



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 20 June 2019**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 20 June 2019**

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

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

*Visitors*

### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the public gallery a school group from Hunters Hill, which is in the Lane Cove electorate.

*Documents*

### AUDITOR-GENERAL

#### Reports

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 421D of the Local Government Act 1993, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Development assessment: pre-lodgement and lodgement in Camden Council and Randwick City Council*, dated 20 June 2019, received this day.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

*Governor*

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

**Debate resumed from 19 June 2019.**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (10:14):** Although I am a little bit out of order this morning, I am sure I can pick up from where I left off yesterday. I was talking about the honour of meeting the new Governor, Margaret Beazley, just several days after her appointment. It was an honour also to get to know the last two governors in my role as a member of Parliament. I ran into Marie Bashir during the North Shore by-election at the polling place where she and her husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie, voted. I was there helping out my good friend Felicity Wilson. I had with me my then four- or six-month old daughter Audrey who gave the Governor a massive smile. Ms Bashir said, "Oh, look at us! We're friends already." It was a real treat to have her chat to my little one and I was pleased to chat to Sir Nicholas as well.

Mrs Hurley is a local shire girl, so we have a bit in common, and I also was pleased to get to know former Governor Hurley. He is very interested in beekeeping and we have a great beekeeping facility down our way. I particularly appreciate Mr and Mrs Hurley's love for music. At every event at Government House Mrs Hurley would lead everyone in a song. She did a great rendition of *You Are My Sunshine*. Similarly, I know that Governor Beazley will create fond memories for us as we develop our association with her.

As I said yesterday, the Governor started her speech by urging us as members of Parliament to never forget the honour that has been bestowed on us and the trust that has been placed in us. To that end, let me start by thanking the people of Holsworthy for supporting me. I love representing Holsworthy. It is an honour to represent my constituents and I respect the trust they have placed in me. It takes a strong campaign team to get us here. I have previously recognised in this place those people but I want to do so again. We can never thank enough those who give up their weekends and nights, who stand on train stations and at street stalls and who support us. The member for Campbelltown, Greg Warren, and I have that in common: Our teams back us; they believe in what we do. It is nice to have that support and it gives us a boost.

I injured my back about December last year and was out of action, walking hunched over, until mid-February. I had to rely on my team and they were there for me. I am forever grateful to them because for a little while I thought our tight margin might get a whole lot tighter. I was not sure which way it would go and I was flat on my back. I thank my team members for everything they did. I thank in particular Mitchell McMartin, Rhonda Holt, Haris Strangas, Nick Smerdley, Paulene Radley, Arthur Lim, Julia Kokic, Dimitri Konstantinidis, Mazhar Hadid, Tony Hadchiti and Sam Kayal for getting out there weekend after weekend to ensure we spoke with as many residents as possible. I also thank those who helped out on pre-poll and on election day.

I am blown away that some people used their annual leave to assist at pre-poll. We had three pre-poll sites across the two weeks. I will be forever grateful to the people who were willing to take their holiday leave to stand out in the rain, wind and cold to make sure that voters received a how-to-vote pamphlet. I thank Darren and Rebekah Foxe, Fiona and Ian MacNaught, Russell and Kerry Vickers and their family, Alison McNicol, Macia McInerney, Amar Singh, Xavier De Domenico, Melanie McPherson, Darren Cook, Ryan Webster, Sheik Mohammed Hbous, Robyn Williams, Luke Tomovski, Tracy Cook, Annelie and Julie Thatcher, Sharna Southwell, Michael Ross, Gary Fox, Jim Dimovski, Faith Perryman, Nicole and Stevie Lillis, Jeff Page, Bryson McMartin, Claudio Alosi, Stephen Nicholls, Carlene Radley, Richard Azar, Ameen Dannoui, Mitchell Clout and Shane and Cheryl Johnson and many, many more people whom I do not have time to list. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I have a special campaign team that has been with me for many campaigns. They know how to get it started and make it happen. The team is led by Daniel Nicholls, who has worked with me for about four years. I love Daniel. Daniel took time off from work to campaign. As staff cannot campaign out of our offices, he took his annual leave to make sure I was returned to this role. I will be forever grateful to him. I am grateful also for the work of Alison McInerney, Louise and Justin De Domenico, Tony Hadchiti, Mazhar Hadid, Haris Strangas, Nick Smerdley, Mitchell McMartin and Darren Foxe. This team kept up the motivation and the drive, that's for sure. Although they were not allowed to campaign, as Daniel and I spent more time out of the office on our campaigning they became more and more busy. They were always there with a cup of coffee, a smile and a "buck up" when we needed one.

I am forever grateful to my team in the office, particularly Jeff Page and Faith Perryman. Jeff recently retired after about 30 years working for Parliament. For many years he worked in the Table office. Eventually I was able to convince him to come and work in my electorate office. As I have said in this place before, we call him the constituent whisperer. If a person who rang our office was going through a hard time or might have been upset Jeff was able to set them on the right path. He offered them support and always sent them out of our office with a laugh, happy and smiling. I thank him for all the time he has given to us.

Our head office is a well-oiled machine. I thank our State director Chris Stone for his clear head and direction and Nick Westenberg for his energy and drive. Nick is truly talented. I have bumped into him on and off for nearly 20 years. It is nice to see him grow in each role he has taken on. Cameron Dunger is another talented person. He is now in the office of the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. He gained experience in the Premier's office before going to the Liberal Party head office. We were very lucky to have his skills focused on our local campaign. The President, the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, is a very busy man. The role of President does not stop because of a campaign. I am thankful for all the time he gave to us.

I thank my family for their patience and understanding throughout the campaign. My partner, Kent Johns, has long been by my side in many campaigns for the last 15 years or so since we first came across each other at Sutherland Shire Council. We have worked together on every campaign since. He has a phenomenal campaigning mind and energy. This time we had a change to our normal routine; we have two little girls at home who also needed us so better time management came into play. Our daughters, Audrey and Elizabeth Johns, are the absolute sunshine of my life. It was a huge investment for us as a family to give up so much of our time while they were so little. But that is how much this role and this opportunity means to me and to us as a family. I hope they will grow to value community service and the need to make a difference and to help others.

I could not have achieved this result without my parents, Rhonda and Scott Gibbons, who were always there when I could not be. They gave me the opportunity to fight for what I believe in and advocate for the Holsworthy electorate in the knowledge that everything was fine and under control at home. We have the right Premier leading the Liberal Party and the State. She is thoughtful, kind, strong and smart. Both as a woman and as somebody who represents a multicultural community, I am proud that she is our first elected female Premier. When the Premier came to visit Liverpool West Public School she asked how many students did not speak English at home. Many hands shot up in the crowd of students. More than half my electorate do not speak English at home. The Premier told them she was just like them. She then asked them how many of them did not speak English when they started school and many hands stayed up. Once again that was the same as her experience. She is a fabulous role model for our community. The Premier leads a very capable team of Ministers who spend a great deal of time in our area. I am thankful to her and to them for their support.

The Governor outlined the Government's plan for New South Wales, and it is a strong plan indeed. As an overview of local projects, the New South Wales Government will be working towards providing more commuter parking at Edmondson Park, Warwick Farm and Leppington train stations; upgrades to Liverpool Hospital; much-needed additional parking at Liverpool Hospital; a new Service NSW centre in the present Edmondson Park area; funding towards Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO] Innovation Precinct; more support for local sporting teams, including Southern Districts Soccer Football

Association and Moorebank Rams; planning for the extension of Sydney Metro Southwest from Bankstown to Liverpool; and upgrades to our local schools, such as Prestons Public School and Liverpool West Public School. I am proud that this Government continues to focus strongly on supporting the creation of local jobs and helping businesses thrive and grow. That is why I am particularly excited about the \$12.5 million investment that we are making into the ANSTO Innovation Precinct. This investment will help to accelerate medical and technological breakthroughs and also assist in the generation of an estimated 5,000 new jobs. [*Extension of time*]

The funding will help facilitate the creation of a new world-class precinct for business, scientists and start-ups at Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation in my electorate at Lucas Heights. The organisation is already working on cutting-edge treatments for cancers and other diseases. Many of our families and friends would have benefited from the work that ANSTO does. The Government's \$12.5 million in funding will be delivered over four years to create incubators for nuclear medicine and technology businesses; to give start-ups access to cutting-edge technology and some of the best science in Australia; to help establish a graduate institute, including 25 scholarships for PhD students; and to drive collaboration between start-ups, researchers and industry to grow advanced technology businesses in New South Wales. ANSTO is working towards making Australia a global leader in the supply of nuclear medicine. This funding boost from the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is not just generating 5,000 new jobs over a decade but also helping to boost innovation in the region, with ANSTO's work having the potential to change the lives of thousands of people around Australia and indeed the world.

Transport infrastructure continues to be a main focus of the Government and of my electorate. Most of the issues in my electorate these days concern transport and roads. I am proud the Government has focused on this issue. The number of commuter parking spaces at Edmondson Park train station will triple under the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's plans, with a \$40 million investment to deliver 700 additional commuter spaces at the station by about the middle of next year. When the project is complete, 1,100 spaces will be available for customers at Edmondson Park station. When the Government built the South West Rail Link in 2015 we also delivered hundreds of free car parking spaces. Customers are now telling us they need more, and it is obvious they need more. You only have to look around to see how far away the cars are parked and how far people have to walk to know there is a demand. Labor in its election campaign offered about 200 spaces as part of an \$18 million project. That would not touch the sides of the need in my community. Our \$40 million project with 700 spaces will make a difference for the community. I am incredibly proud to be part of the Government that is delivering this project for our community.

When the South West Rail Link was first opened the area was basically farmland surrounded by sheep. Now it is a rapidly growing and developing community and it is crying out for a new primary school and high school at Edmondson Park. I am pleased to say that that is a priority of this Government. Plans are underway for that to happen and I am looking forward to making an announcement soon. The Government will deliver about 250 extra commuter car spaces at Warwick Farm station on top of the already 700 available to customers. That is great news for locals, who have been part of the massive growth in the number of people using the Sydney train network over the past few years. It is obviously a popular way to get work and with the new air-conditioned carriages on our line it is becoming an even better option. The Government wants people's commute to work to be pleasant and easy.

I was particularly honoured to stand beside the Premier and the Liberal candidate for Liverpool, Paul Zadro, to announce the Warwick Farm spaces. Paul has been very successful in his life and career and he wanted to offer his hard work and dedication to the Liverpool electorate. Although he was unsuccessful this time, I hope he considers running again in the future. I know he would do amazing things in the electorate. In the area of martial arts, he encourages children and young people to become involved and active in our community and teaches them discipline through the sport. I was very happy to get to know him as the campaign progressed. I also mention that the Government is committed to providing essential funding and support in our education sector. Every school in the Holsworthy electorate will have its maintenance backlog wiped to zero. This will ensure that students enjoy the best possible learning environments. The classrooms are very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Members spend their days in air-conditioned comfort and we should expect that our young people and early learners have the same comfort.

We have made a commitment that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government will clear every maintenance job currently outstanding in all Holsworthy electorate public schools by July 2020. We are wiping the slate clean and ensuring that all outstanding maintenance jobs at our schools, such as carpeting, roof maintenance and painting works, will be carried out. We have spent a lot of time and money already in reducing the backlog that we were left with in 2011 but, as at 30 June 2018, we were still left with a \$6.6 million backlog. We have committed to fast-track the work so that we can wipe out that backlog by mid next year.

It is a fantastic result for our local students who will be able to learn and study in the best facilities possible. As I said, we inherited a huge backlog from the Labor Government—across the State about a billion dollars worth of school maintenance needed to be carried out. It is only because of the strong economic management of the Liberals and Nationals that we are in a position to fix the problems that were created and left to us by the Labor Party and to get our schools in the best possible condition. I am glad to see that hundreds of Prestons, Casula and Lurnea families will benefit from the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's record investment in education, with the \$10 million major upgrade of Prestons Public School now underway.

Prestons Public School will have 10 new air-conditioned classrooms, a new hall, a library and administration facilities. I am thrilled that this upgrade is being delivered for the wonderful students, teachers and families of the school. I spent some time at the school on election day and was pleased to see that work underway. I know all our voters who walked through the booth at the school were very excited to see the construction work already underway. The school put on a great sausage sizzle that day too; they did a lot of hard work. The queues of people waiting to vote went for miles and the school looked after everyone. I thank the principal of the school, Liz Van Der Muelen, and the P&C for working with me and the Government, particularly with the former Minister for Education at the time, Rob Stokes, to make this project a reality.

The Governor mentioned in her speech the cost of living. I assure the Governor that it is a focus of this Government to provide reductions in the pressures associated with the cost of living. For the first time, self-funded retirees in our region will be amongst the 130,000 seniors across New South Wales who will be able to claim \$200 a year to help with their power bills, thanks to a new initiative from the New South Wales Government. This rebate will be available to customers who hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, through Service NSW centres and online. I know the difference that will make on top of the energy rebates we already provide to pensioners. We are happy to say that a new Service NSW centre will be coming soon to our area, with a centre planned for around Prestons or Edmondson Park. The Service NSW centre at Liverpool is the busiest in the State, yet it still has a satisfaction rating somewhere in the high nineties—I believe it is about 98 per cent. The centre looks after everyone beautifully. I thank the Governor particularly for outlining all our plans for the future.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (10:32):** In reply: First, I thank members on both sides of the House for their contributions to the debate on the motion to adopt the address-in-reply, which I moved and which was seconded by the member for Cootamundra, who is in the Chamber. I thank members representing the electorates of Manly, Wyong, Riverstone, Seven Hills, Gosford, Mulgoa, Port Stephens, Ku-ring-gai and The Entrance. I also thank the outstanding member for Heathcote and members representing the electorates of Campbelltown, North Shore, Wyong and Holsworthy, and other members who have contributed to the address-in-reply.

As I mentioned in my speech a few months ago, this Government is delivering record spending on infrastructure not only in Sydney but throughout New South Wales, as the budget handed down this week shows. Another record spend is in education, with 190 projects currently underway. Two of those projects are in my electorate. Over \$55 million has been provided for an extensive rebuild of Penshurst Public School and a major redevelopment of Penshurst West Public School. Those 190 projects cover each corner of the State. As the Treasurer said this week, an extensive list of schools from Milton to Merrylands to Penshurst to Picton are being built or rebuilt.

Many members in this Chamber who have been here over the past eight years would know that one of my passions as a member of Parliament is the rebuild of St George Hospital. I believe that St George Hospital is one of the best hospitals in the State and is in one of the best areas that has one of the best football teams. But the hospital was neglected by the Labor Government for a long time. I remember my first speech in this place when I was up against the former member for Kogarah Cherie Burton. It was as if St George Hospital was in some sort of Bermuda Triangle—it was forgotten, neglected and not upgraded by the Labor Government. A good thing for us and a good thing for the hospital and the community is that after those 16 years of neglect by the Labor Government we are getting on with the job of rebuilding the hospital.

When this Government first came to office in 2011 my promise was to see an expansion, a relocation and a rebuilding of the emergency department at St George Hospital. We have done that with an investment of \$41 million. That new emergency department was promised, built, delivered and opened in the Government's first term of office, and it has double the capacity of the previous emergency department. Stage two, which we promised in 2015 with a commitment of \$300 million, has delivered a brand-new acute services building, a new intensive care unit, more intensive care beds, and more doctors and nurses, and that was opened two years ago. That will make a total investment in that hospital of more than \$700 million—just under \$100 million for each year since this Government came to office.

It is a big win for our local community. For once, our local hospital is as good as, if not better than, any of the major hospitals in other area health districts. That is not to say that St George Hospital is not a major hospital; it is. That, in itself, is a great win for our local community. As the Treasurer said, we have never before

seen anything like this hospital building blitz—from Liverpool to Lismore, Coffs Harbour to Campbelltown, Gosford to Goulburn, Bankstown to Blacktown, St George to Shoalhaven and Randwick to Ryde hospitals. We are getting on with the job of building and rebuilding many of those hospitals that for many years have been in urgent need of repair.

Our infrastructure investment is now fast approaching \$100 billion and not only are we getting on with the job of building in the areas of education and health but also we are getting on with the job of rebuilding many of our much-needed transport hubs, upgrades to railway stations, commuter car parks, WestConnex and light rail, and we have recently opened the Northwest Metro. These are big-ticket items in transport that will transform the way people travel throughout Sydney and across New South Wales.

There is a record spend on infrastructure by this Government, which is something that the Opposition did not do in over 16 years in government. I recently had the pleasure of opening the multimillion dollar health training facility at St George TAFE, Kogarah. I was joined by the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, Geoff Lee, to tour the new nursing and aged-care facilities. It is the biggest capital spend in probably 30 years at St George Hospital. The member for Liverpool will remember the former member for Barton the Hon. Gary Punch and it was probably a little over 30 years ago that he opened the brand new library he funded at St George TAFE. The new health training facility at St George TAFE cost \$4.2 million and is the biggest funding announcement for the TAFE since the former member for Barton funded and opened a new library on that site.

This is part of the Government's ongoing investment in capital works projects across the TAFE network. It is something those opposite forgot about many years ago. Health and wellbeing are amongst the fastest growing courses in TAFE NSW. This is reflected locally in my community where enrolments have been surging in recent years. The new facilities have been built to reflect current industry practice and deliver a much-needed increase in local training capacity to match the growing demand in the St George area. This forms part of the Government's significant commitment to redevelopment of St George Hospital in order to meet a strong demand for a skilled health workforce. I am proud to be part of a government committed to expanding training opportunities across Sydney and New South Wales, not just in health but in many faculties. This particularly applies to the St George area.

This multimillion dollar investment will help to equip students with the real world skills they need to excel in the health sector. As I mentioned in my address-in-reply speech, a number of transport projects have been delivered in my electorate. When I became the member for Oatley the Oatley train station was frequently used but highly inaccessible with 37 stairs to the platform. Until I became a parent five years ago I did not realise that Mercedes Benz-manufactured baby trollies are very heavy. The Government got on with upgrading both Oatley and Narwee train stations.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT (NOTIFICATION OF SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF PRIVACY BY PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCIES) BILL 2019**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

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

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Labor Opposition to introduce the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (Notification of Serious Violations of Privacy by Public Sector Agencies) Bill 2019. This is almost identical with a private member's bill of similar title that I introduced in 2017. There are some minor updates, for consistency of expression from that earlier bill, the updates being proposed by Parliamentary Counsel. The substance and legal aspects of the bill have not been altered. When previously introduced to this place, the Government expressed its opposition to the measures in the bill. That opposition at the time was unpersuasive and the effluxion of time has made the case for the bill even stronger. Recent events, including a censure motion against a current Minister, have made the case for this bill, in my opinion, overwhelming.

The objects of the bill are to require a public sector agency that has caused a serious violation of the privacy of an individual by contravening an information protection principle or a privacy code of practice, or by disclosing personal information held in a public register, to notify the individual concerned and the Privacy

Commissioner of that contravention or that disclosure. Technology, and our society generally, has moved and advanced a very great distance since the principal Act, the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act [PPIPA], was adopted in 1998. As is frequently noted our legislation protecting privacy in this State dates from a time before the invention of the iPhone. It is no surprise that the legislation needs amendment and rejuvenation. The Government for the last eight years has been entirely innocent of any interest in this area. The bill before the House amends the principal bill in a small but significant way that is entirely unobjectionable albeit now quite topical.

The arguments for supporting the bill are quite clear. The measures in the bill are what the community expects. The 2017 Australian Community Attitudes to Privacy survey that was conducted by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner showed that 95 per cent of respondents believed that if a government agency loses their information the individual should be told about it. It is legitimate to argue that as technology becomes increasingly pervasive these attitudes in the community will only strengthen. Mandatory notification, apart from being obvious, has a number of specific positive consequences. It can prevent or minimise the difficulties or damage that may otherwise flow from a breach. It is also an important element of accountability by the agency for the breach. I also note that the Privacy Commissioner recommended this change. In a report dated February 2015 the commissioner, in recommendation 10 of that report, said:

The PPIP Act be amended to provide for mandatory notification of serious breaches of an individual's privacy by a public sector agency similar to that proposed to be provided in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

The change proposed in this bill has already been adopted by a conservative Federal Government. The provisions of the bill before the House amend the principal Act, the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act. This bill proposes the insertion of a new part 6A in the principal Act. New section 59C requires public sector agencies to take reasonable steps to notify an individual if that agency has reasonable grounds to believe it has caused a serious violation of the individual's privacy. New section 59C (2) sets out what must be in the notice. Notice must be given no more than 15 days after the agency becomes aware of the circumstances giving rise to the serious violation. New section 59D provides the obligation to notify the Privacy Commissioner.

New section 59E imposes an obligation for an agency to assess whether a violation of the privacy of an individual is a serious violation. New section 59A provides a meaning of the term a serious violation of an individual's privacy. It occurs in the context of the legislation if an agency contravenes an information protection principle or a privacy code of practice or discloses personal information kept in a public register, and a reasonable person would conclude that the contravention or disclosure has resulted or would be likely to result in a serious violation of or interference with the privacy of an individual to whom the information relates.

New section 59B provides the matters to be considered in determining if privacy has been violated in a serious manner. New sections 59F and 59G contain provisions as to the Privacy Commissioner directing agencies to provide information and the obligation of agencies to do so where the commissioner believes a serious violation of an individual's privacy has occurred. New sections 59H, 59I, 59J and 59K provide for various exemptions. The Privacy Commissioner may declare that these provisions do not apply if it is reasonable to do so. A law enforcement agency is not required to comply with these provisions if to do so would prejudice the agency's law enforcement functions. Likewise a breach is not a serious breach if the agency takes action before significant harm results to the individual concerned and a reasonable person would conclude that the breach would not result in a serious violation of or interference with the privacy of the individual concerned. As I have indicated the Government opposed this bill in 2017. They argued that the Opposition had not considered whether the current scheme was adequate or whether the bill would be useful or necessary, and that it had not considered the resource implications and had introduced it without consulting public sector agencies or the Privacy Commissioner. I will deal with those objections in reverse order.

It is absurd that Government would attack the Opposition for not consulting the Privacy Commissioner on the bill. As I pointed out in introducing the bill in 2017 and earlier in this speech, this precise measure was actually recommended by the Privacy Commissioner in a report tabled in this Chamber. Rather than criticise the Opposition with a fanciful claim that we had not consulted the Privacy Commissioner, the Government should explain why it has not implemented the commissioner's recommendation, four years after it was made. The criticism about resources succeeds as a cheap debating point but not much else. The Premier said during the election campaign that New South Wales could have it all, but apparently we cannot have adequate protection of privacy. The Government will not spend enough money to protect the privacy of the citizens of this State if its previous opposition to this bill is to be believed.

The other Government criticism can be boiled down to the proposition that there is a voluntary scheme by agencies that quite adequately deals with the current situation already; that it already has adequate voluntary reporting. If that is the case, I note in passing, it makes even more absurd the Government proposition that my bill is too expensive. If you are doing adequate voluntary reporting then the amount and thus cost of mandatory

reporting is unlikely to be prohibitively greater. If the extra resources necessary were significant, then clearly the current voluntary scheme is not adequate because there is not enough reporting. And if it is good enough to report voluntarily, it is hard to see why a substantive argument against making it mandatory would make any sense.

The recent leaking of motorists' personal data sourced to Revenue NSW is a very good example of the inadequacy in practice of the present system. Those individuals whose privacy was breached have still not been advised by any government agency of that breach. In particular, one of my constituents whose privacy was breached, and the details of whose driving incident were given to a journalist in apparent breach of the law, has not been notified by an agency of the substantial breach of his privacy. My advice to him is to complain to the Ombudsman. That should not be necessary. My constituent should have been notified by the government agency concerned.

This bill is a sensible and reasonable modernisation of the State's privacy laws. It is in accord with community expectations, it is consistent with a scheme already adopted by the conservative Coalition Federal Government and has been recommended by the Privacy Commissioner. It increases the accountability of agencies and potentially helps mitigate the damage following a privacy breach. It should be supported by the Chamber. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER AMENDMENT BILL 2019

### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 6 June 2019.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:53):** I appreciate the opportunity to reply to this private member's bill on behalf of the Government. The House will know that the original Parliamentary Budget Officer Act was introduced in 2010 by the Labor Government and was one of those bills introduced by them which effectively set up what was likely to be their period in Opposition. We all remember the circumstances which obtained in 2010. It was the worst, most corrupt government that this State has seen since this Parliament was established—

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

I hear the member for Maitland chirping away in the House. Typical form from the member for Maitland.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! Who is interrupting?

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** That was not even me that time.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I did not say it was the member for Maitland; did I mention the word "Maitland"? Apology accepted. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I can still hear chirping from the member for Maitland. There is a lot of chirping today. We all remember that dirty, rotten government, before 2011, the government that saw at least three of its members found to be corrupt by ICAC—Eddie Obeid, Ian Macdonald and Joe Tripodi. I apologise to the House if I have left any out.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Where's Daryl?

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I think Ms D'Amore was also found to be corrupt. Indeed, it is salient to remember that administration—that dirty, rotten administration—in the context of this debate.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Use a thesaurus. I would have thought you had more words. Run out of superlatives?

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I do not know what the member for Maitland had for breakfast but she is certainly very chirpy.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I ask members to behave. The next train that leaves Martin Place is in five minutes. If members continue misbehaving I will make sure they are on it, under Standing Order 249. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** There must be something in the air at the moment on the Labor side of the House. I know there is a lot of angst—

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! Members entering the Chamber will be quiet.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** There is a lot of angst with their leadership dispute and contest. Of course, it is regrettable that the budget reply speech, which is about to be delivered, will not be delivered by anybody thought competent enough to be the future leader of the Labor Party—not even in the game.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 73. That is an outrageous slur on the member for Keira and if the member for Ku-ring-gai wants to make that kind of statement he should do so by way of substantive motion.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Maitland. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call.

**Mr David Mehan:** And wear a better suit.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** You could not afford this suit.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I will start kicking people out. The member for The Entrance should look at his own suit.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I do not think the member for The Entrance has ever gone near Saville Row to be able to afford this suit. I must say that the point of order—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for Ku-ring-gai's comment was a little unfair.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** That point of order from the member for Maitland was very instructive and apparently one needs a substantive notice of motion to state the fact that the member for Keira is not a contestant for the Labor leadership—

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order—

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai will resume his seat. I ask members who have just entered the Chamber to take their seats. This is not George Street; it is the New South Wales Parliament. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

**Mr David Harris:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 76. The member for Ku-ring-gai has not even started to address the actual bill. He is talking about a range of issues, none of which is to do with this private member's bill. I know he is filling in as much time as possible, but he is right off track.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Regrettably, that is the sort of vacuous point of order that we constantly hear from the member for Wyong.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! Members who continue to interject will be asked to remove themselves from the Chamber.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** If the member had the courtesy to listen to what I had said, he would have known that I started my contribution to the debate by speaking about the 2010 Parliamentary Budget Officer Act, which this private member's bill seeks to amend. That would be an obvious place to start any consideration of the bill.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### APPROPRIATION BILL 2019

#### APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2019

#### STATE REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019

#### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 18 June 2019.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Before I call the acting Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, I remind all members to extend the usual courtesy to him for his speech in reply to the budget to be delivered uninterrupted.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (11:01):** I acknowledge and thank my family, staff and friends from the Illawarra for attending Parliament this morning. I also acknowledge and thank those proud men and women from the trade union movement who are in the public gallery. A special thanks goes to my nine-year-old boy, Preston. He is the reason I am not in the leadership race.

Debt, deceitful, disappointing—those three words could easily describe this budget. Since coming to office eight long years ago, this Government has received \$61 billion in stamp duty through a property boom the likes of which we have never seen before. In that time the Government has received \$70 billion from selling community assets. All this and the Government made the election promise that we could have it all. Yet 48 hours ago this Government delivered the largest debt in the history of our State. Thousands of jobs will be cut. There will be increased taxes. And there are broken promises. The Treasurer talks of small government, so he saddles the State with debt, sells off our public assets and undermines our future prosperity.

We care about the economic future of this State because it supports opportunity, care and a safety net for each of us and the communities we are grateful to represent. It is important for the family in Auburn, an area with one of the highest rates of homelessness in New South Wales, who face moving from one crisis accommodation placement to the next. It is important for the parents in Penrith who want their children to receive an education that prepares them for the future. It is important for the elderly residents of Newcastle who, as the temperature drops, are struggling to stay warm because of soaring electricity bills. It is also important for the young person living in Coffs Harbour who, despite their best efforts, is unable to find work because one in every five young people in that area is unemployed.

Importantly, let us not forget those families who are doing it tough on the land in this terrible drought. Everyone knows the significant impact the drought has had on rural and regional New South Wales. As we sit here, there are communities just weeks away from having no water. We are concerned about not just the impact on the towns but also the cost to local jobs. Urgent measures need to be put in place for those communities. The effect and impact that the drought has had on farmers, workers, small businesses and families can never be underestimated. I implore the Premier not to apply efficiency dividends to any agency delivering services to drought-affected communities and farmers. I say this to the farmers across New South Wales: The Labor Party knows you are doing it tough and my colleagues and I stand with you. This Government will have our support for any drought relief. A State stricken by drought needs a unified Parliament and we will ensure that it has it.

In 2011 the Government inherited \$6 billion of debt, just 1.4 per cent of the gross State product. Somehow this Government has sold \$70 billion worth of public assets during a record housing boom but will take us into \$39 billion of debt. In four years we will have the largest debt in the history of New South Wales. Debt as a share of the economy will be the highest since the turn of the century, at more than 5 per cent. The Government still has no plan to pay it back. The interest alone on that debt will be more than we spend employing the entire NSW Police Force. And it is only going to get worse. We know the revenue-generating assets are long gone. They are delivering profits to their private shareholders. And stamp duty revenue is falling. The economy is weakening. Growth in State final demand will fall from 3.4 per cent to 2.5 per cent. Wages growth remains at record low levels. Jobs growth is forecast to fall to just 1.25 per cent. So, in four years' time, with the largest debt in history, it will only be harder to pay it back.

When the dust settles on this Government, its legacy will be clear. After eight years, this O'Farrell-Baird-Berejiklian Government will be remembered as the most wasteful in this State's history. Consider the facts: This Government has sold \$70 billion worth of assets that belong to the people of New South Wales. This Government has sold our electricity network, our desalination plant and, even worse, the Land Titles Office—the agency that holds the deeds to people's homes. This Government has taken those revenue-producing assets and flogged them off in the biggest fire sale this country has ever witnessed. We know that, once sold, those assets are gone forever and, more importantly, so too are the revenue streams into the future that the State relied on. That is why we will reach record debt. It was a choice and, because of that choice, dividends that once generated \$2.6 billion in income for this State are falling to \$779 million. Because of privatisation, revenue keeps falling and debt will keep rising.

What has happened to that \$70 billion so far? We know that \$14 billion has been lost to budget blowouts on major projects alone. Just a fraction of that money could have been spent to help people like Rosemary Hoy. Rosemary is a Macquarie Fields resident who cannot access her local train station. She now uses a wheelchair after a multiple sclerosis diagnosis, but there are no lifts at Macquarie Fields train station. To get a train she must first travel to Ingleburn. Only under this Liberal-Nationals Government does someone in south-west Sydney have to travel backwards to go forwards.

When the Government privatised our electricity network people thought—and were told—that it was for funding infrastructure, not infrastructure blowouts. The stories just keep coming. I am talking about a project so mismanaged that the contractor the Government hired to build the infamous light rail just down the road sued the

Berejiklian Government for deceptive and misleading conduct. That is a serious accusation, but it is okay because the Premier assured us—and continued to do so during the election—that the accusation was completely unjustified. But just days after the election she paid \$576 million to the contractors to settle. I do not know about you, but if I was wrongly accused of deceptive and misleading conduct I would not hand over more than half a billion dollars to settle. Either the Government is handing over \$576 million of the community's money unnecessarily or it did engage in deceptive and misleading conduct. It certainly would not be the first time.

The Premier told us that the light rail first increased in cost because of "customer improvements". Months later the State's Auditor-General gave us the real reasons for the blowout—poor planning, mispricing and omissions in the business case. I will break that down. The cost was \$517 million because of poor planning and \$576 million to settle court action for deceptive and misleading conduct. That is \$1.1 billion of taxpayer money wasted on this Premier's incompetence. Imagine how many more classrooms across western Sydney could be air conditioned and how many more stations like Unanderra could be upgraded with lifts.

The Government has broken faith with the people of New South Wales, particularly people in regional New South Wales. We all remember the much famed \$250 regional seniors travel card that was only funded for two years. The budget delivers just one-third of the promised \$1 billion upgrade to the Princes Highway. For our people out west, it is worse. Just 10 per cent of the \$2.5 billion promised for the Great Western Highway has been allocated and only \$11 million of the \$266 million needed for the Muswellbrook bypass has been allocated over the next four years. It is nothing new. Regional New South Wales has been given just half of the infrastructure spending it was promised. It was cheated out of \$1.2 billion in infrastructure—all during a drought. No wonder the people of regional and rural New South Wales are angry—and particularly angry at The Nationals. In March this year members opposite announced a roads package of more than \$20 billion but only 2.5 per cent of it was included in the budget. When the Government underinvests in our roads, real people suffer—such as Dominic from Epping, who has to travel 45 minutes to work every day. With five children and a sixth on the way, time in the car means time away from his family.

The election showed new highs—or lows—with empty promises and spin. Remember when the Premier promised 4,600 new teachers at a price tag of \$2 billion? Beware of the fine print. According to the independent Parliamentary Budget Office, the Premier did not allocate a single cent of new money for teachers. As for the proposed school builds and upgrades, more than 60 per cent of them do not even have a start date let alone a completion date. The schools listed in the planning phase were also in the planning phase last year. The nine new schools in last year's budget have all been re-announced this year.

While the Government has made big claims about health funding, it has not honoured its election promises. There is no money—or even a single mention in the budget—for a new hospital in the Forster-Tuncurry area that was promised by the local member in March. There is no new money to build the new Rouse Hill hospital that was promised by Mike Baird in 2015 and again by the Premier in 2019. There were promised upgrades to Bankstown Hospital, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney Children's Hospital, Ryde Hospital, Fairfield Hospital, Shoalhaven Hospital, St George Hospital, Eurobodalla Hospital and Manning Base Hospital, but they are not funded in the budget.

On 20 March this year—just days before people went to vote—the Premier gave an ironclad guarantee. She was asked would she sell any further assets such as Sydney Water or the rest of the electricity network. Not only did the Premier say no; she also gave an ironclad guarantee to the people of New South Wales when she said, "If we were we would have told you up-front." That was before the election. Now her Treasurer refuses to rule out privatisation. Her transport Minister refuses to rule out privatisation. Then on Tuesday—just hours after handing down her debt-bomb budget—the Premier refused to rule out privatisation, because it is in their blood. It is what they believe in.

The Fire and Emergency Services Levy, which the Treasurer described as the "most significant reform in a generation", really takes the cake. The Treasurer introduced the legislation and spent \$25 million implementing the new tax. He even established the office of the Insurance Monitor. All of that made the humiliation worse when he backed down. We thought that was the end of it, but it was not. Why bother introducing a new tax when he can just raise an old one? Despite his refrain of "no new taxes", this budget confirms the Government has raised taxes by \$603 million through the Fire and Emergency Services Levy—a \$600 million insurance tax that hits every person in New South Wales. The average insurance bill will rise by close to \$100. I am concerned that up to 11,000 households across the communities that we are so fortunate to represent will drop their insurance coverage due to yet another cost of living hit. It will not just hit people with insurance. Every person in this State will pay through their council rates.

The people of Wagga Wagga will pay an extra \$156,000. People in Cumberland Council will pay an extra \$410,000. The community of Singleton will be hit with a \$128,000 bill. The good folks of Wollongong will have to pay \$213,000. When hundreds of thousands of dollars are taken from those communities, it leaves potholes

in the road, it takes playgrounds and sports fields from children and it pushes up council rates for every household in the State. That is economic reform under the Liberals and The Nationals. Before the election the Government talked a big game when it came to jobs, but it has delivered cuts such as the cuts to disability advocacy services. That area should be off limits, and it is something that Labor will always support. Those advocates have been arguing for \$20 million in advocacy funding. Labor will support it; Labor is committed to it.

Under the cuts of the Liberal-Nationals, vulnerable people are now more vulnerable. Before the election there was no mention of more than 2,500 job cuts to the public sector. But it took the Premier just days to revert to type. Those jobs are in roads and public transport. Those people are working tirelessly for our State, day in and day out. Mark my words: Regional New South Wales will suffer bitterly. The last round of the Liberal-Nationals job cuts hit 15,000 people, thousands of them in our regions. Those are thousands of people and families in our country towns who have been cast on the scrap heap.

I ask the Premier what will happen to the men and women working for the Firearms Registry, the Crown land department, the State Debt Recovery Office or the Department of Primary Industries? Cuts are cuts and they will hurt communities everywhere. Not even our emergency services are safe. Does anyone remember the Premier saying before the election that she would rip out \$77 million from the NSW Rural Fire Service? No, but she has done it anyway. Does anyone remember the Premier saying she would slash Fire and Rescue NSW funding by \$41 million? No, but she has done it anyway. Thousands of people are about to lose their jobs and income. Thousands of people do not know how they will pay their mortgage or rent, or put food on the table.

I want to talk about two issues that the Treasurer did not address on Tuesday. The first is climate change. The Treasurer made no mention of climate change, but why would he? After all, he is the Treasurer who said, "If you question man-made climate change, you are not a sceptic." Yes, you are. The State has lost a decade to address climate change. Under this Treasurer, that will continue. For him, climate change is a gratuitous waste of public money. Opposition members accept that climate change is real because we believe in science. We know that we, as a State, must invest in renewable energy. Just like at the last election, my colleagues and I will never apologise for putting forward bold policy in that area.

The second issue is very close to my heart: homelessness. Last week our country farewelled one of its finest, Bob Hawke. Bob once said, "The things which are most important don't always scream the loudest." How easily that could apply to the challenge of homelessness. Every night across the communities that we represent, live in and love around 38,000 of our fellow citizens are experiencing homelessness. There has been a lot of talk of records in this budget. That is another record and it is not one to be proud of. Those people will not have a warm and safe place to sleep during the cold winter nights. Their stories are not often told in this place; I want to tell a few of them. I met Emma at the Wollongong Homeless Hub. Emma is a young woman who should not be couch surfing. She should not be sleeping in the sand dunes at the local beach until she is so sick she needs urgent medical care. Elderly women should not be using their cars to shelter from the cold and mothers like Shantelle who I have spoken to should not be living in motels, wondering if the decision to leave their violent partner was the right one.

Ahead of this speech I decided to lend support to any measure to reduce homelessness, but there are no new measures to address homelessness in the budget. I remember the Government's commitment during the election campaign to halve homelessness. I remember how Government members were unable to even answer how many people are homeless now. Homelessness is up almost 40 per cent on the Premier's watch. The Labor Party and every one of my colleagues offers a hand in support, but homeless people cannot, and should not, wait four years. With four years to run in this Parliament, is there an opportunity to make a real difference to what the Salvation Army has called a national crisis? I suggest there is. We understand it means providing more interventional support along the way to try to stop people falling through the cracks. But above all, we understand it takes political will from all sides.

Like with the drought, Labor members stand ready to do what they can to enhance any measures to reduce homelessness in New South Wales because we know that the people who live in every one of our communities expect the issue to be above politics. The Labor Party supports an ambitious community and an ambitious society. We have been and always will be strong and determined advocates for high-quality public services, particularly in the areas of health, education, community support and safety. It is why when, on the floor of the Parliament, the Government attempted to privatise hospitals we fought alongside the community to oppose it. It is why our nurses and allied health workers, who ensure that our hospitals function effectively, are a priority for the men and women on the Opposition side of the Chamber. It is why we believe proper funding for early childhood education, school education and TAFE training is an investment, not a cost. It is why we proposed an additional \$158 million package to support victims and survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence. It is why, as I have said, we commit today to delivering the disability advocacy services that people so desperately need and deserve. We have to revisit our agenda for the next four years but our values are enduring; they are not up for review. Adopting a

small-target strategy is not one of them. Improving the lives of working people and the local communities we represent is at the heart of why we entered this place. But—more important than any of us—it is what our community rightly expects from each of us.

We will never shy away from the big economic, environmental and social challenges that face New South Wales and the people we are so proud and honoured to represent. The Liberals and The Nationals have received \$61 billion in stamp duty, \$70 billion in privatisations and they promised we could have it all. But they delivered job cuts and they delivered increased taxes and tolls. Worse, they delivered broken promises. That is the Liberal way. We are calling it out. Over the next four years Labor will continue to scrutinise the Government while building an agenda rooted in our eternal values. At the end of that process there will be a vote—and \$39 billion of debt.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The question is that these bills be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I move:

That these bills be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Budget

#### BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2019-2020

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I move:

That this House take note of the Budget Estimates and Related Papers for 2019-2020.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I set down debate on the Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2018-2019 as an order of the day for a later hour.

### Business of the House

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ROUTINE OF BUSINESS

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (11:30):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to:

- (1) Permit the Consideration in Detail forthwith of the following motion in relation to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill "That the Legislative Assembly agrees to Legislative Council amendment No. 4, insists on its disagreement a second time to the Legislative Council amendment No. 34 and moves a further amendment as circulated".
- (2) Provide that consideration of the motion take precedence of all other business prior to 2.00 p.m.

The reason I am doing this is obviously that there has been legislation before this place and the other place and we are now trying to resolve the advocacy matter. This was not debated earlier today because there have been negotiations between the Government and the Opposition in relation to advocacy. We have been advised that one of the peak groups needs to look at the amendment that has been put. The amendment, as it relates to resolving this impasse, is that the disability services commissioner will look at the funding of advocacy over the next six months. The Government has made it clear that it will not have the upper House put in place appropriations and send the bill back to this place. It is clear under the Constitution Act. We want to bring this on and get it resolved. There is a sensible solution.

I ask all members, including the crossbench, to consider the eminently sensible amendment which the Minister has circulated and we get this resolved today and let the upper House get on with the business of passing this so that we have a disability services commissioner on 1 July. That is what is important here: making sure that the commissioner is in place as of 1 July. I would like to see this amendment agreed to in this House and send it back upstairs and let them get on with their merry day. That is the matter before the House. That is why I am suspending Standing Orders right now: to ensure that legislation is before the upper House so that we can get an disability services commissioner as of 1 July. The upper House needs to understand the importance of having that commissioner in place. There has been a lot of good work overnight to try to resolve this matter.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:33):** The Opposition does not oppose the suspension. The Leader of the House showed us a copy of the suspension a little while ago and it is entirely appropriate that the debate be conducted. As to the substance of the motion that will be debated, which the Leader of the House touched upon,

I suspect that there might not be so much agreement on that but that is a debate we will have when the suspension has been carried.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Committees*

## **STAYS SAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)**

### **Meeting**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I move:

That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Council conveying the terms of the resolution of the House.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

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

### **Consideration in Detail**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)**  
(11:35): I move:

The Legislative Assembly agrees to Legislative Council amendment No. 4 and insists on its disagreement a second time to the Legislative Council amendment No. 34, and moves a further amendment:

No. 1      **Funding for disability advocacy**

Page 14. Before line 13:

**25**

### **Report about disability advocacy**

- (1) The Commissioner must, by 31 December 2019:
  - (a) prepare a report in relation to the funding arrangements for independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for people with disability in New South Wales, and
  - (b) consult with independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for people with disability in New South Wales in relation to the report, and
  - (c) provide the report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), in preparing the report the Commissioner must take into account any funding provided by the Commonwealth, under the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 of the Commonwealth, to independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for people with disability in New South Wales.
- (3) Before providing the report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament, the Commissioner must give a copy of the report to the Minister.

What we on this side are proposing is the sensible way forward. Without having to ventilate the issues around amendment No. 4, which relates to the independence of the commissioner, what I want to talk to is the proposed amendment. For the benefit of members of the House, there has been discussion around advocacy funding. I have made it quite clear as the Minister for Disability Services that I strongly support our advocacy services but there has been some question as to the appropriate funding moving forward. In order to resolve that, what I am proposing is that the first item of business for the independent Ageing and Disability Commissioner be to prepare a report in consultation with those advocacy groups on the funding pathways so that there can be an opportunity for advocacy groups to have a conversation.

The report is prepared and presented to Parliament so the commissioner can do the job and the people can have confidence that they have been heard. It is critically important that we get this right but it is appropriate that if we trust this new commissioner, as I am sure we all want to, and want to see it do its work that it do this piece of work that is requested. I said yesterday that the money that was proposed to be allocated was an arbitrary figure and I think even behind-the-scenes people agree with that. There is no real methodology about how the proposed amount has been come up with. What I am genuinely seeking to do through this process is find out what advocacy groups need. We are establishing an independent process. This has never been done before. We are giving our independent commissioner the opportunity to do this work and then come back with a report which can be seen by all of us and then decisions can be made based on that evidence. I think this is a reasonable way forward. I do not want to be in a situation where the commission cannot start its work from 1 July.

I appreciate the fact that crossbenchers and those opposite have genuinely raised some concerns. What I am seeking to do is to provide a pathway so that the most important thing, which is that the commission start this work on 1 July, which I think most people would agree with, occurs. Amendments in relation to advocacy have been raised. What we are now doing is providing an independent lens—something that has not been done before—in relation to this so that we can genuinely find a pathway forward. I implore members in this place and in the other place: Do not let us fall into a situation where the commission cannot start because of questions around legal advice in relation to one particular provision.

We have come a long way. There have been 35 amendments and 31 were agreed to by the Government. There has been some push and pull from The Greens and the Opposition—I acknowledge and thank them for that—in relation to those amendments but this is a very sensible and measured way forward to provide independent consultation and advice to the House in relation to these questions. That way we all know where we stand. It is not a question of pulling out arbitrary figures; it is actually a question of getting an outcome, which I know is what we all want. I ask that the House consider this amendment and support it.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:38):** I thank the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. I also thank members of the crossbench, my Labor colleagues and the many stakeholders that have had to leave their very important work because they have been rushed by the Government, which should have consulted with them months ago about this. The Government is putting a gun to their head and saying, "You have to do this." I want to make it very, very clear—and everyone knows the Labor Party's position—that we on this side absolutely support the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. We want to see a tough, strong—

**Dr Geoff Lee:** No, you don't.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Yes, we do. We want to see a commissioner that is going to protect those people who are vulnerable, who have been exploited and who have been neglected. We know those stories because we have heard them at the inquiries both here in New South Wales and in the Senate. Four years ago we called for a public advocate. Through the elder abuse inquiry that was established and pushed by the Labor Party and the crossbench we got some very good recommendations for a public advocate. Here we are four years later and the Government is trying to rush this at five minutes to midnight.

Let me make this very clear: We support amendment No. 4. We support it and we thank everybody involved. We want to see an independent commissioner—fully independent, at arm's length from government—regardless of which party is in government. If we are in government I want to see us at arm's length, and I will tell you why by way of an example. The Government promised independence of many statutory bodies. In the area of multiculturalism we had a statutory authority that was independent from the Government under Wran, under Unsworth, under Carr, under Greiner and under Fahey. We had an independent statutory authority.

When this Government came to office it turned the Community Relations Commission into its own little department called Multicultural NSW. That is why I do not trust what this Government says. I have learnt my lessons over the past many years. When those opposite say something, they do not actually do it. I have seen it in multiculturalism, where the independence of an important voice that represents minorities in this State was gagged, particularly with what has happened over the last few years. The Labor Party will not allow this Government to dictate, particularly in this area of ageing and disability. We on this side support amendment No. 4.

With respect to amendment No. 34, we want to see disability advocacy. We want to see the \$20 million. We want the Government to commit to that funding, and I will tell you why. For many years the Government has been saying, "We're on their side." But the Government is not on the side of the vulnerable. Disability advocacy is not about the NDIS. This is about those people in Unanderra who do not have a lift but they have advocates there representing them. There are people with disability in our community that those opposite might know that do not have lifts. For example, a couple of years ago the Government made a commitment that it would build lifts on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and then it backflipped. Then the advocates came out. The shadow Minister for transport, the member for Strathfield, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Gosford and I rallied with the advocates to make sure that the Government built those lifts on the Sydney Harbour Bridge before the Invictus Games began. We were going to be embarrassed. It was the hard work of the advocates that got the Government to fast-track and build those lifts.

It is because of the advocates in this State that we are getting some good things happening but we have a long way to go. In my area of multiculturalism we need advocates because there are so many people—not only in my community where 55 per cent of people are born overseas and one in five has a child with disability—who do not even know about the NDIS. They cannot get access to specialist services. They do not even know about some of the services. You have 70-year-old or 80-year-old carers who are looking after 45-year-old or 50-year-old people with disability. We need those advocates who speak a second language and who can advocate strongly. These things should be done. It is \$20 million. I am not going to back down. We are not going to back down. We

want to see this money on the table. Come on! The Government delivered the budget 48 hours ago and it is spending all this money on other things. This is \$20 million for these people to do their work.

Yesterday the member for Gosford made an impassioned plea. An organisation in her community has shut down. People with disability in regional New South Wales do not have the access that we have within a 10-kilometre radius of Sydney. The member for Keira, the shadow Treasurer, mentioned a person with a disability who has to go backward to Ingleburn to then catch a train to go forward to somewhere else. This is not the twenty-first century here and "You can have it all". You can have it all? The ageing and people with disability do not have it all.

If we have to stay here all night, we will, because we are going to fight for the most vulnerable, the most neglected and the most exploited. Each and every one of us on this side of the House will fight because this commitment should have been made. The Government cannot establish this commission without proper resources and proper funding. In the bill the Government talks about advocacy in relation to the community visitor program, because those advocates are going to raise those issues with the commission. I know everyone on the Government side believes in this commission—so does everyone on this side and the crossbench. Here is an opportunity for this Parliament to do its work to represent the most vulnerable people in New South Wales. We are going to fight every step of the way and we will not support this replacement amendment. We want to see the money before the winter break.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:46):** I move an amendment to the resolution before the House:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "No. 4" with a view to inserting instead:

"and Legislative Council No. 34."

In plain English that means that members on this side of the House are saying we maintain our support for both amendments that were passed by the upper House. That has been our consistent position all the way through. I will not speak for any longer than that because I could not be any more eloquent than the shadow Minister.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (11:47):** Let us be clear: The Opposition interim acting Leader of the House has just moved an amendment to an amendment. I have some experience in the area of disability services. I made it clear yesterday that everyone supports advocacy services. It got \$9½ million last year, \$11½ million this year, \$26 million for advocacy services in the budget and an amendment before—

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** How many times do we need hundreds of people with disabilities in this place?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** You can go for it. You can take it outside. So there is \$26 million spelt out in this year's budget in terms of advocacy services and a commitment from the Minister through an amendment to stop an impasse in the upper House which relates to the commissioner actually investigating this. Because guess what? One person in the advocacy sector advocating \$20 million might be right or might be wrong.

**Ms Kate Washington:** It is not one person.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Hang on a second. I have heard very clearly that the Opposition has been talking to the peak group. What this does and what the effect of this amendment will be is to ensure that the newly established—

*[Members interjected.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Are you going to listen or are you just going to be rude? You're going to be rude.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** It's already gone.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** This amendment enables the newly formed disability services commissioner—and yesterday I heard those opposite talk about IDEAS in Tumut and every other organisation out there—to go out and properly assess this and report back to the presiding officers in Parliament.

**Ms Kate Washington:** They are sacking their workers now.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** What is now on display is an attempt in this place, in the upper House and in communities to say that the Government does not support advocacy services, when it clearly does.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** It is called democracy.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I heard the performance of the member for Newtown. Those opposite have tried a stunt on with an appropriation amendment in the upper House, which again is very clearly unconstitutional. I could reference a whole raft of constitutional legal advice in relation to this, but I will not. The point is that the Government has found a way forward. I urge the peak body on which members opposite are relying to block the bill in this place to consider that when it goes back to the upper House this afternoon, so that we do have a disability services commissioner as of 1 July. The point of having the commissioner on 1 July—and this is what I am passionate about—is so that we can stop abuse in our community where there is abuse happening.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That is what is on the stakeholder.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Those opposite want to stop the commissioner being put in place on 1 July to actually stop abuse. They are playing this game in here over funding—I mean, for goodness sake!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I understand that people are very passionate about this issue. Everybody will have an opportunity to speak in this debate. I am sure all members know how the procedures in this House work. I ask members on all sides to respect each other during this debate. I do not want to put people on calls to order, but I will not tolerate people's disrespect on this particular issue. The Minister has the call and he will be heard in silence.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I know better than anyone the importance of having a commissioner in place as of 1 July to ensure that we do not see ongoing abuse of people with disability. That is the purpose of this legislation. That is why it is before the House. That is why we are trying to move a sensible amendment to allow that newly formed commission to talk to the advocates and get the appropriate concerns raised as to ongoing funding.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** You are the Government.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** There is money in this year's budget. For the member for Canterbury, of all people, to say that there is no money in the budget—when there clearly is—is misleading the Parliament. Then the upper House will be talking about appropriation in relation to advocacy services. This bill is far more important than one element of the disability sector and an appropriation. This bill is more important than that. We say to the upper House that you cannot appropriate money up there. It does not matter if it is this bill or any other bill. What we are now setting is a clear pathway in terms of allowing the newly formed commissioner to go and deal with advocacy and get a report back to the presiding officers, which is what the amendment clearly says. Everyone will see it, it will all be accountable and then we can move forward. There is money in this year's budget for advocacy services—let's be clear on that.

**Mr Jamie Parker:** What about next year?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Again, go and read the amendment, Jamie. Go and see what it says. If you are going to now block the formation of the disability services commissioner for the entire sector, for every person with disability in this State, on the basis that the upper House is unconstitutionally appropriating funds then that rests with you. The Government is going to put forward a pathway which is eminently sensible. It is sensible to the peak group in terms of advocacy, and it should be. If they, along with all of those opposite, are saying, "There will be no disability services commissioner on 1 July; we are going to make this about advocacy funding," then I am sorry but I am saying this commissioner's role is far more important than anything else in dealing with the abuse in the sector that I have seen over generation after generation. It is an important commissioner. We all agree with that. I have heard all those opposite say it, every single one of them—including the member for Newtown. *[Time expired.]*

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (11:53):** It is important to note the reason why we are here in this Chamber having this debate over an amendment that has come back having been insisted upon by the Legislative Council. Last night after we sent this bill back to the Legislative Council I went there to watch the vote take place. It was probably one of the first times I have felt that the Parliament was working at its best. High level discussions and negotiations were happening between people. An unpredictable outcome demonstrated the fact that all members were factoring in the communities and values we represent and making decisions on how we voted. When the rope was put up in the Legislative Council and the votes were counted we watched the decision that

was made take place—the Legislative Council take the position of insisting that this amendment be sent back down to the Legislative Assembly for consideration.

We are considering this amendment because it actually is in order. Yesterday the Speaker of this House provided advice and allowed us to continue with the debate. We know that the Speaker can rule an amendment out of order because it happened with the amendment to provide \$20 million for disability advocacy funding moved by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. That amendment was ruled out of order and we did not get to debate it. The amended bill before us is in order and that is why we are here having this debate. If the Leader of the House or the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services have any evidence or advice as to the unconstitutionality of this amendment then I encourage them to table that advice. I encourage them to take the time that is available to them to share it. Maybe then we will have a look at it and change our position.

The reality is that they are fudging around with words here. The amendment before us seeks to put the job of making this decision about funding disability advocacy services onto a new commissioner, but that new commissioner will be setting up the new commission. The timeline set out in the bill means that they need to report back on that by 31 December. I am not sure if people in this Chamber or those listening to this debate are aware, but the commissioner is only allocated \$3.4 million to establish the Ageing and Disability Commission. Let's put that in perspective. The commission for greyhound racing, which obviously is also welcome, is allocated \$11 million annually. We are providing less than half the resources to support the Ageing and Disability Commissioner in this State than we are providing to the greyhound commission. I mean no offence—I acknowledge the need to protect our furry four-legged friends—but come on! The reality is this new commission will get less than half of the funding that the greyhound commission is getting.

The Minister and the Leader of the House say, "It is just one person." The Treasurer is just one person. The Premier is just one person. I as the member for Newtown am just one person. But we know that our representative democracy and our civil society exist with alliances, representatives and groups that stand up on behalf of massive movements of people, huge swathes of people. I am here representing the 50,000 people who live in the electorate of Newtown and the values of the people who support The Greens. The Premier is in this place having been elected by the people of New South Wales. We are all just one person and we are always here to represent a larger group of people. We know you cannot ignore it. Hundreds of people stood outside of this Chamber and took photos holding "Stand By Me" signs. They said, "We need disability advocacy funding to continue." There were hundreds of people before that at the launch of the campaign and before the election there were thousands of people joining rallies at which we spoke.

It is crucial that we do not try to put this down to one person. At the moment there is one person speaking with key people and trying to negotiate this funding but she is doing that on behalf of hundreds of thousands of people who have taken action over years to be able to see disability advocacy supported. We hear the threat that this amendment will stop the Ageing and Disability Commissioner being established but that is not a real argument. If the Government was genuinely committed to providing funding for advocacy services in this State we would not be faffing around here. We would not be faffing around in the Legislative Council. We would not be seeing Government amendments moved at a minute to midnight. The Government would just be committing the money and making an announcement in the budget this week for the \$20 million. The reason they have not done that is they are not committed to funding it and they are trying to palm it off to someone else, and that is an unacceptable reality.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)**  
**(11:59):** I thank members for their contribution. I remind the House that this is an ageing and disability commissioner—ageing and disability. Thousands of older people will rely on this commission. The upper House is insisting on attaching an appropriation to this bill so that something that is not related to the structure of the commission can be included in legislation. There has been claim after claim made in relation to advocacy funding, so, again, I confirm that I would never allege that anyone in this Chamber does not support advocacy services. I would never make that claim. In fact, the Government allocated \$9.5 million in the last budget and \$11.5 million in this budget for advocacy services. We made a commitment to fund advocacy.

Even the disability sector has said an independent review is needed, which is why we recommended that the first job of the independent commissioner is to undertake this work so we can ascertain exactly how much the sector needs. The amendment says that the commissioner should consult with the sectors. Once again we are offering a reasonable way forward to give the commissioner the opportunity to do that work. We have funded advocacy services. The funding is in this budget. The claim that it was not is wrong. Members of this House should think about the impacts of this. The Government has made its intentions clear based on advice. In relation to the comments made by the member for Newtown, I reiterate my response to the very reasonable question asked by the member for Wyong yesterday. I was proffered the advice that you cannot prejudice legal privilege by tabling the document in the House. I am not going to do that. If I were misleading the House by misrepresenting

legal advice and opinion I would be in enormous trouble, but the reality is the advice is what it is—the amendments are unconstitutional.

The Government wants to establish an ageing and disability commissioner on 1 July to inquire into abuse, neglect or exploitation. The Government wants this commission to be able to educate the public. The Government wants this commission to investigate systemic abuse. The Government wants this commission established on 1 July to support the inquiries that need to take place. And, in what I thought was a very reasonable move, the Government inserted into the legislation a requirement that the first act of this commissioner is to investigate the advocacy services that members opposite have raised in this Parliament to consider the money that needs to be allocated, rather than simply pick an arbitrary figure out of the air that is lower than the \$26 million the Government committed to.

There has been absolutely no rigour or explanation as to how the figure in the amendment has been calculated. We have provided the pathway to establish exactly what that amount will be. But it seems even that is not enough for the Opposition and crossbenchers, who are intent on ensuring the commission will not function from 1 July. They are ignoring the ageing sector because of one appropriation that has nothing to do with the original bill, and they will hold this entire process to ransom. We will not let that happen. I say to members opposite: When you get in your cars or when you go back to your electorates you need to think about the resulting actions in this game of brinksmanship that people, in the other place largely, seem to be playing. It will have real life consequences. From 1 July the standing inquiry by the Ombudsman into people with disability ends. I do not want to think that members would hold up an ageing and disability commissioner because of one claim in relation to one appropriation.

I have agreed with 31 of the 34 amendments. I have proposed to do the independent inquiry that even the sector has been calling for. Those opposite were talking about the independence of the commissioner yesterday, but the first thing they want to do is tell the commissioner what to do. Now they are saying that is not good enough! It seems nothing is good enough for the Opposition. It seems that this has descended into a game-playing exercise, the politics of which I thought ended in 1998. John Della Bosca, Andrew Constance, John Ajaka—all of these people have worked in a bipartisan way. I have met with anyone who wanted to see me about this bill. I have had the crossbench on speed dial. I have spoken to people. We have done everything we possibly can to work this through. Now in spite of all the provisions in the legislation and in spite of all of the good that this could do, the Opposition is saying that because of one provision in relation to a monetary appropriation that has had no rigour around its calculation and in spite of the fact there are appropriations in the budget, you are going to hold the whole lot up. Shame on every single one of you.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:04):** I support my colleague the shadow Minister for disability services to reinforce Labor's position in relation to the current amendments before the House. Many things have been said today and last night about the situation we are now in whereby there is a continuing push from this side of the House to have the Government support something that it appears everybody in the House knows that we need. There is absolute support from this side of the House, and the entire House, for an ageing and disability services commissioner. There is no question—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Vote for it.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** We have supported that to every extent that we can. To make it very clear—

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** You are not supporting it.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** —Labor is supporting that wholeheartedly.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** No, you're not. You're holding the whole thing up.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** But to suggest that it is our fault in any way that there might be some delay to the implementation of a commissioner by 1 July is completely wrong.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You're going to have to explain why you voted against this and held the whole thing up.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** Because you have had in Government—and Minister I completely acknowledge that you are a new Minister in this role—

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** Don't be patronising.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** Excuse me, we have been patronised by the Leader of the House in every debate so far on this, but—

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Get used to it.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** I will never get used to it. I acknowledge that you are a new Minister in this role. In the last term of your Government—because it is the same Government—there were pleas and urgings to you as a Government to fund disability advocacy services. The only reason there is any funding in the current budget for disability advocacy services is that you had people drag you kicking and screaming to put any funding there. You were going to cut them off entirely. That is the only reason there is currently any funding for disability advocacy services. They are currently closing their doors because the funding you have in your budget is a cut; a significant slash to the funds they have been operating with for decades.

These services have been operating in our communities for 50 years, 30 years, and they have done all the groundwork and the preventative support; they have the connections to the communities that they represent. An ageing and disability services commissioner cannot step into the shoes of these organisations that have the control, the connections and the ability to ensure that our community is a fairer community. That is what we are fighting for today—we are fighting to ensure that New South Wales is a more inclusive fair society. We will not drop it today because you have not listened for the past four years. It should have been in the budget this week, but it was not.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** It was!

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** It was not in the budget this week. The funding that the services need to do their jobs was not in the budget this week. They are closing their doors on 1 July. It is too late to task the commissioner with consulting with the sector because advocacy organisations are already closing their doors. We will stand today and fight for a more inclusive and fair society. Unless those organisations keep their doors open and continue to operate, the ageing and disability commissioner's task will be insurmountable because the disability advocacy groups do all the prevention work on the ground, they empower people with disabilities and they provide the peer mentoring, support, information and advocacy that people with disabilities across this State need.

We are going to stand our ground on this because we stand up and will always stand up for the most vulnerable people in our communities. We will keep pushing to ensure that this bill and the Ageing and Disability Commissioner is not lobbed into a role that is not capable of being effective because the disability advocacy services have been wiped out, courtesy of this Government that has ignored them for the past four years. The upshot is that we are standing here today because we do not trust the Government.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:09):** I respond briefly to the Minister's comments about the real-life consequences of us walking away and not having an Ageing and Disability Commissioner in this State. It is important for us to recognise that there are real consequences for not funding disability advocacy organisations because, as we heard from members who have contributed to this debate, those centres are being closed across the State. We know that this is a problem of the Government's making. The Government knew before the budget that it could have committed this money to disability advocacy services. The Government meets with people all the time when it is developing the budget; so the question has to be asked: Why did the Minister for disability, past or present, not meet with the sector to determine what they needed so that it could have been included in this budget?

If the Government has not committed to ongoing disability funding in this budget we know that the Government has no intention to provide it. If the Government wanted to provide ongoing disability funding we would not be here having this debate. The Government is doing this because it wanted to wave a flag and say, "Look at this amazing new Ageing and Disability Commissioner that we have established"—meanwhile ignoring the fact that all the disability advocacy services go under—and think that it would be cheered into the future and ride off on a unicorn. We know that that is not the case because no-one is riding anywhere and no-one is doing anything. If this Government were genuinely committed to disability services and to not leave people behind with real-life consequences it would have agreed in this budget to fund lift upgrades at every station in the State. If the Government were genuinely committed to disability services it would have funded disability-accessible buses across the State. But the Government has not done even that.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: My point of order relates to the amendment to the amendment, and the amendment before the House. The good member is now well and truly outside the leave of the debate, which relates to the amendment. The amendment before the House makes it very clear that the independent Ageing and Disability Commissioner will be able to undertake a review into the funding of advocacy services. The amendment is not about the budget. My point of order relates to relevance. The member should come back to the leave of the bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** To the point of order: As I said when I stood up, I was responding to the Minister's comments when he said there were real-life consequences for this delay. I was talking about the real-life consequences for people living with disability in this State and I was responding directly to the Minister's comments, so I take issue with the point of order.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I understand that a number of amendments relating to this bill are before the House. Members should ensure that they continue to focus their comments on the bill or the amendments that are before the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** What I was talking about particularly was disability advocacy funding and the amendment to the bill. It is important to realise that this is a problem of the Government's own making. It is a problem of the Minister responsible and it is a problem of former Ministers, who have not consulted and advocated internally within the decisions of Cabinet and Government on behalf of people with disability in this State to ensure that ongoing advocacy funding exists. It is the failing of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government to have not recognised the fact that the National Disability Insurance Scheme does not provide the necessary support to the many people living with disability in this State.

While an Ageing and Disability Commissioner can provide education, advice and support it is a very different and escalating process to take an issue to a commissioner as opposed to a local disability advocacy service, which is usually linked to some direct service support and other places that can provide that assistance. The Greens are in this place and out in the community every day. We are not here just for our own electorates; we are here to uphold the values of caring about people and we are here to point out the hypocrisy of this Government when it claims that it cares about funding disability advocacy services. The Government handed down the State Budget this week and we heard the shadow Treasurer say in his reply to the budget that the Government had reached a settlement deal with the light rail subcontractors for \$576 million. Yet the Government cannot commit \$20 million to advocacy funding in this State. As the member for Ballina often says, it is a hill to die on. [*Time expired.*]

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery student leaders from high schools across New South Wales who are attending the Secondary Schools Leadership Program conducted by Parliamentary Education.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (12:15):** By way of reply I need to make a couple of points. First, I have met with advocacy services. In fact, previously we had discussed having a roundtable later in the year about funding; that had been the position. So the suggestion that I have not done that is wrong. I need to clear that up and make that very clear. I again remind the House that we have funded advocacy services in this budget—the money is there. There are two things that I would have thought the Opposition would have said. First would be to name an advocacy service that has closed its doors—I do not know of any. Secondly, to explain how the Opposition has come to this figure of \$20 million.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Not a single person who has spoken in this debate has met with me to speak about advocacy services. Not a single person who has spoken in this debate has written to me about advocacy services. That is how concerned those opposite are about advocacy services. If they were genuine about advocacy services in this debate and they believed everything they said about allowing the commissioner to start, they would say, "Okay, we have got so far on this bill. We have agreed to so many amendments, we will back down on the \$20 million. But we are going to introduce a private member's bill to deal with that issue in isolation." They can have that, but they have said, "No. We are going to hold up the whole debate because this bill is actually not about advocacy funding." It never was. The bill before the House is about establishing a statutory office, the Ageing and Disability Commissioner.

If that is the real position of those opposite, if that is what they believe, introduce a private member's bill and have the conversation. But no, gun to the head, they are saying, "No, we are not going to allow you to have this commissioner established." I remind members that when they vote against this bill and they leave this Chamber on this last sitting day, they will go back to electorates where older people will be abused, they will go back to electorates where people with disability are living in squalor and from 1 July will they have someone to fight for them?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I do not want to put the member for Canterbury on another call to order, but I will do so if she continues to interject. The House will come to order

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Those members who vote against this will need to ask themselves, "Why did we do that?" Even though this bill does not relate to advocacy funding, those opposite are trying to hang something on the end as if it were a Christmas tree, putting in things as they go. They are so fixed on this position that there

is no other way forward, and they will hold up the whole thing because of something that is unrelated. So elder abuse will go on. Grandmothers and grandfathers will be living in squalor. And people with disabilities who need support will not have that advocacy. Those opposite talk about advocacy, but from 1 July their actions will result in the reduction of advocacy.

I again remind those opposite that the claim that there is no advocacy funding in the budget is wrong. That funding continues from 1 July for another 12 months. As part of this amending proposal we have proposed to have an inquiry in relation to that—an independent inquiry asking the commissioner to do its job. I question the motives of those opposite and I am appalled that I have to do that. I am appalled at the actions of those opposite who would rather play politics with the ageing and people with disability than support them. It is all on display. The disgustingness, the evilness, the revolting nature of the politics that is being played here is disgraceful. It is actually evil that those opposite would allow the most vulnerable in our community to go without because of one particular amendment. You say to me "How dare I." I say to you, "How dare you?" How dare you put people who are vulnerable, people who have disabilities—like me, who has a disability—in this position—

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

Don't you dare groan. How dare you!

**Ms Tamara Smith:** I didn't groan.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Whoever it was, that was disgraceful. I would not have thought it would have been you, in fairness, so I withdraw that.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** But somebody did. You lot opposite need to grow up; you just need to grow up. This is about a serious reform that allegedly had bipartisan support; a serious reform that protects people. The Opposition is now saying that because of one appropriation unrelated to this bill it will block the lot. That reflects on them. When people who have been abused or neglected do not have that advocate, those opposite will have to explain to them why they voted against this bill; why they held it up. Bring in your private member's bill. Let us discuss advocacy. Let us have the independent commissioner do the analysis. Do not hold this up for people who need it. It is a great reform for those who require it.

I would have thought better of just about every member opposite. I thought they would have accepted something that was reasonable such as an independent inquiry. For goodness sake, that is what parliaments do, that is what commissions do. Why would you not accept an independent inquiry to arrive at a figure that we can all move forward on. But, no. We have advocacy funding in place. I have said that the Government is supporting advocacy. The Government is supporting advocacy organisations; we have funded them. This is actually a reasonable pathway, but it seems the die has been cast. I will let other people decide who was reasonable in this debate and who was not.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the Legislative Assembly agree to Legislative Council amendment No. 4, insist on its disagreement a second time with Legislative Council amendment No. 34, and moves a further amendment as circulated, upon which the member for Liverpool has moved to delete all words after "No. 4" and replace with "and Legislative Council amendment No. 34". The question is that the amendment of the member for Liverpool be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....45  
Noes .....47  
Majority.....2

#### AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Dib, Mr J  
Finn, Ms J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Leong, Ms J  
McGirr, Dr J

Atalla, Mr E  
Butler, Mr R  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Donato, Mr P  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
McKay, Ms J

Bali, Mr S  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mehan, Mr D

## AYES

Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R  
Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

Minns, Mr C  
Parker, Mr J  
Scully, Mr P  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

O'Neill, Dr M  
Piper, Mr G  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

## NOES

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

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

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  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G

**Amendment negatived.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question now is that the Legislative Assembly agree to Legislative Council amendment No. 4 and insist on its disagreement a second time with Legislative Council amendment No. 34, and moves a further amendment as circulated.

**Motion agreed to.****Messages**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)**  
**(12:28):** I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council advising that the Legislative Assembly agrees to Legislative Council amendment No. 4 and insists on its disagreement a second time with Legislative Council amendment No. 34, and moves a further amendment as circulated.

In moving that motion I remind members of the House again that what is being asked for is a one-off \$20 million allocation versus \$26 million, which has been allocated for advocacy funding for two years. If this does not pass it will risk the introduction of the commission. I do not want to see that happen, and I would ask that the consideration be put.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the Minister that he is moving the motion without debate. The question is that a message be sent to the Legislative Council advising that the Legislative Assembly agrees to Legislative Council amendment No. 4 and insists on its disagreement a second time with Legislative Council amendment No. 34, and moves a further amendment as circulated.

**Motion agreed to.****PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER AMENDMENT BILL 2019****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (12:30):** The amendments to the Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010 propose the establishment of a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office and an increase in the scope of the Parliamentary Budget Office's key functions. The Government sees many reasons to oppose the bill. The costs of having a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office and broadening its remit cannot be justified. In

2011 the Committee on the Parliamentary Budget Office found that the benefits of a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office were outweighed by the costs and did not provide value for money for the people of New South Wales. The reason for that conclusion was that the current arrangements for transparency and accountability in New South Wales elections were already adequate.

I will remind the House of those current measures for transparency. The current Act establishes the Parliamentary Budget Office as an independent office of the Parliament; the office provides costings of election policies in response to requests by parliamentary leaders and budget impact statements for all costed policies; and the appointment of the Parliamentary Budget Officer commences on 1 September in the year prior to a general State election—which is sufficient for the fulfilment of the functions of the Parliamentary Budget Office—and ends three months following the election.

The current term of appointment allows sufficient time for the Parliamentary Budget Office to discharge its duties and promote transparency and accountability in elections. Indeed, at the most recent election it commendably performed its role. The Government and Opposition policies were costed and there was commendable transparency. A permanent Parliamentary Budget Office would need a broader function to justify its role and purpose within our parliamentary system. I very carefully scoured the second reading speech of the member for Keira, who has put forward this bill, and no compelling justification was put forward to the House for the proposed expansion of the role under this bill.

For the 2019 election the Parliamentary Budget Office was allocated \$2.25 million to meet its capital, operational and staffing requirements for a term of 10 months. A permanent Parliamentary Budget Office will need a greater budget allocation based on the proposed expansion in the scope of its functions and reporting activities. There is no justifiable purpose for that substantial increase in outlay. It is very interesting that the member for Keira in his budget-in-reply speech today was complaining about government expenditure and increased debt yet he puts forward a bill with an ill-conceived and ill-justified rationale that will add to the cost of government. The inconsistency and hypocrisy of his position is quite extraordinary and laid bare. It is an additional expense for the Government and for taxpayers that is not needed.

As the bill is drafted, a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office would substantially duplicate functions that are currently undertaken by parliamentary committees, such as the Public Accounts Committee of the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council Public Accountability Committee and other general purpose standing committees. It is important that our elected representatives, who are already properly funded to undertake financial accountability and transparency in government, should be allowed to fulfil their democratic purpose and duties. To have unelected people fulfilling important functions of elected representatives is unacceptable, anti-democratic and very inconsistent with the tenets of our democracy. What are members of Parliament to do if we appoint statutory office holders to fulfil all of the roles that we are charged with under legislation and under our parliamentary remit?

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

I hear the chatter across the Chamber. There is a lot of chatter in the Labor Party at the moment. Of course, they do not want democracy. They do not want members of Parliament to have a meaningful role in our democracy. They want to outsource everything because at their very core they are very, very lazy people. They just want to recline on the couch and go to sleep. They do not want to do their jobs. They continually display themselves to be innumerate—they do not like numbers, they do not understand numbers.

**Mr Mark Coure:** They don't understand.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** They waste money when they are in government and they complain about things that they do not understand when they are in opposition. It would be good for our democracy to make them do a little bit of work—to read a few balance sheets, to read the budget papers properly instead of selectively, as was evident from the budget-in-reply speech, and to actually do their job. The bill as drafted would duplicate the functions of several government agencies, including the NSW Treasury and the office of the Auditor-General. The bill substantially undermines the integrity of the New South Wales parliamentary system. In our system of government the appropriate avenue for interrogation of budgetary, fiscal and economic issues is the budget estimates process. Recently the Legislative Council substantially expanded the days of hearing for this process. That is another reason why a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office cannot be justified.

The proposed Parliamentary Budget Office arrangement would duplicate and undermine one of the tenets of the New South Wales parliamentary system and compromise its integrity. In short, New South Wales has a Parliamentary Budget Office that is fit for purpose. It is well resourced, it produces independent advice that informs voters in New South Wales and, importantly, it is a focused office. It is not a wide-ranging, ill-focused, expensive body, as this bill proposes to establish. It is a focused body, it is not ill-conceived and it is not an

unwarranted expense to the budget. Accordingly, the Government opposes the proposed measures outlined in this private member's bill.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:39):** I support the Parliamentary Budget Officer Amendment Bill 2019, a very good private member's bill brought forward by the shadow Treasurer. During the contribution of the member for Ku-ring-gai I shook my head and wondered what he was talking about because not very far from here in a place called Canberra—that mystical place a bit south of here—there is a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office. The member for Ku-ring-gai suggested that a permanent office in New South Wales would undermine the basic tenets of the parliamentary democracy. I hope when the member revisits his contribution to the debate and looks closely at what the Parliamentary Budget Office in Canberra does he will reconsider his views.

The Parliamentary Budget Office in Canberra can be accessed by all parliamentarians and gives advice on the estimated financial implications or costs of their policy proposals. One of the key roles of politicians is to come up with ideas that will benefit our communities. The Government thinks this is strange because those opposite believe they are the holders of all knowledge. Parliamentarians have a broad range of experiences and have good ideas. However, at the moment they do not have any facility to properly cost the impact of their policies. That means a lot of good ideas are not aired until just before an election, when they can be costed. The Government often criticises the Opposition and the crossbenchers by saying, "You have had no ideas until the election comes along". One reason we do not want to put our ideas out there is because those opposite steal our good ideas. Another reason is that we cannot get our ideas costed until the final moments before an election. It is not that we do not have ideas or we are not developing policy, it is that it is very hard to get proper costings of our policies.

In Canberra it is recognised that the Parliamentary Budget Office [PBO] helps to level the playing field by providing access to costing and other analytical services which, in the absence of the PBO, would normally be exclusively available to the government. The reason the State Government opposes this private member's bill is that it does not want the Opposition and the crossbenchers to have access to these analytical services. It does not want the Opposition and the crossbenchers to have a fair go in this place. The Government is now finding out the consequences of the last election as it does not have the numbers in the upper House. It has to do some work and negotiate to get legislation through this place. The Government is struggling and does not like to be in this position. This bill would establish a full-time Parliamentary Budget Office to strengthen democracy in our State. It would give us a better opportunity to come up with properly costed ideas and the Government may adopt these ideas. Government backbenchers may also want to use the office to properly cost and analyse their ideas before they take them forward to Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries. The Parliamentary Budget Office in Canberra began operation in July 2012. I refer to commentary on the PBO:

... it has proved to be the greatest advance in fiscal accountability in many years, some say since the senate estimates committee system was set up in 1970. And it has dramatically changed the way election campaigns run.

...

Before the PBO, the policy debate at election time was no fair contest. When it came to working out the cost of policy proposals, the attempts of oppositions, minor parties and independents were not quite back-of-the-envelope but they were certainly no match for the boffins of the treasury and finance departments, which worked for the government.

The establishment of a PBO is about fairness and good government. A PBO helps the Opposition to hold the Government to account. In order to do so, oppositions need full-time access to these types of services. The commentary went on:

[Before the PBO] It didn't matter if the policy idea was fundamentally sound, a simple error of arithmetic was enough to see it killed off. Every campaign featured numerous stories about costing "black holes".

Establishing a permanent PBO in New South Wales, as proposed by the shadow Treasurer in this bill, would take out of the equation the numerous stories about costing "black holes". The community would have proper policy arguments based on proper costings rather than a back-and-forth process of questions about costings. The community is sick of politicians arguing about costings and accusing the other side of having a black hole or costings that have not been properly done. Having a permanent PBO would get rid of these arguments and make members more accountable to the community. Members could come up with ideas that are properly costed and we could have a proper debate through the four-year term of government about the best ways to provide services and policies for the people of New South Wales.

The Government argues against having a permanent PBO, although around 30 countries have established such institutions. Most of these institutions were established after the 2008 global financial crisis because those countries saw their establishment as a necessary function of government to ensure that a service is available to members of Parliament to have their policies properly costed. That is why establishing a permanent PBO in this State is so important. Establishing such a body should not be left to the last moment when everyone is rushing to get their policies heard. I believe the Government issued some of its policy costings one day before the last

election, which meant nobody had a chance to properly analyse the policies. The shadow Treasurer did a fantastic job in getting his policy costings out early and he got a big tick for doing so. He was able to issue his policy costings early even though, after years of policy development, he had to wait until the office was re-established just before the election to have them costed. That delay in costing does not make for good government. In Canberra there has been consistently high demand for policy costings and budget analysis. According to the Parliamentary Budgetary Office in Canberra:

In the 10-week period from the beginning of July 2013 to polling day on 7 September 2013 we responded to more than 1,100 requests with no fully specified requests remaining incomplete.

Over the course of our first three years of operations we received almost 3,200 requests for policy costings and budget analyses and provided more than 3,000 responses.

This Government says that having a permanent PBO is not necessary. That is clearly incorrect. This service is needed to create better government across the board. A permanent PBO would ensure that the Government, the Opposition and the crossbenchers are better able to serve their communities and bring forward ideas that will not be shot down because costings are not available. It is important that good ideas stand up because they are good ideas. Having a permanent PBO would mean that we have better outcomes overall. Many Government members want a permanent PBO they think it is a good idea. But because the Opposition has brought forward this private member's bill those opposite are obliged to vote against it. There was irony in the Minister for Disability Services asking why we had not put up a private member's bill.

How many private member's bills actually pass through this place? I cannot remember any; it does not happen. Perhaps in six weeks or at the end of the year the Government will bring forward a bill to set up a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office. Those opposite know that having a full-time service would be a good idea but they do not want to give credit to the Opposition for bringing forward this bill. Having a permanent PBO would be to everybody's benefit. One day those opposite will be in opposition—sooner rather than later, we hope—and then I bet they will ask for a permanent PBO to be established. Those opposite should support this bill brought forward by the shadow Treasurer. It is a very good bill that is modelled on the PBO in Canberra and the institutions established in 30 countries. It is best practice and that is why this bill should be supported.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:49):** I make a contribution to debate on the Parliamentary Budget Officer Amendment Bill 2019. I thank the member for Keira, the shadow Treasurer, for introducing this important bill as part of ongoing reform. The heart of this bill is about the contestability of ideas and an appetite for a reform agenda. Good ideas are based on good information and analysis which should be available to every member of Parliament—in the Government, in the Opposition and on the crossbenches. With the increasing number of members of the crossbench, they deserve and should be entitled to have the same level of resources as does any Government or Opposition member in order to ensure that their ideas and policies undergo proper and thorough analysis provided by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Meaningful debate cannot be held without first putting good policy and ideas through the ringer and being scrutinised and assessed by an independent oversight body that has no vested interest and will provide good practical advice. That allows for good government and the implementation of good policy. Central to this Chamber and our democracy is the idea of contestability. To be competitive one has to have a good product. A good product comes about from being contested; from good information, facts and analysis; and from private discussion with people with different skills. No-one in this Chamber has all of the necessary skills or a monopoly on good ideas.

**Mr Rob Stokes:** You have got a lot of sense.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** I note the interjection of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and I could not agree more. For once, he is not misleading the House. The contestability of ideas is not in between the pre- and post-election period; it happens throughout the term of the Parliament. Members who have ideas should be able to get assistance and support to ensure their ideas can become even greater ideas. Let us make ideas great again through the Parliamentary Budget Officer. No more fake news, no more holding up the *Daily Liberal* in this Parliament. All members of this House should have their ideas contested. If Parliament and this Chamber are not about contesting ideas based on good analysis and facts, why are we here?

The member for Wyong in his contribution to the debate said that this legislation is about creating a level playing field. Undoubtedly, Government members and ministerial staff have access to bureaucracy which Opposition members and Independents do not have. Surely the party of the free market would want a competitive market in this space. Surely Government members do not want to be known as free market frauds who speak the language of a free market but do not support a free and competitive market to ensure that each and every agent in that market is able to compete on a fair basis. We do not want an anti-competitive policy cartel in this place. We should ensure that good monopolistic competition is always alive and well in both chambers of this Parliament.

The bill is also about an appetite for reform, which is an ongoing process. We do not stop work after an election; we keep on going all the time. Reform means that we are moving in the right direction to make things better, more competitive and more productive. The statistics show that productivity has been on a decline. Opposing this bill will add to that decline. For people to be productive they need a reform agenda that will continue to change the way things are done. If we stand still we will fall behind as others walk right past. The purpose of the shadow Treasurer's Parliamentary Budget Officer Amendment Bill is about reform and making changes that will make our community better.

This Parliament cannot fall behind in implementing reforms that have been made in many institutions around the world. I am surprised by the argument of the member for Ku-ring-gai who said that this bill undermines democracy. If that is so, then democracy is undermined by fiscal institutions like the Parliamentary Budget Office in the United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, Victoria and even in Canberra. I thought they were good democracies. Investing in institutions is important because they frame the way that things should be done. The Parliamentary Budget Office is an independent, non-partisan institution that allows all members to contribute to the policy and the public debate space.

As I said in my inaugural speech, one of the great measures of progress in our society is the way in which we debate issues in Parliament and in the public space. We need to have a dialogue that is based on facts, good information and independent advice. We cannot have meaningful dialogue based on fake news and minimal information. The purpose of the Parliamentary Budget Officer is to allow that institutional framework for all members to have meaningful dialogue with one another and with the public. We should not be afraid of reform. We should not think of the Parliamentary Budget Officer as we think of the character in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* We should not be afraid of good and proper reform that allows members of Parliament to better engage with the community and to devise ideas that will assist the State in a competitive economy. This bill is about producing greater prosperity for the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:56):** I welcome the opportunity to contribute to debate on the Parliamentary Budget Officer Amendment Bill 2019. I congratulate my mate and fellow Illawarra member of Parliament the member for Keira on introducing this bill because it is an important investment in institutions not only in this Parliament but also in our democracy and in public debate. The member for Keira, the acting Leader of the Opposition in this place, gave a speech in reply to the budget. I am sure that in question time later today the Government will attempt to criticise his speech by painting a picture of what he did and did not address. The member for Keira said that the Labor Opposition believes in making sure that we have the best institutions for our State and more broadly for our country and our communities, which is where the Parliamentary Budget Officer comes into play.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer Amendment Bill 2018, which was introduced by the Treasurer prior to the election, established the Parliamentary Budget Officer. In his second reading speech the Treasurer said: The Parliamentary Budget Officer assists to promote transparency and accountability in New South Wales elections. It is important that the legislative framework supports the Parliamentary Budget Officer to prepare accurate, high-quality and independent election policy costings to Parliamentary leaders. The Treasurer introduced this legislation a few months before the election but after the election the office virtually disappeared overnight. It was good enough at the time for members of all parties to have the opportunity to have accurate, high-quality and independent election policy costings but it is not good enough for us to have that in the remaining four years of a parliamentary term. It is not good enough for the Fifty-seventh Parliament to have available to it the resources it needs to properly undertake and engage in debate. That is what the people of New South Wales expect of us. The member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Wyong made some very good points.

The Parliamentary Budget Office is not a new institution. As the member for Wyong said, 30 countries around the world have a parliamentary budget office or similar institution as part and parcel of their democracy seven days a week, 355 days a year. In the same way, the office operates in Canberra 365 days a year. It operates in Victoria, too, thanks to the Andrews Government, 365 days a year. However, in this place, the office operates for only a few months at the end of a four-year parliamentary term, when there is a conga line of stuff. Everything gets jammed up and is thrown at the Parliamentary Budget Office for independent costings and determination. There is also a little loophole that the Government used to avoid sending some of its proposals to costing. Although the Parliamentary Budget Officer belled the cat on the looming net debt burden that was coming our way through the budget if the Coalition was re-elected, not many people saw that because it was dropped right towards the end of the process.

The member for Ku-ring-gai said that the Opposition needed to look at some balance sheets and understand them. He accused us of being innumerate. The one thing Labor Party members can do is count. Innumeracy is a hollow criticism by the member for Ku-ring-gai. He said we need to do more work but that there should be no more resources available to us for that sort of work. If that were the case the logic would extend to

the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. We seek the Parliamentary Counsel's advice on what to include in private member's bills, amendments and the like. So it is okay for the Opposition to access expert, independent advice on the legislative side of the equation, but somehow, according to the twisted logic of the member for Ku-ring-gai and his wet-lettuce defence of the Government's desire to vote against this bill, it is not okay for the Opposition to have access to independent, expert advice when it comes to costing policies. It does not make sense.

I note that the member for Wollondilly is in the House. I have cited him a couple of times in my recent contributions. I mention him again because earlier today we had a brief conversation in the corridor about the Maldon-Dombarton rail link. One big question is not only how much it might cost, but also how we might finance it. The rail link has general support from the member for Wollondilly, his predecessor, the member for Kiama, the member for Shellharbour, who is in the Chamber, and the member for Keira. We all understand the basics—that it has to be done and it is right to do it—but we are left with the question of how to work out its cost and fund it. That is the sort of advice we could get from a full-time parliamentary budget officer. That is the sort of addition we could make to debate by having a permanent parliamentary budget officer. That is the sort of benefit and independent advice our colleagues in the Federal and Victorian parliaments get every day.

The bill is an important addition to our democracy. The member for Macquarie Fields talked about the need for competition and the competition of ideas. I absolutely embrace that. This should be a Chamber of debate. Too often, it turns into a Chamber where cheap shots, scoring points and a few laughs are the substance of the contributions. When I was at former Prime Minister Hawke's memorial service last Friday, I met my good friend and mentor Dr Craig Emerson, the former Minister for Trade among other things in the Rudd and Gillard governments. Later he wrote in the *Australian Financial Review* about that event and quoted something he was fond of saying in the House. It is something I subscribe to, having an economics background. He wrote:

Competition is good but more competition is better.

By trying to oppose and shut down the establishment of a permanent parliamentary budget officer in the New South Wales Parliament—which I bet by the end of this term will be implemented anyway—the Government is shutting down competition. It is trying to deal from the bottom of the deck—trying to tilt the pinball machine—in relation to competition and parliamentary debate in this place because the Government absolutely hates the idea that more competition is better. If the Opposition is equipped with access to advice and expert knowledge, we will get away from the silly little debates that take place from time to time about costings being out by a million bucks here or there. At the heart of those debates are the services, infrastructure and support we provide to the people of New South Wales and the support that each of us wants to provide to our communities.

Over the past few weeks a number of new members have made their inaugural speeches. They were great contributions, filled with optimism about how the members might go about things. The speeches were also often filled with proposals that will not be completed in a single term. Any Government member who speaks about what they might like to achieve during their time in this place and who does not recognise that they might not get it all done in one term and that they might not always be on the Government benches, should vote in support of this bill. The Government should be willing to set up, support and build on the foundation of our democracy by introducing a permanent parliamentary budget officer because that is the sort of assistance the Government will need in the future.

I hope that the Opposition is not on this side of the Chamber for much longer. I hope Government members experience being on this side because in the future they will understand why we put forward the bill. The Government will thank us for having forced it to invest in our democracy by providing the tools it will need in Opposition to propose ideas or to combat ideas that we might put forward. The member for Keira should be congratulated on the bill. His work and advocacy should be recognised. He is investing in our Parliament, our institutions and our democracy because at the end of the day that will make for better debates, better public policy and better contributions from every member in this place.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:06):** I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Parliamentary Budget Officer Amendment Bill 2019, which has at its core something important: transparency and credibility. Ultimately the people in our communities throughout the State need to know that when we say something we mean it—we mean what we say and we say what we mean—and most importantly, that programs are appropriately costed and money can be put into the budget. Long story short: We want people to know that when we say something in this place and establish policy, whether it be during a campaign or during the course of our parliamentary duties, it will happen. The community deserves that certainty and the bill will provide that certainty. I commend the member for Keira, who is the shadow Treasurer and the acting Leader of the Opposition, for bringing this bill to the House and for his commitment to ensuring that we have nothing less than the best process of policy development.

I also congratulate him on a sound and stellar budget reply speech this morning. It was a speech of conviction, based on Labor values for a fairer New South Wales and a better outcome for the people of our State. A fully-funded and permanent parliamentary budget office will drastically enhance the ability of all members in this House and in the other place to develop policy ideas and proposals to benefit the people we are privileged to represent. My colleagues the member for Wollongong and the member for Macquarie Fields eloquently and accurately laid out in clear terms the importance of institutions. I agree with everything they said but I am a little perplexed by the contribution of the member for Ku-ring-gai. Many times I am disappointed that politics gets in the way of pragmatism.

This bill is a pragmatic approach to ensure certainty and transparency when it comes to policy. The Government's resistance to this bill is disappointing. However, I do not find it surprising, as it is clear that at times this Government's entrenched culture is: my way or the highway. They are not open to suggestions or scrutiny and just want to power ahead with their own agenda without due consideration, debate or consultation. We have seen that being played out in the Parliament, in the other place and in here, with the bill that we recently divided on. Ultimately that comes down to a lack of negotiation, consultation and due consideration. We on this side know that the best outcomes are achieved by working together. There are some things that we do not agree on, but there are lots of things that we do agree on; this bill is something that we should all agree on because our communities expect to have certainty in policy and the subsequent funding model.

Let us be very clear: We all enjoy the competition of ideas. The member for Wollongong spoke about that, as did the member for Macquarie Fields, and it is important because when we have competition of ideas we challenge each other, and when we challenge each other we force ourselves to do better. But we need to make sure that the policy instruments are costed and credible. As the member for Keira said in his second reading speech, this is not a revolutionary idea by any stretch of the imagination. Frankly, it is just common sense. We talk a lot about our role in this grand Parliament, and we should never stop talking about having a correct process in place for policy certainty and credibility, and of course the associated cost.

The Federal Parliament has a permanent budget office, and rightly so. We know that it plays a critical role in ensuring that all members—government, opposition, crossbench—are able to properly develop and cost their policy ideas before bringing them to their party room or the Parliament for debate and consideration. The desire for negotiation and consultation that I believe each and every member in this place has—and if they do not, they should have—and for developing policy based on community expectation is so important. But the community expects that that should be done correctly and validly.

We on this side of the House do not subscribe to the notion that the role of backbench members is to sit there and gobble up whatever is fed to them by the front bench, or that ideas from backbench members are unwanted and best kept to themselves. The vast array of talent among my colleagues on this side runs through the back bench and the front bench. Whilst I do not know each of the members opposite intimately, I am sure there is the talent to come up with policy ideas for the betterment of communities. We know that all members in our party, regardless of their rank or position, have a positive contribution to make in this place and we want them to be able to make that contribution in a transparent, collaborative and consultative manner. This bill will provide an important instrument for that.

When we create policy, it must come from the community, but in our great party in this great State we rely on our 18,000 rank and file members to give us counsel and advice when it comes to the establishment of policy. Frankly, that is the role of every major party. We do it within our great party and it is something that I know all of my colleagues are very proud of. We know that a permanent parliamentary budget office is critical to allowing that to happen because it will ensure that the ideas and policy proposals put forward by the non-executive members can be fully and correctly costed, scrutinised and examined. But of course this Government, and some members opposite, clearly do not want that. I find that very disappointing because this is a sensible bill. It will help us to make sensible decisions for the betterment of our community and to ensure that policy-setting platforms are costed appropriately.

We are in the third term of a government that was, frankly, lacking in talent to begin with and is now well and truly filling out its front bench with people who I am sure are trying their best. However, we are not seeing the results that we require for a progressive and prosperous State. The budget that was handed down this week raises serious issues. The economic storm clouds are not on the horizon anymore, they are coming to the shore. The Government has ignored that, instead crowing about the State's prosperity and talking itself up. In my view it thinks it is immune to the storm that is coming and that is going to hit hard.

My advice to those Ministers and members opposite is very simple: Be better at what you do; be better at policy creation, be more consultative, and make sure that you support this bill because our communities deserve to have certainty. We need to install credibility into the processes of government. I urge all members, particularly the backbenchers on the other side, where I know there is a considerable amount of talent, to think long and hard

about why the Government and its Ministers are resisting this simple proposal. I urge them to support the bill brought forward by the member for Keira to establish a permanent parliamentary budget office so that everyone has the ability to develop good, detailed policies for us to debate. The community must know that the costs of those policies can be relied on. We all know that there is distrust in our communities about the process. [*Extension of time*]

Let us be blunt and honest with ourselves: the element of distrust in our communities is something that each and every one of us has experienced, and I must say that, regardless of members' political persuasion, I do not believe that is fair on many members in here. I do not know each and every member intimately, but I do believe that is an unfair judgement on some members here. This bill will provide an instrument of certainty and credibility so that people will know that we mean what we say and we say what we mean. We will have policies in place that are consistent with our communities' expectations. They will be fully financed and funded and the days of, "Oh well, they say that now, but they'll never do it", will be gone. That is good for each and every one of us in this place. That is why I urge all members and the Government to support the bill.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:17):** I make a contribution to the Parliamentary Budget Officer Amendment Bill 2019, having had good experience in this matter in my fairly recent background. In 2011, when I first came to this place, I was appointed to a joint committee. The committee was then dealing with the question of the Parliamentary Budget Office. It was chaired by the member for Baulkham Hills, who is now the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I have a folder that developed as a consequence of that committee's work. I estimate there are some 500 pages, but on a number of them I have managed to print two pages on one, and I have done some front-and-back printing as well, so let us say there are some 600 or 700 pages.

I would have thought that before the member for Ku-ring-gai came into the Chamber today and made his insightful contribution to this debate he would have read the committee's entire deliberations so that his comments were well researched. That is not what I heard him say, which was fundamentally that he can afford a more expensive suit, so therefore his opinion is more important. That was almost literally what he said, word for word. The member for Baulkham Hills may well have read this material before coming into this Chamber and making his contribution. If he had, he would have been well aware that at that time the Committee on the Parliamentary Budget Office had received submissions from a range of sources, including and not limited to then-Parliamentary Budget Officer Mr Tony Harris, the Canadian Parliamentary Budget Office, the parliamentary budget officer of the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis, the United Kingdom's House of Commons Scrutiny Unit and the Scottish Parliament.

We also received submissions—and this is not the entire list—from the Certified Practising Accountants of Australia and from the Business Council of Australia. Given that cohort, regardless of your politics you would think that that is a reasonably robust, broad range of submissions—and it was. In particular, the Business Council of Australia paid a research group to write a 54-page submission to be added onto their own submission. It was called "Enhancing Budget Integrity in Australia: An options paper for the Business Council of Australia". A broad range of politics, countries, philosophical backgrounds and ideas were represented. Every single submission made to that committee endorsed, supported and encouraged an ongoing parliamentary budget office. Whatever their backgrounds, reasons or rationale, they all said that having a parliamentary budget office is, fundamentally, a potential cornerstone of incredible democracy.

If the Government were to vote against this bill today—let us face it, the Government moved an amendment to the bill in 2011 under false pretences, voted against this bill in its previous form during the last term of government and is likely to vote against it again now—I remind Government members they would be voting against the Certified Practising Accountants of Australia, the Business Council of Australia and the entirety of the unanimously supported budget offices of the Scottish Parliament, the UK House of Commons, the Canadian Parliament and the Dutch Parliament. Every single one of those groups thinks that a parliamentary budget office is a good idea. At this moment there are about 45 people on planet Earth who might come into this Chamber and vote to say that it is not a good idea. I suspect that a whole bunch of those people actually believe it is a good idea, but they have been told that they have to vote no. It is almost like the paralysis that Australia faces in trying to deal with climate change. Three quarters of the Federal Parliament believes that we need to do something—well, 74 per cent—and 26 per cent do not. It is incredible.

Globally, people with access, degrees, qualifications and experience well beyond that of many members of this Chamber have all said that a parliamentary budget office is an essential option as a cornerstone of democracy. Here we are in New South Wales and we just cannot come to terms with that. We just cannot cope with that. Members can imagine the process in that committee. We got hundreds and hundreds of pages of submissions all endorsing a parliamentary budget office. We got all the evidence showing why parliamentary budget offices work, how important they are and what a significant benefit they have been to democracy. Members can imagine the surprise of everyone on that committee—from all sides of politics, let me tell you; I was in the

room—when the chair tabled his report that said we do not need a parliamentary budget office. He tabled a report that was contrary to every single submission made.

**Debate interrupted.**

### *Committees*

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

### **Meeting**

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

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that the time and the place for the first meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety will be Thursday 20 June 2019 at 2 p.m. in rooms 814 to 815.

### *Motions*

## **EDUCATION FUNDING**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:25):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the Government for its delivery of record amounts of needs-based Gonski funding to schools.
- (2) Commends the Government for its record investment in school infrastructure.
- (3) Condemns the Opposition for underfunding schools and neglecting students for 16 years while in government.

I thank the House for the opportunity to speak on the important matter of our fantastic education system in New South Wales. Yesterday I gave a notice of motion that was clear and concise and that set out a statement of facts: the fact that whether we are talking about Muswellbrook South Public School, Armidale City Public School, Scone High School, Willow Tree Primary School or Russell Lea Public School, our kids are thriving in learning environments that present them with extraordinary opportunity; the fact that because of this Government's sound management of the State's finances we are delivering record amounts of needs-based funding into our schools; and the fact that over the next nine years to 2027 the New South Wales Government will fund an additional \$6.4 billion into schools, bringing the State's total investment over this period to \$148 billion. This is an unprecedented amount. It has to be stressed that this level of needs-based funding is only possible because of the tough decisions this Government made when it first assumed office in 2011 and how it got the budget back under control after the fiscal mismanagement that was a hallmark of the last Labor Government.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

I remember it well. I remember observing it from outside this place and getting some perspective. Not only are we providing record amounts of needs-based funding, but we are also the only State in Australia to have created a specialised equity fund for government schools that will ensure that no child is disadvantaged by the Commonwealth's Choice and Affordability Fund for non-government schools. The \$712 million New South Wales school equity program ensures that kids in our public schools are not treated as second class citizens. Equity lies at the heart of our education system. Every child is important, regardless of what type of school they attend. I see this day in, day out, whether I am visiting St Cecilia's Balgowlah; St Keiran's, Manly Vale; or Manly Village Public School.

Recurrent funding by itself is not enough. Our kids also must be taught in cutting-edge learning environments. That is why we have embarked upon the most ambitious school building program in Australia's history, here in New South Wales. Over the next four years alone we are investing \$6.7 billion to build 190 new or upgraded classrooms. The 2019-2020 Budget provides funding for new high schools in Bungendore and Jerrabomberra. We are also prioritising planning for primary schools at Murrumbateman and Googong. This Government will deliver new facilities at Queanbeyan High School, Karabar High School, Queanbeyan West Public School and Queanbeyan East Public School. It continues our work delivering new and upgraded schools at Kingscliff, Tweed Heads, Lennox Head, Byron Bay and Pottsville. This budget will provide funding to plan upgrades at Bexhill Public School, Bangalow Public School and Teven-Tintenbar Public School.

We are also investing record amounts in our teachers on the front line. Since coming to office we have hired an additional 4,560 teachers and as part of our election platform we have committed to hiring 4,600 more. We are also setting new standards for teacher quality, creating teacher success profiles that will ensure the teachers we hire are the very best. We are ploughing on full steam ahead and delivering on our election commitments. We are clearing the maintenance backlog left by those opposite. We are hiring at least one full-time psychologist at every school.

We are providing before- and after-school care for all primary school students by 2021. We are providing \$10 million to empower students to create more sustainable schools by investing in practical programs to help them make their school environments cleaner. We are also focusing on what goes on inside the classroom. We recognise that we must get back to basics and declutter the curriculum, so we are undertaking the first comprehensive review of the curriculum in over 30 years. We have also developed new, modernised syllabuses in English, science, technology, maths, history, geography and languages. I thank the most recent education Minister, the Hon. Rob Stokes, for his work, particularly in delivering two comprehensively upgraded schools in my electorate—one in Manly Vale and the other in Curl Curl North. They are two examples of what our massive amounts of funding are delivering for our communities. One school was delivered on time, and opened on day one of term one. For the other, a sod has already been turned and work is underway.

That brings me back to my opening remarks. What we are about to hear from the member for Lakemba will be a distortion of the facts. The member is to be respected for his views, given his tremendous background in education, but what we are about to hear from him will not be the reality of where our funding is making the greatest difference. New South Wales has one of the best education systems in the world. We are spending more on our students and school infrastructure than any State government in Australian history, yet our job of striving for excellence is by no means complete. We intend to continue governing for all students in New South Wales, equipping them with the best possible tools to enable them to be productive and engaged twenty-first century citizens. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (13:31):** I thank the member for Manly for bringing this motion, and I thank him for his compliment. There are things that we will agree on and, of course, there will be things that we disagree on. But I guarantee this: there will not be a distortion of the facts. I move:

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

"this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the Government for its delivery of Gonski funding to schools.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government for its investment in school infrastructure."

On Monday I was excited because I had heard there was going to be some great school investment announcements. When the Treasurer started to talk about Gonski and investing in schools I thought he was about to say, "You know what? We are going to fully fund Gonski." By the time he finished I had not been so disappointed since the 1999 National Rugby League grand final when St George was meant to win and did not. I went in there thinking there was going to be a great deal. That is my only dad joke for today, I promise.

I acknowledge the Government is making big investments in education—it has signed up for Gonski and it is working on school infrastructure. But as has been shown time and time again, a lot of the things taking place are not quite working out. If we look at the infrastructure element, for example, 117 of the 190 schools in the budget have no details. I think that is because the Government does not necessarily have any details. I have a major concern, given that we have a projected budget deficit of \$38-odd billion. Maybe four years down the track some of those schools with no details will still be getting continuously kicked down the road. We have not seen the transparency from the Government that we expect. We have not seen the transparency in terms of school builds and upgrades that we expect.

We keep hearing that Labor left the Government with a terrible legacy. What legacy was that? We have heard that apparently Labor left a maintenance backlog of \$1 billion. It was \$156 million. I have tabled the document about four times in this Chamber, but the Government still refuses to acknowledge it even though it came from a Government Minister. On their watch the backlog increased by over 300 per cent to the billion-dollar mark. The Government does not like to mention that it cut the maintenance budget by half in its first budget. Anyone will tell you that if you cut something by half its cost will increase later. Members opposite talk of Labor closing schools. Labor opened 136 schools when in government. This Government has actually closed 15 more schools than it has opened. That is factual; it is not a distortion of the truth. The truth is the maintenance backlog was \$156 million and Labor opened 136 schools. This Government has closed 15 more schools than it has opened. The maintenance backlog grew by 300-odd per cent.

It is Gonski that really concerns me. I am glad that it was raised. Every single member in this place knows that what is really important is quality funding of schools. Do members remember Gonski? It was that great Labor thing about needs-based funding. Many of us have worked in schools. About 12 people in this Chamber have worked in schools in some form, including Madam Temporary Speaker Sonia Hornery. The member for Wyong was a school principal. The member for Fairfield was a teacher. Everyone wants to be a teacher! The husband of the member for Cootamundra is a school principal. Teachers are great people, and they will tell you that needs-based funding is the one opportunity to level the playing field and give kids the chance to get the best start in life.

My concern is that the Treasurer spoke about outcomes-based funding, which is a great neoliberal idea of thinking we can just draw a line and everybody should get to it. It does not take into account certain complicating factors such as the complexity of a school, the complexity of the community, whether a student is a recent arrival or whether there are other extenuating circumstances. To give a good example, I know of a school that ran its own childcare centre within the school so that young female students who had children did not have to leave. How do you measure that? You cannot measure that on some tick-a-box thing, but it meant those young ladies had the chance to get their education and get the best start in life. That is what needs-based funding does.

The member for Wyong and I visited schoolkids in Wilcannia whose teacher drives to the mission, picks them up and brings them to school so that they can actually be there. How do you measure that? You measure that in the sense that the school is going above and beyond in trying to ensure that kids can get to school. To simply draw a line, do you just pick a number? Do you say, "We want attendance to be 96 per cent," but then not take into account that when a First Nations person passes away there is a period of sorry business that takes a long time? Do you take into account the refugee child in an intensive English centre who is suffering trauma and is unable to speak English but who has to sit a NAPLAN test like everybody else? How do you take that into account? Outcomes-based funding does not work, and that is why the Minister has started to walk back from it. The decision was not made with educational outcomes in mind. It was made by the penny pinchers and the bean counters. You are doing the wrong thing when you start having bean counters in charge of education.

We have not even touched on all the other things that we need to talk about that also have a massive impact. Let us start investing in quality teacher training. Let us start giving the teachers the support they need. Instead of cutting what they call "back office" positions, let us recognise the positions for what they are. They are professional frontline support positions in school communities. There are so many things about education that we could talk about. I will clarify one thing for the record about full Gonski funding, because the Government does not quite get it. Everyone knows that full means 100 per cent. That is what I understand it to mean. When I fill my car with petrol it is full when it is at 100 per cent. The current agreement between this Government and the Federal Government for public schools means that we will only get to 92 per cent funding by 2023. That is not full. That is not the full Gonski—and the funding for kids will still be 8 per cent short in New South Wales public schools.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:38):** I enthusiastically second the motion of the member for Manly commending the Government for its record investment in schools. I firmly believe that the motion is worthy of precedence above others because there is nothing more important than the education of our children. There are 63 public schools in the Cootamundra electorate. I am incredibly proud of how we are delivering for all of those students.

Speaking to the motion's first point, the Gonski funding for schools in my electorate has climbed year on year since the Resource Allocation Model [RAM] payments were introduced in 2014. RAM funding gives school principals freedom to spend their allocated funds on delivering the best outcomes for their students. There is no one-size-fits-all model, and country schools are enabled to invest in the resources or technology that they need. This year schools in the Cootamundra electorate have received more than \$17 million out of a record \$1.18 billion being distributed to more than 2,200 public schools across the State. The total RAM funding across New South Wales schools this financial year has increased more than \$100 million on top of last year's record amount. Our schools can use the additional funds to continue to hire more teachers or administrative staff, for example, or to buy new iPads, instruments or sports equipment—whatever our school communities decide will best meet their unique learning and teaching needs.

As to the motion's second point, the recurrent funding comes on top of an astounding investment in school infrastructure across the State and, proudly, in the bush. The total maintenance allocation in the 2018-19 year in the Cootamundra electorate is almost \$4 million. That is a number that, in words we can understand, means new floors, ceilings, paint and grounds maintenance to make our schools better places to teach and to learn. That came before our commitment to clear the billion-dollar backlog left to us by July 2020. In Cootamundra the backlog represents over \$12 million.

Since July 2018 we have received a \$630,000 upgrade of the Cootamundra High School science labs, an electrical upgrade at Cowra High School, and works at Coolamon Central School, Cowra High School, Gundagai Public School, Junee Public School, Mulyan Public School and West Wyalong Public School totalling \$1.2 million to improve access for students with special needs. As many members may be aware, we are currently planning a game-changing shared library facility for the town of Young and Young High School, which will benefit surrounding schools and community groups. It is a real signal of the commitment of this Government to the bush and of the representation of The Nationals and Liberal members that this collaborative, multipurpose facility will be built in Young, which has a population of 9,000—not in Ultimo, Parramatta or even Wollongong.

Under our \$500 million Cooler Classrooms program, all of my 63 public schools are automatically eligible for an upgrade under the first round. I am delighted to update the House that, as of this month, five of those schools are in the design phase and 58 are in planning. As the member for Manly put so well, our schools were underfunded and our students were neglected for 16 years while Labor was in government. Nowhere was that more pronounced than in the country where many small rural community schools were closed. I remember it, our teachers remember it, and it is important to point it out.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:42):** I endorse the words of the shadow Minister for education about this motion. He has done a good job of not only holding the Government to account but also in espousing good educational policy that the Government should take note of if it really wants to improve our school system. I come from a background of 23 years in education—22 years as a school executive and 18 of those as a school principal—so I know a little bit about how schools operate and what makes a good school. Unfortunately, what Government members fail to see with their latest thought bubble about outcomes-based funding is that one paragraph does not tell the story of a book. Similarly, one test or one set of criteria does not tell the tale of a school.

A school is a very complex place—every classroom is a complex place and every student is complex, and a one- or two-day test or a short review of how a school meets specified outcomes does not demonstrate what a school does for a student. I believe that the Government is very misguided if it thinks that is a good way of funding schools or of penalising schools if they do not meet particular standards. The shadow Minister mentioned particularly Aboriginal communities and sorry business, which has always made attendance levels at schools an issue. We certainly support that being improved, but I am sure the criteria for funding would not address the fact that when sorry business is happening Aboriginal students miss school. Should those schools lose resources? The Government has to be very careful about going down that path.

One thing we do need to do is to support our teachers. I am a little bit biased, my wife is an assistant principal, but what she tells me about teaching in school—which has changed in even the four and a bit years that I have been in this place and not taught at a school—is that it is getting more and more difficult because of the complex things teachers have to deal with. If the Government really wanted to make a difference, instead of setting more criteria and making the system more onerous for teachers it should support teachers in the classroom. The shadow Minister took a range of very good policies to the last election that the Government should take note of, such as supporting students with disabilities in the classroom.

Unless you have been a teacher you would not understand what it is like when you walk into a classroom and have a class with a couple of students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, some with autism and some with dyslexia. There are a whole range of issues in a normal 30-student class. How you deal with that complex environment and ensure that every student's learning needs are supported is very difficult. Our teachers are highly skilled; they have great knowledge and they know what to do. The Government should get out of their lives and let them teach. Instead of giving them more tests, more forms to fill out and more boxes to tick—for example, they say they have to do phonics one week and tick the box there—the Government should let them teach the kids; let them understand the needs of the people in their classroom. That is how you improve outcomes. You do not improve outcomes by constantly looking over their shoulders. That is not to say there should not be standards and there should not be accountability—there 100 per cent should be, but it should not be to the point where teachers are more worried about accountability rather than teaching the young people in their classroom.

It is great for Government members to crow that they are putting extra money towards education and all that sort of thing. Every government has done that since time immemorial because the budget just keeps going up. We did it, they will do it, and next year the budget will go up a little bit more. Let us have motions brought to the Parliament about real improvement and real strategies that improve teaching in classrooms, not self-congratulatory messages.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (13:46):** I am proud to support the member for Manly on this very important motion. This Government is leading the country when it comes to education funding. The Government's 2019-2020 budget delivers record State funding for school education, proving yet again that only the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals can deliver for the children of New South Wales. As many members have said, this year's budget includes \$16.6 billion in capital and recurrent funding for government primary and secondary schools; \$1.4 billion in funding support to non-government schools; and \$146 million for the NSW Education Standards Authority.

The budget also includes record State investment in government school infrastructure. An amount of \$2.2 billion has been allocated in the budget as part of a \$6.7 billion investment over the next four years. We are spending more on school infrastructure over the next four years than Labor spent in four terms in government. It is disappointing that members opposite keep trying to highlight a supposed lack of funding. Today my local paper reported a lack of funding, which the shadow Minister for education spoke about in a priority motion the other day. I address Jannali East Public School and say that our investment in new and upgraded schools in New South

Wales is unprecedented. I am advised that all 190 school projects mentioned in the budget are fully funded, including the new school hall at Jannali East Public School. That is completely in contrast to the message that the Opposition is putting out in the public domain and having the media falsely report on.

We give the Opposition an "F" for its comprehension skills. If those opposite did their homework properly they would know that schools listed as "N/A" are either in the planning phase, for which the Government has allocated \$30 million, or are undergoing a commercially confidential tender process. I hope that those opposite can appreciate that. It is disappointing, but not surprising, for the Labor Party to try yet again to poke holes in the largest investment in education this State has ever had.

I will return to the positive news. The 2019-2020 budget also supports the ongoing operation of government schools as a result of our election commitments. That includes funding for 4,600 extra teachers to be recruited over the next four years to meet population growth and to provide more targeted support for students who need it most. The budget also allocates \$120 million over the next four years to expand before- and after-school care to all parents with primary school aged children at public primary schools by 2021 and \$88.4 million to employ 100 additional school counsellors or psychologists and an additional 350 student support officers.

The budget includes funding for dedicated services for rural and remote students to ensure that public high school students across the State have access to mental health and wellbeing support. I know the member for Manly is passionate about that issue. It also includes \$10 million for the Sustainable Schools Program to help schools and students develop innovative and hands-on solutions outside the classroom to reduce, reuse and recycle in order to make their school environments more sustainable; \$8 million for Foodbank NSW and ACT Limited to expand the School Breakfast 4 Health program to a further 500 schools; and \$2 million to support Life Education NSW to continue to deliver the Healthy Harold program. This is an incredibly important motion. I commend the member for Manly for bringing it to the attention of the House.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:50):** I support the amendments moved by the shadow Minister for education, and member for Lakemba. There are a number of concerns about the education budget this year. Government members are crowing endlessly about how great it is, but it has not been well received. The largest public primary school in the State is in Westmead in my electorate. Westmead Public School has grown from about 900 kids seven or eight years ago to 1,620 kids, but the new school for Westmead is only listed as being in the planning stage. It has been at that stage for two years. The school is groaning under the weight of its demountables. The playground is shrinking—with more than 20 demountables, including double storey demountables, where the netball and basketball courts used to be. If the Government cannot get it right at the biggest school in the State, it is getting it wrong.

The new school is an urgent priority. Bizarrely, in the planning for the new school at Westmead it is said that it will be located in the Parramatta electorate. None of the suburb of Westmead is in the Parramatta electorate, so I do not know why they would put the new school there. At the moment half the population of the suburb of Westmead send their kids to school in the suburb of Parramatta. They have to walk two kilometres across Parramatta Park each morning or drive for half an hour through some of the worst traffic in Sydney to get to O'Connell Street Public School because they cannot fit at Westmead Public School, where there are 1,620 students. If the Government cannot get that right it really is getting a lot of things wrong.

Government members crow about a record level of Gonski funding but we are only receiving 93 per cent of what is recommended. That is a 7 per cent shortcoming that should have been addressed by now. In my electorate a number of schools have received additional funding since the Gonski reforms. Some of the things they have spent the funds on are astounding—not in terms of wastefulness but because they are things they should not have to spend money on. For example, for a number of years Holroyd High School ran a breakfast program funded by Gonski. We would hope that not a huge number of students would come to school without breakfast, but they do. That is what that school spent its money on and it is delivering improved educational outcomes.

Other schools have had to spend their funding on speech pathologists and all sorts of other things that are not necessarily front of mind when we think about improving student outcomes—but they are working. If the funding was lifted to 100 per cent those schools would be able to deliver so much more. This Government, which is suddenly obsessed with outcomes in education, should look at fully funding the Gonski recommendations to achieve those outcomes. It has been working, but is not at the level it should be. It is certainly not at such a level that Government members can crow about it.

The funding cannot address the structural disadvantages faced by the schools that are receiving the most of it. Their facilities are run down in comparison with other schools. To crow about achieving 93 per cent of what is required is delusional. If the Government wants to improve student outcomes it must lift the funding to

100 per cent, as Labor promised in the election campaign. It must also deliver a new school in Westmead, which Labor also promised in the campaign.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:55):** In reply: I thank all members who made a contribution to the debate, including the member for Lakemba and the member for Cootamundra, who gave us some great insights into country schools and mentioned a \$630,000 science lab upgrade. I did not realise the member for Wyong had such a distinguished career in the education system. We were going so well until the member for Miranda gave those opposite an "F". The member for Granville raised a number of important points.

The member for Wyong suggested that the Government is not supporting teachers. That is patently false. The Government is providing support in the budget through many avenues. I am particularly proud of one incredibly important measure. The member for Wyong mentioned the complexities faced by teachers in a modern classroom environment. A number of those complexities and concerns are related to young people who have mental health issues. The budget supports student welfare and mental health by delivering over \$80 million to employ school counsellors and psychologists in all public schools across New South Wales. In addition, the Government is getting out of the way of teachers and undertaking the first review of the curriculum in 30 years.

The Government does not support the amendments moved by the member for Lakemba. We must give credit where credit is due. The member wants to replace the word "commend" with the word "acknowledge". The definition of "acknowledge" is to admit something to be real or true. The definition of "commend", which is in the motion, means to formally praise something or someone. This Government deserves formal praise for what it has done in the budget for education. I commend the motion to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....41  
Noes .....47  
Majority.....6

#### AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Catley, Ms Y  
Daley, Mr M  
Donato, Mr P  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Haylen, Ms J  
Leong, Ms J  
McGirr, Dr J  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R  
Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E  
Butler, Mr R  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harris, Mr D  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Parker, Mr J  
Scully, Mr P  
Voltz, Ms L  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Dib, Mr J  
Finn, Ms J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mehan, Mr D (teller)  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Piper, Mr G  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G

#### 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  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Provest, 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  
Petinos, Ms E  
Roberts, Mr A

Barilaro, Mr J  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D

## NOES

Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Smith, Mr N  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Singh, Mr G  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Williams, Mr R

**Amendment negatived.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Manly be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I had the pleasure at lunchtime today of hosting Takewaka San, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney; Nakazato San, outgoing Managing Director of Japan External Trade Organization [JETRO]; and Takahara San, the incoming Managing Director of JETRO; as well as Bob Seidler, Special Envoy to Japan, in my Speaker's Dining Room today. I welcome them to the Chamber. I note that both Takewaka San and Nakazato San are shortly heading back to Japan. I know they will be, in an ongoing sense, great ambassadors for Sydney and New South Wales, as well as for Japan. Thank you both for everything you have done over recent years.

I extend a warm welcome to a group of high school student leaders from across the Kiama electorate who are attending a student leaders forum in Parliament today. They are guests of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, and member for Kiama. I welcome Mark Zakhia, a year 10 work experience student, guest of the member for East Hills. I welcome also the Mayor of Coffs Harbour, Denise Knight, guest of the member for Coffs Harbour. I acknowledge the presence of Tim Kelly and Geoff Berkley, guests of the member for Dubbo. I acknowledge also Councillor David Brown, Deputy Lord Mayor of Wollongong, who is in the gallery today, guest of the acting Leader of the Opposition, and member for Keira. Finally, I acknowledge the Mayor of Forbes, Phyllis Miller, OAM, and General Manager of Forbes Shire Council Steve Loane, guests of the member for Orange.

*Announcements***TOM PAYTEN**

**The SPEAKER:** Today is Tom Payten's last day in the role of Director, Parliament, Cabinet and Legal in the Premier's office. Tom has worked for the New South Wales Government since 2012, having served in the offices of former Premier Mike Baird and Minister Roberts, and is currently with Premier Berejiklian. In that time Tom not only has made great use of his intellectual gifts but also has shown great courtesy and professionalism in his dealings with others. I certainly have experienced that, and no doubt I share the sentiment of many in wishing Tom all the best for what I am sure will be a very bright future outside this place.

**SIMON FONTANA**

**The SPEAKER:** On behalf of many colleagues, I farewell Simon Fontana, who I am told is the longest-serving chief of staff in government. He has worked in a number of portfolio areas, including Family and Community Services, Housing, Domestic Violence, Planning, Mental Health and Medical Research, but most recently he was the Hon. Pru Goward's chief of staff. We thank Simon for his service over many years and wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours. I am sure his future will be very bright.

I am sure the House will join me in wishing Tom and Simon well for the future, whatever their challenges and wherever they lead them.

***THE FINAL QUARTER SCREENING***

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members, their staff and all who work in the parliamentary precinct of an exclusive parliamentary screening of *The Final Quarter* this afternoon. The film, which premiered at the Sydney Film Festival, documents the final years of the career of Sydney Swans footballer and Australian of the Year Adam Goodes. The film will screen at 4.00 p.m. today in the theatrette, with special guests Ian Darling, AO, the

director of the film, and Tanya Hosch, the Australian Football League's General Manager of Inclusion and Social Policy, in attendance. I note also that when Adam Goodes was in his final years as a footballer this House agreed to a motion, moved by the former member for Auburn, that expressed its total support for Adam Goodes and condemned the booing. I note that members representing the electorates of Penrith, Newtown, Port Macquarie and Fairfield, and the former member for Canterbury spoke in support of that motion. I look forward to seeing as many members as possible at the 4.00 p.m. screening.

*Question Time*

**AUSGRID PRIVATISATION**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:24):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that today the media has once again reported that senior Government Ministers are pushing for asset privatisation, despite the Premier's commitment before the election that, "If we were, we would have told you up front", will she rule out the sale of Ausgrid before the next election?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24):** I start by acknowledging the budget reply given by the acting interim Leader of the Opposition. He came down and gave his best effort despite the fact that Labor has not had a leader for 87 days. It was more similar to an intimate moment with the member for Keira than a budget reply. It is interesting to note that there were actually two different budget replies produced by the Opposition today. During the acting interim Leader of the Opposition's budget reply the member for Kogarah tweeted his own budget reply. His contribution included a chart and actually had some financial numbers in there. It was a bit light on substance but at least he gave it a go.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is making introductory comments, which I am happy with at this stage.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Those opposite want us to forget some of the facts. On 26 November 2016 on the ABC the member for Keira said, "The situation is very simple: We are not opposed to privatisation as a general rule." That came from the member for Keira. We also need to remember what those opposite did. Without talking to the community and without going through an election, they sold the gentrifiers in the middle of the night. The member for Strathfield was in Cabinet at the time and she supported the decision, as did a number of those opposite. Of course, we also know that Sussex Street and then Premier Morris Iemma tried to sell the poles and wires. Again, the member for Strathfield supported that decision. From memory, I think the member for Kogarah was in Sussex Street at the time. Their hypocrisy is evident. They do not believe in asset recycling and they do not believe in the State carrying any debt, even though they have never been in negative net debt territory. We are \$8.8 billion in negative net debt.

**Mr Ryan Park:** You want to talk about debt? You're the last person who should be talking about debt.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am talking about debt. The budget reply did not include a single idea, policy or contribution for the people of New South Wales. Labor members have been in opposition for eight years and what they produced when they came into the House today was an embarrassment for the people of New South Wales—an absolute embarrassment.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. It is a simple question: Will the Premier rule out the privatisation of Ausgrid—yes or no?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is being generally relevant to the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Unlike those opposite, we actually have a vision for the people of New South Wales.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Explain it then.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Read the budget papers. When Labor left office New South Wales was last. As those opposite demonstrated today, they do not believe in asset recycling and they do not believe in having any debt. One thing they do believe in is tax. The shadow Treasurer and acting interim Leader of the Opposition—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. Will the Premier rule out the sale of Ausgrid—

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. There is no point of order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Strathfield and the member for Kogarah should make their positions on privatisation clear. The member for Strathfield supported the sale of the gentraders and supported the sale of poles and wires. Now she is pretending otherwise. She has to either step up or step out.

#### STATE BUDGET

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (14:30):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How does the budget deliver for hardworking families across New South Wales, and are there any alternatives?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30):** I will answer the second part of the question first: No, there are no alternatives. I thank the member for East Hills for her question. One of the greatest privileges during an election campaign is meeting people on the ground and hearing about their hopes and aspirations and stresses.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** And then you tell them lies.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** No, that is what you do.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** That is why Labor will be in opposition for another 12 years. I will start again. I thank the member for East Hills for her question. I again say what a privilege it was during the election campaign—and now in my capacity as Premier of this State—to talk to people on the ground and hear their hopes and aspirations. We are in a position where our budget is strong enough to support working families, individuals and households who are bearing the brunt of cost-of-living pressures. I am incredibly proud that our budget has provided an additional \$2 billion in support for families and households across the State to address cost-of-living pressures. Households have saved hundreds and thousands of dollars through the Energy Switch program, the Gas Switch program and the Active Kids rebate.

I draw members' attention to one case study in particular. In the electorate of East Hills people are saving, on average, around \$400 on their electricity bills because of Energy Switch. They are also saving \$100 per child on Active Kids vouchers—something that those opposite opposed. That rebate is now happening twice a year instead of once a year. Those opposite opposed providing it twice a year. We have the Creative Kids vouchers, which will enable many more families to pay for those costs, which are escalating. Interestingly, Service NSW told us that more than 23,000 people have already gone to our cost-of-living specialists and worked out savings for their families.

The Mayor of Dubbo will be happy because one family in that community—the family of Peter and Annette—saved in excess of \$2,100 per year after going to a cost-of-living specialist at Service NSW. The family saved \$550 through the Energy Switch program, \$400 on Active Kids vouchers, \$200 on Creative Kids vouchers, \$300 on Pensioner Travel Vouchers and \$285 on the Low Income Household Rebate—the list goes on. In essence, the family saved in excess of \$2,000. That is what those opposite need to appreciate. I had hoped the Opposition would support the Government in reducing cost-of-living pressures for our community. I cannot understand why they would oppose these important measures. At the end of the day, all of us come here with noble objectives. We come here to support our communities. We come here to deliver the infrastructure and services our communities need.

Our New South Wales budget is by far the strongest in the nation. On every single indicator we outdo all the other States. Notwithstanding that, we know that families do it tough. We know that individuals and households do it tough. If we have any opportunity to reduce those cost-of-living pressures, we will continue to do so because we know that whilst wages have not been growing very fast, expenses have been growing for our households. I am incredibly proud of Service NSW and I commend the Minister. I also commend each and every one of our officials who work in those customer service centres. I also commend the Minister for something that we launched in East Hills a couple of months ago: Mobile customer service vans are now visiting smaller communities so that those who cannot access the larger centres are still able to access those fantastic cost-of-living initiatives. We run a good budget and a strong economy not for the sake of it, but so that we can return it back to our communities and families. *[Extension of time]*

I thank the member for East Hills and all of our members who appreciate the importance of promoting the cost-of-living measures. I know some of those opposite tweet about them as well, and that is a good thing. We want as many people as possible, especially those living in parts of our community that have never had this type of relief before, to benefit from it. I say to all members of Parliament: Be proud of this initiative and make sure we promote it. The money is in the bank and we want to make sure that every family and every household has access to the information so they can apply. This is in stark contrast to those opposite: While in opposition they announced nine different new taxes. Whilst shadow Treasurer, the acting interim Opposition leader announced—

from witness protection—nine different taxes. That is the difference between us and them. I assure the people of New South Wales that we will continue to run a strong budget and a strong economy because we believe in the hopes and opportunities of the people of New South Wales. We will continue to deliver for them.

### PRINCES HIGHWAY

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (14:36):** My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. The Minister promised \$960 million for the Princes Highway upgrade, but only a third of that will be delivered over the next four years. Why has the Minister broken faith with the people of regional New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** I am not sure that the question is in order as directed to the water Minister.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:37):** I thank the member for her question, bemused as I am, but I know that our Government is committed to the Princes Highway, the Great Western Highway and the Pacific Highway. We will always be committed to those projects under the stewardship of our regional roads Minister, Paul Toole, and Andrew Constance as the Minister for Transport and Roads in Sydney. The issue is that I am now the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, in case the member has missed that. But I am committed as a member of this Government, which has the financial ability to invest in roads, water infrastructure and regional New South Wales in a way that those opposite never, ever did and never, ever will.

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

### STATE BUDGET AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:38):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. How is the budget delivering for regional New South Wales?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:38):** I thank the member for Clarence for his question. What a fantastic member. It was great to see in this week's budget a little project that I am really fond of: the Iluka ambulance station. I know that the community there were calling for it, and the member delivered during the election campaign. Most importantly, he delivered it in the budget. I acknowledge a couple of regional mayors who are in the gallery today: Forbes Shire Council Mayor Phyllis Miller and Mayor of Coffs Harbour City Council Denise Knight.

I am sure Denise was happy to see the Coffs Harbour boat ramp and the Woolgoolga multipurpose centre in the budget, thanks to the new member for Coffs Harbour. During the election campaign I was promoting investment in regional New South Wales by the Liberal-Nationals Government—something I am very proud of—from the proceeds of Snowy Hydro, where every single cent will go to regional New South Wales. Our Regional Growth Fund has \$1.7 billion earmarked for regional New South Wales. It was exciting to see 1,386 projects about to be released in the regions. That is in excess of \$1 billion for community projects in the regions.

We were out there, member after member, campaigning as always for a fair share for regional New South Wales. During the campaign, I was given a new nickname by those opposite—one that I wear as a badge of honour. They kept saying, "Pork barrelling! Pork barrelling!" Then they dubbed me "Pork Barilaro". I wear that as a badge of honour. A number of members on that side of the House should thank me for my pork-barrelling program that they keep talking about, which Pork Barilaro is delivering for regional New South Wales. I am delivering for many members on the crossbench. For me, "pork-barrelling" means delivering for all citizens and all communities of regional New South Wales, regardless of where they live.

I will start with Gosford on the Central Coast. For years, the community there has been calling for a new wharf at Woy Woy because the existing one would get flooded—and I mean completely submerged. It is used regularly by thousands of people; about 200,000 ferry trips are made annually. While Labor was in government, it did nothing. The wharf remained nearly impossible for the elderly to use when the tides were up. Clearly it was a problem worth fixing, but it took the Liberal-Nationals Government to fix a Labor problem. Through our Regional Growth Fund, \$4 million will go towards a brand-new floating pontoon. The member for Gosford is one member who clearly is satisfied with the so-called Pork Barilaro and the Regional Growth Fund. I was pleased to read her comments in the local paper praising that funding decision.

There are plenty of other decisions like that. I again remind the House that the Liberal-Nationals Government is representing every single community across the State, especially in the regions. The member for Maitland must be pleased to see \$5.2 million for the Maitland Regional Sports Hub. I appreciate the comments she made in the media thanking the Government for that investment. In Ballina there will be \$3.5 million for

construction of the Ballina Indoor Sports Centre. Politics aside, we are getting on with delivering for regional New South Wales. We are delivering \$10 million for the Griffith Regional Sports Precinct, which I am really proud of. I know it was high on the agenda of Griffith Mayor John Dal Broi.

A Special Activation Precinct will change Parkes forever, with new industries and new jobs. It will be an exciting place to be. We are delivering for the people of Parkes and for regional New South Wales. I know that the current member for Orange is a big fan of what is happening in Parkes. It is a significant investment by the Liberal-Nationals Government. Earlier this year we announced the Bomen Special Activation Precinct in Wagga Wagga. I know that the Independent member for Wagga Wagga is very happy with what is happening in his backyard in that great city. I believe Wagga Wagga will probably be the first regional city to hit a population of 100,000, because of significant growth. [*Extension of time*]

What we are delivering for electorates represented by Nationals members is a good question, because when I get through the list of 16 projects I will go to the 1,370 other projects that are being delivered in regional New South Wales. Regardless of where you live in regional New South Wales, we are delivering for regional New South Wales. It makes no difference where you live, because in the budget there is \$400 million for mobile phone blackspots—under Labor, zero, not a single tower was built. Furthermore, during the campaign those opposite criticised the Liberals and Nationals for investing in telecommunications because, supposedly, that is the responsibility and under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

Because we in this Government manage our books and we said we would use the \$4.2 billion of Snowy Hydro funds to enable generational infrastructure, we have put party politics aside. We have dismissed the concept that telecommunications infrastructure is the responsibility of the Federal Government, because in the old language connectivity was road and rail and in today's language it is digital. We believe that we have the responsibility as well as the resources, means and vision to deliver for regional New South Wales. We will not play the blame game and try to blame the Feds or the State; we have taken responsibility and we will leverage these funds to see what we can do.

Right across the regions we are seeing significant investments. In the health space, we have made a healthy \$200 million commitment to stage one of the Wyong hospital redevelopment. We have committed \$104.6 million to continue to work on the M1 upgrade. We have committed \$24.4 million as part of the \$348 million envelope for the Gosford Hospital redevelopment. The difference between this Government and those opposite is that when the Liberals and Nationals are in government we serve all the people of New South Wales, whereas when Labor is in government its focus is on winning votes—taking votes from The Greens, buying The Greens in inner-city seats in Sydney—and it dismisses regional New South Wales. Regional New South Wales is not represented by putting on a brand-new akubra hat; it is a matter of delivering all the time.

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge Rob Pirina and his staff from Glenorie Bakery in the public gallery. They are here to help out on the Pie of Origin event, which raises money for Westmead Children's Hospital. They are guests of the member for Hawkesbury and the member for Lane Cove. I thank them on behalf of those who enjoyed a pie today and I thank all of those who gave money for this good cause.

#### DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:47):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier exempt all agencies delivering services to drought-affected areas of New South Wales from the efficiency dividend?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:47):** If I had asked my office for a Dorothy Dixier today, it would be that question. I watched the reply to the budget given by the acting Leader of the Opposition, the member for Keira and the shadow Treasurer. He has done a wonderful job as interim leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales. I like the bloke and I think it is a real shame that he has not put his hand up for the position of Leader of the Opposition. I do not know if Opposition members have been following the media since the election, but pretty soon after the election the Premier and I did a couple of press conferences, knowing the impact of the drought on regional communities and the importance of jobs in regional New South Wales.

We know that as a result of the drought about 19,000 direct jobs have been lost. We said from day one that we would protect all public sector jobs in the regions. We said that regional and rural New South Wales would be exempt from any job losses, and the Premier, the Treasurer and I have consistently relayed that message throughout this time. We will not use regional and rural New South Wales at a time of drought, when families are doing it tough. People are feeling the pain of the drought. The ripple effects of the drought go beyond the farm gate and into the community. The drought has an impact on the broader community.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. This point of order had better be a good one.

**Mr Ryan Park:** I know The Nationals are not allowed on the Expenditure Review Committee [ERC], but my question is about the efficiency dividend.

**The SPEAKER:** May I have a copy of the question? I am satisfied that the Deputy Premier is being relevant to the question, albeit he is addressing most of the question and not specifically the efficiency dividend.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** It is clear from the budget that we are going to make some decisions in relation to public sector jobs in back offices. We make no apology for this, because we are putting the savings into frontline services. At the same time that we make back-office savings, we will see an additional 2,500 police, nurses and teachers on the front line. If we can minimise the impact on backroom offices, we will. Those jobs will not be lost in regional New South Wales; there will actually be more jobs in regional New South Wales—not only in the next 12 months, not only in the next four years. Since 2015, 125,000 jobs have been created in regional New South Wales. That is a guesstimate; it is probably higher than that.

Even though those in the bush are doing it tough and the drought is impacting on jobs—not just directly on farms but beyond the farm gate where businesses are doing it tough—we know that we have a responsibility to make sure we keep jobs in the regions. We must also protect private sector jobs. How have we done that in this budget? We have committed \$170 million to infrastructure stimulus and projects across local government areas to make sure that local contractors, local tradies and local businesses can continue to employ locals. We will support local government and make sure that jobs are not lost in regional New South Wales as best we can. I think the Shadow Treasurer did not understand his own question. I do sit on the ERC, mate. Unlike you, where your budget is a picture book with crayons, mate, I actually understand a balance sheet. The difference between you and me is that I have run a business. My friend, the difference is that whilst you have been at the beck and call of the unions, a professional staffer, a bureaucrat, I have actually spent days on the factory floor, running a business, employing people, employing apprentices—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order—

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** —paying payroll tax, paying taxes, investing in my business—

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Premier will resume his seat.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** —mortgaging my home, taking a risk, being part of the small business community—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Deputy Premier to order for the first time.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** —and I will never, ever, ever be lectured by those opposite—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Deputy Premier to order for the second time.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** My point of order relates to previous Speakers' rulings regarding members directing their comments through the Chair. I refer to Rizzoli in 1988 to 1991 and Murray in 1999. I also refer to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question is about the efficiency dividend. The Deputy Premier's performance while I sought the call was diabolical.

**The SPEAKER:** Firstly, the Deputy Premier is being relevant, as I ruled. Secondly, the Deputy Premier was out of order and is on two calls to order. Thirdly, on the matter of members speaking through the Chair, the member for Fairfield makes a valid point, but the Deputy Premier and the acting Leader of the Opposition were going at each other with great gusto. In those circumstances I am not inclined to call to order a Minister who is responding to interjections. I ask the acting Leader of the Opposition to desist from interjecting for the rest of the answer. If he does not he will be called to order.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I am happy to get two calls to order and be thrown out of the Chamber in defending regional New South Wales and defending small business owners. I will not allow those opposite to come into this House and play politics with the people of regional New South Wales at a time of drought. In his speech in reply to the budget, the shadow Treasurer had no answers. In the election campaign, those opposite did not dare mention the word "drought". Instead they talked about tax, tax, tax on tradies and farmers. I remind the guys opposite to keep talking and enjoy their time on the Opposition benches, because they have no vision for the State.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (14:54):** I address my question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. How is the budget delivering for community safety?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:54):**

I really wish I were Italian sometimes to be able to get to that level of excitement. I thank the member for Dubbo for his question and particularly for his interest in our police and emergency services in the short time he has been a member of this place. I can already tell from the engagement we have had that he has a genuine love for law enforcement and for the emergency services that service his electorate. He has been rewarded by this portfolio because in his electorate of Dubbo we are building a new state-of-the-art \$35 million police training facility which will not only service the people of the central west but also provide a wonderful opportunity for people from around the State, particularly those in law enforcement, to visit Dubbo for their training and put some money back into the local economy, and ensure that the people of Dubbo get the recognition they deserve for providing world-class facilities. But it does not stop there—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** What's wrong with Goulburn?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I note the interjection of the member for Cessnock. There is nothing wrong with Goulburn. In fact, Goulburn elected a wonderful MP at the most recent election—Mrs Wendy Tuckerman. Unlike the Labor Party we do not service just one area of regional New South Wales. We think all of regional New South Wales should be given the opportunity to enjoy the prosperity and indeed the generosity of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government. It does not stop with the \$35 million we are putting into policing. The member for Dubbo well knows that we are building a \$9 million world-class NSW Rural Fire Service centre for excellence. Imagine the Rural Fire Service going to regional New South Wales. That is exactly what the member for Dubbo will enjoy in his electorate.

As we have just heard from the Deputy Premier, regional New South Wales is going through a drought. Unfortunately that means an increase in the number of bushfires our Rural Fire Service will have to fight against. I am delighted that Dubbo will be taking a very important part in that. The member for Dubbo enjoys the support not only of this Government but also of the workers, professionals and dedicated members of frontline agencies in Dubbo and right across New South Wales—those volunteers and salaried emergency services personnel who play a critical role in ensuring that our community remains safe.

This Government has invested record amounts to make sure the technology, the training and the professionalism of our police are second to none. That includes \$583 million for 1,500 new police right across the State, which equates to 15 or 16 police officers for every single member of this place. I know members on the Government benches have not broken the law as much as some of those who sit on the Labor side, so they may need a few of ours—I am happy to give them some of mine. That goes to prove the commitment this Government has been able to provide to our police. It culminates with a record \$4 billion investment in the NSW Police Force over this financial year. Recurrent funding of \$3.8 billion and a record \$286 million on capital works equates to a 30 per cent increase on last year in the capital investment in our police force.

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** The budget also provides \$5 million in CCTV grants across western and south-western New South Wales. That is the sort of technology that this Government is investing into our police force. It not only provides us with safety and security but also provides our police with the type of intelligence-gathering opportunities they need to ensure that crime is kept down. This Government has also introduced drug supply prohibition orders. This gives our police the type of power they need to crack down on organised crime gangs and that cannot be underestimated. [*Extension of time*]

That two-year drug supply prohibition orders program will operate across four commands: Bankstown, Coffs-Clarence, the Hunter Valley and the Orana Mid-Western area, where I know the member for Dubbo will ensure it is put to good work. We on this side of the House believe the police are there to protect our community. That is why we have committed \$16.6 million to continue preventative health and welfare—

**Ms Trish Doyle:** What about the fireys?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I will get to fireys. The member for Blue Mountains can seek an extension for me and I will get to fireys. Remember this is the Government that actually introduced payments to provide them cancer payments. Her side of the House was blocking that at every step of the way and has not stopped questioning it. But we can get to the fireys if the member for Blue Mountains is interested in them. The \$16.6 million that we will be putting into that initiative is part of the workplace—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. Was the member for Kogarah taking a photograph then?

**Mr Chris Minns:** No. I was just showing an article.

**The SPEAKER:** Members should be aware that yesterday I had a complaint about photographs being taken. I will confront those who look as though they are taking a photograph. If people tell me they are not, I am happy to accept that, but I remind people not to take photographs in the Chamber.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I can give him one of mine if he needs one, Mr Speaker. Last week the member for Oxley and I went to Eungai in her electorate. We not only opened a brand new \$2 million Fire and Rescue station at South West Rocks, which had been operating since 1979 and has now been renewed thanks to the prosperity of this Government; we also met the captain, Leslie McDonald, and former captain Stan Deveridge, who are both absolutely committed to the service of their community. Captain Deveridge had been captain there for 23 years. We took the opportunity to go to Eungai Rail, where we delivered a new CAT 1 Rural Fire Service truck and opened the extension to the brigade's station. I must take this opportunity to ask the member for Oxley to tell them they make a fantastic sausage sandwich and I will be back there at the earliest opportunity. The member for Blue Mountains asked about Fire and Rescue. This Government is prepared to commit \$826 million to Fire and Rescue, which is only the tip of the iceberg.

#### RAIL PASSENGER SAFETY

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:02):** I direct my question to one of my favourite Ministers for incompetence in this place.

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume his seat. The House will come to order. I will allow the member to ask her question, but I will also ask her to apologise for making that comment before she asks her question.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE:** Sorry, Robbo. My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister guarantee the safety of rail passengers in New South Wales by maintaining train guards in their current roles on the new inner city fleet?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:03):** Yes, I will maintain rail safety across the State. That is what all transport Ministers do, just to help the member out. The regional Minister agrees with that too. I point out to the member for Blue Mountains what a fantastic State Budget it is for her electorate, with \$9 million to complete the Hazelbrook station upgrade, \$2.2 million to complete the planning and commence construction of Lapstone station upgrade, \$3.2 million—

**Ms Trish Doyle:** It's not in my electorate, mate.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Is the member telling me that people in her electorate do not use stations? That is really smart. There is an upgrade to the Faulconbridge station and a plan to upgrade the Great Western Highway. I know one thing about the member for Blue Mountains: She seems to have a lot of opinions. But she did not have an opinion when the member for Maroubra was at a local pub in the Blue Mountains, making some interesting comments.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Hello!

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Hello, Andy. How are you today?

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to make an attack on the member for Blue Mountains, he should do it by way of substantive motion. My point of order also relates to Standing Order 129. The question is about train guards. Almost two minutes into his answer, the Minister has not mentioned them even once.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has not breached any standing order yet. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** If we want to have a few opinions around the place I say, through the Speaker, to the member for Blue Mountains: We all remember the silence when the member for Maroubra stood up and said what he said. The member for Blue Mountains did not denounce that, but she comes here with her smart barbs and her rudeness, and she is prepared to stay silent here.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I just ruled on the member's point of order. Is it a different point of order?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Minister is launching an attack on the member for Blue Mountains. She asked a legitimate question regarding train guards.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not satisfied that the Minister is breaching Standing Order 73 at this stage. The Minister is being relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I note that the member for Blue Mountains is supporting the member for Strathfield in the ballot. Neither of them has said anything about Mr Setka. Is it not extraordinary—the protection racket? The member for Blue Mountains is quite prepared to pick on Government members. In the same way, she will not leave the member for Summer Hill alone. She is picking on her too.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I cannot even hear what the Minister is saying. I will not take the point of order. I will ask the Minister to continue. I ask all members to be quiet so we can hear what the Minister is saying. I know the member for Strathfield is likely to take another point of order if the Minister is not being relevant. I suggest that the Minister think about being as relevant as he can be, albeit he generally has been relevant, from what I have heard.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

Yes, the Minister could speak a little bit closer to the microphone, but it is very difficult to hear him with all the noise that is coming from Opposition benches.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The point is that the member for Strathfield and the member for Blue Mountains come into this place and have a lot to say to members opposite, but they do not seem to have much to say about racists in the Blue Mountains and Mr Setka. Shame on you! Now they pick on the member for Summer Hill, who is not part of the EMILY'S List brigade, not backing in the member for Strathfield.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will take the point of order now.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, which is relevance, and Standing Order 73. If the Minister wants to attack both me and the member for Blue Mountains, he must do it by way of substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister continues to be relevant, but he is now transgressing Standing Order 73.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The point is that the member for Blue Mountains has said nothing in relation to Mr Setka. She is a disgrace for not doing so.

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

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy to hear further from the Minister. If he continues down that path, there will be consequences. I ask the Minister to be conscious of Standing Order 73.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I am conscious of what the member for Blue Mountains said when she stood up in this place and asked her question. The reality is that she can throw stones, but let's leave the member for Summer Hill alone for doing the right thing in backing the member for Kogarah. What I am seeing out of you guys opposite is a protection racket. Until the member for Strathfield says something about Mr Setka, she should not be taking points of order. She should stand ashamed.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** If you want to answer the question, tell us whether you're going to get rid of train guards. It is a legitimate question. Standing order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. There is a proper procedure for taking points of order. Are you taking a point of order?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** I am. It is Standing Order 129

**The SPEAKER:** If you are taking a point of order, you will seek the Chair's call. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** You won't call Setka a grub.

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

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** She did yesterday. Look at *Hansard* from yesterday.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time, but I will now take her point of order as she has sought the call in the appropriate way.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance, and Standing Order 73, substantive motion. The Minister is flouting your ruling time and time again. I ask you to draw the Minister back to the leave of the question, which is about train guards. It is a really important issue for the people of the Blue Mountains. If the Minister were a proper transport Minister, he would answer that truthfully.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I am glad she has mentioned train guards because I have been dealing with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] in supporting our efforts around the new intercity fleet. Why is the RTBU not backing you? You have been shadow Minister for transport for four years and you cannot even get the union on side in rail. Why is it not backing you? Mr Minns has a smile. He is starting to smile.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Paul Lynch:** I have two points of order. The first is that the Minister is directing his comments across the table.

*[A Government member interjected.]*

Could the fascists please be quiet? The Minister is directing his comments to the member and, secondly, the Minister is completely breaching Standing Order 63.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has concluded his answer. Dare I say, some members on both sides of the Chamber should look at how the crossbench members behave during question time.

#### LACHLAN HEALTH SERVICE

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:11):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Will the Minister provide assurance to the growing communities of Forbes and Parkes that the Lachlan Health Service will continue to provide theatre services at the Forbes District Hospital and will also restore and maintain level three birthing, with access to obstetric and anaesthetic services in the maternity unit of Parkes Hospital?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:11):** I thank the member for his question. I note that the member had a briefing yesterday from my staff on this very important issue for the residents and constituents of Parkes and Forbes. When the member asks questions of this Government about his constituents, we will always behave responsibly and give him the answers. I must say that the member's colleague in the upper House, Mr Borsak, seems to have no agenda other than trying to destroy whatever he can about the Government, and the member for Orange should take active steps to make sure that he behaves in a responsible way.

**Mr Philip Donato:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is a very important issue in my community. The mayor of Forbes is sitting in the public gallery. We will appreciate a relevant answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The Minister for Health was not one minute into his answer. I am happy to hear further from the Minister.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I acknowledge Phyllis Miller, the Mayor of Forbes Shire Council. I thank her for coming along today and for being at the council of various mayors in the region of the Central West just a few weeks ago. If the member for Orange wants to ask sensible questions, that is fine, but he should make sure that his colleague in the upper House, who shoots and eats elephants, does not.

**Mr Philip Donato:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129 again. This is a very important issue.

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

**Mr Philip Donato:** The Minister has wasted well over a minute talking rubbish.

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

**Mr Philip Donato:** Stick to the issue and answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Orange to order for the first time. The crossbench has just ruined its record. The Minister for Health has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** As I was saying, I am very interested in working with members who want to work with the Government in the interest of constituents. But I am not really interested in, or too keen on, members who bed themselves down with elephant-eating, elephant-shooting, kangaroo—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**Mr Philip Donato:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Swansea was on her feet first.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I know you do not often uphold this point of order, but on this occasion I think you will. It is Standing Order 74 (2). There is no doubt the Minister is trying to quarrel with the member and also a member of the upper House.

**The SPEAKER:** Your inclination was correct. I will also take the point from the member for Orange.

**Mr Philip Donato:** It is Standing Order 129 and Standing Order 74 (2). There are a lot of people in Parkes and Forbes watching this right now who are shaking their heads at the way you are behaving.

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

**Mr Philip Donato:** This is a legitimate question that I want answered.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. The Minister is being generally relevant and I would ask that he be heard in silence. The Minister has, for parts of his response, been relevant. He has been, dare I say it, responding to some interjections as well. I ask the Minister to be mindful of the question as he continues and, if he has silence, I trust that he will address the question relevantly. Both the Minister and I are waiting for silence for him to continue his answer.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I indicate to Mayor Phyllis Miller and to Ken Keith, the Mayor of Parkes who spoke with me at that forum, it is a very serious issue because Parkes and Forbes have had some real challenges, particularly in the last 12 months. I have been advised that over the past 10 years the number of obstetrician GPs have gone down dramatically. The obstetrician GP availability in Parkes reached the level where the local health service, as I know the member for Orange and the member for Parkes have had discussions with, was just not able to do what was necessary. What I understand provoked the review was the gradual decline in the availability of obstetrician GPs.

I indicated to the member for Orange and to his colleagues that I am keen to see services continue at Parkes and Forbes—any health Minister would be. But in my discussions with local management they told me that they felt patients were being compromised—women giving birth were being compromised particularly—by that cover that has been operating for the past 12 months at both sites. They found that on some weekends they simply could not get the service from Forbes area across to Parkes. They were worried about patient safety and I think we should all be worried about that. I have indicated to them that, through plenty of decisions across the council of Australian health ministers, we should do everything we can to keep health services in the regions, operating across the regions and making sure that there is appropriate networks. I am very keen to continue that on behalf of the member for Orange and his constituents. *[Extension of time]*

We are talking about a really serious issue. In fact, talking to ministers at the Council of Australian Governments health ministers forums, right across regional Australia, I discovered that governments are finding it really difficult. There is a quote that I had about this from the national health ministers' maternity framework, which said:

The National Maternity Services Capability Framework highlights the importance of networks to facilitate the transfer and referral of women as a basic principle in providing safe and effective maternity services in Australia

That is what we are all trying to achieve. There was a review in 2018. I thought that the member had been briefed on that, but perhaps I was wrong. That review was undertaken by the Western NSW Local Health District and the member is welcome to talk to Scott McLachlan about that. As I understand it, the review proposes a model where Parkes would have, for low-risk births, basically a midwife-led birthing arrangement, but have proper coverage, and if they are at a higher-risk level patients would be transferred to Forbes. I think the last time I drove between Parkes and Forbes it took about 20 to 25 minutes.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** Between the two new hospitals.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Between the two new hospitals, as the member has just reminded me. I can assure the member that the New South Wales Government is absolutely committed and will work with the Western NSW Local Health District to try to achieve services at both hospitals, but that is about trying to get new doctors available in the area too. I am happy to take advice from the mayors or from the member on this issue if there are

things that we can do that we have not done. But the advice I am getting at the moment is that this is a struggle right across regional Australia, but we are in it. We really want to support women who are giving birth. We want to make sure that they do it safely and that both the women and their babies get the safest and best possible support during the birthing process and the aftercare.

#### STATE BUDGET AND WESTERN SYDNEY

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:21):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. How does the budget deliver for jobs, especially in western Sydney, and are there any alternatives?

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (15:21):** I thank the member for Mulgoa who had an outstanding election campaign. Being re-elected to her seat comes off the back of commitments to infrastructure, which are all about generating jobs—like the commitments to Mamre Road, which I know were particularly important to her community. This budget is all about delivering on our plan for a stronger New South Wales and I can say that when you go to an election the public gets an opportunity to see two plans—two plans for the future of New South Wales—and they get to make the choice. And that is exactly what they did.

**Ms Kate Washington:** You lost four seats.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** We still won the election. You can sit over there for another four years. The public got to see the two plans for the State and they voted overwhelmingly to endorse this plan. This week, in budget week, they get to see again the two plans that are available to the people for the future of New South Wales: the budget that was delivered by the Treasurer earlier this week and the reply to the speech that was delivered by the Leader of the Opposition today. I could not see a greater contrast if I tried. There was not one single plan for the future of New South Wales by those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition even referenced climate change and homelessness, but still did not offer one single plan. That stands in stark contrast to what this budget has been able to deliver, and that is a particular focus on the creation of jobs.

What we see now is the lowest unemployment rate of any State in the country, at 4.6 per cent. In fact, since 2011 we have created over 670,000 new jobs in New South Wales, which underpins the strength of our economy. But it is not just the macro figures that are important. In fact there is a really strong success story here for women in our economy. We have now reached the highest participation rate of women in the history of the New South Wales economy, at 60.6 per cent and the lowest female unemployment rate we have ever seen at 3.7 per cent. That means more women employed and more women making a contribution across our State. Many people and many economists would say that it has been the strength of female participation in the workforce that has helped lift the strength of the New South Wales economy. We have seen western Sydney go from strength to strength, as well.

Under those opposite, the unemployment rate in western Sydney was 7 per cent; today it is 5.1 per cent. That is more people in western Sydney with jobs. In the local government area of Penrith, which the member for Mulgoa represents, unemployment has reduced from 6.2 per cent to 3.5 per cent. In the local government area of Hawkesbury it has dropped 2 per cent, in Liverpool it has dropped 1.2 per cent and in Blacktown it has dropped 1 per cent. In the local government area of the Blue Mountains the unemployment rate is now 2.8 per cent. We are delivering right across western Sydney when it comes to creating jobs. In the time since we formed Government we have seen 228,000 new jobs come into western Sydney. These new jobs are creating opportunities for people, strengthening families and strengthening communities. The other thing that this budget does is deliver infrastructure right across western Sydney. Our public investment in infrastructure has lifted the capacity of our economy. It has put over half a per cent onto the gross State product.

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

**Mr STUART AYRES:** That investment continues to drive jobs. What did we see over the course of the past eight years? Every single time we wanted to invest in one of those new pieces of infrastructure, those opposite rejected it. They rejected the Sydney Metro Northwest and they rejected WestConnex, which will open up the M4 East. That was rejected time and time again—promised and rejected, promised and rejected, promised and rejected. They rejected the duplication of the M5 tunnel and the linking of the M4 and M5. We have now seen that the Sydney Metro Southwest, which gives people across Bankstown access to a twenty-first century rail, is still opposed by those opposite.

I really do not understand why those opposite are completely against new infrastructure and why they do not want people, not only in western Sydney, but also across New South Wales, to have stronger employment options. The simple fact of the matter is that this budget once again reinforces to people right across New South Wales that if you have a strong plan to invest in local services, invest in local infrastructure and keep taxes down,

people get jobs. If people are getting jobs, the economy right across New South Wales will become stronger. It is true not only for road and rail infrastructure, but also for social services like schools and hospitals. [*Extension of time*]

Right across western Sydney—whether in Blacktown; in Westmead, via the billion dollars that the Premier and Treasurer were talking about at Westmead Hospital; in Kingswood, via the billion dollars that is going into Nepean Hospital; or the fantastic investment in the health and academic precinct at Liverpool—we understand what these precincts are able to do for New South Wales and particularly for western Sydney. It will not stop here, because we have been endorsed by the people of New South Wales with a strong economic plan for the future. We fundamentally believe in the concept of precincts. Westmead gives us a real opportunity to take the med-tech innovation that exists in this State and showcase it on the world stage, attract international investment and create jobs in western Sydney around the precinct.

We also note that there is an opportunity to create a tech and innovation hub in and around Central Station. We have the world-leading Sydney Startup Hub down on York Street. There is plenty of business confidence to invest in Australian and New South Wales innovation and ingenuity, and we will showcase that on the world stage with one of the best tech and innovation precincts available anywhere. This will enable superannuation funds and private equity venture capitalists to put their money in, and back Australian and New South Wales know-how.

When it comes to western Sydney, we will back in the new Western Sydney International Airport with our aerotropolis. We have set up an authority to make sure that we take a different approach to planning, bringing all of the councils, the State Government and Commonwealth Government together. When we do that, we will get better planning outcomes and deliver over 200,000 new jobs across western Sydney. That means jobs for people in Camden, Liverpool, Leppington, the Hawkesbury and Blacktown—even if the local member opposes it at every step of the way. All of those people in every single one of those communities deserve to have jobs closer to home. That is exactly what this budget delivers.

#### STATE BUDGET

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:29):** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** It is becoming an unfortunate practice for members to belittle other members based on stature. I am being serious. It is just getting a little bit tired and it is inappropriate. Irrespective of whether or not the member takes exception, I do not want to hear it anymore.

**Mr MARK COURE:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. How does the State budget deliver for the people of New South Wales and are there any alternatives?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (15:29):** I love little Ryan. I loved his reply speech today. Budget reply day was my favourite day in this Parliament because it was the member for Keira's last speech as the interim acting temporary Leader of the Opposition. Maybe it was his last speech as shadow Treasurer. In fact, it is the first time in the Parliament's history that a budget reply speech has doubled as a valedictory speech. It is out—my favourite newspaper, *The Australian*, has just put up this headline: "Judgment delivered: NSW budget is 'envy of the world'." I thought the budget two years ago was the envy of the Western world. We have gone all the way and we have now taken over the eastern world as well. What do you think about that, member for Liverpool? We have taken over the east. The article says:

... the budget further enhances NSW's reputation as the best-run and most dynamic State economy in the country. This is a smart budget, making NSW the envy of the world ... The NSW government has been very strategic about its asset recycling program.

It goes on and on. I want to give a speech in a similar vein to the budget reply speech, because I think it was the best budget reply speech in the nine years that I have been in this place, by a long way—and that is because there were no Labor policies in it. In fact, there were no policies at all. It was hard for Ryan, given the circumstances that put him through all this. For the past three months he has been in here day in, day out.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 75. The use of the word "Ryan" is in breach of standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** Technically, I uphold that point of order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** It is hard for him to come up against such a strong Government with a strong budget that is strongly in surplus with negative net debt, record infrastructure investment, \$5 billion in tax cuts, \$2 billion dollars in cost-of-living measures, the lowest unemployment rate in the country and the greatest jobs growth in the country. Everywhere you look, this budget backs in everything that is great about the leadership on this side of the House. But there are a few things the member for Keira got wrong. As we know, he said he stands with farmers. We respect that he has backed in our policy, our \$1.8 investment to help those in regional

and remote communities. We know those opposite never would be able to fund it, but at least they support it. This was coming from a man who wanted to put taxes up on farmers in the middle of the drought. He complained about the Emergency Services Levy [ESL] in the budget reply, but failed to mention that Labor's proposal would have cost five times as much.

He raised the topic of homelessness—and fair enough—but he opposed the sale of the Sirius building, which will fund even more social housing across New South Wales. He talked about climate change and renewables, but Labor's solar policy in the election campaign did not contain batteries. What I am most proud about in this budget is that it helps people get ahead. As Treasurer, in government you can be focused on the big numbers and the major infrastructure projects, but behind every single one of those numbers are people who will get ahead as a result of our budget. These are real people with real stories, like Ryan from Keira. Every morning, Ryan wakes up and puts a nuisance call into 2SM and he drives up the main road in his luxury Audi—which, under this budget, will not have a luxury car tax—and he will qualify in this budget for half price rego. Thanks to our stamp duty cuts in this year's budget, Ryan has been able to buy five properties, including one in Potts Point, using negative gearing, which he opposes in public. He has become a bit of a property mogul. Despite all of this, Ryan finds time to advocate for homelessness, which we all support. [*Extension of time*]

Then there is Jo from Summer Hill, a working mum of three children, including twins. While just missing out on the baby bundle, she will soon be able to take advantage of our before and after school care. Jo is also very concerned about the growing drug use in our community. She feels a lot safer with our 1,500 new police, the use of sniffer dogs and our opposition to pill testing. Then we have Jodi from Strathfield. Jodi aspires to great things but her poor temperament lets her down. A transport enthusiast, she is looking forward to the opening of WestConnex and, having previously referred many of her colleagues to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, she supports new budget funding for a new public prosecutions unit and is looking forward to referring her colleagues there once again.

Chris from Kogarah is a lover of yum cha. Chris is looking for a party with bold ideas that stands for something, and he has found that new leadership with the Coalition. Chris is backing budgets focused on educational exports because, unlike Trish from the Blue Mountains, he knows the true value of Asians with PhDs. Then there is Michael from Maroubra. Thanks to our new digital driver licence he will never lose his licence again. If he does, he can get the light rail to the Allianz Stadium and try to put it back together again. Then there is Penny from Newtown, a quiet Australian but a loud Trump supporter. She is backing our sensible climate change policies and our new no interest loans for solar, and now backs our \$1.4 billion climate change policy. Finally, I turn to outsider Walt from Toronto. He is soon to be unemployed, but he is in the right State. We have Paul from Liverpool, a devoutly religious man and daily mass goer, who now backs our approach on religious freedom. He knows that he can always back the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government to keep his freedoms alive.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: The Treasurer's answer breaches the standing orders, which state that this place is a parliament, not a circus.

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Chair and Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 19 June 2019 Justin Paul Clancy was elected chair and Peter Bryan Sidgreaves was elected deputy chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development.

### **COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **Chair and Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 19 June 2019 Robyn Anne Preston was elected chair and Gurmish Singh was elected deputy chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure.

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

#### **Chair and Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 20 June 2019 Gurmish Singh was elected chair and Joseph Gregory McGirr was elected deputy chair of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission.

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING****Chair and Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 20 June 2019 Alexander Hart Greenwich was elected chair and Felicity Lesley Wilson was elected deputy chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning.

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS****Chair and Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 20 June 2019 Lee Justin Evans was elected chair and Felicity Lesley Wilson was elected deputy chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

**LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Chair and Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 20 June 2019 Felicity Lesley Wilson was elected chair and the Hon. Trevor John Khan, MLC, was elected deputy chair of the Legislation Review Committee.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ROUTINE OF BUSINESS**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:40):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to:

- (1) Permit the interruption of any business before the House, excluding the 10,000 signature petition discussion, for the consideration of government business, including any messages from the Legislative Council.
- (2) Permit the interruption of any consideration of government business at 4.30 p.m. for the discussion on the 10,000 signature petition.

For the benefit of members, I have moved this motion because the Legislative Council will commence debate on the Appropriation Bill 2019 and cognate bills at approximately 3.30 p.m. This House will await messages from the other place. We are in the hands of our friends in the upper House. We look forward to receiving their messages.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:40):** The Opposition does not oppose the motion for the suspension of sessional and standing orders. Earlier the Leader of the House shared the details of the motion with the Opposition and it seems entirely appropriate.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**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**.

**Route 389 Bus Services**

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

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

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

#### **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**.

#### **Inner City Alcohol and Drug Services**

Petition requesting increased funding to expand the range of inner city alcohol and drug services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

#### *Documents*

#### **PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I table a copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to the Hon. Pru Goward, former Minister, dated 19 June 2019.

#### *Matter of Public Importance*

#### **WOMEN'S STATE OF ORIGIN**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:42):** The State of Origin is not just a matter of importance, it is a matter of pride. It is an honour for me to speak in this place today on this matter. I acknowledge the member for Hawkesbury who invited me to the Pie of Origin, which was an opportunity to eat some very tasty pies but also to raise funds for the Children's Hospital at Westmead. The State of Origin is referred to as Australia's greatest rivalry. It is one of Australia's premier sporting events. It attracts a huge television audience and usually sells out stadiums in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and this year Western Australia. It is the pinnacle of rugby league and the country's biggest sporting rivalry.

When it comes to the State of Origin we often forget to talk about one of the significant cohorts of those who are playing this beautiful game—our women. I take this opportunity on the eve of the Women's State of Origin to talk about our girls who will be running out on Friday night at North Sydney Oval. Many members in this place may be upset about the fact that Latrell Mitchell is missing from the men's State of Origin selection but I point out that another Rooster is missing from the women's side—Ruan Sims, who has been ruled out because of injury. Ruan was nominated as a finalist in the NSW Women of the Year Awards. She is a leading figure, promoting not only the game of rugby league but also mental health and wellbeing. Ruan Sims is a firefighter by trade and also works as a Channel 9 National Rugby League sideline commentator. During my own playing career I had the honour of lining up against Ruan, but it is much more enjoyable watching her play rather than being a speed hump on a field.

Then there is Stephanie Mooka, who has been on the cusp of selection for the past six years but has not quite made this year's selection because she cannot afford to go to camp and to take time off from work. That is part of a bigger problem that I would like the House to address: the inequality that exists between our female and male sports stars. Despite my sadness in not seeing some of my favourite players run out this Friday, I am extremely excited to hear the stories of our debutantes who will be playing. I particularly mention Kezie Apps, who has been named captain of the Blues team.

Born in Bega, Kezie began her juniors career at Bega Roosters at the age of 12 but was forced to stop playing due to age restrictions. In 2014 she returned to league, playing for the Helensburgh Tigers. In 2016 she won the women's Dally M award and is now playing for the St George Illawarra Dragons. I conclude with a final comment for thought. Currently Sportsbet has our women paying \$1.18 versus \$2.00 for Queensland. Alternatively our men are paying \$2.60 versus \$1.48 for Queensland. Don't get me wrong, I love our boys in blue and I also love the Roosters' favourite son, Freddy Fittler, but we all know that if you want a job done well give it to a girl. I know that they are going to restore pride to New South Wales. Best of luck, ladies. Up the Blues!

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:46):** This Sunday game two of this year's State of Origin series will be played in Perth at the brand-new Optus Stadium. The game born in New South Wales is now taking its greatest spectacle across the Nullarbor. Given the momentous occasion this is for Western Australia, I am very pleased to speak in support of the matter of public importance raised by the member for Coogee. It is certainly not the first time our great game has been played interstate, although I think all members can agree that at times

we wish we had not told Queensland about our great game. I have no doubt that taking the State of Origin to Perth is a win for fans of the game across the entire country.

State of Origin has been played in Victoria on eight occasions and in California once but it has never been played in the west, despite the Western Australian Reds playing in the Australian Rugby League in the 1995 and 1996 seasons before being rebranded as the Perth Reds in the 1997 Super League. The Reds played their games at the famous WACA cricket ground but—just as cricket, Australian rules football and major concerts have done in the past 18 months, rugby league will make the transition down the road to Perth's colosseum, the brand-new Optus Stadium. Game three of the series will be played at ANZ Stadium on Wednesday 11 July. The planning process for the redevelopment of ANZ Stadium has begun as the New South Wales Government continues to deliver world-class venues for the State, further enhancing our position as a global and sporting destination. Members in this place and 30,000 western Sydney locals will remember the official opening of the western Sydney stadium, known as Bankwest Stadium, on 22 April this year when the mighty Parramatta Eels overran the Wests Tigers.

The Government is committed to ensuring that we not only attract the greatest rivalry in sport and all the other spectacles to grace our stadiums, but also that we provide the pathway and the infrastructure to showcase our junior talent and women's sport. As the good member for Coogee has mentioned, this Friday night our women will go head to head with the girls from Queensland in the second annual Women's State of Origin at North Sydney Oval. I believe quite a number of members of the House will be there, including the member for North Shore and the member for Miranda, as well as the great Governor of New South Wales. What great support there will be at North Sydney Oval. The 2019 game will no doubt showcase skill and pride as 40 of our country's top representative players from New South Wales and Queensland battle it out for the historic title.

Last year's inaugural Women's State of Origin was an incredible occasion at a packed out North Sydney Oval, with more than 700,000 tuning in to watch New South Wales take on Queensland. The New South Wales Government is proud to be investing in the Women's State of Origin for the second year in a row. By doubling the Active Kids rebate the Government is encouraging young people to stick with the sport of their choice. I know that the rebate has been very popular in my electorate of Seven Hills. I ran into a family at Lalor Park whose kids play for the Kookas Junior Rugby League Club in my electorate of Seven Hills. The mother of three was at the Service NSW centre at Blacktown processing the Active Kids rebate, which provided \$100 for each of her children. The players' registration was \$105. This lady walked out of Service NSW with rebates that enabled her three kids to have footy boots for \$15 and they were ready to play. She said it was the first time in her life she had got the rebate, that it was fantastic and easy to access, and that it had made a big difference in her life. Returning to the State of Origin, I want to mention David Klemmer from Toongabbie and Wade Graham, who came from Hills Sports High School at Seven Hills. I am sure all members will join me in wishing the Blues the very best weekend. I support the matter of public importance raised by the member for Coogee.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:50):** This weekend we have a double dose of one of the country's great rivalries, the State of Origin. I am proud to have the New South Wales Rugby League headquarters based in my electorate of Auburn. It is an area with a proud history in rugby league, with players like Tommy Raudonikis, John Dorahy and John Donnelly, who called Lidcombe Oval home while proudly wearing the blue jersey against Queensland. The New South Wales teams that run out this weekend represent the great diversity of rugby league in our State. The daughter of dairy farmers in Bega and the son of a single father in Taree are our two leaders. We have brothers from Sydney's northern beaches with Serbian heritage and a young mother who started playing rugby league in Helensburgh in 2015 and who has developed into one of the best fullbacks in the women's game. That is what sport can do for a community: It can unite us all.

On Friday night our women's New South Wales team takes on Queensland in the second State of Origin battle. The Blues won last year's inaugural battle and have won the past three interstate games. In total, eight players are wearing the blue jersey for the first time. New captain Kezie Apps leads a quality team whose strength and depth illustrate the growth of women's rugby league in our State. After Kezie leads the Blues out on Friday night her former Bega Roosters teammate Dale Finucane will make his debut for the Blues on Sunday in Perth. He is one of two debutantes in a new look Blues team, which coach Brad Fittler hopes will make an impact in this series. While the Blues fell short in the first game, everyone knows each game is a different battle at this level. A tough task lies ahead against a strong Queensland side but any team with the speed and skill of Damien Cook, the evasiveness of James Tedesco, the brute force of Tariq Sims and Tyson Frizell and the lightning pace of Josh Addo-Carr is hard to stop. As a State, this weekend we will unite behind the Blues. Good luck to Kezie, Boyd and their teams. Go the Blues!

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:52):** By leave: I thank the member for Coogee for raising this matter of public importance today. While many people in this place were very excited to don the scarves in support of the Blues in the last sitting week, for me it was fundamentally about supporting our women at the

upcoming State of Origin this Friday night. It was incredibly exciting for me as the member for North Shore to have the inaugural women's State of Origin played at North Sydney Oval, a beautiful space that has one of the best atmospheres for any sporting game. Around 7,000 people were at the inaugural game last year contributing to a cacophonous roar for our girls. In the last 10 minutes or so of the game a huge chant for New South Wales went out across the stadium. We won by only about four points but it was a great outcome for our girls.

When the girls arrived at the stadium for the game and got off the bus they spoke to us about the impact on them to see the number of people crowding around, wanting their autographs and wanting to talk to them. It shows how far women's sport and women's sports leadership in our community have come. It is magnificent to see so many young girls in particular who view them as icons and want to emulate their skills and talents on the field. I thank the member for Coogee for raising this matter. I will see her on Friday night on her visit to my electorate of North Shore to watch the game. I will be excited to be joined by the Minister for Sport, the Governor and many members of this place. I wish Kezie and the girls the best of luck. Let us hope we can keep the shield in New South Wales.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:54):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Seven Hills, Auburn and North Shore for their contributions to the debate. New South Wales is hosting the event on Friday night and the Premier of Queensland will be attending. I know that our girls will show her what's what and send her home hanging her head—even though she is a friend of mine. There is only one thing left to say: Go the Blues!

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **FAIRFIELD WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:54):** On Wednesday 12 June 2019 I had the great pleasure of attending the launch of the new Fairfield Women's Health Service at Cabra-Vale Diggers. The launch was well attended with a fantastic showing of community members, leaders and local representatives to support the Women's Health Service. The Fairfield Women's Health Service will offer a diverse range of invaluable support services completely free of charge to women in need throughout our local community. The launch was a wonderful display of cultural diversity, opening with a traditional Daramu Aboriginal performance followed by an Assyrian band. We were also fortunate to hear an incredibly inspirational and heartfelt speech from Ms Anna Thao Phan. Anna spoke of her battle with cancer and how the services operating from the Fairfield Women's Health Services were pivotal in her time of need as they supported and assisted her throughout her journey. I congratulate the Fairfield Women's Health Service on a very successful launch and commend Ms Mariam Mourad and her remarkable team for providing so many vital services to women in need in our local community.

#### **CAITLYN ROGERS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:55):** I inform the House that Caitlyn Rogers has been named in the NSW Country under-15 girls' rugby team to play Queensland and City. Her selection followed the Country championships played at Crescent Head, where Caitlyn was a member of the Mid North Coast Tomahawks side. Caitlyn has been named on the wing. Mid North Coast Tomahawks won two of six games, with Caitlyn scoring a couple of tries to add to her defensive efforts. Caitlyn will now head to Sydney for a three-day camp with the Country squad before going to Queensland. The team will then meet again in August to tackle City and from there the New South Wales under-15s side will be chosen. Caitlyn is a student at St Claire's High School and was third in the under-14 girls 400 metres at the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges Athletic Championships last year, clocking one minute four seconds in the final, and was eleventh overall in the 200 metres. Caitlyn plays for Old Bar in the Manning Netball under-15s and is a member of the Manning 15s to play in the State Age Champions in Sydney. I congratulate Caitlyn Rogers on her sporting achievements this year and wish her well in the future.

#### **ARRAHMAN COLLEGE**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:56):** I recognise Arrahman College, a new school proposed at Seventeenth Avenue, Austral. The foundation stone of this college was laid on Saturday 15 June. The school has obtained development consent from Liverpool Council and in 2021 it will have its first students. It eventually proposes to cater for students from kindergarten to year 12. The college is an initiative of the Al-Mabarat Benevolent Society. Present and participating at the event on Saturday were the General Manager of Al-Mabarat Association, Dr Sayeed Mohammad Baqir Fadlullah; the Imam of Masjid Arrahman, His Eminence Sheikh Yousef Nabha; Hajj Jaafar Akeel from the Al-Mabarat Association, and Dr Saad Ramadan, President of the Board of Directors of Arrahman College. I note also the presence of a number of local government elected members, especially the Liverpool Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ali Karnib. I am delighted to recognise the vision and ambition of the college and foundation.

### SHARE THE DIGNITY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:57):** I take this opportunity to inform the House of the Share the Dignity April drive. The Share the Dignity campaign provides sanitary products to homeless women and women in refuges, who cannot afford to purchase the products. During April and May of this year my office was a collection point for sanitary products that were then distributed to women in need. This is the third or fourth year we have participated in the Share the Dignity drive. In Australia the figures regarding women and homelessness are disturbing, with 25 per cent of the homelessness of women being due to family and domestic violence, including physical or sexual violence. The Share the Dignity campaign provides some relief to women at risk. I was touched by the number of local residents and community groups who generously donated to this fantastic cause. I strongly encourage all members to make their electorate offices collection points for this amazing cause, and I look forward to the day when that is the case.. The next drive will start again in August. In November and December Share the Dignity collects handbags and sanitary items for those in need.

### BLUE HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:58):** Recently I was ecstatic to see the fantastic efforts that resulted in one of our local schools being recognised as one of five schools short-listed for the Government Primary School of the Year. In 2016 Blue Haven Public School was in the bottom 5 per cent in New South Wales in relation to academic growth in years 3 to 5. Last year it was in the top 6 per cent. Principal Paul McDermott, his staff, students and community should be congratulated on the incredible progress they have made in such a short time. Great leadership is the key to success in education and Blue Haven Public School is making impressive strides through a team committed to quality education. Mr McDermott is also one of six finalists for Government Primary School Principal of the Year in recognition of his leadership in the school community. Congratulations to Mr McDermott and the teachers, staff, parents and students for the great work that you do. I will be crossing my fingers that you are successful in the competition.

### RAYMOND ANGEL

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:59):** This afternoon I recognise an amazing gentleman in my electorate, Mr Raymond Angel, who has been named as one of the 24 emergency services finalists in the 2019 Rotary Clubs and Districts of NSW Emergency Services Community Awards. The finalists include nominees from Fire and Rescue, NSW Ambulance, the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service and the Volunteer Rescue Association. Mr Angel works with Marine Rescue NSW. Ray's most significant contribution is consistent with the "Service Above Self" Rotary motto. His primary contribution to "Service Above Self" can be attributed to the time he invests in the unit's maintenance and material area. Ray's service thus far includes 730 hours underway in marine rescue vessels, encompassing 56 call-outs. Each of these has required direct support to search and rescue operations in a range of conditions. I wish him all the best for the awards ceremony. Recipients will be announced on 2 August.

### HUNTER TAFE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:01):** I recognise the 23 students who are recipients of the Hunter TAFE Foundation scholarships. I especially commend the three students from the Maitland area. The Hunter TAFE Foundation was established in 2000. The organisation works with business, education and community leaders to support TAFE students. I pay tribute to Macayla Conners and Anna Bailey, both of Aberglasslyn, and Caroline Ball of Metford, who were awarded \$500 scholarships from the Hunter TAFE Foundation. I congratulate the foundation on the work it does. Ms Conners is studying a Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing at Scone, Ms Bailey is enrolled in a Certificate III in Travel at Hamilton and Ms Ball is undertaking a Diploma of Nursing at Newcastle. I thank the Hunter TAFE Foundation for supporting young people in our community to enhance their trade.

### TOM "BOMBER" CARNEY

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:02):** Today I acknowledge one of the greatest athletes to ever hail from the Dubbo region, Tom "Bomber" Carney, who sadly recently passed away. As members may be able to guess from his nickname, Bomber was an elite boxer known for his punching power. In the late 1960s and into the 1970s Bomber became the first Dubbo boxer to represent Australia. Somehow he was left out of the 1972 Munich Olympic team despite beating the reigning Australian champion at the selection trials in Perth. A year later, just to prove his doubters wrong, he was crowned Australian champion and then toured New Zealand as a flyweight. He will be remembered for inspiring a generation of young boxers and athletes in the Dubbo region, especially those from an Indigenous background. Tom "Bomber" Carney is survived by his loving wife, Gae. I pass on my condolences to the family and friends of one of the Dubbo electorate's real sporting legends.

### FRIENDS WITH DIGNITY

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:02):** I recently had the privilege of attending a high tea, along with 500 of my closest friends, including the member for Maitland Jenny Aitchison, in support of the incredible organisation Friends with Dignity. The inspirational and amazing keynote speaker was Rosie Battie, 2015 Australian of the Year and a Friends with Dignity Ambassador. Friends with Dignity is a volunteer-led charity assisting survivors of domestic violence. The organisation, which was established three years ago and is entirely funded by donations, ensures that women and children escaping domestic violence have the support they need in the sanctuaries where they are forced to go. I recognise Friends with Dignity CEO Manuela Whitford and the other directors for establishing this amazing organisation. I pay tribute to the members of the Port Stephens Friends with Dignity who do so much to support my community: Katherine Yeo, Jo Winchcombe, Barbara Stevens, Joan Lewis, Nicola Markham, Sally Dunwell, Susan Dunkley, Cheryl Brayshaw and Jo Brown. Thank you for supporting women and children escaping domestic violence in our community.

### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST 2019

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:04):** Community is what the people of the Cootamundra electorate are all about, so it is no surprise that five of our constituents were recognised in the Queen's Birthday 2019 Honours list. My heartfelt congratulations to Nicole Maree Bolger and Nichols Nadycz from Harden, David McCann from Coolamon, Jennifer Roberts from Cootamundra and Jessica Smith from West Wyalong, on their service to their communities and its lasting impact. The skills and contributions of this group vary but they are united by their passion and extraordinary drive to go above and beyond in their workplaces and communities. Thank you very much and congratulations.

### ETTALONG BEACH ARTS AND CRAFT CENTRE

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:04):** I left the Ettalong Beach Arts and Craft Centre's patchwork and quilting class with my cup filled with love. The students and their fabulous teacher are a bundle of creative joy working on so many diverse projects filled with colour and joy, from the traditional embroidery style of the Japanese poor, traversing magnificent quilts of colour for family and community members. Thought and love goes into every single creation. Sewing a life of memories into a quilt over four years brings a smile to my face and pride in the amazing lives of women of the Central Coast. I heard stories of saved remnants lost in the Nyngan flood and cupboards stashed with colour and creative potential. With absolute delight I encourage everyone to get along to the Ettalong Beach Arts and Craft Centre to stimulate those creative juices. Thanks to all the volunteers who have worked on the board over the years, giving so much time and energy to build such a successful and important resource in our community. Let us always celebrate creativity.

### MOSMAN ROTARY

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:05):** The Rotary Club of Mosman has been a leading service organisation in the North Shore electorate since it was formed over 55 years ago. Members of the Rotary Club of Mosman have contributed their time, energy and passion to many projects in our community. Notably, they have given \$42,000 over two years to 21 first-time women and their children at the Manly Warringah Women's Resource Centre. Many of these women arrive with little money or belongings, so the Rotary Club of Mosman funds a pack worth \$2,000 in a six-week period to assist women and their children with rent, food, an Opal card, clothing and other basic needs. They also provide financial support through their annual Christmas raffle fundraising. They raised \$7,000 to support child care for children whose mothers are making court appearances or at workshops and courses, so that the mothers do not have to worry about finding child care options for their children. They have also assisted in funding the laying of new soft fall in the children's playground at Lane Cove. I congratulate and thank the Rotary Club of Mosman for its continued support of our local community.

### ST THERESE'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL, WILCANNIA

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:06):** This week I had the honour and privilege of welcoming to Parliament Aunty Karen, Aunty Casey, Principal Rory McCaffery, teacher Helene and former teacher Yvonne, along with students Lebron and Miranda, from St Therese's Community School, Wilcannia. Meeting them has been one of the highlights of my time here in Parliament. They were excellent ambassadors for their school and I look forward to visiting them in Wilcannia. During their visit, they delivered letters to me from their classmates. It is some of the most profound mail I have received during my time in Parliament. I would like to read some extracts. From Shanayd:

I am writing to you about our darling Barka ... it is the place where the spirit Ngatji lives and it makes us feel very sad that her home is getting destroyed.

From Kylera:

We need the Barka to have fun. When I go to the Barka I go fishing and I go learning about culture. I always go down there with Imogen and her Dad teaches us about Paakantji culture.

From Jack in kindergarten, alongside a very good picture:

Our river is very important to the Paakantji people. The fish need water too. Please give our water back.

Kids, I promise I am working hard to get water back for the Barka and for you and your community.

### **WESTMEAD HEALTH PRECINCT**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:07):** Westmead is quickly becoming the health and medical research capital of New South Wales. Before the election, the Government committed a further \$619 million for upgrades across the Westmead health precinct for stage two of The Children's Hospital redevelopment. I am delighted that the Treasurer has begun funding this initiative in my Seven Hills electorate. This means a total of \$1.6 billion worth of health, medical research and tertiary education investment at Westmead by the Government. Stage two of the redevelopment of The Children's Hospital at Westmead will increase bed capacity and complement the new expanded paediatric emergency department currently being built within the 13 storey acute services building. This particular project will deliver a new paediatric services building and refurbish existing facilities to provide additional service capacity. These include a neonatal intensive care unit, a paediatric intensive care unit, acute inpatient beds and a cardiac laboratory. I take this opportunity to recognise all those involved in the delivery of health services across the electorate of Seven Hills, particularly nurses, doctors and allied health professionals.

### **GRANVILLE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:08):** Last night I joined Granville Boys High School for their annual Eid dinner, which was absolutely fantastic. It was a very cold night but there was so much warmth in the hall. Eid marks the end of a month of sacrifice and self-reflection during Ramadan. The Eid dinner at Granville Boys High School is one of the school's largest community events. Parents and students prepared a delicious feast for well over 1,000 people to enjoy. Desserts prepared by the boys were amazing—there are some very talented bakers at Granville Boys High School. As well as the feast there were some fantastic performances by the boys and another visiting high school. This year Newcastle High School's didgeridoo group performed, as well as their Aboriginal dancers. The Granville Boys High School band, teachers' band, Arabic drummers, Islander dance group and Arabic band also performed and they were all fantastic. Congratulations to everyone involved in bringing together the school community and the wider community to celebrate Eid.

### **TAFE NSW EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:09):** I congratulate Christopher Russo of Miranda and Sarah Wadland of Sylvania on receiving top awards in the TAFE NSW Excellence Awards earlier this year. Christopher, who has just completed his Certificate III in commercial cookery at Loftus TAFE, was awarded the prestigious Apprentice of the Year award for his academic achievements and positive work ethic. Christopher currently works at Cafe Sydney but is passionate about studying patisserie so that he can start his own catering business in the future. Sarah, who has just completed her Certificate III in meat processing, was awarded the Agribusiness Student of the Year award. As a fourth generation apprentice butcher, Sarah defied her family's wishes to show that women can do anything, including become a butcher. Women make up only 6 per cent of butchers and smallgoods makers but Sarah was determined to become a butcher and once she has received her qualification will join her dad in the family business. I congratulate Christopher and Sarah on their outstanding achievements and their commitment to their studies. I extend my best wishes for their future endeavours.

### **NEWTOWN JETS PRIDE AND DIVERSITY DAY MATCH**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:10):** The Newtown Jets recently held rugby league's first-ever Pride and Diversity Day match on Saturday 8 June at beautiful Henson Park in Marrickville. A rainbow flag was painted on the field and the mighty "Bluebags" wore rainbow socks to show their support for the local LGBTIQ community. The Newtown Jets are a foundation rugby league team, and have a strong history of championing the inclusion of our LGBTIQ community, both as players and as fans. Newtown Jets Director David Ray said:

The launch of Pride and Diversity Day celebrates the contribution of the LGBTIQ community to our club and region. It reaffirms that Newtown is everyone's team, and everyone is welcome at Henson Park.

Initiatives like this send a strong message, particularly to LGBTIQ kids, that they have value and a home in every corner of Australian life. Most importantly, the Jets beat the Wentworthville Magpies 22-10.

**MANLY VALE CALABRIA CLUB**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:11):** The Manly Vale Calabria Bowling, Sports & Social Club celebrates its twentieth annual Calabria Night Dinner Dance in July. The event celebrates the strengths and achievements of the multicultural communities that make New South Wales the greatest place to live. Sydney's northern beaches have always had a large Italian community, many of whom emigrated from the southern Italian region known as Calabria—a beautiful, sun-soaked region with many popular beaches. It is no wonder then that so many Calabrians found their way to beautiful Manly. The first general meeting of the club took place in July 1998 and was attended by over 100 guests. Twenty years later the club remains a friendly place for the Calabrian community to be together and to keep their traditions alive for future generations. Whether enjoying the lawn bowls or futsal courts, the Calabria Club has always been a hub of activity. In fact, the first event I was invited to as a member of Parliament was the Calabria Night Dinner Dance in 2017. I have been grateful for their friendship and hospitality ever since.

**GRIFFITH HIGH SCHOOL P&C**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (16:12):** I recognise the Griffith High School P&C Association for the absolutely fantastic job they do running the canteen at the Griffith High School campus of Murrumbidgee Regional High School. Recently Griffith High School P&C were named second in the State for the New South Wales Department of Education Healthy School Canteen Strategy. They have also been featured on the front page of the lookbook produced by the Department of Education and are the only high school to appear in that publication. The running of a large high school canteen is a significant job and I commend the Griffith High School P&C for the amazing work they have done at the school. They went above and beyond, employing a dietician for eight months to help create the menus and serving sizes. For their efforts they deserve to be commended. Congratulations to the Griffith High School P&C Association.

**HANNAH JENKINS**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:13):** I congratulate Hannah Jenkins on recently receiving a NSW Teachers Federation award for HSC excellence at the Public Education Foundation annual awards. I note that this award recognises the achievements of students from New South Wales public schools who have come first in a course in an HSC examination—an outstanding achievement. I acknowledge that Hannah attended Elderslie High School and commend her for achieving first in the State in textiles and design with her unique major work, a hat inspired by the 1910s. I wish Hannah success with her university studies.

**CLUB BONDI JUNCTION RSL**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:14):** I congratulate Robin Mandarins and Club Bondi Junction RSL for hosting a fantastic fashion parade and high tea. It was a wonderful and affordable day out on what was a pretty miserable and cold weekend. The last ladies' day event that was held at Club Bondi Junction was more than a decade ago, and Robin, as a new female director on the board, has reinvigorated a great event that attracted over 100 women to the club for a fun day out. The electorate of Coogee is home to 12 clubs and over 55,000 club members. Our clubs are incredibly important community hubs. Places like Club Bondi Junction are spaces where the community can gather, engage with each other and build connections. They are so important for creating a sense of community, and I would like to thank Club Bondi Junction for its efforts in doing just that. Thank you again, Robin, for organising this wonderful event and for helping build a strong and vibrant community.

**BEN PATTERSON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:15):** I congratulate Dubbo's Ben Patterson, who has been formally recognised as the best male cricketer in country New South Wales. Ben has plied his trade across Australia and the world in the past 12 months, with the highlight being the chance to represent his country and culture on the Australian Indigenous squad's tour of England in 2018. He spent part of 2018 in Sweden, where he played, coached and helped develop the game. Upon his return he coached the Newtown club to premierships in Dubbo's T20 and two-day competitions. In January he represented New South Wales at the country championships and he was named in the merit squad for the tournament. Ben now heads to the big leagues of Sydney first grade, and I am sure he will continue to do us proud. Good luck, Ben, and well done.

**EID FESTIVAL**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:16):** It was a great pleasure to attend the Eid al-Fitr Festival on 9 June organised by the Islamic Charity Project Association [ICPA]. The annual festival held at Paul Keating Park, also known as the Festival of Breaking the Fast, marks the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and brings family, friends and the wider community together to celebrate. I take this opportunity to thank the President of ICPA, Mr Mohammad Mehio, and the executive for arranging the event and also for the invitation and the

opportunity to address the many who attended. This is an important occasion for my community and one that transcends the political divide, with dignitaries from both sides in attendance. Since 1989 the ICPA has worked tirelessly to build multicultural relations in Australia and today provides a number of different services including education, sporting activities and cultural events. I acknowledge the valuable contribution the ICPA makes to social harmony in Australia and I congratulate the association on a successful Eid festival. Eid mubarak.

#### **WORLD REFUGEE DAY**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:17):** World Refugee Day is held on 20 June and the Refugee Council of Australia is based in Surry Hills, in the electorate of Newtown. I would like this Parliament to acknowledge and celebrate the immense courage, resilience and valuable contributions made by refugees in our society. I thank the many organisations and groups that campaign tirelessly to support, advocate and campaign for refugees rights in this country for their strength, determination and hard work. I particularly thank the Asylum Seekers Centre, in the electorate of Newtown, the wonderful people from the mums4refugees and the incredible activists from the Refugee Activist Coalition. This year the theme is a continuation of the three-year theme Stand With Refugees, telling the world of stories about the plight of refugees and asylum seekers who have fled their homelands to seek better places of refuge. I hope that this is the final year in which we provide recognition of World Refugee Day when refugees and asylum seekers are being inhumanely treated in this country.

#### **TREVOR PICKER**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:18):** I pay tribute to the late Trevor Picker, who was tragically killed in a multi-motor-vehicle accident on 7 June 2019. Mr Picker, who was 91, was a pioneer and leader in the superfine merino wool industry. With a keen and knowing eye, he achieved a number of world records for the prices received for Hillcreston bales. Mr Picker demonstrated community spirit by sharing his knowledge and providing assistance to other producers to purchase stock, which led to improved wool clip quality and to Goulburn becoming known as the superfine wool capital of Australia. Mr Picker played an integral role in the Superfine Wool Growers Association. The region has benefited and continues to benefit from Mr Picker's leadership and generational pride in the wool industry. His knowledge and passion continue today with his son as the current Superfine Wool Growers Association's President. Mr Picker was also a proud husband and a loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Vale, Mr Picker.

#### **DRAGONS ABREAST**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:19):** I recognise Dragons Abreast members who come from Penrith, Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains. I was delighted to attend the recent Come and Try Day for dragon boating at the Sydney International Regatta Centre. Dragons Abreast crews are made up of breast cancer survivors. This is their way of spreading the good word about life after treatment and the amazing work Dragons Abreast Australia does. Breast cancer affects so many people, young and old. Exercise is an important tool to use post-treatment for continued physical and mental wellbeing. Dragons Abreast members provide a "face" for breast cancer statistics whilst spreading the message of breast cancer awareness through participation in the wonderful and strenuous sport of dragon boat racing. I particularly acknowledge Jeanette Fry and Angie O'Reilly, whose fabulous crew is to be commended for its efforts.

#### **SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (16:20):** Over the recent sitting weeks, I was delighted to host at Parliament students from my local high schools as part of the Secondary School Leadership Program and the Young Women's Leadership Seminar Program. At the Secondary School Leadership Program on 29 May I spoke with year 12 students from all over the State about my role as a member of Parliament. Well done to Darcy Goddard and Josephine Greenall from Kambala School, and Annabel Young and my daughter Georgina from Ascham School for putting up their hands to develop their leadership skills. They also visited the new Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency The Hon. Margaret Beazley, for afternoon tea.

On Thursday 6 June, the Parliament hosted year 11 students for the Young Women's Leadership Seminar to learn more about Parliament. I was one of three female MPs who had the chance to speak with the students and answer their great questions about leadership and politics. I was lucky to host representatives from three local schools including Elsie Gillezeau and Beth Kelly from Rose Bay Secondary College, Mimi Silberstein and Zoe Bakerman from Reddam House and Anika Deva and Francesca Jones from Ascham School. I applaud them for signing up to the program and wish them all the best of luck with their future studies.

#### **QING FONG LION DANCING TEAM**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:21):** I congratulate and recognise the Qing Fong Lion Dancing Team based at the Bonnyrigg Ming Yue Lay Buddhist Temple. The Qing Fong Lion Dancing Team was formed

in late 2018 and had its inaugural performance earlier this year. I was honoured to witness their performances during Chinese New Year celebrations at the Ming Yue Lay Temple in early February of this year. I can say without a doubt that the dancers do a marvellous job in performing this intricate craft. I thank Qing Fong for all that the team has done for the community since its formation in late 2018 and wish the performers every success in the future for connecting people with the ancient Chinese tradition that is lion dancing.

#### **FIVE LANDS WALK**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:22):** This weekend the Five Lands Walk will be held on the Central Coast. The walk begins at the beautiful Macmasters Beach and concludes at the even more beautiful Terrigal Beach. I congratulate Con Ryan and all the members of the organising committee who will again put on a fantastic display of culture. They will be supported by the Darkinjung community. Thousands and thousands of people will participate in the walk, which will kick off very early on Saturday morning. I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to participate in the walk. It is a beautiful experience which starts at Macmasters Beach, heads north to the surf clubs at Copacabana, Avoca Beach and North Avoca and ends at Terrigal. I congratulate the organisers and the incredible team of volunteers, including school students, who take part in the Five Lands Walk. Con and the team always do their best. They connect people with place and people with people. This is what the Five Lands Walk is all about.

#### **SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:23):** The Sathya Sai International Organisation is a multi-faith organisation with a following in 126 countries that focuses on the teachings of love and service by their spiritual teacher, Sathya Sai Baba. This year for the first time, the Sai National Conference was hosted in western Sydney. On 19 April I had the privilege of being a guest of honour and speaker at the Sai National Conference. The Sathya Sai community share their history and culture through speeches, workshops, songs and dance. The Sai National Conference was a great opportunity for the followers of Sai Baba to reflect on and reinvigorate their spiritual journey and to share new ideas and initiatives. It was a wonderful event and I acknowledge Singanayagam Indrapalan, Nalini Kumar, Dr Chandrinka Subramaniya and Dr Narendrananth Reddy for organising this successful event.

#### **RON VAUGHAN**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:24):** I congratulate Regentville resident Ron Vaughan on presenting the local school, Regentville Public School, with a beautiful handmade sculpture commemorating its 150 years of operation in the community. Ron has carefully and skilfully crafted this amazing sculpture for an astonishing 20 hours to remind teachers, students and parents as they pass it each day that their school has its roots in their community and will continue to thrive. When the development of Glenmore Park almost saw the loss of Regentville Public School, Ron, along with many other parents and families, fought to keep its doors open. Through their commitment to this community, Regentville Public School has grown immensely, becoming a focal point for all living in the area. Ron's gift to the school, titled "From Small Country School to Big City Place" perfectly captures the essence of the community and their efforts to see their school thrive. Well done, Ron.

#### **GEORGE HUGH WELLS**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:25):** I acknowledge and congratulate Master George Hugh Wells, a talented young man from Niagara Park in my electorate who has been competing in track and field at a national level since 2016. Most recently George competed in the Australian Track and Field Championships at Homebush as part of the Athletics NSW State team and the impressive results from this event included gold in the men's under 14s shotput as well as gold in the under 14s discus throw. George also competed this year in the Little Athletics National Championships in Hobart when he won gold in shotput and gold in discus. I am sure this will not be the last time we hear the name George Hugh Wells. I hope to see George represent Australia at an international level in the future.

#### **LICIA POLITIS**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:26):** I congratulate Licia Politis on being awarded the prestigious Frances Binnie Award at the Sydney Royal Easter Show for her exquisite hand-quilled wreath. This is the first time quilling or paper art of any kind has received the Frances Binnie prize. For those who are unfamiliar with the art form quilling, it involves the use of strips of paper that are rolled, shaped, and glued together to create decorative designs. Licia put enormous thought and effort into her entry creating a wreath made up of paper succulents. The myriad colours, intricacies and textures in each 3D design is truly phenomenal, and I strongly encourage everyone to check out this outstanding piece of art. Licia's design was awarded the most meritorious exhibit in the Standard of Excellence Showcase, Champion of Champions. She said that her inspiration stemmed

from her love of growing succulents, especially in Australia's arid climate. I thank Licia for drawing attention to this incredible art form and look forward to seeing more of her creations displayed in our community.

#### **PATRICK ANTHONY LEONARD**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:27):** This week Broken Hill farewelled one of its union and community stalwarts, Patrick Anthony Leonard. He was 84. In his working life Pat maintained the rights of workers for more than 40 years, holding executive positions in the Workers Industrial Union of Australia at a time when union membership was strong and roundtable talks between the mines management and the unions in Broken Hill were the way that industrial agreements were negotiated. Pat had firsthand knowledge of the underground working conditions being employed as a timberman on the zinc mine in the late 1970s and advocated strongly for a fair go for workers. In retirement, Pat's strong sense of justice remained, with his volunteering for St Vincent De Paul. Pat was the force behind the establishment of the Bishop Fox Meal Centre in Broken Hill. He believed that everyone had the right to at least one decent feed a day, and was motivated to look after his fellow man, when he saw people hungry and looking for food from bins. The Bishop Fox Meal Centre provides on average 650 meals per month to vulnerable people in Broken Hill. Pat looked after his workers. Vale, Patrick Anthony Leonard.

#### **NATIONAL CHINESE EISTEDDFOD**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:28):** The National Chinese Eisteddfod is an annual event organised by the Chinese Language Educational Council of NSW. It is a poem or prose recital competition for Chinese students. Each student has to recite two poems, one modern and one traditional, in front of judges. The results are based on their pronunciation, fluency, voice and body language. Campsie Public School has been participating in this event for many years. The school leadership team and the community always give us great support in the preparation and on the day. This year we had 57 students in an individual category and two groups of students in the group category that represented Campsie Public School in the competition on 25 May at Birrong Boys High School. The results were outstanding and the school community were very proud of the students for their effort, enthusiasm and language skills. I congratulate all the winners from Campsie Public School.

#### **LACHLAN WILLINGHAM**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (16:29):** I congratulate Lachlan Willingham on receiving a NSW Teachers Federation Award for HSC Excellence at the Public Education Foundation Annual Awards recently. I note that this award recognises the achievements of students from New South Wales public schools who have come first in an HSC examination. I acknowledge that Lachlan Willingham attended Elderslie High School. I commend Lachlan for achieving first in the State in Mathematics General 2, which is an outstanding achievement. I wish Lachlan success with his studies at university.

#### **CANCER RESEARCH AWARENESS WEEK**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:29):** I acknowledge national Cancer Research Awareness Week. As a cancer survivor I know only too well about the position I would have faced if it were not for the brave souls who spend countless hours in laboratories researching treatment methods for different cancers as well as working towards finding a cure for all cancers. In saying this, I acknowledge the staff at the Cancer Council's Greater Western Sydney office for its tremendous work in raising vital funds for cancer research, prevention and advocacy programs.

#### *Petitions*

#### **ORANGE AND CENTRAL WEST RAIL SERVICES**

##### **Discussion**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:30):** It is unfortunate that again I have to address this House over the Government's apparent failure to properly prioritise the needs of the people of rural and regional New South Wales. If recent history is anything to go by, support for this Government is waning because of its previous failures to address the needs of the bush, which resulted in recent losses of its local representation across a significant portion of this State, with people of the bush turning to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to be their voice in this place. It is my hope the Government will now take heed and listen, if only for its own sake.

Despite my lobbying in the previous Parliament for improved passenger rail services for Orange and the broader Central West, no tangible improvements in passenger rail transport have been planned or delivered for the community of Orange by this Government. The members of the Orange Rail Action Group, with whom I routinely meet to discuss the transport needs of the Orange community, resorted to harvesting 10,000 signatures to petition this House. I applaud the members of the Orange Rail Action Group for their motivation and effort to

cultivate support for this petition. They managed to glean the 10,000 signatures in less than 11 months. The relatively short time needed to complete this petition does not come as a surprise to me, because the vast majority of locals with whom I have spoken agree that passenger rail transport is a very important issue to them, including consultation with them to update travel schedules to meet their needs.

This petition reasonably seeks to improve passenger rail to service the needs of Orange and surrounds, encompassing a rapidly growing community. The petitioners are seeking to have an early morning express passenger train direct from Orange to Sydney Central and its return in the same afternoon. In fact, the smaller city of Bathurst, a relatively short distance to the east of Orange, benefits from such a daily train service known as the Bathurst Bullet, in addition to the XPT service. A second Bathurst Bullet service is reported to be commencing later this year.

The community of Orange do not begrudge Bathurstians their service, but the doubling of a daily bullet train between Bathurst and Sydney when no such service exists a short distance away in Orange lacks common sense, especially when such a service is stabled at Lithgow each night and is often empty of passengers to and from its stabling site. If just one of those two services was stabled in Orange, it would kill two birds with the one stone: Passengers could travel seamlessly by train between Orange and Sydney. The train could still provide a service to the people of Bathurst and be stabled at Orange, where existing infrastructure lies virtually dormant. This service would also provide efficiencies in that patronage is likely to increase to and from its terminating stabling point. Let us not forget the community of Blayney, which would also benefit from such an arrangement. There is clearly strong community support for this service; it now just requires political will to provide Orange and the broader Central West with what it needs and wants.

This petition also seeks necessary infrastructure upgrades of the main Western line to support fast passenger rail and freight rail services. The lack of appropriate investment in critical infrastructure will stifle the true potential for growth in the western region, to which the Central West is a conduit. It is also an intrinsic part of that region. For New South Wales to capitalise on the full benefits of the inland rail project, improved rail infrastructure between the Parkes freight hub and the Sydney basin is of paramount importance. Until this rail line is upgraded New South Wales may lose economic opportunity. An upgraded rail line would facilitate safe and efficient freight movements to and from the Parkes rail hub.

Finally, the petition seeks early commissioning of the regional rail fleet on the Main Western line. As I said earlier, the city of Orange and the surrounding district are growing rapidly. To support our growing community, the new rail fleet is needed urgently to provide safe and efficient transport of passengers who increasingly need a modern rail service incorporating the technology that they now rely upon. I acknowledge the members of the Orange Rail Action Group who dedicated their time and effort in presenting this petition to benefit the community of Orange and the broader Central West. On behalf of the community of Orange, I thank Peter Bilenkij, Neil Jones, Joanne McRae, Geoff Bargwanna, Doug Brooks, Denis Gregory, Phil Stevenson, David Williams, Shane Austin and Anne Warwick. I conclude by encouraging the Government to finally favour the bush by committing to the improvements to rail transport and infrastructure that the people of Orange are asking for.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:35):** I thank the member for Orange for bringing this petition to the Parliament. I recognise and acknowledge the passionate advocacy of the Orange Rail Action Group, particularly that of Dr Peter Bilenkij. Two weeks ago I met with Dr Bilenkij and the local member to discuss train services across the region. We also discussed some of the challenges and opportunities and our future plans for better rail. I explained to the local member and to passionate advocate Dr Peter Bilenkij that the Government is continuing to meet the needs of people living in regional communities. The Government wants people to be able to travel to places such as Central station to access services, to conduct business or for leisure. We all understand the importance of connectivity for regional communities with major cities and with each other.

I told Dr Bilenkij that the Government has a big, bold vision for transport, which is focused on a hub-and-spoke model. The vision connects regional customers to the nearest regional city or health service. It connects people with jobs, shopping opportunities and education and it uses different modes of transport to improve on existing connections to deliver additional services. The member for Orange, Dr Peter Bilenkij and I also spoke about how NSW TrainLink operates a daily direct morning Sydney-Orange-Dubbo service and an afternoon Dubbo-Orange-Sydney service. The service departs Orange at 3.52 p.m. and arrives at Central at 8.42 p.m. The direct return service departs Central at 7.19 a.m. and arrives at Orange at 12.02 p.m. Customers also have other service options, including a coach service to and from Lithgow, connecting with intercity services. A coach service also connects with the Bathurst Bullet. The Government knows that a day return service to Sydney is important. The Government also knows that it will have to overcome the many challenges such as fleet availability, operational changes, maintenance and stabling of trains that prevent it from delivering it today.

We also discussed the New South Wales Government's plans to invest \$2.8 billion into a new regional rail fleet and a brand-new rail maintenance facility at Dubbo. It is an opportunity to replace our ageing XPT trains. The new trains will improve safety and provide comfort, accessibility and reliability for customers who travel from Sydney to many regional centres in New South Wales. The new fleet will comprise 117 new carriages, form 10 regional intercity trains, nine short regional trains and 10 long regional trains. They will replace the existing XPT, Xplorer and Endeavour trains. The new fleet will meet the needs of the modern customer. Regional rail customers will experience a more comfortable journey, with better seating, improved accessibility and spacious buffet areas. I explained to Dr Peter Bilenkij and the local member that with the rail maintenance facility being constructed in our area there will be an opportunity for expansion of current services and additional services in the future. I committed to Dr Bilenkij that I would ask Transport for NSW to investigate the possibility of an additional coach service for the new train service in Bathurst in the near future.

The petition should not be about Bathurst getting this and Orange getting that. The member for Orange should understand that it is about growing the Central West and that the Government is investing in rail infrastructure. It is upgrading the Main Western line, putting in train loops to improve freight productivity, introducing more passenger trains and making sure things like signalling are addressed. This Government's investments are creating those opportunities.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:40):** Many members would be aware that I am a proud product of the Central West, having been born and raised in Dubbo until I enlisted into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps in the Australian Army when I was 17. I have many fond memories of growing up in Dubbo, but I will not forget the disconnect that country people feel from Sydney. They feel disconnected, unconsidered and, at times, somewhat irrelevant. I say to the people of Orange and regional New South Wales that they are not irrelevant. I commend the member for Orange for bringing this important petition to the House as it gives members the opportunity to again acknowledge the importance of regional New South Wales. I thank the Orange Rail Action Group and all signatories to the petition.

The lack of public transport services in the Central West is a by-product of this Government's Sydney-centric focus. The attitude specifically of the Liberal Party is extremely Sydney-centric, but it cannot even get Sydney right. Look at the blowouts in the light rail, WestConnex and the other projects that the Liberal Party has failed to manage in Sydney. We can only begin to wonder what we could do in Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo and across regional New South Wales. We hear big talk from the Liberals about regional New South Wales, but talk is cheap. I have a message for The Nationals members, many of whom I have the deepest respect for. I advise them to not be the annoying long-lost second cousin in the Coalition arrangement. They should stand up to the Liberals and put them in their place. They should not yield. They should put regional New South Wales first.

The vital role that regional New South Wales plays in our State's economy and the relevance of the good people in the bush must never be overlooked. We know that is precisely what the conservative Liberals do time and again in this place. The member for Orange and the signatories to the petition and everyone else are consistently watching this Liberal Party run a government with a Sydney-centric focus. The proposal makes sense in so many ways. If we want to be serious about decentralisation and urban planning, this is a positive indication of what could be done. But it will take the political will of the Government and the Liberal Party to step up to the plate.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:43):** I am pleased to speak in the discussion on this petition. I know the situation firsthand; I live in Dubbo. I thank the member for Campbelltown, who still has family there, for his contribution. I am sure they are enjoying the vibrancy of Dubbo at this time. The New South Wales Government's vision for transport is all about growing regional economies and includes investigations into a fast rail network, including a potential route to Orange. While that work is underway, the Government is also buying new trains to replace the older fleet, as the Minister mentioned. In fact, on Valentine's Day this year—very romantic—the Minister for Roads and Transport, along with the Deputy Premier, announced that the Government will construct a brand-new maintenance facility at Dubbo. Action is happening. Since the election I have been in regular contact with the Minister who will be delivering the fantastic project—the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, who sits in the Chamber—about how it will benefit not just Dubbo but the entire western region of New South Wales. The new regional train fleet and maintenance facility have the potential to unlock opportunities to make improvements for Orange customers as well.

To better improve the services offered to regional customers, the New South Wales Government is investing \$2.8 billion in the regional rail fleet project to replace most of the regional train fleet. Members may be interested to know that the last time a new regional fleet was introduced to the Central West was in 1982. Apart from new trains, one of the exciting elements of the project is the construction of the new rail maintenance facility at Dubbo that I spoke of. The new fleet and the maintenance facility at Dubbo will unlock amazing opportunities. Investigations are already underway to explore the way services will operate in the Central West when the facility

opens. Our plans to improve services when the trains arrive are still under development, but we will continue to work with the communities of the Central West to ensure that service levels will meet demand now and into the future.

The construction of the facility will provide many job opportunities for people right across the Central West region and allow them to develop their skills on a major government project. Early works for construction are planned for 2020. Once the design work is completed—that will take around 30 months—we will have sustainable employment, skills development and business opportunities during construction and operation. Current estimates indicate that the project will generate about 200 new jobs during peak construction, 60 new jobs for the final fitting-out of the trains and the testing and commissioning works and 50 new ongoing jobs during operations, including traineeships and, importantly, apprenticeships.

We know that a strong regional economy is essential. As well as upgrading our trains and looking at better services for customers, we have an opportunity to develop new industries and drive jobs growth. One of the things we are tackling is social issues to reduce disadvantage. Transport plays a very important role in improving access. There is work to do, and the Government will continue to work with the Orange community. We want to get the best outcome we can with the rail projects underway and make the most of the opportunities that lie ahead.

*Private Members' Statements*

**FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE RAILWAY STATIONS**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:46):** This week in Parliament the Treasurer handed down the 2019-2020 budget. Following an eight-year long tradition of one failed budget after another, I was truly surprised to see that this budget actually contained a little something for the Fairfield electorate. Following years of ongoing advocacy from myself, my parliamentary colleague the member for Cabramatta and our local communities, I am pleased to say that we have managed to secure funding for easy access upgrades at Canley Vale train station. Residents who access Canley Vale train station have, for far too long, suffered the inability to move between the two platforms unless they are able-bodied.

In order to swap between the Railway Parade side of the train station and the First Avenue side, the only option available was to traverse two flights of stairs on each side—a task which has proven incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for those with mobility impairment or for parents with prams. Wheelchair-bound residents cannot even travel to the other side using the pedestrian overpass just down the road at Bareena Street because there is a giant telegraph pole situated in the middle of the footpath, blocking all access to the pedestrian overpass. That being said, we hope that the upgrades we have managed to secure funding for will go a long way to resolving issues for local residents and commuters in Canley Vale.

This funding, however, only addresses part of the transport access issues facing the Fairfield electorate. Residents who reside in Villawood, Carramar and Yennora are forced to persevere with substandard transport options and, in some cases, the complete inability to access their local transport services. This is a very serious matter that I have advocated for on many occasions in this very House as it is a matter of utmost priority for so many people who are forced to suffer as a result of insufficient resourcing.

In Villawood we have a fantastic group of seniors devoting their time, resources and energy to supporting one another and our local community through the Villawood Senior Citizens Centre. This centre is located directly adjacent to Villawood train station—fantastic, you might think; a great way for residents to get around and connect with their local support services. Despite their best efforts and intentions, there is very little those volunteers can do to plan and arrange outings for their attendees given that the local transport services are either inaccessible or onerously difficult to utilise. I can tell members who have not seen Villawood train station that it is a Herculean feat to get up and down those stairs. It is like our very own Everest for many senior citizens who wish to utilise the train service.

A similar fate has been bestowed upon the residents around Yennora train station. There is no mobility access and locals are left in the lurch. It is simply not good enough that in this day and age the Government cannot get the simple things right. Access to essential public services should not be considered a privilege for a lucky few but something that is granted to everybody in our communities without discriminating against their medical conditions. Carramar train station is another prime example of a station in our local community which has had its fair share of issues. Carramar station is well known by residents as the only station where access would be routinely flooded during rainy seasons. In addition to access points flooding, there is literally no way for individuals with mobility impairments to get to and from either of the platforms. The only access to the platforms is via two flights of stairs via the underpass. Despite the complete inability of mobility impaired individuals to access the platforms, it is nice to see that wheelchair accessible car spaces are made available to them in the car park.

I have recounted the hardships faced by the late Errol Russell, a local resident who had a number of chronic medical conditions which left him wheelchair bound. Errol lived directly opposite Carramar station; however, in order to receive medical treatment, he needed to call for a cab to take him to another train station so that he could continue his journey to the city or Liverpool to receive his regular medical treatment. Failing to invest in the basic necessities throughout our communities, such as transport infrastructure, results in individuals like Errol Russell being forced to suffer further hardships unnecessarily. For many years now the residents of Fairfield have rallied behind the call to provide improved access to our essential transport services throughout our community.

### STATE BUDGET AND MULGOA ELECTORATE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:51):** I congratulate the Treasurer on a fantastic budget handed down this week, a budget that not only delivers on our election commitments but also makes record investment in services and infrastructure that will make a real difference in the lives of the people across New South Wales. In particular I congratulate the Treasurer on launching the largest ever education budget, which will deliver 4,600 new teachers, fully meet our Gonski commitments, put mental health counsellors in every public high school, offer before- and after-school care services, roll out free mobile dental checks for primary school children, wipe the maintenance backlog to zero, air condition over 900 schools as well as invest a record \$6.7 billion to build and upgrade 190 schools.

In the Mulgoa electorate we are enjoying this prosperity with unprecedented investment in our schools. In the lead-up to the election held in March this year I was proud to make multiple announcements to deliver new and upgraded schools across the electorate and I am proud that this budget will fund our election commitments, just as we promised. Glenmore Park is an ever-expanding suburb with more and more families moving into the growing region each year. During the election campaign I was thrilled to announce that Glenmore Park will receive a brand-new primary school in Mulgoa Rise to accommodate that growing suburb.

I was also pleased to announce that a new performing arts and learning centre will be built at Glenmore Park High School. For several years Lisette Gorick, the principal of Glenmore Park High School, and members of the Glenmore Park Learning Alliance, which includes seven primary schools, have been advocating for a space to hold performances, eisteddfods and assemblies. In conjunction with Western Sydney University, our local Aboriginal education group, Penrith high schools and local businesses, the performing arts and learning centre will be a shared facility for the whole community. The performing arts and learning centre will not only support students of Glenmore Park High School; it will also be a shared facility available to other local schools across the region and a place for all of the community within Glenmore Park to use and enjoy.

I welcome this budget that funds our election commitments, just as we promised it would. I also welcome the continued investment in our schools in Cecil Hills. Cecil Hills Public School is one of 190 schools being upgraded to accommodate the growing population. The upgrade will include 15 new permanent classrooms, allowing the school to accommodate over 900 students. I also welcome the current planning and consultation underway at Cecil Hills High School. It is all thanks to the record \$6.7 billion investment in building new schools and upgrading others.

In October of last year it was my pleasure to officially open the new St Clair High School Innovation Centre. After fire destroyed 80 per cent of the school in 2014, I went into the election in 2015 promising that the school would be rebuilt, and be better than ever before. I was thrilled to stand alongside then Minister for Education Rob Stokes and the community of St Clair High School—who have worked for years to make the school a reality—to officially open the school last year. The new \$24.6 million Innovation Centre has 16 new teaching spaces, a research area, a lecture hall, a learning common area, a kitchen, a cafe and a tiered outdoor learning area. Just as we promised at the last election, we have delivered on the promise.

When I first entered this place in 2011, I began advocating for schools in western Sydney to have air conditioning. In the Nepean Valley students regularly contend with sweltering 40-plus degree days and high humidity. I said that every school in western Sydney must have air conditioning. Thanks to the Liberal-Nationals Government, we are delivering air conditioning to every public school in Glenmore Park, Regentville, Wallacia, Cecil Hills and Mulgoa. This is a game-changer for students and teachers, who will now be able to thrive as they learn and teach, no matter the weather.

In addition to its record-breaking school building program, the Liberal-Nationals Government has committed an unprecedented investment to eliminate the school maintenance backlog so that every public school in the State can provide the world-class facilities that our students and teachers deserve. It will mean that every maintenance job in Mulgoa's 18 public schools will be cleared by July 2020. Regentville Public School alone will receive \$300,000 for improvements and upgrades. That record investment in education by the Liberal-Nationals Government will ensure that our children and their children have the very best start in life. I congratulate the

Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Education on making a real difference in people's lives and ensuring that our children in western Sydney have the best access to education.

### WIN REGIONAL NEWS SERVICES

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:56):** On Tuesday I chatted to journalists back home in the Riverina and the Central West, getting the message of the budget out to our people. Yesterday afternoon it was announced that at least two of the journalists that my office and I spoke with on Tuesday, who were stressed and trying to hit a deadline on budget day, will not have a job from next Friday. Late on Wednesday afternoon the number of options for regional people to keep informed and up to date with the news in their communities was slashed by a third. On Wednesday afternoon staff at four regional WIN newsrooms were informed that they would not have a job from 28 June. That includes two newsrooms covering my electorate, Wagga and the Central West. WIN is also closing newsrooms in Albury and in Queensland's Hervey Bay.

The closures will affect 35 to 40 staff, including casuals, across the local television news services. I acknowledge the hard work of WIN Wagga Director Madeline Oldaker and WIN Central West Director Annabelle Amos. I also acknowledge journalists Jenny Archdall, Steph Muir, Chloe Attwood and Ellie Bryce, all of whom have regularly travelled into the Cootamundra electorate to cover politics, report on our wonderful communities and—at times—ask me difficult questions. There are more people I could mention. I feel for every single journo, editor and camera man and woman affected by the sudden and shock announcement. While politicians and journalists are sometimes at odds, I have always had the utmost respect for the press and the vital role it plays in our nation's democracy. I have also very honestly experienced nothing but the utmost professionalism and dedication from the journalists I have mentioned, some of whom are just beginning their careers.

The announcement has been met with sadness and widespread disappointment by my constituents, who are avid consumers of local news. It speaks to a more general move by companies recently—whether they be the big banks or Target in Temora—to walk away from regional New South Wales. It is a trend that we need to call out. While they may be independent business decisions, they are business decisions which affect the lives of people in the bush. This particular business decision affects our ability to access reliable and independently sourced information. The country's "largest regional network" has clearly abandoned that mission, cutting regional coverage from some of our most vibrant towns, cities and villages. Rural and regional people need strong and diverse media coverage, and moves to reduce those services will only weaken our communities.

The Nationals will always fight for more services for the bush, not less. We believe in the important role journalism plays not only in our democracy but also in our communities, bringing people together and keeping them informed. It is often a thankless job, but it is absolutely fundamental. In the first six months of this year The Nationals spent close to \$3 million advertising on regional television in New South Wales, and I am proud that our party has moved to cease all advertising with WIN Television until it reverses its decision. We will not invest in a company that does not believe in the value of our communities and the stories they have to tell.

I thank all the journalists, editors and camos that I have had the pleasure of working with over the past few years for bringing scrutiny and stories to my constituents despite difficult working conditions, seven-day rosters, below average pay and near constant pressure. In my experience, there are few journalists who are not motivated by a desire to do good and to contribute positively to society through their work. What they did in Wagga Wagga, Orange, in my electorate and in between on the many days when they got up at 6.00 a.m. and travelled to our announcements by 9.00 a.m. was valued. They will most certainly be missed. It is a sad day for regional news.

### GOVERNMENT REBATES

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:01):** This Government is committed to reducing the cost of living for families across New South Wales. Families and households face significant financial pressures. This Government recognises that between the household bills and the costs of housing, rent and children, some families across New South Wales and in my electorate of Holsworthy are struggling to keep up. Families are the bedrock of any community, and they need our support. As Parliamentary Secretary for Families I am pleased to say that this Government has been faithful in its commitment to local families. One of the ways this Government has delivered is through the Energy Switch program, which has been a huge success. New South Wales households are saving hundreds of dollars on their energy bills. By looking at a customer's latest electricity bill, Service NSW locates the cheapest electricity plans available for them. Upon request, Service NSW can conduct a switch of energy providers with ease. Amazingly, savings of up to \$1,600 on energy bills have already been recorded.

Those savings make a huge difference, particularly to families that are struggling to get by. I encourage my local residents in Holsworthy to get on board, make an appointment with Services NSW and double-check

their electricity options, because customer awareness of the cheapest electricity options will spur competition in the electricity market and push prices down. The Government has also introduced a gas switch program. We do not have too many families on gas in my area, but there are a few. That program is still in its early stages. New South Wales households can apply to Service NSW to unlock savings on their gas bills.

I had the opportunity during the campaign to join the Premier, Treasurer, former Minister for Energy Don Harwin and local Casula residents Aaron and Leanne Gaudry to announce that the New South Wales Government will provide up to 300,000 households with the ability to save hundreds of dollars on their power bills thanks to a no-interest loan to purchase solar-battery and battery systems. To be eligible for the scheme, applicants will need to be owner-occupiers of a house and have an annual household income of up to \$180,000. Loans of up to \$9,000 per battery system and up to \$14,000 per solar-battery system will be available to them. According to our estimations, a family with a \$500 quarterly electricity bill could save up to \$285 a year on its bills while repaying the interest-free loan.

Families right across New South Wales want the best for their children but, unfortunately, the cost of living is stressful and can force some families to choose between a child's soccer membership and paying an electricity bill. The Government recognises that helping students to flourish is not limited to the classroom and that the sporting and creative endeavours of our children need to be encouraged. That is why the Government has introduced the Active Kids Rebate, providing two \$100 vouchers for guardians of school-enrolled children to put towards membership fees for sport and active recreation each year.

Speaking of which, we are also providing assistance to our sporting groups with \$4.5 million going to Southern Districts Soccer Football Association and \$400,000 going to the Moorebank Rams to make sure their clubhouses are up to scratch; and to make sure they have facilities particularly for females—we are trying to encourage more females to play sport—and people with disability. Some of those facilities are definitely not up to scratch. This assistance will make sure that they are looked after and encouraged to play as well. The Creative Kids voucher of up to \$100 will help to pay for activities of students aged between about 4½ and 18 years. The voucher can be used to cover costs for creative arts, speech, drama, dance, digital design, coding lessons, music lessons and other activities provided by organisations that are registered activity providers.

As I mentioned, Service NSW is a great resource that assists local residents to find cost-of-living savings. The bad old days of waiting hours to complete a simple government transaction are over. We have a fabulous Service NSW at Liverpool. It is the busiest in the State but it has one of the highest customer satisfaction ratings of about 98 per cent, which is phenomenal given how busy it is. It is testament to strong customer service and dedication to assisting local residents. I am proud to highlight that due to the success of Service NSW we will be opening a new Service NSW centre somewhere in the Prestons-Edmondson Park area to ease the pressure on the existing centre and to encourage more people to attend. I commend the Government for its great work in delivering for families and households across New South Wales, particularly in my electorate of Holsworthy.

#### **TEA GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL PARLIAMENT**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:06):** Last week something very special happened in the small, beautiful community of Tea Gardens. Tea Gardens Public School celebrated the opening of its thirtieth school parliament. Tea Gardens Public School does not do things by halves. Its school parliament is complete with its own Governor-General and is presided over by its own Speaker led in by the Usher of the Black Rod, who carries a rod turned by the local men's shed. I commend the principal and Governor-General of the school parliament, Mr Mark Clemson. I give a very special mention to former principal and founder of the school parliament, Mr Daryl Martin, who not only commenced the tradition at the school but has not missed an opening of parliament since.

The genesis of the school parliament was an excursion to Canberra in 1988 led by Mr Daryl Martin, where students saw the Commonwealth Parliament in action. The following year the school established its own parliament, with students in years 3 to 6 participating. As well as a Prime Minister and Ministers, there are shadow Ministers, Clerks, ushers, Hansard recorders, a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker. Teachers take the review role of senators and the principal as Governor-General signs off on any changes.

While the behaviour of some in this place could be described as immature, the same cannot be said of the honourable members of the Tea Gardens Public School parliament. The students are incredibly well behaved and well spoken. They carry out their roles responsibly and show respect to other honourable members even when they have different opinions. Over recent years the school parliament has supported motions including, "That we replace plastic straws with paper straws in the canteen," and, "That we get a zebra crossing out the front of the school". This year students sought support from their peers to raise funds for the Mark Hughes Foundation for brain cancer and CanTeen for children suffering from cancer. It is wonderful to see students placing importance on issues affecting their community well beyond their school fence.

I congratulate this year's 2019 Tea Gardens Public School parliamentarians: Prime Minister Darcy Ingram, Deputy Prime Minister Isla Brumby and Leader of the Opposition, Sam Alchin. The school parliament was kept to order by the Speaker of the House, Amelia Henning, and Deputy Speaker of the House, Lara Randall. They were ably assisted by Hansard reporters Ricky Ngyuen, Coby Bates and Bailey Condon; Serjeants-at-Arms Darcy O'Brien, Zarlii Ray, Claire Carter and Seth Thomson; and Usher of the Black Rod, Cooper Studdert.

In the transport portfolio, transport Minister Liam McKenzie sits opposite shadow transport Minister Karly Biffin. James McCarthy has the role of Minister for sport opposite shadow sports Minister Ethan Avery. In the education portfolio, education Minister Natureh Fenton-Holt is supported ably by shadow education Minister Deena Clemson. The building and health portfolio is led by Minister Tyler Rodgers, who is helped out by shadow Minister Seth Rawlings. The important portfolio of pupil welfare sees Minister Jessie Lawler supported by shadow Minister Sam White. Haleigh Simmons has taken on the role of the Minister for special events, sitting opposite shadow Minister Evie Braddick. Isla Brumby combines her Deputy Prime Minister responsibilities with her role of Minister for the environment, supported by shadow Minister and Deputy Opposition Leader Boston Marchant.

The school parliament has been so successful at Tea Gardens Public School because it has been embedded across the entire school community. I thank and congratulate the staff of Tea Gardens Public School: Miss Elise Dunford, Mr Guy Feeney, Mrs Caitlyn Kelly, Mrs Anya Ingram, Mr Brendan Walsh, Miss Leah McFayden, Mrs Erin Bryant, Mrs Tasha Howard, Mrs Anita Howarth and Mrs Emily True. Since the school's parliament has been functioning, the school has been recognised for its outstanding achievements on a number of occasions. In 1992 the school was awarded the Hunter region assistant director-general's award for outstanding achievement in the areas of public speaking and school parliament. This was followed in 1995 by a NSW Children's Week Award of Excellence and a 1995 award for fostering excellence in student participation and decision-making. In 2002 the school was awarded a discovering democracy achievement award recognising outstanding achievement in civics and citizenship, and in 2008 the school was awarded a Department of Education Director General award.

Too often there is a disconnect between what occurs in this place and the citizens we seek to represent, but not at Tea Gardens Public School. In the process of learning the importance of democracy, the students are learning the important skills of public speaking, leadership and respectful disagreement. Most importantly, the students of Tea Gardens Public School are learning the importance of everyone having a voice to help shape our communities so that everyone's needs are met. I am confident that one day we will see a Tea Gardens Public School student sitting on these benches.

#### STATE BUDGET AND RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:10):** I bring to the attention of the House the very substantial commitments to education and health infrastructure for the electorate of Riverstone confirmed in this week's State budget. Unfortunately, I am also obliged to correct the sloppy and misleading reporting in the *Rouse Hill Times* about those investments. There has never been more capital funding allocated to schools in the Riverstone electorate than there is this year. That is a fact. The pipeline for the following three years is just as strong. All of the projects announced by the Government prior to the election are included in the four-year budget allocation. The record statewide investment of \$6.7 billion over the four-year term enables a record number of projects to be undertaken. Of this total, \$1.68 billion has been allocated in the 2019-2020 budget to specific major projects for which contracts have already been let. That means there are billions of dollars left for the projects which have not yet gone to tender.

Budget documents for the education portfolio never identify individual school allocations until a project has gone to tender so that a genuine market value can be established for each. Nevertheless the global funding envelope includes sufficient allowance for all projects concerned. Had the *Rouse Hill Times* journalist who wrote such a misleading story about local school investment contacted the NSW Department of Education, the Treasury or my office to seek clarification of the budget papers this would have been explained to him. To suggest, as he did, that school projects listed in the budget document were somehow "left off the State Government's big-ticket spending" or "placed in doubt" is silly and embarrassing to him now, reflecting a failure by him to do even the most basic homework.

School investment this budget year in the Riverstone electorate for projects where contracts have been let includes \$45 million for the Farmland Drive primary school, \$3.9 million for the Quakers Hill East Public School upgrade, \$11.5 million at Riverbank Public School, \$9.2 million at Riverstone High School and \$24.2 million at Schofields Public School. New projects to commence during the four-year term include a new primary school in the Tallawong area and major upgrades at both John Palmer Public School and Glenwood High School. In the neighbouring electorate of Londonderry a new primary school will be built in Marsden Park and a high school which is currently in the planning stages will follow. All of these projects are identified in the budget

papers. In addition the majority of schools in round one of the Cooler Classrooms Program will receive their air conditioning in the coming budget year. There are 10 such schools in the Riverstone electorate.

Through this year's budget the New South Wales Government reaffirmed its commitment to the Rouse Hill Hospital. There is \$56 million to finalise site acquisition. The balance of the \$300 million set aside from the poles and wires remains reserved to allow construction of stage one of the project to commence during the current term once the planning phase is completed. Labor claims that the project received no budget funding, which were picked up by the *Rouse Hill Times*, show that Labor does not realise how many hospital projects there are in New South Wales. The list of 29 further projects to which Labor referred is nowhere near the \$10.1 billion health capital investment strategy to which this Government is committed.

More than 70 projects are listed in Budget Paper No. 2. Rouse Hill Hospital was in the pipeline before those 29 further projects. Unlike most other projects it is a brand-new hospital that will be built on a greenfield site, requiring both site selection and hospital network planning to occur before construction. This is what has been progressing. In 2015 Labor did not commit a single cent towards a Rouse Hill hospital. Only after the Liberal Government committed to the project did Labor discover a need for a hospital in Sydney's north-west. The new Rouse Hill Hospital will form part of the \$10.1 billion over four years that is being invested in health infrastructure in New South Wales.

All of this information about local school and hospital investment is available either in the budget papers or elsewhere on the public record. If the *Rouse Hill Times* had made a simple phone call to either the relevant department or the relevant Minister or to my office these facts would have been explained. The same newspaper previously reported that the hospital would be funded by a \$300 million reservation from the 99-year lease of the poles and wires. During the election campaign the newspaper even published reports quoting the Labor Party criticising the figure of \$300 million.

For the newspaper to claim now that the \$300 million figure has suddenly been discovered is simply incredible and cannot be supported. That funding was no last-minute reaction; like all the other allocations I have spoken about, it is in the budget papers. The journalist responsible for this misrepresentation has done the *Rouse Hill Times* no credit. The local community deserves reporting which is accurate, objective and by all means exercises a degree of healthy scepticism but is always grounded in impartiality. On this occasion the *Rouse Hill Times* has failed to live up to that standard.

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (17:16):** I congratulate the member for Riverstone on raising this very important matter. It is important that constituents in his electorate understand what is being delivered. I believe it is critically important to put on the record that when you are trying to get absolute value for money in school infrastructure the last thing you would want to do is publish the exact amount that you had available before the tender. All that would do is force the price up for every school. We have seen what happens when school infrastructure budgets are not managed well—there are blowouts on infrastructure costs and fewer schools are built or upgraded. That is exactly what the member for Riverstone rightly raises in the House today. We do not list the exact price for each individual school because we want to get absolute maximum value for money for the taxpayer so that members like the member for Riverstone have the best possible schools in their electorates.

#### **BUILDING CLADDING SAFETY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:17):** Tonight I advise the House of serious issues raised with me by a constituent of mine. The issues are quite serious for this particular constituent but have broader significance for a reasonable number of my constituents and an even greater number of citizens across the State. My constituent lives in a comparatively recently erected unit in the Liverpool CBD. It is a high-rise structure of over 25 metres in height. The sale of the property in which my constituent lives settled in April 2015. There is a form of cladding on the building. Cladding obviously raises issues following the fire at the Grenfell Tower, London, in 2017 and an earlier fire in Melbourne in November 2014 at the Lacrosse building. The Melbourne fire occurred at a building where external wall cladding was made of aluminium composite panels, known as ACP. Similar panels have been implicated in fires at the Neo 200 apartment complex in Spencer Street, Melbourne, and at buildings in Dubai in 2015 and 2017.

In 2017 the New South Wales Government subsequently established a New South Wales cladding task force, which included Fire and Rescue NSW, that looked at buildings with external wall cladding. As at June 2018 it was reported that 417 buildings required further assessments because they had cladding which potentially increased fire risks. A more recent report referred to 435 buildings. In July 2018 residents at the Liverpool building in which this particular constituent lives received a New South Wales Government letter which said, in part, "your building ... has been identified as having a quantity and/or arrangement of aluminium composite panel that may increase the fire and safety risk and requires further assessment".

The letter said that Fire and Rescue NSW would be doing further work and that the local council, which is Liverpool, would be made aware of the situation to allow it to inspect the building and consider what action to take. This provoked a number of reports and various pieces of documentation. Liverpool council issued a fire safety order requiring an audit report on the internal cladding. Following reports, other documentation and a further Liverpool council fire safety order, it seems that the cladding must be removed. The cost of that is to be borne by the strata, and thus by the owners of the units. For people such as my constituents the figures being quoted are astronomical. My constituent is concerned and distressed by this.

Purchasers proceeded to buy new units in good faith and did everything they could reasonably be expected to do. Buildings were approved and no-one told purchasers there was a problem. Subsequently, there has been a flurry of official action. In 2018 the New South Wales Government imposed a retrospective ban on various types of cladding which had been legal to install but now were not. Fire safety orders now direct the removal of cladding that it was perfectly legal to install at the time of its installation. As the residents of this building are discovering, unsuspecting unit owners are receiving cladding rectification bills they simply cannot pay. My constituent quite understandably says that whatever type or level of government allowed the erection of buildings that were unsafe should wear the financial cost of rectification.

The information provided to prospective purchasers at this particular complex by agents included this comment about external walls: "mixed glass windows/doors, rendered concrete panels/FC cladding, blocks with paint finish all to BCA requirements". Purchasers did everything they reasonably could to ensure they were buying safe properties and received appropriate assurances. But the purchasers are now expected to bear the financial cost of rectification themselves. Dame Judith Hackitt headed the United Kingdom inquiry into the Grenfell Tower tragedy. When she was in Australia recently she made the obvious point that it was likely that the Government would at least partially fund rectification. The Victorian Government has announced a plan for owners to obtain loans to deal with rectifications and then to pay the loan off via rates. I note media reports of a government fund in England. The New South Wales State Government has declined to offer any financial relief.

The expectation presumably is that individual unit owners engage in litigation, whether by class action or otherwise. That, of course, is based on the heroic assumption that proposed defendants will not retreat into liquidation, leaving no-one to recover damages from. Phoenix companies are hardly unknown in the building industry. I understand some potential defendants have already adopted this course. Then there is the six-year limitation period on the statutory warranty, which may exclude some owners from recovery. It would be foolhardy to assume litigation would deliver compensation or justice to unit owners.

These issues are serious for my constituents living in this complex. Liverpool council's fire safety order concerning this block cites a report showing that the building is clad with Vitrabond PE aluminium cladding, which has a highly combustible core and has been shown to represent a high risk to the safety of persons and the spread of fire. Unless it is removed and rectification work is carried out, the owners face fines of \$5 million. The building was approved originally by the joint regional planning panel. Consent for the construction of the building was approved by Liverpool City Council. The construction certificate and occupation certificate were issued by a private certifier.

This is not the only building to have these problems in Liverpool. Ten buildings within the Liverpool council area were issued with an order to provide a cladding assessment report. Of those buildings, three have now been ordered to remove cladding. The costs are beyond the capacity of many of my constituents to bear. The Government should take positive steps to deal with the cost of rectifications. My constituents should not have to choose between living in unsafe buildings and bankruptcy.

#### STATE BUDGET AND PENRITH ELECTORATE

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (17:22):** It is great to be here in budget week and to be able to update the House and my community on the fantastic things that are being delivered out of the New South Wales budget this year for the community of Penrith, which I am lucky enough and very proud to represent. This is my ninth year in the Parliament. This week is the week I was elected nine years ago, so I do look back very fondly on this—

**Mr Paul Toole:** You are looking as young as then.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I haven't changed a bit—two suit sizes higher maybe. It has been a fantastic budget for the Penrith community, starting first and foremost with the highlight figure of \$93 billion being invested in infrastructure across New South Wales, and Penrith being a big recipient of that investment. I am most appreciative to the Treasurer and the Premier for the capacity of this Government to support cost-of-living measures, particularly with initiatives such as the Active Kids rebate—which has been a raging success in the Penrith community, and I have no doubt the doubling of that will be taken up very strongly by the community in

Penrith—and stamp duty relief for first home buyers. It is wonderful to see young families, young couples and individuals getting into the property market. Energy rebates and the reduction of transfer duty exemptions on energy rebates also drive down cost-of-living expenses for residents across Penrith.

The Nepean and Blue Mountains local area commands will benefit from the extra 1,500 members of the NSW Police Force. Our growing population in the Penrith electorate will benefit from the very large investment in Nepean Hospital and the 5,000 workforce boost that we are giving to New South Wales frontline services. Our schools will also benefit from the additional 4,600 teachers statewide.

Mr Assistant Speaker, my community, like yours, is a commuter community and it is fantastic to see that the Government has been able to invest from the strength of the New South Wales economy back into commuters by placing a cap on the Opal card. Those people utilising trains and buses on a regular basis will have a maximum cost of \$50 a week. Energy Switch has been expanded to include gas to ensure that people get the absolute best deal. We have introduced the new Seniors Card and the \$200 energy rebate for self-funded retirees. This Government is looking after people from the beginning of life and as they age. There is a strong infrastructure spend that I will talk about later.

As part of the broader work being done at Nepean Hospital, the planning work on the new child and adolescent mental health unit has started. The Government has committed to delivery of a new commuter car park at Emu Plains train station and the early stage planning for that will soon begin. It was fantastic to take commitments to the election in relation to local sporting facilities and to then see them reflected in the budget. They include upgrades to the Penrith Tennis Centre; Lapstone Oval, home of the Mountain Goats; Parker Street Reserve, which will receive lighting and field upgrades; and Leonay Oval, which has a Stuart Ayres block a little further up—their name, not mine. It has something written at the end and I expect jokes from everyone at the Leonay football club. It will be expanded to deliver the facilities needed on the top field.

Eileen Cammack Reserve and Hickeys Lane Football Fields will be subject to expansion and improvements and a new synthetic running track will be built at Penrith. The school infrastructure upgrades are fantastic. The budget lists the work for the Kingswood High School hall. I send a shout-out to the P & C, community and students at Kingswood High School and thank them for their strong advocacy. It is great to see that project underway. That will be backed up by a learning centre at Cranebrook High School and a new hall and multipurpose facilities at Jamison High School and Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School. There will be minor works upgrades at Kingswood Public School and Kingswood South Public School. A new library facility is proposed for Lapstone Public School and minor upgrades are proposed to York Public School.

The additional rail and road infrastructure is highlighted by the massive amount of construction work on Mulgoa Road and Northern Road at the moment. My electorate will benefit from the M4 Smart Motorway upgrade. I know that those people utilising the M4 every day have already experienced the benefits of the additional lane. As the interchanges are improved as part of the M4 Smart Motorway project Penrith will finally get the M4 it deserves, including a tunnel underneath Parramatta Road. There is no doubt that the only reason we can deliver all of this for the people of Penrith is the strong economic management credentials of this Government, and that is evidenced on every page of this year's budget.

#### STATE BUDGET AND BATHURST ELECTORATE

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (17:27):** It gives me great pleasure to talk about a number of things happening in my electorate while it is budget week. It has been a Bathurst budget bonanza. The member for Cootamundra is present in the House and the member for Dubbo was previously in the Chamber. There are projects on the ground and being delivered in the electorates of Bathurst, Dubbo and Cootamundra that will make a difference to the lives of the people living in those areas. This Government is building roads and investing in important community projects that support and change the way in which people live in those areas. A big announcement would require an extension of time and those opposite will not give me one.

**Mr David Harris:** We will.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Thank you. The first announcement is the new Bathurst Bullet that will begin operating later this year. It is a second daily train service that my community is excited about. It is a train service that responds to the needs of the local community. A train service has been operating since 2012 and it has been a huge success for the local community. Before the train was operating the community called for a train to give families a way to travel to Central station and the ability to attend medical appointments or to enjoy recreational activities in Sydney throughout the year. A daily return service was introduced and it has been popular, well received and used by the community. It stops at Lithgow with minimal stops along the way. The two carriages are almost full by the time it gets to Central station.

With the increase in demand there was a call from the community to put an additional carriage on that train. We have gone one better than that. This Government is about thinking big and delivering more services to the bush. That is exactly what we are getting now with an additional train service. The second Bathurst Bullet will commence later this year in spring. The first train leaves Bathurst at 5.46 a.m. and does not leave Central station until 6.30 p.m. That means the train leaves early in the morning and when people get back it is dark and cold. The good news is that the second service will leave Bathurst at 7.30 a.m. and leave Central Station at three o'clock in the afternoon, which will have people back in Bathurst before dark.

The most important thing is that it will give people options and flexibility to choose the times appropriate for them. The other good news is it will operate not just on weekdays; there will be a weekend service. This will be well received by the community and it is something they are looking forward to. There is another exciting thing about this great new train service. I have spoken to residents in the Rydal and Tarana communities. They have been requesting for a couple of years that the service stop at their smaller villages. I can say, "Yes, that will happen." The Government will provide this great train service that will stop at some of the smaller outlying villages of Tarana and Rydal. That gives the people living in that area connectivity. It is about providing connectivity travelling to and from Sydney.

This Government is providing opportunity for people living in regional communities and my Bathurst electorate will be a beneficiary. I could go on but I do not have much more time. Rail loops and investment into our rail lines are about creating opportunity for more freight trains to move on our main western line. It has been replicated across the area with signalling improvements that will improve freight and passenger lines. Bathurst residents cannot wait for that second train service to begin operating.

### STATE BUDGET AND DISABILITY ADVOCACY SERVICES

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:32):** In the context of the budget delivered this week and the debate in this place about disability advocacy services, I am concerned about their role in the community. Many years ago, in 2010, I was the member for Wyong when the decision was made to close Peat Island. Peat Island was a high-needs disability centre on the shores of the Hawkesbury River. Some land was chosen in my electorate at a place called Casuarina Grove and I was pleased to turn the first sod for this facility with the then Minister, Paul Lynch. It was a 100-bed brand-new purpose-built facility and the only one of its kind in the State operating a 24-hour service. At first the parents of the residents were very concerned that they were moving from Peat Island to the new facility because they thought it was further from Sydney, where many of them lived. The second concern was their care in the future. Moving forward to today, the current policy is to transition these facilities to the private sector.

As I said, it is a 100-bed facility. It was brand new in 2011—so not quite 10 years old. It went out for tender in 2017, but no tender has been taken up. This facility looks after people with an intellectual disability and complex ageing-related needs. It is the first of its kind in New South Wales. In the meantime, beds have been closed, which means they are not taking new clients in and staff do not know what is happening. I was very disturbed to see the headline on the front page of the latest issue of the *Wyang Regional Chronicle*, "Toxic working environment, mass resignations and multi bed closures at aged care facility". Previously I was alerted to issues by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, which had been keeping me up to date about what was going on. It seems to be much worse according to the article in the paper. These are some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Clearly the private system does not want to take responsibility for these people because their needs are very complex and expensive.

If ever there were a facility that should be operated by the Government as a place of last resort for those who have the highest needs in our community, this facility is one. It is not old, it is brand new; so maintenance costs are fairly low. It is a fantastic environment. When the families saw it completed they were over the moon. They had tears to see what their loved ones would be moving into. This is a cluster-style hostel where there is a common room, but there are private bedrooms et cetera. There is 24/7 care. The staff are extremely dedicated to their clients and they were people with whom they had had relationships over a long time. To hear what is going on under the current regime—bed closures, staff being bullied and harassed, people resigning out of frustration because they just do not know what will happen—is absolutely heartbreaking. This is a state-of-the-art facility out for tender, but no-one wants to put up the money to take over such a facility.

I feel so sorry for those families who took the Government on trust that when they moved from Peat Island, their loved ones—their children, in many cases—would be cared for and looked after for the rest of their lives. Many of these parents were in their 60s and 70s and were worried about what would happen to their young adult children after they passed away. We were saying, "Look at this. What a great facility." To see what has happened under this Government is an absolute disgrace. The Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services should step in to guarantee the long-term future of this facility for the clients and staff to make sure that they have the care they need into the future.

### NAN TIEN TEMPLE AND INSTITUTE

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (17:37):** It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House the outstanding achievements of the Fo Guang Shan order with a temple in Parramatta, the Nan Tien Institute, and the great celebrations for Buddha's birthday. The Hsing Yun Education Foundation and the Nan Tien Institute were established in 2016. They provide postgraduate courses in humanistic Buddhism, applied Buddhist studies, health and social wellbeing and mental health. The institute also provides culture and arts and community and social welfare to the community. The Nan Tien Institute provides education through courses and curricula information from Buddhist wisdom and values, and provides financial support to current and potential students. I acknowledge Venerable Master Hsing Yun, founder of Fo Guang Shan, Nan Tien Temple and the Nan Tien Institute, for all his hard work and commitment over the years. The venerable master is 93 years old and is still involved in helping youth.

I also acknowledge Emeritus Professor Bill Lovegrove, OAM, President of Nan Tien Institute, for all his dedication and hard work. I was pleased to attend, along with Minister John Sidoti, and recognise Buddha's birthday, which is a global Buddhist celebration that has reached its twenty-eighth anniversary in Sydney. The celebration and offering to Buddha promote multiculturalism and I applaud the following groups for their wonderful performances: the Tierra Colombiana Folkloric and Cultural Group; the Mosaic Japanese Dance Group; Tropical Soul; Learn to Hula Sydney; the Evergreen Performance Group; and the Buddha's Light International Association—Young Adult Division, Sydney Dun Huang Dance Troupe. I was also delighted to help hand out almost 800 books that were collected for months prior to the event to donate to the children who attended the celebration, to encourage children to develop a fondness of reading.

I acknowledge and commend the Nan Tien Temple, Nan Tien Institute and the Buddha's Light International Association Sydney, including Mr Francis Wong, President of Buddha's Light International Association Sydney, for the fantastic event that they organised. I was also pleased to be given the opportunity to attend the One-Stroke Calligraphy launch, "See the power of compassion". With the venerable master's poor vision and shaky hand, he lets his heart guide his hands in completing the extremely rare one-stroke calligraphy, where every piece of calligraphy is written in one stroke. I congratulate and recognise Venerable Master Hsing Yun for all his effort and time over the many years. Many who have met the venerable master have been deeply surprised and impressed by his words. His efforts have supported education through establishing the Nan Tien Institute in Australia, University of West Los Angeles, Fo Guang University and Nanhua University in China, and Guang Ming College in the Philippines, which has supported thousands of underprivileged youths.

I acknowledge and commend the temple in Parramatta that promotes and practises three acts of good deeds: say good words, do good deeds and think good thoughts. The temple practises these by supporting the community and carries out a lot of charitable work. I congratulate and praise all the volunteers from the temple who participated in the following community activities: delivering food to the elderly in the local community twice a week with Meals on Wheels; cleaning up the Prince Alfred Square in Parramatta for Clean Up Australia Day; visiting local nursing homes to have company and interact with the elderly; and providing 130 Christmas hampers to the elderly and 50 Christmas hampers to families in the Westmead Children's Hospital to share the spirit in the local community. I wish the volunteers, the Nan Tien Temple in Parramatta, the Nan Tien Institute, Buddha's Light International Association Sydney and Venerable Master Hsing Yun all the best as they continue to grow and make a meaningful contribution to our community.

### RACHAEL BROWN

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (17:42):** Today I inform the Chamber of the story of Rachael Brown. Last week I met with Rachael's parents, Cheryl and Peter, who are constituents in my electorate. They were gentle and courageous as they told me of their daughter, who struggled with drug addiction for more than a decade until her tragic death last month following an overdose. Cheryl and Peter are a couple who previously have faced adversity in their lives. Following an accident 12 years ago, Peter is now a quadriplegic. At the time of the accident Rachael was finishing her higher school education at Abbotsleigh and was destined to become a teacher.

Rachael had everything going for her—she was smart, beautiful, highly qualified and had loving family. She had undergraduate degrees in education and psychology, and was undertaking a Masters of Social Work. Rachael was a gifted teacher who used her talents to serve the young people she loved. Following her father's accident, Rachael had trouble sleeping so her doctor prescribed sleeping pills. It was here that her gradual addiction began. Cheryl told me of how Rachael would go "doctor shopping"—a term I had not heard of until this meeting. Rachael would travel to different GPs around the northern beaches and Sydney to try to get prescription drugs, in an attempt to get as many scripts as possible. She would then do the same with pharmacies.

Cheryl would visit the GPs and the pharmacies asking for them to voluntarily share with her whether Rachael sought prescriptions from them, as any concerned mother would earnestly do. Some would, some would not on the grounds of patient confidentiality. Cheryl told me that a couple of pharmacies would call her when she was at her wits' end saying, "Rachael is here now" so she knew where her daughter was and could go to collect her. After some time, Rachael ended up in a rehabilitation clinic in the hope of overcoming her addiction. Unfortunately, it was there that Rachael met another man who introduced her to harder drugs like heroin. On 16 May, Cheryl and Peter lost Rachael, who was in St George Hospital following a drug overdose. Now Cheryl is using her daughter's story to try to curb some of the behaviours that Rachael undertook in feeding her addiction, in the hope it will save or help others who are suffering from a similar plight.

Cheryl spoke to me about ScriptWise, a non-profit organisation that is advocating for ways to reduce the number of deaths in Australia from prescription medication misuse. ScriptWise is advocating both nationally and statewide for a real-time prescription monitoring system that helps prevent people from doctor shopping. It would link pharmacies and GPs and enable them to share information about what drugs have been distributed to a particular patient. A system like the one Cheryl spoke to me about seems like a sound way to help prevent addicts from getting access to these drugs and to help the families who spend so much time trying to personally prevent their loved ones from getting access to these drugs that are doing them great harm.

Cheryl also spoke to me about the need for more oversight at drug rehabilitation facilities. Vulnerable people, like Rachael, entering these facilities should not come out of them more exposed, more addicted, more vulnerable or more at risk due to the people they meet while inside. In my electorate of Pittwater, in Cheryl and Peter's home of the Northern Beaches, we have recently gained a 10-bed drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility at Mona Vale Hospital to care for people like Rachael in a safe place that is closer to home and their loved ones. Cheryl and Peter's story is both tragic and touching, and Rachael's parents are seeking to use her memory to make the world a better place for the next person or family suffering at the hands of addiction.

Their story powerfully emphasises the role that all of us have in supporting the vulnerable among us in a non-judgemental way. I was shocked by the story because these are beautiful parents and Rachael grew up in a supportive family environment. There was nothing about Rachael's background or her incredible opportunities that would suggest that she was likely to take this destructive path. Yet she did take this path and she spiralled out of control. The consequences were devastating for my community and for the Brown family. We all have a role to play in protecting people addicted to drugs and their families. I thank Cheryl and Peter Brown for their courage, and for being an example of loving and faithful parents who never gave up on their daughter. I am sure Rachael knew and felt this love. I also acknowledge Reverend Steve Everist of Pittwater Uniting Church, who has provided support for the Brown family through this time. He sat with them as they told me the story. Reverend Everist does a wonderful job supporting families like the Browns throughout my community and other communities.

### ***THE FINAL QUARTER SCREENING***

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:47):** I have just finished watching the documentary about our great First Nations Australian Football League [AFL] player Adam Goodes, *The Final Quarter*, in the Parliament's Theatre. Adam is a proud Indigenous man and yet he had a terrible time on the playing field in the final few seasons of his illustrious career. Sitting through that movie was confronting. I would recommend that every Australian person take 70 minutes out of their busy lives to watch the movie. I am a white Anglo-Saxon person and when I was sitting in the theatre I was embarrassed, ashamed and angered by the treatment of this great player. I was humbled and inspired by his reaction and I am sorry that any Indigenous person has to be on the receiving end of such treatment. I am inspired by the stand that Adam Goodes took and the unimaginable depth of courage, commitment and character that drove him to keep turning up to play matches week after week.

I am appalled by the behaviour of AFL supporters who relentlessly booed Adam Goodes because he is an Aboriginal person. He was not booed because he was a great player for the Sydney Swans. The Sydney Swans had many great players—I understand that supporters of the teams playing against the Swans would often boo their opponents at various venues around the country. But Adam was booed because he is an Aboriginal man. As Waleed Aly, from Channel 10's *The Project*, pointed out this was an attack on an Indigenous man in Australia. In recent years Waleed has become the conscience of our country in many respects.

We Australians like to think that we are not racist and that we live in a cohesive society, but, as Waleed Aly pointed out, that would appear to be the case only until a person from a minority group dares to speak up and step outside of the box in which the dominant white Anglo-Saxon group puts them. If a person from a minority group has the courage to stand up for who they are then sadly we as a nation cannot cope with that scenario. As I saw in the documentary and I know from my interaction with people in the community, racism in this country is often inspired by media commentators who say the most disgusting things on air. They drive divisiveness in our community under the banner of freedom of speech when in reality it is racist hate speech. I congratulate the documentary's director, Ian Darling, because in the movie a handful of these racist people were called out.

They were not called out by the documentary somehow framing their messages against their will, but by their actual words, comments and newspaper columns being put up on the screen. In the documentary they are shown making racist comments on the radio or writing racist articles published on various media platforms. There was no misinterpreting of their words. We must recognise that these individuals drive divisiveness in our community and blame members of minority groups on every occasion they can. I was inspired by the movie *The Final Quarter*. I encourage every person in Australia, no matter what their race, religion or background, to watch the movie. As members of this Parliament we need to call out racism every time we see it. From this day I will call out any act of racism I see, as I hope I have in recent years. Hats off to Adam Goodes.

#### MIRANDA ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:53):** I acknowledge the recipients of the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours across the Miranda electorate. Firstly, I acknowledge barrister James Glissan, QC, who received a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to the law in New South Wales. Mr Glissan is a Sutherland Shire local, having grown up in Oyster Bay and attended Jannali High School before studying law at the University of Sydney. In 1971 he was admitted to the New South Wales Bar, and four years later he began working as a barrister. In 1985 he was appointed a Queens Counsel and has a reputation for having one of the sharpest minds at the Bar. Throughout his distinguished and long career, Mr Glissan has filled many legal roles including four years as a New South Wales public defender, an arbitrator of the Supreme Court of New South Wales and two years as an acting District Court judge.

Apparently, Mr Glissan knew from the age of 12 that he wanted to be a barrister. His passion for and love of advocacy have fuelled his 48-year career and pushed him to get the best result possible for his clients. Additionally, Mr Glissan volunteers his time to save lives on New South Wales waterways in Marine Rescue NSW's Botany Bay-Port Hacking unit. I extend my congratulations to Mr Glissan and commend him for his extraordinary work.

Secondly, I acknowledge Mr William Gilmour of Sylvania, who received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the community through charitable initiatives. While Mr Gilmour is an internationally known former tennis champion as well as an international tennis referee, today I acknowledge his amazing work as a champion for the Sutherland Shire. As a philanthropist and benefactor, Mr Gilmour has been able to help organisations across the shire, including The Sutherland Hospital, St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, Endeavour Sports High School's Special Kids With a Disability and the Sutherland PCYC.

I understand that Mr Gilmour has generously donated community buses to assist many shire organisations, but he is most proud to have donated \$1.5 million for a dialysis unit at Sutherland Hospital in 2008. There was no dialysis unit at The Sutherland Hospital in 2008, but now, thanks to Mr Gilmour's support, shire residents continue to have access to this invaluable facility today. Mr Gilmour is passionate about supporting our local community groups and giving back whenever he can, either through tennis coaching or donating to worthy causes. I commend Mr Gilmour for his never-ending support for our shire and wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours.

Another extremely deserving recipient is Mr John De Cean of Caringbah, who received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to surf lifesaving. Mr De Cean has been an active member of the surf lifesaving community since aged 10; he is a member of Wanda Surf Life Saving Club. He has served as president, deputy president, secretary, director of finance and branch team member at the Surf Life Saving Sydney Branch since 1992, and volunteered as part of the junior Sydney branch since 1978. Earlier this year I had the privilege of awarding Mr De Cean with a Premier's Volunteer Recognition certificate and badge for his 40 years' service to surf lifesaving. The further acknowledgment of his dedication with this prestigious award is well-deserved. Mr De Cean has also spent over 30 years with Wanda Surf Life Saving Club, protecting beachgoers as they swim and surf at our beautiful beaches. I thank him for his extensive years of service.

I also acknowledge Mr Ronald Wright of Jannali for receiving a Public Service Medal for outstanding public service to skills development programs and infrastructure projects. Mr Wright has been an exemplary public servant and excelled in serving the people of New South Wales. He has changed the face of TAFE NSW throughout his career of almost 50 years. As Project Director Infrastructure at TAFE NSW, Mr Wright was instrumental in delivering the Barangaroo Skills Exchange, which delivered on-site training and upskilling for workers involved in the construction of the Barangaroo project.

Due to Mr Wright's management, the Barangaroo Skills Exchange provided more than 1,000 apprenticeships with 5 per cent Indigenous participants, 11,000 workers trained and more than 50,000 training outcomes. As a result of the resounding success of the Barangaroo Skills Exchange, Mr Wright helped design and create the highly successful Infrastructure Skills Legacy Program, which has now been adopted as a standard for the New South Wales Government on all infrastructure projects. I commend Mr Wright and

thank him for his public service. I take this opportunity to congratulate all the recipients of the Queen's Birthday Honours from the Miranda electorate and extend my best wishes for the future.

### TRAIN GUARDS

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:57):** I speak on behalf of my constituents who work for the people of New South Wales and for this Government to provide fantastic services but fear for their jobs, despite the promise that no regional jobs will be lost. Train guards not only in my electorate but also across this State are in fear of their jobs in the future. I say to the Minister for Transport and Roads that it seems like his bureaucrats have outmanoeuvred him and engineered the critical role of guards out of trains. The Minister knows very clearly the important role of our guards on trains in New South Wales for all of us, particularly people with disabilities, mums with prams and kids, groups of people rushing to get on a train, the elderly and people with mobility challenges. They have always been carefully supervised by guards who always have their eyes on the commuters and call out if something is not right. They are on the platform after the doors close to make sure that everyone is safe; if an incident arises they can call out.

These bureaucrats have outsmarted the Minister and have gone exactly against what he said in a press conference last October. The Minister said very clearly to the train guards of New South Wales that there would be a job for them on the new intercity fleet. The Minister stated that they will be called train guards and they will perform exactly the same role as they perform today. The Minister further stated that when a train arrives at a platform we will see the guard's head outside of the door looking for issues around safety. The enormous awareness that a guard brings versus any form of technology is unsurpassed. That was reinforced when the Minister travelled on a train with a train guard in the guard's cabin and witnessed the role performed, unnoticed by the travelling public of New South Wales.

The Minister gave an assurance to Martin Stewart, a fantastic blind Australian of the Year in 2018, who lost an arm and leg in a horrific accident in Victoria when he fell unnoticed from the platform between the carriages of a driverless train. There was no guard to listen to his screams and he was dragged 500 metres. Blind since birth, Martin Stewart is now an arm and leg amputee living in Victoria as a result of the absence of a guard. The Minister has promised this will not happen in New South Wales as the guard will not only watch for safety but also most importantly hear the screams and prevent the driver from moving the train with the guard's door in the open position.

Apparently the bureaucrats from Transport for NSW have completely disregarded the transport Minister's commitment to the people of New South Wales: The new trains being built in South Korea have been engineered to remove the safety critical role of the train guard. The guard cannot now observe the platform at arrival or departure from the guard's open door. The train can no longer not move with the guard's door in the open position due to traction interlocking being introduced on the train guard's door. Also there is no guard's control door button to open and close customer doors, a bell or anything else to alert the driver to stop the train while the guard is at the door. Sadly, this is the first time it has been introduced on trains in New South Wales on the guard's door.

The Minister's commitment has become an unfortunate embarrassment as he has been overruled by bureaucrats not elected by the people of New South Wales. What will this mean for commuters on the new intercity fleet? Martin Stewart will have to live with the terrible injuries he sustained for the rest of his life and it may become a reality for some commuters in New South Wales. Children will now be separated from their parents and left on platforms or trains as the guard cannot see or hear anything from an open door. Gone will be the days of the guard holding the train for late running customers who now may be stranded at stations, especially those of us up the coast who have to wait another hour for the next train. Previously the guard would make sure that person had time to board the train.

The ability for the train guard to perform that critical safety role has been taken away. The new trains that have sadly been manufactured in Korea at a loss to regional jobs is programmed for driver only operation. Yesterday the Government bragged about no losses to regional jobs in New South Wales. We will watch to make sure that our train guards keep their jobs when the new trains are phased in across regional New South Wales.

### PLASTICS POLLUTION

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:02):** Last week in the Cessnock electorate, like many members of Parliament, I had a number of appointments. I am sure all members will agree that meeting our constituents and hearing their various concerns, whether in the office or out on the road, is one of the best parts of the job. We rely very much on the information we get from our constituents—their thoughts, ideas, dreams, hopes and aspirations—to form our views about what we represent in this Chamber, as that is our fundamental job long before we belong to a political party of any colour.

Last week I had an appointment with two your girls from year 6 at Bellbird Public School. They had made the appointment themselves to speak to their local member of Parliament and so a time was arranged. Fortunately their wonderful schoolteacher—as most schoolteachers are—was willing to drive them to the office and return them to school safely, having gone through the necessary protocols with their parents to make sure that taking them offsite and getting them onsite at the school was ticked off. That was smooth. I did not know what the meeting was about and I did not care.

If a couple of year 6 girls or boys from a local school say they want to meet with the local MP the answer is yes; details can come later. I met with the two young students. One young girl was called Charlize and the other was called November. We sat down and I said, "Okay ladies, what are we here to talk about?" They replied, "Plastic". I said, "What's going on?" We spent the next 30 minutes talking about their thoughts and ideas about single-use plastic, the direction we should be heading in, what we as a community could do, how they were inspired by some people in Australia and New South Wales and the direction New South Wales needs to take in the future.

I will talk shortly about some of the girls' comments but first I want to acknowledge something wonderful that their school does on Wednesdays. I think the term it uses is "waste-free Wednesdays" and it relates to the food eaten at lunch and recess. On a Wednesday any by-product of recess or lunch—for example, a juice packet or a chips wrapper—is collected, the students weigh the collected waste and the winning class or group gets a prize at the end of each term. It is a great initiative and it is good fun. I add that the term "war on waste" has been made popular by a wonderful series on the ABC.

I will now talk about the issue that November was concerned about—plastic straws. It is not a new issue in 2019, but if someone had raised it in 2015 or 2016 we might have thought they were a little crazy. It is a growing issue that we are stepping away from. In her presentation November wrote, "In 2017 a little girl named Molly Steer started a program called Straw No More when she was just nine years old. Did you know that little Molly got rid of plastic straws out of Cairns and in far north Queensland? That's a massive thing to do and that's what I want to do for my Cessnock community." Hearing that I was tempted to give young November a membership form and sign her up. I thought she could be a future member for Cessnock and probably do a much better job than I can ever do.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Wrong party.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Labor, of course. What a wonderful aspiration that young girl has. She wants to rid Cessnock of plastic straws. We will try to do bits and pieces. Charlize wants to get rid of single-use plastic. She said, "Plastic pollution has gotten to the point where it's more than repulsive. It is one of the biggest issues in the atmosphere and it's even said that the first ever plastic bag is still somewhere in landfill." Many of us would not even have thought of that. Where is the first plastic bag? Apparently it is going to take a thousand years for plastic bags to break down. The two young girls are thinking of their future and acting on it today. They are welcome in my office any day, as are any young students. Congratulations and hats off to them for taking the time, making the effort, taking a stand and having a purpose. Good on you, girls. Well done!

#### **KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS RECIPIENTS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:08):** In 2019 eight residents of Ku-ring-gai received Queen's Birthday Honours for their outstanding service to the community in various fields. Three of those people—Dr John Edmonds of Pymble, Andrew Leventhal of Wahroonga and Emeritus Professor John Pollard of West Pymble—are now proudly Members of the Order of Australia [AM]. After 50 years in practice, Dr John Edmonds retired as the head of the Department of Rheumatology at St George Hospital in 2014. He remains the chair of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, a position that he has held since 2007, as well as the conjoint professor of the St George and Sutherland Clinical School at the University of New South Wales. Dr Edmonds received his AM for significant service to rheumatology and to medical research.

Andrew Leventhal has been recognised for his significant service to geotechnical engineering and to the community. However, his work had not gone unnoticed previously. Between 2010 and 2011 he was named by the Australian Geomechanics Society as the Geotechnical Practitioner of the Year and received the Sir John Holland Civil Engineer of the Year and the Professional Engineer of the Year awards from Engineers Australia. The first of those awards followed Andrew's work in developing a national framework for landslide risk management, an area that has occupied his attention since the 1990s. Andrew was also generous with his time as a member of the Newport beach surf patrol in the 1960s and 1970s and in the 1990s he was a senior level umpire with Baseball New South Wales.

Professor John Pollard is an insurance company director and adviser and a past president of the Statistical Society of Australia and the Institute of Actuaries of Australia, which presented him with its prestigious Silver

Medal in 2001. He was the long-time head of the Department of Actuarial Studies at Macquarie University, being responsible for more than 80 research papers in refereed journals and the author of seven books about actuarial practice, one of which has been translated into Japanese, Chinese and Spanish and another of which appears in Braille. It is for his significant service to the education of actuaries and to community music events that John has received his AM. As to the latter, since 1971 he has been the principal honorary director of The Radio Community Chest, a registered charity that regularly presents Handel's *Messiah* by the Combined Church Choirs in the Sydney Town Hall and assists needy persons in the Sydney region. He has also been the principal sponsor of the Sydney Eisteddfod since 2006.

Five Ku-ring-gai residents were awarded Medals of the Order of Australia [OAM]. Mike Askey of Turramurra served in the Citizen Military Forces, achieving the rank of major, and in Vietnam on attachment to the 1st Field Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers. He has sat on the Veterans' Review Board and the Repatriation Review Tribunal and is very well known in Ku-ring-gai as the outstanding president of the Roseville Sub-Branch of the RSL from 2003 until its closure in 2018. Major Askey's OAM is for service to veterans and their families.

Ku-ring-gai's 2018 Citizen of the Year, Peter Kirkwood of Warrawee, has been awarded an OAM for service to the community of northern Sydney. His extraordinary contribution has been made through a number of voluntary organisations which include the Rotary Club of Wahroonga, the Rotary Club of Waitara, the Hornsby community safety precinct committee, the Ku-ring-gai police safety committee, St Paul's Anglican Church, Studio ARTES and the Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai Police Citizens Youth Club [PCYC]. Currently Peter is the president of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai PCYC. He even played the didgeridoo to accompany the welcome to country at its opening in 2017.

Like Professor Pollard, Donald Mayes of Pymble has been an honorary director of The Radio Community Chest for 45 years and a director of the Sydney Eisteddfod since 1999 and is its current company secretary. Admitted to the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1966, this accomplished and respected solicitor, who is also the current church warden of St Swithun's Pymble Anglican Church, has been awarded an OAM for services to community music. Another Pymble resident, Robin Speed, has also been practising law for over 40 years but the harmony that he has sought over the course of his professional career is equality under the law for all Australians. Robin is a co-founder and partner of the well-known Sydney firm Speed and Stracey Lawyers but it is his establishment of the Rule of Law Institute in 2008 and the Australia's Magna Carta Institute in 2015 that provided him with the platform to promote access to justice, freedom of the press and basic legal rights. Robin has deservedly earned an OAM for his service to the law.

Jill Stevenson of North Turramurra has been recognised for her service to the community through a range of organisations, in particular the Presbyterian Church of Australia, the indigo foundation, the McIntyre Centre and St Luke's hospital, Sydney, where she was a registered nurse and an active fundraiser for the nursing school. I congratulate the Queen's Birthday Honours recipients, all of whom have done much to improve the lives of many, not just in Ku-ring-gai but across the State and across the world. In particular I note Major Askey and Peter Kirkwood, who are well known to me and are outstanding citizens. They deserve their recognition in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

#### **YAGOONA RSPCA SHELTER**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:13):** Australia loves its animals, from our native possums, cute koalas, kangaroos and the more notorious dingoes to our more domestic friends of guinea pigs, rabbits, cats and dogs. Many Australians share a passion for animals. However, not every animal is given the love and care it respectfully deserves. The RSPCA in Yagoona is the largest animal shelter in New South Wales and is committed to giving each animal that enters its doors loving and well-deserved care. Each year around 15,000 cats and dogs are rehomed and adopted from the Yagoona centre.

On Sunday I was thrilled to visit the RSPCA with the Minister for Local Government, Shelley Hancock, and the member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbons. The reason for our visit was to announce that the Yagoona shelter is receiving from the Liberal-Nationals Government a \$12 million investment to enable the centre to renew and expand its adoption facilities at Yagoona. The investment will update the 40-year-old facility and will inevitably change not only the many animals' lives but also those of the kind-hearted people who adopt them. This is on top of the already major investment of \$7½ million given to the RSPCA in 2011 that was used to rebuild and refurbish veterinary facilities at the centre. These funds will improve the customer and pet experience, increase the efficiency of pet adoptions and update the 40-year-old site.

The RSPCA not only focuses on animal adoptions but also assists with enforcing New South Wales animal welfare laws and provides safe and adequate shelters as well as state-of-the-art veterinary clinics. Without this major upgrade provided by the Government to the Yagoona facilities, it would struggle to help the likes of

Rex. Rex was a red cattle dog who had an unfortunate incident with a fence, causing him to lose a leg. Rex was lucky to be adopted by a very good lady, Rhondra Deer, my aunt, and is a true RSPCA success story. Rex came to the RSPCA having been neglected, injured and requiring surgery. He was operated on and then rehomed to a loving and caring environment.

The CEO of the RSPCA, Steve Coleman, has seen the best and worst of animal welfare since he joined the RSPCA as an inspector in 1991. He contributes to animal welfare in many ways by sitting on numerous government and industry committees and advisory councils, such as the Animal Welfare Advisory Council, which reports directly to the Minister for Primary Industries. He said that the Yagoona facility is the hub of animal welfare, not just for the East Hills electorate and the Sydney basin but for the greater community of New South Wales. He is looking forward to the new facility being built, which will enable the RSPCA to further promote responsible pet ownership in a positive way.

Along with the new funding that the State Government has provided for the new facility, the Government has also extended the Crown lands lease for the Yagoona site for a further 20 years, providing long-term security for the site. Rent for the site has been set at \$481 a year, helping the RSPCA save millions of dollars compared to what it would have to spend if it were to rent a similar commercial site. The Government is committed to supporting the excellent work that the RSPCA does for our community and assisting the likes of Rex, the three-legged dog, make their way to a new and loving home. The RSPCA is a great organisation in my local area of East Hills.

### FAIRFIELD STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:16):** Today I acknowledge the great work that the local State Emergency Service unit does in my local community. The Fairfield State Emergency Service unit forms part of more than 240 operational units that make up the State Emergency Service [SES] across our great State of New South Wales. Volunteers in the SES are tasked primarily with responding to storm and flood events but they also support other emergency services, such as search and rescue. At the end of last year the Fairfield unit assisted in The Hills and Liverpool regions during severe weather conditions.

Apart from doing a tremendous job in helping to save and protect the lives of those in the community the SES volunteers also spend a lot of time giving back. The local unit has most notably supported community events such as Grandparents Day and the local Fairfield Relay for Life. Communities like Cabramatta would be a lot different if it were not for the brave men and women of the SES and those serving in our emergency services. I would like to particularly acknowledge Kylie and Nancy Nguyen. They are remarkable young women who have been named the Fairfield SES Rookies of the Year, having just 12 months' service under their belt. Both girls are currently also completing their studies at Macquarie University. I also acknowledge Mr Grigory Rogojkin, who was named the Fairfield City Citizen of the Year early in January, having served for over a decade in the SES. Without a doubt these frontline responders do a tremendous job for my community of Cabramatta. They are true heroes without capes.

I thank all members of the State Emergency Service in New South Wales and abroad for the work that they do for our communities. On behalf of members on both sides of this House, I congratulate them. I would encourage more young people to get active in volunteering with organisations like the SES. Joining the SES and meeting new people can be a little daunting but the skills learned and the friendships made through taking these leaps of courage will last a lifetime. I congratulate the members of the Fairfield SES unit and wish them well in their service to my community.

### KIAMA STUDENT LEADERS FORUM

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:19):** I am very pleased to inform the House that today I hosted the ninth annual Kiama Student Leaders Forum in Parliament House. A record 62 students and teachers from 11 local schools—Catholic, independent and public—took part in the forum. The high schools included Nowra Anglican College, Kiama High School, Bomaderry High School, Shoalhaven High School, Nowra High School, Albion Park High School, St Joseph's Catholic High School, St John the Evangelist Catholic High School, Nowra Christian School, The Illawarra Grammar School and Smith's Hill High School. I acknowledge each of the wonderful student leaders who participated and represented their schools with such great pride and distinction as well as the teachers and Student Representative Council [SRC] coordinators who also attended to help supervise these students.

I want to name each of the students who participated, starting with my old high school, Bomaderry High School. I acknowledge Patrick Adams, Jackson Bamber, Corey McConville, Cassie O'Carroll, Tayla Dunn, Jasmin Geaghan, Maya Britton, Zara Podmore, and Trish Rogers as their accompanying teacher. From St Joseph's Catholic High School at Albion Park I acknowledge Mayha Podolski, Kyna Gella, Zachary Johnson, Chloe

Markulic, and Ms Jaimi Adams as their accompanying teacher. From Kiama High School I acknowledge Lucy Burton, Jayden Wilshire, Bethany Chapman, Sam Scobie, Raina Lawton, Dominic Borserio and Shannon Motbey as their accompanying teacher.

From Nowra Christian School I acknowledge Elizabeth Curline, Ryan Davie, Charlotte Dickinson, Nicholas Hotchin and their principal, Mr Rob Bray, as accompanying teacher. From Albion Park High School I acknowledge Jaedon Scott as year 12 school captain, Tishayla McGartland as year 12 school captain, Connor Pearson as year 12 vice-captain, Stephanie Chase-Horton as year 12 vice-captain and Lucy McGrath as their accompanying teacher. From The Illawarra Grammar School I acknowledge Francesca Lambert, Tamika Mansell, Sam Aubin, Luke Wilson and Jean Burton as their accompanying teacher.

From Nowra High School I acknowledge Leigh Hutcheson as school captain, Oscar Moysey as school captain, Aidan Sanders, Matthew Nash, Alicia Sleeman, Gemma Thompson and Ms Lauren Clerke as the accompanying teacher. From Shoalhaven High School I acknowledge Nathan Harris as year 12 school captain, Sophie Dobell as year 12 school captain, Alyson Green as year 12 school captain and Misty Wood as the accompanying teacher. From St John the Evangelist Catholic High School in Nowra I acknowledge Cameron Miller, Alex Miller, Izabella Barak, Zoe Chater and Carmen Lee as the accompanying teacher. From Nowra Anglican College I acknowledge Aidan Wearne, Samantha Legzdin, Lachlan Sutton, Sophie Emery and Mr David Hamaty, the deputy principal, as the accompanying teacher. From Smith's Hill High School I acknowledge Sebastian Black, Jiah Pang, Angelyn Indraya, Laura Charlton and Linda McGavock as the accompanying teacher.

I thank the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, who took time out of her extremely busy schedule to talk to the students. I thank also my friend the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC. I also thank my very good friend and Parliamentary Secretary the member for Holsworthy for her participation, as well as the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, MLC, for addressing these student leaders in the New South Wales Parliament House today on their roles and responsibilities and taking questions from the students. I also thank my good friend Isaiah Dawe from ID Know Yourself, which is a program aimed at helping to provide young Aboriginal people with the best possible start in life. I know that Isaiah was a particular hit on the day. Thank you, Isaiah, for addressing the students and telling your story.

The student leaders received a tour of Parliament and had the opportunity to enjoy question time in the bear pit to see democracy in action and just one of the many ways in which the Government is held to account. My favourite part of the forum was hearing from student leaders about the issues that matter to them. At this forum the issues that were raised included youth mental health, TAFE and skills, our local environment, public transport, hospitals, providing more assistance to people with disabilities and reducing homelessness.

In my inaugural speech in this place I said that the challenge to leaders is to create more leaders and not more followers. It may not be the easiest objective to achieve but it is one that all members of this place must strive for. This is why I have held this forum every year since being elected in 2011 and I will continue to do so into the future. Young people of our communities need to know that their representatives care about their views and opinions. Their views matter to me. Whilst these young leaders may not be able to vote just yet, they are the custodians of our future communities. Indeed, if this group of young people are what we have to look forward to then I know that our future is in safe and capable hands. As members of Parliament we represent all of our communities, including the young people in those communities who are too often under-recognised for their great work and achievements. It is important that they have a chance to have their say. I understand profoundly the importance of listening to young people and giving them a voice as part of this forum and I cannot wait for the next forum in 2020.

### ST GEORGE HOSPITAL

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:24):** I inform the House of the opening of the world-class Cancer Care Centre at the St George Hospital. The opening of the centre showcased the achievements that are possible when community fundraisers and the State Government work together for the health of our local community. I was joined by Mr Phill Bates, AM, for the opening of this \$16 million facility, which has doubled the capacity of some cancer treatment services at St George Hospital. The State Government boosted funds raised by the Cancer Care Foundation, which has done an outstanding job gathering support over the past 22 years. The completed works include an atrium-type construction linking the Cancer Care Centre and the Pitney Building, where many of the medical staff are housed, providing all-weather access for patients and medical staff. The outpatient clinic has expanded from nine beds to 16 consulting rooms and three new purpose-built review spaces, taking the number of outpatient clinic spaces to 19. I commend Phill Bates and all involved.

Earlier this month I had the opportunity to visit the construction site for the rebuild of the St George Hospital Birthing Unit and announce that Fugen Constructions has been awarded the contract for its

redevelopment. St George Hospital has been a huge passion of mine since becoming the member for Oatley eight years ago. I am happy to inform the House today that construction will commence on the \$11.5 million project in the coming months, delivering new birthing suites with fit-for-purpose birthing rooms, including water immersion facilities. This announcement follows on from the Premier's election promise in February of \$385 million of funding for stage three of the hospital's redevelopment.

This will create a new precinct, including an ambulatory care unit, outpatient and day surgery services, a new rehabilitation unit, increased subacute inpatient beds and a hub for community health and home-based services. This upgrade will allow the dedicated staff to continue to improve on the exceptional care they already provide to mothers. I am proud to be continually delivering for our local community's healthcare needs by making St George Hospital the State's premier health destination. I look forward to keeping the House informed of its continued redevelopment.

While we are talking about health, I take this opportunity to inform the House once again of the newly opened multimillion-dollar health training facility at St George TAFE, Kogarah. I was recently joined by the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, Geoff Lee, to tour the new nursing and aged-care facilities which are part of our Government's ongoing investment in capital works projects across the TAFE network in New South Wales. Health and wellbeing are among the fastest growing courses across TAFE NSW and this is reflected locally, where enrolments have been surging in recent years. These new facilities have been built to reflect current industry standards and practice and will deliver a much-needed increase in local training capacity to match growing demand in the St George area.

Our Government's significant redevelopment of St George Hospital will bring strong demand for a skilled health workforce. I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to expanding training opportunities in the St George area. This multimillion-dollar investment will help equip students with the real-world skills they need to excel in the health sector. While we are talking about aged care and health, I thank Georges River Council, particularly Councillor Colleen Symington and Mayor Kevin Greene, for the recently announced and funded footpath along the Henry Lawson Drive Reserve. Improvements to pedestrian access near the busy Peakhurst aged-care facility have now been funded by Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] along with help from Georges River Council.

This is great news for residents, staff and visitors to Peakhurst Lodge who have been calling for improved access for many years, especially during peak times. The RMS has committed \$17,000 towards the new footpath through the reserve. This will help the council deliver a new 125-metre long path. The pedestrian link will provide more efficient parking options for visitors by improving access to and from Jacques Avenue. The aged-care home is in a busy area; around 40,000 road users travel along Henry Lawson Drive each day between Padstow Heights and Penshurst. I thank all the residents, nursing staff and visitors for lobbying my office for this much-needed funding and I thank the RMS and the council for bringing this to my attention.

### COAL INDUSTRY

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:29):** Tonight I speak on the issue of coal. It probably will not come as a surprise to people that I would want to talk about coal. Indeed, the last time we were in this place, about two weeks ago, I spoke about coal in a private member's statement. I draw to the attention of the House an article today on *news.com.au* that was written by Ben Graham. I congratulate him on writing this fine article. The article talks about the Federal election result in the electorate of the Hunter and the significant shift in voting patterns that happened during the election. Ben, to his credit, in writing the article went into the town of Cessnock and asked locals how they felt about where our community was and where it might be heading. Reading Ben's article today something occurred to me that I guess I knew and the community also knew, but it has not really been spoken about yesterday or today and probably will not be spoken about tomorrow.

I refer to the transition of the workforce away from coal. Some people may want to make political hay about that statement and say that I am trying to shut down coalmines. That is not what I am doing through this statement. Ben's article raised what has become glaringly obvious—that we have failed to talk about the transition of coalmining communities in the Hunter Valley for almost a century through changes to the nature and size of the workforce. Automation has significantly decreased the workforce of a modern coalmine or coalmining region compared to the workforce that was required historically. Although we have several thousand coalminers in Cessnock today, in the early 1900s and 1950s there were tens of thousands of coalminers working directly in coalmines. I make that point to highlight that for the last 60 or 70 years the area of Cessnock and the coalfields of the Hunter Valley have been going through an enormous transition as coalmining jobs have disappeared thanks to automation.

Going forward into the next decade, or maybe even a few short years from now, we will possibly see more automation and driverless vehicles. One of the most labour-intensive areas in coalmines at the moment is

driving enormous dump trucks in the open-cut coalmines. Depending on the strip ratio, the operators can take eight or 12 tonnes of coal over to a rock pile for every one tonne of coal they can put into their trucks and sell. These guys are essentially truck drivers. All the signals across the planet indicate that automation is on its way. Indeed, up in north-west Australia many heavy vehicles are already automated. Once the trucks in New South Wales become automated there will be another wave of job losses in the coal industry, not because the coal itself is no longer sought after and used but because automation is forcing transition onto that community.

I make that point because it is something we have failed to embrace and understand in this Chamber over many funding cycles and under many governments of all political persuasions. The problematic legacy for a community like Cessnock is that for many decades a person could be an unskilled worker in a coalmine and get a good wage, buy a house, raise kids and put food on the table. The numbers of those types of jobs have now decreased enormously. Unfortunately, our area has some of the lowest education standards in the State. We also have the lowest number of people who go on to tertiary education, the lowest number of people who complete their educational studies and the highest number of people who do not do any after-school education. This is a legacy issue of coalmining. While we might want to talk about roads and bridges and infrastructure that facilitates coalmining, we also need to talk about how we acknowledge communities that have had a coalmining past. That is covered so well in the article by Ben Graham on *news.com.au* today.

### **THE FINAL QUARTER SCREENING**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:34):** Two weeks after the world premiere of *The Final Quarter* at the Sydney Film Festival, the film was screened today in Parliament House for all members, their staff, parliamentary staff and selected external guests. The event was organised through my office. I thank Ellie Laing for the work she did in pulling all that together. The film uses archival footage to document the final years of the footballing career of Indigenous Sydney Swans star Adam Goodes. It was directed by Ian Darling, AO, and produced by Shark Island Productions. In addition to those directly involved in the film, representatives attended from the Australian Football League, including the General Manager of Inclusion and Social Policy, Tanya Hosch. We heard from both Ian and Tanya as well as Alex Shain, the Education Director of *The Final Quarter*. They all provided valuable insights before and after the screening.

I mention that screening, as I did in question time today, because it is relevant to this House and the messages that this House wants to convey and reinforce against bullying and recognising and calling out inappropriate behaviour. On a previous occasion the House passed a resolution condemning the relentless booing of Mr Goodes, which took place over some years. I had the privilege of seeing the film today and witnessing its powerful message while seated next to the member for Cessnock. It was supported in a bipartisan way by shadow Ministers and Ministers in this Chamber, members of the backbench and many people who work within his Parliament. I commend them. Each viewer can draw for themselves the anti-bullying and anti-racism message from the media footage contained in the film.

It also prompted me to think of an outstanding person in my electorate. Occasionally, I have the privilege to acknowledge exceptional people in my electorate of Davidson. Author and anti-bullying activist Kate Pennington is a valuable community member who has made a very notable contribution to her local community and the broader community as well. For many years Kate has worked in long day care centres, kindergartens and preschools. Kate studied adolescents with behavioural problems before becoming a foster mother and opening her home as emergency accommodation for adolescents. In her brother's memory, Kate created anti-bullying centre Beyond a Joke to assist teenagers and adults facing bullying and abuse. She has also authored a collection of anti-bullying children's books. Her goal has always been to empower people and build them up to be strong, compassionate human beings. I commend Kate for her exceptional service to our community and the positive change she is making to our society at large. I know that Kate would encourage others to take a stand and try to make a difference to counter bullying and inappropriate conduct whenever we see it.

### **THE HON. PRU GOWARD**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (18:39):** I pay tribute to my predecessor, the former Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward. Pru entered Parliament in 2007 as the member for Goulburn. Pru held a number of ministerial portfolios, including Family and Community Services; Social Housing; Planning; Medical Research; Mental Health; Women; and Assistant Minister for Health. Pru was the State's first Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. She also served as Shadow Minister for Community Services; Women; and Climate Change and Environment.

There is no doubt Pru had a substantial impact on social policy reform in New South Wales. She fought for what she believed in and was never shy to take up the fight on difficult policy decisions, no matter how challenging or difficult. When I became the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, Pru

repeated some wise words: "These portfolios do not often get the media attention they deserve but they are some of the most critical in government. They are tough and often filled with great sadness, but also with people who wish to take charge of their lives and just need a chance."

Pru certainly improved outcomes for those vulnerable and disadvantaged people in New South Wales and gave them that chance. Today I want to highlight a few of her achievements. Pru left the child protection system in a much better place. The Department of Family and Community Services has seen 10,000 more children since the Liberal-Nationals came to Government, a 44 per cent reduction of new entries into care compared to the previous two years, record numbers of caseworkers, record low caseworker vacancies, record numbers of caseworkers on the front line and record child protection funding.

Pru reformed the child protection system with a focus on permanency for our most vulnerable children in New South Wales. She championed open adoption and giving children a safe home for life—a forever home for our most vulnerable children. She was appointed as the first Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. She introduced high-risk offender teams and suspect targeting of domestic violence offenders, putting the perpetrator squarely in the frame, and she delivered record funding for services.

As social housing Minister, she championed the biggest social housing building program in the country—the \$22 billion Communities Plus program, which is delivering 23,000 social housing properties, 500 affordable homes and 40,000 private homes over the next 10 years. She made the tough decision to sell Millers Point to build more than 1,500 new fit-for-purpose social housing properties. As Minister for Medical Research, she started Australia's first clinical trials of medicinal cannabis. She fought hard to ensure some of the sickest people in New South Wales, including children with epilepsy, could access safe products.

I thank Pru for her service and congratulate her on what she achieved in this place helping some of the most vulnerable in our State. I join with all members of the House in wishing her every success in the future. She was an outstanding Minister and an outstanding member for Goulburn. Pru has been followed by another great woman, Wendy Tuckerman, who I know will do an outstanding job representing her community.

This is Simon Fontana's last day working in this building. Simon worked for Pru for many years. He served her loyally and professionally. I have the privilege of having known Simon through the Young Liberal movement since he joined. His service and dedication made Pru's office and her service as a Minister much stronger. He has been assisting me and Minister Sidoti for the last few months. We have been very grateful for the work that he has done. There is no doubt that when Simon walks out of this place for the last time he will have been a part of so many important decisions that changed lives and provided opportunities for people they may never otherwise have had. He is passionate about social issues and this portfolio and making it work for people.

It is people like Simon who make these portfolios work so well, who help with carriage of reform, and who apply pressure to departments when ministers are not available. I have appreciated not only his advice and professionalism but also his friendship over many years. As a new Minister, it is important to have someone in that role you can trust. I know why Pru thought so highly of Simon. I certainly share those views in relation to his performance, professionalism, integrity and intelligence. I cannot thank him enough for what he has done for me and my office as I chart a new course following in the footsteps and standing on the shoulders of giants like Pru Goward.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I shall now leave the chair until 7.30 p.m. when the House will resume on the ringing of one long bell to consider government business.

### *Budget*

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2019-2020**

### **Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (19:32):** I am delighted to speak on the budget because in May this year the people of New South Wales put their faith in the Liberals and Nationals to maintain the momentum of eight years of progress and keep building a better State. That is exactly what this budget does. We are getting straight to work putting our positive plan into action and it is an honour now to talk about what was in the budget. The budget delivers on our commitments and gets on with the job, making record investments in the services and infrastructure that make a real difference to people's lives. The budget sets out that over the past 12 months the global and national economies have slowed and that here in New South Wales local challenges have arisen too. Our farmers are enduring the worst drought in living memory, the housing market has cooled and households are feeling the pinch.

Our prudent financial management since coming to office means that we are well placed to rise to these challenges. Our budget is firmly in the black, with solid surpluses forecast for the next four years. Net debt is still

negative and is the lowest of all the States. We are redoubling our efforts to improve government efficiency, to eliminate waste and to save taxpayers money, moving resources from the back office of government to the front line of service delivery. Our careful spending and responsible financial management mean that we can invest where it matters most for the people of New South Wales.

With almost the entire State now affected by drought, our farming communities are being put to the ultimate test. This budget brings more critical relief in their time of need with more funding to better secure our precious water supplies. We are also easing cost-of-living pressures for families and individuals, with new initiatives such as our \$50 weekly Opal fare cap and no-interest loans for solar panels and batteries for up to 3,000 homes. To further reduce the cost of getting kids into sports we are doubling the Active Kids voucher program with two \$100 vouchers now available to families for every child every year. I know that my community in Hornsby is very excited about that increase as the people in Hornsby have the highest take-up of the Active Kids voucher in New South Wales. This is a great win for Hornsby families.

We are also bolstering New South Wales' reputation as the education State to give our kids the best chance of success. We are employing an unprecedented 4,600 new teachers and building 190 new and upgraded schools while setting an ambitious goal of making New South Wales the best State for education by 2022. To make life easier for parents we are funding free dental check-ups in select regions and providing before- and after-school care in every public school in New South Wales. We are ensuring health care in world-class hospitals, with 29 new hospitals on the way and 8,300 new nurses, doctors and other health professionals—the biggest boost to frontline health workers in the State's history.

The people of Hornsby are also very excited by the injection of \$65 million to complete the stage two redevelopment of Hornsby Hospital. When we came to government it was one of the worst hospitals in New South Wales after years of Labor neglect, but that is no longer the case. The Coalition Government has invested more than \$300 million to turn Hornsby Hospital from being one of the worst hospitals in the State into one of the best. In addition to that we are providing new funding to the Kids Helpline, which will provide vital help in times of crisis, and our historic support for spinal injury research and treatment will bring new hope to the seriously injured. One of my local constituents, Steve Ralph of Berowra, had a terrible accident and he is now paralysed and in a wheelchair. This research will hopefully go a long way to finding a cure to ensure that people like Steve are able to walk again.

For those members of our community most in need we are doing more to break the cycle of disadvantage, funding better infrastructure in Indigenous communities, appointing a new Ageing and Disability Commissioner and supporting Foodbank at 500 more schools so that it can provide breakfast for kids who would otherwise go without. Our vision for New South Wales of thriving cities and regions takes shape with another infrastructure pipeline of \$93 billion to keep delivering the public transport, roads and cultural facilities that make our communities great places to be no matter where people live. Whether in the bush or in the city, communities right across New South Wales are benefiting from this infrastructure spend. My community knows that only too well with the NorthConnex project being delivered in the next year or so. The NorthConnex project will remove up to 40,000 cars and up to 10,000 trucks a day from Pennant Hills Road. It will fix one of the worst roads in the country—and it is not just me saying that, it is also the NRMA. I know that my colleagues from the Central Coast on the opposite side of the Chamber share the desire to see Pennant Hills Road fixed so that their communities can get to the city faster, avoid traffic lights, save time and ultimately have a safe journey.

In addition to that we are building the new metro line to Parramatta and the Western Sydney Airport and delivering regional rail and road upgrades and motorways on highways in every corner of the State. We are connecting New South Wales like never before. Greater services and infrastructure are the foundations for thriving communities and this budget does more to create better opportunities for the working men and women of New South Wales. New employment precincts will be hubs of learning, innovation and entrepreneurship in industries such as technology, health and nuclear medicine. As the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation I was proud to have secured the important investment into Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation [ANSTO], creating a new nuclear medicine precinct at Lucas Heights. It is a great win and hopefully it will underwrite the innovation of tomorrow when it comes to nuclear sites and nuclear medicine.

In addition, 100,000 free TAFE and vocational education and training courses will give aspiring workers, young and old, the skills they need to secure fulfilling jobs. As the global economic landscape transforms and with new challenges and opportunities approaching fast on the horizon, we are taking action now with a new wave of reforms to set up New South Wales for an even brighter future. We will continue to grow the Generations Fund to keep debt sustainable for future generations, and the next phase of outcomes budgeting will ensure government spending is getting real results for the people of New South Wales. A new economic blueprint for New South Wales will chart the most comprehensive plan ever devised for the New South Wales economy and we will take

the national lead on the reform of Commonwealth funding arrangements to find ways to better secure great services and infrastructure and encourage growth and investment in our economy.

This is a budget of delivery to kickstart a term of delivery, a budget that keeps our promises and creates new opportunities for everyone in New South Wales. It paves a new path for the premier State to stride confidently into the future. I will touch briefly on what that means in my portfolio of Energy and Environment. I will outline a number of initiatives in this budget. The New South Wales Government will dedicate \$1.7 billion in recurrent expenditure to the environment and energy sectors. In addition it will spend \$213 million in capital works to support the ongoing investment in environment- and energy-related infrastructure. We will be focused on ensuring that access to our vast national parks network will be boosted with a \$150 million spend over the next four years.

The budget allocates \$25 million to extend, upgrade and improve walking trails, visitor infrastructure and facilities as well as by introducing online and digital tools for virtual tours. There is \$17 million to protect our parks and reserves as part of a \$125.9 million commitment over four years to enhance the fire trail network to prevent and control bushfires. That was a commitment given to the NSW Rural Fire Service that we are delivering on. There is \$32.3 million as part of a \$65 million package over three years to support threatened species conservation. It will include \$21.1 million for the Saving our Species program, which delivers targeted conservation actions to secure populations of threatened species in the wild. It also includes \$11.2 million to provide more habitat for koalas by supporting local community action, improving koala health and safety and building our knowledge to improve koala conservation. These actions are all being delivered as part of the NSW Koala Strategy.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the \$51.3 million which is part of a \$212.7 million package over four years that is provided for private land conservation in priority areas. The Biodiversity Conservation Trust of New South Wales will build on the 19,000 hectares already preserved through conservation agreements in its first year of operation. We will be delivering a cleaner environment by ensuring investment in our State's waste and recycling services. I know that is important to communities right across New South Wales. It is of particular interest to local governments. This includes providing \$143.3 million in 2019-20 as part of a \$352.4 million package over the next four years—that is, the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. The management of land contaminated by PFAS, asbestos, waste and chemicals is a huge issue. We want to make sure that communities are free from these dangerous substances and this is part of the initiative that will turn that into reality.

There is \$324.5 million allocated as part of a \$1.1 billion package over the next four years to deliver energy rebate programs that support low-income households to manage cost-of-living pressures. These rebates include the low-income household rebate, the family energy rebate, the gas rebate, the life support rebate, the medical energy rebate and the energy accounts payment assistance rebate. We know that over 900,000 New South Wales households currently take advantage of the various rebate programs. Our latest figures show that there are 300,000 New South Wales households that are yet to take up these rebates. It is important to get the message out to communities across the State that the rebates are available. If people think they might be eligible they can check by jumping on to the Service NSW website which will give them an indication as to whether or not they are able to access these rebates. I encourage everyone to jump online to [www.servicensw.gov.au](http://www.servicensw.gov.au) and start saving now.

**Mr David Mehan:** Could you give us that address at the end?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I know the member for The Entrance has a lot of constituents who no doubt would be interested in taking up these rebates. There are a number of rebates to ease cost-of-living pressures prevalent in communities right across New South Wales. The Government will dedicate \$10.4 million as part of a \$42.1 million package over the next four years to establish a new energy rebate to assist self-funded retirees meet cost-of-living pressures. I know that is something that the new member for Camden has been lobbying for. There are a lot of self-funded retirees and other retirees in Camden. The member for Riverstone also supports that rebate. I thank them for their advocacy as part of delivering this important initiative. It will help self-funded retirees, those who worked hard and saved for their future. This is about easing the squeeze on them.

The program I am very interested in and one that I know the member for Wyong also is very interested in is the \$295.4 million package that will help communities and businesses adapt to a changing climate and minimise climate change impacts. Climate change is a huge issue. This Government and I as the Minister are determined to take decisive and responsible action to deal with climate change. We need to make sure we leave our planet for our kids in a better state than we found it. This important package, part of a \$1.4 billion program over the next five years, is about helping us achieve that objective.

We will assign \$30 million to the Regional Community Energy Fund to provide grants for renewable energy projects and clean backup power for emergency response sites. This will improve the reliability and affordability of energy for regional New South Wales communities. We have some big challenges in the energy space. Some of our existing coal-fired power stations are coming to the end of their useful life. The challenge is

to make sure we replace the capacity that is lost from those old assets with new generation assets. Coal is obviously part of the energy mix going forward, but so too are other forms of generation including renewables, pumped hydro, battery storage and, most certainly, gas.

As the energy Minister I am focused on delivering reliable affordable energy for the citizens and businesses of this State. It should not matter whether they are in the city or the bush. The \$30 million Regional Community Energy Fund is about looking after our country cousins. With an investment of \$7.9 million we will support the rollout of solar panels and battery systems to households across New South Wales as part of a \$65.4 million package over the next four years. The Empowering Homes program is about improving energy efficiency and reducing cost-of-living pressures for families across the State. Solar panels and solar power are very popular amongst citizens across New South Wales and I encourage people to jump on the Service NSW website or the Energy NSW website—[www.energy.nsw.gov.au](http://www.energy.nsw.gov.au)—to see whether they are eligible as part of the Empowering Homes program for a rebate for solar panels and battery storage.

I know the member for Cabramatta is a huge fan of renewable energy and I have no doubt he will get down to his local Service NSW to take up the rebate for solar panels on his roof and possible battery storage for his house. I know the Clerk, Helen Minnican, the great lady that she is, is committed to reducing her energy bills and ensuring that she does her bit for our planet. I encourage her, the Hansard staff and the officials here tonight—Danny loves his renewable energy—to look at the Empowering Homes program and see if you can do your bit for the environment and save money at the same time through solar panels on the roof and maybe a battery.

**Mr Nick Lalich:** Is that why it is cold in here every day?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Cabramatta. The member is talking about a great initiative: that is, bundling up the Government assets, including the Parliament, putting solar panels on them and operating a virtual power plant. It is a great idea from the member for Cabramatta. He is very innovative when he talks about clean, green renewable energy. I commend him for that. It is something we will look at.

**Mr Nick Lalich:** I am a greenie.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Cabramatta. For the benefit of Hansard, he said that he is a greenie. Good luck to him. We are also accelerating the rollout of solar panels on government buildings, such as schools and hospitals. We are doing that with \$5.1 million from this year's budget and that is part of an \$18 million program over the next three years. Our target is to reach 55 megawatt hours a year by 2024, so we are going to encourage schools, hospitals and community buildings to take it up. Schools are particularly well placed to take advantage of the solar rebates because they need energy when the sun is out and they do not need it when it is not. The Government subsidising solar panels on their roofs could have a huge impact on their operating expenses. That will mean paying less in electricity costs as a result.

I know that the Deputy Speaker is really excited about these initiatives and everyone in the House has come down to hear a bit about them. I want to make sure that I do not let them down, so I will go into a bit of detail. When I became the Minister for Energy and Environment one of my priorities was expanding the footprint of our national park network and enhancing the visitor experience. One of the first things that we are looking to do as part of the initiative is to deliver on our promise to provide another significant boost for our State's koala population, with a major new package that will improve access to existing national parks. We are looking to create a new national park with around 3,680 hectares in the north of the Goulburn electorate, bordering Wollondilly. The new park is centred around Tugalong Station, about 25 kilometres north-west of Bowral. The Liberals and The Nationals have been careful custodians of the State's national parks, and I am thrilled that we are going to deliver another one.

In fact, it was Tom Lewis, a former Liberal Premier, who set up the national park network in New South Wales. That is something that we as Liberals are all very proud of and I hope to continue that great legacy. During the election campaign Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced a \$150 million investment to improve access to national parks across New South Wales. The budget allocated a portion of that investment, which means we will be doing major upgrades in places like Sydney's Royal National Park and in the Blue Mountains world heritage area, making it easier for people to enjoy our wonderful natural beauty. [*Extension of time*]

The member for Wyong has some great national parks in his electorate and he is a very committed conservationist. I should remind him that the NSW National Parks passes will be coming out very soon. They are probably the most popular perk that has not been taken away from us yet. I hope that as the Minister for Energy and Environment I can continue to ensure that members of Parliament are able to use those passes to see our national parks and spruik the benefits of them. I say for the benefit of the member for Wyong that the natural bushland is not the only great thing to be seen in our national parks. They are also the best vantage point to watch

whales this whale season. The member for Wyong has some coastal national parks in his electorate, as does the member for The Entrance. It is literally a whale superhighway at this time of year. Recently I was at Royal National Park to launch the whale-watching season. We are coming up to the peak time, 30 June, and the Royal National Park is probably the best vantage point to watch it. On 30 June last year there were 250 whales migrating. For those of us who are not coastal MPs—

**Mr Nick Lalich:** There is no beach in Cabramatta.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** There is no beach in Cabramatta apparently, despite the best efforts of the mayor to no doubt create one. The member for Hornsby has a bit of coastline in his electorate but there are no whales that come up the Hawkesbury River. I encourage people to get out to our national parks to check out the whales as they migrate north for breeding season. I digressed, so I will come back to what I was talking about—the national park at Tugalong Station that we are going to create. It has some of the best koala habitat in the Southern Highlands. Koalas are an iconic species and we are acting to ensure their survival through the creation of the national park. The new national park will not only add to the State's conservation lands; it is yet another example of how the New South Wales Government is moving to protect and preserve our koala population. The \$150 million investment over the next four years will improve access to existing national parks including upgraded walking tracks, better visitor infrastructure and facilities and new digital tools such as virtual tourism and live streaming cameras.

It will include more access. For example, there will be a significant upgrade to the grand clifftop walk from Wentworth Falls to Katoomba in the Blue Mountains world heritage area. The member for Blue Mountains has talked to me about her beautiful national parks. The 3.6 kilometre upgrade will cost about \$10 million. We are also upgrading the access to iconic lookout points to a mobility impaired access standard. That will cost about \$9.9 million. We realise that if our national parks are truly there for everyone, everyone needs to be able to access them. It is therefore important that we provide people with disability the opportunity to access our national parks in the same way other people would. Our national parks are beautiful for families and to have picnics, which is why it is important that we improve the visitor infrastructure and facilities. My focus is on expanding the picnic areas, the barbecues and the water provision facilities, for which we will allocate about \$38 million.

We will increase support to people with restricted mobility by spending about \$45 million. That will include upgraded picnic facilities and walking tracks at the Audley Weir in Royal National Park. We will also be improving the safety of access by investing \$36.4 million to make our extensive network of walking tracks and trails safer and more accessible. That includes an expansion of the Think Before You TREK safety program for bushwalkers. We will work with other agencies to deliver other priority safety programs such as rock fishing and enhanced mobile connectivity in the parks. We boast some of the best and most majestic and picturesque coastal lookouts, outback walking tracks, camping grounds and beaches in the world.

We want more visitors to experience the natural beauty and wonder of our national parks. We have just completed the building of a safety barrier in Royal National Park to protect Wedding Cake Rock, which is a famous and iconic place for selfies. I know that the member for Riverstone often has to be warned not to go down to Wedding Cake Rock to take selfies. I will put on the public record that the rock is unsafe and it could fall off at any time. We want people to enjoy going to our national parks and to be safe when they go and not put themselves or others in danger. It is not just about the member for Riverstone risking his life—

**Mr Kevin Conolly:** Important though that is.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** It is very important. If he went on to the rock he would not only be risking his life; he could be risking the lives of our NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service personnel and our emergency services personnel. It is really important that people can safely enjoy the beauty of Wedding Cake Rock and that is why we have put a barrier around it. Wedding Cake Rock featured on the Channel 7 news tonight—in fact, I did an interview with Alex Hart, a journalist at Channel 7. I know he is related to Madam Deputy Speaker. He married up when he married Laura Jayes, who is on *Sky News*.

One of the great initiatives in the Environment portfolio is the Saving our Species program, which is all about ensuring the survival of our threatened and endangered species. More than 1,000 New South Wales plant and animal species are listed as being at risk of extinction. We introduced the Saving our Species program to identify and fund actions to secure our threatened plants and animals in the wild for the next 100 years. Saving our Species is one of the largest threatened species conservation programs ever undertaken in Australia—in fact, it is not only nation leading; it is up there with best practice around the world. We launched the program in December 2013 with an initial allocation of \$7.95 million over four years, which was invested in projects designed to secure around 80 threatened species in the wild. The Government committed another \$100 million over five years in the 2016-2017 budget to protect more of the State's threatened species. The Government has also

committed more than \$40 million to reintroduce regionally extinct mammals such as the bilby into three locations in New South Wales.

The Saving our Species program had a budget of \$23.4 million in 2018-2019, which allowed the project to expand to include more species, protect ecological communities and mitigate threatening processes that affected many species. We supported a conservation project targeting 389 threatened species in 21 ecological communities. An example of how the investment is improving conservation is a landmark program using 225 hidden cameras to monitor endangered spotted-tailed quolls across four priority areas. From the footage captured on those cameras scientists will soon be able to generate accurate population figures for spotted-tailed quolls and tailor predator control programs. I know the member for Cabramatta cares deeply about the spotted-tailed quoll and that he is a big supporter of the program. I thank him for that.

We have a captive breeding program for the endangered plains-wanderer. The Saving our Species Contestable Grants Program is distributing about \$9 million to a partnership between government, the community, non-government organisations and industry. Other projects bring together researchers, the community, land managers and the Government including the \$1 million Australian National University project to protect the swift parrot population on the Central Coast and in the Riverina. It is great that the member for Wyong and the member for The Entrance are in the Chamber to hear about protecting the swift parrot population. [*Further extension of time*]

I wanted the extension of time to talk about the other great initiative under the Saving our Species program, which is the Northern Tablelands Local Land Services project to secure the entire Bell's turtle population in New South Wales by using detector dogs to identify nests and help to target conservation action. It is great that the member for Gosford is in the Chamber, because that means we have the full complement of Central Coast members, apart from the member for Terrigal, who is probably having a beer while I speak. I know that the member for Gosford will also be very excited about our program to protect the swift parrot population on the Central Coast. An issue that is of great concern to those opposite as well as members on the Government side is protecting our koala population. I have seen the member for Gosford in the Ballina Shire because there are a lot of koalas in Ballina.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** We want them in Pearl Beach as well and we want funding.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Apparently we have them in Pearl Beach and the member for Gosford has made a request for cash.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** We have the application in.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** We will have to see whether we can find funding in next year's budget, because we have just handed down this year's budget. I was not aware of the Pearl Beach koala population, but perhaps the member for Gosford will invite me to look at them. She can then take me to the best restaurant in Pearl Beach.

[*An Opposition member interjected.*]

The member for Gosford has made an offer I cannot refuse, which is to go to Gosford to see the koalas. I will put on *Hansard* that she has promised to take me to the finest restaurant in Pearl Beach.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Pearls on the Beach.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I acknowledge the interjection that the member for Gosford will take me to Pearls on the Beach if I sort out the koala population. We have got a deal. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring the survival of koalas. We have a number of strategies, but I need to see how those strategies will work for the Pearl Beach koala population. The Government has a \$44.7 million koala strategy, which was released in May 2018 acting on the recommendation of the Chief Scientist and Engineer's review into the decline of koala populations. The strategy aligns efforts across government agencies and encourages the community to play a part in monitoring and protecting koalas through a range of projects.

The centrepiece of the strategy is setting aside areas of land where koalas can thrive and new habitats can be created. Action so far includes a \$20 million commitment to purchase properties that contain priority koala habitat and reserve them in the national parks estate. We have already purchased two properties in the Southern Highlands totalling 2,566 hectares and one property of 43 hectares of prime koala habitat in Tweed Shire. I acknowledge the arrival in the Chamber of the member for Port Stephens, who is a great advocate for koalas in her electorate. I was delighted to deliver on a request by the member for Port Stephens to buy back the Mambo Wetlands.

**Ms Kate Washington:** And the entire community.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** It was led by the member for Port Stephens, who is a passionate advocate for the project.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Why did you have to buy it back, Minister?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I am just the new Minister. I had to come in and make a very good decision to protect the koalas in the Mambo Wetlands.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** What a good Minister you are too.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Terrigal. The member for Port Stephens knows only too well, because she has been a fierce advocate for this, that the development application for the Port Stephens koala hospital and tourism facility was approved in February 2019. It is fair to say that we are all very excited about the koala hospital.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Can you give us some more money, please?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I acknowledge the request of the member for Port Stephens for more money for koalas. Do you want the money for anything in particular?

**Ms Kate Washington:** For a koala hospital.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Koala hospitals play an important role in protecting our koalas. We have made a number of commitments to roll out koala hospitals across New South Wales. I am very happy to look at the request of the member for Port Stephens to see what is needed to support the koala population in Port Stephens. For the benefit of the member for Oatley, just as the member for Gosford invited me to her electorate and promised to take me to Pearls on the Beach, I am very happy to come to Port Stephens.

**Ms Kate Washington:** I have invited you and you have said no.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Is that true?

**Ms Kate Washington:** Yes, it's true.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I have not seen the request.

**Ms Kate Washington:** It must have gone through your Parliamentary Secretary, who said no on your behalf.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** There must be a gatekeeper in my office, but I would be delighted to go to Port Stephens at any time. I am sure that the member for Port Stephens would be delighted to take me to the new Rick Stein restaurant there. We also have a commitment to set aside more than 24,000 hectares of State forest for koalas. We have already set aside 4,000 hectares of forest with koala habitat on the mid North Coast and we have transferred that into the national park estate. More than 170 hectares of koala habitat in the Port Macquarie electorate is being protected across five properties, in perpetuity, through conservation agreements. We would struggle to find a more dedicated or fierce advocate for koalas in any Parliament at any time than the member for Port Macquarie. I know that she rivals the member for Port Stephens in her care, love, advocacy and commitment to protect koalas in New South Wales.

Another feature of the strategy that everyone is very excited about—and why the member for Oatley has entered the Chamber—is the \$8.9 million to build our knowledge about koalas. The member for Oatley thought he knew everything there was to know about koalas, but apparently he still has more to learn. Other funding includes \$5 million to deliver local actions to boost koala numbers, \$4.5 million to support koala rehabilitation and provide specialist training to veterinary surgeons and nurses and \$3.3 million to fix roadkill hotspots. Two of them that we are looking at are in Camden and Campbelltown.

**Mr Peter Sidgreaves:** On Appin Way.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** On the Appin Way. Money will go towards that important project. I want a drum roll from the member for Port Stephens, because another part of the strategy includes \$3 million for a Port Stephens koala hospital.

**Ms Kate Washington:** We know that that's there. We just need some more, please.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Okay. We will take that offline. Nobody has updated my talking points. With the funding we have delivered local community action workshops in 13 locations across the State to identify regional priorities for koala conservation. Koala fencing is currently being installed along Picton Road, which is a known hotspot for koala vehicle strike, which the member for Camden campaigned for during the election. I think he is the best member for Camden that we have ever seen.

**Mr David Harris:** Since the last one.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Since the last one, yes. We are also delivering the NSW Koala Research Plan, which sets out the research priorities to fill critical knowledge gaps over the next 10 years. After three years we will evaluate the outcomes of the koala strategy and identify priority actions for the next phase of koala conservation in New South Wales to ensure the survival of that iconic species. All members are very concerned about the cost of living. As the energy Minister I know that energy is a key area of price pressure for families. That is exactly why the Government is committed to reducing the burden of energy costs on New South Wales consumers and is providing record amounts in assistance to low-income and vulnerable households to help. [*Quorum called for.*]

[*The bells having been rung and a quorum having formed, business resumed.*]

From 1 July 2019 up to 130,000 households in which the electricity account holder has a Commonwealth Seniors card will be able to claim a rebate of \$200 a year to help with their power bills and cost-of-living expenses. Last financial year the Government increased the budget for energy rebates in the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme from \$256 million to \$312 million per year. Eligible low-income households received an increase of 20 per cent on their energy rebate. LPG customers who applied for the gas rebate received \$121. Customers in regional areas are encouraged to look at whether they are eligible for the rebate as well. Over 43,000 households accessed the Family Energy Rebate in the last financial year. Customers that cannot apply for energy rebates through an energy retailer can now apply through Service NSW centres or online, making it easier for them to access the Government's rebates. As well as increases in expansions to energy rebates in 2017-18, the New South Wales Government increased support for the scheme from \$15.8 million to \$19.8 million.

I put on record that this year the Government has \$324.5 million in energy rebate programs. They include the Low Income Household Rebate, Family Energy Rebate, Gas Rebate, Life Support Energy Rebate, Medical Energy Rebate and the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Rebate. About 900,000 households take out those rebates to ease cost-of-living pressures. We know that about 300,000 households that are eligible have not yet taken up the rebates. I encourage every member to go back to their communities and issue newsletters to say that the rebates are available. They make a big difference. They will drive down cost-of-living expenses and ease energy price pressures. The Government is encouraging people to take them up. In the limited time I have left I will say that the budget delivers good news for people who care about the energy and environment portfolios. We are going to drive down power prices and make sure that our grid is reliable. At the same time we will take decisive and responsible action to tackle climate change.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (20:18):** I thank the Minister for Energy and Environment, and member for Hornsby, for his insightful introduction to some of the more intricate parts of the budget. It has been quite entertaining.

**Mr Matt Kean:** It will help you with estimates.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** I appreciate that. I will comment on the budget from the perspective of the electorate of Wyong. There was some good news and some not so good news for that community. It is great that my Central Coast colleagues are here because some things I will talk about affect them as well. I talk first about the Wyong Hospital. Just on four years ago, at the 2015 elections, a \$200 million upgrade at Wyong Hospital was promised. It is great that the Minister, and member for Pittwater, is here, because he came to the site on a Sunday afternoon and announced the upgrade at the front of the emergency sign outside. We appreciate the announcement, but it has been brought to my attention that because of proposed privatisation and the fact that it has been four years the \$200 million no longer covers the services that were promised. The \$200 million envelope will not build what was committed to at the time. I will write and talk to Minister Hazzard to bring to his attention that the Opposition would appreciate it if that funding was adjusted to factor in the rise in costs since the original announcement was made and the fact that it has taken a while for that to happen.

In the last budget \$30 million was allocated for the enabling works at the hospital and to build stage one of the car park. That work has been completed and this budget commits a further \$60.491 million to stage one of the actual building project and a further \$2.6 million for the car park at Wyong Hospital. That is welcome because finally people will see real work going on at the hospital. During the planning phase that we have been going through over the past 12 months it has been brought to our attention that the \$200 million envelope will not cover what is needed. For example, currently the radiology department has 10 bays but after money is spent on redevelopment, the department will have only eight bays. Hundreds of millions of dollars will be spent on upgrading the hospital but there will be a cutback in the number of beds available. Also there will be only a shell for an MRI machine; no MRI machine will be supplied. I ask the Government to look at those things again to ensure that our growing community gets those services.

There has been a lot of talk about the redesign of the emergency department. There are some issues around that and around room sizes. For example, some rooms have been designed in such a way that bariatric beds do not fit in them. At Wyong, bariatric beds are necessary, which means there will be restriction on people accessing those rooms. All this is happening because those opposite are trying to fit things within a budget that was relevant four years ago but is not relevant now because things become more expensive. The good news is that major funding is starting, so we will see some work, but the bad news is that the original amount will not cover what was committed to.

The member for Gosford, the member for The Entrance, the member for Swansea and I have also been fighting for the car parking at Wyong Hospital, which is free at the moment. For those who do not know, Wyong Hospital is in a suburb called Kanwal. It is not close to any major public transport; it is not near a rail line or anything. People have to travel there by car because the bus services go past on the highway. I think only three or four buses stop at the hospital every day. The parking has been free but under the State Government's hospital parking policy, when the car park is redeveloped, people will be charged for parking there. That seems like a huge impost. It is a low socio-economic area and people can get there only by car. The parking charge will be massive impost not just on the residents who visit and use the hospital but also on the staff, who travel there from all over the Central Coast. They cannot walk to the hospital or catch a train because of the timing; their only option is to drive. The charge will act almost like a pay cut to them.

At Gosford Hospital staff have to pay \$1,263 a year to park at the hospital, which is double the \$560 that they paid before. At Wyong Hospital parking has been free but the new charge will be an impost. We have dubbed it the "sick tax" because people who visit the hospital have no choice but to pay. We think that is very unfair. We are running a campaign with a petition, working with the Health Services Union, the nurses' union and the community, collecting signatures to say that the State policy needs a review and that there should not be the impost of parking charges at Wyong Hospital. At Gosford Hospital parking charges should be capped at \$12 a day. We think that is fair, given the restricted opportunities to get to that site. We are halfway to the 10,000 mark; we have well over 5,000 signatures already. It is certainly a hot issue in the community.

The second issue I want to speak about is the new primary school proposed at Warnervale, which was committed to in the budget two years ago. The former Minister is in the Chamber. I have acknowledged that the site chosen is very difficult and has massive problems. In fact it is the site of the old school. When we were in government we did not build a new school there because of those issues—I did not tell them that. The department wants to build on that site. This school will eventually have 1,000 students. The department is having terrible trouble working out how to fit that footprint on that site.

I note that a public meeting is coming up on 1 July to talk about how that is progressing, which is good, because for two years we have not heard a lot. That meeting will give the community an update of where things are up to. That school is certainly needed. In our time in Government we built two new schools in that area: Woongarra Public School and Warnervale Public School. Warnervale Public School is only six years old and it already has six demountables. We need the next school because it is a big residential area where all the housing is going in. We ask the Government to listen to the community carefully to ensure that we get a quality school development there.

I will have to talk to the new Minister about an issue that the previous Minister is aware of, which is that the site is leased to two community groups: the Australian Air League Toukley Squadron and Options Disability Support. Both those organisations have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars doing up that site. Unfortunately, because the new school is going there, they will be evicted. They do not have a new home. We have been trying to find them a new spot because they are very important organisations. We will ask the Government to assist us in trying to find them a new home. When that school site became vacant after the new school was built, we put a demountable on the block so that they could use it. They did up all the old classrooms, which had been gutted by fire and vandalism.

As I said, they rebuilt the whole site voluntarily and spent a lot of money and now they find themselves homeless. That is a sad thing. They have been on that site since 2009. After 10 years they have nowhere to go. They are not having a lot of luck finding a new place. They have looked at the old Dooralong school but that is a long way out of town. They have to transport all those people with disabilities there. It is quite concerning. A public meeting is coming up about the new school. It has taken two years and we are still not sure about the funding. Hopefully we will see some concept designs at that meeting. But it does not address the other issue of that area, which is secondary education. We took to the election a commitment to build a senior college on the Wadalba Community School site—a years 11 and 12 college to give greater provision of secondary education. The concept we came up with is based on The Entrance senior campus. We saw that as being complementary to the high schools that already exist.

For example, Gorokan High School has two selective streams. To get into those, students have to do the selective schools test. Labor set that up when it was in government. Wyong High School has selective technology streams which Labor also set up. If the Government could look closely at putting in this senior campus then it would give students in the area a full and broad range of options and subject choices, both academic and technical, and improve educational outcomes. It would also take some of the pressure off Wadalba, which is seeing massive growth in enrolments due to all the new building in the area. In the election period Labor committed \$20 million to do that, which is less than half the cost of building a high school, but it would be very popular in the community and it is something that needs to be done.

That is the education part of the budget. Unfortunately there is no identified money to do up any other schools in the electorate. I again draw to the attention of the House the need of Tacoma Public School, which has a demountable building that leaks as an administration block. We on this side hope that the Government will see its way clear to build a new administration block at some stage. Our schools are really good. We are very proud of our schools. Blue Haven Public School was a finalist in the Australian Education Awards for public school of the year and its principal has been nominated for principal of the year. All of our schools do a really good job.

Moving along, in terms of roadworks I have spoken in this House on numerous occasions about the Pacific Highway through Wyong. Once again the budget has an allocation of another \$2.5 million for planning. It might surprise many members that this \$2.5 million brings us to a total of more than \$30 million for planning. This would have to be the most planned road in New South Wales. It has been 10 years. Tuggerah Straight was completed in 2009. The first concepts started in 2006 but the detailed planning started around 2009-10 and since then a whole range of options have been looked at. Detailed planning has been happening. Land purchases have happened—I acknowledge that—but it is time for this project to get underway.

Recently the Hon. Taylor Martin from the other place said that road cannot start until the M1 freeway work is finished. I have always acknowledged that the work on the road itself cannot start until the freeway is finished, but this is what is called the Wyong Town Centre project. It is actually a series of projects which includes doing up the railway station, building a commuter car park and building two new bridges, on all of which work could be started without impacting on the actual roadway but instead we have to keep waiting and waiting. Some days the trip from North Wyong to Tuggerah, which is about 1.6 kilometres, takes around 45 minutes.

Local businesspeople have come to see me—for example, Wideline Windows & Doors. They have a factory at North Wyong and transport materials to Tuggerah on a regular basis. They say it is killing their business. I suggested during the election campaign that \$19 million could be allocated now to start those pre-works—that was money that was allocated in Restart NSW. You do not just start doing the road surface. You have to build the pylons of the bridge, you have to build the commuter car park, you have to move services—all of which could be done while the road continues to operate and while the M1 is being finished. It is not a good enough argument to say we cannot start anything until the M1 is finished. The engineers have told me this offline. They have said that they are getting frustrated. In fact, one engineer is off on stress leave because it is getting to him so much. He is getting so frustrated that this work could be started but it has not, simply because not enough money has been allocated.

To think that nearly \$31 million has now been allocated for planning is incredible when you sense that many road projects on the Central Coast—intersections, for example—could be totally built for that amount of money. It is frustrating the whole community. Today I have received calls from members of the business community in Wyong who are very upset that it has been delayed once again. Everybody knows that this is not a project that can be finished overnight—this is going to take years to finish—so the longer it goes before we start it, the longer it pushes it out. At the moment it is not due to be finished until 2023 or 2024.

That is simply not good enough when you have the growth in population in the northern part of the Central Coast, when the Scentre Group, has just committed to a \$2.1 billion upgrade of Westfield at Tuggerah, but the main thoroughfare internal road is congested every single day of the week, morning and afternoon, and it gets worse on the Saturday mornings because of netball. It is just not good enough. People want to see some sort of start and some sort of action. I can appreciate their frustration levels because my office is there. We have printed the corflutes and they simply say, "Gladys, fix this road". That is what people tell me all the time, so we are going to advertise that it needs to happen. That is the road through Wyong.

Another road project which was not in the budget is the Pacific Highway at Charmhaven. Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] has been very good. When we went to Anna Zycki after 15 accidents on that section of the road, she went to Treasury and got \$200,000 for a safety review on that section of the road. The outcome of that safety review is that the crash rate on that section of road is five times higher than on a similar section of road. The RMS has acknowledged that and is going to drop the speed limit from 70 kilometres an hour to 50 kilometres an hour. This has not made a lot of residents happy but it does acknowledge that most of the accidents are people getting rear-ended. When drivers attempt to pull into their houses or make a turn out of residential streets they are

getting hit by cars coming through. Clearly 70 kilometres an hour was too fast. But simply dropping the speed limit is not enough; some physical work also needs to be done. There need to be turning lanes and at least a roundabout at the shopping centre. [*Extension of time*]

There needs to be more work done there. I know the RMS is trying and recognises there is a problem. The letter the RMS wrote to me a week or so ago acknowledged the crash rate and acknowledged that something needs to be done. I know that the cheapest and simplest thing is dropping the speed limit but clearly that will not work by itself because at peak hour there is a constant stream of traffic. If you are trying to turn out of your residential street, the church or the service station, it is almost impossible because there are no gaps. Something physical, a way of stopping or slowing traffic, is needed so that people can get in and out of that particular suburb.

People there have been waiting for a long time. The campaign just to get the safety review took three years and on top of that it now looks like it will be another 12 months before any physical work is done on the road. This is a big problem on the Central Coast—as the population grows, congestion increases but the amount of roadwork has not kept up with it. And so, we are getting more and more choke points around the coast, particularly in the northern part. My colleague the member for The Entrance spoke about choke points along parts of the Central Coast Highway and he did get a commitment to a project there, but there was not a whole lot of money in the budget for it. There was maybe just some planning money.

The Government needs to understand that the Central Coast, particularly its northern part, is a growth area and needs an injection of extra funds to make sure that when people move there they have sufficient infrastructure. It is great that people are moving there. I have whole suburbs of new houses—about 4,000 houses in the last 18 months. I opened the new HomeWorld Warnervale a few weeks ago and cut the ribbon on the first house at the Warnervale Town Centre. That is exciting, but it is not exciting if we cannot move anywhere because we are stuck in traffic all the time. These road upgrades have to happen at the same time. There have been some grants to the Central Coast Council. We also need an upgrade to water and sewerage infrastructure in the area so that the Warnervale Town Centre, for example, can get its retail and commercial section up and running.

I will meet in early August with the new owners of that land. It looks like Warnervale Town Centre will finally start happening. That is good because, although we designated it a State significant precinct in 2006, apart from one intersection and an internal road, not much has happened since then. It looks like it is moving ahead now. I look forward to sitting down with the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and discussing how we can perhaps make that a priority precinct, because the Wyong Employment Zone could potentially create thousands of jobs for the Central Coast. It just needs that infrastructure put in place so that businesses can move forward. Businesses have put in development applications and then have had to wait and wait because there are no services. These are businesses that could be generating jobs now, but they are either being put on hold or moving further north to Lake Macquarie. Clearly that is not good enough.

As I said, it is a bit of a mixed budget. Some of the things I am disappointed in are that the Government has only allocated \$200,000 to set up a special committee into the Tuggerah Lakes. This is a huge issue. In the election campaign Labor committed \$5 million for projects to clean up the lakes with gross pollutant traps, riverbank upgrades and those sorts of things. Unfortunately, the Government has only seen fit to set up another committee. Anyone who lives in that area knows that we have had so many committees and reports on the Tuggerah Lakes. People are sick of the reports and investigations; they want money to do the work. They want money for dredging because the channels are becoming silted up and people cannot get their boats in and out. People cannot use boat ramps because of the weed and siltation. The lake smells and is becoming stagnant. We need work to make sure the health of the lakes is ensured.

We ask the Government to have a very close look at an investigation into the demolition of Munmorah Power Station. I know we said we do not want any more investigations but this is a new issue. When they shut down Munmorah Power Station they did not take into account the effect that would have on both Budgewoi and Lake Munmorah. For those people who do not know, when they built Munmorah Power Station they changed the whole shoreline of those lakes and dug new tunnels so that the water would circulate around through both of the lakes and through the power station's cooling system. It would then cool down by the time it got back to the power station again so that the station could keep running within its limits. The problem with that is that they changed the whole lake system.

Now that the power station is gone and the turbines are not operating, there is no flow because the natural flows have gone. They put in a golf course, parks and a whole lot of other stuff with the silt, rock and sand they dug out of those channels. They changed the natural flow of both lakes. There has been no investigation nor any attempt at rehabilitation now that the power station is no longer there. This needs to be looked into because people are noticing a difference and noticing that the lake system's health is deteriorating. The fact that there is currently a drought does not help either. As I do, I am sure the member for The Entrance and the member for Swansea have

people talk to them all the time about the health of the lakes. For the Government to commit another \$200,000 for another committee does not meet the expectations of the community.

One of the other disappointments of this budget is that a long time ago, in 2010, I first got the money to build lifts at Tuggerah railway station and then we lost the election and the Government took that money away. Even though the Liberals took over the seat, they removed that money. They had dug the holes and built one of the awnings but then they stopped and took the money away. The awning is still there but there are no lifts. In this budget, despite the election promises that were made, there is again no money for the lifts. There is money to start planning the commuter car park but we have to wait another 12 months for those lifts. The plans are done. They were done in 2010. I have seen them. The station staff have shown them to me. The hole is there—it probably needs to be dug out again. But the work had already started and it is disappointing. We would have thought that this was a no-brainer. The easiest thing to do was to start work on these lifts. Of course the Government promised a whole lot of other lifts as well in the electorate of The Entrance, which is great, but there seems to be no work on the lifts at Tuggerah and no mention of them. That is a shame because it was a big election issue and the community had fought hard for it.

While I am talking about train stations, the budget again does not mention whether the Government is going to build the new North Warnervale railway station or upgrade the current Warnervale station. Obviously part of the town centre project was to have a railway station and transport hub there but it has disappeared off the radar. Again, when Labor was in government, just before the election it had produced brochures with concept designs for the new station. After the election they were all pulped and destroyed. We have heard nothing of it since, other than every now and again when a photograph or a drawing appears and the Government just says it is monitoring passenger numbers and will think about a station some time in the future.

The problem is what I was talking about before. If you put all the houses in one area but you make everybody drive through an already congested road to get to the railway station and there is no real public transport, all you are doing is creating bigger problems. By building or upgrading the current railway station and making sure it is timetabled so the train stops there, you are taking pressure off Wyong and Tuggerah. Therefore some of the issues of parking will not be exacerbated so much. I acknowledge that there are some good things in the budget, but some other things are lacking. We will continue to campaign on those things. Wyong is a very fast-growing area. It puts pressure on local infrastructure. Whoever is in government will have to make sure that areas like this have the funding to keep up with that population growth, because we want people to move away from Sydney to stop congestion but we also have to give them good reason to do that.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of Susan Boyd, the President of the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales and a very good friend of mine. Welcome to Parliament House. I hope you are enjoying the debate.

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (20:48):** I make a contribution in relation to the budget for 2019-2020. Clearly this is a very exciting budget for the people of New South Wales. This place is obviously focused on their welfare and on making people's lives better across this great State, wherever they live and whatever their background. The budget is about creating opportunities, recognising that people have the freedom to make of those opportunities what they will and that all of us have a right to shared opportunities, a right to be able to develop our gifts, talents and attributes in service of one another. That is what makes great communities.

A highlight of this budget is \$93 billion worth of infrastructure, which is a record spend and a phenomenal result for the people of New South Wales. In concrete terms, this infrastructure means 40 new and upgraded hospitals, and 190 new and upgraded schools. I recognise the indefatigable Susie Boyd who is in the gallery today. She is an amazing advocate for parents and citizens of our public schools right across New South Wales. It was my joy and privilege to work with her in my role as Minister for Education. She is a formidable campaigner and a genuinely lovely human being. It would be a great honour if I could count Susie as a friend for the rest of my days. Many of us feel the same way. She is a great Australian.

The budget is not only about schools, but also about transport. This budget continues with our record of delivering three light rails, three metros, seven motorways, which are in various stages of construction, three stadiums, art galleries and museums. Our projects extend right across the State. Whether it is transport, essential services, community services, parks and playgrounds—which I will talk more about later—at every level our infrastructure spend is geared to connect people to one another and connect people to the services that will enrich their experience of life. Ultimately, that is what community is all about.

One of the most phenomenal statistics and achievements in this budget of which the Premier and Treasurer should both be very proud is the State's net worth. I find this particularly fascinating and exciting. It is something that every member of this Chamber should be proud about. There is a lot of argument about privatising

State Government assets in these sorts of debates, but the proof is in the evidence, which suggests that the value of those assets on the State's balance sheets continues to grow. It provides an endorsement of this Government's strategy of asset recycling—replacing assets that are losing value and losing relevance to the community and, instead, transitioning to assets that are increasing in value over the long term and will benefit the people of New South Wales.

It was interesting that in 2016 *The Australian* predicted that the huge increase in the State's net worth would mean that by 2020 it could be as high as \$248 billion. We have achieved even more than that. The State's net worth was already more than \$254 billion by the beginning of this year. This budget now projects that the State's net worth will be as high as one-third or one-quarter of \$1 trillion by the end of the forward estimates. Those figures provide strong endorsement and evidentiary support to justify the policy of spending more on infrastructure to make sure that our infrastructure is new, relevant and meeting the needs of the community. We can recycle infrastructure that is losing value, which we may otherwise have held onto for many years, into things that are even better and more relevant, and can produce even greater benefits for the community.

I turn to elements of the budget that speak particularly to my portfolio responsibilities in planning and open spaces. This budget delivers a \$113 million investment in critical infrastructure and service upgrades to better connect communities across New South Wales. The budget includes \$58 million in new funding for work on infrastructure projects such as road upgrades in Greater Sydney, a new pedestrian cycleway bridge over the Parramatta River, and water and sewerage works in Yass, Queanbeyan-Palerang and Warnervale. These are projects delivered through the Housing Acceleration Fund. To pick on one at random, the pedestrian and cycleway bridge over the Parramatta River has been well supported by Macarthur Girls High School, which is on the northern side of the river, because it provides great connections for students and staff alike. The bridge provides active ways to get to and from school, replacing reliance on the increasing automobility that has shaped our city for so many decades.

As a former education Minister and now planning Minister I am very passionate about providing these active transport networks because they provide a great opportunity for people to get out and experience their environment, and also a great relational opportunity for people to talk together while they walk to school. What an amazing opportunity to talk to young people. One thing I love to do—and I do not get to do it enough—is to walk with my kids to school, to chat about what they have learned during the day, to chat about their concerns and their friends. It is amazing how much you can learn when you are not face to face with someone, but when you are walking alongside them. That is what active transport does. Projects like this may be small compared to some of the big infrastructure projects I have spoken about, but they provide real meaning to people's lives. In a very real, granular, anecdotal way, they can make people's lives better.

The pedestrian and cycleway bridge over the Parramatta River is so important because as we are building, for example, more schools around greater Parramatta it has been exciting to see how more and more families are opting to walk and cycle to school. These bridges facilitates those connections. For example, the new Parramatta O'Connell Street Public School is an amazing adaptive reuse of the incredible heritage of the former King's School site. I was very excited when I visited that school to see all the full bike racks when school begins because there are now more ways in which kids can cycle and walk safely to school.

I endorse the work of Harold Scruby and the Pedestrian Council of Australia in championing better pedestrian connections and recognising that roads are more about streets and shared public spaces, and that the rights of pedestrians are just as important, if not more important, than the rights of motorists. Whether it is for new sewerage services in Yass or Warnervale or whether it is a road upgrade in western Sydney, all of this funding is about helping to deliver essential services needed to support our growing communities where the new homes are being built. It is also about improving some of the pinch points on our roads to ease congestion and make it easier for people to get home so they can invest more time in their families and in their communities in volunteering and not waste time in frustrating congestion.

A further \$55 million will deliver vital infrastructure and service upgrades in 10 Aboriginal communities through the Government's Roads to Home initiative. This is really important because many of those communities have been forgotten for decades and do not experience the same level of amenity that other communities take for granted. New roads, new footpaths, new street lights will be among the upgrades delivered to these communities. Again, it is all about providing better connections to surrounding neighbourhoods and services, and making sure that vulnerable and isolated communities are given the same respect as existing communities, recognising particularly our enduring obligation to ensure that Australia's First Peoples are treated with the respect that they deserve. These upgrades will make it easier for people in isolated Aboriginal communities to get to and from work and school. They will improve road safety and enable communities to start to grow new businesses by providing attractive urban environments and streetscapes where businesses can flourish. I am pleased that consultation on where that money will be spent and how it is to be spent will begin later this year.

In the words of long-time Pittwater resident Tim Shaw, "But wait, there's more!" The budget also delivers a massive boost for public spaces and green spaces following an election commitment to create well-connected communities and quality local environments. In this budget \$162 million will be used to upgrade existing government-owned land, to buy new land for public park plans to increase the tree canopy across Sydney and to build more inclusive playgrounds. It is important that we make better use of our existing public lands, whether they are lands already identified as parks or they are lands that have been residual, that are not cared for or that are not really thought about, but which, if thought about creatively, could add to our parkland estates or could be useful connections between existing parks, making existing parks more accessible, more inclusive, safer and better able to serve a burgeoning community.

Increasing the tree canopy is particularly important and a lot of great work has been done by the New South Wales Government Architect in identifying ways in which we can quantify the value of different parklands and also the way in which we can use tree canopy to make parklands more accessible, more beautiful and more usable. We know that parks and open spaces can not only give us a better sense of wellbeing but also affect our physical and mental health and wellbeing. Countless studies document the benefits that access to great quality parklands can provide.

I have a terrible case of the man flu and the lozenge I was just handed by the attendant was very valuable. That is why we should all be so grateful for the incredible attendants who serve this place and us so faithfully and well. Tree canopy is important because there is a well-documented phenomenon known as the urban heat island effect. The urban heat island effect can literally mean the difference of several degrees of temperature, making some parts of Sydney, particularly western Sydney, unbearable in the heat of summer. The answer is to provide shade trees that can let through light in the winter months, but provide shading in the summer months, like a process of natural air conditioning to cool our streets to make them more inviting and safer because more people will be out on them, to make them more accessible and to get people outside relating to one another.

We have a vision of creating outdoor living rooms across Sydney so that more people can get outdoors and enjoy easy access to fantastic spaces wherever they live in this great city and this great State. One of the things that concerns me about some of the debates around urban planning is that we are being encouraged to follow urban typologies that are focused on indoor living when the one thing that people love about Sydney is that it is an outdoor city. The weather and the environment want us to be outdoors, but we need that shade and we need parks that are usable, accessible and safe. In this budget alone \$19 million is devoted to improving existing government-owned land, including \$9 million to improve open space in Frenchs Forest with new green connections linking the local community to nearby bushland corridors. That is very important because some important strategic work is going into determining a new town centre for Frenchs Forest, recognising that it is a strategic centre on the northern beaches that provides a massive opportunity for new jobs and new homes centred around a new hospital centrally located in that part of the northern beaches.

Mr Assistant Speaker, you will be pleased to know, because it is not far from you, that \$6 million has been provided in the budget to upgrade facilities at Kempt Field in Hurstville with a new running track or a new playground, depending on consultation with the locals. I understand, Mr Assistant Speaker, that you played on Kempt Field as a youngster, which, of course, you still are. Also, \$4 million has been provided to improve open space at Withers Road in Beaumont Hills, which is one of the burgeoning suburbs of Sydney's north-west. Improvements could include new playgrounds, new nature trails and shared pathways between Smalls Creek and Caddies Creek. Another \$30 million will be used to upgrade open space in Appin, Ermington, Fairfield, Leppington and Penrith, and \$75 million of recently announced funding will be used to buy new land across the State to be converted for public use.

In really exciting news, funding has been set aside to continue building inclusive playgrounds across New South Wales through the Government's Everyone Can Play initiative. We have delivered some of these playgrounds recently in Hornsby. I know that the member for Hornsby, and Minister for Energy and Environment, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Cabinet, the member for Ku-ring-gai, were very excited about the opening of new inclusive playgrounds in Hornsby; in the Premier's electorate of Willoughby; in Lane Cove, in the electorate of the Minister for Counterterrorism and Corrections; and also in the electorate of the member for Wagga Wagga, with 30 more inclusive playgrounds to be delivered in conjunction with local councils.

I have already referred to the urban heat island effect. We are committed to planting more and more trees to boost Sydney's urban tree canopy because we recognise that not only is it an important part of our response to climate change and to adapting to changes in our climate but also it makes really good sense anyway in amenity benefits, and in making our communities more accessible and more attractive. I now turn to my community of which I am immensely proud, the electorate and the people of Pittwater. This budget delivers in spades for the people of Pittwater. In capital projects alone we are talking about almost \$45 million in this year's budget for a series of major works. The really big project to talk about is the Mona Vale Road project. Mona Vale Road is a

critical connection for my community. It has been associated, tragically, with many serious accidents. [*Extension of time*]

As I was saying, Mona Vale Road is a very important artery for my community; it is an important way for people to access jobs. The nearest university for the people of Pittwater is at Macquarie. Macquarie Park is obviously an important CBD for the beaches community, and an important artery for people visiting the beaches on summer weekends and in holiday periods from across this great city. The ultimate project on the eastern section of Mona Vale Road connecting it up to Ingleside is a \$140 million project, which is well underway. It includes additional climbing and descending lanes, wider shoulders, a median separation, fauna connectivity improvements and a heavy vehicle arrester bed. Due to concerns raised by the community it has been important to ensure that fauna fences have been erected across the active worksite to ensure that native animals are not struck by vehicles and that the vehicles themselves are protected from collision. I thank the Northern Beaches Roadkill Prevention Committee for its incredible work in protecting our beautiful native wildlife, which is so much a part of the Pittwater community and the Pittwater experience.

Beyond Mona Vale Road is a series of other important transport improvements. We are continuing to see some very exciting expansions of our cycle and pedestrian networks across Pittwater. Together with Northern Beaches Council we are funding a grand vision of a walkway and cycleway linking Barrenjoey headland in the north with North Head in the south. Part of this budget will go towards achieving that vision, with a shared path along the northern side of Gladstone Street from Barrenjoey Road to Kalinya Street and along the western side of Kalinya Street from Gladstone Street to midway along Kalinya Street in Newport, again providing important connections east-west along that broader north-south cycleway and pedestrian walkway.

We are also seeing significant investment in Pittwater's boating community. Pittwater is one of the largest, if not the largest, recreational port in the country. Our wharves on Scotland Island and elsewhere on the western foreshores are an important part of local transport connections, but also add to the character of the area. This budget will ensure that funding continues to go to these important wharves and boating facilities.

The schools in Pittwater are big winners from the budget. There are significant major capital projects in schools right across my community. Mona Vale Public School is getting a brand-new purpose-built performance space, but also a significant school upgrade. I note the incredible leadership of Greg Jones at Mona Vale Public School. He is a former student and teacher, and is now principal of Mona Vale Public School. He is an incredible educator, a great leader and a man of very strong views, of very clear views who has left a legacy of strong leaders in his wake at Mona Vale Public School. He has announced his retirement and the Pittwater community wishes him the very best.

Construction has begun on a new community performance space at the Barrenjoey High School, which was designed by local architect Richard Cole and strongly supported by the school community, including Kalinda Hawson, the indefatigable Avalon local, and Ian Bowsher who has been a transformational principal who has been at Avalon for more than a decade. I note the great work that principal Natalie Baldi does at Newport Public School and the investment into a new fence at that school community. Ryan Shepheard and Dane Ropa share the Narrabeen Education Precinct, which is getting a big investment as announced in the budget to ensure that those schools meet the needs of a growing community.

I note the great work of Jason Ramsay, the Minister of the Newport Anglican Church, which is getting investment for new access ways and solar panels to make sure the church is sustainable and can meet the needs of its congregation. Jason does an incredible job serving his flock and the wider community in Newport. Rob Emerson is the President of the Newport Surf Life Saving Club. Architect Rudi Valla has done an incredible job reimagining that beautiful heritage building and iconic surf club at Newport. A significant grant has been made towards the design work required to reimagine the club and protect its heritage. It is beautifully located at Bert Payne Reserve, Newport.

A massive investment between council and the State Government of more than \$5 million has been made into Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club. Bryce Munro, local plumber extraordinaire, a great man and great leader, has been a visionary president at that club. I note Ralph Stinel who has chaired the building committee and made sure that the club can be a reality, again through investment by the New South Wales Government. I am grateful on behalf of my community for their support.

This budget is providing a massive investment of an additional million \$6 on top of an additional \$10 million into Mona Vale Hospital. Mona Vale Hospital is a critical part of health infrastructure on the wider northern beaches. It is the identified centre of excellence for subacute medical services on the wider northern beaches and fulfils an important acute function with the operation of the urgent care centre to cater for local emergencies down the northern end of the peninsular. The additional funding will ensure the campus plan identified in the 2013 health services plan will be realised.

It is exciting that through hard work, dedication and advocacy by the local community a hospital that at one stage had very little sense of any future whatsoever then saw a health services plan, a clinical services plan, that saw a potential hospital of 66 beds is now a hospital of 90 beds with more investment to be announced. There will be a new ambulance station to ensure that ambulances are even closer to the community they serve. That additional \$16 million investment on top of what has already been invested in Mona Vale Hospital will continue its transformation so that it can continue to serve the needs of the community over the next 50 years, as it so proudly served its community over the previous 50 years.

All in all it has been an incredible budget for the community of Pittwater and an incredible budget for the people of New South Wales. As Winston Churchill once said, "This is not the end. This is not even the beginning of the end. This is merely the end of the beginning." There is so much more to do in building a just, a sustainable and a productive New South Wales for everyone. This budget is a huge part of ensuring that bright future for all of us in New South Wales and I commend it to the House.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:14):** I will speak to the budget in the context of education and especially education in my electorate. The previous speaker said, "This is the beginning" and I agree, but unfortunately there is still far to go in education and especially public education in New South Wales. The Gonski framework is an amazing Labor initiative. It is a needs-based funding model that ensures equity for kids in school. It is cross-sectoral and best for the public system where we have the largest number of disadvantaged students and high-complex needs students in a low socio-economic environment. The kids in the public system and the communities who go to schools in our public system benefit greatly from this. That is where I worked before I came into this place.

Labor took to the election a commitment to reach 100 per cent funding for Gonski. Unfortunately, because of the Liberals' Federal colleagues there are massive gaps in the community. This Government is seeking to try to make up some of those gaps, but it is a shame when your Federal counterparts are missing out. The college my school was a part of was going to miss out on \$1.2 million worth of funding, which totals over \$2 million. Kariong Public School would miss out on over half a million dollars' worth of funding and Narara Valley High School \$1.1 million of funding over the next three years. Umina Public School would miss out on \$780,000 worth of funding and Ettalong public school \$690,000 worth of funding. These schools are amazing schools.

Going to the graduation ceremony at Ettalong Public School I see kids win book awards. The principal, with incredible dignity, gives them to the kids. But you know in the background these kids are ineligible for book awards because the school is in such a low socio-economic area that the kids do not have access at home and the school has made this resource available to the students. This needs-based funding model is important to get a level of equity in public education in New South Wales, rather than push it back onto teachers with the outcome-based model that the Government is asking for.

We know that teachers are up to their eyeballs in administrative work. My partner has just moved through TAFE as a shipwright. TAFE shipwrights folded under this current Government. He has retrained as a high school teacher. He is leaving home at 6.30 in the morning and coming home after six o'clock at night with his workload as a new engineering teacher. The school he is teaching at is crying out for an engineering teacher, even though he does not have great experience in this sector, because we do not have enough engineering teachers across the system. All the while the Government is sprouting about the capacity of science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] and the importance of improvements in STEM.

In my electorate we have a beautiful school, a Bump It Up school, which is really willing to participate in the Bump It Up strategy. Unfortunately, the staff have not received sufficient training or the resources they were promised. They are working hard over and above their workload, with no additional resources, to achieve the outcomes. But they really do not have much of an idea of what is required and they have expressed to me feelings of isolation and feeling professionally lost in trying to achieve this for their kids. This adds to the already overwhelming anxiety about teacher workload, not just at this school but also across teaching communities in New South Wales.

Extremely experienced teachers, not just at this Bump It Up school but also at my old school, are telling me that extremely experienced teachers are being left behind in their workload, which means they are questioning themselves and feeling terrible for their less experienced colleagues who they know must be finding it even more challenging. This Bump It Up school is particularly concerned about the requirement to do one-on-one testing, which leaves the other kids unsupervised while testing and monitoring evaluation goes on. Because it is a Bump It Up school it throws teaching and learning, and all the other requirements, out the window.

Another concern is asset management. Schools in my electorate, and I am sure in other electorates, are falling apart. Local Schools, Local Decisions has removed the authority of principals to engage contractors to fix

immediate problems. One school in my electorate has cracks across the verandah that parents could fix with grace and ease. After the asset management unit finally goes to the school to assess the issue, the work is often done at great expense and poorly, requiring a whole bunch of follow-up attempts by overpriced contractors. Schools in my electorate have experienced contractors arriving at very short notice to undertake work the school had no knowledge of and then demanding that large areas of the school be shut down while the work takes place. This is usually unworkable and puts horrible pressures and extreme stress on the principal and executive staff as they try to work out operationally how to reorder rooms and timetables, let alone where to put displaced classes. Due to these changes, teachers must reorganise lessons and programs and pick up the pieces later.

I have one horrific example. Workmen came to repair a school library roof. They took the roof off and stood and watched as storm clouds came over. They made zero attempt to place tarpaulins over the roof space. They watched the storm arrive and the rain cascade down on the books and computers and carpet. The department is left to pick up the pieces of this disastrous reparation work that is going on in our schools. What sort of confusion and chaos in resource allocation does that create when workers with low-level skills are doing repairs in our schools? Another concern is the Department of Education digital systems, which are not working all that well and have not been communicated clearly or expertly. Principals are tearing their hair out trying to use the non-flexible budget system, which reflects the training they have received on this system. Principals have been told that they are breaching current practices when all they have done is follow the specific training instructions. I also mention the seriously defective SAP system, which sees large numbers of teachers unpaid and underpaid and waiting months for correct payments and back payments.

I raise the concern about the pay anomaly for teachers who began teaching in 2013 to 2015. They are still on a progressive pay system, which means they are being paid about \$8,000 a year less than teachers who began teaching in 2016 to 2019. It hardly seems fair and is a gross inequality when they have more experience. The Government has refused to fix this anomaly despite the federation's attempts. I also point out the casualisation of school counsellors and the contract work that has been forced upon them. They are paid \$19 less per day than other teachers because they are not deemed specialist teachers. These two pay anomalies are causing serious grief for the teachers involved. Although they perform the same work as their peers, they are financially disadvantaged as a result of decisions made by this Government. I also mention that, shamefully, schools in my local community have to seek charity funding to run programs to help their students.

Sadly, by the end of today six men will have taken their own lives across Australia. The suicide rate of young men is increasing, and we are seeing that on the Central Coast. The Top Blokes program, which started in Sydney, is now operating on the coast. We would love the program to be funded through Gonski funding in all of the schools across the Gosford electorate, especially in disadvantaged schools where the family structures include young men living with single-parent families or not living with parents at all. The Top Blokes guys form great relationships with the kids. I refer to a great story about young Sam, who is at a school in my electorate and who was one of the first participants. Sam was having trouble at school and ended up in a Top Blokes workshop. Sam said:

Sometimes I would struggle with feeling sad because I was having trouble with my friends ... finding it hard to focus and work in class.

Sam said he did not know how to speak up and was feeling insecure about doing so anyway. He was at the age when boys begin to feel that vulnerability is a weakness. Sam then took part in the Stepping Up program with Top Blokes. He is now better able to understand his behaviour and how it impacts on others. In the course he learnt to be respectfully and talk respectfully to other people and his teachers. It helped him to understand that although he may be joking around other people might take him seriously. Now he is getting on with his life. I thank Bendigo Bank and Rotary in my community for their assistance but there should be fair education funding—not outcomes-based funding but needs-based funding—so that these programs can be provided to kids from disadvantaged backgrounds and in socio-economically disadvantaged schools.

I feel that the Liberals are corporatising education. In the budget handed down this week the Government is imposing cuts on every school and forcing principals to justify every dollar they receive from the Government. This is not an argument about supposed backroom cuts or efficiency dividends in the public service. This is an attack on every school and every teacher. Principals are made out to be the baddies. They have to go hat in hand to beg for morsels of funding from the Government. Since I was elected two years ago schools in electorates across the Central Coast have had zero upgrades—except for two in the Terrigal electorate, which the Government has bragged about ever since. Education is so much more than the sum of the budget. Public education is very important. As a kid who survived Toronto High School I am proud to be here in the Parliament of New South Wales. Education is about people and the experience.

If the Liberals were the economic managers that they so enthusiastically tell everyone they are, they would know that a well-educated population is at the heart of a strong economy. The more education someone

receives the more they are able to contribute. They will have better job prospects, be more productive and be less likely to rely on government support. Every cut means that a child misses out and every diverted dollar is a dollar that will have to be spent down the line—in poorer health outcomes, in welfare payments or in police and corrections expenditures. Education is a debt-preventative measure and we need to make sure it is funded properly now so that we have a better society in the future.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Bills*

**APPROPRIATION BILL 2019**

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2019**

**Returned**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

**STATE REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019**

**Returned**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I direct that the Legislative Council amendments to the bill be taken into consideration forthwith.

**Consideration in Detail**

**Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.**

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 20 June 2019.*

No. 1 **GRN No. 2 [c2019-024]**

Page 1, Long title. Omit "to reduce extended leave entitlements for certain public sector employees and".

No. 2 **GRN No. 1 [c2019-024]**

Pages 12 and 13, Schedule 4, line 1 on page 12 to line 24 on page 13. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 3 **OPP No. 1 [c2019-026]**

Pages 14–18, Schedule 5, line 1 on page 14 to line 18 on page 18. Omit all words on those lines.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (21:28):** On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I move:

That Legislative Council amendments Nos 1 and 2 be agreed to.

I reluctantly move this motion. It is important to note that the Government, for a number of reasons, wants to ensure that the appropriation bills and the State Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill passes through the Parliament. In relation to the Legislative Council amendments Nos 1 and 2, I reiterate to the House why the Government sought to make amendments to reducing extended leave entitlements. Currently New South Wales public servants accrue two months of long service leave for the first 10 years of service and five months of leave for each subsequent 10 years of service.

New South Wales public service leave entitlements are the highest of any State or Territory—higher than Victoria, Queensland and the Parliament of the Commonwealth. These long service leave entitlements are more than double the entitlement given in the private sector, which I understand is two months. In fact, the long service leave entitlements in New South Wales are 66 per cent greater than in Victoria. We are trying to bring back long service leave entitlements in New South Wales to the standard of the rest of the country, which we believe is fair and rational. That is why we sought to bring this forward in the upper House. Obviously, the upper House has sought to amend this provision. On the basis of what I have said, the Government will reluctantly agree to these amendments.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Legislative Council amendments Nos 1 and 2 be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (21:30):** On behalf of Mr Dominic Perrottet: I move:

That Legislative Council amendment No. 3 be agreed to.

I very reluctantly move this motion. I note that not many members of the Opposition are in the Chamber this evening but I point out that tonight the Labor Party voted to retain the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS]. The Government made very clear that our intention is to integrate our public transport and road agency functions. I would have thought that those opposite might have thought that was a sensible idea. The next time an Opposition member writes to me about the problems with RMS, those opposite should remember that the Labor Party moved an amendment in the upper House that does nothing other than retain the Roads and Maritime Services. What an achievement. There was a debate in the other place in relation to job losses and the like and some assurances were given, but with the passage of this amendment the Government is potentially going to have to consider other ways to achieve this integration. I thank The Greens for acknowledging the importance of integrating the RMS with Transport for NSW. There is no point in building a road in one place and a rail line in another place without being able to integrate the plan for the whole arrangement. If those opposite want to continue to support the operation of the RMS as a silo that is well away from public transport—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You lost, just admit it.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** You might lose yet and that is going to be very good to watch. The reality is that members of the Labor Party have voted to retain what was formerly the Roads and Traffic Authority and is now the RMS and leave it to operate in a silo. The Government has sought to give assurances to the union movement, through legal advice and the like, and The Greens have acknowledged these assurances in the numerous meetings. The union movement made out there had been no meetings but, for goodness sake, there were eight meetings in which this was spelt out. I have a clear message for Labor members: You want to retain the Roads and Maritime Services and not integrate RMS into public transport. We believe the integration is eminently sensible and in the community interest.

We have given a very clear undertaking that we are going to grow jobs in Transport for NSW with the merging of RMS and Transport for NSW in the bush, which will mean more jobs based in the regions to support our transport network. We have given the undertaking that this is not about job cuts; it is about jobs growth for Transport for NSW in regional areas. That undertaking has been lost on the Opposition. Members of the Labor Party appear to be anti jobs in the bush. They want to keep in place all the challenges and all the problems in relation to RMS.

The reason this legislation in relation to the integration of Transport for NSW and the RMS is before the Parliament is to ensure that we can transfer the assets, including transferring freeways, from the RMS to Transport for NSW. We want to ensure that we have absolute clarity about everything from land acquisitions to the purposes of infrastructure builds, which sit under the Roads Act. We want to ensure that industry has very clear procurement processes when it comes to the \$50 billion-plus of investment that we are making across the State. The move tonight by the Labor Party is about creating uncertainty. We also want to ensure the benefits of immunity under the Roads Act are in place for the transfer of assets.

We can revisit this legislation and then I will give due consideration to this amalgamation, specifically in relation to the RMS. I am not going to hold up the bill on that basis, and that is why the Government will reluctantly agree to this amendment. I want to make the point again that every member of the Labor Party and its caucus have made clear on the record tonight their ongoing support for the Roads and Maritime Services to take a silo-based approach to the delivery of roads separate from Transport for NSW. It would be eminently sensible to integrate these two agencies. The Greens in the other place had the good sense to acknowledge that it would be sensible and I acknowledge Mr David Shoebridge for his support.

**Mr Jamie Parker:** We support the integration.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Exactly, and I acknowledge the member for Balmain for his support. It makes sense but members of the Labor Party failed to do that in the debate in the other place. They stand condemned for doing so. As I said, the Government will reluctantly agree to this amendment.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (21:35):** I acknowledge and celebrate with joy the Minister's concession to agree to this upper House amendment. I note the extraordinarily marked bad temper with which he has done so. He should perhaps understand that he does not always win every debate. I suggest that he get used to it.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: My temperament is well outside the leave of the amendment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Legislative Council amendment No. 3 be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Budget***BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2019-2020**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (21:37):** My, oh my, what a red letter day it was for the Northern Tablelands when the budget of all budgets was delivered. It gives me great pleasure to make a contribution to this take-note debate on the 2019-2020 New South Wales budget. For the Northern Tablelands the Government has committed to a record spend with over \$304.3 million of capital expenditure in the next financial year.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Where at?

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** I note the interjection from the member for Cessnock. If he listens to my contribution, I will tell him where every cent of that money is going in the Northern Tablelands. In response to his question, the Government has committed record expenditure for the Northern Tablelands.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Biggest ever?

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** It is the biggest ever. Last year the communities of the Northern Tablelands thought they had struck gold when they secured \$259 million of capital spending. As the local member I thought that would be the high-water mark, but I am not too proud to say I got it wrong. This budget has delivered even more bounty for the people of the Northern Tablelands. I can tell every member of this House that the people of the Northern Tablelands deserve every single cent of the \$304 million. I will campaign over the next 12 months to ensure that this is just the beginning and that they get even more in the next budget.

Turning to the details of this budget for the people of the Northern Tablelands—whether it is for hospitals, roads, schools or water infrastructure—this expenditure is unprecedented. It is, as I said, record breaking. From our largest town to our smallest villages in the Northern Tablelands this budget will fund projects that will build and renew infrastructure, provide new and enhanced services and make life easier for the residents of our region who are experiencing the most difficult and traumatic drought conditions that have ever been experienced in the history of our region. The New South Wales Department of Primary Industries Combined Drought Indicator shows the areas that are in the intense drought category covers virtually the entirety of the 60,000-odd square kilometres of the Northern Tablelands electorate.

The silver lining, if I can put it that way, for the electorate is that this budget delivers the money we need to improve our hospitals, to invest in our schools, to secure critical water infrastructure, to droughtproof our communities by making them more resilient to the impacts of drought, to invest in roads around the electorate, to build critical community facilities, to upgrade youth resources and to support agricultural research which is important, particularly at the more than 100-year-old Glen Innes Agricultural Research and Advisory Station. Next week I am taking the Deputy Premier to a wonderful shearing school there that is run by the Department of Primary Industries in conjunction with TAFE NSW and three local high schools. An intensive three-day course is held there for students to learn how to shear. Hopefully their experience will be the beginning of a very successful career for students in the sheep industry as shearers. The budget also provides funding to improve local police stations. I will refer to the Inverell Police Station in more detail later.

A record investment of over \$304 million does not happen by accident; it is as a result of proactive local councils. I am incredibly blessed, as are the communities of the Northern Tablelands, to have some wonderfully proactive and community-driven local councils that work in partnership with their communities. It could be an individual council or several councils or a number of community organisations, but the key to success in the Northern Tablelands is partnership. When there is a true partnership between the community, local councils and local members of Parliament, at a State or Federal level, we can kick so many goals and achieve so many things. It is due to proactive councils and the champions of the community working together and being persistent in lobbying government for their fair share that projects are able to be delivered, as has been reflected in the budget papers that were handed down on Tuesday. That is the key to securing investment to developing projects that enhance our region to make the Northern Tablelands and, more broadly, country New South Wales truly the best place in which to live, work, raise a family, invest and play.

As I said at the outset, I do not take credit for this result. The credit belongs to the community that collectively earned every single cent that the State budget is providing. Some of the key projects that will be funded in the Northern Tablelands include an additional \$19.8 million to the \$30 million for stage one of the Inverell Hospital redevelopment. That will be followed by stage two, which will also be a \$30 million redevelopment. A total \$60 million will take what is quite an antiquated—and I am being generous—health facility, parts of which were built 60 or 70 years ago for a different time of delivering health care. The Inverell

community has grown so much since then and has virtually doubled in size. That crucial project has been lobbied for by the community for many years.

Recently the community had the pleasure to host the health Minister, Brad Hazzard. It was the first time he has seen the hospital redevelopment since the first sod was turned in October last year. I was so pleased that Bob Bensley was present. Bob is Mr Inverell Hospital. He is a gentleman who has been campaigning for the redevelopment of that hospital for nigh on four decades. I recall vividly upon being elected to this place as the member for Northern Tablelands in 2013 that one of my first meetings was with Mr Bensley. When he came into my office he was carrying a swathe of papers and scrapbooks. He had kept newspaper clippings and copies of *Hansard* going back many decades. He had been at the forefront of a campaign to get a brand-new hospital for the Inverell community.

It was fitting that Mr Bensley was there to welcome Minister Hazzard to the Inverell Hospital redevelopment site and wonderful for him to talk the Minister through every aspect of that redevelopment. It is fair to say that Bob Bensley knows more about the development than Health Infrastructure and the Hunter New England Health District combined. He could fill in the gaps when the staff who were escorting the Minister missed a little bit of detail in the redevelopment. I pay tribute to Bob whose advocacy has been crucial in galvanising the support of Inverell Shire Council and the Inverell community to achieve this result. The Inverell Hospital redevelopment is a perfect example of what I talked about earlier—it took a whole-of-community effort. It was not my idea or my drive that got this project across the line; it was the work of Bob Bensley, Inverell Shire Council and people like Di Baker, the chair of Operation Operating Room Ltd, which is essentially the hospital auxiliary equivalent for Inverell Hospital.

Operation Operating Room has raised almost \$200,000 over the years for equipment for the hospital and to make patients' stay more comfortable. It is not my intention to do that organisation out of a job with the new hospital. I am sure it will have plenty more projects to which to dedicate its funds that it works so hard to raise. It is because of its efforts, the efforts of people like Bob Bensley and the leadership shown by Inverell Shire Council—Mayor Paul Harmon, Deputy Mayor Anthony Michael, General Manager Paul Henry and their predecessors—over many years that we were able to achieve such a wonderful result.

While I am talking about Inverell Hospital I also want to pay tribute to my predecessor, Richard Torbay. When he was not a member of this House, a member of the National Party or a member of the Government he served the people of Northern Tablelands for 14 years and also fought very hard for this project. In anything in life, when you achieve a great result you often do so because you stand upon the shoulders of those who came before you. Whilst Richard was not the local member when we achieved this result together as a community, he certainly worked very hard to advocate for this project while he was the local member.

It is important to acknowledge that because he put in a lot of effort with the community, particularly in circulating petitions and having debates in this very Chamber. That project is crucial, not only for Inverell but also for the entire health network across the Northern Tablelands. It comes on the back of the recent completion of the \$60 million redevelopment of the Armidale Rural Referral Hospital, a project that the community fought hard for. At times it had to fight not just the Treasury or various health Ministers to access those funds but also the bureaucracy—I speak of Hunter New England Health, which has been incredibly supportive of the project of late but that was not always the case. The community had to work hard to convince not only the Government but also the Hunter New England Local Health District that the project was worth investing in. It is a wonderful new facility.

Inverell Hospital is well underway. With the funding injection from Tuesday's State budget, stage one of the project will be completed in October next year. Before then tenders should be called for stage two and we should roll on with construction seamlessly. For the benefit of the House, the \$30 million stage one involves building a brand-new hospital at the rear of the existing Inverell Hospital that connects with the old structure. Stage two is the gutting, repurposing and refurbishing of the old hospital building and bringing in all the outpatient, ambulatory care, dental and GP clinic services. That means that instead of having a fragmented health delivery service in Inverell, where bits and pieces are scattered all over the community, every primary and allied health service and outpatient service will be delivered under one roof at a completely redeveloped Inverell Hospital at a cost of \$60 million. It has happened because of a tremendous effort by everyone. I cannot thank the Inverell community enough for signing petitions, turning up to meetings and putting their shoulder to the wheel to make that happen. I am incredibly proud of the project but I do not take credit for even a moment because the community deserves it.

Another project crucial to the people of the Northern Tablelands, which is funded as part of the record spend in the budget, is the continued investment in improving the Newell Highway, which is the spine of country New South Wales—if only those opposite understood where country New South Wales is. Hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of produce travels along that highway, which spans the full length of the State, north to south.

Another \$54.292 million is allocated for the critical replacement of 18 kilometres of the Newell Highway from Mungle Back Creek to Boggabilla to the north of Moree. It is a treacherous section of the Newell Highway. Not only will the highway get new bitumen and a wider road pavement and become smoother and safer, but it will also get a couple of new overtaking lanes, which are absolutely crucial. They will be in addition to five overtaking lanes in the Moree Plains Shire section of the Newell Highway. That project is a wonderful partnership between the State Government and the Federal Government.

I extend an invitation to all members of this House. Should they wish to discover the delights of Boggabilla or Mungle Back Creek, I am happy to escort them in my vehicle; it will be an experience that the members will not forget. That project is crucial for people who use the highway locally and interstate—truckies and the freight industry in general. As I said, it is a magnificent partnership between the State and Federal governments. I acknowledge my Federal colleague Mark Colton, the member for Parkes, who is an outstanding representative of an electorate that covers exactly 50 per cent of the area of New South Wales. He does a magnificent job. It has been a pleasure to work with him because without the Federal Government's injection of funds, the project would not be possible. A total of \$54 million is going to that project to upgrade roads. It is a part of over \$85 million worth of investment and new funding just into road and bridge infrastructure in the Northern Tablelands. It is also a record. Last year's high-water mark for roads investment in the Northern Tablelands was a little over \$60 million; this year it is \$85 million. That is just one component of the record \$304.3 million investment across the electorate.

I refer to another investment in Inverell that this budget delivers: the building of a brand-new police station. It is a \$9 million project. This budget allocates \$3.96 million to get cracking on that construction in September this year. The new Minister for Police has assured me that tenders will be called for in September and construction will begin in December this year. The people of Inverell, particularly the local police, cannot wait for the project to start. The old station was built in the 1960s for a complement of only 12 officers. Today more than 50 police officers work out of the same station, keeping the community safe on a 24/7 basis. Chief Inspector Rowan O'Brien and his crew do a magnificent job of keeping everyone safe. I also acknowledge all the officers at Inverell police station. The 24-hour station is vital to keeping the community safe as it continues to grow. The Government will invest heavily in it.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Announcements*

#### **BRIGID O'BRYAN**

**The SPEAKER:** Today is Brigid O'Bryan's final parliamentary sitting day in this place. Brigid started in the speaker's Office in 2015 under Minister and former Speaker Shelley Hancock. She kindly agreed to stay on in my office to help facilitate a smooth transition. She has been an invaluable source of knowledge and wisdom both for Minister and former Speaker Hancock, and for me and my team as I have observed over the past couple of months. She is intelligent, dedicated and delightful to work with. I sincerely thank Brigid for her years of service to not only the Speaker's office, but also this Parliament. I am sure the House will join me in wishing her all the best in her future endeavours.

#### *Bills*

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

#### **Messages**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it does not insist on its amendment No. 34 disagreed with by the Legislative Assembly and agrees to amendment No. 1 proposed by the Legislative Assembly.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:00 until  
Tuesday 30 July 2019 at 12:00.**