister has 23 seconds of regular time left.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I will ask again. My colleagues did not hear because of the interjection. Was it 10.1 billion?

**Government Members:** Yes!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** And of course it is. It is an unprecedented amount.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: It is an act of disorder to encourage interjections and that is what the Minister is doing.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** My old Marxist mates—

**The SPEAKER:** There is an established practice in the House—one we might review—that I will take advice on from the Clerk. I am happy to make a ruling with the advice of the Clerk.

*[Extension of time]*

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The member knows and all members on this side know that over the next four years the budget for health infrastructure is unprecedented. It is an amount of \$10.1 billion and it does not matter where you are in the State, new hospitals will be coming near you. Recently I was with the Premier at Westmead—a \$1 billion hospital—and we were discussing with the excited nurses and doctors that the new hospital will be fully commissioned by the middle of next year. It should be handed to the doctors and nurses in the next few months. I say to the member of Bankstown, who keeps indicating to her local residents that it is not happening, "It is underway in terms of planning."

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** Where is it?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** If you were a little more sensible and responsible you would be more engaged in it.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Everything that happens in Bankstown will not be due to you. You will not have any part of it because you cause grief.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: It would perhaps help the Chamber if the Minister would direct his comments through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The point of order is valid, but the Minister was directing his comments to the member when she was actively engaging with and baiting the Minister. I called the member

for Bankstown to order. I will not pull up a Minister or anyone else when they are responding to an active interjection.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In the next four years the budget will be \$26.7 billion. This Government is committed to making sure that the health system in this State leads the way. New South Wales health is supported by the best doctors, the best nurses, the best allied health staff and the best security staff, and they know that New South Wales Government is supporting them too.

*Petitions*

**PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Powerhouse Museum Ultimo**

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

**Inner-city Ferry Services**

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

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

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

**Pet Shops**

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, 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**.

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

**Wellington Police Station**

Petition requesting a 24-hour police station in Wellington, received from **Mr Dugald Saunders**.

*Business of the House*

**STATE BUDGET AND EDUCATION**

**Reordering**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:34):** I move:

That the general business notice of motion (general notice) standing in my name this day [State budget and Education] have precedence on Thursday 20 June 2019.

This is a government that is passionate about education. We were the first State to sign up to Gonski. We are leading the nation in delivering record amounts of needs-based, sector-blind funding to our schools. And we are delivering the biggest school infrastructure program in the nation's history, delivering 190 new and upgraded schools over the next four years. As a part of this year's budget, this Government has allocated an unprecedented \$21 billion for the Department of Education to support school education, skills and tertiary education, and early childhood education. Of this, around \$18.5 billion is allocated to schools and early childhood learning, which is an increase of \$1.2 billion from last year.

This record investment is only possible because of the sound management of the State's finances by the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government. We inherited a State from those opposite that was going backwards in almost every economic measure, a result of 16 years of poor management. By making tough decisions when we were first elected, we are now in a position where we are investing more in education than any State in Australian history. This Government is serious about building the schools we need to cater for surging enrolment projections. This is why, since 2011, the New South Wales Government has invested heavily in school infrastructure to ensure students have the best possible learning environments.

In continuing this, the New South Wales Government is investing a staggering \$6.7 billion over the next four years to deliver more than 190 new and upgraded schools to support communities throughout New South Wales. This represents the largest capital investment into schools by any State government in history. We are spending more on new schools over the next four years than Labor spent in four terms of government. This Government is proud to have brought needs-based Gonski funding to New South Wales. Only the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government could have put the State in a financial position to sign the original Gonski agreement. I am delighted to continue our track record of record recurrent spending on teaching and learning in schools across New South Wales. This week's budget is one that cements this Government's reputation as a government committed to excellence and equity in all of our schools.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:37):** My motion should be debated because the Minister for Transport and Roads owes the people of Sydney's inner west an explanation and he owes them an apology. His great plan that region 6 had to be privatised to improve on-time running and reduce customer complaints has been completely exposed. The data is out and it reveals that on-time running is worse under the Minister's chosen private operator than it was under the State Transit Authority. Inner-west buses have not once met the Minister's target of 95 per cent on-time running since he sold them off. Between January and April this year 90.5 per cent of buses were on time under the private operator transit system compared to 93.5 per cent under STA. That is a complete and total fail.

What about customer complaints? Residents have regularly reported buses with severe maintenance problems, buses weaving down tiny residential streets completely lost, buses that have completely failed to turn up, buses that have left primary school students standing on the side of the road and buses arriving without ramps that are advertised as accessible services. Residents are asking, "If services were meant to improve under a private operator, why have things got worse? Why has the Minister got it so wrong?" It is time the Minister for transport admitted that selling our buses was never about on-time running. It was never about customer satisfaction. It was always about his complete hatred of publicly run services and fulfilling this Government's ideological obsession with privatisation. That is all it was about. We have seen that this Government has sold off \$70 billion worth of public assets. The question is: Where has all the money gone?

This Government has sold our poles and wires, Land and Property Information NSW, our ferries, our buses, the Sirius building, disability services, ambulance stations, TAFE campuses and heritage buildings—it has even sold things it has not finished building. It has even sold WestConnex. There is an incredibly long list of things this Government has sold, but what has it got to show for it? It has \$38 billion worth of debt. We have higher electricity prices for working families across New South Wales. We have polluting toll roads, with costs for western Sydney motorists that they will have to bear for generations. And now in the inner west we have buses that do not even show up. We have buses that leave primary school students standing on the side of the road. That is a complete and total fail. I say that the inner-west buses show that privatisation does not work. The Minister for transport owes the people of Sydney's inner west an apology. And the Treasurer owes the people of New South Wales a guarantee that he will not sell off any more of their public assets.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion of the member for Manly have precedence on Thursday 20 June 2019.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....46

Noes .....39

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  
Lindsay, Ms W  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Piper, Mr G  
Roberts, Mr A  
Singh, Mr G

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  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D  
Smith, Mr N

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  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Speakman, Mr M

## AYES

Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Wilson, Ms F

Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G

Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G

## NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Dib, Mr J  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lynch, Mr P  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E  
Butler, Mr R  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Donato, Mr P  
Harrison, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mehan, Mr D  
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  
Haylen, Ms J  
Leong, Ms J  
McGirr, Dr J  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

## PAIRS

Sidoti, Mr J  
Williams, Mr R

Finn, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S

**Motion agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind members that there are likely to be many divisions this afternoon and that, unless I indicate otherwise, the entire back row of seating is a vote with the ayes.

*Bills*

**CRIMES (ADMINISTRATION OF SENTENCES) AMENDMENT (INMATE BEHAVIOUR) BILL  
2019**

**Returned**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

*Motions Accorded Priority***NSW LABOR****Consideration**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:50):** My motion should be accorded priority because since I last moved a motion on 5 June 2019 there have been important developments on the Labor leadership battle. As a consequence, the House needs to be further updated. It is now 86 days since the member for Maroubra—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind members on both sides of the Chamber that a number of members are on calls to order. I ask members to respect the member who is at the lectern. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** It is now about 86 days since the member for Maroubra announced on election night that he would not continue as Labor leader.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Who could forget that awkward moment when the new member for Coogee, oblivious to the situation, jumped on the podium after his leadership resignation and cheered wildly? It is nothing short of a disgrace that there is no Labor leader to give the speech in reply to the budget tomorrow.

Since my last motion on 5 June the Labor Party has continued to be focused on itself rather than on the people of New South Wales. What is particularly concerning is how ugly the Labor leadership contest has become and how divided those opposite are. Since I last spoke about the Labor leadership this division has reached the media in a series of leaks by one camp and counter leaks by the other. This started a few days ago, on 13 June, with the leak that \$5,000 of personal relocation expenses incurred by the member for Kogarah were paid for by interests associated with the Chinese Communist government. To put this in context, former Senator Sam Dastyari resigned from the Senate when he was caught receiving \$3,000 from similar interests to pay his personal expenses. In an article in *The Australian* headed, "'Dirty tricks at play' in NSW Labor leadership contest", the following is reported:

Both Mr Minns' campaign and federal deputy [Labor] leader Richard Marles have appeared to point the finger of blame at the state branch. "It's a matter for the NSW branch of the Labor Party," Mr Marles said.

It is fair to say that Mr Minns' camp should know, because he is a great friend of Jamie Clements, who was convicted of a criminal offence associated with leaking private information from the head office of the Labor Party. The leadership leak was also reported in an article in the *Daily Telegraph*, "Chinese whispers hits Minns campaign for NSW leadership", and in an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, "Bowen drawn into 'dirty' NSW Labor leadership battle". The mediocrity of the contest is shown by the fact that the Strathfield camp is backed by the member for Maroubra, who lost the State election—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Rockdale that he is already on one call to order.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** —and the Kogarah camp is backed by Chris Bowen, who lost the Federal election campaign. This really is a race to the bottom in the Labor leadership contest.

## STATE BUDGET AND EDUCATION

### Consideration

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (15:54):** The Premier spoke about the importance of education and no-one would argue with that. On Monday I kept hearing that this year's budget was going to include the best education budget ever. Yesterday when the Treasurer delivered his Budget Speech I got a little bit excited because he started to talk about Gonski. I thought the Government was going to fully fund Gonski. He said, "We are going to fully fund Gonski" but what he meant was, "We want to fully fund the commitment that we made". The Government refused to tell us that it is under-committing. I will explain something about Gonski. The school resourcing standard states that 80 per cent of the funding for public schools comes from the State Government and 20 per cent from the Federal Government. If the State Government were to fully fund Gonski it would mean that this State would put in 80 per cent. The agreement that was signed last year, and which goes for the next four years, will see this State get to a maximum of 72 per cent. I was not a maths teacher but that means the State Government is still 8 per cent short.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** This Government talks about the importance of investment in education. The Opposition does not argue with that. But when the Government says it is fully funding Gonski it is not telling the truth. The Government is fully funding its commitment to Gonski and its commitment to Gonski falls short. The Government is happy to see kids and public schools being underfunded by hundreds of millions of dollars a year. That is a shame but it gets worse. The Treasurer then started talking about outcomes-based funding. What we need is needs-based funding. The previous two education Ministers would never have made a captain's call like that because they know that some things cannot be measured. Tell the kids at Wilcannia High School that the school will receive its needs-based funding based on student outcomes, on student attendance overseen by home school liaison officers and on NAPLAN results when NAPLAN has been a disaster.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** With the Government's approach to education the only outcome is a bean-counting outcome. Listen to the education experts. All education experts say that a needs-based funding model should be the priority, not an outcomes-based model. I challenge Government members to vote for my motion so that the House can debate it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion of the member for Ku-ring-gai be accorded priority.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....45  
Noes .....41

Majority.....4

## 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  
Smith, Mr N  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Elliott, Mr D  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
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  
Roberts, Mr A  
Singh, Mr G  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Wilson, Ms F

## NOES

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

Atalla, Mr E  
Butler, Mr R  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Donato, Mr P  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Piper, Mr G  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Doyle, Ms T  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mehan, Mr D  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

## PAIRS

Sidoti, Mr J  
Williams, Mr R

Finn, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S

**Motion agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind members that a number of them are on two calls to order.

**NSW LABOR****Priority**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:05):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that after 86 days the Opposition still does not have a leader.
- (2) Notes that the Opposition will deliver a budget reply without a leader.
- (3) Notes that the the Opposition leadership race is getting ugly, with unprecedented leaking and Opposition members forced to lock their doors, turn off their phones and leave Parliament House as quickly as they can.
- (4) Calls on the Opposition to start putting the people of New South Wales first.

The Labor leadership contest has certainly turned ugly. In preparing for this priority motion, I went through a few of the leaks that have gone to the media. Before I return to those, I ask this question rhetorically. On 3 June 2019 at the Trades Hall Auditorium, Sussex Street, Sydney, who said, "If we are going to be a Labor Party that wants



to take on the health system as a serious policy issue we have to talk about people"? It was the member for Strathfield.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Apparently Labor has never taken on the health system as a serious policy issue and the member for Strathfield is advocating that the party needs to do so now. I also ask rhetorically, who said, "In the other election, the State election, we didn't offer much in the way of detailed plans for the future of this State—lots of criticisms but no plans—and again we lost"? It was the member for Kogarah. Where is he? He is not here. Who said, "I think we have to admit that what we're doing isn't working"? Again, it was the member for Kogarah. Who said, "NSW Labor has to get on with the job of building infrastructure that the people of New South Wales deserve"? Again, it was the member for Kogarah. Who said, "Right now people still do not trust Labor. People still do not trust us"? It was the member for Strathfield.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** That's me.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** That's right, very good. You remember what you says.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Who said, "Some people I know think success in their family life is associated with the Liberal Party"?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** That's Chris.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** No, it was not the member for Rockdale, whose brother is in the Liberal Party. In fact, it was his good friend the member for Kogarah.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Who said, "The sad reality for us is that when it comes to public transport we promised and cancelled so many public transport projects in our last term of government that in order to regain credibility about how we will fund these pieces of essential infrastructure we will have to explain how we fund it"? It was the member for Kogarah. I must say that the Labor leadership battle is reflective because the party acknowledges that it has not taken policy issues seriously. It acknowledges that it has been completely hopeless and pathetic. It gives great insight that the Labor Party is entirely fixated on itself and not on the people of New South Wales. Isn't it a shame that things have got ugly with counter allegations? I informed the House about the allegation of \$5,000 worth of expenses of the member for Kogarah being paid by Chinese Communist Party interests.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. Whilst these motions are broad, a personal attack on a member of this place must be by way of a substantive motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:11):** I have consulted widely and Labor will make some small amendments to the motion which the members opposite will agree to. The amendment will wipe out everything after "That this House"—none of that counts—and will insert "congratulates NSW Labor for having two great candidates standing for the leadership of the oldest and finest political party in the country". That is easy. We do not have just one great leader, we have two great leaders, even before the vote: me here in this Chamber and Penny Sharpe up there in the upper House. What more can you ask for? We are prepared to double the Government. There is a bigger benefit; it gets even better. I have saved the Government money. On budget week I am a part of the Government's efficiency dividend. I should be the acting, part-time, unpaid volunteer Leader of the Opposition who is also the shadow Minister for volunteering.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I should also be the shadow Minister for volunteering because I love this party so much that I have been prepared to do this job completely without any pay. I am so proud that our party has not just one great leader but two great leaders and we will have two great leaders going forward. Members on this side of the Chamber are very proud of our political party and the Labor members who represent the communities we live in and love. We are very proud that two people from our great party have decided to put up their hands to lead our great party. What does that say about us? It says we have good people who want to lead a great party. That is what it says.

I will point out what is ironic in budget week. The Government has presented a \$84 billion budget. When you have a \$84 million budget there are probably one or two things you would want to talk about. If I had the pleasure of having an \$84 billion budget, do you think 24 hours after I handed down that budget I would be talking

about the Liberal Party? I would want to talk about the things in the budget that make a difference. In Ku-ring-gai, that swinging and marginal electorate, there is a member who I think would really like to be in the Labor Party. We understand that because if he was in our party he might be on the front bench. I know that Gareth Ward is an outstanding contributor, Adam Marshall does an enormous amount of work and Matt Kean is the next best thing.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

And Shelley Hancock, absolutely. She is modernising the Liberal Party. I think we would find a place on our front bench for Alister because we are all about good leaders. So much so that we have two good leaders now and we will have two good leaders in the future. This is really simple: We are happy that the Government, 24 hours after it has handed down a budget to the tune of \$84 billion, is talking about the Labor Party. We are delighted that in budget week, what is meant to be the Premier's rolled gold week, the Government has run out of things to talk about in the budget and now is talking about what is happening on level 10. I have to tell you, I do not know if we are all locking our doors. I do not keep my door locked; not many people come and see me. Level 10 is not that interesting. We do not want to be on level 10; we want to be on levels eight and nine because we want to be in government one day. And when we are in government I can give you a tip that 24 hours after we hand down a budget we will not be talking about the Liberal Party. I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

"this House congratulates New south Wales Labor on having two great candidates standing for the leadership of the oldest and finest political party in the country."

That is the motion the House we should be debating and is worthy of support. It is a good amendment. We have great leaders who are very proud to represent the mighty Australian Labor Party.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will remain silent. I remind the member for Keira that most of the noise during his contribution to the debate came from his side of the House. The member for Riverstone will be heard in silence. I remind Opposition members that a number of them are on two calls. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the third time.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:16):** The role of an opposition in any parliament in the Westminster tradition is a serious one. The members opposite have a responsibility to represent arguments in the community, to put up a contest of ideas and to hold the Government to account. None of that is happening on that side of the House. Members on that side of the House have shown no respect for that role for over 86 days. They have simply turned amongst themselves, scurried off into corners, walked out of Question Time and missed divisions because they are so focused on their own internal squabbles.

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

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** There are real issues in this State to be concerned about and to debate. There are proper and important matters that we should be focusing on.

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

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** The members opposite are showing no respect to the people of New South Wales because they are failing to carry out the role that they should be carrying out as an opposition in this place. They have failed since the election way back in March. Remember 23 March? It is quite some time back. For another two months after that date those opposite have failed to confront the issue, not because it was not possible but because they wanted to put the interests of their party ahead of the interests of the people of New South Wales. They wanted to put that ugly little squabble on hold until after the Federal election so that they could help their Federal Labor mates. They did not put the people of New South Wales first; they did not even put them second. They had the interests of New South Wales a distant last as they fought amongst themselves to promote the Federal Labor Party and their own factional interests in this place. That is the disgrace that the current New South Wales Labor Party represents: factionalism first, Federal mates second and the people of New South Wales a distant third.

The big challenge for those opposite is to recognise that if they are ever going to carry out the role of a proper opposition they are going to have to start telling the truth. New South Wales deserves an Opposition leader who can confront the truth. We have not had one of those for a long, long time. The budget has just been handed down by a government that has done the hard yards and has made record investments in public transport. It is a fact. We are investing in public transport projects that those opposite cancelled, deferred and could not confront because they could not manage money. The Sydney Metro Northwest, which has just opened, is a record-breaking project. The light rail projects in the Sydney CBD and Parramatta, the South West Rail Link and the other metro extensions that are coming through represent record investments in public transport.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:20):** You say you want the truth. The truth is that the Government members are more focused on us than they are on the State of New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Swansea to direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The problem is that the Government is embarrassed about the democratic process that the Labor Party is going through at the moment. And it should be embarrassed. In this country only the Labor Party goes through a democratic process to elect its leader. We are not embarrassed by that and we are proud to talk about it in this place. In fact, this debate is like us getting a Dorothy Dixier. We were quite excited to see this motion and we hope it comes back again tomorrow. The community is getting involved. We can tell that people are interested in this process because they are joining our party. They are joining because they get the opportunity to be part of a democratic process and to vote for their leader. They love it. That is what the Government is worried about.

But it is not only the Government that is worried about this process. Let us look at what former member for Parramatta Ross Cameron had to say about it. He said that Premier Berejiklian is seeking to destroy a movement for democracy within the Liberal Party. He said, "That's either because that's her genuine personal view that she wants to retain an authoritarian party ...". That is a bit of a worry. I do not normally take the advice of former Prime Minister Tony Abbott but on this occasion I do agree with him when he said—

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The member's comments have nothing to do with the motion that is before the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea will continue.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** In relation to Michael Photios—who we know is very close to the Premier and in fact at one point we were unsure who was actually leading the State of New South Wales—Mr Abbott made a fine point when he said, "If you are making money out of the people whose preselections—

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Point of order: My point of order also relates to Standing Order 129. The member for Swansea has not listened to your ruling and did not come back to the motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I did rule previously. The member for Swansea is being relevant to the original motion and to the amendment.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The former Prime Minister said it is obvious that preselections are being chosen by lobbyists. Can I say that that is the truth? [*Time expired.*]

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:23):** In reply: There was unfortunately an air of delusion about the member for Keira's contribution to this debate. He extolled the virtues of his own leadership and that of the Hon. Penny Sharpe. However, neither of them is running for leadership. That is a kind of self-selection that goes without saying. His delusion continued as he spoke about what would happen if I was in the Labor Party. Clearly he is delusional because that would never occur. It was an unfortunate contribution. But the member for Keira did say, "We want to be in government one day."

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** His comments immediately reminded me of statements quoted in an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 15 June entitled "Labor in turmoil as leadership battle between McKay and Minns set to come to a head". The article reported:

A seasoned Labor Party elder says, "I would have thought everyone would want to avoid the schisms we went through after 2007. If everyone is determined to stay in their corner, then Labor will be waiting till the 2030s to return to government."

It was timely for the member for Keira to remind me of those important comments in the context of this debate. The member for Swansea said she was excited by the motion. Really? She needs to get out more. The best she could say about the Labor leadership was to refer to Ross Cameron, a former member of the Liberal Party. The contribution of the member for Riverstone was the most significant in the debate. The member for Riverstone reminded us that this whole Labor leadership battle has disrespected the people of New South Wales in that it did not occur long before this time and that factionalism and Federal interests were put before the people of New South Wales.

The member for Riverstone made the important point that Labor needs a leader who will tell the truth to the people of New South Wales because it has been a long time since a leader with that quality has ever led the Labor Party. As senior figures in the Labor Party have said, it will be the 2030s before Labor is back in government the way that it is going. It is very regrettable how ugly this battle has become—there are allegations against the member for Kogarah, allegations of developer donations against the member for Strathfield. They are leaking in the media and it is all very unfortunate. [*Time expired.*]

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....35  
Noes .....45  
Majority.....10

**AYES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Saffin, Ms J  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E  
Butler, Mr R  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dib, Mr J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R  
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

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Elliott, Mr D  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Petinos, Ms E  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
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  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D  
Singh, Mr G  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Wilson, Ms F

**PAIRS**

Finn, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S

Perrottet, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

**Amendment negatived.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Ku-ring-gai be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....45  
Noes .....38  
Majority.....7

**AYES**

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)

Barilaro, Mr J  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Davies, Mrs T

## AYES

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

Elliott, Mr D  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Petinos, Ms E  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G

Evans, Mr L.J.  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D  
Singh, Mr G  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Wilson, Ms F

## NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R  
Scully, Mr P  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E  
Butler, Mr R  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Parker, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dib, Mr J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

## PAIRS

Perrottet, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Finn, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S

**Motion agreed to.***Bills***AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.***Schedule of amendments referred to in the message of 18 June 2019***No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2019-009A]**

Page 6, clause 12 (1) (d), line 17. Insert ", including referrals to independent advocacy services, where appropriate" after "older adults".

**No. 2 GRNS No. 2 [c2019-009A]**

Page 6, clause 12 (1) (e), lines 18 and 19. Omit "regarding matters in relation to which the Commissioner may conduct investigations". Insert instead "relating to the protection and promotion of the rights of adults with disability and older adults or the abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults with disability or older adults".

**No. 3 GRNS No. 3 [c2019-009A]**

Page 6, clause 12 (1). Insert after line 25:

- (h) to monitor, assess and report on the New South Wales implementation of the National Disability Strategy (NDS).

**No. 4 OPP No. 1 [c2019-014A]**

Page 6, clause 12, lines 28–32. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (3) The Commissioner is not subject to the control or direction of the Minister.
- No. 5 **GRNS No. 5 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 6, clause 13 (1), lines 34–36. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:
- (1) A person may make a report to the Commissioner about the following:
- (a) an adult with disability or older adult if the person has reasonable grounds to believe the adult is subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation,
- (b) circumstances that the person has reasonable grounds to believe will result in the abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult with disability or older adult.
- No. 6 **OPP No. 1 [c2019-012]**  
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. 7 **GRNS No. 6 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 7, clause 13 (9), lines 20 and 21. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:
- (9) The Commissioner may conduct an investigation of a report that the Commissioner has referred to another person or body under subsection (8), including in consultation with the person or body, if the Commissioner is of the opinion that conducting an investigation may be necessary to protect an adult with disability or older adult from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- No. 8 **GRNS No. 7 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 7, clause 13 (10) (a), line 25. Insert "despite having been provided with the appropriate support for the purposes of making such a decision" after "consent".
- No. 9 **GRNS No. 8 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 7, clause 13 (10) (b), line 26. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead:
- (b) it is not necessary to obtain consent due to the seriousness of the allegation or the risk to the personal safety of the adult, or
- No. 10 **GRNS No. 9 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 7, clause 14. Insert after line 36:
- (2) A relevant agency may provide relevant information to the Commissioner for the purposes of enabling or assisting the Commissioner's exercise of its functions.
- No. 11 **GRNS No. 10 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 7, clause 14 (3), lines 41 and 42. Omit "that may be provided under this section, and to which an information sharing arrangement may relate". Insert instead "or a relevant agency that may be provided under this section".
- No. 12 **OPP No. 1 [c2019-013]**  
Page 8, Division 2 of Part 3, line 35. Insert "**and public inquiries**" after "**Investigations**".
- No. 13 **GRNS No. 11 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 8, clause 16 (1) (a), line 39. Insert "and answer any questions" after "notice".
- No. 14 **GRNS No. 12 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 9, clause 16 (2), line 7. Omit "50". Insert instead "100".
- No. 15 **OPP No. 1 [c2019-017A]**  
Page 9, clause 16 (3) lines 8–11. Omit all words on those lines.
- No. 16 **GRNS No. 13 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 9, clause 17 (3), line 43. Insert "(in circumstances where the adult has been provided with the appropriate support for the purposes of making such a decision)" after "concerned".
- No. 17 **OPP No. 2 [c2019-013]**  
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.
- No. 18 **GRNS No. 14 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 11, clause 19, line 16. Insert "or older adult" after "disability".
- No. 19 **GRNS No. 15 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 11, clause 20 (1), lines 24 and 35. Insert "or older adults" after "disability".
- No. 20 **GRNS No. 16 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 12, clause 21 (1) (h), line 26. Insert "independent" after "about".
- No. 21 **GRNS No. 17 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 13, clause 23 (3) (e), line 18. Omit "community".
- No. 22 **OPP No. 2 [c2019-012]**  
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.
- No. 23 **GRNS No. 18 [c2019-009A]**  
Page 14, clause 24, lines 10–12. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:
- (3) An annual report prepared under subsection (1) must include the following:
    - (a) any recommendations for administrative action or changes in the laws of the State that the Commissioner considers necessary,
    - (b) information on the number of reports made to, and actioned by, the Commissioner, and the number of referrals made elsewhere and to whom,
    - (c) the number of investigations held under section 13 (10) where consent was not given, including as a percentage of total investigations held,
    - (d) if a Board member has been removed under section 27 (9) during the reporting period, the reasons for removing the member.
- No. 24 **GRNS No. 19 [c2019-009A]**

Page 14, clause 25 (3), line 21. Omit "may". Insert instead "must".

No. 25 **OPP No. 1 [c2019-015B]**

Page 15, clause 27 (2), lines 4–5. Omit "relating to the abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults with disability and older adults".

No. 26 **OPP No. 2 [c2019-015B]**

Page 15, clause 27 (3), lines 7 and 8. Omit "Minister who, in the opinion of the Minister,". Insert instead "Commissioner who, in the opinion of the Commissioner".

No. 27 **GRNS No. 21 [c2019-009A]**

Page 15, clause 27, line 11. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead:

the community, and include the following:

- (a) 2 or more persons with disability,
- (b) a representative of independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for people with disability in New South Wales,
- (c) a representative of independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for older adults in New South Wales,
- (d) 1 or more persons representing persons employed in the provision of disability services or services for older adults.

No. 28 **OPP No. 4 [c2019-015B]**

Page 15, clause 27 (6), line 14. Omit "Minister is to appoint". Insert instead "Board is to elect".

No. 29 **OPP No. 5 [c2019-015B]**

Page 15, clause 27 (8), line 19. Omit "Minister". Insert instead "Commissioner".

No. 30 **OPP No. 6 [c2019-015B]**

Page 15, clause 27 (9), line 20. Omit "Minister". Insert instead "Commissioner".

No. 31 **OPP No. 7 [c2019-015B]**

Page 15, clause 27 (9), line 20. Insert "and must provide a report on the removal to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament" after "time".

No. 32 **GRNS No. 25 [c2019-009A]**

Page 15, clause 29, line 41. Omit "50". Insert instead "100".

No. 33 **GRNS No. 26 [c2019-009A]**

Page 16, clause 30, line 4. Omit "50". Insert instead "100".

No. 34 **GRNS No. 27 [c2019-009A]**

Page 16. Insert after line 11:

**32A Independent specialist disability advocacy, information and representative organisations**

- (1) Parliament recommends the State provide financial assistance to independent specialist disability advocacy, information and representative organisations in New South Wales by grants of a minimum of \$20,000,000 per annum (adjusted annually for inflation), to be distributed as determined by the Commissioner.
- (2) The assistance recommended under subsection (1) is in addition to any other financial assistance to be provided by the Commonwealth.

No. 35 **OPP No. 1 [c2019-016C]**

Page 16. Insert after line 34:

**34 Independent review of Act**

- (1) The Minister is to commission an independent review of the Act to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (2) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament before 1 July 2022.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)**  
(16:41): I move:

That the House agree to Legislative Council amendments Nos 1 to 3, 5 to 12, 15 to 31 and 35.



**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:42):** I acknowledge the fact that the Government is supporting amendments to the bill from the other place. It is an unusual occurrence. I welcome this democratic process and give credit to a Minister who has taken on board amendments to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I acknowledge the disability advocacy services and the key disability services who have pushed to improve the bill. It shows what can be done when we listen to stakeholders and the community to improve bills that will assist the communities they are there to serve. It is important to acknowledge that. It is wonderful and I hope over the course of this Parliament there will be many more bills improved and amended in the upper House and accepted in this place.

We can then say nice things about the Government. It is always good to say nice things about the Government when they support The Greens amendments. I send a particular shout-out to Abigail Boyd, the new Greens MLC. She worked tirelessly before and after her election to connect closely with disability advocates and people with disability in our community to ensure they are heard. I pay tribute to the strong campaigns she has run to achieve that. The Greens stand beside those communities. We know that everyone is supportive of the establishment of this commissioner. But if a bill can be improved it should be, and The Greens will advocate in this place and in the upper House for improvements to put the people of New South Wales first wherever possible.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:44):** I acknowledge The Greens for proposing these amendments. I have more to say in relation to some of the amendments that we have moved and that have been accepted. I acknowledge the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance and the 23 representatives who attended the Social Issues Committee inquiry into the provisions of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019. I acknowledge the Minister and the work that he has done in ensuring that all of our issues have been taken into consideration. This is an important lesson; when putting forward such a big reform it is important to take into consideration the views and concerns raised by the key stakeholders, the people on the front line, the key workers and the providers. There is massive change in the disability and ageing sector, particularly given the royal commissions that will report in the next few years. I acknowledge the work that has been done on this very important reform.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:45):** I thank all of the advocacy groups, disability organisations and ageing organisations that have contributed to this bill coming to fruition. It is important that we all listen to sensible suggestions, particularly when considering legislation like this that is not about politics. It is not about the Liberal, Labor or Greens thing to do; it is about the right thing to do. On matters like this I would like to think that all of us as representatives can come together to achieve good outcomes. That is what this Parliament should be about.

It is a real travesty that the press gallery is empty. I am sure that the fourth estate on level six are not interested in this because there is no controversy. All sides of politics are working together to get outcomes for the people whom we serve; to provide supports for those who have been abused, neglected or exploited. That is what this bill seeks to achieve. When people bring forward sensible suggestions or want to strengthen legislation, of course I want to listen to that. That is the democratic process. There is an upper House that has very different views. There are Independents, there are parties of all different colours, and all of them, I think, have come to the table quite genuinely to make suggestions to improve the bill, so there should not be any politics in this. Of course, there might be some differences of opinion, which is fine. I thank everyone who has worked with me on this bill, both in the department and in this Parliament.

As I said when I introduced the bill, this is a landmark reform which the Government is absolutely delighted to see through Parliament. It is a credit to the Premier that she wanted this bill to be the first piece of legislation to come through Parliament. It speaks volumes about not just the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government's view on the importance of social policy, but also about every member of Parliament who proactively, sensibly, rationally and caringly participated in the debate to get better outcomes for older persons and people with disability.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Legislative Council amendments Nos 1 to 3, 5 to 12, 15 to 31 and 35 be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:48):** I move:

That the House disagree with Legislative Council amendment No. 4.

The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 does not subject the commissioner to ministerial control in relation to the investigation and reporting functions. In this respect the bill was modelled on other independent statutory bodies that report to a Minister but act independently in the exercise of their functions, such as the NSW

Children's Guardian, the NSW Mental Health Commissioner, and the NSW Information and Privacy Commissioner. Like these statutory officers, the Ageing and Disability Commissioner is accountable to the responsible Minister who, in turn, is responsible to Parliament and to the people of New South Wales.

I need to make this clear to members: A statutory officer can be independent while still having a degree of accountability. The Government is simply asking for the same provisions and conditions for this commissioner, so that both the commissioner and I can do our respective jobs. All I am asking for—nothing groundbreaking—is to have similar arrangements in place as we have for other statutory officers. There seems to be a suggestion that what we have proposed does not allow for independence. It is clear in the legislation that this is an independent officer. The commissioner can bring forward reports and comment on Government policy in a quest to get better outcomes for people who are ageing or who have disability. I caution the House about changing these provisions to make this legislation so inflexible and so challenging in relation to the accountability that all of us should expect from statutory officers. To solicit the advice of someone who is independent is very different from holding those people who have a role to account.

We are simply asking for the same conditions as this Parliament has established for other statutory officers. We are not asking for anything new or different in relation to the construction of any other statute in relation to statutory officers and their functions. I plead with the House to think about the consequence of this amendment. I think what members opposite may be trying to achieve has already been achieved. If it is not their intention to oppose this amendment I ask them to consider what they are worried that the Minister may do—be it me or a future minister—that is warranting disagreement on this particular proposal. I commend the opposition of this amendment to the House.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:51):** I acknowledge what the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services has stated, but when you present a bill and when you talk about independence you cannot be quasi-independent, you cannot be half-half. If you are talking about an independent commissioner, it means just that—arm's length from government. It does not mean that the Minister's hands will be tied because that is not correct.

The purpose of this amendment, which the Opposition supports, is to ensure that the new commissioner is independent of the Minister in respect of all the commissioner's functions. Clause 12 (3) of the bill currently provides that the commissioner is not subject to the control or direction of the Minister only in respect of some functions. This limited independence means the commissioner could be subject to the control or direction of the Minister: in respect of hiring staff under clause 10, when delegating functions under clause 11, and when making recommendations to the Minister in relation to the community visitors scheme under part 4.

The stakeholders and my amazing Opposition colleagues who have contributed to and worked with me on this bill and who have spoken to the stakeholders in their communities have said this amendment must stay in the bill. Stakeholders who appeared before the social issues committee inquiry gave evidence that they consider that the commissioner should be independent of the Minister in respect of all the commissioner's functions. The views of the stakeholders are set out on pages 7 to 8 of the committee's report. Family Advocacy stated in its submission to the inquiry that:

The independent functions of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner form one of the most critical foundational pieces to the success of the role...

We want this commission to be successful. We are working together with the Government, the crossbench and everyone in good faith to ensure that this commissioner is not a toothless tiger, but is independent and strong. That is what we want to see. Family Advocacy's submission continued:

To this end we recommend that all functions of the Commissioner, as expressed on page 6, Clause 12 (1) (a) to (g) be independent and not subject to the control or direction of the Minister...

The Council for Intellectual Disability [CID] stated in its submission: The independence of the Commissioner is qualified within the Bill so that the minister of the day—I have a good relationship with Minister Ward. I believe him and I trust him. But there could be another Minister down the track—and I say that in good faith—from either side of politics. I acknowledge that this Minister is very good, but we have to be clear that independent means independent. The NSW Council for Intellectual Disability said that the Minister of the day could be quite directive of the operation of the office, including in some of its substantive functions in clause 12 (1) and the administrative and budgetary areas. We would like a high level of independence, as suggested in the Government's outline of the role of the commissioner. Meagan Lawson, Chief Executive Officer of the Council on the Ageing, told the Standing Committee on Social Issues:

There is an important principle of independence there to have those kinds of statutory roles completely separate from ministerial interference, for want of better terminology.

Ms Lawson continued:

There is a lot of emphasis on those instances where the abuse is perpetrated by a carer or within the home but I think often there is not intent, there is not enough services. I think there are times when actually it is about how the Government is operating or how services are operating that give rise to instances of abuse. People need to be able to operate freely and say that freely and comment on that freely even if it is against the services that the Minister is authorising and providing.

Other stakeholders such as the Physical Disability Council of NSW, the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance and the Australian Services Union expressed their support for the independence of the commissioner. The Labor Party agrees with the concerns raised by those stakeholders. We believe the amendment should remain in the bill.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:46):** I will give clarity to some comments made by the member for Canterbury. The member made mention of clause 12 (3) and specifically noted the public service legislation and the hiring arrangements. I draw the attention of members to clauses 24 and 25, which make it clear that this is an independent commissioner. Clause 12 (3) also highlights the independence of the commissioner in that role. The commissioner is the head of the agency and decides the particular staff that the agency will employ. It is also clear in the bill that the commissioner reports directly to Parliament. It is not a case of the Minister directing the commissioner. In fact, what the provisions seek to do is highlight the focus on the independence of the commissioner. This Minister or any future Minister will not tell the commissioner who the agency gets to hire and fire. The commissioner will make the decisions. There is no suggestion in the legislation that the alternative would be possible.

Just as clause 12 (3) highlights the independence of the commissioner, so do clauses 24 and 25. They make it clear that it is an independent body. I disagree with the interpretation that has been offered because that is not the proper interpretation. I know the member for Canterbury is coming from a very good place and I have appreciated the collaborative nature in which we have worked together on many of the amendments. But I need to make it clear for the benefit of members who are voting that those two clauses, read together with clause 12 (3), confirm the independence of the commissioner. The proposed provision is rigid and unnecessary and I ask members to reject it.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:58):** I make it very clear that The Greens are in line with the Opposition when it comes to this amendment. We believe it is important to listen to the advocacy bodies and the people who have made submissions to the inquiry on this piece of legislation. Often in the ageing and disability sector—with the best intentions—challenges occur within government departments under the control of the Minister. In such instances, it is important that the commissioner has the ability to act with full independence from the Minister. We are looking at a specific case in which it is crucial to have that independence. The amendment would ensure that the commissioner could act independently, particularly in situations where the Minister, who has with oversight of services for people with disability and older people under the investigation of the commissioner, may have a simultaneous responsibility for a department involved in the investigation. The Greens are committed to maintaining this important amendment to the bill.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (16:59):** In response to the member for Newtown, I again draw the attention of members to the role of the Mental Health Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Children's Guardian, all of which have the same construction. The roles are independent and highlight the difference between independence and accountability. There is no suggestion of there being anything other than independence. I referred the member for Canterbury to clauses 24 and 25. I make it clear that the intention of the legislation is that there be an independent commissioner. There is nothing to frustrate that. I add that members need to be careful of unintended consequences that can occur from not having an accountable commissioner. I may get into trouble for saying this, but if members opposite wanted—this may be what they are seeking—they could try to establish an oversight committee in Parliament. That is a matter for either Chamber if members wish to do that. I think that is what the members are seeking, but this amendment will not achieve that outcome.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Legislative Council amendment No. 4 be disagreed with.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47  
Noes .....39  
Majority.....8

AYES

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Davies, Mrs T

Barilaro, Mr J  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V

## AYES

Elliott, Mr D  
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

Evans, Mr L.J.  
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  
Wilson, Ms F

Gibbons, Ms M  
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

## NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Dib, Mr J  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E  
Butler, Mr R  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Donato, Mr P  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
O'Neill, Dr M  
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  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

## PAIRS

Clancy, Mr J  
Williams, Mr R

Finn, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S

**Amendment disagreed with.**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)**  
**(17:09):** I move:

That Legislative Council amendment No. 13 be disagreed with.

This amendment would give the commissioner stronger powers than the Ombudsman or the police. It inserts a power that is far wider than any power contained in other Acts where the category of person who can be questioned is quite specific. The provision would contain no protections. It is likely to disproportionately impact those less likely to know and exercise their rights to decline to answer any questions—for example, Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse people.

Creating an obligation to answer questions may make victims or bystanders feel persecuted. I need to make it clear that there is no commission of this sort, other than royal commissions, that contains this power. People need to be apprised of their rights, particularly when we think about the sorts of people who will raise issues with the commission. They will predominantly be carers and to withdraw their right of silence would be an extraordinary step. To give the commissioner prosecutorial-like powers has never been the intention. It was not the intention expressed in any of the inquiries in relation to the bill. It would go over and above the powers envisaged in the bill in a way that would not be helpful for the people involved. The commission is about resolving issues where it can, but compelling people to answer questions and making it a prohibition not to answer them seems extraordinary. I think members opposite have heard the calls in relation to this, so I ask the House to disagree to this amendment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Legislative Council amendment No. 13 be disagreed with.

**Amendment disagreed with.**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:11):** I move:

That Legislative Council amendments Nos 14, 32 and 33 be disagreed with.

These amendments are inconsistent with similar provisions in other Acts—for example, under the Guardianship Act the penalty for providing false or misleading statements is 50 penalty units. Ultimately the penalty imposed is a matter for the courts in any given case. Courts are not compelled to assign the maximum penalty for any offence. I again make it clear that the commission will predominantly deal with carers. The impact of these amendments would cause the maximum penalty to rise to around \$11,000. I believe we should look at other Acts, like the Guardianship Act, that have a basis of 50 penalty units.

Obviously, if the commissioner is of the view to recommend changes, the commissioner would have the opportunity to do so. In many cases carers do not get holiday pay or opportunities to get penalty rates for working weekends and often they do not get superannuation. There are many types of hardworking carers and we want the commission to fix things for them. The commission is not about punishing people; it is about getting outcomes. I think members opposite have heard the calls for disagreeing with these amendments. I ask for their support.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Legislative Council amendments Nos 14, 32 and 33 be disagreed with.

**Amendments disagreed with.**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (17:13):** On behalf of Mr Gareth Ward: I move:

That Legislative Council amendment No. 34 be disagreed with.

I seek advice from the Speaker in relation to this amendment. The reason I do so is that members will recall that when this amendment was brought forward by the member for Orange in this place there was some conjecture around it. I seek input from the Speaker in that regard.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not so much giving advice as I giving an opinion. As members would be aware, I previously ruled out of order an amendment that the member for Orange proposed to move during consideration in detail of this bill on 29 May this year. In doing so, I noted that under the standing orders a Governor's message recommending an appropriation from the Consolidated Fund was required before the House could proceed to consideration of such financial measures. The standing orders reflect important constitutional principles regarding the primacy of the Legislative Assembly in relation to money bills and appropriations. In examining the amendments to this bill, which were received today from the Legislative Council, I note that amendment No. 34 includes provision for the Parliament to recommend that the State provide financial assistance to independent specialist disability advocacy, information and representative organisations in New South Wales by grants of a minimum of \$20 million per annum, adjusted annually for inflation, to be distributed as determined by the commissioner.

I note that the proposed wording highlights the disputes that have arisen over time between the Houses on the extent of the powers and privileges of the Legislative Council in relation to financial legislation. At a later point in time, I will come back to the House with a detailed statement of my views regarding these important constitutional principles and the powers of this House with respect to money bills. For the moment, I simply make the observation that the appropriations should be clear, expressly worded and not subject to ambiguity or uncertainty regarding their intended effect. It is a matter for this House to make a decision on whether to agree to or disagree with the Legislative Council's proposed amendment. I make no further comment at this stage.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. There are a couple of things that are really important for members to know about the amendment. First of all, we have provisions under Standing Order 243, the basis of which relates to the Constitution Act 1902. I want to make clear our support for advocacy services as evidenced by the former disability services Minister, the current disability services Minister and the Government. There is not one person in this place who does not support advocacy. That is not what this bill is about. I note that for any service gaps that exist as a result of the Commonwealth and State relationship around the National Disability Insurance Agency, the appropriate course of action for funding post 2020 very much relates to the Minister raising it through the appropriate forums that are available to the Minister.

In relation to the disagreement about this amendment between the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, it is important that members of the Legislative Council recognise that all appropriations must originate in the Legislative Assembly and be moved by a Minister, or supported by a certificate from the Governor. In relation to the provisions as referred to by Mr Speaker, we want to ensure that there are not vague terms in that

regard. It needs to be very clear that the Treasury benches are formed under the Westminster system of government for a reason—that is, to reflect the democratic principles with which our community works. I urge all members of this Chamber to reflect on the fact that what we are agreeing to and disagreeing to is not about advocacy. It is about the establishment of a precedent that can be taken up for other purposes.

Section 5 of the Constitution Act provides that all appropriation bills must originate in the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Council is a House of review. It is important that the roles and responsibilities and the formation of the Legislative Assembly—in many ways being the House of Executive Government—ensure that the section is upheld. The Legislative Council making an amendment to a bill with an appropriation attached to it in many ways changes the very nature of the bill before us, which is about the establishment of an Ageing and Disability Commissioner. The bill is not about advocacy services. It is about the establishment of a commissioner.

I would hate to see a circumstance that, come 1 July, the Minister is not able to ensure that the commissioner is in place because the upper House made an amendment that is not relevant to the establishment of the commissioner but relates to an appropriation to advocacy services and is the reason that the commissioner is not established. We do not disagree on our important commitment. Nobody disagrees on it. It is critical that the Legislative Council agree, should the House move this way, to not block the establishment of an Ageing and Disability Commissioner on 1 July on the basis of an amendment which is very different to the purposes of the bill. It is important. Comfort can be given to anybody who is concerned about advocacy services, as we all are, that the Minister will continue to work closely with that sector within disability services to work through the funding arrangements post 2020.

Section 46 of the Constitution Act clearly underpins Standing Order 243. Section 46 was reflected on last time when the member for Orange sought to move his amendment. It is true that it only deals with bills, votes and resolutions in the Legislative Assembly. It does not refer to the Legislative Council. But, again, it is clear in its intent to support the convention of the House as it relates to the financial prerogative being with the Legislative Assembly. We know that government is formed in the lower House. We have a responsibility in that sense to ensure that the responsibilities of the House are upheld and that it is appropriate for the Governor's message be presented in this place.

Sections 5 and 46 of the Constitution Act are very clear. I reiterate that the Hon. Abigail Boyd sought to rely on a precedent in the Legislative Council, which is appropriate, but I do not believe what she referred to has a precedent value to which our standing orders and the Constitution Act adhere. I say that because the situation and circumstances of the precedent to which the Hon. Abigail Boyd referred relate to a hung Parliament in 1993 and again it was the Opposition and the crossbench which moved that way. I do not think it has the precedent value to which the member referred when this amendment was moved in the Legislative Council.

I remind all members—from Labor to The Greens, the Independents and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—of the importance of upholding the Constitution Act in terms of the roles and responsibilities of Executive Government and of the Legislative Assembly in terms of appropriation bills being adhered to. I want to give comfort to everybody. The bill was about establishing a disability services commissioner. It was not a debate about \$25 million in advocacy services, which needs to be worked through—nobody is in dispute about that. There is time for that to be resolved in light of the funds that the State Government has already set aside for advocacy. On that basis I argue that the House should not agree to, and disregard, amendment No. 34 from the Legislative Council.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery members of the public who are attending the A Little Night Sitting program conducted by Parliamentary Education.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:25):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak against disagreeing with the amendment moved by Ms Abigail Boyd in the other Chamber, which recommends that the State Government provide financial assistance to independent, specialist, disability, advocacy, information and representative organisations in New South Wales by grants of a minimum of \$20 million per annum, adjusted annually for inflation, to be distributed as determined by the commissioner. I have heard the Minister raise concerns about the amendment.

It is worth putting on the record that it was the Minister who is the Leader of the House who spoke against this amendment, not the Minister for Family and Community Services, who has carriage of this bill. It is important to note that there is a problem here. We are talking about this Parliament recommending to the commissioner to provide \$20 million per annum to assist people with disabilities and to fund disability advocacy services. The Minister said that there is not a person in this place who does not support advocacy. The Greens support the amendment staying in the bill because this Government does not support disability advocacy.

We are here because the Government has said it is going to use the excuse of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] as a reason to cut funding to ongoing disability advocacy services. We know that in New South Wales about 10 per cent of people living with a disability are eligible for the NDIS. Yet the other 90 per cent of people with a disability benefit every day from advocacy services speaking up on their behalf. That is why it is essential for us to see this commissioner not as a replacement for disability advocacy services but rather in addition to them. That is why Ms Abigail Boyd in the other place looked at how the Parliament, while staying within its rules and constitutional requirements, could recommend that the State Government provide financial assistance to be distributed as determined by the commissioner. That is not outside the scope of the functions of the commissioner as set out in the bill, which are to take further action to investigate, raise awareness and educate the public about matters relating to abuse, and to provide advice and general assistance to the public about matters relating to abuse and neglect.

One way the commissioner could choose to exercise those functions is by properly funding civil society organisations like disability advocacy groups. With no disrespect to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in this place, it moved a fairly clunky amendment in this Chamber. It was a gallant effort. The amendment said that it is the intention of the Parliament that the Government provide \$20 million in funding each year. The Greens member in the other place, Ms Abigail Boyd, who has the disability portfolio, did the fine work of looking at the intention and spirit of that amendment and she provided a way for it to be included in this bill to ensure ongoing funding of disability advocacy services. That is what we have before us. The upper House agreed to the amendment. Now it is up to this Chamber to agree or disagree with recognising the importance of disability advocacy services.

We know full well that there is the potential to get this done quickly. It is important that the Government does not threaten us that the disability commissioner will not be established because we are not disagreeing with the amendment. We stand strong with disability advocacy services and the millions of people with disabilities and their families that the services represent and support. We want to see the commissioner established but we also want to see properly funded disability advocacy services in the State. We know the spin that will occur and we know what will happen if we push through the idea of accepting the establishment of the disability commissioner, but at the same time we foresee the loss of advocacy services. It will be, "This is what we are doing to support people with disability." It is great. We all love the fact that we are establishing a disability commissioner but it is not okay not to fund advocacy services. I encourage wholeheartedly all members in this place to support the amendment. [*Extension of time*]

If the Leader of the House and others in this place are concerned about the precedent being set, there is one simple solution to this in the budget week: Put on the record right now that the Liberal-Nationals Government will continue to fund disability advocacy services in this State. The Government should make the announcement in this Chamber. That way we do not have to set dangerous precedents and disability advocacy funding will be provided. Maybe we should contact the Treasurer and see if he wants to contribute to this debate and make the commitment. Maybe he will say it was an oversight in the budget to not continue to fund disability advocacy services in the State. Then we do not have to worry about the precedent being set by this so-called "inappropriate" amendment when in fact it is a completely legitimate amendment.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:31):** As the first Minister for Disability Services to have a disability, I am quite offended by some of the suggestions that came from the member for Newtown in her contribution. When it comes to funding for people with disability—and as someone with that lived experience—I say to her that I absolutely support people with disabilities, as I always have. I have said repeatedly that we need to be strategic and sensible about advocacy services. Let me explain what the Government has said. As part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, money can be claimed for advocacy services.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Not the NDIS. Come on!

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Just listen and behave yourself. A total of \$395 million is available for people who have this ability to claim for advocacy services. I have said repeatedly that there are people with disabilities who are not covered—

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** What about the people who don't have the NDIS?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Gosford will have her opportunity to speak in the debate.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** —by the NDIS. I have said repeatedly that when it comes to the gaps I will do all I can to ensure that the funding continues because I support the work of advocacy services. I think they do a great job. If you heard the speech of the member for Newtown without knowing anything, you would have thought

that she was doing something to ensure that funding; in fact it is quite the opposite. That is because the Government has made it clear that the provision that she has proposed and the way it has been done has absolutely no constitutional effect. Seeing as she raised it, the so-called "precedent" that was referred to by the Hon. Abigail Boyd in the other place, the Letona Co-operative case—

**Ms Jenny Leong:** She's not honourable.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** You can say that again. The Letona Co-operative case, which refers to a State-owned fruit-growing company—an Act from 1993 that has been repealed—was in entirely different circumstances not only in relation to how it addressed part 5 of the Constitution Act but also in relation to the appropriation issues. What they are trying to say is that by moving this amendment it somehow guarantees advocacy funding, without actually knowing what the gaps are. They have not actually asked advocacy groups what the gaps would be. They have not asked them that.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** How many letters have those opposite written to me? None on this issue. They come in here and try to make out as if they are fighting for advocacy services, but it is a totally hollow amendment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Port Stephens will cease interjecting.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** This is a totally hollow amendment from those opposite, which they know has no impact. If they actually believed in advocacy services, where was the meeting request to come and talk to me about it? Have they spoken to the Treasurer? Did they say anything about it during question time?

**Mr Jamie Parker:** That is your job, Gareth.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** No. Hold on. We are dealing with the amendment that you moved. So important do you think this is that you are carrying on and waving the flag because you think you are standing up for advocacy services, but don't you just look quite silly right about now? In relation to this amendment and its constitutional validity—because that is what I am talking about—the intention of the amendment is to redirect appropriated funds for a specific purpose. That is what they are seeking to do.

**Mr Jamie Parker:** Twenty million.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Correct. That would make the bill an appropriations or money bill. Is that what you are seeking to do?

**Ms Jenny Leong:** It is recommending.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** If that is what they are seeking to do, the amendment is an appropriation and it is contrary to section 5 of the Constitution Act, which provides that all bills appropriating any part of public revenue must originate in the Legislative Assembly. This amendment has come from the Legislative Council. Section 5 reinforces the primacy of the Legislative Assembly, as the Leader of the House said, with respect to money bills. In doing so, it reflects a longstanding fundamental convention of Westminster parliaments that the House we are in is the one from which money bills emanate, because this House is accountable for the financial management of the State. If this amendment is not an appropriation, contrary to section 5 of the Constitution Act, then it is of no legal effect and all the claims members opposite are making about advocacy will not be funded. I want to see the gaps filled when it comes to advocacy. I want to make sure that people with disabilities have—

**Ms Kate Washington:** You don't fund them.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** In response to the member for Port Stephens, we have funded them: \$26 million over two years in relation to this.

**Ms Kate Washington:** And they are closing their doors as we speak, Gareth.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** You are the one that constantly politicises these issues. I am still waiting for you to come and see me, which you would if you genuinely believed in what you are saying, but you have not done so. The \$20 million figure is a totally arbitrary figure. It is not based on any current assessment of gaps in the NDIS or disability advocacy funding, nor is it futureproofed. How did those opposite come up with the figure? How did they get to it? It is even less than the two years' amount that we have allocated in the budget. How did they come up with that figure? They have no idea. This is weak and sloppy from those opposite.

The Government has committed to provide additional transitional funding for disability advocacy services until 2020. The NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building [ILC] funding is designed to support the broader disability community to make community more accessible, improve access to information and enable



choice and control. One of the NGOs that appeared before the social issues inquiry, National Disability Services, the peak body for disability service providers, had this to say about ILC funding commitments by the Commonwealth: They welcomed the Government's announcement that it will deliver the full \$398 million in funding to support people with disability through the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building program.

The claim inherent in this amendment that we have somehow not supported disability advocacy is wrong and it is offensive. There is only one other person on that side of the House who has a disability and understands this from a lived experience point of view. I take great offence at some of the carry-on that has gone on here, because this is all about banner-waving and flag-waving. Those opposite have shown no substance, no care and no diligence in relation to how they arrived at this figure. This amendment was just moved so that those opposite can go to certain people and say that they have done something in relation to this issue. I am trying to work through this in a methodical way by finding the gaps so that we can provide sensible and responsive services. Instead those opposite have embarrassed themselves with an amendment that has no legal effect. They have not genuinely tried to lobby for it. This amendment was an afterthought as part of a bill that should be bipartisan and has been up until this point. I am not angry but I am disappointed with the behaviour of those opposite.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (17:39):** As the mover of the motion against the amendment, I will make some observations. It is important that in this debate we do not lose sight of how far disability services have come in this State because of bipartisanship. Ms Sophie Cotsis knows it and I know it. There are people in this place today who were not around 10 years ago when John Della Bosca was able to secure bipartisan support for the funding of services. The NDIS has shifted the goalposts in terms of the debate for disability services. I understand absolutely the passion for advocacy to making sure that it does get funded in the future. Everybody agrees on that. But the main thrust of the argument here relates to the very important role and responsibility of the Legislative Assembly versus that of the Legislative Council, which is a House of review. The Constitution Act 1902 underpins the operations of the Parliament.

To the Minister's point it is important that we do not end up in a situation where this becomes logjammed between the Houses and we do not get the disability services commissioner as of 1 July. The debate around advocacy and services can continue. Members on the other side of the House can continue to move notices of motion and maintain their arguments, but given the overview of this bill I ask members—and I am particularly calling on The Greens and the Labor Party in the upper House—to ensure that this bill is not blocked in terms of its establishment as at 1 July because of toing and froing between the Houses.

The overview of the bill clearly relates to the establishment of the commissioner; it does not relate to advocacy services. Whilst the member for Newtown made a point about the importance of advocacy in relation to the disability services commissioner, the establishment of the commissioner is not about the provision of advocacy. Advocates have an important systemic and individual role to play in this sector and they do need to be funded. If there are service gaps they need to be drawn out between the Commonwealth and the State. That has always been the case.

**Ms Kate Washington:** This is exactly what we are trying to draw out.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That is right. But, to the Minister's point, it is important that we do not get to a position of underfunding of advocacy services through that process either.

**Ms Kate Washington:** They are currently underfunded.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That is right, Kate. You have just hit the nail on the head. But what is the actual number? It is a bill establishing a disability services commissioner. A bill which establishes a disability services commissioner is not a bill about advocacy services, which are independent from the commissioner.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** No.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** They are independent of the commissioner. If members had been in the Chamber earlier they would have heard the point made that the Minister is going to continue to work with the sector through the appropriate ministerial forum at a Federal and State level to resolve the service gaps and resolve the funding. As the Hon. Jenny Macklin and I agreed, the funding which is handed from the State to the Commonwealth for the provision of services—and not for the building of Taj Mahals by the Commonwealth, which has happened through the National Disability Insurance Agency over the past five years—is very much about getting the money directly into the front line and not into back office bureaucracy. It is an important principle in terms of where the State dollars need to continue to go. In the debate around this amendment I ask that it is done respectfully in a bipartisan way and that people reflect on the argument I am putting as to the Constitution Act and the role and the responsibilities of the Legislative Assembly. As I said, this is not about the advocacy services—everyone agrees that has to be resolved—but it is very much about the role and the primacy of the Legislative Assembly versus the Legislative Council.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:44):** I support the amendment. I understand that upholding the Constitution is of the utmost importance in this House. We understand the concerns of the Leader of the House. Let's talk about a precedent being set by the member for Newtown because this is the voice of people with disabilities across New South Wales screaming out for an increased investment in advocacy in their twilight moments as they are unfunded. I thank the member for Orange for putting the amendment to this House. I also thank Ms Abigail Boyd in the other place for the work that she has done to try to create a space on behalf of people living with disability. Those who are within the NDIS, and the 90 per cent who are not, as well as the families and communities of people with disabilities, are slowly and surely having their voice eroded. I thank the Minister for Disability Services for the work that he is doing picking up the pieces that were possibly not heard by the previous Minister. Information about the desperate state of people living with disabilities and their concerns about advocacy across our State obviously has not been passed on in its entirety to the new Minister.

The bill is about an Ageing and Disability Commissioner, but these amendments are fully supported by advocate organisations across New South Wales. The amendments come recommended by advocacy agents across New South Wales because they know the circumstances and the challenges of people living with disabilities—people who are slowly losing their voice because of the funding cuts under the guise of the supposedly great NDIS. The Leader of the House claims that the NDIS is in place. No, it is in a transition stage, which makes this amendment even more important for the vulnerable people who are moving into the NDIS and do not have a voice.

On election day I met a guy in a clapped-out old wheelchair who was living in a caravan without a floor. He did not really know about the NDIS or even how to get it. Who do I send him to when our Central Coast Disability Network has gone? We do not have a place in our community—besides members of Parliament—to be a voice for people with disabilities and reach out to support agencies, because they have gone. Maybe that is a gap left by the previous Minister for disability and the current Minister has not been informed of these gaps that are appearing across New South Wales.

Today I also mention and commend the work of IDEAS—Information on Disability, Education & Awareness Services—an independent and unbiased regional organisation based in Tumut which employs about 20 staff to service the people of regional New South Wales and their families. They have spent years building their understanding, their organisation, their competence, their knowledge and their relationships with remote Aboriginal families living with disabilities, and they are already cutting their staff because their funding is being cut. For 30 years they have been out there—for decades. That wealth of knowledge is now leaving the communities of disability and we are going to have to look for it somewhere else. When those families do not have that voice and we are picking up the pieces there will be a higher price to pay, Minister.

I am waiting on a coronial inquiry into the death of a gentleman who died because the care in our community let him down. I will not speak about that circumstance, but this is desperate. These people need a voice. There is a fine line for people living with mental illness who have previously been supported under other funding structures who will need to be transitioned to the NDIS, and we are not there yet. We cannot let go of the issue of these gaps. That is why the member for Orange, the member for Newtown and Ms Abigail Boyd in the other place have raised this with such passion.

The Minister and I both know that living with a disability is tough. We have the capacity and we have a voice in this place but we also know that there are a hell of a lot of people out there who do not have a voice. That is why I am proud to stand beside my colleagues in this place and say that, whilst this amendment may not go through today, I call out to the other side of the House to look hard and deep into the budget for funding to support advocacy, to keep those people in employment across New South Wales, because those people with disability are going to cost us so much more. If a death in my community is one of those costs, it is already one cost too many. Those organisations are not there because they have shut down. [*Extension of time*].

I add that the success or failure of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 will fall on the agency of the advocates. If those advocates are not there, who will be there? Whilst the commissioner will not be completely independent like an Ombudsman, they will still need somewhere to put those recommendations and those voices for change in the future. As members of Parliament we know that recommendations go to agencies that help create future changes in our society. The commissioner will recommend funding to make this happen. The amendment is about being strategic and sensible about the gaps. Minister, let us make sure that those gaps are considered. Let us call on the Treasury to be here to hear about those gaps. The amendment will possibly not go through because those opposite, while they say they support people with disability and advocacy, are going to vote this down. It is a tough one.

I am proud to be a voice in Parliament for people with disabilities across New South Wales. Those voices come from members of our community and from advocacy agencies that speak on behalf of families that are so fragile they cannot even get into my office to speak. I would love to bring all the people who come to my office

to complain to the Minister's office but I am not going to overload him with that. I am going to recommend that we support advocacy in another place. People are out there waving flags in the streets. You are saying that it is political; it is absolutely apolitical. It is because there are gaps out there and the experts know there are gaps. This is not about the NDIS which has arrived. This is about the arrival of the NDIS and supporting people until people with disabilities are fully supported in this community.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:51):** By leave: I thank my friend and colleague the member for Gosford for her wonderful contribution. I agree with many of her sentiments. I put on the record my thanks to the member for Gosford, who has many chats with me and has had over many years. She is a terrific advocate for people with disabilities and she should be commended for her passion. I genuinely thank her for it. I clarify that the reason why members on this side of the House are not voting for the amendment is not because we do not support disability advocacy. I think each side of the House has a differing view about how we get there.

I clarify for the House that a disability Ministers council meeting is coming up on the 28 June. Before Federal Minister Stuart Robert was sworn in I wrote to him and asked that this be one of the matters that we discuss. There are some challenges—enormous challenges—around the NDIS. The member for Gosford quite rightly articulated many of those and I am sure other members of the House would have experiences with their constituents where there have been challenges. Of course, when a reform of this type and enormity is undertaken, there will be challenges. That is why advocacy services are important. We all acknowledge that. The member for Bega, the former Minister, spoke incredibly well in relation to that.

All I am saying is that, because of the question around the validity of this provision, it will not produce the outcome that we all want. What I am trying to do as the new Minister is to find those gaps and then take proposals to government to make sure those gaps are met. There are funds through the NDIS for certain types of services. There will be a role, in my opinion, for the State. What frustrates me is that this provision is not about the functioning of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. I appreciate the sentiments and the passion—I think we all share that. We all want to see people with disabilities live free and independent lives and to reach their potential, no matter their lot in life.

This provision is being voted against by the Government not because those of us on this side do not share the Opposition's passion but because we do not believe there is constitutional validity in the way that this has come about. I will continue to do everything I can to make sure the people of this State who have a disability realise their potential. I will continue to work with the Commonwealth to find those gaps so that we can deliver better outcomes. But I make clear that the reason we are voting against the amendment is not because we do not agree with the sentiment but because we do not agree with the way in which this amendment has come about and whether it will have any effectiveness. Let's put that beyond question and get the outcome that we are all looking for.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:54):** I contribute to discussion on disagreement with the amendment that was passed in the Legislative Council. After his second reading speech, I commended the Minister for the intention of the bill. We know we need a commissioner. We are very pleased that 36 amendments were successful in the upper House and we note that they were combined Labor, The Greens and crossbench amendments. But this is about a lost opportunity. I say to the Minister, with respect, that this argument should not be focused on a constitutional issue when it could be solved now by the Minister putting on the record and saying loudly and clearly to all the disability advocates and to all the people with disability in this State that there is money on the table for them right now.

I held a National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] forum last year, which was attended by 60 providers. The focus was on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with a disability. It was very disturbing over a seven-hour day to hear recounts of gaps and problems with the rollout of the NDIS. I do not suggest that it is necessarily the fault of the creators of the scheme, but there are problems with the rollout. I will give a couple of examples. Many people in Aboriginal communities like Tabulam thought that the acronym NDIS stood for the NBN—they thought it was something to do with the rollout of the internet because people were using acronyms. As my colleagues have already discussed, people face many hurdles in even knowing that the NDIS exists and is available, let alone the steps in getting yourself registered.

Advocates at the forum described the barriers to being able to speak to a person and that it would take a one-hour interview. I am not making this up: They spoke to people who asked them whether Down syndrome was something that you acquired. There were lots of very disturbing examples of things that people working in that sector would have to ask. Currently those advocates—and they are from not-for-profit organisations—have no business case to know whether they can exist after the current funding runs out. This is an opportunity for the Minister to put it on the record and say that the money is there, not to clutch onto a constitutional issue and say

that sometime in the never-never some arrangement will be made between the Commonwealth and the State. It is not good enough; it is not money on the table.

What was very clear in yesterday's budget was the \$2.3 billion for two stadiums in Sydney, yet we have an issue with \$20 million of certainty for disability advocates in this State. That is stark and unbelievably disappointing. The idea is ludicrous that once a commissioner is employed he or she will then be able to somehow fill the gap left by the advocates that are already dropping daily because there is no funding and their business case is gone. This is about an opportunity for the Minister to assure every person and every family of a person living with a disability that the Government cares enough to ensure that there is no gap today.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (17:59):** I will clarify that \$11.5 million was made available in this year's budget for disability advocacy services and that is up from \$9.5 million the year before. I do not think it was suggested that we are not funding advocacy services, but I make it clear that we are. As I have said repeatedly, I want to see the gaps met and I am working to do that. I am simply saying that because of the questions around the legal validity of this provision this is not the way to get the outcome we all want. Perhaps one of the suggestions that the member for Sydney was just discussing with me is worth discussing between here and the Legislative Council. The suggestion was that as Minister I can request certain reports and that perhaps we should ask the commissioner to do a report on advocacy services and make suggestions about funding models that work, and that could be done independently.

*[A member interjected.]*

I am the one with the eyesight problem, but the member for Sydney was in the Chamber moments ago and he asked me about that. I am sure he will confirm that later with the member for Newtown. That is one suggestion that I thought was worthwhile mentioning and I would certainly be open to it. I just do not want to see this bill delayed because of a provision that has questions about its function. I remind members that the standing inquiry by the Ombudsman ends on 30 June. We have one sitting day left between now and 1 July. If this legislation does not pass the upper House—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** That's blackmail.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am not blackmailing anybody. I am simply saying that this is the consequence, that we could have a situation where this commissioner is not in place by 1 July. I am simply apprising members of all the consequences of decisions that are taken in this House today. I want to see the gaps met and I am working to do that. I would not be hanging my hat on something that adds questions around constitutional validity, but I have said in this House on the record that I am working to get the outcome that everybody wants.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Every other Minister has ignored it completely.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am not.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:01):** We had a full gallery earlier and things always get a little heated. I want to make it very clear on the record that I meant absolutely no offence, and I was offended by the Minister's accusation that I would cause offence to people and not respect people with disability in this place or in the community. Yesterday the budget was handed down with an \$802 million surplus. We are talking about \$20 million annually. In the budget \$2.4 billion was promised for a new Prison Bed Capacity Program. In addition to that we saw the ongoing funding of WestConnex at \$500 million per kilometre for a 33-kilometre road.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: The member for Newtown is talking about WestConnex and yesterday's budget. This is a very clear debate currently between the Houses. The member is talking well and truly outside the leave of the amendment.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** I take the Minister's point, but I am talking about the \$20 million that disability advocacy services—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Newtown will resume her seat. I remind the member of the subject of the amendments and of the specific amendment currently being debated, which is No. 34.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** To the point of order: The Minister is asking this House to take him on trust that he will do something about this funding without it going through as part of the bill. This is the Minister whose department defunded three domestic violence services—

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

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** That was in my electorate.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** That is actually not true.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** It is.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** I speak to the amendment. The amendment is looking specifically at recommending that \$20 million be provided through the disability commissioner, which is this function, to disability advocacy services. The Minister asked why that figure and where that figure came from. I remember being at the launch of the Stand By Me campaign with Government members and Opposition members. In fact, I felt slightly awkward because it felt so apolitical: There was me hanging out with Government members and Opposition members. But in actual fact it was a great thing because we want Stand By Me supported by everybody. But this week we see a failure to deliver \$20 million annually. Where does this figure come from? I can tell you: One-third of people are turned away from disability advocacy services, and this is a 33per cent increase to the funding. It is as simple as that and if we need more, then let us put more in. But I would say that the speaker has made it perfectly clear. The reason we are having this debate is that this amendment is not out of order. If it were out of order we would not be debating it.

As I said, with all respect to the member for Orange, his amendment was ruled out of order and we did not debate it. This amendment was not ruled out of order and that is why we are debating it. I acknowledge that Abigail Boyd is here listening to this debate. If we want to test this, if the Minister, the Leader of the House and the Government believe that this is truly unconstitutional, then that is for the courts to decide. But right here, in this place, this is the amendment we are considering. We support this amendment because it will enable the commissioner to provide money through the disability commission to support disability advocacy organisations. We know full well that this Government is not committed to doing that; if it were it would have promised it yesterday in the budget. It would have been in the budget papers yesterday, but it was not, which means the Government not committed to doing it. Government members should hang their heads in shame.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:06):** What I request is of a technical nature. Government members have said that this is unconstitutional. I am seeking to find out whether they have sought advice from the Crown Solicitor and will they table that advice for the House to see so that we can understand, on an equal basis, the advice that they have received?

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:07):** By leave: I thank the member for Wyong for that question. The answer is yes, but, as you would appreciate, if I were to table that advice it would prejudice the advice. I cannot table advice without prejudicing the attorney-client privilege. But, yes, I have sought advice and that is why we have acted in the way we have.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Legislative Council amendment No. 34 be disagreed with.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....45  
Noes .....42  
Majority.....3

#### AYES

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
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

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
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  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J  
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  
Wilson, Ms F

#### NOES

Aitchison, Ms J

Atalla, Mr E

Bali, Mr S

## NOES

Barr, Mr C  
 Catley, Ms Y  
 Crakanthorp, Mr T  
 Dib, Mr J  
 Greenwich, Mr A  
 Haylen, Ms J  
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
 McDermott, Dr H  
 Mehan, Mr D  
 O'Neill, Dr M  
 Saffin, Ms J  
 Tesch, Ms L  
 Washington, Ms K

Butler, Mr R  
 Chanthivong, Mr A  
 Daley, Mr M  
 Donato, Mr P  
 Harris, Mr D  
 Hoenig, Mr R  
 Leong, Ms J  
 McGirr, Dr J  
 Mihailuk, Ms T  
 Parker, Mr J  
 Scully, Mr P  
 Voltz, Ms L  
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Car, Ms P  
 Cotsis, Ms S  
 Dalton, Mrs H  
 Doyle, Ms T  
 Harrison, Ms J  
 Kamper, Mr S  
 Lynch, Mr P  
 McKay, Ms J  
 Minns, Mr C  
 Piper, Mr G  
 Smith, Ms T.F.  
 Warren, Mr G  
 Zangari, Mr G

## PAIRS

Clancy, Mr J  
 Williams, Mr R

Finn, Ms J  
 Hornery, Ms S

**Amendment disagreed with.**

**Messages**

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council advising it of the Legislative Assembly's agreement to amendments Nos 1 to 3, 5 to 12, 15 to 31 and 35, and the Legislative Assembly's disagreement with amendments Nos 4, 13, 14, 32, 33 and 34.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****Establishment and Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 36 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, a joint committee known as the Committee on Children and Young People be appointed.
2. That under section 38 of the Act, the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox and the Hon. Greg Donnelly be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.
3. That on the crossbench membership to be appointed to serve on the committee being determined, a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Council  
 19 June 2019

JOHN AJAKA  
 President

**COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION****Establishment and Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 64 of the Health Care Complaints Act 1993, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission be appointed.
2. That under section 67 (1) (a) of the Act, the Hon. Lou Amato and the Hon. Walt Secord be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.
3. That on the crossbench membership to be appointed to serve on the committee being determined, a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

JOHN AJAKA  
President

## **COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

### **Establishment and Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 63 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption be appointed.
2. That under section 65 (1) (a) of the Act, the Hon. Taylor Martin and the Hon. Adam Searle be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.
3. That on the crossbench membership to be appointed to serve on the committee being determined, a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

JOHN AJAKA  
President

## **COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION**

### **Establishment and Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 31A of the Ombudsman Act 1974, a joint committee known as the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission be appointed.
2. That under section 31C (1) (a) of the Act, the Hon. Lou Amato, the Hon. Niall Blair and the Hon. Adam Searle be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

JOHN AJAKA  
President

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Establishment and Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That under section 4 of the Legislation Review Act 1987, a joint committee known as the Legislation Review Committee be appointed.
2. That under section 5 (1) (a) of the Act, the Hon. Trevor Khan and the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane be appointed to serve on the committee as members of the Legislative Council.
3. That on the crossbench membership to be appointed to serve on the committee being determined, a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

JOHN AJAKA  
President

## **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

### **Establishment and Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assemblys message of Tuesday 18 June 2019 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.
2. That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee be the Hon. Ben Franklin, the Hon. Catherine Cusack, the Hon. Courtney Houssos and the Hon. Peter Primrose.

3. That on the crossbench membership to be appointed to serve on the committee being determined, a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.
4. That on the time and place for the first meeting being determined by the House a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

JOHN AJAKA  
President

### **STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)**

#### **Establishment and Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Tuesday 18 June 2019 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee to inquire into and report on road safety in New South Wales.
2. That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee be the Hon. Lou Amato and the Hon. Daniel Mookhey.
3. That on the crossbench membership to be appointed to serve on the committee being determined, a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.
4. That on the time and place for the first meeting being determined by the House a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

JOHN AJAKA  
President

### **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL**

#### **Establishment and Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

1. That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Tuesday 18 June 2019 relating to the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General.
2. That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General be the Hon. Scott Farlow and the Hon. Mick Veitch.
3. That on the time and place for the first meeting being determined by the House a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

JOHN AJAKA  
President

### **COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that the following member has been appointed to serve on the joint committee:

Ms Abigail Boyd to serve on the committee as a member of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

### **COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION**

#### **Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that the following member has been appointed to serve on the joint committee:

The Hon. Mark Pearson to serve on the committee as a member of the Legislative Council.



Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

## **COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

### **Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that the following member has been appointed to serve on the joint committee:

The Hon. Rod Roberts to serve on the committee as a member of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

## **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

### **Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that the following member has been appointed to serve on the joint committee:

The Hon. Robert Borsak to serve on the committee as a member of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

## **STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)**

### **Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that the following member has been appointed to serve on the joint committee:

The Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile to serve on the committee as a member of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Membership**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that the following member has been appointed to serve on the joint committee:

That Mr David Shoebridge serve on the committee as a member of the Legislative Council.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

## **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

### **Meeting**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council informs the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That the time and place for the first meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters be Thursday 20 June 2019 at 9.30 a.m. in room 1043.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

**STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)****Meeting**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council informs the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That the time and place for the first meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety be Tuesday 6 August 2019 at 9.00 a.m. in room 1043.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL****Meeting**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Mr SPEAKER

The Legislative Council informs the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That the time and place for the first meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General be Thursday 20 June 2019 at 9.00 a.m. in room 1043.

Legislative Council  
19 June 2019

TREVOR KHAN  
Deputy President

*Bills***LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2019****Returned**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the bill with amendments.

**Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.***Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 19 June 2019***No. 1 Administration of elections**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 37:

**[6] Sections 296AA (1) (b), 296 (1) and 298 (3)**

Omit "the general manager of the council" wherever occurring.

Insert instead "an electoral services provider engaged by the council".

**[7] Section 296AA (2)**

Omit the subsection. Insert instead:

(2) A resolution referred to in subsection (1) (b) must include the following information:

(a) whether the general manager has identified an electoral services provider to be engaged for the next ordinary election of councillors and, if so, the name of that provider,

(b) any other information required by the regulations.

**No. 2 Administration of elections**

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 9:

**[8] Section 296A Elections administered by an electoral services provider**

Omit "the general manager of a council" from section 296A (1). Insert instead "an electoral services provider engaged by a council".

**[9] Section 296A (2) and (7)**

Omit "general manager" wherever occurring. Insert instead "electoral services provider".

**[10] Section 298 (5)**

Omit "A general manager of".

Insert instead "An electoral services provider engaged by".

**[11] Sections 299 (3), 300 (3) and 317 (1) (c)**

Omit "the general manager" wherever occurring. Insert instead "an electoral services provider".

**[12] Section 313 Check on double-voting and failure to vote**

Omit "a general manager" from section 313 (2).

Insert instead "an electoral services provider engaged by a council".

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (18:18):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

For the information of the House amendments were moved in the other place by Mr David Shoebridge and agreed to by the majority of the House, including the Labor Opposition.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members who do not want to listen to the Minister should leave the Chamber; otherwise they will take their seats.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** By way of explanation, I am happy to agree to the amendments as moved in the upper House. If this House is happy about that, I am too. The amendments deal with the issue that was raised earlier in the debate by a number of members in this House that local councils should not be able to run their own elections. That amendment was moved in the upper House, and I agree with that.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:19):** On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition and the Hon. Peter Primrose in the other place, I acknowledge the comments made by the Minister for Local Government. The Labor Opposition obviously supports these amendments as moved by Mr David Shoebridge in the other place. In summary it says on page 3, schedule 1, "Insert instead 'an electoral services provider engaged by the council'" so that councils will not engage in running their own elections but rather will engage either the Electoral Commissioner or a service provider. The Opposition does not oppose the amendments.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (18:20):** On behalf of The Greens, I thank the Minister for Local Government, the Government, the Opposition and crossbench for working constructively together. In this debate The Greens have tried to propose practical solutions and amendments, and have worked constructively with all groups in the Parliament, including in the local government space, to achieve a positive outcome. I acknowledge the role of everyone involved and thank the Minister.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Private Members' Statements*

**NORTHERN RIVERS YOUTH SUPPORT**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:22):** By leave: Recently a young woman who is 19 years of age sent me an email. What she said in the email deserves a public hearing. It was wonderful that she cared so much about the young people in the community, and I want to place it on the record. She said: My name is Lily Hotko and I am writing to you about a deep concern of mine for the young children and youth of my generation within our community. Many people know me as a young person from Lismore, NSW. I'd like to see a change within our community that offers better support for youth and children. I recently had my best friend sent to jail for heavy crimes that he has committed. I am in no way writing to justify these behaviours however I would like to see a better support system put in place for the people who find themselves in these situations. My friend was just 14 years old when he began this journey of drugs and crime. He went to every school in our town but was kicked out of almost every one. His mother cried out for help to the teachers, youth workers and services within our towns but little or no support was offered. He is now 21 years old. Stuck in the same system.

How does it go this far without one teacher following up where he is? How can our schools kick a student out but not check on their well-being or offer support? Why is it that it seems to be the children who complete school who get supported but not the ones who don't? I've sat with him and lawyers while he has been broken and said he wants to slit his wrists and the response from majority of these services has been "We will see if we can offer you support and get back to you" with no response whatsoever. He would then get himself into deeper hurt which lead to trouble.

I have sat with a young 14 year old in our very own community right now in 2019 while they have said to me they attend school two days a week and on the other days they stay out and drink alcohol and avoid their families due to domestic violence. Why are FACS not involved? Their only option seems to be to take themselves to a youth worker and see if they will help but it generally takes appointment after appointment before they actually get any practical support or help.

I recently sat with a 15 year old girl who has been homeless, living under the Lismore bridge in a tent. When she went to Centrelink and explained her situation, desperate for support, their response was "it looks like you have been successful with couch surfing so

you are not on the top of our priority list". How?! According to the Echo News, the Northern Rivers has the highest number of homeless people in NSW, and nearly half of them are children or young adults.

I've seen crime rates increase, children rob our local supermarkets to get things they need because that seems to be the fastest way for them to get what they need right now. How can we expect young children from as young as 14 years old to reach out and find their own help when they're emotionally drained in every single way? And how can we get angry at people for the crime and wrong they're doing while we are offering them little to no support?

I would like to see social workers at the skate parks offering free BBQs on a Friday afternoon or people out on the streets at 1am offering support to these children who are on drugs and alcohol. I am aware of 17 year olds who deal drugs who I have reported to the police and not seen any result. I currently go out and sit with these children who I barely know and just listen to them.

But why am I their only safe place when I am just a 19 year old with no qualifications whatsoever. I'd like, rather than all the charity and Church's having everything within their buildings, to see people on our streets as a safe person for these children to. I'd like to see Red Frogs organisations on our streets because I truly believe with all of me that if we actually invested into the wellbeing of our youth in our city that crime rates would drop and suicide in our city would drop. At what point will our youth's voices be heard?

There is more in the email that the young woman sent to me but I do not have time to put it all on record. What I have read tonight gives a sense of what she is saying. It is both sad and wonderful to have a young woman in my community reach out as she has. I met with her and I will continue to work with her and help her find solutions. She saw all of us here as older people giving up on youth. We have to make sure collectively that we show we can offer these services.

#### *Matter of Public Importance*

### **WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:28):** Many people would know that 14 June is World Blood Donor Day. The idea of World Blood Donor Day was conceived by the World Health Organization [WHO], the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as a means to raise awareness of the importance of blood donation and to recognise the contribution of voluntary unpaid blood donors in saving lives and improving health. The event was first celebrated in 2004 and was officially established by the fifty-eighth World Health Assembly in May 2005. It is one of eight official global health campaigns marked by WHO.

Over the years the purpose of World Blood Donor Day has been broadened to encompass the appropriate use of safe blood and blood products. It now provides a springboard for blood safety programs and campaigns throughout the year as well as wider activities to strengthen blood transfusion services. World Blood Donor Day is celebrated by many countries around the world. Each year a different country hosts the event and each year the campaign has a different theme. The host country for World Blood Donor Day 2019 is Rwanda and the event will be held in Kigali, Rwanda. The theme of this year's campaign is blood donation and universal access to safe blood transfusion, as a component of achieving universal health coverage. The campaigns slogan is "Safe blood for all".

Australia has approximately half a million voluntary unpaid blood donors and of those nearly a third come from New South Wales. Donors come from all walks of life and represent people from a wide range of ages, from school children to senior citizens. Many donors have been donating blood on a regular basis for many years and the blood helps to save millions of lives every year. Originally I started donating blood after my sister had an emergency caesarean section for the birth of her twin daughters. It became clear to me just how much blood product is used in saving women's lives during pregnancy and childbirth. Another major use of donated blood is in cancer treatments, particularly plasma and platelet products.

I know many people in the Parliament building are donors—I understand the member for Riverstone, Kevin Conolly, has made more than 70 donations of blood. My last donation of blood was at a donation centre at Mount Street, North Sydney. Unfortunately I have been unable to donate blood for a little while because being pregnant I am one of the individuals who cannot donate blood. Going through my own pregnancy and childbirth experience I felt supported knowing I had access to clean, safe, quality blood products that had been sourced from donors. On behalf of members of the House I thank all blood donors across New South Wales and Australia. I know it takes a considerable amount of effort to donate blood on a regular basis. But I also know that people are motivated by the idea that they can help to save people's lives—and it is life saving as a significant area of blood use is road trauma and accidents. In line with the sentiments of World Blood Donor Day I acknowledge the valuable contribution that blood donors make to Australia and express my sincere gratitude and the gratitude of the members of the House to them for donating their blood.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:32):** I welcome the opportunity to speak on World Blood Donor Day on 14 June during World Blood Donor Week, which was 9 to 15 June. The event seeks to raise awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products and to celebrate blood donors for their freely given, life-giving gift of blood and to encourage more in the community to give generously. I declare to the House that I am a blood donor. The date of 14 June was chosen as it is the birthday of Karl Landsteiner, the Austro-Hungarian biologist who in 1900 distinguished and classified the modern system of blood groups. He is described as the "father of transfusion

medicine" for his discovery of a method to safely transfuse blood from patient to patient. Perhaps millions of people owe their lives and good health to him.

The theme of this year's World Blood Day is "Safe blood for all". Blood is vital for an effective healthcare system. People of all ages and in all stages of life rely on blood and blood products to live a full life. The demand for blood is constant, not just for urgent transfusions in the case of an accident or supportive transfusions during surgery but also for the treatment of chronic immune conditions such as anaemia. Most donated blood goes to people with cancer and blood disease. For example, immune-boosting blood transfusions allow people with immune deficiency to live their lives in a way that would otherwise be impossible.

Aussies give blood generously, with over 1.3 million donations last year from 500,000 individual donors. More donors are always needed because donated blood only lasts 42 days. It is a huge medical, scientific and logistical task to ensure our blood stocks are full, that the blood products are safe and that the products get to where they are needed. We are very fortunate to have a world-class healthcare system but many others in the world are not so fortunate. Of the 25 million Australians only half a million give blood in a given year. I would encourage all to make an appointment to give blood as soon as possible. It is as simple as calling the Red Cross, booking a time and filling out a few forms. It takes maybe half an hour or more, depending on your blood pressure and how fast your blood flow is. Of course, at the end, there are always plentiful snacks to ensure that your blood sugar and blood volumes safely recover. I hate needles, even getting the flu shot, so for me to donate blood every 12 weeks is a significant contribution.

A single donation can contribute to 22 different medical treatments and can save three lives. That is really remarkable when you think about it. There are three different types of donation. Whole blood, which is exactly what it sounds like, can be given once every 12 weeks, which is what I do. Plasma, which is the liquid that carries red and white blood cells as well as platelets, can be given once every fortnight. It lasts for up to a year if frozen. Platelets can be given once every two to four weeks. Platelets clot our blood and prevent bleeding but last only five days.

Members of this place and followers of my social media would know that I am very passionate about the importance of donating blood. Blood is the most vital fluid. Blood is life. The book of Leviticus says, "the life of the flesh is in the blood". Donating blood is the most precious gift that anyone can give another. It is the gift of life. Donating blood cannot be compelled; it is always voluntary. It is perhaps the simplest act of heroism that any one of us can undertake but it is also simple, convenient and virtually pain free. I commend all blood donors everywhere and commend this matter of public importance being brought before the House.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:36):** I support the member for North Shore's matter of public importance in recognising our State and country's lifesaving blood donors. Friday 14 June was World Blood Donor Day. In the Cootamundra electorate mobile donor vans visit Junee, Temora, Gundagai, Harden, Coolamon, Cootamundra, Young and Cowra and are enthusiastically supported by these towns and surrounding villages. The gift of blood is precious. Sadly, across Australia we are not as generous as we could be. One in three Australians will need blood or blood products in their lifetime but only one in 30 Australians give blood each year. It is a form of volunteering that is profound in its impact. One single blood donation can save up to three lives.

Demand for blood and blood products will grow by 100 per cent over the next 10 years. While we need to herald those who are already showing up month after month to give this vital gift, we also need to urge others to get on board. Being a member for a rural electorate, I believe the Red Cross and federally funded National Blood Authority could do more to make donation accessible to the regions. Last year in Harden, when the frequency of the visits was cut from four times to once a year due to resourcing issues and a need to collect more plasma, community members were very vocal in their disappointment. According to locals, around 30 people regularly donate in Harden when the blood bank comes to town.

While I do understand the difficulty in resourcing collections across the country, I know I speak for the people in our small towns and villages when I say more regular collection opportunities would be warmly embraced by rural people. There are willing donors in the regions but our populations are also ageing. So in this respect the tyranny of distance is at play. Make no mistake, the Red Cross does exceptional work as a charity and to all the charity's frontline nurses and milkshake makers thank you for the vital work that you do. Most importantly, to the 606,000 registered donors across Australia, thank you. While we recognised you globally last week, you are heroes 365 days a year.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:39):** In reply: I thank the member for Heffron and the member for Cootamundra for their contributions to the discussion on this matter of public importance. I also thank the member for Lismore for her earlier contribution. The member for Heffron mentioned that he is a regular blood donor. We know that donating blood is a lifesaving contribution to people across our communities. I note the comments of the member for Cootamundra when she not only thanked the donors in her community and the

mobile blood donation vans that visit her community but also gave her insights into the needs of her community, particularly for more regular blood donation collections.

As I said, a significant proportion of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service's donations is used to treat people suffering from cancer and blood diseases. About 34 per cent of blood donations treat people with cancer and blood diseases while about 18 per cent is used for surgical procedures—10 per cent for orthopaedics and about 4 per cent for obstetrics—and there are a range of other uses for our blood products. Members probably know the catchcry of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, which is that your donation can save three lives. If we multiply the number of donors in Australia by three, that is how many lives can be saved across the country. There are many ways in which people can volunteer but there are not too many ways where they can save a person's life. I thank all those who donate blood for the incredibly important contribution that they make to our communities. I commend the matter of public importance to the House.

*Private Members' Statements*

**STATE BUDGET AND BEGA ELECTORATE**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (18:41):** Yesterday's budget was a critical day for regional New South Wales. There is no doubt, given the amount of regional infrastructure spend in the budget, that this budget will secure jobs in the bush—both public sector and private sector jobs—and therefore promote regional growth. The budget's emphasis was on the construction sector as the budget continues to address much of the infrastructure deficit left by former governments that did not invest in regional New South Wales in the way they should have. For the electorate of Bega, it is very pleasing that the budget itemises funding for the construction of a new regional hospital for residents of the Eurobodalla shire. I commend Dr Michael Holland, who has led the community charge for this hospital, for his commitment. He is ecstatic that it is now a line item in the New South Wales budget papers.

Water filtration for the Bega Valley on the Bega-Tathra and Brogo-Bermagui lines also features in the budget papers. The budget also details investments for major construction of sports facilities at Bega, Pambula and Merimbula. There will be continued upgrades to the Princes Highway, which will include the Moruya bypass. I note that there has been a bit of mischief-making in circles in the region in relation to a \$7 million allocation but I contend that it is all about the planning of major construction. Anyone driving along the route can see the upgrade from Berry to Bomaderry and that the Batemans Bay bridgework is proceeding. Millions of dollars are being poured into the highway upgrade this year, which is creating great jobs particularly for young people.

We will also see vital links and safety upgrades with the commencement of stage two of the South Batemans Bay Link Road and new police stations at Bega and Tathra, to name but a few line items in the budget. These are all amazing projects, which are being welcomed by the community. In delivering large-scale infrastructure we must also remember the smaller projects that can make a world of difference to many community members. There is no doubt that volunteers drive these smaller scale projects. These volunteers dedicate their time to improving their town or village amenities. They are involved in local community fundraising by hosting events such as lamington drives, cake stalls and a good sausage sizzle. These events are a great way to bring the community together. I recognise that volunteers spend a lot of time raising funds for local community projects while at the same time having one aim, that is to improve the community's social experience and public amenities.

Because of funding programs like Stronger Country Communities, My Community Project and the Community Building Partnerships, the Government will continue to take the pressure off volunteers to deliver vital community infrastructure at a grassroots level. That includes projects such as a new Rural Fire Service truck or a shed, fencing of local tennis courts, repairing or constructing a pathway—for which there was \$600,000 in yesterday's budget—refurbishing community halls and building accessible playgrounds, such as the one in Tathra that I will be involved in opening on Saturday. That is a great step forward for a community that was ravaged by bushfire last year. It is vital that rural and regional communities continue to be well supported in this regard. New fences, stockyards at local showgrounds, new kitchens for the local Country Women's Association, seating and lighting at local sportsgrounds—these projects have an immediate impact on communities. When funded, they are received with heartfelt thanks by local volunteers who support our local community.

In terms of the budget handed down yesterday, we are seeing infrastructure development in the south-east that has never been experienced before. The new bridge that is underway at Batemans Bay is the largest project in the region's history. There is funding for the Eurobodalla hospital, as I mentioned before. We are also seeing the continuation and delivery of other projects further south, such as the Eden port. Very pleasingly, in the next few weeks the community will come together for the opening of the new commercial wharf extension, which will see the unprecedented hosting and throughput of cruise ships. This will transform a town that has undergone enormous structural adjustments and changes that have affected many people. The opening of these projects will be great for our community on the far South Coast.

**STATE BUDGET AND MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:46):** I want to inform the House of the great news from yesterday's budget. Before I go to the budget and what it means for the Myall Lakes electorate, I will refer to two major announcements that were made last year when the Cabinet held a meeting in the Myall Lakes electorate. The first announcement was a further \$20 million for stage one of the redevelopment of the Manning Base Hospital. That was on top of the \$20 million already provided, making a total of \$40 million for the stage one redevelopment of the hospital. The second announcement made last year was a \$100 million roads package for local roads in the MidCoast Council area, not for State roads but for local roads. People have been crying out for this roads funding. When I toured the electorate everybody talked about the need for action on local roads.

In the budget this year there is continued funding for stage one of the redevelopment of the Manning Base Hospital as well as \$100 million funding for the planning of stage two. Stage two will deliver a new critical care unit, upgrades of the operating theatres and recovery areas and a new day surgery. These facilities are so important. The planning will involve meetings to obtain stakeholders' input. Doctors, nurses and ancillary medical staff will all have input into what should be included in stage two. Stage one was for new oncology and renal dialysis units and the second \$20 million for stage one is to fund the relocation of medical imaging and a revamp of the existing medical imaging area to include an emergency transit area. That is absolutely fantastic news.

In the ancillary papers accompanying the budget papers there is the announcement of the Forster-Tuncurry private medical unit. That funding will go into the planning phase and again there will be consultation with stakeholders as to what should be included in the facility. We also see continued funding for the new police station at Taree, which is an estimated \$18 million build. The ancillary papers show \$1 million for the very important Tuncurry slipway, the only public heavy boat slipway between Newcastle and north of Coffs Harbour. On a number of occasions boats from Newcastle or Port Stephens have limped into the harbour at Forster-Tuncurry to use that slipway. Also in the papers we see the Northern Gateway project at Cundletown. That is a new freight hub area where trucks that go up and down the Pacific Highway can change drivers, change rigs and decant into smaller vehicles. That new freight hub is expected to generate many jobs. Part of that project is moving utilities, upgrading roads and constructing roundabouts.

Included in the ancillary papers is the Cedar Party Creek Bridge at Wingham. As the community knows, the Government has promised there will not be a new bridge without a new swimming pool and there will not be a new swimming pool without a new bridge. It is a package deal. Also in the papers is a commitment to new facilities at the Tuncurry championship golf course, which has very poor facilities. Three major tournaments will be held there, with the NSW Mid Amateur Championship in 2020, the NSW Women's Open in 2021, which will attract international competitors, and the seniors tournament the year after. Those tournaments cannot proceed without proper facilities. The Government has promised funding and that is in the budget papers. It is exciting stuff. These projects can only happen because the Government has got the budget under control and has put New South Wales back on top.

**STATE BUDGET AND BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:51):** Once again the Liberal-Nationals Government has shown absolute disregard for the needs of my community of Bankstown. It was very disappointing to see the lack of funding in the budget for vital infrastructure and social projects that were promised and are long overdue. The Government has been crowing about the supposed budget surplus and its big spending but in Bankstown there is nothing to be happy about because we received very little. This budget ignores the needs of Bankstown. We are a growing community and the south-west is one of the most disadvantaged areas in metropolitan Sydney. We would think that the Government would ensure that appropriate funding is provided for essential services and capital works. It is quite the opposite.

During the dying weeks of the election campaign the Government promised a brand new Bankstown hospital. Interestingly, when I opened the budget papers in relation to Bankstown I saw no mention of any new hospital. There is mention of \$11 million for the existing emergency department of the current Bankstown-Lidcombe hospital. Prior to the election we were told that \$25 million is needed for that upgrade yet the Government has provided only \$11 million at this stage. No money has been allocated in the 2019-20 budget for planning or for any other aspect of the new hospital.

I remind the House that I nor anyone in my electorate is yet to be informed of the location of the new \$1.3 billion hospital, which was announced on 10 March 2019 but has received no allocated funding in the Government's budget. No money has been put aside for the new hospital nor has there been any clear indication as to where the hospital will be located. During the election campaign the then Liberal candidate and now member for East Hills, along with the Liberal candidate for Bankstown, indicated that the new hospital would be on the

existing hospital site. However, the Minister for Health and Medical Research and the Premier have indicated in recent weeks that they are now seeking consultation with the community as to the location of the new hospital.

I can tell members there will be a lot of very angry residents if ever the new hospital, if it is funded or is a line item in the budget, is not located on the existing site because that is what was put to them during the election. There are concerns that it might end up being a high-rise hospital in the central business district of Bankstown. Together with the metro, one can only imagine the traffic congestion and chaos that would result. The CBD is already cut by a train line and has significant traffic and congestion issues. I will say more about the hospital in due course. I am also concerned that I could not find any reference in the budget to the Dunc Gray Velodrome at Bass Hill. As members know, the velodrome was built in 1999 and is part of the Olympic legacy and has a high usage by cyclists. The velodrome is leased by council, managed by council and located on council land.

There was a sub-lease to Bankstown Sports Club. Now council and the ratepayers have a huge burden, with the prospect of increased rates to cope with the cost of the upkeep of the velodrome. This Government has chosen not to provide any assistance in capital works or in any other way for the upkeep of a very significant legacy of the Olympics and a piece of sporting infrastructure that provides statewide cycling opportunities, not just cycling opportunities for my region. It is imperative that the Government provide funding for the velodrome. I raise this concern because it is becoming a real issue for residents and ratepayers of Bankstown who are not aware whether the Government will provide any support for the velodrome in the future.

### STATE BUDGET AND TAMWORTH WATER SECURITY

#### **Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (18:57):**

I update the House on the dire situation of the Tamworth city region in relation to water security. I was pleased to note that water security is a key part of the New South Wales budget with \$170 million to fast-track critical water and infrastructure projects in drought stricken areas, which includes the Tamworth region. The pressure from an unprecedented drought means that every drop must count until there is relief. Water security for our struggling communities remains a major focus of mine and I know the Government is aware of its need. The drought package announced by the New South Wales Government in the State Budget is one of the largest assistance and support packages on record. The package is far-reaching not only from a farming operational perspective but also from a community perspective. I am thankful that the Government has realised this and it is assisting in every way possible.

Water in the Tamworth region is at a critical stage. In the short term we need to save every drop in Chaffey Dam as well as focusing on longer term solutions so that we never find ourselves in this situation again. I have met with the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Melinda Pavey, Tamworth Regional Council, farmers, irrigators and businesses to make sure that we do everything we possibly can to conserve as much water as possible to make it last as long as possible while still providing critical supply for the town, for businesses and of the agricultural sector. I am confident that funding from the Safe and Secure Water Program will be allocated to support our communities and ultimately, longer term, build more water capacity. We need to look at short-term, immediate solutions as well as longer term solutions such as building dams.

The Dungowan Dam is one that is certainly on the horizon and has the capacity to meet our water security needs well into the future. A second Dungowan Dam could be constructed in front of the existing Dungowan Dam. Land has already been purchased by Tamworth Regional Council. A dam wall would need to be built in front of the existing dam which would serve as the second Dungowan dam. The proposal is that when the original Dungowan Dam overflows the second dam would be filled up. There is an existing pipeline from Dungowan Dam to the water treatment plant at Calala, which ensures no loss of water when it is released from the dam to the water treatment plant. At present water requested by Tamworth Regional Council from Chaffey Dam, flows down the Peel River and is picked up at the water treatment plant at Tamworth. There are significant losses from the volume ordered at Chaffey by the time it reaches the water treatment plant.

As part of supporting our farmers during this terrible time, we need to ensure that they are also able to access water to run their businesses, just like Tamworth city businesses and residents. Everyone needs to be taken into consideration when we are looking at a solution to fix our water problems. A solution needs to be found quickly, and I will be working day and night to find the right water solution. We need to continue to pray for rain. It will rain, and when that day comes we will rejoice. At that time we also need to continue to look at securing our water security well into the future so we never find ourselves in this dire situation again.

#### **JOHN F. BOOTH, AM**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (19:02):** I recognise John F. Booth, AM, as the larrikin behind the *Weekly Times* for the past 40 years—a considerable achievement in anybody's language. There is so much to John F. Booth, AM. He was born on 23 February 1932, the same year



the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened. In fact, John Booth was born at home at 232 Blaxland Road as Ryde Hospital had not been built. John's early schooling was at Ryde Public School and then at Sydney Technical High School. After school, John worked as a copy boy at Frank Packer's *Daily Telegraph*. He worked his way up and became Deputy Editor of the *Primary Producer* newspaper. In 1957 he took over his family's cake shop, Gum Leaf at Top Ryde.

In 1959 he was elected to Ryde Council. Back then Ryde was full of dirt roads and market gardens. John was keen to transform Ryde. However in order to do so he needed to manage the budget. He immediately doubled the rates so that he could raise funds to build the facilities Ryde needed. Needless to say raising the rates was not popular, and there was some community backlash against his business and against him personally. However, a determined John pushed ahead. As a result he transformed Ryde. He was behind building Ryde swimming pool; allocating land for Macquarie University; purchasing land to create ELS Hall Park; securing 127 parks in Ryde; building the Civic Centre; replacing dirt roads with paved roads; converting Ryde from septic to sewerage; plus other achievements too numerous to mention. In 1965 he became disillusioned with activities within Ryde Council and resigned.

He then commenced a two-year campaign to establish an ombudsman, an independent officer to investigate the actions of public authorities. As a result of John's efforts an ombudsman now exists in every State and Territory throughout Australia. John's efforts to establish an ombudsman were recognised when he was awarded an AM. In 1979 John turned his attention to the local newspaper, becoming the owner and editor of the *Weekly Times*, which was founded in 1921 by Charles H. Engisch. Under John's always colourful and sometimes controversial control, the paper has flourished. It is now distributed to more than 54,000 homes, clubs and businesses. This week John is celebrating 40 years at the helm.

During this time John's community involvement has been considerable. He has been recognised for his outstanding contribution to and support of the Scouting movement. He is a local legend among Balmain Tigers fans because of his passionate, lifelong support as the famous one-eyed tiger. He has been a long-time supporter of the Ryde Sports Foundation, the Granny Smith Festival and the West Ryde Easter Parade, to name just a few. John "Bradfield" Booth has made an enormous contribution to our community in Ryde. However, in my view, his contribution to strengthening our democracy and, therefore, our way of life has been even more profound. Those of us who love democratic freedoms are indebted to John Booth. Bravo, John Francis Booth, AM. I congratulate him on his 40 years of service to our community as the editor and owner of the *Weekly Times*.

### STATE BUDGET AND NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:05):** In Aristotle's *Politics*, the great philosopher considered what made the governments of city-states good or bad. He came to the conclusion that a government was good if it worked for the common good of the whole city and that a government was bad if it worked for the good of only a part of the city. In the centuries that have passed since Aristotle's time, we have developed beyond city-states but I think the philosopher's metric is still worth considering. Is the New South Wales Government working for the good of the whole State or is it concerned for the good of only a part of the State? Measured by the yardstick and considered from Newcastle's perspective, this Government is a very bad one indeed.

This Government seems to forget that there is a part of the State north of the Hawkesbury, south of the shire or west of Parramatta. Outside Sydney, the State is just something for the Government to pay lip service to. There is no real energy and no real investment, just a box-ticking exercise. This Government sold off the Port of Newcastle and then spent the majority of the proceeds on Sydney infrastructure. This Government is trying to extract another \$100 million from Hunter Water to patch up a budget full of holes.

Newcastle is the State's second-largest city. In the last budget the Government made a lot of noise about the proposed new Newcastle Education Precinct; one year on, not a cent in funding has been allocated to the project. The Government promised Newcastle a world-class public transport system; it has been in chaos for two years. This budget gets no closer to fixing Newcastle buses. There is no new funding for the Newcastle Art Gallery and no new funding for cruise ship facilities at the Port of Newcastle while the Government continues to pork-barrel by spending \$55 million on cruise ship facilities at Eden. All of these matters are vital to Newcastle's future. All of these matters were raised with me directly by constituents during the election campaign. All of these are matters the Government has failed to deliver on.

Newcastle is facing enormous challenges as we move into the twenty-first century. Our schools can barely keep up with current demand and will face ballooning enrolments as the city grows. Our roads are congested, our public transport system is a mess and this Government is blocking the region's wider economic potential by blocking a container terminal from going ahead in our fine city. It is something that the Deputy Premier agrees with.

**Mr John Barilaro:** Yes.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** I note a yes from the Deputy Premier. As the elected representative of the citizens of Newcastle, I remind the Government that Newcastle and the Hunter region contribute well over a billion dollars in coal royalties and Hunter Water dividends. Yet we are still being left behind. But there is another problem. Ironically, when the Government does allocate funds to major projects, it does not spend them. For example, in each of the past three budgets, the Government has allocated more than \$10 million toward the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor bypass. Guess how much of the more than \$30 million allocation it has spent. It has spent a big \$2 million. At this rate, we may have a bypass by the end of the next century.

But that is not surprising. This Government has never been interested in delivering for Newcastle. It privatised our public transport. It has sold off our port. It is selling off all the State's revenue-generating assets. In fact, now it is trying to suck money out of Hunter Water to ensure that its budget can still deliver its much-vaunted surplus. What good is a surplus when the State's kids are sitting in overcrowded schools that are struggling under the weight of an enormous maintenance backlog? What good is a surplus when commuters are packed like sardines on unreliable public transport or kept waiting on congested roads? What good is a surplus when the work we need to do to deliver surpluses in the future is not being done now? The State is being left to languish by this Government's skewed priorities.

What is more, New South Wales is struggling under the highest amount of debt in the State's history—an eye-watering \$39 billion—and all this Government has done since coming to office in 2011 is undermine the budget's structural foundations. The Government might trumpet record spending in health and education, but revenue and expenditure go up year after year thanks to the economic realities of inflation and population growth. The reality is that very little of this so-called record spending is being seen on the ground in communities across the State, particularly in Newcastle. I will work with this Government to deliver, but I will not hesitate to hold it to account. The budget does not bode well for the rest of the Berejiklian Government's term. The people of Newcastle deserve better. Unlike this Government, I will fight to deliver it for them.

#### TRIBUTE TO NICOLAS MANIKIS

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (19:10):** I speak about a remarkable man from my electorate and my hometown of Queanbeyan. For the past 44 years, Nicolas Manikis lived in Queanbeyan and operated a seven-days-a-week, family-run small business called Nic's shop or Nic's Convenience Store. Known as Nic by his customers and Niko to the Greek community of Queanbeyan and Canberra, Nic was born in 1951 in Koupia, a small farming village in the southern part of Greece, south of Sparta in the region of Laconia in the state of the Peloponnese. Like many migrants, Nic moved from Greece to Australia in 1975, where he lived briefly in Cooma with his extended family before moving to Queanbeyan. Nic settled in Queanbeyan and married Yvonne, otherwise known as Voula, on 20 June 1975.

Nic had a strong work ethic and in 1975 he managed the convenience store with his wife while working a second job at the nearby abattoir at Oaks Estate. Sadly, Nic passed away on Wednesday 12 June 2019, three days shy of his sixty-eighth birthday and two months from retirement and travel with his wife. Nic was everyone's 'go-to' man to share their life matters big and small, as well as to seek advice and support, knowing and trusting that he would keep it all confidential. His customers spanning several generations describe him as a happy, generous, kind, caring, honest, hardworking and genuine man with a big warm smile. Nic loved his local community and built strong relationships with people from all walks of life. He was a pillar of the community and his shop was a Queanbeyan institution. The community is in deep shock and feels that it has lost an icon.

Since Thursday morning when news of his death spread, flowers, cards and tributes have flooded Nic's shop. If the measure of someone is how they make you feel, the outpouring of grief from the local community reflects their deep loss and the end of an era. The Manikis family know it is not just their hearts that have been broken, but also the hearts of many in the Queanbeyan community. Nic's family felt a responsibility to create an opportunity for the community to celebrate the great man that Nic was. In his tribute, on what would have been his sixty-eighth birthday on Saturday 15 June, his family opened the shop's doors for the very last time for a few hours and in celebration of his life gave over 500 lolly bags to customers of all ages. Estimates put the number of attendees at about 1,000.

Customers have created Nic's condolence page on Facebook with close to 1,000 followers. The Manikis family are working with the Queanbeyan-Palerang City Council to have a bench seat to commemorate Nic placed at Apex Park in Crawford Street, where Nic would take his beloved grandsons for a walk and play. Nic was a family man. Family was everything to him. He is survived by his wife, Yvonne; three children, Kerry, George and Christopher; and two grandsons, Domenik and Josef.

I was born in Queanbeyan and lived up the road in Surveyor Street, a five- or six-minute walk from Nic's store. Nic's family home was behind mine in Surveyor Street. As young boys travelling down to the Queanbeyan Pool, we would always pass by his shop on the way there or on the way back. Back in the day there was the old Space Invaders game in the corner. We would turn up as young boys back in the seventies and eighties with a fistful of coins. Nic would patiently count out the coins and give us direction on what we could buy. Like all young boys or young girls, we would try to maximise what we could buy with maybe 50 cents, 80 cents or a dollar. He was just one of those guys with a genuine smile and a caring nature.

Nic was one of those men that you meet and never forget. I remember during the recent election, I was standing on pre-poll. Nic walked past me and what I loved about him is I would say, "Good morning, Nic. How are you?" He would say, "Johnny, how are you?" Titles like "Deputy Premier" did not matter to him—it was always "Johnny". He was so caring. It was who Nic was. It did not matter who you were—you could have been the Prime Minister or an eight-year-old who had walked into the store looking to buy a bag of lollies. Corner stores have gone out of fashion, but for Nic and for the Manikis family Nic's corner store has remained part of our landscape in Queanbeyan. This is a sad day and a sad moment for Nic's family, but many memories will stick with all of us. I will always remember his great smile. I inform everybody that his funeral will be on 22 June at 11.00 a.m. in Queanbeyan at St Dimitrios Church. All I can say is God bless, Nic, and I hope you enjoy opening the store in heaven.

### STATE BUDGET AND SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:16):** The New South Wales 2019 budget delivered by the Treasurer yesterday is a great start to the Government's election commitments for the people of Seven Hills. The Government has locked in \$2 million for planning to upgrade the Toongabbie rail bridge. Upgrading the bridge will allow for greater traffic flow and benefit a large cohort of constituents who reside in Seven Hills and Toongabbie. The Government is also investing a further \$300 million in commuter parking across the State. I am pleased that the Government has invested planning funds for additional parking for Winston Hills M2 bus commuters and will work with the relevant councils to deliver this commitment. Service NSW is a great success of the Government and I am very pleased that my community will have a centre in Northmead, one of 10 new centres committed to by the Government at the 2019 election. This is great news for the entire Seven Hills electorate, which will benefit by being able to make State Government transactions locally, easily and quickly.

It was my pleasure this morning to host the Premier, the Treasurer and the member for Parramatta in my electorate for the topping-off ceremony of the new 13-storey acute services building at Westmead Hospital. In particular, I note the budget allocation this year for stages one and two and the total investment of \$1.6 billion into Westmead Hospital, The Children's Hospital at Westmead and associated educational and research facilities. I also note the continued funds for stages one and two of the upgrades and new infrastructure at Blacktown Hospital. Since parts of the first stage upgrades have been completed, I have been overwhelmed by the positive reactions of local constituents about their experiences with the new hospital and new facilities on that campus.

The Government has just opened the fantastic Sydney Metro Northwest, which is taking pressure off the T1 Western Line and the M2. Both changes have been welcomed by the people of Seven Hills. It is great to see the Government allocate \$6.4 billion over the next four years to fast-track the Sydney Metro West, which will begin in my electorate at Westmead and provide turn-up-and-go services to Parramatta and beyond to Sydney. Stage one of the Parramatta Light Rail will connect Westmead to Carlingford and has funds allocated in this budget. In addition to this, I note the Government has continued funding increased bus services and the recent addition of 12 Waratah Series 2 trains along the T1 line, servicing stations in my electorate at Seven Hills, Toongabbie, Pendle Hill, Wentworthville and Westmead. Further funds have been allocated by the Treasurer for the Prospect Highway upgrade. This will greatly benefit people as they travel throughout the Blacktown local government area. It will also benefit many working mums and dads, who will be able to get home faster each night as they cross western Sydney due to the duplication of the Prospect Highway and its associated access upgrades in Seven Hills.

It is also good to see continued schools maintenance upgrades in the electorate. I am pleased to see commitment to upgrades of Pendle Hill High School and Darcy Road Public School in Wentworthville and of Matthew Pearce Public School in Baulkham Hills, which educates quite a number of students from the Seven Hills electorate. I note the investment of \$300 million for schools which are going through planning and commercial-in-confidence processes regarding purchases of land, including for a new public school in Westmead. Western Sydney is a key piece of the investment story of this Government and it is great to see this continue. I also note in the budget and of great benefit to the people of Seven Hills is \$76.9 million for a Western Sydney Construction Hub TAFE super-campus.

Western Sydney public school students will take part in a \$70 million free dental check-up program. We will spend \$2.2 billion over four years for the More Trains, More Services program, delivering western Sydney a

much greater train network. We have allocated \$645 million towards the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta, which will be great to see when it arrives. I commend the Treasurer for delivering further initiatives which ease the cost of living for people in Seven Hills, particularly by doubling the Active Kids rebate, capping Opal travel fees at \$50 per week, providing early childhood education cost relief, and adding fee-free apprenticeships. As a former police officer, it is an honour to serve as the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Justice. I note the Government's investment towards an additional 1,500 police officers. I also note the large investment in infrastructure in the justice cluster, including \$109 million for building and upgrading regional police stations and courthouses and for constructing a new police education centre at Dubbo. I commend the budget to the House.

### **TONY SHERIDAN WALK**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:21):** On Saturday 15 June 2019 Councillor Jane Smith, the Mayor of Central Coast Council, opened the Tony Sheridan Walk at The Entrance. The Tony Sheridan Walk honours Tony Sheridan, OAM, former mayor of Wyong Shire Council and member of the Australian Labor Party. The mayor was joined by her councillor colleagues and Federal and State members of Parliament, including many former Labor members such as Michael Lee. Tony's family and members of the Central Coast community also attended the event. The dedication of this walk was in recognition of Tony Sheridan's years of service to the Central Coast community. Prior to becoming a councillor, Tony was the area's senior representative of the New South Wales State Government in his capacity as a child welfare officer. During this period Tony was responsible for the support and care of many families in crisis, which also included the placement of at-risk children. I thank the council for taking the initiative and putting in the effort to erect signage around the walkway, properly recognising Tony, and for properly dedicating the walkway to Tony Sheridan.

Tony served on Wyong Shire Council for a total of 27 years as an endorsed Australian Labor Party councillor. That period included eight years as shire president and one year as mayor. Importantly, Labor was not in the majority during any of the period that he served on council. It is due to Tony's strong support in the community and his leadership that he was able to obtain support on council to become mayor or shire president so many times during his service as a councillor. Tony always championed progressive measures for the Central Coast and he was instrumental in gaining State and Federal funding for a number of specific projects, including the upgrade of Wyong Road from Tuggerah to the coast and the establishment of Bay Village, Bateau Bay, and Westfield Tuggerah Shopping Centre. A most significant legacy of Tony's role as mayor was the renovation of The Entrance shopping area, including the development of the waterfront and plaza as a recreational area for the community and for families. This ensured that safe facilities were available especially for young children.

During all those years, Tony remained an active parishioner in the Catholic parish of Our Lady of the Rosary at The Entrance, as well as a lifelong member of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Tony still does volunteer work for St Vincent de Paul. Indeed, at 94 years old, Tony still spends two days a week as an active member of Vinnies in support of community members and families. I record my personal appreciation to Tony for his friendship and counsel. Tony played a vital role in the 1992 by-election, which saw the first Labor member elected for The Entrance electorate, and I enjoyed his support and advice in the many twists and turns in politics which preceded my election as the second Labor member for The Entrance in 2015. On behalf of The Entrance electorate, and I think the wider Central Coast community, I thank Tony Sheridan for his service.

### **TEAM RUBICON AUSTRALIA**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (19:24):** I am delighted to inform the House of the wonderful work that Team Rubicon Australia undertook with the coordination of a drought relief operation in the Upper Hunter electorate in May. Team Rubicon Australia unites the skills and experience of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy disaster response teams. Its motto is "Disasters are our business. Veterans are our passion." Team Rubicon Australia is a non-profit organisation principally made up of military veterans that serves communities affected by disasters. As one can appreciate, military veterans have the unique skills and experiences necessary to respond safely, rapidly and effectively in the wake of disasters. Team Rubicon is funded through the generosity of sponsors, foundations and individual donors. Operations and training are only possible due to those donations.

By enabling continued service after taking off the uniform, Team Rubicon Australia allows veterans the opportunity to repurpose and utilise their skills again. This provides a sense of purpose and instils within them a feeling of identity and belonging, which is often lost after separating from the military. By providing veterans a mission that helps them regain a sense of purpose, community and identity, Team Rubicon is building the strongest and most effective unit of disaster response workers in the world. Between and during disaster response operations Team Rubicon engages its members in training, service projects and social events to ensure that they build the strongest and most effective cadre of disaster response workers in the world.

Engaging both veterans and civilians as Team Rubicon volunteers promotes veteran reintegration and bridges the gap between military and civilian life. Team Rubicon Australia's headquarters is in Sydney and it has established disaster response teams in Sydney, Brisbane, Townsville and Melbourne with more to follow. Team Rubicon began in 2010 and to date the Team Rubicon network of organisations has been deployed on about 240 disaster response operations around the world. Team Rubicon Australia was established in 2017 and has a growing roster of more than 250 volunteer members who stand ready to be deployed. Due to the iconic T-shirts worn by Team Rubicon members they are often referred to as "Greyshirts".

I had the privilege of seeing their work firsthand and meeting members of Team Rubicon Australia in May when they came to the Upper Hunter electorate to volunteer to help with drought relief. After their drought response efforts in the Dubbo region, Team Rubicon deployed an incident management team to re-engage with local authorities and community members in the Upper Hunter region. Operation Grant followed and consisted of Team Rubicon Australia deploying over 25 Greyshirts to assist drought-affected farmers in the Upper Hunter. They completed a series of work orders such as fence construction and deconstruction, chainsaw operations, stock feeding and outstanding cleaning and maintenance tasks. I can assure members that the farmers in the area were very grateful for their volunteer work and expertise. It can be noted that the Greyshirts who worked in the Upper Hunter included volunteers from all States.

In partnership with Team Rubicon Australia, ClubsNSW made a generous donation in support of Operation Grant relief efforts. All funds raised from that appeal have underpinned the deployment of veterans and first responders to provide aid to severely affected members of the community within the Upper Hunter electorate. Equally generous donations came from Scone and Muswellbrook RSL clubs, the Upper Hunter Sub-Branch of the National Service Association and from other community groups and individuals. I personally thank those organisations for contributing.

Since its inception in 2017, Team Rubicon Australia has sent teams to disaster areas—for example, deployments went to North Queensland in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Debbie and to the bushfires in Tathra, New South Wales; they provided ongoing drought support in western New South Wales; they helped surf lifesaving clubs; they supported victims of the Queensland bushfires; and they recently helped with the aftermath of the Townsville floods. As the member for Upper Hunter, it is gratifying to know that we have at our fingertips a highly organised, experienced and proficient unit that we can call upon in times of need. On behalf of our community I thank the Greyshirts for their time and for the valuable work they undertook in the Upper Hunter electorate.

### WARRAGAMBA DAM

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:29):** Tonight I speak about the Warragamba Dam wall project on behalf of a number of people in my community. I begin by acknowledging Aunty Sharyn Halls, Kazan Brown and young Taylor Clarke, who have been a fortifying part of this campaign. They have been members of registered Aboriginal parties who have expressed strong opposition to the New South Wales Government's proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall. I will read a statement that the group made so eloquently recently. They said:

The impact that this proposal will have on our cultural heritage and ability to access significant Ancestral land will be devastating. It will destroy sites which are core to our Gundungurra dreaming story, "The Journey of Gurangatch and Mirrigan", further shattering the song lines of our people. Until the dam [wall] proposal is scrapped, we will continue to fight for our lands and our culture.

Recently I joined nearly 950 people in the Blue Mountains to march to save the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area from the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall. The wild rivers of the southern Blue Mountains form a landscape that has been largely untouched by modern society. The area is home to 48 threatened plant and animal species, ancient river valleys, rare dry rainforests and hundreds of Indigenous cultural sites. The significance of the southern Blue Mountains landscape led to it being inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000. Ornithologist Martin Schultz has stated:

The area is so special because it is a functioning ecosystem, you have dingoes keeping kangaroos under control and it's all working like it should—it's healthy.

The plan to raise the dam wall will see the area flooded through a "controlled release" of water which Dr Schultz says threatens the biodiversity in the region. He warns it could take hundreds of years for the ecosystems to turn into something functional again. Raising the Warragamba Dam wall will destroy 65 kilometres of wilderness rivers and inundate 4,700 hectares of the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park, threatening endangered wildlife and culturally significant Indigenous sites. It is a developer-driven proposal. It will make it easier to build on flood-prone land in western Sydney but it will not stop floods.

Further, the Government has peddled a number of lies. I would like to know why the Minister for Western Sydney misled the public when he stood on the floodplains and said, "As far as the eye can see—to that tree line—that's the urban development land", when he was talking about flood mitigation. This is about development. The Blue Mountains tourism industry is very worried; it is worth an estimated \$500 million per year and inundation of our world heritage area, the desecration of Indigenous sites and the wild rivers being impacted will have economic implications of epic proportions.

I thank all those who turned out in Katoomba on Sunday 9 June—my colleague Adam Searle, MLC, shadow Minister for climate change; our mayor, Mark Greenhill; the many hundreds of families; Harry Burkett; Wilson from the Colong Foundation; and Keith Muir. I also thank Bob Debus and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and the many young students who are standing up because they believe in saving our environment. I encourage people to attend the screening of an excellent short film called *Give a Dam: Flooding the Blue Mountains*, which contrasts the wilderness landscapes of the southern Blue Mountains with the overdevelopment that is happening across western Sydney.

I ask the Government, and especially the Ministers involved, to recognise the important environmental and historical value of the heritage-listed Warragamba Dam and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and to understand that raising the dam wall would destroy 65 kilometres of wild rivers and inundate thousands of hectares of our World Heritage listed national park. I would like the House to acknowledge that UNESCO is due to make a determination next month on whether the decision to raise the dam wall is in breach of the World Heritage Convention that Australia should follow. I ask the Government to stop this developer grab.

### HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (19:34):** The Heathcote electorate has some of the most pristine coastline in New South Wales, and I am proud of the beautiful beaches and nature walks available for constituents and others. I have six surf life saving clubs in my electorate, including Era, Burning Palms, Helensburgh-Stanwell Park, Coalcliff, Garie and Scarborough-Wombarra. The sea can be treacherous at times. Less than perfect conditions combined with remote beach areas can create a dangerous environment for swimmers. I take my hat off to the hardworking volunteers who risk it all to protect the community. Each club's volunteers patrol each and every weekend and public holiday over the official surf lifesaving season, which includes the September to October school holidays. Whilst we are enjoying a break and some rest and relaxation, these brave volunteers spend their leisure time protecting our communities.

Currently there are 1,584 surf lifesaving volunteers across all clubs in the Heathcote electorate. This season they have performed 125 rescues and have taken over 3,000 preventative actions. This is a massive achievement and the impact it has on constituents is immeasurable. These volunteers allow us all to enjoy our time at the beach. The Department of Primary Industries has partnered with Surf Life Saving NSW to trial the use of unmanned aerial vehicles [UAVs], or drones. They are primarily focused on shark surveillance. These trials also help Surf Life Saving NSW to understand how best to integrate drones into its general lifesaving activities. The UAVs are fitted with an alerting device and have the ability to drop an inflatable rescue pod to distressed swimmers.

The Government has made a large investment in shark management strategies after a successful trial last summer by Surf Life Saving NSW [SLSNSW] on the North Coast. The technological advancements in cameras and vision resolution will assist with shark species identification and research into the behaviour of marine life. The Illawarra and Sydney branches of Surf Life Saving NSW now have UAV capability, which is being used for search and rescue across both patrolled and non-patrolled locations. The Helensburgh-Stanwell Park Surf Life Saving Club was selected as an additional fixed location for UAV activities, which has allowed the club to incorporate the drone into its normal lifesaving patrols. They have trained 12 members of the club as pilots over a two-day course. The club's UAV now has 55 flying hours and has travelled approximately 2,000 kilometres while undertaking surveillance at that location.

The Government has assisted the six clubs through the Surf Club Facility Program. The investment has been used for a variety of improvements, including enhancing first aid rooms; replacement of weather-damaged windows and doors; installation of security systems and solar power; external cladding replacement; and any general repairs and maintenance requirements. Surf Life Saving NSW undertakes a broad range of community education initiatives, including specifically for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. At the Helensburgh Hindu temple within my electorate SLSNSW ran educational sessions in the wake of drownings at the Figure Eight Pools. It also ran a small beach safety program for members of the Illawarra Multicultural Services women's community hub. Participants included women of Arabic, Chinese, Persian and Australian backgrounds.

Locally, I secured \$15,000 for Helensburgh-Stanwell Park, Garie and Coalcliff surf life saving clubs to purchase patrol uniforms for volunteers. The Government also made a \$200,000 investment to purchase 129 resuscitation kits that play a vital role in an emergency. Additionally, the Government will provide SLS NSW with \$16 million over four years to purchase response vehicles and jet skis, rescue technology and emergency response beacons, and to improve branch services. Surf life saving club members selflessly put up their hands to patrol our beaches and keep the community safe. It is vital we acknowledge their contribution and support these volunteers to carry out this crucial work. Surf life saving volunteers in New South Wales help to patrol our beaches during the summer season and are the backbone of safely patrolled beaches across the State.

#### **KIDS OF MACARTHUR HEALTH FOUNDATION**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (19:39):** I recently attended the annual Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation fundraising ball where I was very pleased to present the foundation with a \$50,000 cheque on behalf of the Minister for Health and Medical Research, Brad Hazzard. I thank the Minister for his kind donation. The Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation was established by a group of local Macarthur businesspeople, paediatricians and healthcare workers who wanted to try to make life easier for children and their families in our community. The foundation continues to be an outstanding success 20 years later.

Over 20 years I am sure that there are many stories from parents of children who have benefited from the work of the foundation. But none of this work can be done without the generosity of the Macarthur community. This year the foundation raised \$235,000. These donations will go towards beginning a pilot program to address the backlog of local children who require assessment from a physio team. The program will consist of a senior physiotherapist and university students. This is a win-win situation—not only will the local children benefit, but also the students will gain experience and hands-on training for their degree.

The Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation has been the driving force behind the provision of much-needed equipment for sick children in the Macarthur region. I thank the many sponsors who continue to support the foundation—without their efforts all the fundraising events held during the year would not be possible. There is nothing more precious than our children. The support the foundation gives to assist with the care of sick children is immeasurable. I take this opportunity to thank the board of directors for its ongoing management and support: Bruce Hanrahan, OA; Paul Wakeling, OAM; Tim Bryan; Julie O'Keefe; Dr Richard Dunstan; Councillor Darcy Lound; David Marsh; Dr Andrew McDonald; and Adam Seton. The 20 years of success is due to the guidance and combined experience of this board and former board members. The Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation is a highly respected foundation that will continue to support our children and their families for many more years.

#### **MID NORTH COAST SURF LIFE SAVING AWARDS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:42):** I congratulate the outstanding volunteers who were acknowledged at this year's Surf Life Saving Mid North Coast Newcastle Permanent Awards of Excellence presentation evening held at the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club last weekend. My husband, Don, and I were pleased to attend and join others in acknowledging the nominees and award winners. It was acknowledgement of another surf lifesaving season. The Mid North Coast branch was formed in 1929, incorporating eight clubs from Macksville in the north to Camden Haven in the south. It offered support operations to the volunteer surf clubs on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales.

Each year the association recognises those exceptional volunteers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that our region's beaches are patrolled safely. Director of Administration Joanne Hawkins coordinated this year's event, with the assistance of the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club, to celebrate the amazing contribution that our dedicated volunteer lifeguards make to our community. I was pleased once again to attend this year's event and present the Life Saver of the Year award and the Club of the Year award. Both commendations acknowledge outstanding qualities in leadership, growth, education, performance and teamwork. For the third year in a row Club of the Year was presented to the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club. I thank the hardworking committee led by President Michelle Garvan, Vice-President Ben Hosick, Secretary Susie Bell and Treasurer Jenny Cooper.

Lifesaver of the Year was awarded to Mr Dave Moore from Tacking Point Surf Life Saving Club for his dedication and service to the organisation in 2018-19. High commendation went to Mr Ben Hosick from Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club. Young Lifesaver of the Year was presented to Mr Logan McEvoy from South West Rocks Surf Life Saving Club and high commendation went to Jay Toogood from Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club. Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Ms Sandra Slattery from Tacking Point Surf Life Saving Club and high commendation went to Nicole Browne from Hat Head Surf Life Saving Club. Recognised as Young Volunteer of the Year was Georgia Gaddes from South West Rocks and Rookie of the Year went to Josh McLaren, also from South West Rocks. Master Athlete of the Year was presented to Ms Elaine Walker from Wauchope

Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club and Surf Sports Official of the Year went to Mr Mick Lang from Tacking Point Surf Life Saving Club.

Acknowledged for the delivery of educational initiatives was Mr Craig Schweikert from Kempsey Crescent Head Surf Life Saving Club for Trainer of the Year. Picking up the award for the Community Education Program of the Year was the Charles Sturt University Bronze Medallion program for paramedicine students. This was presented to President Michelle Garvan and Mr Tony Mills from Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club. In every well-run organisation there are fantastic members who work behind the scenes in administration. I was pleased to see the mid North Coast awards recognise Lynne Smith from Tacking Point Surf Life Saving Club as the Administrator of the Year, with high commendations going to Vicki Thomas from South West Rocks. Initiative of the Year Interagency Scenarios and Training went to the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club and the Most Improvement in Awards went to South West Rocks Surf Life Saving Club. Services Team of the Year was presented to the Surf Life Saving Mid North Coast Support Operations Group and Surf Sports Team went to Kempsey Crescent Head "Tips" boat crew. "The Boatettes" from Wauchope Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club were acknowledged with the accolade of high commendation on the night.

It is often said in this House that volunteers are the backbone of our community. It could not be more true of our volunteer surf lifesavers, administrators, trainers and club executives, who donate thousands of hours each year to ensure that our locals and visitors are safe while enjoying a day on our beautiful beaches on the mid North Coast. I was pleased that each club received a donation of resuscitation kits from the New South Wales Government. I know that they were appreciative of them. Hopefully they will not be used too often but it is always important to have the services and infrastructure there to use in case of emergency. Once again, I sincerely thank all volunteer surf lifesavers and everybody across the mid North Coast branch who assists in ensuring that our volunteers get to the beach every Sunday during the season to support our swimmers and community. While it is sad that there are often some fairly dramatic events, and sometimes tragic outcomes, each member in this House knows that our surf lifesavers give their very best. To each and every one of them, I say thank you.

#### ALBURY ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:47):** At this time of year with the June long weekend behind us it is opportune to recognise all of those wonderful people we have paid tribute to in our electorate that are recipients of Queen's Birthday honours. I congratulate Queen's Birthday Honours List recipients Eliza Ault-Connell, Angus Macneil and Lorraine Crawford, who have been recognised for the significant contributions they have made to their local communities. Eliza is an international medal winner in wheelchair racing and has worked tirelessly to advocate for more vaccines to be included in the national immunisation scheme to ensure that more people can afford to be immunised. That follows on from her own experiences after contracting meningococcal disease nearly 22 years ago. Angus has been recognised for his invaluable contributions to the NSW Farmers Federation, Grain Producers Australia, the then Urana Shire Council, Landcare NSW and numerous committees in Rand. Lorraine has been a driving force behind basketball in Albury through coaching, administration work and by helping to establish the Lavington Panthers Basketball Club in 1981. I commend them for all the work they have done in Albury and across our electorate.

People get recognised in other ways as well. I also congratulate Rotary Club of Tumbarumba member Debbie Harris for the recognition she has received for her longstanding involvement with the Rotary Youth Exchange program. Debbie has been heavily involved with the program since 1997 and has hosted many students in the years since from a variety of countries including Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and Denmark. Debbie has also been involved in helping find opportunities for students to travel from Australia to destinations such as Brazil and Sweden. Debbie is passionate about ensuring the success of the students, so she trains and prepares them for the year away and then debriefs them upon their return. These experiences have contributed in a positive way to the development of those young people as they thrive and grow in a new environment. Debbie and her club certainly embody the Rotary motto of service above self. I commend Debbie and the Rotary Club of Tumbarumba for the work they do to help our youth become better citizens.

In recognising Rotary and the work that it does, I recognise others in their service. I congratulate Elaine Kirk on her amazing achievement, dedication and service in the education department. Nearing four decades of teaching, Elaine will be leaving Table Top Public School where she taught for 28 years. Her gift for teaching and lasting influence on generations of students at the small border school will resonate through this community for many years to come, especially among those who have known her as students, parents or staff. Elaine started teaching in the 1980s, building strong relationships and identifying the strengths in the schoolchildren. She challenged and supported her students, leaving none behind. Her legacy can be measured by the many tributes flowing from past students, colleagues, and parents. I wish Elaine well.

From a job well done in teaching to a job well done in agriculture, I offer congratulations to the Mitchell family of Culcairn, along with the Rene Supreme Team, Brooke Perez, stud groom Kyle Sturgess and



Scott Mitchell, on winning an award at the NSW State Sheep Show. This was the first time they represented at the show since 2008. A remarkable return. The champion ewe named Rene 27/18 was a standout. Judges described Rene as being the "most magnificent ewe" and her team as the "most successful exhibitor" that they had seen in a long time. The team won two broad ribbons at the NSW Dorset Championships and the Australian Sheep and Wool Show. Rene 27/18, the award-winning ewe, will now progress to the Bendigo sheep show in July, then head off to South Australia for the Royal Adelaide Show in September. I wish them well.

#### STATE BUDGET AND TERRIGAL ELECTORATE

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:51):** I draw to the House's attention a number of announcements in yesterday's State budget. The budget delivers a \$802 million surplus for New South Wales. We are getting it done: delivering on our election commitments and building a better New South Wales. I am the only Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly on the Central Coast, and so I bring to the House's attention some of the ways we are building a better Central Coast. At Terrigal Public School we are building 10 new classrooms and core facilities and at Wamberal Public School we are building 15 new classrooms and the core facilities that go with them. The former Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, has joined me at both of those schools for a sod-turning ceremony to mark the beginning of those constructions. Both projects are well underway and are being boosted with \$13.5 million in new funding from yesterday's budget announcement.

Community safety is also a very high priority for the Government. Across the State 1,500 extra police officers will be employed. Contrary to the mistruths being told on local radio by the member for The Entrance, our region will receive a share of those new officers. My electorate of Terrigal is serviced by the Brisbane Water Police District and its fantastic commander, Superintendent Tony Joice. Last year we announced plans to begin a redevelopment of the headquarters of Brisbane Water Police District at Gosford. I am delighted that yesterday's budget kickstarts the project with a further investment of \$2.5 million. Another priority of mine is health funding. My wife is a nurse at Gosford Hospital and that gives me real-life insight into how the health system is operating. The \$348 million brand-new redeveloped Gosford Hospital is nothing short of fantastic. It looks so good that it even featured in the Treasurer's social media video yesterday. It is great to see it taking pride of place.

At Wyong Hospital, the budget is enabling stage one of the redevelopment to begin, with \$60.5 million announced. Palliative care is also an incredibly important and serious issue for our ageing population on the Central Coast. The approach of the Liberal Government is to provide patients with access to the care they need in the setting they choose. That is why our budget provides the \$45 million required for 100 new palliative care nurses, including eight for the Central Coast Local Health District.

On the Central Coast, public transport access to Sydney is vital. A high proportion of workers living on the Central Coast use the train to travel to the city each working day. We all know that fast rail has been discussed and debated for decades. It has taken this Liberal-Nationals Government, under Gladys Berejiklian's leadership, to commit to deliver faster rail services. In December last year the Premier committed to physical works beginning within the next term of Government. This has been kickstarted in yesterday's budget with \$93 million allocated to plan a new rail alignment, including between Sydney and Woy Woy. Together with service improvements, another way we are improving our transport system is through commuter car park upgrades. Thanks to Federal funding secured by my Federal counterpart Lucy Wicks, the recently returned member for Robertson, upgrades will occur at Gosford station and Woy Woy station. I take this opportunity to congratulate Lucy on her historic win at the recent Federal election.

The budget also provides \$212,000 to commence planning an expanded commuter car park at Tuggerah. Another significant public transport change for Central Coast commuters is the new Opal fare travel cap to \$50 per week. Commuters will have up to \$686 per year back in their pockets. The final budget commitment is the massive \$151.2 million roads package. Funding of \$6.5 million will go towards the completion of the Empire Bay Drive roundabout at Kincumber, which is an intersection used by 25,000 vehicles every single day. In fact, Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] advise me that it is one of the most important congestion-busting projects across the RMS Hunter geographical region.

Funding of \$33.9 million will continue the duplication of the Pacific Highway at Lisarow and \$104.6 million will go towards the ongoing upgrades of the M1 Pacific Motorway between Tuggerah and Doyalson, and Karingong and Somersby. Roads funding is a key issue for my local community which is why the budget's new \$500 million Fixing Local Roads program is important. It provides an opportunity for Central Coast Council to address some of the priority projects across my electorate of Terrigal. As I said before, the budget delivers our election commitments and gets on with the job of building a better New South Wales, including the beautiful Central Coast. Strong financial management over the past eight years of this Government has ensured New South Wales is the number one State in Australia. It means we can take the pressure off families and provide support for those who need it. Only a Liberal-Nationals Government can deliver record funding for schools, hospitals, roads and rail projects.

### NEWCASTLE BUS SERVICES

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:56):** I wish to update the House on an issue I have previously raised and that is the changes to the Newcastle buses network and recent feedback I have been getting since its privatisation. In early 2018 services were cut in both length and frequency when the private operator introduced new routes and timetabling. Since then my office has been inundated with complaints of late buses, missed connections, longer waiting times, stranded schoolchildren and people being stranded in their homes because they can no longer rely on public transport.

I was outraged to discover that Newcastle buses will cut further fixed timetabled services. From 30 June 2019 all off-peak weekday and weekend 41, 43 and 48 bus services will be cut from the current one hour service to a two hour service. These cuts will make it even more difficult for people to get around our area and will lead to more cars on our roads. While all commuters on these routes will be affected, it is the elderly, people with disabilities and shift workers who are being hurt the most. Dwane, one of my constituents, lives in the Charlestown suburb of Redhead, and is living with a disability. Dwane works at the House with No Steps in Warabrook, which is about 18 kilometres from Redhead. What used to be a simple journey for him to and from work now involves four connections and at least three hours and six minutes of travel time each day. Given that Dwane travels home in off-peak travel times, his journey and wait times will be even longer after 30 June.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Shame!

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** It is a shame. An elderly couple wrote to me, saying:

We recently moved to Redhead and chose this location because of the services provided as we are retirees and as the years pass we will become more and more dependent on public transport. We chose a home on a flat block, only a 200 metre walk to the bus stop and a 300 metre walk to the local shops. For bus services to be cut to our community which contains a large percentage of retirees will be devastating for us.

These changes also affect students. Alexandria is a university student living in Eleebana. Since the initial changes removed Warners Bay Road from all routes, it has become extremely difficult for her to travel to the University of Newcastle. The journey for Alexandria is now a two hour and 40 minute round trip, including an hour of walking and two connections. These journey times will increase further after 30 June because Alexandria does not always travel in peak times. It is completely unreasonable to expect Alexandria to travel these times each day to further her education. She should not have to move to access proper public transport.

What is the solution? The Minister will recommend that my constituents utilise the new On Demand bus service which operates outside of peak times. An On Demand bus can be booked either through an app or by telephone and will pick you up near your home or a nearby location and take you to the nearest connecting bus stop. The issue with this service is that it is subject to availability and change. That means it is often unreliable for people who need to make an appointment or a deadline. The other complaint that I am hearing about this service is that the elderly and disabled are not able to use the technology required to keep track of their bookings. An elderly person can book the service over the phone to meet them at the corner of their street but if the service needs to change pick-up time or pick-up location this information is only available on the On Demand app. People who have booked by phone obviously do not use the app so they are left confused, stranded and running late.

I am not saying the On Demand service is completely useless. I do see the value in it, particularly for the younger generation, but it needs to run in addition to fixed proper timetabled services. My constituents have the right to a reliable public transport system. They should not have to move to catch reliable public transport. The private operator of Newcastle buses has made these changes without proper consultation with the community and with the support of the Berejiklian Government. I am asking the new Minister for Regional Transport and Roads to intervene and ensure that On Demand services to the Newcastle buses network run in conjunction with frequent, reliable, fixed timetabled services.

### STATE BUDGET AND GOSFORD ELECTORATE

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:02):** Who would have thought the member for Gosford would come here and start her reflections on the New South Wales budget by thanking the developers who have had the guts to put investment into the city centre of Gosford? I thank Singo and Denny, as we know them on the coast—John Singleton and Tony Denny—who are local gentlemen who have had the guts to invest in our community alongside the investment in glossy brochures by the Liberal-Nationals Government. It would be great to see a Government investing in the university that it gave nothing to. It would be great to see the a Government investing in any infrastructure that the Central Coast is crying out for. But unfortunately on budget day in New South Wales the Central Coast got no new projects. It is pretty disappointing for the coast.

It is the first budget since the election. People put their names down to vote for this Government and what do we get on the coast? A re-announcement of a whole series of old projects continuing on. The people on

the peninsular still do not have the Woy Woy underpass that was promised eight years ago. We have the walkway that gets flooded during rain which was the precursor for the Woy Woy underpass—the thing that will stop the risk to the lives of people getting to home and work, on and off the peninsular. The Government promised it and it has not been delivered. The Government brags about a surplus, privatising \$70 billion worth of stuff that belongs to the people of New South Wales. We have a debt of almost \$39 billion from the budget and no new projects for the coast. Apparently we can "have it all".

Up and down the coast we have been talking about train station upgrades to give people with disability easy-access train stations. We are yet to see a timeline for specific deliveries of these stations for people on the coast. We have been waiting for ages for easy access to stations at Point Clare in my electorate and up north at the Tuggerah station. It is the same just south of my electorate, where lots of people from across the beautiful Hawkesbury River catch the train. We hear about the weakening economy in light of increased unemployment for the coast and yet we have no additional support.

The Government seems not to be listening to us about our needs as we see in the budget more and more deliveries for Sydney and more budget blowouts. I do not know who was in charge of creating the maps depicting where budget spending will occur, but people on the peninsula—Woy Woy, Ettalong, Umina—opened the budget papers to see zero dots on the map depicting the Liberal Government delivering for the area. I note that when I drive through Kangy Angy and past the wetlands it is interesting that no-one there wanted a train maintenance yard, but we are getting a road that is almost like the Cahill Expressway. This road will end up costing a hell of a lot more than the Woy Woy underpass, yet no-one asked for it.

This Government promised \$500 million would be spent on local roads. What spending will we get on the peninsula? Zero. What does Gosford get for local roads? We get nothing besides the glossy brochures that we have been given. There will be no investment in universities or in car parking for our commuters. It is a bit disappointing—in fact, I do not have words for it. This is a budget from a government that has run out of ideas. There is no vision, no consideration of the big issues affecting our region, yet we hear about \$4.2 billion from the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund. The Central Coast is meant to be a regional area, as part of the Hunter. The Hunter gets \$75 million, the Central Coast gets zero. The Illawarra gets \$100 million, the Central Coast gets zero.

I have spoken about the lack of investment in particular projects, but we should be more worried about the economy and what that means for the future of our community. For our young people this budget has \$39 billion in debt. This Government is telling the coast to take 70,000 additional residents escaping Sydney over the next 15 years, but this budget has no support to make that happen. There is no plan for how our infrastructure will cope and there is no plan for job creation. There is no plan for the 7,500 jobs cut from TAFE. We know our kids are using the train line to get to courses that cost big bucks way down the line. The budget has nothing new for the coast to boost our weakening economy. The Government promised \$16 million for the Kariong parklands, a job creation zone, but there is zero for that as well. To me it seems that this Liberal Government does not care about the people of the coast. The member for Terrigal has spoken about the same two schools since I was voted into this place. It is time that this Government listened to the people of the Central Coast and delivered for the them.

### NEPEAN HOSPITAL

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (20:07):** I bring to the attention of the House a recent experience in the Nepean Hospital of a resident in the electorate next to Londonderry. This person, Julie Plimmer, lives in the electorate of Penrith. Her experience speaks to the issue of staffing of hospitals and I urge the Government to seriously consider this matter. It would be foolish of me not to acknowledge the Government's significant investment in Nepean Hospital, as a result of community campaigning over many years following unprecedented growth in western Sydney. We now have the hospital that we deserve. This person wrote to me about her experience at the hospital on 6 December last year. She was on the phone when she suffered a traumatic brain bleed, which was unexpected as she is otherwise a very healthy person. She was taken by emergency services to Nepean Hospital.

She has very little memory of what happened from that time until when she opened her eyes and her daughter told her that she was in hospital and she had been there for two weeks. Her daughter explained to her what had happened during that period. She had x-rays and scans at Nepean Hospital that showed that she had suffered a brain haemorrhage. She had presented to the emergency department and because a brain haemorrhage is a serious medical emergency and the speed of treatment is vital, she was told that she needed to have an angiogram. In this procedure, the surgical team goes in through the patient's groin and tries to clip the bleeding. Nepean Hospital has amazing equipment for this procedure but they do not have a neurosurgeon to perform the surgery.

Staff at the hospital called her husband, daughter and son and asked if she had private health insurance. Luckily she did and she was transferred to Macquarie private hospital. What happens to people who do not have private health insurance when there is no neurosurgeon at the hospital at which they present? I note that Nepean Hospital is a teaching hospital in the heart of where the majority of people in western Sydney live. There were complications for Mrs Plimmer because it took almost a day to transport her from Nepean Hospital to Macquarie. The incident happened in the morning and she was not operated on until 6.00 p.m. the following day. During the clipping procedure she suffered a stroke and she was left with no peripheral vision in her left eye.

Because of the expertise of the surgeons at Macquarie, she is doing okay. She has urged me to tell her story in Parliament, which I am doing this evening. As the member for Londonderry, I am very concerned about what happens to people who do not have private health insurance. I am greatly concerned about the many residents I represent who cannot afford private health insurance. What happens to them, particularly if they are not in a fit state to answer a question about whether they have private health insurance? Perhaps they do not have family members to tell the hospital whether they can afford to be transferred to a private hospital for treatment.

Nepean Hospital may have had all the necessary equipment, but it did not have a surgeon to perform the necessary procedure. Thankfully Julie Plimmer's life was saved. I put the Government on notice that something has to be done about staffing levels at hospitals, so that, in the case of someone not being in a position to afford private health insurance, next time I am not talking about someone whose life has been lost. We live in a civilised society where people deserve the best health care possible.

### **CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:12):** I bring to the attention of this House the ongoing destruction that continues in the electorate of Coogee and in the eastern suburbs as a result of the CBD Light Rail: a project that never should have happened and a project that a former Liberal Premier, Nick Greiner, said, "Do not build this, it will not work." It was not just a former Liberal Premier who opposed the project, but when the current transport Minister was appointed in 2015 he allegedly expressed the wish to his staff to dump the "dog of a project". It is a project that has been riddled with issues from the get go. A project that never should have happened, but we are now stuck with and it is our responsibility to make sure it works for us. We must make sure it gets us where we need to go, and improves the lives of those living in the eastern suburbs.

Yesterday I was quite surprised when I read the budget to find that the line item for the total cost of the light rail project was missing. Is this Government actually acknowledging its lack of fiscal responsibility and its inability to properly plan major infrastructure? Is the Government admitting that it has no idea what this dog of a project will actually cost the great people of New South Wales? Regardless, even without that line item in the budget, we now know that it looks as though this project will cost the people of New South Wales \$3 billion—almost double the original price tag predicted in 2012 by then transport Minister and now Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

This project has seen more than 800 fig trees removed—fig trees that were planted as a way of acknowledging our Diggers who went to war for us, so that we could live safe, secure and peaceful lives. This is a project for which a rail inquiry in October last year showed that noise levels often reached above 90 decibels at night, which is in breach of regulations; a project that has seen upwards of 150 businesses forced into liquidation or left on the brink of financial ruin, and are suing the Government for \$400 million; and a project that has seen in excess of 900 businesses reporting losses as of July 2018. During my election I visited small business owners along Belmore Road and all of them told me they had had reductions in turnover. Simply walking down Belmore Road, the high vacancy rates demonstrates how tough business are finding it. Randwick is a dead zone, and many business are struggling to stay afloat.

One of the most devastating part of this project is, however, that despite all of this destruction to our residents, our hardworking small business owners and the environment, as well as the exorbitant blowouts, it looks as if there will be no time-saving benefit. Travel time testing has yet to be completed, so it is unknown if the project will cut travel times. It is predicted and it has been said that the aim is for a maximum travel time of 40 minutes between Kingsford and Circular Quay, which is double the current 20 minutes that it takes an express bus to complete the same journey.

The reality is that we are stuck with the project. What is important now is how we make sure it works for the people of the eastern suburbs, how we ensure that the buses we rely on remain, and how we ensure that we are not sardined onto this project. But also we must guarantee that such a terribly planned project never happens again. We do this by ensuring that proper business cases are developed, that projects are thought through and that the community is consulted and listened to. And, importantly, those that who responsible for this terrible project are held to account.

## DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:16):** The current drought began almost three years ago, but the times were tough before then. We have stepped out of one drought straight into another. The Government introduced a Rural Resilience Program, which has not functioned as intended due to the rolling droughts we are experiencing. So what are we in this place doing to address the fact that we are in uncharted territory? What are we doing to address the fact that we are in a drought that has eclipsed the Millennium Drought as the worst drought since European settlement? One of the untapped opportunities is listening to young professional farmers, who are the future of agriculture in this country. They are the future of our regional communities. They are well educated, astute businesspeople. Across the Barwon electorate I have met many of them. Their commitment to the industry in these trying times is unwavering. These young professional farmers have plans and strategies that they want to implement for the future of agriculture. It is time we start listening.

Across the board they talk about multi-peril crop insurance. The message from these farmers is loud and clear: This is an important drought policy tool. Properly implemented, it will enable the stabilisation of income and, crucially, the protection of crop input costs. Through good policy and supporting multi-peril crop insurance we can ensure that farmers have the finances to plant a crop, restock their farms and manage competitor pest incursion on their properties. We need to make sure that our farmers are not so debt ridden that they are not able to recover.

The Government has sat back and watched good people across New South Wales form charities, dig into their own pockets and use their own connections and resources to help those in the country doing it tough. When times are tough, look for the helpers, and thank God for the helpers because the time it takes to get access to the current drought funding offerings is altogether too slow. Months and months of work, hundreds of dollars in paper work, more stress, time away from the farm and, at the end of it all, is a rejection or a request for more evidence. Instead of a ladder up, it is often a snake down. We can help to fix this through more support for our rural financial counsellors and by employing more of them. They are the gateway to drought support and should be readily accessible for those who want to head down the path of receiving a loan. At the moment, our rural financial counsellors are stretched thin. They are trying their hardest to make themselves available but there are only so many hours in a day and only so many kilometres you can travel.

While a loan may be the path for some, let us not forget that if you are fortunate enough to get some funding, you will be on the Government's books as a receivable, as future income. More debt for farmers is not the solution. They will have a debt hanging over their heads when the drought breaks—a debt that will greatly inhibit the speed of recovery. After the drought breaks, money does not start to flow immediately. There is a rebuilding process, a recovery time. Farmers who manage livestock do not have a return until they have restocked, reared the stock and sold them, and at times it can take 25 months from gestation to T-bone.

As soon as farmers get back on their feet, they also start fixing up the debts that they are carrying with local businesses, which is great for our communities. We need to make sure that the speed of recovery for our farmers is as quick as it can be. More cash in people's pockets will help. More money in people's pockets means more money circulating in our towns. It will enable farming communities to gain a bit of a reprieve. But we need to rethink how we deliver this money to farming communities.

The Government celebrated its surplus yesterday during the budget announcement. Money in Government coffers does not help our country communities. Rates relief funding to local government does help our country communities. Direct funding to local government is not complex; it is rather simple and could be done straightaway. It would put cash back into people's pockets. The Government also needs to look at its assistance for all small businesses in agriculture-reliant towns. Support should not be restricted to farmers or farm supplying business, but should apply to those who have suffered substantial downturn due to drought.

There is a very high risk that budget pressures will influence this Government. When the drought breaks, we need to make sure that the Government does not move too quickly to phase out any form of drought assistance. We need to make sure that other policy issues do not occupy the space we need to formulate long-term plans. To best support our farmers and farming communities, we need to support them not just when we are in drought but also when the rain comes. An emergency response is important but on its own it is not enough. Our farming communities deserve more. It needs to be accompanied by long-term coordinated support, delivered through the whole drought cycle, which helps farmers and farming communities prepare for drought, cope with drought when it is happening and recover rapidly afterwards.

## MYUNA BAY SPORT AND RECREATION CENTRE

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:21):** For many young students in the Auburn electorate, NSW Sport and Recreation camps have been a part of schooling life. For over 70 years these camps have hosted

great-grandparents, grandparents, mothers and fathers, and now the young as they have got out in the great outdoors and, for the first time in their lives, physically challenged themselves in sports such as archery, abseiling or canoeing. One of the most loved of these camps has been Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation camp on the banks of Lake Macquarie. It is for this reason that the closure of Myuna Bay, in the middle of an international sporting event, without any notice has raised alarm bells.

But the actions of the Office of Sport in particular raise some bigger alarm bells. The Office of Sport closed the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation camp at the request of Origin Energy as a result of its report into the Eraring Dam. But the big question here is why was Dams Safety NSW not dealing with this issue from day one? Dam safety in New South Wales is dealt with under the Dams Safety Act 2015. Under the Act all prescribed dams, one of which is Eraring Dam, are required to have surveillance reports prepared for their dams at five-yearly periods, and annual reports on ash and tailing dams. Given it is five years since Origin's purchase of Eraring we can assume this report was conducted in compliance with the Act—indeed Origin has informed that is why a report was done.

Different reports are required but for all categories of extreme, high A and high B dams, such as Eraring. This report must be prepared by a team of qualified engineers experienced in dam engineering and supported by other technical specialists. Importantly the specialist assistance should include an experienced seismologist who should advise on the continued validity of any seismic loading estimates quoted in the report. The dam owner is to formally transmit the surveillance reports prepared for their dams to the Dams Safety Committee as soon as reasonably practicable after its preparation. Upon an owner of a dam becoming aware of safety incidents or failures, a report is to be provided to the Dams Safety Committee as soon as reasonably practicable if there are immediate or imminent implications for dam safety or otherwise in the next surveillance report.

Dams Safety NSW may, by order in writing—an emergency order—declare that an emergency exists in respect of a declared dam or an emergency exists that constitutes an immediate threat to public health or public safety or that is causing or is likely to cause damage to property. If an emergency order is in force in relation to a declared dam, Dams Safety NSW may take such other measures as it thinks fit. Given all the powers and, indeed, the requirements under the Act, there are big questions as to why the Eraring Power Station dam and the closure of the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre never appear to have seen the light of day at the Dams Safety Committee of Dams Safety NSW. It is a committee that the owner of the dam, Origin Energy, is required to forward the report to immediately.

The last annual report for Dams Safety NSW notes that the Dams Safety Committee maintains close contact with owners of prescribed dams through meetings held during the year to discuss specific dam requirements and general procedures, and to ensure that owners are able to communicate their concerns to the committee. For example, during 2017-18 the Dams Safety Committee inspected 55 dams and basins and held onsite meetings with owners' personnel. The report notes that the Surveillance Sub-Committee held eight meetings that year. That means one meeting every 6½ weeks. Even taking into consideration the holiday period and given Origin Energy managed to meet with the former Minister for Sport and the Office of Sport in November 2018, you would assume that by early February 2019 the Surveillance Sub-Committee would have met and that the meeting would have occurred one week before the meeting of the Dams Safety Committee, which, as I have already noted, can take any action as it sees fit if there is any risk of an immediate loss of life.

The Minister for Sport now informs us that he is getting an independent review by the Dams Safety Committee, which is extraordinary given that it was its job from day one to look at the issue. However, it has never been near it. The Dams Safety Committee may, and, if directed by the Minister, must conduct an inquiry into matters relating to the safety of a dam. It may require evidence to be given in writing. It is subject to section 13 of the Oaths Act and it has powers of authorised officers to require answers. More importantly, it is required to hold those inquiries in public. The Minister must answer as to why that has not happened.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I thank the member for Auburn. It is no surprise that I support her contribution.

#### **CABRAMATTA COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (20:26):** I speak on some very disturbing events that have occurred in my electorate as well as in neighbouring electorates in recent weeks. Last week a police officer was stabbed in the head and neck while responding to an outstanding warrant. The officer suffered serious injuries, but, thankfully, he was stabilised by the brilliant doctors at Liverpool Hospital and was released later in the week. The week before that, robbery charges were laid upon some individuals, all under the age of 20, who robbed a business in Cabramatta. Only time will tell how many more such events will occur. Only time will dictate whether a life is lost due to one of those reckless acts, which highlights growing issues that need to be addressed before they get out of hand.

Such criminal events are becoming frequent and they prompt the need for more resources to be invested into frontline police officers to ensure that a safe environment is maintained at all times. Families and children should neither have to fear for their lives when travelling in and around local icons in Cabramatta, nor should they be subjected to imposing curfews on their children. We cannot let crime and fear taint the Cabramatta community, as it did in the 1990s. Families deserve to walk the streets of Cabramatta with their heads held high, reassured that their safety is maintained at the highest levels possible.

In saying this, Cabramatta is growing continually. It is the most multicultural and linguistically diverse community that represents the very definition of modern-day multiculturalism in Australia. That being said, we need to ensure that we have the necessary infrastructure projects and mechanisms in place to support the growth. We need to ensure that our frontline responders are well equipped, and that young children are educated about the rights and wrongs of the law. That means our emergency services need to be well funded, and our schools and hospitals properly resourced. I conclude by urging the Government to invest more resources into my community of Cabramatta for the sake of community safety and public order. If that is not done, it will be only a matter of time before someone gets seriously injured or killed. I hope the Government takes into account the events I have mentioned and addresses them before the situation gets out of hand.

*Bills*

**AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019**

**Messages**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it does not insist on its amendments Nos 13, 14, 32 and 33 disagreed with to the bill, but that it insists on its amendments Nos 4 and 34 disagreed with to the bill.

I order that consideration of the message be set down as an order of the day for a future day.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:31 until 10:00 on Thursday  
20 June 2019.**