



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 30 July 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 30 July 2019

The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea) took the chair at 12:00.

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the Chamber students from St Patrick's College for Girls Campbelltown, who are guests of the member for Campbelltown.

Private Members' Statements

WALLACIA GOLF CLUB CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (12:14): For the people of Wallacia, the past year has been one of uncertainty and fear as a proposal for a cemetery at the Wallacia Golf Club has threatened to destroy their entire village. The proposal by the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust [CMCT] would have halved the Wallacia golf course to make room for a 42-hectare cemetery. Since it was first put forward, the proposal has been met with absolute opposition from the community, the Wallacia Progress Association, Penrith City Council and me. Despite my attempts to work with the CMCT to identify alternatives, the trust continued to pursue its plans for a cemetery at Wallacia. Its proposal would utterly destroy the village character and community of Wallacia, which is a small, very close-knit township—a village—on the outskirts of the Penrith City Council local government area. It would turn the only public recreational space into a cemetery—in direct contravention of the New South Wales Government's Local Character and Place Guideline.

For the past 12 months the people of Wallacia have been fighting this proposal that would have decimated the heart of Wallacia. Going into the election in March, I made my position emphatically clear: Wallacia Golf Club had to be protected. In March, before the election, I was pleased to welcome the announcement that the Premier had commissioned the Greater Sydney Commission to conduct a strategic project to provide a citywide review of current and future cemetery and crematoria needs, which would provide clarity on the characteristics of land that was suitable and not suitable for the burial needs of our communities. It is envisaged that the review will ensure that cemeteries and crematoria are developed in appropriate locations, following community consultation and evidence. Wallacia Golf Club is not one of those locations.

It has been a long and difficult fight over the past year for the people of Wallacia, but their tireless advocacy has prevailed. Two weeks ago we welcomed the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] recommendation to reject the proposal for a cemetery at Wallacia Golf Club. Together we have fought to ensure that Wallacia Golf Club and the whole town of Wallacia is protected. I thank the entire Wallacia community for its patience over this year, for fighting and for believing that together we could stop the proposal and save our community. At times, it felt like a David and Goliath fight, but the community never stopped fighting to save the Wallacia Golf Club and together we have won.

I congratulate the Wallacia Progress Association on its tireless advocacy on behalf of the Wallacia community. In particular I thank Ellena Jee-MacLennan, who, as former president of the Wallacia Progress Association, first began raising a concern within her local community and making people aware of what was planned. I thank current president Jane McLuckie and committee members Darrell Bell, Debra Jeffree, Margaret Stepniewski and Ned McGovern. I also thank Penrith City Council Mayor Ross Fowler and Councillor Bernard Bratusa for their advocacy for the people of Wallacia and the wider community of Penrith. I make special mention of the late Wallacia newsagent Andrew Gouriotis, who fought for this result over the past year but passed away just one week prior to the announcement. My thoughts and prayers go to his family and friends during this time. Vale, Andrew Gouriotis.

I thank the people of Wallacia for all their hard work, determination, passion and persistence to make sure that the Independent Planning Commission heard their voice loud and clear. Now the Greater Sydney Commission will complete its strategic review of current and future cemetery and crematoria needs for western

Sydney. The IPC has approved the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust's planning proposal to build a 36,000-plot cemetery at Varroville. Whilst this is not the end of the fight for Wallacia Golf Club, the IPC's decision will ensure that Wallacia Golf Club will not become a cemetery. I thank the people of Wallacia. We have won together. This particular piece of land was provided to Wallacia Golf Club members more than 60 years ago via a debentures payment. It took club members close to 20 years to pay the Fowler family so that the land could move from the family's private ownership into the ownership of the members of the golf club. To ensure that this fight has been won, we now have a chance to ensure that the land will be protected for the people of Wallacia as was intended at the beginning of its history.

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE FOR GIRLS, CAMPBELLTOWN

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:19): When we reflect on World War I and World War II we often cast our minds back to the soldiers, sailors and airmen who bravely sacrificed their lives defending our great nation. However, there is another aspect of those wars that we do not regularly acknowledge and in June this year an exhibition by the history club of the St Patrick's College for girls in Campbelltown did just that by paying homage to local nurses who served in the various wars. I acknowledge the many history club members who hosted the event and who are present in the gallery today. From the moment that the other guests and I walked through the school's front door, we were greeted by students dressed in historical uniforms as a tribute to the local nurses. It was not the first time they had donned their outfits; they also dressed up during Anzac Day commemorations earlier this year.

Nurses who served in World War I, including Sister Eleanor Dagma Gjedsted, Sister Ida May Graham, Sister Clarice Elizabeth Green, Sister Elizabeth McRae, Sister Dora Ohlfsen-Bagge and Sister Elizabeth Chisholm Thomson, were represented by students Bronwyn Zapirain, Laura Zapirain, Olivia Hind, Molly Quinnell, Olivia Mason and Eve McGillicuddy respectively. Nursing Sister Ruth Allardyce Steel was represented by two students—Abbey Clancy and Eliza Percy. Aimee Claydon and Alessandra Rullo, a year 3 student from St Peter's Anglican Primary School, also dressed up as Red Cross nurses who served in World War I. World War II nurses Sister Helen Haultain and Sister Nea Hildred were represented by Tess McEvoy-King and Emeline Latu, and Chantelle Gordon was dressed as a nurse from the Vietnam War era. The students' effort and attention to detail was impeccable. It was obvious that a lot of time and thought had gone into the designs. Credit for that must go to all the students, but particularly Lucette Zapirain. I commend Fran Musico-Rullo for her role as organiser.

One of the local nurses represented in the history club's exhibition was Sister Eleanor Dagma Gjedsted, who was born in Campbelltown in 1981 to Edward and Eleanor. Her decision to enlist was particularly timely as it was the day after the Gallipoli landings. After enlisting in the Australian Army Nursing Service, Sister Eleanor was assigned to the No. 1 Australian General hospitals in Egypt and London. She then joined the No. 3 Australian Casualty Clearing Station in France. The horror and devastation of the action on the frontline is often talked about. Undoubtedly, Sister Eleanor was not immune to the carnage that she experienced during the Great War. She would have been completely exposed to the brutality of war including gunshots, shrapnel wounds and missing limbs. Her ability and willingness to nurse, care for and treat the wounded soldiers and service personnel during their time of distress would have had a profound impact on those soldiers and their families. I am sure Sister Eleanor's wartime memories never left her until the day she died in 1955, aged 71.

Sister Elizabeth McRae was one of the more documented nurses from World War I. Her journey, duty and life was captured by Jeff McGill, the former editor of the *Campbelltown-Macarthur Advertiser*, who led the successful push to have a street in Minto—her former home town—named after her. It is fitting that Jeff is here today in the gallery. This confronting passage from one of Jeff's yarns in April 2015 sums up the stark reality of Sister Elizabeth's role during the war: "She saw more danger in World War I than some of our male veterans and, as a surgical nurse on the Western Front, was up to her elbows in blood as bombs and gas shells fell around her." This is why the history club at St Patrick's College for girls in Campbelltown is so important. The club was formed in 2017. It encourages our youngest generations to not only learn about but also understand the plight of all our veterans and what they went through. Whether they be soldiers or nurses, airmen or sailors, so many Australians played critical roles during the many wars in our history. Their contribution and dedication should never be taken for granted or forgotten. Well done to the history club for keeping the memory of our veterans alive. Lest we forget.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (12:24): This week is Local Government Week and I wish to highlight the significant contributions local councils make to communities across the State, particularly in my electorate. The Clarence electorate covers the Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley local government areas; each deliver essential and vital services to local residents. I have a wonderful working relationship with both those councils and, in particular, with both the mayors—Councillor Jim Simmons, the mayor of Clarence Valley Council, and Councillor Robert Mustow, the mayor of Richmond Valley Council. We have worked

collaboratively to deliver some wonderful infrastructure projects for both those local government areas and for the communities they serve.

The theme for Local Government Week 2019 is "Your Council": to highlight the achievements, successes and accomplishments of councils beyond roads, rates and rubbish. Across the Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley local government areas, the councils operate and manage 11 public swimming pool complexes, 41 public halls, six public libraries, 1,109 hectares of open space and 3,523 kilometres of roads. With a population of over 74,887 residents across the two local government areas, and a revenue of over \$172 million per year, our local councils could be better described as thriving businesses that serve their communities and deliver essential infrastructure and services on a daily basis.

I am pleased to be part of a government that supports local councils. Since being elected in 2011 funding of over \$9 billion has been awarded to councils for vital infrastructure and services. Some of the important projects that have been delivered across our communities include local road upgrades, new and improved cycle ways, graffiti reduction and eradication programs, animal shelter maintenance and upgrades, heritage grants to protect our important historic buildings and facilities, and waste management—all been done in partnership with local councils for the benefit of our communities. For example, local infrastructure currently being built includes the Grafton Bridge in the Clarence Valley and a \$7 million extension to the livestock exchange in the Richmond Valley. Since being elected in 2011 the New South Wales Government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars across the Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley local government areas. This represents a significant investment for the future of our communities.

By linking more and more transactions to the MyServiceNSW account the Government is working to ensure that it is easy for local residents to do business with councils. The delivery of more digital service options will help people to save time and money. Since its launch in October 2018, 244 pets have been registered via the new online registry across the Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley local government areas, and across New South Wales 12,813 cat and dog owners have utilised the online service. Also, since being added as a convenient new method in November 2018, an additional 1,556 owners now pay their pet registration fees via Service NSW.

We recognise that our councils are more than just roads, rates and rubbish. Councils also play a significant role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our companion animals. That is why the Government reimburses 80 per cent of lifetime registration for animals in local government areas, as well as those registered from eligible shelters. Across the Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley local government areas, under the New South Wales Government's companion animals lifetime registration fees, over \$630,000 million has been allocated to assist councils to fund animal shelters, for ranger services, dog recreation areas, and education and awareness activities across each local government area.

I thank our local mayors and councillors, as well as the more than 750 staff who work across the Clarence Valley and Richmond Valley local government areas, for their ongoing contribution to our local community. I will continue to work with our local mayors, general managers and councillors to secure additional funding for our region and assist our councils to deliver the infrastructure our communities expect and deserve. As we celebrate Local Government Week I sincerely thank those who work for our councils. I acknowledge the work they do each and every day to better our community.

SYDNEY TRANSPORT

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:29): I wish to raise the issue of transport opportunities from the north-west of Sydney to the CBD now that the Sydney Metro has opened and to explain some of the changes to those travel patterns, which are quite complex. The opening of the Sydney Metro has been a huge boon for the whole region. Many thousands of people—far more than expected in the transport planning—have decided they will use the Sydney Metro as their go-to method of transport from the north-west into the city every day. Patronage has therefore exceeded expectations and the Government is ramping up the service more quickly than it expected. That is great news because it takes many cars off the road. I know that because I sometimes travel to Parliament by car and have found it a lot quicker than it used to be

I am sure other people who travel on the M2 because their nature of business means they cannot catch public transport are also enjoying a better run. Whether someone is travelling by train or by road, it is a good thing for the whole region that this other mode of transport is available. It seems the Sydney Metro has been a rip-roaring success in getting cars off the road. As a result of providing a new rail service the Government has had to re-examine and adjust the bus services to match the new travel patterns that are emerging, which it always said it would do. The Government said it would wait a couple of months after the Sydney Metro opened to see what the travel patterns were and what adjustments to bus services were needed and should be made. It is not just a matter of removing buses but rather redeploing buses—moving assets around—so that new areas that did not have a

service can be served. Naturally there has been a reduction in the number of buses that were travelling down that corridor into the CBD, because so many people use the train, but some remain.

The Government gave a commitment that buses travelling to the city would continue to use the M2. That commitment remains but some adjustments have affected people. I want to clarify how those changes are affecting Riverstone residents. Concern has been whipped up by some that it is no longer possible for residents of areas such as Kellyville Ridge or Stanhope Gardens to travel by bus on the T-way to the CBD. The concern is that those people have been left out and that they have to use the Sydney Metro because there is no bus for them anymore. That is not the case.

It is true that it is now necessary for people to change buses. I am talking about the 607X. It used to run from Rouse Hill to the T-way and then onto the M2 and into the city. Now it starts at Bella Vista and runs along the M2 into the city. People who need to get to Bella Vista via the T-way will need to catch a different T-way bus. But the good news is that there are many extra T-way buses. The 665 route has had an increase of 300 weekly services. I think it was formerly called the T65. Some renumbering and renaming of services has also occurred. We have catered for people who prefer to use the bus and that option remains for everybody.

There is now the inconvenience of changing buses but that is the trade-off for providing more services for more people by redeploying buses to areas that did not have services before. Transport services are now operating in new suburbs and new communities that were underserved previously. There is now the capacity for residents from Kellyville Ridge, Stanhope Gardens or The Ponds to use those bus services as well as using a T-way bus and then changing to a bus travelling into the city. We have also looked after them in terms of price.

Recently the Government announced that it reduced the weekly cap on Opal to \$50. That protects those people travelling from the areas I am talking about from any increase in costs. Depending on where they were travelling from most were already at that level or, in some cases, exceeding it. If people are required to change buses or from a bus to a train, they will no longer be out of pocket. The cap of \$50 means that that is all anyone will pay for a week of trips into the city. Commuters who are travelling that significant distance every day appreciate that protection. I will continue to advocate for those who may have been disadvantaged by the changes to see if the Government cannot tweak services a little bit to improve them in some areas. The Government is listening on that front and the Minister wishes to ensure that the service is as good as possible. It is certainly not the case that anybody has been left out. The people in that region still have a choice of catching either a bus or a train to the CBD at \$50 a week.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge in the public gallery the family of the late Mrs Diana Percival. In particular, Drew, Julie, Virginia, Susan and Edmund, guests of the member for Macquarie Fields. I note Diana Percival's late husband Greg Percival, OBE, was a Liberal party member of the Legislative Council during the 1970s and 1980s.

TRIBUTE TO DIANA PERCIVAL

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:34): Sometimes in life the best and most wonderful friendships develop in circumstances that one cannot ever imagine or foresee. My friendship with the late Mrs Diana Percival is one of those special things. In many respects, our lives and upbringing could not have been more different. Diana was born in Worthing, England, the daughter of a prominent physician and migrated to Australia with her family at the age of one. In 1936, Diana's family purchased a property off Sackville Street, Ingleburn, where she enjoyed horseriding, tennis and polo cross. In those days Ingleburn was very much a rural town.

Diana attended Ascham, one of Sydney's most prestigious schools, as a boarder where she excelled in athletics and sport. Diana experienced World War II when she was evacuated from her school because of the threat of bombing. For a period of time she lived with her family on Palm Island where her father practiced his profession. Diana then went on to marry her husband, Greg, in 1951. He was a successful local businessman, long-term alderman and highly respected Mayor of Campbelltown. Greg later became a distinguished member of the Legislative Council. Diana and Greg spent 60 full and wonderful years together before Greg passed away in 2011.

As a recognition of Greg's service to our community the new Ingleburn library and community centre were both named in his honour. These much-loved and valued public assets are places of knowledge and civic engagement. It is appropriate to have them named after a public figure who possessed those personal qualities. Diana raised three children: Virginia, Drew and Susan. They are here in the Chamber. Diana immersed herself in civic life. She became a greatly respected member of our community in her own right through her many groups, organisations and committees.

Later, Diana's family grew and she became a much-loved grandmother and great-grandmother. In comparing Diana's life and upbringing to mine you will find no similarities—and that is without mentioning the almost 50-year age gap between us. How then did Diana and I form a friendship? I am not really sure that I can trace the origin. Perhaps it was seeing Diana down the main street of Ingleburn with her son, Drew, or daughter Virginia. Perhaps it was at a Campbelltown council civic function or perhaps it was through Virginia organising a carpark underneath this building to assist Diana in attending a former member's luncheon. Perhaps it was through her grandson Scott.

At any rate I came to know Diana and grew to love her company and to respect her, because to know Diana Percival was to respect her. She was a lovely lady who was a wonderful host and a great conversationalist with an intelligent, inquiring and inquisitive mind. Late afternoon gin and tonics in Diana's lounge room were always full of laughs and lively conversation. Such occasions were of course preceded with a knock on her door and followed by an announcement, "It's the Labor Party." Politics featured in our conversations ever so lightly and never in a partisan way. Our conversations also roamed from travel to current events, our respective family histories and personal news.

Indeed, one of my greatest joys was introducing Diana to my wife, Anna, and daughter, Audrey. I will never forget Diana's warm embrace of me and my family. My last memory of Diana was visiting her on the Monday before she passed away. While she was clearly unwell she was in fine form. As always our conversation flowed easily and casually, but that is the case for people who value each other's company. I was there perhaps 30 minutes when the lift servicing her bedroom arrived. Out of the lift came her much-loved daughter-in-law, Julie, and great-grandson Archie. Her eyes lit up and her smile beamed and I knew it was time for me to go.

The memory of Diana surrounded by her family—including Virginia and Susan, looking immaculate—overlooking her wonderful and beautiful garden is one that I will keep and treasure. To Virginia, Drew, Susan and their families, I can only offer my sincerest condolences. You have lost a dear mother, I have lost a dear friend and our community has lost one of its finest members. A generational chapter has closed with your mother's passing, but I know the dedication to our community, as demonstrated by both your mother and father, will continue to live on. May the memory of Diana Percival be honoured and treasured forever.

TWEED ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:39): I inform the House of significant events that have taken place in recent times in the great electorate of Tweed. As always, I am 100 per cent committed to the good people and to the electorate of the Tweed. Earlier this month the Hon. Brad Hazzard, Minister for Health and Medical Research, visited our local area for a sod turning to mark the countdown to the start of construction on the state-of-the-art, \$534 million Tweed Valley Hospital. It brought us one step closer to the new hospital. Early construction works were given the green light to start now. Not only will our new hospital deliver world-class health services to the community closer to home, but also it will bring hundreds of new jobs to the region and boost our economy.

The new hospital will mean that more than 500 patients will not have to travel outside the region each year for life-saving treatments. The early works involve preparing the site for construction of the hospital buildings, and include the creation of permanent and temporary site access, bulk excavation, piling, retaining walls and in-ground services. It is interesting to point out that Lendlease has been appointed the head contractor. I praise the Minister for his dedication. It has been a long, hard road. The last election was a referendum on the hospital and, believe it or not, we won all 19 polling booths and increased our margin. The silent majority has spoken; the Tweed is getting a new hospital.

The health Minister also attended a soft opening of the first ambulance station in Pottsville, which is set to come live in a few months. The construction of the new \$6 million facility is now complete. The new Pottsville ambulance station includes internal parking for up to four emergency vehicles, logistics, a storage area, relief accommodation, staff parking, deliveries and a loading bay. These next steps are very important to the State Government's goal of increasing health services in the local area. I thank our local paramedics for their efforts over the past 10 months, which have culminated in this milestone. Once again, I thank the health Minister for coming along.

That is not all. We also had a visit from the Hon. David Elliott, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I was very pleased with a number of his announcements. One major announcement was that we are getting four new officers—three new general duties police officers and one sergeant. On top of that, we are getting five water police officers. Recently we completed the \$3 million joint facility for fisheries, maritime and water police, and five new water police officers will start there very shortly. This will dramatically increase the level of protection for the wider community. During his visit the Minister also announced \$5.8 million for a brand-new

fire station at Kingscliff. Currently there are 17 retained officers and site selection is underway. We look forward to that new facility as, once again, it will increase service levels and protection for our community.

I pay tribute to our fire and rescue workers, our firefighters, who do an excellent job. Kingscliff has one retained female firefighter and is about to employ another two female firefighters. It is a great effort. While he was there, the Minister handed over a new \$200,000 Mobile Incident Command Vehicle to Marine Rescue. Glenda and the team at Marine Rescue in Point Danger do an excellent job keeping our waterways and our oceans safe for all. This new Mobile Incident Command Vehicle will greatly enhance their services.

But on top of that we had a visit from the Hon. Dr Geoff Lee, with whom I attended the official opening of the Murwillumbah community learning centre. It is a great initiative that offers training to the youth of our local area. We were absolutely fascinated by the mobile catering van, which saw first light at the recent Splendour in the Grass festival, held north of Byron Bay, which was visited by over 40,000 people a day. There were no incidents. The mobile catering van gave young people a chance to learn how to become baristas and to serve food to the massive number of volunteers. So in roughly four days four Ministers came to the Tweed to make announcements that will greatly enhance the lifestyle of the Tweed community. Once again, I am 100 per cent committed to the Tweed.

BARWON ELECTORATE VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (12:44): Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, said:

If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever.

In my travels across Barwon I have been fortunate to meet many volunteers who keep our communities going and lift them when they are at their lowest; who motivate and inspire. Volunteers fill a gap that government can never occupy. They are workhorses who operate barbecues and cake stalls; who know how to rally a community. They are at bedsides in hospitals, at Rotary clubs, Lions clubs and Country Women's Association [CWA] gatherings; they coach kid's football teams and run the canteens. They are local tradies, doctors, nurses, parents, retirees and business owners. They are our tireless volunteers; they are the core of the fabric of our communities.

Today I call attention to some wonderful organisations that are giving their all in Barwon to make our communities better places to live. The Baradine Country Women's Association Drought Aid Pantry has been providing farming families with essential groceries out of the local CWA hall for a year. The pop-up pantry was only supposed to run for a few weeks. Now one year on, it is still operating. The only thing is that the Baradine CWA has thrown every last penny it has at this vital service. But on the one-year anniversary of the Drought Aid Pantry, it still has hope. Today it launched a 12-month donation drive, calling for monetary donations so that it can restock the pantry and continue to support local farming families who are doing it tough. It promises not to give up on the community and to continue its crucial work. That is the true spirit of the volunteer—to continue to give even when their back is to the wall.

Over the winter break I attended the Changeover Dinner for the Rotary Club of Narrabri, an amazing group of motivated, community-minded individuals. At the dinner I heard about Neighbours in Need, a project run by the Rotary Club of Narrabri, in partnership with the Rotary clubs of Wee Waa and Boggabri. The idea for Neighbours in Need came from a local. He had buried far too many of his neighbours due to suicide—a number he saw was on the increase. The club banded together to tackle this big issue with Neighbours in Need, which works to identify and assist people struggling with social isolation and general mental health due to the drought. The project uses Rotarians and their friends to reach out to people and demonstrate support for those in need—whether it be social, emotional or material. It has attracted donors from across Australia, providing support to hundreds of farmers and farming families during this protracted drought. I applaud the Rotary clubs of Narrabri, Wee Waa and Boggabri for not shying away from the big issues, and tackling them with tenacity and compassion.

In sheds across Australia—and now the world—men are working away at repairing an antique table, building a bench for a local park or sitting down for morning tea. Those men have been brought together through the Men's Shed Association. Across the State there are now over 300 sheds where men can work alongside each other and, most importantly, talk to each other. Men's sheds work to break down barriers and to get men to talk about their feelings and the issues they are facing. The men come from all walks of life, across generations and backgrounds, and are brought together to do something meaningful with their time and to help each other out. The movement has been able to grow and become part of communities, both small and large, with minimal government funding but with a drive to do something by men and for men.

If you can get along to a shed, support the organisation—donate some wood, ask the men to work on a project or talk to them about their work. More importantly, we should value the important contribution that the

Men's Shed Association is making to improving men's health and wellbeing. Our volunteer organisations are able to do an awful lot for our communities with little to no government funding. It is important that we recognise, support and promote their important work. If you can donate to those organisations, please do so. Dig deep. If you cannot donate money, donate your time. You will find many wonderful, giving people who are committed to making our communities better places.

NORTH RYDE RSL NETBALL CLUB

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (12:48): Community is by definition the people and places we surround ourselves with, and we all make a contribution to that community. It is to this extent that the significant contributions of members and institutions must be recognised. The North Ryde RSL Netball Club is one such institution. This year it is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary and has touched the lives of many people in Ryde during that time. In 1969 the club was founded under the name North Ryde RSL Youth Club by a group of local families, with a small group of junior teams playing and training at local psychiatric centre grounds. The club depended on individual contributions in service to the community, such as member's dads marking the fields. While originally playing in RSL competitions, the group joined Eastwood Ryde Netball Association—lovingly known as ERNA—in 1971. Since then the club has grown, today reaching 35 teams with 324 players.

Robyn Bates and Lorna Humphreys are two members in particular who have contributed immensely to the club. I acknowledge the contributions of these two individuals, who have devoted so much in service to those around them. Robyn Bates has been a member since inception. With an impressive 50 years she has seen the club through all its stages. Robyn joined when her two daughters, Jennifer and Leanne, started playing netball. Since then she has held many positions within the club, facilitating many aspects of its operation. Her roles have included coaching and managing teams, ERNA ground supervisor, secretary, assistant secretary, umpire convenor and ERNA delegate. Furthermore, she has been crucial to the club's senior involvement, leading the senior intra-club branch. In 1999 she was key to the club's official recognition under North Ryde RSL. This speaks to her devotion and work ethic as well as an inclusive attitude that has touched so many lives in her community.

Lorna Humphreys has similarly given a great deal to the club. When her daughter, Denise, joined in 1980 Lorna jumped straight into the responsibility of managing her daughter's team and all subsequent ones. She later gained the role of secretary and held that role until formation of the seniors branch, where she assumed the role of secretary. This role has encompassed the senior treasurer, registrar and ERNA delegate. Lorna was pivotal in the establishment of the senior intra-club branch alongside Robyn. She is recognised for her role in 2009 in unifying senior and junior branches under the modern form of the North Ryde RSL Netball Club. Since 2011 and leaving the secretary position Lorna has consistently volunteered in the club and continues to make enormous donations of time and effort to her community. While the club has seen many forms over the years, the core ideal of bringing a community together around sport has never changed. Robyn and Lorna deserve recognition for such extensive volunteer work, all out of the passion for sport and love for the community even after their daughters grew out of the competition. Robyn and Lorna are both ERNA life members and we cannot thank them enough for their service.

I am proud that our Government is committing a record amount of \$30 million to build a community netball facility on the grounds of Marsden High School, which is relocating to the Meadowbank Education Precinct. This precinct is not only State leading but also nation leading. It will hardwire in education from primary school to high school, to TAFE and beyond. Because we have a strong budget and know how to manage the economy we are investing \$30 million into a netball facility that will cater to all the up-and-coming netballers, not just in Ryde but also the surrounding areas of Parramatta, Lane Cove and Epping. We all know that sport is a critical part of our fabric in New South Wales and indeed Australia. It is essential that we provide the infrastructure needed for critical clubs and activities such as netball to participate in. That is why I am proud of what we are about to build in Marsden.

DAPTO PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:53): Once again I speak on behalf of the people of Dapto to relay their concerns regarding Dapto Public School and its upcoming upgrade. There is no denying that demand for school spaces in my community is skyrocketing as local housing developments are completed and new families flock to the region. When completed West Dapto will be home to over 50,000 people in 19,000 new dwellings. There is no denying that members of this Government have spent the last eight long years dragging their heels, twiddling their thumbs and knocking down stadiums instead of building schools. Two years ago those opposite announced an upgrade for Dapto Public School, currently the only school in the West Dapto area. I want to preface what I say next with this reminder: Both local residents and I fully support additional funding for local public education, especially in West Dapto. Residents on the surrounding streets do, however, have an issue with this

Government's approach to the upgrade so far and they also have reservations regarding this upgrade's ability to deliver for the long-term needs of the area.

Let us be clear: Just as I stated in my media release two years ago, this upgrade is a "bandaid for a bullet wound". I have been fighting for a new school for Dapto since my election back in 2011. I want to remind every member of this House that this fight is not over yet. The concerns raised with me by these residents follow a similar train of thought. Firstly, these residents are concerned about what this upgrade will mean for overcrowding at the site. The 2003 *New Schools Privately Financed Project—Summary of Contracts* report states that Dapto Public School was initially built to accommodate 400 students and up to a maximum of 630 students somewhere in the future. There are 730 kids currently enrolled at the school. The kids are struggling through stifling summers in 14 demountable classrooms. Sure, this upgrade will provide an additional six new classrooms and finally remove these demountables, but this means enrolments at the school will likely rise again, to a total of 850 pupils.

With the expected population increase, can this Government truly guarantee that Dapto kids will not be back in demountables in a decade? I cannot stress this enough: Dapto Public School was never ever intended to cater for 850 kids or even its current 730. Bandaid solutions do not work. The enrolment increase at Dapto Public School will also have flow-on impacts with local road traffic impacting the safety of students, parents and teachers and will permanently alter the community atmosphere of the area. It is not just the massive increase in student numbers that will impact the atmosphere of the surrounding streets and community, but the design of the buildings themselves. According to current artist impressions, the new school buildings will stand 9.5 metres above the top level of playground, which is 1.5 metres higher than originally anticipated. It is important to note that these concerns with Dapto Public School should not be equated with the issues in inner-city Sydney. While in Sydney the Government is constructing high-rise schools due to a complete lack of local land, there is plenty of land to build on in West Dapto.

It is time to invest in the area's future, it is time to acquire the land that is needed and it is time to plan for a new school that Dapto needs today. Those on this side of this House are not interested in bandaid solutions—we never have been and never will be. Labor has listened to the needs of Dapto. Prior to the recent State election, Labor committed to spending \$60 million on the planning and construction of a new school in West Dapto. It is no surprise that this commitment was not matched by the New South Wales Liberals. Ignoring this oversight, I believe it is still only right to recognise that these community members have valid concerns with this project. I call on the Minister to take the time to listen to these community members and respond appropriately to their concerns, while ultimately prioritising the long-term future needs of West Dapto. To those opposite who still have not got the message: It is finally budgeting, it is finally planning and it is finally building a new school in Dapto.

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:58): I speak about a matter that is of great concern to my electorate and, indeed, to The Greens—that is, the transition to a circular economy with the removal of single-use plastics across the board. I have just visited several cities in the United States—Los Angeles [LA], Seattle, San Francisco and Phoenix—and what struck me was that I did not see a single plastic bag or take-away plastic food item anywhere except Arizona. When we consider that the west coast States of California and Washington are the most progressive cultures in the entire United States, we understand why bans on single-use plastics and zero-waste policies are palpable in places like Seattle, San Francisco and LA. Seeing the opposite in a conservative red State like Arizona, where my aunts live, fits with the narrative that environmentalism and concern for the planet are mostly the purview of the Left. But what that tells us and what people in my community of Ballina talk about is that banning the bag and reducing our plastics is all about political will and nothing to do with the kinds of arguments that some conservatives in the New South Wales Government and naysayers make around negative impacts on tourism, price points and the sky falling.

As a tourist in those cities there was absolutely no choice about plastics and alternatives were provided: It was not a question. It was so easy and straightforward to use alternatives. Every time I was offered a keep item—a keep bag, a keep cup, a keep straw—I was reminded over and over that it was just that simple. The same can be said for bed taxes and generally being taxed to death as a tourist in the United States: You like it or lump it. Tourists to the Byron shire would most certainly live with a bed tax if we had the courage to value our resident communities in the same way as does the United States. But I digress.

The sad facts are that Australians use over 10 million new plastic bags each year and throw away enough of this plastic to circle the earth four times. That incurs a clean-up cost to taxpayers of over \$4 million per year. Let me just briefly mention the tax on our wildlife: 22 per cent of marine mammals, 44 per cent of seabird species and all—yes, all—species of sea turtles have been found with plastic in or around their bodies. Over one million documented cases of marine animal deaths are due to plastic pollution. Is this a tax we are willing to pay? We have seen already impressive results from the Coles and Woolworths supermarket bans on single-use plastic bags. This initiative has resulted in an 80 per cent reduction in the use of single-use plastic bags, saving 4.7 billion bags

from polluting our environment in the year since the ban was introduced. Despite all the controversy and the outcry and the decades of naysaying, this shift from those giant retailers has been simple and effective.

However, New South Wales is now the only State in Australia that has not committed to phasing out single-use plastic bags. I will note the Minister's comments shortly. What we want is a circular economy model in New South Wales. We accept that we are behind the times, but let us get well ahead of the times and from the get-go move to a circular economy model that removes waste and pollution from the system in the very design of products and rewards innovators while valuing our finite earth's resources. I believe we can go much further than California, and our tourists will love us for it.

New South Wales is the second-highest per capita waste producer in the world—I emphasise: the second-highest per capita waste producer in the world for a State, not a nation—with each person generating two tonnes of waste each year. That is why I was so pleased to see Minister Kean's comments in the media on 2 July committing to developing a wideranging plan to ban single-use plastic bags. We encourage him to go even further. My constituents in the costal electorate of Ballina are deeply concerned about the impact of plastic bags on our marine environment. We will seek further information about that time line and when they can expect to see a ban implemented. As a species we are using 1.75 times the earth's resources and counting. By about June this year we had used up and could not replace all of the earth's resources in the consumption this year. What the hell are we waiting for with single-use plastic bags? New South Wales needs to do what its Pacific counterpart, California, has done and the rest of Australia already has done.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:03): This week is Local Government Week. From Monday 29 July to Sunday 4 August each of the 128 local councils in New South Wales can showcase their work for their local communities. In my home region, the new Central Coast Council is made up of the former Gosford city and former Wyong shire councils. Our community overwhelmingly supported the amalgamation in May 2016 as time and time again the two councils proved to the people that they were incapable of working together towards shared goals. Having one local council for the Central Coast region also helps to reinforce our regional identity as "one Central Coast".

We have a population of over 339,000 across the Central Coast region. Between 2016 and 2036 the region's population is expected to grow by an additional 75,500 people. This is a significant opportunity that all levels of government are working towards accommodating. It is also important to note that local councils are often the major employer and supporter of local economies. This is certainly the case on the Central Coast, with 1,800 people employed by Central Coast Council. This workforce is across a wide-ranging variety of skill areas: engineers, town planners, cashiers, lifeguards, librarians, accountants, legal professionals and administration workers—just to name a few. Central Coast Council has an annual revenue over \$562 million, which is one of the largest in New South Wales. Every single council's contribution through infrastructure building, service delivery, business support, community engagement and economic development should not be underestimated. Having said that, our council has a lot more work to do.

It is unfortunate that out of the 15 councillors, six Labor councillors and two Independent councillors think they were elected with a mandate to reject funding from the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. In the past year or so, these councillors have had to unceremoniously backflip on a number of issues. They have had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the table to reject \$1.225 million to dredge the Ettalong Channel. They have also finally accepted \$2.9 million for a boardwalk at Terrigal, in spite of Labor's continued opposition. Our councillors should realise that people actually want Central Coast Council to work with the New South Wales Government to deliver what our region needs and deserves.

Local councils are often the first point of contact for many in our communities and there is no surprise as to why. Councils can act as landlords, booking officers, leisure centre operators and field managers. Indeed Central Coast Council operates eight public swimming pool complexes including rock pools, as well as 142 public halls and 12 public libraries. Council also manages 3,625 hectares of open public space and 2,198 kilometres of road across the Central Coast. Councils across our State are also responsible for council-run childcare centres, cemeteries, museums and galleries, and undertake a variety of services within our communities such as food safety checks and development approvals.

I am pleased the New South Wales Government is continuing to support Central Coast Council to deliver essential infrastructure and services. Since its election to government in 2011, over \$9 billion has been granted to councils across New South Wales, including over \$100 million for Central Coast Council since 2016 alone. This funding represents better roads, cycle ways, footpaths, reserves, playgrounds, public halls, and beach facilities for our local communities; not to mention the ongoing support for council operated facilities including our incredible and fantastically well run surf life saving clubs, and naturally our public libraries. Some of this funding has been

delivered through the Stronger Communities Fund, one of the advantages for our community from the amalgamation of Gosford and Wyong councils.

I am proud to have provided funding for a number of highly successful projects. This includes \$2.8 million for the foreshore redevelopment at Avoca Beach, which locals and tourists absolutely love. This also included \$2.2 million to redesign and fix the traffic flow arrangement in Terrigal central business district. Recent figures show that this saves an average of 12 minutes for drivers through Terrigal, which is an outstanding result. Additionally, over \$1 million has been invested in Central Coast Council through the Government's Companion Animal Register. Councils receive an 80 per cent reimbursement of lifetime registration for animals across the council as well as those registered from eligible shelters. These funds are then reinvested into the local community and utilised to build and upgrade animal shelters, dog parks and off-leash areas, as well as fund ranger services and education. As we celebrate Local Government Week I acknowledge the hardworking staff of all our councils, particularly Central Coast councils, and commit to this Government working with them to deliver for our community.

WALLSEND POP-UP POLICE STATION

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:08): Not a day goes by without constituents calling my office complaining about petty crime or antisocial behaviour. Understandably, the community has been feeling very unsafe. On 16 July I joined the Newcastle City Police District as it hosted the Wallsend pop-up station. The pop-up police station provided Wallsend locals with an opportunity to meet and speak with local police about any issues they felt were important to them. A police mobile command centre was set up and officers patrolled the streets. I thank Superintendent Brett Greentree, Commander, Newcastle City Police District, and Acting Inspector Lisa Jones. Superintendent Greentree is working with me and my office to provide much-needed increased policing in the Wallsend electorate. Acting Inspector Jones, who has helped to spearhead a number of extraordinary community outreach programs, said to me:

I think it's a basic premise: I think what's missing in our world at the moment is the opportunity to actually speak to each other. But it's that grassroots of standing with someone and saying, "This is where you live; I want you to tell me what you think is wrong and I want to try and help fix it." I think that is the basic message that we have here today.

Her statement illustrates why the pop-up police station has been so very welcomed in Wallsend. However, it is only a partial solution. The western suburbs of Newcastle and the north-western suburbs of Lake Macquarie need a police station. People are rightly concerned about response times and police numbers. The distance from Newcastle police station to Minmi is 20.3 kilometres along the best route. That takes 32 minutes to travel but with traffic the travel time could be as much as 40 minutes or more. Waratah police station is 14 kilometres away; with even moderate traffic that is a 20-minute time frame. Of course, police cars do not just sit at the station. A car could be as far away as Stockton, which is 30.3 kilometres from Minmi—a trip that takes more than half an hour even in the best traffic conditions and in bad traffic could take more than 55 minutes.

Beresfield and Tarro are 12 kilometres or 15 minutes away from Maitland police station and 16.2 kilometres or 18 minutes away from Raymond Terrace police station. The Port Stephens-Hunter Police District covers remote communities in the Hunter Valley all the way up to Dungog. In a worst case scenario a car at Dungog could take 50 minutes or more to travel the 61.2 kilometres to Beresfield. All of this presumes optimal traffic times and conditions. The areas of Glendale, Edgeworth, Cameron Park and West Wallsend have seen extraordinary growth in the last few years but the nearest police stations are at Toronto and Belmont. It takes about the same time to travel from Toronto as it does the 15 kilometres from Belmont police station. A car at either Swansea or Wangi Wangi responding to a call in Glendale would take more than half an hour to arrive on the scene.

When pushed on the matter of response times and police strength in the Wallsend electorate the police Minister is evasive. The local police go out of their way and do the best they can to help residents of the Wallsend electorate, limited only by a lack of resources and staff. Unfortunately, the Minister fobs off my attempts, made in good faith, to gather information with generic non-answers. All options need to be put on the table. I am committed to working productively with the Government on this important matter. All of this leaves me asking: How can Wallsend electorate residents and business owners feel safe to invest in the community unless the community invests in them?

URALLA BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (13:13): Last Friday I had the enormous pleasure of attending the second annual Uralla Shire Business Chamber business awards night at the Uralla Showground events centre. I acknowledge the Hon. Damien Tudehope, Minister for Finance and Small Business, who paid due honour and respect to Uralla businesses by presenting the major business of the year award on the night. The event recognises the ongoing

achievement and success of the small town's thriving business community. I say "thriving" because despite the fact that Uralla has a population of a little over 2,500 people and is 22 kilometres from Armidale its boutique retail and hospitality sector is a daytripper's dream. It is arguably fast becoming the true CBD of the city of Armidale.

On a Saturday or Sunday motorists cannot get a parking space on the New England Highway, the main street of Uralla, as people from across the region—even from down the hill at Tamworth—come to Uralla to soak up the town's heritage and enjoy the locally grown food and beverages at the wonderful coffee shops and other eateries in the small community. At a time of extreme drought and economic hardship which our State and particularly the Northern Tablelands region is going through, it makes me incredibly proud to see the Uralla CBD thriving, with a tenancy rate of nearly 100 per cent. It is a struggle to find an empty shop anywhere in Uralla at the moment, even though we are in the grip of the worst drought we have ever seen.

The Uralla Shire Business Chamber is being led strongly by president Teresa French, the owner of Thunder Graphics, secretary Corinne Annetts of Sunhill Dairy Goats and treasurer Darren Stevenson of Emergency Planning and Safety Consulting. They have done a magnificent job, together with their committee comprising Macka Mackintosh, John Buckingham, Russ French, Colin Hull, Wayne Howard and Sonia Repin, in getting the chamber off the ground and presenting these wonderful awards for the second year running. I acknowledge all the award recipients on the night. The four awards categories were Excellence In Customer Service—Trainee/Apprentice/Youth, Excellence in Customer Service—Volunteer, Excellence In Customer Service—Employee and Excellence in Customer Service—Business.

I will run through the winners of the prestigious awards. Landy Harvey from Uralla Pharmacy won the Excellence in Customer Service—Trainee/Apprentice/Youth award. The first runner-up was Taylah Whitton of Uralla Preschool and the second runner-up was Lachlan Barnden from Dales Downtown Meats. The finalists were Simone Ryan, Lauren Acton, Alex Cormack, Gemma Weguelin, Fin Makin and Melanie French. In the second category of the night, Excellence in Customer Service—Volunteer, the winner was Ann Edwards, the first runner-up was Jan Kaehler and the second runner-up was Michelle Williams. The stellar cast of finalists was Erica Barwell, Maryanne Munsie, Bruce Stubberfield, Graham Carlon, Carol Barnden, Darryl Carter, Diana Hayes, Kaye Sutton, Colin Wood, Isabel Strutt, Jim Walkinshaw, Narelle Solomon, Robyn Wheatley, Bob Crouch, John Buckingham and Peter Phillips.

The next award was the Excellence In Customer Service—Employee. The winner was Rachel Calliess from Uralla Pharmacy. The first runner-up was Chloe Waters, who does a brilliant job behind the bar at Top Pub. The second runner-up was tied between Bron Byers and Bek Frost, both from the award-winning TG's Child Care and Preschool. They beat an amazing field of finalists: Emily McClenaghan, Lisa Kelly-Westbury, Nkala Frost, Abbey Sweeney, Jo Fletcher, Amica Riley, Georgia Wright, Jaime Schultz, Phoebe McMillan, Luise Scherer, Kelly Williams, Tony Swilks, Michael Welbourn, Isaiah Olig-Grennan, Jo Hull, Petra Evans, Russ French, Rachel Goodwin, Lauren Gordon, Matt Jones, Trish Binkhorn, Ruby Camble, Lisa Westbury, Jack Stoker, Connor Campbell, Scott Harrison, Emily Harper, Kaelene Tobler and Jody Smith.

The big award of the night was Excellence In Customer Service—Business. For the second year running the winner was TG's Child Care and Preschool. Gayle and her team do a magnificent job. The first runner-up was Uralla Pharmacy and the second runner-up was Subway Uralla. It was an amazing field of finalists: The Pie Mechanic—Phil and his team do a great job—Michael's Cafe, FoodWorks, Kentucky General Store and Cafe, Dales Downtown Meats, Uralla Chiropractic, Neighbourhood Centre, Top Pub, Jason's Small Engines, and the list goes on. Finally I recognise Dales Downtown Meats owner Dale Goodwin, who has been operating as a local butcher for 15 years. When a lot of butcheries are going out of business, his is an amazing success story. The Uralla Business Awards was a great night, showing off the best of Uralla. I cannot wait until next year.

Community Recognition Statements

JASON HOLLEY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:18): I inform the House that 26-year-old Forster resident Jason Holley has achieved his dream of winning an Olympic gold medal representing Australia in ten-pin bowling at the Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi. Jason came away with a gold medal in the doubles and a silver in the teams division. He finished an impressive fifth place in the singles division. A fundraising campaign beginning in June last year included a Bunnings barbeque, a trivia and auction day, and a bowl-a-thon at Forster Ten-Pin Bowling. Manning and Great Lakes disability service provider Dundaloo Support Services raised \$1,400 in donations and the athletes contributed an additional \$1,000. Jason's major sponsor was Forster Bowling Club, which funded half his trip to Abu Dhabi. I congratulate Jason on his gold medal win and the local community on banding together to fundraise for Jason to fulfil his dream.

MARY BLACKFORD, OAM

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:20): Mary Blackford's contribution to our community is no secret. After her children left home Mary began volunteering. She saw a great need for a home visiting service. With the help of the Hunter Volunteers Centre and a dedicated board of committee members Mary founded Wallsend Carers, an organisation that has provided companionship to hundreds of elderly people in the area since 1984. Mary worked as the coordinator up until last year when she retired at the age of 85. Mary has received several much-deserved awards and many blessings from her work. She still visits her clients as friends. I congratulate Mary on receiving her well-deserved Medal of the Order of Australia and thank her for her tireless work. Mary is a Wallsend giver. Bless her.

SANDY POINT DRAGONS BOAT CLUB

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:20): Unfortunately, I missed the Sandy Point Dragons Boat Club annual presentation of awards this year. I try to make as many as I can. I note that the Sandy Point Dragons have a fantastic membership, which was shown by the fact that more than 85 people attended the presentation. The awards were split between two age groups—the adults and the juniors. For the adults, the club service award went to Neil Burton, the encouragement award went to Robyn Mack, the odyssey award went to both Sean and Danielle, the rookie award went to Mark Stevens, the award for most improved went to Vicki Bowling and Jill Stanton, the award for best male went to Edgar Francis, the award for best female went to Trena Tarrant and the coaches award went to Chieu Phan. For the juniors, the award for most improved went to Tim Hosken and Amy Padmore, the encouragement award went to Michelle Nguyen and Gabrielle Francis, the best male paddler award went to Dominic Curtin and the best female paddler award went to Nadia Elsayed. I once again acknowledge the Sandy Point Dragons for holding a successful annual awards presentation ceremony.

BONALBO SHOW SOCIETY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (13:21): In continuation of my congratulatory statement about the Bonalbo Show Society on the successful holding of the ninety-first show on 3 May and 4 May, I further acknowledge honorary life members Mrs Ethel Short, Mrs Gillian Perrett, Mrs Joy Whitney, Mr John Clarke, Mrs Dot Clarke, Mr Roy Vary and Mrs Margaret Vary, and paid life members Donald and Elizabeth Johnston, John and Joyce Ralston, and Ken and Jan Vary.

ST GEORGE LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:22): I congratulate the many small businesses in the St George area that were recently recognised at the 2019 St George Local Business Awards. Some of the local businesses recognised with an award include Hummingbird Lane Patisserie at Oatley, All Starz Performing Arts Studio at Peakhurst, Bridge Street Kids Early Learning Centre at Hurstville and Power Up Your Marketing at Lugarno. Other local businesses recognised on the night were Fernwood Women's Health Club at Beverly Hills, Chrystalla Hair at Penhurst, Beverly Hills Animal Hospital and the amazing family restaurant Bitton Oatley Cafe and Bistro. Additionally, I recognise Star Ceramics Australia at Hurstville Grove. I also recognise Natasha Gonzalez of 1K Words at Penhurst as Business Person of the Year. I give a special shout-out to some of my family's own favourites—Edmonds and Greer at Oatley, Jumbuck Meats Gourmet Butchery at Oatley and, finally, Lugarno Seafood Restaurant. I congratulate all small business owners and operators on receiving their awards.

TRIBUTE TO ANNETTE TINDALE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:23): I remember Annette Tindale, who has recently passed away and left an incredible legacy on Shellharbour and the greater Illawarra. Annette was one of the founders of the Illawarra Women's Health Centre. The centre she helped to create provides a range of feminist comprehensive and integrated health care and wellbeing options for women in a unique, safe and empowering setting. Those who knew Annette speak of her passion, determination, courage and compassion. Annette supported women and, through her vision, the Illawarra Women's Health Centre has changed and saved the lives of women for over 30 years. She has left a beautiful and meaningful legacy. I thank Annette. Her contribution to women in our community will never be forgotten. Shellharbour gives its condolences and love to her family and friends during this time.

ROBYN FOX

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (13:24): I congratulate First National Inverell Principal Sales Agent Robyn Fox on achieving the platinum level for real estate sales within First National this year. I congratulate her also on being named Agent of the Year in the 2019 RateMyAgent awards. Robyn and her team at First National Inverell were hesitant to attend the awards because of the Tingha Plateau fires, which consumed 23,000 hectares of land around Tingha

earlier this year. The First National Inverell team assisted during that trying time by giving free rent and shelter through their landlords to those affected in the township. Robyn is very deserving of the award. I commend Robyn Fox and her First National Inverell team for their hard work and genuine commitment to the community, which has fostered such great success within their business. I wish them all the best for the future.

BATTLE OF FROMELLES

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (13:25): On the 103rd anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles I commemorate the Australian and Allied soldiers who fought and died for our freedom. The Battle of Fromelles was the beginning of Australia's involvement on the Western Front during World War I. Australia lost 5,500 troops in the battle, which is believed to be the greatest single-day loss by an Australian force during the war. It is important that we continue to commemorate the sacrifice made by so many Australians in the defence of the universal rights of liberty, democracy and peace. The Fromelles Day procession and service at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park included a beautiful commemorative address by historian Patrick Lindsay, who was ably supported by Natalia Ray, Lily Garret, Emily Cropp and Lily Witaker from St Clare's College, Waverley. The students read out a heartbreaking letter from one of the many mothers whose son went missing at Fromelles but was never found. I thank the Families and Friends of the First AIF, the Anzac Memorial and RSL NSW for a fitting tribute to the fallen of Fromelles.

ROGER PALMER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:26): I congratulate Roger Palmer, the outgoing unit commander of Marine Rescue Central Coast, who has served in the role for three consecutive terms. It has been fantastic to work with Roger to deliver better equipment for our region, including a new 10-metre vessel at Terrigal and a new 7.5-metre vessel at Point Clare. Roger was at the helm during the merger of the former Gosford and Terrigal units and did a fantastic job overseeing the transition. I welcome the new leaders of Marine Rescue Central Coast, including Mark Sheehan, who was elected as unit commander at the annual general meeting on 18 July, along with Adrian Davies as deputy unit commander. On the Central Coast we are surrounded by ocean and waterways. Marine Rescue performs an essential role in keeping both visitors and residents safe. I thank the Marine Rescue Central Coast team for all its wonderful work to keep our boaties and water users safe.

HABERFIELD ASSOCIATION

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:27): The Haberfield Association is leading the charge to protect the world's first garden suburb, Haberfield, and is campaigning to have the entire suburb listed on the State Heritage Register. Recently the association hosted an open day at Yasmar estate, which the Office of Environment and Heritage has described as the "only relatively intact villa house estate remaining on Parramatta Road, the oldest roadway in Australia." The association's Friends of Yasmar group, led by Angie Gallinaro, regularly tend to the historic gardens as part of its campaign to save the estate from dereliction through neglect. I was very pleased to attend the recent open day at Yasmar to support the campaign to keep the estate in public hands and to thank the wonderful volunteers who work tirelessly to preserve the important heritage home and garden. Yasmar is the heart and soul of Haberfield and I congratulate and thank the Haberfield Association for all it does to protect it for future generations.

CHRISTINE DEL GALLO

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:28): With great pride I update the House that the recipient of the 2019 Bill Kennedy Medal for enduring commitment to public education is the principal of NBSC Mackellar Girls Campus in Manly, Ms Christine Del Gallo. The recipient of the Bill Kennedy Medal must demonstrate dynamic, inspirational, creative and influential leadership. In my years of knowing Ms Del Gallo, she has consistently demonstrated those skills. She is an outstanding educational and community leader. The Bill Kennedy Medal is a prestigious award given to educational leaders who not only support the outstanding work of the New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council and the development of quality leadership in secondary schools across the State but also provide outstanding advocacy for public education, its students and its teachers. Christine has a distinguished history as a leader and has worked in a diverse range of educational settings over many years. She has transformed her local school into a school of choice and is respected in the wider community. Christine Del Gallo is a worthy recipient of the Bill Kennedy Medal.

FAIRFIELD ENGAGING FAMILIES OF ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:29): On Thursday 11 July 2019 I had the pleasure of joining the Fairfield Engaging Families of Aboriginal Heritage [FEFAH] network in its first major event as part of NAIDOC Week celebrations. It was a truly outstanding inaugural event. The celebration provided a great opportunity for families to come together and engage in traditional activities that have long been part of their rich heritage. We were all privileged to witness traditional Indigenous song and dance and to share in the Aboriginal history of the

Cumberland Plain. I thank and congratulate Uncle Des, Aunty Wendy, Aunty Freda and the volunteers of the FEFAH network for their efforts. I also acknowledge The Parks Community Network Inc, Communities for Children FP - Fairfield, the local men's shed and Woodville Alliance for their contribution to this wonderful event.

SYDNEY BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:30): I congratulate the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation on its sixteenth annual Rugby Long Lunch, which I attended, to raise much needed funds for breast cancer awareness and treatment. That one event raised an astonishing \$400,000, which will go towards funding Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation's breast fellowships at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. The Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation fellows are educated about high-volume reconstruction and complex lumpectomy procedures, which offer a chance of good aesthetic outcomes after an already harrowing diagnosis and traumatic treatment for breast cancer. That huge amount of money was raised because of the incredible generosity of all the guests, sponsors and supporters, particularly principal sponsor Richard Crookes Constructions—a sponsor for 16 consecutive years. Thank you to the talented speakers throughout the day. I particularly thank president of the Sydney Breast Cancer Foundation Lynne Crookes, OAM, vice-president Renae Lopez, director of breast services Dr Cindy Mak, the whole committee, and the volunteers who helped put this fantastic event together.

ANDREW PARKER AND MICHAEL PASCOE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:31): There are few actions more worthy of praise than saving a life. I recognise the heroic actions of two men who saved the lives of three tourists—a 44-year-old woman and two children aged eight and 15—who had been washed into the ocean while swimming in rock pools at Boat Harbour. They were quickly swept 100 metres out to sea. The actions of off-duty police sergeant Andrew Parker and local resident Michael Pascoe averted a tragedy. When the alarm was raised by his young daughter, Andie, Andrew Parker dived into the rough seas with his surfboard and secured the three tourists. Meanwhile Michael Pascoe set off in his tinnie through the rough seas towards the fraught scene. The relieved visitors were ultimately hauled into Michael's boat. Water police and rescue helicopters arrived shortly afterwards. Another element of the successful rescue effort was the presence of an angel ring thanks to local "guardian angels" Marie and Ray Smith, who had recently replaced it. I thank everyone involved and commend Andrew Parker and Michael Pascoe for their rapid, selfless and courageous response. They are true heroes of Port Stephens.

REGIONAL YOUTH TASKFORCE

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (13:32): Great ideas make the Coffs Harbour electorate stand out from the rest and that is why Coffs Harbour was the recent launch pad for the first ever Regional Youth Taskforce in New South Wales. The Hon. Bronnie Taylor, Minister for Regional Youth and Women, joined me for the announcement at the Keys Youth Hub in Coffs Harbour. The taskforce will ensure the views of our young people are heard, and applications for 12- to 24-year-olds to join the taskforce are open until 5 August. At the launch we were inspired by the many people achieving great things for youth in our community. At Key Employment we have executive director Chris Worboys, chief financial officer Michelle Worboys, CEO Jodi Wood and their extraordinary staff. Mother of two Chelsea Adams, a graduate of Key Employment's Kids and the Power of Work program—KAPOW for short—told her powerful story of transformation. Executive officer Clark Webb and his fine team at Bularri Muurlay Nyanggan Aboriginal Corporation also supported the taskforce launch. Headspace is another outstanding organisation helping youth in my electorate. I thank manager Madeleine Lawler and all of her colleagues for the work that they do.

DUBBO ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:33): I acknowledge the fantastic work of this Government in creating a world-class emergency services precinct in the city of Dubbo. Last Thursday I was honoured to have Minister David Elliott in town to officially open the \$23 million Rural Fire Service training facility. This fantastic facility rivals the current complex in Sydney. While in town, the Minister visited the new joint State Emergency Service/Volunteer Rescue Association complex. At this new site the two organisations have masses of storage space and great training facilities and support one another through some of the confronting work they do in the service of our community. In the near future work is due to start on the police training centre, which will make the Dubbo airport a true hub for emergency services. I thank the Government and the Minister for his continued support of the bush. I thank also the volunteers for continuing to keep us safe.

VISIT DENI DESTINATION MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (13:34): I recognise the Edward River Council's achievement in receiving the Local Economic Contribution award at this year's Local Government Excellence Awards for their Visit Deni Destination Marketing Campaign. The Visit Deni campaign also took gold at the New South Wales Regional Tourism Awards. The campaign has succeeded in putting Deniliquin and the wider Edward River region

on the map as an attractive family holiday and water sport destination. Edward River Council outclassed several strong finalists for this award including metropolitan and regional councils, which is a real credit to the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of its staff in implementing the campaign. The council's dedicated and innovative Community and Economic Development team did a fantastic job in promoting what the region has to offer and it deserves to be commended for its efforts. I congratulate the Edward River Council.

MCAULEY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (13:35): McAuley Catholic Primary School, Rose Bay, is one of the special local schools in my electorate. On Tuesday 2 July 2019 I hosted students from years 5 and 6 during their visit to New South Wales Parliament House. In this Chamber I spoke about my role as a local member and tried to answer all their great questions. I thank the students and teacher Mrs Tania Lambros for visiting. I take this opportunity to salute the school's principal Gera Guilhaus and its teachers, parents, caregivers and students for creating such a caring community. Each year I am warmly welcomed at their Christmas liturgy and awards night at St Mary Magdalene's Catholic Church, Rose Bay, where there are always high achievers to congratulate and many Christmas carols to sing. The school consistently participates in my season's greeting card design competition and enters fantastic designs. Last time I visited the school I shared in Walk Safely to School Day. I look forward to visiting McAuley Catholic Primary School again very soon.

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:36): I acknowledge the enthronement of newly-elected Archbishop Makarios as the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Australia and Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. The appointment was unanimous and has been widely welcomed across Australia and the world. Thousands of people, including parishioners, schoolchildren, clergy and many dignitaries attended the ceremony on 29 June 2019 at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation or Our Lady. Born in Crete, His Eminence completed master's degrees at the universities of Boston, Harvard and Monash in Melbourne, and a doctorate at the University of Crete. He has been a monk since the age of 19 and there is no doubt he has made an enormous contribution to medical, scientific and theological academia as well as orthodoxy internationally. It has been a very difficult time for the Greek Orthodox community with the passing of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos. I congratulate the new Archbishop on his appointment and wish him great success in that role.

NARRANDERA FISHERIES CENTRE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (13:37): I recognise the exceptional work of the scientists and staff at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre. Manager Martin Asmus, Hatchery Manager Matt McLellan and Senior Fisheries Manager Cameron Westaway are overseeing some incredibly important projects for the State, including the restocking of Menindee Lakes and the development of the herpes virus to tackle carp numbers. The centre plays a significant role in breeding and conservation for New South Wales fish stocks. The 35-year-old centre is so productive that it is at full capacity and needs to expand. I am committed to working with the centre to pursue funding for its expansion.

WYONG MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:38): I congratulate Wyong Musical Theatre Company on its latest production, *Aladdin Jr*, and the talented, young cast of the fantastic show I attended on Friday 19 July 2019. It was a professional and thoroughly enjoyable production. I tapped along and enjoyed every minute. I congratulate the director, Amanda Daniel, and the entire cast, particularly cast members Sean Logan, Jamie Sturgess, Caitlin Stevens, Harrison Sturgess, Hartley Cox, Anneka Holland, Connor Logan, Tom Sutherland. My personal favourites were Jamie Sturgess as the genie and the very sinister Harrison Sturgess as Jafar. It was another fantastic show from the Wyong Musical Theatre Company's junior cast.

BELLA VISTA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (13:39): In May I was thrilled to be joined by the mayor of The Hills Shire Council, Dr Michelle Byrne, and the planning Minister, Mr Rob Stokes, to announce the official opening of Bella Vista Public School's new synthetic field. The facility enables talented footballers to play and train on a pitch that meets the requirements of Football NSW and allows for almost three times the play that even the most advanced natural grass fields can provide for training and home games. Previously there were no facilities in The Hills Shire that met the strict eligibility requirements. As our population continues to grow, the new sporting facility will provide essential support to our local clubs and help increase participation in sport and active recreation while contributing to the improved social, health and cultural outcomes of my community.

I thank principal Derek Danby for hosting the opening, as well as The Hills Shire Council and the NSW Department of Education whose efforts made the project possible. The new playing field is the direct result of local and State governments working together to provide local residents with the best possible quality of life. Previously, there were no facilities in The Hills Shire that could meet the strict eligibility requirements. As our population continues to grow, the new sporting facility will provide essential support to our local clubs and help increase participation in sport and active recreation, while contributing to improved social, health and cultural outcomes. I thank Principal Derek Danby for hosting the opening, as well as The Hills Shire Council and the Department of Education, whose efforts made this all possible. The new playing field is a direct result of a local government and the State Government working together to provide local residents with the very best possible quality of life.

GLENN TURNER, AM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:39): I congratulate Mr Glenn Turner on being made a Member of the Order of Australia in this year's Queen's Birthday honours. Mr Turner made his home in the City of Newcastle in 1977 and has been integrally involved in the re-development of the city over the last 40 years. In the various leadership roles that Mr Turner has held in Newcastle institutions, he has brought a drive for innovation in the ideas economy of the twenty-first century, which now typifies the city as a whole. In particular I recognise Mr Turner's contribution to the Newcastle-based Hunter Medical Research Institute [HMRI], firstly as foundation chair, and then as board chair. During his 10-year tenure Mr Turner provided invaluable strategic and fundraising leadership to position HMRI as a world-class entity in translational research. There was also a four-fold increase in income and a trebling of research, which came with a lot of opportunities. I am delighted to congratulate him on behalf of the people of the City of Newcastle and the Hunter region.

HOLSWORTHY HIGH SCHOOL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:40): I recognise the students of Holsworthy High School, who recently held an event to build community awareness about veterans and raise funds for Invictus Games athlete Rachel Kerrigan. The event was spearheaded by student Hannah Herron, who recently shared her story of meeting Rachel in an article published in the *Liverpool City Champion*. Hannah and Rachel met each other at the Invictus Education Project event at ANZ Stadium. The two bonded and Rachel subsequently invited Hannah to the semifinals of the wheelchair basketball at the Invictus Games, where she saw Prince Harry and the Duchess of Sussex. With encouragement from Rachel and after attending the wheelchair basketball event, Hannah has decided to take up the sport. I wish Hannah all the best as she begins to participate in this sport. I also congratulate all students of Holsworthy High, including Hannah, for their fundraising efforts towards Invictus Games athletes.

ASSYRIA DAY CONFERENCE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:41): On 30 June 2019 I had the honour of joining the Young Assyrians and the Australian Chapter of the Assyrian Universal Alliance for the 2019 Assyria Day Conference. Assyria Day promotes the objective of allowing all Assyrians to safely return to their indigenous homeland of the Nineveh Plains in northern Iraq and exist in harmony, peace and security with their neighbours. The theme for this year's Assyria Day conference was "Past, Present and Future". This year marked the ninth time that the annual Assyria Day conference had been held and featured speakers from a range of different areas of expertise. I acknowledge Deputy Secretary General of the Assyrian Universal Alliance Hermiz Shahan; President of the Assyrian Australian National Federation David David; the Young Assyrians Paul Warda, Nirari Shahan and Tighlat Rommel for their hard work in organising yet another incredible conference; and keynote speaker Professor Eftrem Yildiz for his impassioned remarks.

SING AUSTRALIA

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:42): I acknowledge a fantastic group in my electorate called Sing Australia St George. In April, I had the pleasure of attending Sing Australia's regional gathering at Peakhurst South Public School, which was part of a national Sing Australia celebration. The St George branch was joined by fellow Sing Australia groups including Ashbury, Collaroy, Plateau and Gordon. The day of celebration saw 105 Sing Australia groups meet across 32 regional gatherings to showcase the very significant achievements of Sing Australia, and to highlight the benefits of making singing an inclusive and non-judgmental activity. Sing Australia emphasises the need for inclusive singing as a way of connecting people in our communities. Sing Australia's 20 years of experience has made singing an accessible form of connecting thousands of potentially lonely people. I am proud to say that each year the St George branch has opened my annual St George Community Awards, which is a definite highlight of each award ceremony. I thank Sing Australia for their continued efforts in bringing joy to countless groups across my electorate.

MACQUARIE TOWNS ARTS SOCIETY

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (13:44): It is my pleasure to report to the House my attendance on Friday 31 May 2019 at the Macquarie Towns Arts Society's 2019 Autumn Exhibition, which was held at Richmond School of Arts. The event went from Friday 31 May to Sunday 2 June. The Macquarie Towns Arts Society has been operating for 63 years. I had the privilege of meeting well-regarded local artist Judy Brownlie, who had the difficult task of choosing the award winners. There were 38 artists and eight craftspeople displaying over 160 works. I pay tribute to the talent and dedication of all the artists and craftspeople whose work was on display and wish them all continued success and inspiration in their work. I congratulate Guenter Barth for his oil painting *Whirlpool*, which took out the top prize. I commend to the House the Macquarie Towns Arts Society for its commitment to showcasing our finest local art and organising such an engaging and worthwhile event.

WE CARE CONNECT

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:45): I thank We Care Connect and the very generous people in our community who recycle their children's equipment and clothes so families in need across the Central Coast and the Hunter region benefit. I congratulate Derek and Gloria, who have made this dream real. They now have a warehouse fully stocked with donated pre-loved children's clothing and quality baby items ready to give away. Caseworkers from community centres and family support agencies across the coast call on We Care Connect to support their families. Family and Community Services workers and other NGOs regularly use the resources provided by We Care Uniting, which is powered completely by volunteers and community donations. I send a shout-out to Derek and Gloria. They have worked hard to make this real and collaborate with a great bunch of volunteers who drive across the coast and Sydney connecting resources to distribute to families in need. I thank the many people who are involved.

GIVE ME 5 FOR KIDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (13:46): The compassionate health professionals who care for our kids when they get sick have hearts of gold. They bring hope every day to the children's wards in our hospitals. On the Coffs coast their important work is supported each year by the popular fundraiser called Give Me 5 for Kids, organised by Triple M 106.3 Coffs Coast. Triple M breakfast announcer and content director Michael Moffett—better known to his listeners as "Moffee" and the "Mayor of Moff's Harbour"—and his Triple M team pounded the pavement to raise money for the children's wards at Coffs Harbour and Bellingen hospitals for vital equipment. In five days they walked 50 kilometres from Woolgoolga in the north to Sawtell in the south, with generous locals throwing their money into the Triple M wheelie bin. The 2019 Give Me 5 for Kids promotion raised over \$52,000, with more pledges still coming in. The generous support of the Coffs coast business community and our wider community helped to make it a success. So too did the tireless efforts of Moffee and Triple M promotions co-ordinator Ben Grierson, and the generosity of Coffs Harbour Chamber of Commerce President Martin Wells.

PAUL ROBERTS

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (13:47): It is with pleasure that I congratulate Sergeant Paul Roberts on his retirement after 31 years of service with the NSW Police Force. Paul came from a small town in the Blue Mountains and was transferred to Nyngan in 1988. His dedication to the NSW Police Force is reflected in his many achievements. In the Nyngan floods of 1990 he helped to evacuate 2,200 residents to safety. Paul has always been passionate about helping people and has enjoyed being a part of a community where a person can make a difference. Paul has retired to his orange orchard property in Menindee. I thank Sergeant Paul Roberts for the positive and lasting impact he has made in keeping our communities safe.

DISABILITY TRUST

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:47): On 3 July 2019 I had the great honour of attending the opening of Disability Trust's Canterbury office. It was fantastic to be joined by Minister Gareth Ward, Mayor Khal Asfour, Aunty Joan, CEO Margaret Bowen and chief operations officer Edward Birt, and of course our amazing participants. The Disability Trust was established in 1974 to help people with disability and their families in the Illawarra. Disability Trust has grown across New South Wales and provides disability services to over 3,000 people. I am very happy to welcome Disability Trust to serve our community. I look forward to working together to ensure we advance opportunities for our fellow Australians.

DUBBO ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:48): I acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Dubbo community to secure funding for a hydrotherapy pool at the Yawarra Community School. I was proud to have the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, Sarah Mitchell, join me to officially turn the first sod on

the pool, which was allocated more than \$3 million in the "boom time" budget. This project has taken years of lobbying from community members. I am excited to see the final product: a facility which will benefit the students at the school and the wider community. While in town Minister Mitchell also took the time to visit Dubbo College Delroy Campus, Dubbo and District Preschool, Dubbo Public School, the Central West Leadership Academy and the Dubbo School of Distance Education, where she got a taste of the excellent array of educational opportunities Dubbo offers to suit the needs of students across the State's central and western areas. I thank the Minister for her visit.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins, a former member of the Victorian Legislative Council. I welcome former member for Eastwood and for Epping in this place, Andrew Tink, AM. Mr Tink is accompanied by friends Charlotte Brown, Steve Williams, Nate Malloy and Julianna Hale from Phoenix, Arizona, guests of me, the Speaker, and member for Davidson. I welcome to the Chamber Kenneth and Laurelle Watson, guests of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, and member for Kiama. I acknowledge in the gallery Alex McMartin, the school captain of Terrigal High School, guest of the member for Terrigal, and Government Whip. I acknowledge and welcome West Wollongong Probus Club members to the Chamber.

Announcements

DEATH OF TERRY PARKER, A FORMER SENIOR CHAMBER ATTENDANT IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER: It is with considerable regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 28 June this year of Terry Parker, who served as a Senior Chamber Attendant with the Legislative Assembly from 1980 until he accepted an offer of voluntary redundancy in June 2011 and subsequently retired, having worked previously in Parliamentary Catering from 1970 to 1980. On behalf of the House, I extend to his son, Peter, his daughter, Arlene, and the rest of Terry's family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly for their loss.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Local Government.

Announcements

DEATH OF BRUCE LAURENCE WEBSTER, FORMER MEMBER FOR PITTWATER

The SPEAKER: It is with regret that I have to inform the House of the death on 25 July this year of Bruce Laurence Webster, a former member of the Legislative Assembly, who served as the member for Pittwater from 8 February 1975 to 21 July 1978. On behalf of the House, I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

Rulings

DIVISIONS

The SPEAKER: Consistent with the advice foreshadowed prior to the winter recess, effective immediately, when divisions are called members who are sitting to my right will be voting with the ayes and members who are sitting to my left will be voting with the noes. So there is no scope for confusion, the dividing line is straight down the middle of the Chamber.

Members

LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AND OPPOSITION WHIP

Ms JODI McKAY: I inform the House of my election on 29 June 2019 as Leader of the Opposition, and of the election on 2 July 2019 of Yasmin Maree Catley as Deputy Leader of the Opposition and of Anna Watson as Opposition Whip.

*Announcements***PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS**

The SPEAKER: I welcome the new Leader of the Opposition to the Chamber and congratulate her on being elected. Members will be aware that in order to improve the way that Parliament works reforms are required—we might hear more about that later from the Leader of the House. To earn greater trust and faith from the public, there must be changes to both the processes of Parliament and the standards of behaviour we set. I remind members that the public expect and deserve debate that is vigorous, rigorous, intelligent, compassionate and, importantly, respectful. Both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have called publicly for this place to set a positive example. Members will ensure that that occurs. I thank the House for heading in the right direction in previous sitting weeks.

*Bills***APPROPRIATION BILL 2019****APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2019****CRIMES (ADMINISTRATION OF SENTENCES) AMENDMENT (INMATE BEHAVIOUR) BILL 2019****LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2019****AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER BILL 2019****STATE REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019****Assent**

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

*Judiciary***CONDUCT DIVISION OF THE JUDICIAL COMMISSION OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (14:24): By leave: I move:

That pursuant to clause 4 of schedule 2A of the Judicial Officers Act 1986:

- (1) This House nominates Mr Kenneth Edward Moroney, AO, APM, and Professor Nalini Joshi, AO, as community representatives for appointment to a panel of the Conduct Division of the Judicial Commission of New South Wales.
- (2) A message be sent requesting the Legislative Council's concurrence in the nominations.

One of the principal functions of the Judicial Commission is to examine complaints against judicial officers. After the Judicial Commission conducts a preliminary examination of those complaints, the commission can summarily dismiss the complaint, refer it to the head of jurisdiction or refer it to a Conduct Division for further investigation. A Conduct Division comprises two judicial officers and one community representative. The community representatives are persons of high standing in the community, nominated by Parliament, and rotate sitting subject to availability.

Mr Moroney has served on Conduct Divisions since the introduction of community representatives in 2008 and Professor Joshi has served since 2016. The nomination of Mr Moroney and Professor Joshi expired on the first meeting of the Legislative Assembly, following the recent State election. The Government is pleased to nominate Mr Moroney and Professor Joshi to continue their service as community representatives on the Conduct Division.

Professor Joshi is eminently qualified for this role. She is a fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and a former president of the Australian Mathematical Society. She is Payne-Scott Professor of mathematics at the University of Sydney and an Australian Research Council Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellow. She was appointed as an officer of the Order of Australia in 2016 for distinguished services to mathematical science and tertiary education as an academic, author and researcher in professional societies and as a role model and mentor of young mathematicians. In 2018 Professor Joshi was elected as vice-president of the International Mathematical Union and is the first Australian to be so elected.

Mr Moroney's qualifications and service have been set out before Parliament on each of the past occasions that his nomination has come before it. Members will be aware of Mr Moroney's service to the State as New South Wales Commissioner of Police from 2002 to 2007 and the countless honours and awards he has

deservedly attained. These include his appointment in 2006 as an officer of the Order of Australia and his awarding of the Australian Police Medal in 1992. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (14:27): The Opposition supports the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

Question Time

SYDNEY FOOTBALL STADIUM

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:30): My question is directed to the Premier. In the lead-up to the State election the former Minister for Sport, standing with the Treasurer, announced the Government had "now entered into a construction contract" with Lendlease for the new Sydney Football Stadium. Why did the Premier go to the election misleading the public?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:31): I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on her appointment. I remind her that these are questions without notice. In future she might not want to tell the radio station in the morning what she is going to be asking. She will get the hang of it.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As the good people of New South Wales well know, we have always been very upfront with our infrastructure programs. This is something those on the other side of the House cannot handle. They cannot handle the truth. It does not matter who they put up as their leader, it does not matter how many leaders they go through, we know when it comes to delivering infrastructure those opposite remain clueless. I say this with absolute conviction. Already, in just a few months this side of the election, we have opened the Sydney Metro Northwest, the M4 tunnels and a new car park at Nepean Hospital. This morning I was with the Minister for Transport and Roads welcoming the first light rail vehicle all the way down to Circular Quay. When it comes to stadiums, those opposite opposed the Western Sydney Stadium in Parramatta, and then were the first ones in the corporate boxes when the stadium opened. What we took to the people of New South Wales was a stadia policy. We all accept there was a lot of debate about that policy. We did the right thing.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: The Premier has been speaking for two minutes and has not been relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant. The member for Swansea will resume her seat. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. When I have ruled, members should cease speaking. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What we took to the people of New South Wales is a budget and a time frame for building the Sydney Football Stadium.

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Port Stephens that she will be put on a call to order if she continues to interject.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If I were the member for Maroubra I would keep my mouth shut.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In any event, we had an arrangement in place where the person engaged to build the stadium had certain—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: What one was that—the one you told people about, or the one you didn't tell people about?

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Do you want to hear the answer?

The SPEAKER: There are too many interjections. Any member who continues to interject will be placed on a call to order. The member for Londonderry, the member for Swansea and the member for Port Stephens already are on one call to order. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: There were certain obligations with the partner we had, but that partner did not meet those obligations. Not only were there obligations around timing and price, but also there were obligations around specific issues for what the stadium would offer the people of New South Wales.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: A hole in the ground.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know, based on advice we received about construction in New South Wales, that the best option for the people of this great State to receive value for money but also to receive a great product was for us to go back to the marketplace, and that is exactly what we are doing.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It would have been more irresponsible for us to go down a path that would not have got us the result we needed to get for the people of this State. I am the Premier and we are a government that has a positive track record when it comes to infrastructure. Unlike—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is specifically about why the Premier misled the community in the lead-up to the election. We know that is what happened.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: The question is: Why did she do that?

The SPEAKER: The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I place on the record that the proposition in that question is wrong and false, but we will put that to one side. As I said, what the people of New South Wales were promised is a brand-new stadium and they are going to get it—just like we delivered the Western Sydney Stadium, just like we delivered the Sydney Metro Northwest, the M5 tunnel, the hospitals, our schools and our roads, because that is what governments do.

COST OF LIVING

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (14:36): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the steps the Government is taking to improve the lives of all New South Wales residents, and are there any alternatives?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:36): The short answer to the second part of the question is no. I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question and I know that he, like all members of this place, is here to make the lives of citizens of a better quality and full of opportunity. I am very pleased to say that, while those opposite have been lobbying each other about who should be leader, while they have been jostling about who should be on the front bench, while they have been sending out material—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I have pointed out to the member for Keira—

Mr Ryan Park: Happy days!

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I remind the member for Keira that he will not be given the same latitude that he was given when he was acting Leader of the Opposition.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say that while those opposite have been obsessed with themselves, we have been obsessed with providing services and infrastructure for the great people of New South Wales. I am very pleased to say that since the last time the Parliament sat we have opened the new M4 tunnel. We have had a lot of feedback not just from western Sydney commuters, but also from many others who have noted that their travel times have been reduced by between 20 and sometimes up to 25 minutes. First of all those opposite promised that project about three times when they were in government. They failed to deliver it, and when we said we would deliver it they opposed it at every turn. The number one opposer, of course, is the new Leader of the Opposition. It actually helped her constituents and yet she saw fit to oppose this project.

Ms Jodi McKay: How much is the toll, Premier?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You just can't handle the truth; it is okay. This side of the House will match you on detail any day of the week or any month or any year. As I was saying, not only have we delivered the new M4 tunnel, which is showing real benefits for the people of New South Wales, but also we are getting on with the job of the Gateway project to reduce travel times for people delivering goods and services to the ports and the airport, which will support reducing congestion around the airport. I was pleased to visit the Nepean Hospital accompanied by the member for Penrith and Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, and the member for Mulgoa to inspect the great progress of the hospital resulting from the major funding boost from this Government. I was very excited to see the progress at that hospital and in so many other hospitals throughout New South Wales.

Recently it has not just been infrastructure that the Government has been working on but also reducing the cost-of-living pressures. We know that while the State is doing well, and has a very strong and healthy infrastructure project pipeline, families are doing it tough. I commend the Treasurer and also the Minister for Customer Service for ensuring that the extra dollars in Treasury are spent on reducing the cost-of-living pressures on families. The Government does that by toll relief, energy rebates and the Active Kids program. During this year's election campaign, the Government announced its intention to double the Active Kids program, but Labor opposed it. Who would oppose giving children vouchers to participate in sport? Who in their right minds would oppose parents getting relief from the cost of sending their children to not one but two sporting activities a year? This Government would never deny members of the Labor Party an opportunity to better themselves!

The Government also is very proud of the measures designed to reduce the cost of living, such as compulsory third party refunds. I commend the Minister for Transport and Roads for capping Opal fares at \$50 a week, which has had such a positive impact on people who travel longer distances. This morning I bumped into the member for Camden in the lift and asked him how he got to Parliament House. He told me he caught the train. I know that many members catch public transport, as do many members of the community, and now fares are capped at \$50. The Government prides itself not only on delivering infrastructure and services our communities need but also on reducing pressures of meeting vital costs of living. Members of the Labor Party continue to be obsessed with themselves whereas members of this Government continue to work their guts out for the people of New South Wales. I thank the member for Wollondilly for his question and commend him for his outstanding hard work in his electorate, which I visited recently. [*Extension of time*]

On the same day I visited his electorate of Wollondilly and received very positive feedback from a number of his stakeholders on how hard he is working, I also visited the Goulburn electorate where I met the member for Goulburn to announce the first tranche of 1,500 police officers hitting the beat across the breadth and width of New South Wales—in regional communities and cities—to ensure that people not only are safe but also feel safe at all times. That is what governments do. During elections, they take commitments to the voters and when they receive the support of the community, they diligently put their heads down and get on with the job of delivering for the people of this great State. This Government will not be diverted from that aim but will stay focused and disciplined. That is what the people of New South Wales expect from this Government and that is what we will deliver.

SYDNEY FOOTBALL STADIUM

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:42): My question is directed to the Premier. Let's talk about infrastructure. Given that the CBD and South East Light Rail is a project that is more than a year late and \$1 billion over budget, will her Government's new Sydney Football Stadium be delivered on time? Will the Premier give an ironclad guarantee that not one extra cent of taxpayers' dollars will be spent?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:43): Again, I remind the new Leader of the Opposition that this is questions without notice. However, it is a very timely question because the Minister for Transport and Roads and I had the absolute pleasure of welcoming the first light rail vehicle all the way down to Circular Quay. What is symbolic about today is not just that the vehicle reached Circular Quay but that it travelled for over a kilometre while being what we call catenary free, which means it did not have any wires on top.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Charlestown not to interject. She is not yet on a call to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to be factual when asking a question. The facts are that the Government said the project would be delivered early in the first of half of this year. The first stage, the main spine of the project, will be open in December this year.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I think the Premier is confused. My question was not about an ironclad guarantee around the light rail; it was about an ironclad guarantee around the stadium. We are seeking a guarantee on costs and timing.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the Leader of the Opposition asks a question that contains incorrect facts it is my prerogative to address those incorrect facts.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will rule on the last point of order in the event that the Leader of the Opposition is now questioning the Premier's comment. The preamble to and an inherent part of the question referred to the history of the light rail. Therefore, the Premier is being relevant in her response in referring to the light rail. I am happy to hear further from the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Premier questioned the premise of my question that the light rail is \$1 billion over budget and a year late. That is factual.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. I have ruled on the matter. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I was saying, I cannot wait for the light rail to start operations in December this year. It is going to be amazing.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will repeat my warning: Any further interjections will result in a call to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Whilst I wrap up on the light rail part of the question, I want to say that this question has come from the same party that opposed the Newcastle Light Rail and then condemned the Government for not building it longer.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They told us it has been oversubscribed. The member for Port Stephens should know that.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time. The member for Port Stephens is on her last warning.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This is the party that said it did not want light rail in Newcastle and now that it is open it wants us to extend the line. This is the same party—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: We are seeking an ironclad guarantee on the cost and timing of the stadium.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: It is Standing Order 129, relevance.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: To make life easier for the Leader of the Opposition I make this point: Whether it is a promise on stadia projects or other projects, the Government intends to keep all of its election commitments to the letter. I say this with the strongest conviction. This question comes from a party that when it was in government promised 12 different rail lines and delivered none of them. This comes from a party that promised the M4 tunnels three or four times and was not able to deal with them. This Government is governing for the betterment of the people of New South Wales. I say to those opposite to support projects and services that will improve lives—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. If the Premier is governing for the people of New South Wales she should give them an ironclad guarantee on costs and timing.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will continue. I will not take any further points of order on relevance from the Leader of the Opposition, the last point of order having been frivolous.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is going to be a very long four years. The Government is incredibly proud of its infrastructure record. Whether it is stadiums, light rail, the metro, roads, schools or hospitals, we intend to keep all of our promises, commitments and time frames. I look forward to showing the evidence when the ribbons are cut.

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:48): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on why the Liberal-Nationals Government is best placed to represent regional New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:49): I congratulate the member for Strathfield on her election as leader of the Labor Party. I wish her a long reign as Leader of the Opposition. I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her advocacy and her work in her electorate. There is not a better champion for regional New South Wales and particularly Port Macquarie. During her time as a member and at election after election she has continued to fight for the people of regional New South Wales.

That is in stark contrast to the members opposite, who for 16 years spent very little money in regional New South Wales. At the last election they campaigned against investment in regional New South Wales. Over the last three years I was out there along with other Ministers of this Government investing in regional New South Wales. The Opposition called it pork-barrelling. When the Government announced \$542 million for Tweed Valley

Hospital the Opposition said it would cancel the development. When the Government found an innovative way to deliver tertiary education to regional centres in the form of the Country Universities Centre, the members opposite used parliamentary privilege to slander Ministers and the volunteer members of the committee. We are delivering tertiary education in regional centres to regional students, the first in their family to receive it, so that we can keep our kids at home. Those opposite continue to campaign against it.

Imagine if the Labor Party won an election and occupied the Government benches. What would it mean for regional New South Wales? We know that under Labor hospital projects were abandoned or unfunded throughout the State. Sick people had nowhere to go. Labor handed out 37 coal seam gas licences across the State, like tossing out confetti or how-to-vote cards on election day. There was high unemployment and lower business confidence and there were more taxes. Labor neglected country roads, not just local roads, and transferred roads to councils. Labor said it would duplicate the Pacific Highway. Guess what? It only got half the job done. Labor promised hospitals in Parkes, Tamworth and Bathurst yet never delivered them. Labor closed maternity units in Ballina, Cessnock, Cowra, Wellington and Yass. I take this moment before I speak about the Government's investments in regional New South Wales to recall what Labor did when it was in government. Remember the solar bonus scheme? It was going to cost \$355 million; it blew out to \$1.9 billion. Those opposite cannot manage money.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Deputy Premier wants to make a personal reflection on the good years of Labor he should do so by way of substantive motion. He should get back to answering how he has continuously ignored regional New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. Standing Order 73 relates to reflections on an individual rather than a party. There is no point of order. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If you want to debate the good years of Labor that will take 30 seconds. Those opposite under their new leadership, the girl from Gloucester, pretending to be a regional country girl—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The previous point of order taken by the member for Campbelltown was out of order. I will hear his point of order, but it had better be a good one.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The standing order relates to a personal reflection, which the Deputy Premier is clearly conveying in the House at this time. If he would like a debate about the Opposition leader or the good years of Labor he should move a motion and we will stay here all night while we tell the House what we did in government and what the current Government has not done.

The SPEAKER: I refer to my previous ruling. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Firstly, my reference was a term of endearment. Secondly, it is what the Opposition has dubbed the member for Strathfield and she should wear it as a badge of honour. She has come from the regions. However, there is a difference between someone coming from regional New South Wales who fights for regional New South Wales and someone who dons on a little Akubra hat, turns up in the regions and tells them what is best for them. The Leader of the Opposition chose to do this last week at the NSW Farmers conference. Unlike vegans that trespass on private property in the regions, these farmers came to Sydney for their conference and were addressed by the Leader of the Opposition. The Opposition leader had an opportunity to pitch the Opposition's vision for regional New South Wales to people in regional communities and farmers, who are doing it tough.

What did she do? Again, she used drought as a political football. When she got up it was a little bit embarrassing. The only time she used the word "drought" was when she said that the National Party had caused it. I think she followed up by saying that the National Party should be investigated for the assassination of JFK. I think that was the other thing that she called for. Because of the ignorance of the Leader of the Opposition she thinks she can turn up to a conference in Sydney— [*Extension of time*]

Once again we have a leader of the Opposition and leader of the Labor Party using drought as a political football. The farmers in that room were waiting to hear a vision about supporting their cause. This State is facing the toughest drought in recorded history, but what does the Leader of the Opposition do? She turns up to a conference to attack some of those members in that room by playing political football with the drought. She embarrassed herself by saying that The Nationals caused the drought. The next day the media asked me questions about those comments. No-one could believe it; there was disbelief. It was ignorant, it was embarrassing, it was just stupid and it just showed that for Labor members drought and regional New South Wales continue to be political footballs.

In the meantime, over the winter recess, Government members, including me and other Ministers, were travelling across the State and investing in regional New South Wales. We are investing in a new airport at Scone. We were in Singleton for upgrades of roads. We travelled to Dubbo where we announced more funding for roads. We went to Gilgandra for a new business precinct. We went to Coonamble, where we are investing in the local caravan park. We went to Nyngan, where we are investing in the local railway museum. We also went to Broken Hill, where we are also investing in an upgrade to the airport. Those investments will support those communities in times of drought. This is beyond the farm fence. This is about stimulating local economies and supporting local businesses, tradies and subcontractors, who we know are all doing it tough. When farmers are doing it tough, they are not spending money in town. When they are not spending money in town, it means small businesses and families are doing it tough.

We chose the winter period to get out and about and make the investments we said we would make in the budget. We are talking to regional communities, turning up, listening and responding, and detailing our vision and 20-year blueprint for regional New South Wales, at the top of which is water security. Yet members opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition, want to play politics with drought and with the people of regional New South Wales. She pretends to be a champion for the regions, but I can be honest with members of this House. It is clear that Labor will continue in the same old way—that is, to neglect regional New South Wales.

SYDNEY CRICKET AND SPORTS GROUND TRUST LAND

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (14:57): My question is directed to the sports Minister. Will the Minister rule out any hotel complex on Sydney Cricket Ground trust lands?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will wait until there is silence. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (14:58): I thank the shadow Minister for her question and her interest in sport. Finally, the electorate of Auburn has a member who actually lives in the electorate—I think. To give members an idea of the interest that the member for Auburn has in sport and stadia, I quote a line from one of her press releases:

Penny Sharpe MLC—

We have moved on since then. It states:

They are going ahead with a stadium in the eastern suburbs, yet western Sydney will miss out.

Can you believe that? According to them, Parramatta is not western Sydney.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. To help the Minister, the question is whether he will rule out any hotel complex on the Sydney Cricket Ground trust land. It is a pretty definitive question.

The SPEAKER: The question was very specific, but the Minister is in the first minute of his answer. The Minister will continue.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the interjection because it gives me a great opportunity to say how lucky I am to have one of the best portfolios in the world and to talk about some of the great things that the Government is doing in my sport portfolio. Whether it is promoting world-class stadia, whether it is our grassroots encouragement for participation in sport—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will wait to hear further from the Minister, but I remind him that the question was very specific.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: We will deliver on all promises we made regarding anything that is going to be built anywhere. We will look at everything at the appropriate time. I say to the shadow Minister—

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance. It was a very specific question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's answer is starting to become relevant. The Minister will continue.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: The member's question is an issue for planning. While it may be sport related—

Ms Jodi McKay: You are the Minister. You make the decisions.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. It is not acceptable for the Leader of the Opposition to stand up and to interject into the microphone at the table. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: You know they have lost an argument when they make hundreds of interjections. We should not be sidetracked from the real issue. The Labor Party is as dysfunctional as ever. It took Labor members three months to pick a leader and—guess what—they got it wrong.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I know you said you would listen further. My point of order is under Standing Order 129. I draw your attention to the specific question, which was will the Minister rule out a hotel complex on Sydney Cricket Ground trust lands? It was a very specific question. The Minister should rule it out.

The SPEAKER: The question was specific. The Minister has been relevant in referring to planning, but I remind him of the leave of the question.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Our Government is getting on with the job of building a better New South Wales. We are delivering more teachers, more schools and more hospitals. We have a record drought relief package of \$1.8 billion for our colleagues in The Nationals. This Government delivers on its promises.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: This answer is entirely irrelevant. The Minister has been going for four minutes now. I ask you to draw him back to the leave of the question.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Why doesn't the Leader of the Opposition ask me for an extension? The Leader of the Opposition can be assured that the Liberal-Nationals Government will deliver unprecedented funds for everything that the people of New South Wales want. This Government delivers what it says it will deliver. This Government has a proven track record of delivering on time and on budget.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:03): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Government is building a strong economy, and are there any alternatives?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (15:03): Jodi, where is your sari?

Ms Jodi McKay: It is entirely inappropriate to talk about my clothing.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Bankstown is not very "sari" about her article this morning. It was a great start to unity among members on the other side of the House.

Ms Jodi McKay: Do you want to borrow one, Dom?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: No, but I do want to congratulate you on becoming the third Leader of the Opposition in the past 12 months. That is one every four months, so members opposite do not need to worry; they will all get a go pretty soon. The member for Kogarah will definitely be getting a go—he's quiet now. As the member for Albury knows all too well, when the economy goes well so too do our regions right across New South Wales. We have seen some emerging headwinds across the country and around the world. The International Monetary Fund recently released its World Economic Outlook, which found that global growth remains subdued. It put that down to a number of factors, including an increase in tariffs between the United States and China, the slowing of global trade and a winding back on spending from both firms and households across both emerging and advanced economies. The good news is that despite those global challenges the New South Wales economy is powering ahead. That makes our performance stand out even more. Going back to the 2015 election, we took the poles and wires reform to the people—a reform opposed by Labor. That reform unlocked significant capital that is now being invested in infrastructure across the State.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It has added half a percentage point to our economic growth. As the national economy slides, you cannot just turn on the tap of infrastructure. The New South Wales Government was ahead of the curve and we showed leadership. That is why the New South Wales economy continues to power ahead. We have the lowest unemployment rate of any State at 4.6 per cent. Employment growth in New South Wales has been over performing. The participation rate is at a record high at 65.9 per cent, driven in particular by demand from labour intensive industries.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: What are you doing about essential energy workers? What about the public sector workers—2,500 of them?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Look, you guys don't even have the right to talk about the economy. You moved the shadow Treasurer upstairs. I am unmarked down here. Don't stop with me—you might as well have the entire shadow Cabinet upstairs.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Play to your strengths: sit here and say nothing. Back to the economy. We are starting to see signs of recovery in the housing market. Post the great result in the Federal election we are seeing auction rates increase. We are seeing consumption—which has been low—increase. Right across the board we are seeing the return of Liberal-Nationals confidence off the back of those two elections. These strong economic fundamentals mean that we can continue to deliver on the things that matter right across New South Wales. Just this month we have seen the payroll tax threshold increase again—that is adding to last year's budget—from \$850,000 to \$900,000. That means that nearly 40,000 small businesses will save more than \$2,000 each year. I note that the Labor Opposition opposed that reform at the election.

Increasing the payroll tax threshold means that smaller businesses can continue to invest, give pay rises to their staff and take on and hire more staff and more apprentices. That is the New South Wales difference. While other Labor States around the country are increasing taxes and cutting public service wages, we in New South Wales are cutting taxes and implementing a range of initiatives, including the cost-of-living initiative and the Active Kids rebate that we spoke about earlier, to put more money back into the pockets of families and businesses so they can grow. At the same time we are leading the way when it comes to public service wages in this country. We are the best friend the unions have ever had. [*Extension of time*]

That shows the difference between the philosophies on our side and on their side. We want to cut taxes and grow the economy; they want to increase taxes and cut wages. That remains the Labor way; the proof is in the pudding. When you compare the States from the north to the south you can see the strong differences between the Labor Party and the Liberals and The Nationals. I see the new shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Walt Secord, is out.

Mr Brad Hazzard: He is a very trustworthy person.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: And you would know—the broken Secord. He was out talking about integrity today. This is a bloke—

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: He got Eddie Obeid's spot in the upper House.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That's right. In 2010 the article said—this is how he came into this place—Eddie Obeid approached the party office and indicated he wanted to move on, but only under the proviso that his replacement is Walt Secord.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will resume his seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —only under the proviso that his replacement was Walt Secord.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Treasurer wants to attack a member of the other place he should do so by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: I clarify that Standing Order at 73 relates to personal attacks. It does not preclude political criticisms that are not of a personal nature.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: When it comes to integrity, every single member on this side has the utmost integrity. The party of ICAC on the other side of the House should be very careful about the accusations it makes.

MINISTER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:10): My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Last November the Minister's chief of staff gave an undertaking to the Commissioner of State Revenue that the confidential records of motorists that were part of a data breach had been destroyed. Will the Minister explain how those records appeared in the media 2½ months later? What action has the Minister taken against his chief of staff?

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge that today is the Minister's birthday.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (15:11): I thank the member for her question. As I indicated before, this matter has been referred to the appropriate authorities.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question has been asked and the Minister is answering it. I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I remain ready, willing and able to assist in those investigations if called upon to do so. If the member has any material, I suggest she refers it to the authorities. Apart from that, I will not be saying anything further in relation to this matter.

NSW POLICE FORCE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:12): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on the rollout of increased police numbers across New South Wales and are there any alternatives?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call Government members to order. When a Government member is trying to ask a question, it is not appropriate to talk over her.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:12): I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question, and particularly for her interest in policing in her local community. Earlier this month I was delighted to attend a ride-along with Nepean Police Area Command officers in the Mulgoa electorate. We had expected to pick up a few Labor politicians along the way—some of them reside out there. It was a fantastic way for me to be introduced to the Mulgoa electorate. A few weeks ago the Premier and I announced that an additional 450 police officers would be on the beat this financial year as part of the Government's historic commitment to increase the NSW Police Force by 1,500 people over the next four years. This is the largest single increase in police numbers in New South Wales in more than 30 years. It is an investment of \$583 million dollars.

Over the winter recess, while Labor had endless party room meetings, I was all across the State visiting towns such as Walgett, Coffs Harbour, Port Stephens and Sanctuary Point. While the member for Strathfield was being measured up for her aforementioned sari, I was meeting with officers such as Detective Senior Constable Beckett in Dubbo and Superintendent Joyce in Terrigal. I went to Tweed, where the local member and I announced a number of additional police for the Tweed-Byron police district, along with five extra officers to go to the Marine Area Command unit. I went to Coffs Harbour with the freshly minted member for that electorate, where the local police district will receive an extra eight officers.

Last night I was in the electorate of Wollondilly. The member for Wollondilly, the member for Camden and I spoke to members of the Camden Police Area Command, which will receive six new officers. The Hunter Valley Police District received a whopping 11 new officers, the mid North Coast Police District received 10 officers and the Monaro Police District will welcome nine new officers, including an Elder Abuse Prevention Officer. That is not all. People living in the police districts of The Hills, Manning-Great Lakes, New England, Chifley, Lake Macquarie, Lake Illawarra, Port Stephens-Hunter, Oxley, Tuggerah Lakes or Hume can sleep a little better at night knowing that five new officers are coming to their local police district and local area command. The member for Mulgoa is very excited that her local police area command will be allocated 11 new police officers.

It is not just about police officers; we are also rolling out infrastructure. Yesterday I was joined by the member for South Coast and Minister for Local Government to open the brand-new Bay and Basin police station at Sanctuary Point. Soon we will be opening a new police station at Mount Druitt, which will be very useful. That command will welcome seven new officers. I am sure members opposite are listening intently. I have been thinking about how the extra police resources will assist their electorates. The Leader of the Opposition could do with the nine extra police officers in surveillance to track down the new shadow police Minister who is certainly missing in action and has done nothing since her elevation to that role. Based on today's effort, maybe those opposite could use a couple of new strategic officers to assist them in question time. The member for Kogarah might need some negotiation officers to assist him and his mates after having been shafted to the back bench.

In contrast to the theatrics and back room dealings of members opposite, this Government remains committed. Since being elected the Government has added 1,000 new police officers. It is a historic announcement and the biggest increase in the NSW Police Force in more than 30 years. Our initiatives with respect to child protection and elder abuse are second to none. The great friend of the parliamentary Liberal Party and the former member for Epping, Mr Andrew Tink, AM, is present in the Chamber. He could only dream of those numbers when he was the shadow Minister for Police, preparing to assist the Liberal Party in taking the Treasury benches in this State. Of course, frontline police better protect, better serve and better assist in fighting crime. We all remember that when Labor was in government crime rates soared, and not just in their parliamentary wing—police were understaffed and stations were closed. The Labor Party cannot be trusted, but the Coalition Government can be trusted to put more police on the streets to make our communities safer.

MYUNA BAY SPORT AND RECREATION CENTRE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:17): My question is directed to the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. Following the Minister's call for an independent review of the closure of Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre, will the Minister update the House on the status of that review and on whether the Government remains committed to reopening the centre and giving staff back their jobs?

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (15:18): I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. He is a hard worker for his electorate; I have witnessed that firsthand. We have been working very closely on the issues surrounding the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre. In March 2019 the New South Wales Office of Sport closed the centre following advice from Origin Energy regarding the potential safety risks if the stability of the Eraring Power Station ash dam wall were to be affected.

I accept that the community is concerned about the impact of this decision and the way in which the decision was made. As I previously reported to the House, I commissioned an independent peer review of the technical advice that the New South Wales Office of Sport relied upon when making its decision to close the centre. The New South Wales Dams Safety Committee facilitated this independent review of the technical reports. The independent reviewer has concluded that the assessment of risk in the original report was reasonable, and the closure of the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre as a means of risk reduction was consistent with the New South Wales dam regulation policy relating to such risk or potential risk. The independent reviewer has also recommended further work be undertaken to increase the understanding of the level of risk in greater detail.

The additional work has commenced and I have been advised that the technical information required to provide an informed decision about the centre will be available by early September. I am determined to ensure that the safety of New South Wales residents is a priority and that we have all the information needed to make the right decision about the long-term viability of the Myuna Bay centre. Staff will remain on full pay until the future of the centre is determined. It is my intention to make the report publicly available in the coming days. Once again, I sincerely thank the member for his cooperation and assure him that I will keep working with him to get the right result for the Lake Macquarie community.

JOBS GROWTH

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (15:21): My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering jobs for New South Wales, and are there any alternatives?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (15:21): I thank the member for Vaucluse for her question. I know that she is incredibly passionate about the economy in New South Wales creating jobs. She is particularly passionate about the ongoing research and development work that is happening across a number of universities and about making sure that the research can be commercialised and turned into job opportunities in the future. One of the things that underpin the creation of jobs in New South Wales is the strength of the New South Wales economy, particularly our \$93 billion infrastructure program that is driving jobs across New South Wales, including in Sydney, in the Hunter and Newcastle, in Wollongong, across the southern parts of the State and out in regional New South Wales. This year's budget projects an \$802 million surplus, and an average surplus of \$1.7 billion over the next four years. For the fourth consecutive year, our budget is in a negative net debt position.

The State's economy has been strong since this Government was first elected in 2011 and has generated over 670,000 jobs since that time. This jobs growth is ensuring that communities in New South Wales continue to be strong. It is not just a Sydney story. In the last 12 months regional New South Wales has added nearly 15,000 jobs, once again supporting the words of the Deputy Premier that are often heard in this Chamber when he talks about regional New South Wales: Let's not talk regional New South Wales down; let's talk about how resilient it is during the drought.

On top of infrastructure, supporting businesses that are future focused is one of the key things that the Government focuses on. It has supported over 500 companies that have generated 14,294 jobs, which is on track to the Government's target of 20,000 new future focused jobs by 2021. A fantastic example of this is the Government's \$35 million investment in its ongoing commitment to the Sydney Startup Hub. The hub has completely changed the way Sydney is perceived as a high-tech innovation centre and it is supporting a number of small businesses in their early growth phases. More than 480 start-ups are either residing at the Sydney Startup Hub or have come through that centre. It is starting to have a real impact internationally and businesses are looking to invest in New South Wales.

Recently I was out with the Premier and the Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts after the Government announced that it would support, with an additional incentive, the areas involved in the screen industry's post, digital and visual effects [PDV]. There is no bigger business in the PDV world than ILM—Industrial Light & Magic. The company was set up by George Lucas. Every person in this Chamber will almost certainly have seen the company's work in action in Marvel films or the *Star Wars* series. It is the world leader in a \$15 billion industry. What has it decided to do after the New South Wales Government followed the Commonwealth and added an extra 10 per cent for PDV businesses that invest

in New South Wales so that investments of over \$500,000 will now generate a 10 per cent rebate? ILM has decided to set up its next global office right here in Sydney.

That will create over 500 jobs and means Sydney now sits alongside cities like Vancouver, San Francisco and London as a world leader in future focused jobs, which are based here. The company is also going to work on the latest *Star Wars* movie, which will go into post production in the next few months. It will be based at Fox Studios, and 500 jobs will go into that location. We expect that the business will not only continue to grow but also strengthen PDV small businesses and the existing ecosystem amongst such businesses in Sydney. The strength of the existing workforce—the talent here in Sydney—is one of the main reasons that ILM wanted to base itself in New South Wales.

It is not just about bringing in one business; it is about making sure that we invest in the skills and training to ensure people in New South Wales have jobs going forward. One fantastic partnership that the New South Wales Government has created with ILM—I also thank the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education; being from Parramatta, he understands how important industry partnerships are—is a \$6 million investment that will create a trainee program that allows the best people in the industry to come to Sydney and strengthen their skills, sending a signal that Sydney is the post-production PDV capital in the Asia-Pacific region. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: I remind members to keep private conversations to a minimum.

Mr STUART AYRES: I thank the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and member for Parramatta for his support with that initiative. With investments such as that of ILM in New South Wales, we see how important it is to develop strong precincts that can attract jobs and allow businesses to cluster together and leverage investment from government in infrastructure, skills development and education. There are now three significant precincts on the boil in Sydney. There is TechCentral, which provides a real opportunity to concentrate and cluster work around tech and innovation. The precinct in and around Central station is a game changer for tech and innovation. Atlassian, Australia's \$50 billion global start-up, has already said that it wants to call Sydney home. It is an Australian business and it wants Sydney to be its global headquarters. It has committed to TechCentral. The New South Wales Government will be working with other businesses as it continues to grow the opportunities across TechCentral.

Westmead and North Parramatta present huge opportunities around the medtech industry, with small businesses producing medical devices and research into new businesses associated with medicine and medical practices, driven by a \$1 billion investment in Westmead Hospital. I know that that precinct will continue to drive jobs growth across western Sydney. The third precinct is our outward and globally focused western Sydney Aerotropolis, which will make sure that businesses get to leverage the full benefits of the new western Sydney airport and create over 200,000 jobs in the Western Parkland City to ensure that people who live west of the M7 get the opportunity to live and work closer to home. Our focus is not only on Sydney; we want to make sure that the special activation precincts that have been announced by the Deputy Premier are supported across regional New South Wales so we can build on the 15,000 jobs that have been created in the regions over the past 12 months and hit our target of generating 250,000 new jobs in New South Wales over the next four years.

Documents

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 142 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the following reports of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission received out of session on 25 June 2019:

- (1) *Operation Chivero*, dated June 2019.
- (2) *Operation Errigal*, dated June 2019.
- (3) *Operation Kariba*, dated June 2019.
- (4) *Operation Rozzano*, dated June 2019.

I order that the reports be printed.

NSW CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAM

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 43 of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, I announce receipt of a report of the NSW Child Death Review Team entitled *Biennial*

report of the deaths of children in New South Wales: 2016 and 2017, incorporating reviewable deaths of children, dated 25 June 2019. I order that the report be printed.

In accordance with section 34I of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Child Death Review Team entitled *Review of suicide clusters and evidence-based prevention strategies for school-aged children*, dated 25 June 2019. I order that the report be printed.

FORESTRY AGREEMENTS AND INTEGRATED FORESTRY OPERATIONS APPROVALS

Amendments

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 69H of the Forestry Act 2012, I announce receipt of amendment No. 7 to the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval for Riverina Red Gum, dated 20 June 2019, together with a statement of reasons, received out of session on 8 July 2019 and authorised to be made public this day. I order that the report be printed.

INSPECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the special report of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Report concerning a complaint by the Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch) and Country Labor about the conduct of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in investigating political donations received by these parties*, dated July 2019, received out of session on 17 July 2019. I order that the report be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

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

- (1) *Contracting non-government organisations*, dated 26 June 2019, received out of session on 26 June 2019 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) *Managing native vegetation*, dated 27 June 2019, received out of session on 27 June 2019 and authorised to be printed.
- (3) *Ensuring contract management capability in government – Department of Education*, dated 28 June 2019, received out of session on 28 June 2019 and authorised to be printed.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Inquiry

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the sustainability of energy supply and resources in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 19 June 2019 Gregory Michael Piper was elected chair and Tanya Davies was elected deputy chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 June 2019 the Hon. Matthew Ryan Mason-Cox, MLC, was elected chair and Felicity Lesley Wilson was elected deputy chair of the Committee on Children and Young People.

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 June 2019 Tanya Davies was elected chair and the Hon. Taylor Mitchell Martin, MLC, was elected deputy chair of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 June 2019 Dugald William Saunders was elected chair and the Hon. Niall Mark Blair, MLC, was elected deputy chair of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission.

STAYS SAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 June 2019 the Hon. Lou Amato, MLC, was elected chair and Robyn Anne Preston was elected deputy chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 June 2019 Nathaniel Gerard Smith was elected chair and the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC, was elected deputy chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General.

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 June 2019 Wendy Elizabeth Lindsay was elected chair and Dugald William Saunders was elected deputy chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services.

COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 June 2019 Wendy Margaret Tuckerman was elected chair and Mark Owen Taylor was elected deputy chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 20 June 2019 Peter Brian Sidgreaves was elected chair and Adam Sibery Crouch was elected deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Wyong and Gosford Hospital Parking Fees

Petition asking the Government to cap staff parking fees at Wyong and Gosford public hospitals, received from **Mr David Mehan**.

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

*Committees***STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE****Membership**

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That Ryan John Park and Anna Watson be appointed to serve on the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee in place of Paul Gerard Lynch and Nickola Lulich—discharged.

Motion agreed to.

*Announcements***PETITIONS**

The SPEAKER: Before I call the Clerk to table any petitions received, I inform members that in future the practice will not involve reading out the list of petitions, but that list will continue to be printed in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Youth Skateboard Facility

Petition requesting the Government to stop Woollahra Municipal Council from developing a youth skateboard facility at Yarrabee Park and Rushcutters Bay Park and to work together to locate a more appropriate site, received from **Ms Gabrielle Upton**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Don Harwin—Powerhouse Museum Ultimo—lodged 28 May 2019 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Paul Toole—Orange and Central West Rail Services—lodged 28 May 2019 (Mr Philip Donato)

The Hon. David Elliott—Wellington Police Station—lodged 19 June 2019 (Mr Dugald Saunders)

The Hon. Adam Marshall—Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program—lodged 30 May 2019 (Ms Jenny Aitchison)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Katoomba Airfield—lodged 30 May 2019 (Ms Trish Doyle)

The Hon. Shelley Hancock—MidCoast Council Administrative Offices—lodged 6 June 2019 (Mr Stephen Bromhead)

The Hon. John Sidoti—Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre—lodged 5 June 2019 (Mr Greg Piper)

*Motions Accorded Priority***M4 EAST TUNNEL****Consideration**

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:35): My motion should be accorded priority because our communities need to be reminded about which side of politics best serves their interests. On this side of the House the Liberal Party and The Nationals have a strong track record of listening to our community and delivering the infrastructure for which our community has been crying out for decades. In relation to the M4 East tunnels, I was proud to accompany the Premier, the Minister for Transport and Roads, the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia and the member for Penrith to cut the ribbon on this incredible piece of infrastructure. The Liberal-Nationals Government delivered this piece of infrastructure.

Throughout the entire process, those opposite opposed this project. They continue to insist that members of my community in western Sydney will have to rely on the congested traffic and 22 sets of lights on Parramatta Road to get to and from the city. The amount of time wasted for businesses and time away from families was a disgrace. A fact often lost in this debate is that this issue about which side of politics best delivers infrastructure for our community goes back decades. Under the former New South Wales Premier, Neville Wran, Labor sold off the corridor, which forced this generation to complete the project at significantly more cost than what it should have been.

That is what the Labor Party does—all for the sake of some dirty political backroom deal to get votes for the Government from residents of the inner city. They sold off the M4 East corridor, forcing us to go underground. It is evident that, based on our track record—the hospitals we are building, the roads we are building, the schools we are building, the commitment to get rid of the schools maintenance backlog, the air conditioning policy—we are a government and a party that delivers for the people of New South Wales; particularly for the people of western Sydney, who have had to suffer extended periods of travel time either to get to work or to run their business.

Under our Government, under our investment of billions of dollars, they now have a faster route to work, they can get back home to their families and they can travel safer on the roads. There is even evidence that Parramatta Road is less congested, so this investment supports those communities around Parramatta Road as well. It is evident that this side of politics, the Liberals and The Nationals, will always fight to ensure that the communities across western Sydney get the infrastructure and the support in cost-of-living measures that they deserve.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Consideration

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:38): This should have been a triumphant time for the Government. It is a newly elected Government; we should see the Premier doing a victory lap. We know that a plethora of problems are plaguing this State, and the Premier is incapable of dealing with any one of them. This is a weak Premier who has failed to show leadership and, as a result, we are in a state of chaos in New South Wales. Front and centre to that is the stadium plan taken to the election by this Government. It was interesting to see the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans stand up here today and not answer the question. Those opposite went to the election on a lie. When the former Minister for Sport was asked, "Is there a contract with Lendlease?", he said no. He said, "There is one contract that has been awarded to Lendlease. We have two stages of construction, one contract."

The Government said it had a construction contract with Lendlease. It did not. It misled the public on one of the most important issues in the lead-up to the election. Now we have a stadium that is knocked down—a big hole in the ground—and the Government has no idea who is going to rebuild it. It will not be able to do it within the \$730 million envelope. We know that because we know what it has done with the light rail project: \$1 billion over budget, a year late and now we see this with Sydney stadiums. The State also has a crisis with apartments. I mention that in the House today because there was a review in 2015 and the Government has done nothing since then. People in Ryde and Parramatta are terrified that their apartment could be in the situation that we find in Mascot and with the Opal Tower.

We know that public confidence is at rock bottom. We know that there are more than 1,400 buildings—that the Government does not have an answer to—with flammable cladding. We know that it has not been able to provide an answer to that problem. Daniel Andrews has put \$600 million on the table and this Government has nothing. The Premier has failed to show leadership with any issue in this State. New South Wales is in a crisis situation with problem after problem and the Government has no idea how to solve those issues. [*Time expired.*]

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

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes41
Majority.....5

AYES

Anderson, Mr K	Ayres, Mr S	Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G	Bromhead, Mr S	Clancy, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K	Constance, Mr A	Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A (teller)	Davies, Mrs T
Dominello, Mr V	Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L.J.
Gibbons, Ms M	Griffin, Mr J	Gulaptis, Mr C
Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A	Johnsen, Mr M
Kean, Mr M	Lee, Dr G	Lindsay, Ms W
Marshall, Mr A	Pavey, Mrs M	Perrottet, Mr D
Petinos, Ms E	Preston, Ms R	Provest, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A	Saunders, Mr D	Sidgreaves, Mr P

AYES

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

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

NOES

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

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

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

PAIRS

Hancock, Mrs S

Kamper, Mr S

Motion agreed to.**M4 EAST TUNNEL****Priority**

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:50): I move:

That this House—

- (1) Acknowledges that the M4 tunnels, the first stage of WestConnex, have officially opened.
- (2) Notes that this project will significantly reduce travel times for busy commuters.
- (3) Condemns the Opposition for promising to build the M4 East several times, but failing to do so every single time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members who wish to have private conversations should have them outside the Chamber.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: It was a wonderful day when I joined the Premier, the Minister for Transport and Roads, the Deputy Prime Minister and the member for Penrith at the grand opening of the M4 East Tunnel. We had the opportunity to meet hundreds of workers at the entrance of the tunnel to thank them for their incredible hard work and expertise in building this magnificent piece of infrastructure. I, along with many members of my communities across western Sydney, have had to battle traffic congestion and risky driving behaviour on Parramatta Road to get from western Sydney into the city. Looking at this incredible piece of infrastructure you know that this is the Government that delivered this infrastructure that members of our communities have desired for many decades, and it was a very, very proud day for me. I had the opportunity to use the tunnel just last week and I was astounded by how quickly I arrived in Ashfield—in almost the blink of an eye. The tunnel saves 20 minutes of driving and bypasses 22 sets of traffic lights, which meant that I could get into the city far earlier than I had expected, which meant I could have a cup of coffee and plan the day.

For many members of our communities, saving time equates to saving money—for their businesses, for their trades. It means a better quality of life for residents across western Sydney, because they get back that time to use as they desire. It is this Liberals and Nationals Government, our side of politics, that has had the capability, the financial expertise and the fiscal discipline to set aside the money to build this project. This project is only a part of the \$93 billion list of infrastructure projects that we are delivering for our communities, not just in Sydney

but right across the length and breadth of this wonderful State that we are privileged to serve. Members of my communities have found it frustrating that in the past they voted for Labor, because Labor promised to build the infrastructure our communities asked for, but for decade after decade they have been let down. That is why the people of New South Wales changed their voting habits and supported us in 2011. They realised that we had a plan for projects, and we have demonstrated that by delivering infrastructure including the M4 tunnel.

It was wonderful to drive through the tunnel at the opening and see this incredible piece of infrastructure. Now we are beginning to get feedback from our communities and we can see that people are astounded by how quickly they can get across our city thanks to the tunnel—and, in fact, their journey is also safer. The thousands and thousands of vehicles on Parramatta Road experience jostling and vehicles pushing in, with heavy trucks in close proximity to small vehicles, and sometimes this caused disastrous accidents. Now people getting to and from work have options, and those who choose to use the M4 tunnel get to and from work more quickly, which gives them more time to get on with their lives. It has been stated that, once the network of tunnels has been completed, drivers taking the trip from western Sydney to the airport will save about 36 minutes of travel time, which is an extensive period of time.

Mr Anthony Roberts: It is a gift of time.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: I acknowledge the interjection by the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections. It is a gift of time, as all members of the Government have said. It is the Liberal-Nationals Government that has delivered the M4 East infrastructure along with a full list of infrastructure projects worth \$93 billion. It is an incredible undertaking of project work that this Government is championing. I reiterate that it was the New South Wales Labor Party that not only sold off the corridor decades ago, which forced this Government's projects underground, but also opposed this essential infrastructure. The M4 East is the essential missing link that is meant to be delivered to support an international city such as Sydney. This Government will always take the opportunity to remind our communities of exactly which side of politics will deliver for our communities, in particular the infrastructure they are asking for and need to support them now and in the future.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:55): It is shameful that the House is debating the M4 East Tunnel today when this morning at the M4 off ramp at Church Street in Parramatta—the off ramp that motorists used to avoid paying the toll—a fatal accident occurred. The toll at that off ramp should never have been reinstated. As a result of the accident, the off ramp was closed and motorists were forced to pay the toll, even those who did not need to travel further. For the Government to move this ridiculously self-congratulatory motion on the day a person has died because of the actions of the Government in reinstating the toll is tasteless beyond belief. For Government members to suggest that the M4 is safer is disgusting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Mulgoa will come to order.

Ms JULIA FINN: Since the toll was reinstated on that stretch of road I have been complaining about the dangerous off ramp. It has taken a fatal accident for any action to be taken. What action has been taken? Some very minor changes were implemented but they are not enough. Hundreds and hundreds of accidents have occurred at the off ramp since the toll was reinstated. The Government's business case predicted that people would leave the M4 in droves to avoid paying the toll. Each day 40,000 cars leave the M4 and thousands of those leave at the Church Street off ramp. That off ramp is incredibly dangerous. The police, the council and the commuters say it is dangerous. I have pointed out in writing and in this place many, many times that the off ramp is incredibly dangerous. At 8.30 this morning there was a multiple car, truck and motorcycle accident and the motorcyclist died. Yet this afternoon Government members boast in this House about how they have brought safety to commuters and how great the M4 road is. That is utterly disgraceful.

For Government members to suggest that the M4 Tunnel project is great for western Sydney is appalling. It costs \$7.89 to travel through all the tunnels and along the widened M4 which the residents of western Sydney already had paid for. The tolls will be paid until 2060. It will cost commuters over \$3,700 a year to drive to and from work. When they get through that tunnel they will hit a wall of traffic on the City West Link. That happened to me this morning when I drove through the tunnel and that is what happens to everybody. Instead of taking traffic off Parramatta Road, as Government members have claimed today, it has worsened traffic conditions on Parramatta Road because people are avoiding the new tunnels in droves. As we have seen time and time again, the entrances to the tunnels are dangerous. People are confused by them and are reversing dangerously to avoid going into them. To talk about the M4 East as a win for safety is ridiculous.

If Government members want to pat themselves on the back, they should not choose to do so on the day a fatal accident has occurred because the toll has been reinstated. The Church Street off ramp was not dangerous until reinstatement of the toll. Now it is incredibly dangerous. For months I have been seeking an update and no-one will tell me the Government's plan to fix it. I have been told it will be fixed by November but I do not know what the Government is planning to do. My constituents ask me about it all the time because they use it

every day. The M4 traverses my electorate but I cannot get a decent answer from this Government about what it will do to make the road safer. Government members may pat themselves on the back all they like but the M4 toll is an unfair tax on the people of western Sydney—and Sydney is the most tolled city in the world. The Government is making the private sector incredibly rich at our expense. The widened M4 will be paid off by the end of the year but we will be paying to use that road until 2060. That is not fair.

The Church Street off ramp is not safe. It is absolutely astounding that on the first day back in Parliament, when someone has died in a fatal accident, Government members are patting themselves on the back about this project. This project is ridiculously expensive. For the first time ever, not only are we paying for the privilege to use the road but when it is paid off we will be paying for decades to come, with the money going towards other sections of the road. This road is highway robbery. Even worse, today the last off ramp motorists are able to use to avoid paying the toll was closed. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:00): It is my pleasure to support this motion moved by the good member for Mulgoa, whom I congratulate on her election. I acknowledge and congratulate the Government on its recent official opening of the WestConnex M4 tunnel and note the reductions in travel time being enjoyed by motorists across western Sydney, including those in my electorate of Seven Hills. As the good member for Mulgoa mentioned, people living in Mulgoa, Penrith, Granville and right across western Sydney are enjoying reduced travel times. This great piece of infrastructure is in line with other projects in western Sydney, such as the \$1 billion upgrade to Westmead Hospital and the upgrade to Nepean Hospital, which is well underway. Recently the Government had the pleasure of opening the North West Rail Link.

The M4 tunnels are a classic example of good, efficient and excellent infrastructure being provided for western Sydney. As well, roads such as the Prospect Highway in my electorate in Seven Hills are being upgraded. The new M4 tunnels were promised way back in 2002 during the days of the previous Carr Government but were never delivered. It took this great Government to pick up the slack and provide them. Road infrastructure for western Sydney is going ahead in leaps and bounds. The WestConnex project delivers a number of tunnels, which include the recently opened 6.5 kilometre stretch of the M4 and 5.5 kilometres of brand new tunnelling from Homebush to Haberfield. This ensures that motorists can bypass one of the most notoriously congested sections of Parramatta Road, as indicated by the member for Mulgoa, and avoid 22 sets of traffic lights, reducing travel times by 20 minutes.

The reduced travel time is not only good for the constituents of Seven Hills and western Sydney, who can get to and from work in a timely manner, it is also good for the tradies and workers, who can do extra jobs. It is often said that there is nothing better for tradies than being able to do four jobs rather than three because they are stuck in traffic going from job to job. Tradesmen in the building and construction industries, people who service and repair appliances and drivers who deliver goods and services to the people of western Sydney can make more money by doing more jobs a day. That means more food on the table for their family and a better quality of life. This is fantastic infrastructure for all those people.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:03): This motion is self-flattering. Self-flattery is a bit like chewing gum: It should be chewed, not swallowed. That is my advice to the Government today. This Parliament is about the future of New South Wales and we should be thinking about transport projects for the future of this State. This Government, with unprecedented revenues and a privatisation bonanza, has prioritised toll roads over public transport. Is it any wonder? They all have chauffeurs. They do not have to pay the toll. Today on *ABC News Breakfast*, just six hours ago, the Hilda report stated that workers now spend on average 4½ hours a week getting to and from work, a rise of 23 per cent since 2002. This number can jump even higher depending on where a person lives and works.

The data have been compiled from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey. In Sydney there has been a 17 per cent increase in the amount of time it takes an individual to get from their home to their office every day. On average, it is clocking in at about 70 minutes a day. Many residents—particularly those in western Sydney—have to spend significantly more time in their cars or on public transport as a result. It makes one wonder what the priority of the New South Wales Government has been regarding transport infrastructure. There has been privatisation, unprecedented periods of revenue and some \$30 billion spent on toll roads instead of public transport.

We now have an absurd situation in which the Government is prioritising the northern beaches tunnel and the F6—two highly contentious projects within the respective communities—ahead of the Sydney Metro West. The proposed line is adjacent to the current western rail line, which is already at 150 per cent capacity and causing difficulties for people getting to work. If the Government was serious about relieving congestion and reducing the time it takes for people to get to their places of work—and particularly people in western Sydney—it would be prioritising building the western metro.

The member for Mulgoa said at the beginning of the debate that the Government had set aside funds to build those pieces of infrastructure. One asks the questions: Why do we have \$39 billion worth of net debt projected by the end of this Parliament? If WestConnex costs in the vicinity of \$30 billion and net debt is projected to peak at \$39 billion in four years, how did the Government set aside the money? I would love the member for Mulgoa to explain the mathematics of those economics in her reply. The truth is the Government borrowed to build the toll roads. It does not come free, because there is no such thing as a free lunch in this country. The average person who uses a toll road every day of their working life will pay something like \$300,000 in tolls to use that infrastructure—that is more than Robbo's holiday house. At the end of the day we have to have some common sense when it comes to transport. I ask that the member for Mulgoa address the questions I have presented in this debate.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (16:07): In reply: I thank the member for Granville, the member for Seven Hills and the member for Kogarah for their contributions to this important debate. I will clarify a couple of things. The member for Kogarah presented a situation whereby this Government is selling off assets. The fact of the matter is that under the stewardship and fiscal discipline of this Government we have grown the net worth of this State to be significantly more than what it was when we first came to government in 2011. Those are the facts.

As a member of Parliament and a backbencher I pay the tolls. This Government is spending on average \$2 billion per year in cost-of-living relief for our communities. That includes toll relief. We recognise that paying tolls is a cost burden for families and we have responded by providing ways and means for families to reduce their toll bill. I encourage people to go to Service NSW to learn about the more than 40 cost-of-living measures that can assist them in reducing pressures on their families. I certainly hope that Labor members are encouraging their constituents to go to Service NSW to tap into all of the cost-saving measures that our Government is providing to communities. The evidence is clear: The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government builds the infrastructure for now and the future; the Labor Party talks about it and promises it but fails to deliver.

I am incredibly proud to be a member of this Government that is putting the people of New South Wales first. It is building infrastructure such as roads, tunnels, hospitals and schools, supporting cost-of-living pressures by offering significant savings in over 40 ways to provide quality of life for our constituents and opportunities for our young people to get an apprenticeship—a foot in the door—to begin their careers. The best form of welfare is a job and the Government is committed to providing and supporting jobs. The amazing WestConnex M4 East tunnel is evidence to that end.

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

The House divided.

Ayes49
Noes39
Majority.....10

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Dalton, Mrs H
Donato, Mr P
Gibbons, Ms M
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

Ayes, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Davies, Mrs T
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J
Butler, Mr R
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L.J.
Gulaptis, Mr C
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

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J

Atalla, Mr E

Bali, Mr S

NOES

Barr, Mr C	Car, Ms P	Catley, Ms Y
Chanthivong, Mr A	Cotsis, Ms S	Crakanthorp, Mr T
Daley, Mr M	Dib, Mr J	Doyle, Ms T
Finn, Ms J	Harris, Mr D	Harrison, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J	Hoenig, Mr R	Hornery, Ms S
Lalich, Mr N	Leong, Ms J	Lynch, Mr P
McDermott, Dr H	McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Mihailuk, Ms T	Minns, Mr C	O'Neill, Dr M
Park, Mr R	Parker, Mr J	Piper, Mr G
Saffin, Ms J	Scully, Mr P	Smith, Ms T.F.
Tesch, Ms L	Voltz, Ms L	Warren, Mr G
Washington, Ms K	Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Hancock, Mrs S

Kamper, Mr S

Motion agreed to.*Bills***PLANNING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 18 June 2019.**

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:17): I lead for the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly in debate on the Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. In doing so, I represent the shadow Minister for planning, the Hon. Adam Searle, in the other place. The bill is largely uncontroversial. It contains a number of miscellaneous amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Land and Environment Court Act 1979, and consequential amendments to the Crown Land Management Act 2016 following the passage of other legislation, in particular the Government's planning changes in 2017. Labor will not be opposing the bill.

As the Minister described in his second reading speech, the effects of the amendments are minor. Overall, they simplify and clean up some technical inconsistencies that have emerged following the Government's 2017 changes. For instance, minor spelling and punctuation corrections within planning instruments will be allowed without the need to go through the significant process of making a further order. The bill also clarifies and standardises some conflicting time frames for State-significant projects, and reorders and updates references contained within various sections of planning law. In his second reading speech the Minister stepped extensively through the various elements of this bill and I do not intend to repeat them—I note that the former Leader of the House is nodding in assent. The bill does not contain any change in planning policy and whilst the Opposition could raise other planning issues—

Mr David Harris: I will be.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I note the interjection of my colleague the member for Wyong. The bill does not contain any change in planning policy; we do not oppose it. However, I note an issue of process rather than of substance—it seems the Government chose not to consult with Local Government NSW prior to the introduction of the bill. That is a concern given the impact on local government. But, not for the first time, the Opposition did the Government's job for it. The Hon. Adam Searle consulted with Local Government NSW to ensure that there were no issues. I thank the shadow Minister for his hard work. As I said, there are no planning policy changes, and the amendments are minor and technical in nature. Labor does not oppose the bill.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:21): It is with much pleasure that I support the Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. Planning is a big issue in my electorate. I have had regular meeting with Minister Rob Stokes and members of the upper House, including the Hon. Lou Amato, who is a resident of my electorate, and the Hon. Mark Latham. People are moving to Wollondilly and they are loving living there. It is a rural area and I want to keep the local character. I want to ensure that there is room for families to enjoy a large backyard, and to have a trampoline and a slip and slide. That is why people move out to live in rural areas. I support Wollondilly staying a rural area with large lots.

Ms Kate Washington: Good luck.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: I am fighting for my community.

Ms Kate Washington: People have to with this Government.

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH: Thank you, member for Port Stephens. This bill will continue the work started with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Staged Development Applications) Act 2017. It will ensure those system improvements are available for government infrastructure projects. In 2017 the assessment pathway for State-significant development was amended. The staged development amendments sought to restore procedures for staged development applications and how the first stage of concept proposals are assessed. Staged development applications are often lodged for complex, large-scale developments. They allow the proponent to obtain "in principle" approval for the entire development. The concept development application sets out the high-level planning constraints on the development.

The staged development amendments were introduced in response to a decision of the Court of Appeal on the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct. In 2015 the then Minister for Planning approved a first-stage concept development application lodged by Arts NSW. The application sought approval for an integrated performing arts and culture precinct in Walsh Bay. The approval did not allow the carrying out of any construction work. The Minister's decision was challenged in the Land and Environment Court, which dismissed the challenge. However, that dismissal was challenged in the Court of Appeal.

The Court of Appeal overturned the earlier court's decision and declared the Minister's approval invalid. The Court of Appeal held that the proposal was not a staged development application within the meaning of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, on the basis that the concept proposal was only to be followed by a single development application for the development of the entire site. The decision of the Court of Appeal meant that a staged development application must involve at least two detailed proposals for separate parts of the site in order for the application to meet the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. As a result of that decision, the circumstances in which staged development applications could be used were limited in the New South Wales planning system.

The staged development amendments sought to restore the policy intention of the development assessment pathway for State significant development. They confirmed that a concept development application may only be followed by a single application for the whole development site, in line with the State Government's policy with respect to staged development provisions. Those changes ensured that sites of proposed staged development would not be superficially divided, which would otherwise be required if the law remained unchanged. If not for the staged development amendments, staged developments would face unnecessary time delays and additional costs for no commercial or community benefit. This is a really important issue with development. With a lot of large development proposals being pushed forward by companies and organisations, such delays sometimes cost in the order of millions of dollars in the interest holdings on those large developments. That is of no benefit to the community or to the State of New South Wales.

The staged development amendments only focused on State significant development, as that was the assessment pathway affected by the Court of Appeal's decision in relation to the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct. The Planning Legislation Amendment Bill will complete the work started by the staged development amendments by aligning the assessment pathway for State significant infrastructure with that of State significant development. The bill will confirm the policy of the State Government in 2017 that a concept development application for State significant infrastructure can be followed by a single application for the whole development site. The bill will ensure consistency between the two assessment pathways for staged development under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. It will also improve the time and cost efficiency of our planning framework to ensure that the legislation accurately reflects the staging of State significant infrastructure. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:27): Like the member for Wollondilly, I contribute to debate on the Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 as a member for an area that is currently being greatly impacted by development. That is not necessarily a bad thing, as it is bringing new jobs and infrastructure to the people of my electorate, but it also is causing some tensions between new development and protecting the reasons that residents moved to the area in the first place. As the shadow Minister said, the bill makes minor adjustments to a number of Acts and instruments to fix them. In that sense, I am a little disappointed that this is the first planning bill to be introduced in this place after the election. The previous Minister is in the House and I thank him for speaking to me about planning issues in my area and on the Central Coast. It shows great cooperation; some of these things have to be bipartisan because the community can sometimes rightly have great concerns.

I was hoping that the bill would include changes to what is commonly known as "spot rezoning". As happens right across the State, local environmental plans [LEPs] in my area go out for public consultation. A lot of community input goes into developing those LEPs so it causes the community great consternation when spot rezoning or gateway is allowed to happen, which dramatically changes land use. The Minister has indicated he has some interest in this area and I encourage him to pursue that interest. It is in the best interests of the whole community that we put a stop to spot rezoning.

The Opposition understands that changes in land use are necessary from time to time but the current process was being misused, which was allowing people to bypass the public in many ways and thus getting development through that was not well supported by the community. For a long time the community in my area fought against four developments that were passed through spot rezoning and the gateway process. Luckily, at this stage none of those developments has progressed. They are all in wetlands and areas that have significant environmental flooding concerns. I ask the Minister to continue to pursue that issue.

The other issue that the former Minister noted during the election campaign concerns boarding houses. If I remember correctly, the Minister identified some issues and I concur with him 100 per cent that it is causing great consternation in the community. Areas are being encroached upon by development that is way out of scale and character with the surrounding style of housing. Sometimes developers are being a little bit clever by using that provision to get upscaling to which they would not be entitled under the normal provisions. Parking is one particular example. It is a really difficult thing. Every member in the House supports the need for affordable housing, but developers should not be able to circumvent the rules in order to get developments through that do meet the amenity needs of the community.

I deal with a lot of social housing issues in my electorate of Wyong. We have learnt that congregating people on top of each other creates many social issues. To circumvent some of those issues, we developed a policy called "salt and peppering" whereby we spread social housing across suburbs. Boarding houses and affordable housing State Environmental Planning Policies are enabling people to build towers again, congregating people together who have quite difficult lives, and in some cases entrapping people. Recently I met with a group of residents in their eighties who are being terrorised by another resident. They are basically prisoners in their home because they cannot get out if they cannot access the stairwell and the lifts—they are trapped by those circumstances. I am not saying that the other person does not need help as well. From what I have heard, they certainly do, but sometimes those developments cause a great deal of misery.

I ask the Minister to take that issue on board and to champion the cause that was raised by the former Minister. All members recognise that legislation is introduced with the best of intentions, but sometimes it has unintended consequences that cause communities great concern. So I think it is time to review the pieces the legislation relating to boarding houses and the affordable housing State environmental planning policy to make sure that we are getting quality development and not congregated development that does not serve the intention of the original legislation. The bill makes a number of small changes but we should attack the big issues in the planning system. I make that comment in a bipartisan way because planning affects us all and we have to make it work in the best interests of the whole community.

This is not necessarily a political issue. Both sides have struggled for a long time to create a system that serves the needs of the whole community—a system that is seen as being fair and reasonable both to those who want to develop a particular place and to the residents of that place. That is a big challenge and hopefully we can work cooperatively to come up with the necessary changes to make the planning system work better. As was mentioned, the Opposition does not oppose this bill. I look forward to speaking to the current Minister, who is a good guy. I speak to him on a regular basis about different issues, and I will be contacting him about a couple of those very shortly. I know the Minister wants to do the right thing by the planning system. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2019-2020

Debate resumed from 20 June 2019.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (16:36): It is a privilege to contribute to this important debate on the budget. One of the things I have observed since the Government came to office in 2011 is that there has long been an association with the Liberal-Nationals Government and its ability to manage money. That has been on display in an incredible way for the past eight budgets. Certainly there has been financial discipline during that time, which ensured that the budget was repaired during the early years. As a result, the Government was in a position to control the budget; the budget was not controlling the Government.

That is important because for 16 years the previous Labor Government mismanaged the State's finances, which resulted in its being unable to deliver the services and infrastructure that the community was crying out for.

It is great that the member for Lane Cove, the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections, is in the Chamber. The Minister has been part of the Government's journey for the past eight years. He joined me in that first Cabinet, so together we know only too well the challenges that beset the Government when it was elected in 2011, and some of the tough calls that were made. The Government put in place a public sector wages cap of 2½ per cent—now the most generous in the nation relative to other governments, including in Labor States. That gave the Government the financial capacity to expend finite taxpayer resources on the services and infrastructure that the community needed most. It also allowed and facilitated budget repair. It is only fair to say that the finance Minister and the Treasurer of the day did an incredible job in that respect.

That incredible job has continued. Our current Treasurer, Dom Perrottet, is a fantastic leader. He has continued to steer the ship. I applaud him for delivering a fantastic budget this year. Against a write-down in GST receipts courtesy of the Commonwealth and a property market that has not been as hot as in previous years—there is a dependency on property taxes—the Treasurer has done an incredible job to continue to deliver a surplus and a \$93 billion, four-year infrastructure program, which I will touch on in a minute.

Throughout the past eight years the Government has ensured not only that it made ends meet for the community but also, with the advent and development of the infrastructure spend, that it was able to deliver great services to the community, in the areas of health and education in particular. In the electorate of Bega this budget has delivered some fantastic outcomes—and I will say more about that later. As transport Minister, I am proud that this year's budget contains unprecedented investment in road and rail projects across New South Wales—not just in metropolitan Sydney but right across the regions as well. This will take the State to a new level, with some \$55.6 billion to be invested over the next four years in transport infrastructure that eases congestion and keeps our community moving.

At 7.30 a.m. today it was very pleasing to stand with the Premier at Circular Quay and greet a light rail vehicle—a tram—that had made its way from Randwick all the way down George Street to the quay. That is the type of outcome our community is looking for. This is a phenomenal year for our city. Since it opened in May the metro has carried 3.8 million passengers. The new M4 East tunnel has opened, which is an incredible outcome for the people of western Sydney and their travel times into the city every day. Light rail is around the corner.

Earlier this year we opened the Newcastle Light Rail. I note that the member for Newcastle is in the Chamber. He loves the Newcastle Light Rail; he catches it to his office every day. I am also grateful to see the member for Riverstone in the Chamber—another wonderful member who is seeing incredible outcomes as a result of the metro. Beyond the metro, there have been incredible investments in on-demand transport services. Just a week and a half after the metro opened people were using on-demand services to travel to a metro station and continue their journey to the CBD, Chatswood or Macquarie Park.

The great thing about this year's budget is that, of the \$55.6 billion I mentioned, \$32.2 billion is for public transport and \$23.4 billion is for road projects. Detractors of the Government say, "You're always investing in roads." But that is the underlying investment we are making in public transport, first and foremost. Over the past four years the growth in demand for government services in this area has been phenomenal. In the past five years—from 2013 to today—passenger trips on Sydney trains have grown from 300 million per year to 420 million per year. That is a 30 per cent increase in five years. Nowhere else in the world has a rail network experienced such phenomenal growth in the same period.

The Government's investment through this year's budget is designed to build on what it has achieved already—thousands of road projects delivered across the State, public transport investment already made and the outcomes are there. I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Vacluse, whose electorate now has a turn-up-and-go bus service into the city—the 333 Bondi link service, which everybody loves. The Government will continue to invest billions of dollars to unshackle the scourge of congestion in metropolitan Sydney. Whether you live in Bega, Bourke or Ballina, there is no doubt that congestion affects the overall economic health of the State. We are seeing productivity loss as a result of congestion. I note a report today about the average journey time to the city that people are experiencing due to urban growth. The intent of these mega projects is to continue to bust congestion.

This year's budget is \$55.6 billion. We are delivering projects such as the Sydney Metro and WestConnex. Anyone walking down Martin Place will see a massive crane in the heart of Martin Place. That is the location of the new metro station being built for the driverless train from Chatswood. By 2023 we will deliver that automated train through the heart of the city, on to Sydenham and then out to Bankstown. I hope to see the tunnelling complete on that project by February next year and then we will start to see the fitting out of that train system.

WestConnex is another major motorway project in the city. The tunnelling of the M5 East project is now complete. The new M4 tunnels are open. WestConnex is a phenomenal project for the city and will eliminate 56 sets of traffic lights to provide faster, safer and more reliable trips across Sydney. Construction of the Rozelle interchange and Iron Cove link will start this year and planning and preconstruction work is underway for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link and the first stage of the F6 extension. The 2019-2020 budget provides more than \$300 million to improve accessibility for rail customers. That is something that every member in the House wants to see. When we came into Government there were still stations on the City Circle that people with disability could not access. That has now been fixed.

We have been investing in rail stations such as Edgecliff. Recently the member for Vacluse and I were very pleased to open a lift at that station. The queue to use that lift was phenomenal during the time we were there. This Government will spend \$885 million on the Transport Access Program over the next four years. We have committed to deliver a further 68 station upgrades including the renewal of Redfern, Beecroft, Bexley North, Canley Vale, Como, Faulconbridge, Lapstone, Mittagong, Roseville, Wahroonga, Warrawee, Wyee and Wollstonecraft stations. This will make 90 per cent of all public transport journeys accessible and bring the total spend to \$2 billion since we have come to office.

This Government will invest \$812 million from this year's budget towards the new intercity fleet, which will improve trains and train services from places such as Newcastle, the Hunter, the Central Coast, the Illawarra, Blue Mountains and Lithgow. We are going to create permanent jobs as a result of that investment on the Central Coast. We are extending our investments in terms of the brand new eight-car Waratah Series 2 trains. We have delivered 24 trains in record speed in terms of procurement. It is part of the More Trains, More Services program. It will deliver additional services on the Illawarra, Airport and south coast lines.

This year's budget includes \$3.2 billion over four years to continue the More Trains, More Services program. It has been transformative in terms of rail. If I had not changed the timetable the patronage demand figures I spoke of over the last five years would have caused the system to fall over. Pleasingly, we are seeing people get across the network with a higher frequency of services. Presently in the peak periods around 70 per cent of those services on Sydney Trains are turn-up-and-go services. The Sydney Metro Northwest opened in May on time and \$1 billion under budget. In this year's budget we will continue to invest in the city and south-west metro line; this year's budget spells out \$1.2 billion to continue the delivery of this project. Very importantly for the people of western Sydney, this year's budget also includes \$6.4 billion over four years for Metro West. This will be a game changer for the three million people in western Sydney. In essence, this project will duplicate the rail line between the city and Parramatta. We will be building it from the city through to Westmead. It will be a driverless, automated, single-deck train—turn up and go—which will massively relieve the congestion on the existing Sydney Trains network. It will provide faster, more reliable journey times for everybody in western Sydney when it comes to trains.

With respect to Parramatta Light Rail, there is \$561 million in this year's budget for the project. The new line will connect Westmead to Carlingford via the Parramatta CBD and Camellia. We are working towards a 2023 opening date for that project. While I am still talking about western Sydney, one of the fastest-growing regions in the State, we have committed another \$480 million to upgrade sections of Mamre and Mulgoa roads. As part of this allocation, a 3.8 kilometre section of Mamre Road between the M4 Motorway and Erskine Park Road will be widened to four lanes. Of course, that will benefit drivers in the local vicinity. Critical pinch points right across Sydney are also part of an important investment we are making, with an additional \$450 million committed to ease the congestion at key traffic bottlenecks.

In addition to the infrastructure investment, the recurrent transport budget of \$14.4 billion will fund the operation of transport services commitments, such as the Regional Seniors Transport Card, which we committed to during the election campaign. This incentive is designed to ensure that our seniors community in regional New South Wales get significant benefit in respect of their travel cost. This is another example of the Government continuing to ease the cost of living pressures right across the board through this year's budget.

Just coming back to the city, one of the key things that we see and concerns that we hear across communities is the availability of commuter car parking. More than 2,000 new spaces are either in planning or underway at locations including Beverly Hills, Cabarita, Casula, Carlingford—which will be part of Parramatta Light Rail—Engadine, Hornsby, Lindfield, Rooty Hill and Schofields. As part of this project the Government also recently announced additional parking spaces for commuters at locations including Edmondson Park, Emu Plains, Engadine, Jannali, Leppington, Riverwood, Revesby, Schofields, Tuggerah, Warwick Farm, West Ryde and Winston Hills. The Government wants to ensure that it encourages people to get onto the public transport network in local communities. We see people drive their cars to major transport hubs; we want to facilitate that. That is what we are doing as a Government.

We are also committed to Redfern station—again, a major station on the network. Earlier this year I committed the Government to invest \$100 million to upgrade Redfern train station to provide six new lifts and six new sets of stairs to platforms 1 to 10. We are undertaking consultation on the early concept plan; importantly, that is underway. Given what we see in that part of the city, particularly with business development coupled with the University of Sydney, this is a station which is very much in need of the transport access that is required to improve the amenity for commuters. Overall, the transport budget has not happened by accident. The Government is grateful to the way in which central government agencies have facilitated and managed the State's finances to be able to invest in this way, particularly in transport. It is really important that this continues for our communities.

I will now touch on the electorate of Bega, specifically as the member for Bega, having spoken about the transport budget. What an extraordinary story for this part of New South Wales. What we are doing in the south-east is incredibly special. Never before in the history of the Bega electorate have we seen the investment that is being made now. Work is underway on the largest infrastructure project in the region's history—the Batemans Bay bridge. Some 45 per cent of the workforce on the site are local people. We have seen phenomenal input into that bridge construction and we will continue to see that from young people who have never worked before and particularly through our local Aboriginal community. The targets that were set—the contribution of young people, Aboriginal people and women working on this project—have been well and truly broken.

I could not be more proud of the way in which John Holland is working through the project and changing access to a dangerous point on the network—the region is completely cut off if there is a breakdown on Batemans Bay bridge. Over the years some terrible breakdowns and failures have occurred on that 60-year-old bridge. This year's budget cements major project spending in the Bega region and will continue to deliver hundreds of jobs. That is why I took aim at the local ABC the other day, which said there was an economic downturn in the region without any facts or figures backing up that completely ridiculous statement. I point out to the ABC the investment across Bega Valley and Eurobodalla shires. [*Extension of time*]

I say to those detractors: Look at what is happening. The commitments that we are making and what is being worked on include a new Eurobodalla hospital, the Nelligen bridge and water filtration plants for the community. City people do not get this. I have a regional community where there is no water filtration on a water supply coming directly from a river. Think about the health of the community without that. The Government will invest in new water filtration for Brogo, Bermagui, Bega and Tathra, and has signed up with a funding deed in place to the council. The Government is also building a new Bega and Tathra police station. I particularly pay tribute to the Hon. Troy Grant, the former Minister for Police for delivering this—what a wonderful police Minister; a standout person in that role. He will never be matched for the contribution he made as police Minister. I look forward to working with the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education on the delivery of a new TAFE facility and connected learning centre for Batemans Bay. The Government delivered one in Bega that opened earlier this year and it is transforming lives. The development of the new Bega TAFE is continuing with investment in a specialist trade centre.

The Government is also building a new welcome centre for the Port of Eden. What a phenomenal success story Eden port is for this Government. The facility will open this weekend. I pay tribute to Cruise Eden for working in conjunction with the Port Authority of New South Wales to deliver a commercial wharf extension. Instead of mooring in the heart of Twofold Bay, cruise ships will be able to pull up alongside Snug Cove, allowing visitors to get directly off the cruise ship and participate in our wonderful, local tourism industry—experience an oyster farm, eat in local restaurants, do a cooking course, and spend a dollar in the local bakery. It is transforming our community. To have that wharf opening this weekend is absolutely phenomenal. One of the Government's undertakings is building a new welcome centre next to that port development. Instead of—as we have seen over the years—passengers getting off to a number of market stalls, we will facilitate a welcome through a proper centre. That will be phenomenal for the local volunteers.

I mentioned the Batemans Bay Bridge. We have committed to building the Moruya bypass. At the same time we will extend the duplication of the Princes Highway from the Jervis Bay turnoff down to the Sussex Inlet turnoff. We will also duplicate the highway at Moruya as we move towards the building of the new Eurobodalla Hospital. That bypass is important because it facilitates the development of the new Eurobodalla hospital. We are also doing a lot of sealing work on some of the back roads in the electorate, such as Towamba to Burragate roads, and have put a funding deed in place with the local council. Work is being done to facilitate access between the Port of Eden and the Princes Highway. We are working on the Tantawangalo Mountain Road.

The Government will continue to invest in community projects, from playgrounds to sportsgrounds, halls and more. We will see some of our communities better connected with construction funding in excess of \$600,000 for safe, shared pathways and crossings throughout the electorate, which is very important. There will be a new pedestrian crossing on the Princes Highway in Pambula; completion of safety upgrades at Wolunla Public School; a new shared pathway at Sylvan Street from George Bass Drive to Banksia and Malua Bay; a new

shared pathway at Francis Street from Coronation Drive to Elizabeth Drive in Broulee; a new shared pathway at Sunshine Bay Road; a new shared pathway at Foam Street, Surfside; and a new shared pathway at Melaleuca Crescent from Calga Crescent to Yarrabee Drive, including a pedestrian refuge in Catalina. We want to improve safety across the electorate. We are investing in these types of shared paths to get people off the roads, whether it is seniors exercising or young families taking their children for bike rides. We cannot do it unless we have strong economic management.

Having been in this place for 17 years I, better than anyone, know the importance of our local industries such as dairy, fishing, oyster farming, tourism and other small businesses. The overall investment that we are making in our emergency services in hospitals, and other areas in health and in education is very important. If one looks at the investments that the Government is making in this year's budget, the benefits realised across the region include \$2.8 billion to recruit frontline health staff, \$2.3 billion for vocational education and training, \$1 billion for fixing country roads and bridges, and \$449 million to clear maintenance backlogs in public schools. That is very important in the bush. Local P&Cs have incredible pressure brought to bear on them to try to raise the funds to clear some of the maintenance backlog. We are investing in a way that has never been seen before.

We have a \$100 million Stronger Country Communities Fund for community-based projects, \$120 million to expand before- and after-school care, and \$88.4 million for additional school counsellors or psychologists. That is critically important. Every school deserves this support, given the challenges we face with youth suicide. There is \$20 million invested in community preschool capital works, and for families in the bush there is nothing better than the Active Kids rebate. That is changing lives. There are other extracurricular activities for kids such as the arts.

It is important to note that this Government is absolutely committed to dealing with drought. The drought has become worse since the budget was released. It is extending throughout the coastal parts at a very aggressive rate. I am very worried about the lack of rainfall this winter, particularly as we head into a very tough fire season, which will start in about a month's time. There is every risk that homes can burn in winter. There have been section 44 fires before in the middle of winter and emergency declarations in the middle of winter, given the nature of the bush and what we are seeing.

This year the drought is horrendous. Over the next couple of weeks I will be making crystal clear to my electorate that they should please get in early to clean up their places and make sure they are ready for a horrendous fire season. Tathra experienced a horrendous fire last year and I am fearful that, particularly on the coast, we will see more communities facing fires and the potential risk of the loss of life. The drought is killing regional New South Wales and it is getting worse, particularly as we are getting no winter rainfall. Very pleasingly, in this year's budget \$355 million has been allocated to extend critical drought assistance to farmers and communities. This is on top of \$1.5 billion that already has been allocated to drought relief. We will continue to stand by our regional communities when it comes to drought because we cannot drop the ball on this issue.

Every member of this place, whether a member representing a metropolitan electorate such as Sydney or a rural electorate, understands that we need to help those affected by the drought. Whilst this Government is doing everything it can, we have to make sure that we reduce red tape for farmers. There is also a secondary effect, which means that rural businesses beyond the farm gate are also being screwed by this drought. We need to do everything we can to look after our farmers—and we are, as is evident in this year's budget. I will continue to press upon my colleagues the need to ensure that we support not only our farmers but also secondary industries that are doing it very, very hard.

Over recent years there is no doubt that the regions have been well looked after by this Government, and they will continue to be looked after well. It is not tokenism; it is real support. We realise that it is tough on the ground but we will continue to fight very hard for our rural communities. Every member who represents a regional electorate is fighting incredibly hard for their communities. There is no doubt that there are differences between the regions but everybody is doing it tough because of the drought. We know that this crisis is getting worse by the day. I commend this Government's tremendous budget. It is a fantastic budget and it has not happened by accident. Through the good financial management of the Liberals and The Nationals we will continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (17:06): It gives me an immense amount of pleasure to speak on the most recent budget. I will reiterate some of the comments that I made during today's motion accorded priority, which I led. Again, I commend our Government, the Premier and the Treasurer, along with every member of the Liberal and The Nationals Government, on this historic budget. I acknowledge the efforts of the Treasurer and the Premier along with every member of our Government, regardless of the electorate they serve. Members all seek to get the best outcomes for their areas; indeed, that is the main reason that members of Parliament seek to be elected to this place. They work hard to improve the lives of members of their communities and they do that by advocating for infrastructure such as roads, rail, hospitals, schools and much more.

Working hard for my community was my inspiration for coming to this place. I have spent my whole life in my electorate, which is now the electorate of Castle Hill. As I have said many times in this place, my family is celebrating its second century in this area. A land grant on Castle Hill Road was given to my ancestor Robert Allen in 1814 and other land grants on the banks of the Hawkesbury River, in areas such as Mulgrave, were afforded to members of my family, such as Charles and James Whalan. We have been here since European settlement, as members of my family arrived on the first, second and third fleets and other members were part of the first Irish convicts sent on the *Marquis Cornwallis*. The area has been very much a family community and the community has watched it grow. Up until 20 years ago the community was adorned with small rural villages that were farming communities and not in need of much infrastructure. As long as they had a decent main road, a local supermarket, a pharmacy and a doctor they could survive quite well. That is exactly what they have done for many years, if not centuries, with only slight changes.

In the early nineties the previous Labor Government changed all that with its policy of the North West Growth Area. Indeed, the Rouse Hill development area is the fastest residential growth area in the nation and takes in all of my electorate and the electorate of my colleague the member for Riverstone. I have said many times that there is nothing wrong with that: People need a place in which to live. As much as I am very loyal to my beautiful rural residential setting, I am also a realist and acknowledge that if our community and our country is meant to grow people need homes in which to live. Governments wishing to make the most of that opportunity must provide for residential growth and there is nothing wrong with that at all. The previous Labor Government proposed that some 250,000 people, which is the same as the population of Canberra, would move into the Rouse Hill development area, which is one-tenth the area of Canberra. Given that for years and years the people of the Rouse Hill area had suffered the condition of Windsor Road, it was an interesting proposition to take on board.

The main road in the Rouse Hill area was a single-lane road between Baulkham Hills and Windsor. Over the years, as areas such as The Hills, the Hawkesbury areas and areas north of the Hawkesbury River such as Wilberforce, Glossodia and Freemans Reach increased their populations, nothing was done to accommodate the movement of traffic. Together with my community, I fought a battle in 1999-2000 and advocated for the upgrade of Windsor Road, which was the least we could have expected. I mention this in the context of the recent State budget because this Government has delivered outstanding infrastructure outcomes—road, rail, new health facilities and most importantly schools—not only to my electorate but also to neighbouring electorates. Prior to and in the early part of 2000, my community and I fought hard for upgrading Windsor Road. Through a very strong, public and successful community campaign we forced the previous Labor Government to invest just over \$600 million to upgrade Windsor Road all the way to Windsor by 2006.

That was the start of a chain of events that eventually led me to become a member of this House. I represented an area previously known as Hawkesbury which was redistributed. In 2015 the rural area of the Hawkesbury electorate was excised and I then represented the predominantly residential part of the area, which is known as Castle Hill, my current electorate. In my first party room meeting in 2007 I raised the issue of the much-needed North West Rail Link. To the great credit of the then Opposition leader, Barry O'Farrell, after the meeting he came directly to my office on level 10 and said, "Ray, if we are fortunate enough to win government in 2011 the new Liberal-Nationals Government will build the North West Rail Link." I was very proud when Barry O'Farrell visited my electorate and announced the project with great fanfare. It was front-page news of the *Rouse Hill Times*. Most importantly, in 2011 when the Liberal-Nationals were elected to govern, the first place that the then Premier O'Farrell selected to visit—accompanied by the then newly minted Minister for Transport, Gladys Berejiklian, and members representing nearby electorates—was the Rouse Hill Town Centre. He arrived with shovel in hand and firmly stated that his Government would commence building the North West Rail Link.

What does that mean in the context of where we are at the moment? We proudly opened the North West Rail Link with great fanfare. Today I used it to come to work. It was a lovely 50-minute trip, with a very smooth change at Chatswood. More than one million people used the Sydney Metro Northwest in its first two weeks. It has proven to have been much needed and is an outstanding and overwhelming success story for our area. In the northern corridor we have some incredible employment areas from Chatswood, Epping, Macquarie and Ryde to the very successful Norwest Business Park.

I always proposed that if any government were to build the North West Rail Link there would be for the first time in this country an equal distribution of patronage in morning and afternoon peak periods. Why? It is because many people from the city areas are moving to the northern suburbs and regions for employment. Many people from the city, from inner city areas and from North Sydney and Chatswood are heading north-west and seeking employment in our world-class business parks that continue to grow and provide an enormous amount of employment. Such has been the success of Norwest Business Park that almost 50 per cent of the working population of The Hills now work within region, which saves them an enormous amount of time travelling back and forwards to reach their employment—which they would have had to do had the business park not been developed. The Sydney Metro Northwest brings people to and from the area and, importantly, transports a large

proportion of people from The Hills each and every day through that corridor to connect to other rail lines. It has been nothing short of an overwhelming success at a project cost of \$7.3 billion.

This is an historic budget for a number of reasons. The Government will invest no less than \$93 billion over the forward estimates for the next four years in important infrastructure for New South Wales. The Government has an \$802 million surplus for the 2018-19 year, with expected budget surpluses averaging out at around \$1.7 billion over the next four years. I continue to prosecute the fact that this Government is debt free. It does not owe anybody a cent. When a government's budget is in check, when it owes nobody any money and when it is cash positive it is in a position to invest taxpayers' money very wisely. The fact is that this budget has been handed down in an interesting economic climate, the context of which should not be lost on anybody. If we look around the world we see countries with strained budgets and great global uncertainty that will impact on our country. However, there is not a government in this country that would not dream of being in the same financial position as the New South Wales Government and able to invest \$93 billion over the next four years.

We are living through the greatest drought in living memory. It is relentless and continues month after month and year after year. We hear that Guyra may run out of drinking water in the next month. That has placed an enormous impediment on the budget but the Government has risen to the challenge, as it should. Even if we were not in a strong financial position we would not turn our back on our country cousins or our regions. Being debt free places us in an enviable position in which we can invest an enormous amount of money into the regions. To date just under \$2 billion has been invested in the drought effort. The Government should be commended for that. You wonder how our predecessors, who were in significant debt, would have been able to rise to that challenge. I think they would have been found wanting.

The lingering drought and global uncertainty have caused agricultural trade to drop by around 20 per cent. Yet the regions continue to increase their employment, with women leading the way, which is very encouraging and quite historic in the current climate. I note the writedown of some \$10 billion in GST receipts and another couple of billion dollars in GST revenue by virtue of New South Wales being in such a strong position. The fact of the matter is that the stronger the position of New South Wales, the less GST revenue it receives. Sadly, through the proceeds of our great work we are propping up neighbouring States that are not performing well. I would hope that in future people will give greater credence to financial management and perhaps look more wisely at how they cast their vote to make sure that they are electing governments that can put them on a much stronger economic footing.

The people of New South Wales can look at the Government with immense pride and say quite fairly that this Government has made a lot of promises and stood by them. Today in question time questions were raised about our stadium builds. If we have said that we are going to do something we have certainly done it. Sometimes we have been ridiculed and punished for it—indeed, we may have lost some votes over it—but I think people cut you a lot of slack when you stand by your commitments, justify them by being in a strong financial position and ultimately deliver on them.

My electorate has been fortunate to pick up some of the many infrastructure projects that had never previously been fulfilled, one of those being the Showground Road upgrade. In last year's budget \$45 million was invested in Showground Road and the first stage has been completed. The second stage, involving the development of Castle Towers and the entry to that area near Pennant Street and Old Northern Road, is currently underway at a cost of \$15 million. It only involves a small area but it is causing some grief and havoc to the people of Castle Hill and will probably take until the new year to complete. The people of my area are very pragmatic. They will happily—maybe not happily, but begrudgingly—sit in traffic and put up with that type of infrastructure work when they can see the light at the end of the tunnel. It is wonderful that the east and west ring roads are now completed. The Hills Shire Council played an enormous role in that project, which the completed upgrade to Showground Road will complement.

Of course, one of the greatest disruptors to traffic right across our region has been the Sydney Metro Northwest. Stations at Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill and Cherrybrook are providing people with relief from having to use their car. Some 4,000 car parking spots have been provided there. Already there is a decrease in the traffic not only locally on roads such as the M2 and Showground Road but also in the burbs—the Kellyvilles and the Rouse Hills. Earlier I was chatting with the member for Seven Hills, who travelled through my electorate this morning. He said he could not believe his travelling time through a busy part of my electorate as he opted to park in the Castle Hill Showground, jump on the Sydney Metro Northwest and make a wonderful trip to the city. It is proving its worth. Road upgrades, rail upgrades and nearly-completed rail lines in that area are making an enormous difference.

As I have said before, roads and rail alone are not enough to service a growing community; we need to also provide schools and education facilities. New schools are going up as we speak. At the beginning of this year I had the pleasure of opening one of our newest primary schools, North Kellyville Public School. The Premier

visited our area to open that school. It is state of the art and has some wonderful facilities: It has its own basketball courts, a small soccer oval out the back and all the wonderful educational areas and breakout areas that children need to get the best education. It cost around \$40 million, for which funding was provided in the previous year's budget. Another \$25 million is being invested into another school round the corner, Samuel Gilbert Public School. *[Extension of time]*

I guess that school has 900 to 1,000 students and—this tests me a bit—perhaps it has been around for 20 to 25 years. The area continues to grow around Samuel Gilbert Public School; it is a sought-after primary school. As I have said before, we have made a great investment of \$25 million in beginning to upgrade that school. Among other schools in our area that are coming under increased pressure is the wonderful Castle Hill Public School. I acknowledge all the teachers and the principals in the area because they are dealing with rapid growth in student numbers on an almost monthly, if not a weekly, basis. There are not only new housing developments but also new apartment dwellings, such as those in the Castle Hill CBD. With any new dwellings come families and with families come children and that places additional pressure on our schools.

Planning is underway for a nice upgrade of Castle Hill Public School. The wonderful principal of Castle Hill High School would condemn me if I did not mention that her school is waiting for a serious upgrade. This year's budget has some \$400,000 for necessary maintenance. Castle Hill High School was built and designed for 900 to 1,000 students; at this point, it would have an enrolment of about 1,700 students. It is coming under increased pressure. Vicki Brewer is the principal at Castle Hill High School. You would not find a finer lady or a finer teacher, educator and principal. She runs a tight ship and an outstanding school. It is a sought-after school for many people outside the area. She has the challenge of trying to control those numbers. She would be hoping that it is not going to grow too much larger than an enrolment of 1,700. Importantly, that school certainly warrants a significant upgrade in the future. Like all good members, I will continue to beat a path to the doors of the Minister for Education, the Treasurer and the Premier to insist on an upgrade of the very important educational precinct of Castle Hill High School in my electorate.

The members for the electorates of Baulkham Hills, Riverstone, Seven Hills, Hawkesbury and I have fought long and hard for a new health facility in Rouse Hill. When a couple of hundred thousand people move into an area they depend on upgraded roads, public transport and schools, none of which were delivered by the previous Labor Government. Those opposite delivered hundreds of thousands of people but no services and no infrastructure to support that growth. Great health care is one of the most important things to families so each member I referred to was delighted to see \$56 million for the acquisition of land allocated in this year's budget. Hospitals and health facilities cannot be built unless you have the land and in the 2018-19 budget that was locked in. Planning is now underway to inform the Government and the department of Health of exactly what will be required. This will roll out over the next few years and will be a wonderful asset.

This area not only has a higher rate per capita of young people with children than in other areas of New South Wales, or indeed Australia, but also has a higher rate per capita of elderly people. Our senior citizens are thriving. They are staying fit and active in the many service groups they belong to such as Lions. I note that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is seated at the table. Many of our elderly senior citizens are still actively participating in the local Rural Fire Service—we have plenty of brigades. They also actively participate in the State Emergency Service, and have done for many years. The Minister would attest that at award ceremonies it is not surprising to give out 25-, 30- or 40-year recognition awards to these people who have selflessly dedicated their lives to protecting life and property. Well done to those seniors who are keeping fit but inevitably we will all need those wonderful health services.

The electorate of Castle Hill also has the state-of-the-art Rouse Hill recycled water plant, which delivers reticulated recycled water back to households in the north west. It was the first of its kind built in this country and has been operating for possibly 20 years—I think the plant started operation in the nineties. There is a liquid amplification and sludge transfer, which I will not go into great detail about that unless the House would like me to. Stage one has worked perfectly well. Now we are getting ahead with stage two but it comes at a cost. Some \$2.4 million has been allocated in this year's budget for that.

The New South Wales Government has helped provide some walking and cycling projects. I am immensely proud of the Caddies Creek Reserve which was recently opened. It is not a budgeted item, but it would not come cheap if it had to be funded. The reserve was trunk drainage land, which comes with extreme costs. It covers low-lying flood land, which the Government had to buy so that it could provide services for the north-west development and the Rouse Hill development area. It cost many hundreds of millions of dollars. Not many people think outside the square, but that expanse of land is a wonderful open space with sports fields that host recreational activities; we have a predominance of sporting associations in my area.

I was very glad to get the support of Government to grant that land to the Hills Shire Council, which has invested many millions of dollars into turning the land into some of the most aesthetically pleasing areas ever to

be found. They are adorned with walking and cycling trails and, most importantly, no less than four full-sized playing fields, three of which are for the great sport of soccer. Caddies Creek Reserve is very much dedicated to my favourite sporting association, the Kellyville United Football Club. The club has a great home at the reserve, but there is also a field dedicated to the Rouse Hill Wildcats and baseball. Recently I was very proud to announce the great news that the Government-owned land adjoining the reserve will be suitable for at least another four full-sized fields.

I thank the Minister for Transport and Roads for giving me the heads-up in the last two weeks that the adjoining land has now been dedicated to the Hills Shire Council. Plans for the land include a Hills football centre of excellence on behalf of soccer, which will be a wonderful asset for that area. Land like that does not come cheap, but that is the type of investment this Government is making on behalf of young people and communities in electorates such as Castle Hill. I commend the budget to the House. It is outstanding.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:36): It is great to speak on this year's outstanding State budget, delivered by the Liberal-Nationals Government. Post the March election it is wonderful to be back as the member for Terrigal. I congratulate the Assistant Speaker on his outstanding re-election as the member for Oatley, with an increased margin. I commend him for the incredible work he does for the people of Oatley. It is great to talk about the budget because it gives me the opportunity to talk about some of the wonderful things happening in the electorate of Terrigal and across the Central Coast and about how the region and my electorate have directly benefitted from the State's strong economy, delivered by this Government.

From the outset I make clear that this year's budget delivers an approximate \$802 million surplus. This State already has zero net debt. We are in negative net debt, which is a fantastic place for this State to be. It puts the State in a strong financial position. Our strong financial management has ensured that we remain the number one State in the nation, which means the Government can take measures to help reduce the cost of living for families across New South Wales, including in Terrigal. We have so many young families moving to the Central Coast who want to call the Central Coast home. It is a wonderful place to live, work, play and, of course, bring up a family. There is no better place on the Central Coast than the electorate of Terrigal, which covers areas from Killcare in the south to Forresters Beach in the north, and all the wonderful suburbs in between, including Macmasters Beach, Copacabana, Matcham, Holgate, Terrigal, Avoca Beach and North Avoca.

As I have said numerous times in this place, I also have the benefit of talking about the surf lifesaving clubs in my electorate. There are seven surf lifesaving clubs in the Terrigal electorate—second only to the electorate of Minister Stokes, which has 11 surf lifesaving clubs. I pay tribute to the literally thousands of members of the surf lifesaving clubs in the Terrigal electorate who have done a truly outstanding job over the summer season. There are more than 4,500 members of the voluntary surf lifesaving movement in my electorate alone. To add to the services provided to the people of the Central Coast by those outstanding men and women, again this season we did not have a drowning death on a patrolled beach on the Central Coast. Surf lifesaving is now under the auspices of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who is in the Chamber. I say to him that it is an outstanding organisation. It is one of the largest volunteer movements in the nation, if not the largest, which does an incredible job on the Central Coast. To have another season with no drowning deaths on Central Coast patrolled beaches is a true credit.

That gives me the opportunity to segue into thanking Chris Parker, the former CEO of Surf Life Saving Central Coast, who has moved on to work for the Rural Fire Service, which is also in Minister Elliott's portfolio. The RFS is another outstanding institute and I will talk about it in detail later. I thank Chris Parker for his outstanding contribution to Surf Life Saving Central Coast, which is the peak body that oversees all of the surf lifesaving clubs in the Central Coast electorates. Chris and his team have done an amazing job managing the increased record funding they have received from this Government year on year. We are the beneficiaries of that funding.

The Government provided Surf Life Saving Central Coast with over \$140,000 to implement a rip awareness program. That program is run on our beaches on the Central Coast for young people and especially people who are not from the Central Coast and are not aware of the dangers of the surf. A lot of visitors to the Central Coast have actually never even seen a beach. When they come to beaches on the Central Coast they can be taught firsthand by experts about the dangers of rips. Through the previous Minister for Emergency Services, Troy Grant, the Government provided three years worth of funding for that education program. I am told by Surf Life Saving Central Coast that the program has reached out to more than 30,000 students already and is continuing to go from strength to strength. It is just one of the many programs run by volunteer and not-for-profit organisations across the Central Coast that have benefitted directly from this Government's strong budget.

Whether it be the result of providing additional funding through the Community Building Partnership to purchase new jet skis or putting roofs on halls—I had a fantastic day at a town community hall—many community organisations have benefitted from the Government's strong economic management of multiple budgets.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I am sure that in your electorate of Oatley many community organisations have reaped the rewards of this Government's success. Providing a couple of thousand dollars to a small volunteer organisation can make a huge difference. It takes a lot of sausage sizzles to raise a few thousand dollars, so it makes a massive difference to our volunteer organisations when the Government is able to assist with sums of \$3,000, \$4,000 or \$5,000 for projects.

I am very proud to be part of this Government, which has delivered discretionary record funding through ministerial portfolios and direct record funding through projects and programs that it has put in place. In their contributions on the budget the member for Bega and the member for Castle Hill talked about the Active Kids rebate. I cannot overstate the importance of that program and what it has done for the Central Coast. In my electorate alone, more than 8,000 families have benefited from the Active Kids rebate. People were scoffing about how it is only \$100 and it will not make a lot of difference. I say to those people: Come doorknocking with me and bump into a mum with a family of four who is now getting back \$400 a year. In fact, I did exactly that.

I was doorknocking on a warm day in Killcare—which is a beautiful spot—and was talking to a mother of four who was heading down to Pretty Beach Public School to pick up her kids. I explained to her how the Active Kids rebate program was going to work and she burst into tears. It was not the response I was expecting, but she told me that it would enable her to start playing netball again. She had sacrificed her netball to make sure her kids were playing and being active in their sporting life. The \$400 a year that that mother-of-four was getting has doubled under this Government's budget announcement; she will now receive \$800 a year to help her children play sport and keep active on the Central Coast. That is how these projects are having a direct impact on the cost of living and helping to put downward pressure on everyday families right across the Central Coast.

When we announced the program there were scoffs from the other side: "Oh, it is only \$100. Is that the best you can do?" Over 8,000 families have benefited in my electorate alone; the Central Coast is one of the areas with the biggest uptake of Active Kids rebates. When the Government announced that it was doubling the amount, the response was overwhelming. I made sure that every single parent whom I could reach out to through our sporting clubs was made aware that they could get the rebate twice a year. In addition to that, we have the Creative Kids rebate. Not every child wants to play sport so here is a great opportunity to recognise those who are more creative, whether it be in coding, drama or music. Not only are we providing additional funding for our kids who are sports minded and want to be athletic, but also we are saying to those who do not, "Here is an opportunity for you too."

I spend a lot of time in my community, especially with my schools. Pretty Beach Public School has a fantastic junior music program that has been supported by artists on the Central Coast. In one instance, the Sydney Conservatorium of Music donated musical instruments to the young students who were learning to play. I have been to a number of their shows and their enthusiasm for learning music is outstanding. Financial assistance for violin, cello or saxophone lessons—whatever it might be—means real, everyday cost-of-living savings. These budget measures are helping people with everyday activities throughout their lives.

I have spoken before about Service NSW. I am the beneficiary of an outstanding Service NSW office in Erina. I say to the manager, Robyn, and the team there that I have never seen a more energetic and enthusiastic group of people. When the Government announced the cost-of-living assessments, I was there on day one. Funnily enough, it was Robyn's mum who came through the door first. In one visit of less than half an hour, Robyn's mum saved in excess of \$430. This was a real cost-of-living saving. I am so proud to say that Service NSW, Erina, has literally racked up thousands and thousands of dollars worth of savings for residents in my electorate by simply spending half an hour going through what is available from the Government. Whether it be the Active Kids rebate, discounts on Opal cards for seniors, or assessments on the cost of electricity and gas—there are so many opportunities—these are real savings that local people are now benefiting from. Again, I acknowledge Robyn and the team.

As you know, Mr Assistant Speaker, when you walk into a Service NSW centre it is not what anybody expects. There is a concierge—it is Michael at Erina—and you are greeted with, "How can I help you? What can we do for you?" I have experienced and observed the service there a number of times, and it is outstanding. My wife is a nurse. She had to do her working with children assessment and she was at the counter within four minutes—that is the gold-standard of service provided by Service NSW. It is not just that; Robyn and her team are so dynamic they are reaching out to our community. I suggested to Robyn that, given the very large number of retirees on the Central Coast, we could promote Service NSW directly in their retirement villages. Robyn is now reaching out to our retirees and conducting information sessions at places like Tarragal Glen, Alloura Waters and others so that our older citizens can get a direct understanding of the benefits offered by Service NSW.

Our older generation are incredibly tech savvy. I sent a birthday card to someone who turned 90 and received an email response thanking me. That goes to show you should never underestimate the willingness of our older generation to embrace new technology. That engagement can be seen through the increase in online

transactions with the State Government through Service NSW. Again, the budget delivers real savings to the youngest and the oldest in our community. I am really pleased that there has been a consistent rollout of savings right across the electorate.

I will touch on a few of the highlights in this year's budget, of which there are many in my electorate and on the Central Coast. An allocation of \$13.5 million has been made to continue the upgrades of Terrigal and Wamberal public schools. Those two public schools have seen unprecedented growth in enrolments because the public education system is so outstanding. Most members will know that I am the product of a family of teachers. Teaching is not just a job; it is a vocation. I am proud of the funding that the Government has delivered to schools on the Central Coast. I believe that a brand-new primary school for up to 1,000 students will be constructed in the electorate of the member for Wyong.

There has been record investment in our schools, but it is not just about new infrastructure; it is also about dealing with the maintenance backlog that this Government inherited. I am proud that every single one of the schools in my electorate has been able to tackle that backlog. Janine Debenham has just retired as principal of Kincumber High School. She was a wonderful advocate for her school and I worked with her to ascertain some of the school's priorities. One of those priorities was to build a covered outdoor learning area, or COLA. The COLA had been sought by the school from those opposite for 16 years but the need was never given any real credence. Principal Debenham and I worked together with the education Minister and we were able to secure half a million dollars of funding to build the COLA, which will give the kids protection in winter and in summer when catching the bus.

Because of the rapid growth in numbers at Kincumber High School the hall will not accommodate all the students. The COLA will allow the school to hold outdoor assemblies under cover. I pay tribute to the new principal, who has come from Woy Woy to take up the baton. He is doing an outstanding job. The funding has been announced and the COLA will be delivered this year. So this Government does not just make financial promises; it delivers infrastructure, including the 25 new classrooms at Wamberal and Terrigal public schools and the COLA at Kincumber High School.

The Wamberal and Terrigal public schools provide good examples of what I am talking about. The Government announced our commitment to record investment in those two schools prior to the last State election. Terrigal Public School has more than 850 students. It has more students than Erina High School. It is a popular school in a wonderful location—one block from the beach; not a bad spot to go to school. Wamberal Public School has more than 734 students. The Government made a commitment to upgrade the two schools to futureproof them and remove all demountables at the schools. The record investment of somewhere in the vicinity of \$30 million for the two projects will remove all the demountables in both schools and deliver 10 new classrooms in one school and 15 new classrooms in the other.

Only last week the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, joined me on the Central Coast. I had the great pleasure of showing her the incredible progress of the two projects. At this stage both projects will be completed and ready for use by term one of next year. The only difficult thing is that year 6 students will miss out on the brand-new schools, but their brothers and sisters will get to use them. During the visit to Wamberal Public School we had a chat to the site manager, who had been a scholar there; the school he was rebuilding was his old primary school. On that day there were at least 50 tradespeople working on site. North Construction and Building, a local company, won the contract. The site manager said that in the next few weeks more than 100 tradies will be on site. I asked how many of those apprentices were locals and he answered, "Every single one of them." That is how the record investment we are putting into our schools, hospitals and roads is directly impacting on the job opportunities for people on the Central Coast. There is no clearer case of that than Wamberal and Terrigal public schools.

I have spoken many times about Gosford and Wyong hospitals because more than half a billion dollars has been invested by this Government in those two hospitals. Gosford Hospital's stage one has been completed. That is a \$348 million investment in redeveloping a hospital that was woefully neglected for decades. My wife is a nurse at that hospital. The feedback I get from her is that the staff are absolutely delighted with the new facilities. Never in their wildest dreams did they expect that they would have a state-of-the-art hospital delivered on time and on budget. In fact it was early and under budget. The under-budget delivery allowed us to redirect \$20 million into a medical health and research unit, in conjunction with our Federal colleagues. My Federal counterpart Lucy Wicks secured another \$35 million from the Federal Government and \$20 million from the University of Newcastle after her re-election with an increased margin to the seat of Robertson. This is not just talking the talk but also walking the walk and delivering. Gosford Hospital is a good case in point.

There is more than half a billion dollars of investment in Gosford and Wyong hospitals and stage one of Wyong Public Hospital has now commenced. That is a wonderful outcome for our ever-growing community on the Central Coast. The Central Coast is benefiting from its wonderful location and its great lifestyle. We anticipate

that more than 75,000 people will call the Central Coast home over the next 12 to 14 years. We have to ensure we have the infrastructure to service and educate them and give them the best quality of life that they can possibly have. Stage two of Gosford Hospital's redevelopment will soon commence. The car park has been completed but the next stage involves building the medical research unit and medical school above the car park. This is part of a collaborative cooperation between the State and Federal governments and the University of Newcastle delivering a \$75 million project that will provide hundreds of jobs in research and education. I congratulate all involved because we knew we could deliver this project if we worked together. [*Extension of time*]

Hundreds of new jobs are being created through investment from the State and Federal governments in partnership with the University of Newcastle. The Central Coast is benefiting from this record investment in health, education and roads. Over the past four years alone—since I was elected—this Government has invested more than half a billion dollars in upgrading State roads on the Central Coast. Never before on the Central Coast has there been that sort of investment in road infrastructure. Again we have seen early delivery on almost every one of these projects. With early delivery, the money that is being saved is then channelled into other road projects. The Government took money from a project that finished early and reallocated it to upgrade a road near Holgate Public School.

Not only is there record investment and early delivery but there is also smart investment when we achieve savings and that money is being reinvested into additional projects. That is a good use of taxpayers' funds to deliver infrastructure projects and it is happening from one end of the Central Coast to the other. During the election campaign I had the privilege of announcing the single biggest dollar value road project the Central Coast has ever seen: the \$387 million upgrades to the Central Coast Highway between Tumby Road and Bateau Bay Road, which crosses the electorates of Terrigal and The Entrance. The Government does not just build infrastructure in Liberal-held electorates. I highlight that the half a billion dollars of road investment over the past four years has taken place in the electorates of Gosford, Wyong and The Entrance, which are all seats held by Labor. These are record investments that Labor did not make in their own electorates for 16 years.

This Government has driven the upgrade with \$387 million in funding. Last week the Minister visited the Wamberal Rural Fire Brigade on the Central Coast and drove down Tumby Road. The Minister observed the volume of traffic travelling down Tumby Road on to the Central Coast Highway. The investment will duplicate the Central Coast Highway between Tumby Road and Bateau Bay Road. I cannot stress enough how important that investment is, with 26,000 vehicles travelling on that road each day. This congestion-busting investment will lead to a greater ability for our people to move around the Central Coast on a daily basis. Earlier I mentioned the Minister's visit, and it was a pleasure to have Minister Elliott on the coast last week. He visited Wamberal Rural Fire Brigade and Empire Bay/Bensville Rural Fire Brigade. There are fantastic rural fire brigades across the electorate of Terrigal and the Central Coast. I thank the Minister for the time he spent on the Central Coast. One of the Minister's first visits was in 2015, shortly after I was elected, to the Wamberal Rural Fire Brigade. They had a photograph of that visit.

Mr David Elliott: I was much thinner then.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: We both looked slightly different four years ago. The Wamberal Rural Fire Brigade reminded us of this Government's investment into upgrading its fire station, which is now almost complete. I congratulate Captain Angela Burford and the team at Wamberal Rural Fire Brigade for the great work they do. They give up their time to train every Wednesday so they can race towards danger to protect other people's homes. The Empire Bay/Bensville Rural Fire Brigade was the first rural fire brigade established on the Central Coast. What a great bunch of people they are.

The Minister was able to present them with \$8,000 of discretionary funding that will allow them to purchase a thermal imaging camera. That means they can look into a dangerous situation with more detail and clarity to help decide how to respond to the particular situation. Whether it is Wamberal Rural Fire Brigade installing an honour board for their members or a thermal imaging camera for Empire Bay/Bensville Rural Fire Brigade, the first rural fire station on the Central Coast, this Government is investing record amounts into the Central Coast. I am proud of this. I could literally stand here all day and talk about investment on the Central Coast.

Mr James Griffin: We know.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I note the interjection by the member for Manly. The member for Manly is also benefiting from the record investment into his electorate. I do like his buses; they are particularly swish. While the Minister was on the Central Coast he met with Tony Joyce, my local superintendent. Another \$2.5 million will be invested into the Gosford police station for the men and women in blue, bringing the total funding for redevelopment of the station to \$3 million. Last week, with Commissioner Mick Fuller, I represented the Minister

at the Brisbane Water police medal and awards ceremony. There were people at those awards who had served the community—

Mr David Elliott: For 60 years.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: —for 60 years. I cannot overstate the commitment and passion with which these people serve our community. I spoke to Commissioner Fuller about my night out with the local area command shortly after I was elected in 2015. I asked to spend an evening with them. They were a bit surprised and concerned about having me in the car with them. I had to sign a liability waiver stating that I would not hold them responsible for any injuries. It was a great program.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Voluntary.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I voluntarily spent a night with them on patrol to see what they do each night. The Minister recently posted that while we are all home they are out on the beat. The Minister recently posted on his social media page that he was spending time with police. I encourage each member to take the opportunity and contact their local area command to organise an evening with the men and women of the NSW Police Force to see what they deal with every day. Members should spend an hour or two in their shoes, see what they have to deal with and then come back and reflect on what they have seen.

I congratulate Tony Joyce and his team on the incredible work they do at Brisbane Water. There has been either a static level of crime or a drop in crime across the Central Coast because of proactive policing. There are a record number of police on the Central Coast because of the funding provided by this Government. I congratulate the Minister on his dedication to funding frontline resources. That is some of the investment in Gosford police station and both Terrigal and Wamberal Public schools.

In regard to road investment for Empire Bay Drive at Kincumber, this was an election commitment I made in 2015. This project is almost coming to completion. It is a \$25 million congestion-busting infrastructure program—24,000 commuters go through this intersection every day. It has been a long but productive process. The community has been engaged on many occasions to ensure that we deliver the project that they believe will help them best, as well as what Roads and Maritime Services believes. I thank all of the people who have traversed this intersection over four years—as I have—for their patience. I made a commitment to deliver this project, and it is being done. This is a great infrastructure project; one of many across the Central Coast.

Whether it be upgrades to Terrigal Drive intersections, whether it be upgrades to Jesse Hurley Drive or whether it be upgrades on the Central Coast Highway, we are seeing investment in our vital road infrastructure. There was also a \$93 million commitment to new rail alignment. I cannot stress how important that number is for people on the Central Coast. I note that the member for Wyong has come into the Chamber. Like me, he realises how important fast and faster rail is to our commuters on the Central Coast. We have thousands of commuters every day. They have made a lifestyle choice: They want to live on the Central Coast and work in Sydney. We must ensure that we provide the best possible rail system for them to do that. I was delighted to see that \$93 million has gone into planning for new rail alignment, which includes rail between Woy Woy and Sydney.

That is a fantastic announcement in this budget. It shows that we are not just talking about rail alignment and speeding up the rail process, we are actually starting to invest money in it. This will go in conjunction with the new intercity fleet, which we will start rolling out. I have seen those trains firsthand; they are fantastic pieces of equipment. We will make the trip more pleasant, and we also will speed it up and reduce the time people spend commuting. Whether it be NorthConnex, which will be a game changer for people in our community; whether it be our schools, with the Active Kids rebates; whether it be the savings on the Opal card—capping Opal at \$50 a week will save people in my electorate more than \$680 a year in commuting costs—or whether it be rebates on tollways, where you get your registration free if you spend more than \$25 a week on tolls, all of these incentives provide people on the Central Coast with the opportunity to live, work and play where they wish to, but also to commute if they need to.

We can be assured of the continued record investment in our schools, our hospitals and our road infrastructure right across the Central Coast. Take a look at the number of cranes in the sky across the Central Coast, including Wamberal—it shows that this Government does not just talk about delivering, it absolutely does deliver. I commend the budget to the House.

Debate adjourned.

*Private Members' Statements***WALLARAH 2 COAL PROJECT**

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:07): On Friday I attended a rally at Erina with residents from right across the Central Coast who are very concerned about the approval of the Wallarah 2 coalmine, which is based in the Wyong electorate, underneath the Central Coast water catchment. Over 100 residents turned out to talk about their concerns about water contamination in the catchment that supplies water to roughly 350,000 people on the Central Coast. The rally had a number of good speakers; it was attended by the member for Gosford, myself and The Greens upper House MLC from the Central Coast. There were also speakers from the local community talking about what we need to do to make sure that the conditions that have been placed on the mine are adhered to, and that our water supply is protected from contamination.

But the next day I woke up to see an article written by Peter Hannam in *The Sydney Morning Herald* entitled "'Shocking': Mining damage in Sydney's catchment prompts calls for halt." One of the things the Wallarah 2 mining company, Kores, has been saying is that it has put in place proper safeguards to protect the integrity of the Central Coast water supply. But through examples such as those provided in *The Sydney Morning Herald* article—which talked about how WaterNSW has real issues around how monitoring is occurring in that part of the Sydney water catchment known as the Eastern Tributary, which supplies the Woronora reservoir—we find time after time that we simply do not have any guarantees to protect the integrity of water supplies in these catchments.

The Wallarah 2 miners have had 122 conditions placed on them, which were put in place because of community concerns. A lot of those concerns are around water integrity. We know that the baseline data used by the company is very unreliable. In fact, one might say that they did not really do the necessary preliminary work to demonstrate how the aquifers work in that area particularly. In its wisdom the Independent Planning Commission panel put in place a condition which says that after 10 years the mining company has to compensate the Central Coast water catchment for lost water. That is sort of like saying how long is a piece of string because no-one really knows how much water is there at the moment, let alone how much will be lost through the mining process. It has been said that they can do that by building a desalination plant—treating water that has entered the mine itself and then returning it to the water catchment.

I have spoken to some of the people who work for Central Coast water and they have an obligation under the health legislation, et cetera, to ensure that clean water is put back into the system for people to drink. They have to treat that water to a level to get it to that standard. They are very worried, given the article in Saturday's newspaper, about the risks of water that goes from the surface into the mine and comes out of the mine—particularly what the water is carrying in it and if they will be able to clean it to a standard that is safe for drinking. At the meeting on Friday we said we would all work together to hold the company and the Government to account to make sure that the conditions that have been placed on the mining company are properly adhered to. We do not think that they can be. Saturday's article says that there are no real safeguards that are foolproof or 100 per cent right because bureaucrats have created conditions on paper. We will continue to fight to make sure the integrity of our clean water is protected.

EDGECLIFF STATION UPGRADE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (18:12): Almost four years ago, in September 2015, I made the announcement, with transport Minister Andrew Constance, that planning and design work would finally begin for an upgrade of my local Edgecliff station. It is a major transport hub serving my electorate and was built in 1979. It celebrated its fortieth birthday just this year. It is a very busy transport hub for buses, trains, taxis and bikes, and is used by residents all over the eastern suburbs peninsula from as far away as Bondi, Watsons Bay and Vaucluse. It is a major gateway for my electorate into the CBD because it also has a shopping centre. Every day tens of thousands of people who need to be able to use the space easily visit it. Edgecliff station has been crying out for an upgrade for decades, with the first calls being made many years before I became the member. It was inaccessible for less mobile people in my community, whether mums or dads, carers with baby strollers, the elderly or those with a disability. There were no compliant safety ramps, only flights of stairs connecting the bus interchange on the upper level to the shopping centre and the train station, and escalators connecting the train station entrance to the train platform.

The announcement of the upgrade was a major milestone in my electorate and I was so proud to secure \$26 million of funding after fighting hard with the help of my local community members. In May 2017 the public consultation on the upgrade design began. In February 2018 planning approval was granted and in May 2018 the construction contract was awarded. The works took a long time because it was a complicated project. Access to private property had to be secured to install the lifts and because of the outdated station construction the escalators had to be taken apart to remove them and the new ones were installed in sections. Finally, on Tuesday 16 July

2019, I joined busy commuters, local residents, the Minister for Transport and Roads and his staff and Transport for NSW staff to open the upgrade. The station is now accessible for everyone in my community.

There are new and relocated ticket gates to improve customer flow and new electronic train noticeboards to match. The station now has two new lifts, which means travelling around the centre will be much easier. The first lift connects people from the New South Head Road train station entry level to the station platforms. The second lift connects the bus interchange, Edgecliff Centre shops and New South Head Road to access the train station. There are also four new escalators to and from the station platforms as well as new fire evacuation stairs inside the station. The rear entrance to the station from New McLean Street is much better. There is a new access ramp, better lighting, CCTV cameras, sheltered seating, landscaping, a kiss-and-ride zone and new bicycle racks for the keen cyclists in our local area. The bus interchange on the roof of Edgecliff station now has an extended bus canopy, additional windbreaks and a new pedestrian crossing, which makes catching the bus safer and drier during wet and cold weather.

There is so much to be proud of but it would not have been possible without the hard work of those who made the project a reality. I thank Minister Constance and his ministerial office, especially Angus McKenzie-Wills—otherwise known as Gus—and Andrew Dixon, who have been helpful from day one and together with me made sure the project kept moving. From Transport for NSW I thank Chris Daffin, Michael Childs and Zoe Rourke. On the construction side we were lucky to have Degnan Constructions led by Chris Degnan. I also had the opportunity to tour the worksite along the way with Milan Debelak, a local resident and managing director of Liftronic, which provided the two new lifts and four new escalators.

The driving force behind this project, like any such project, is the local community. They have fought hard alongside me over many years for this outcome. Special thanks to Darling Point Society President Charlotte Feldman and local resident Rowena Hamilton. We were also joined at the opening by Rose Bay Residents' Association Vice President Bruce Bland, Holdsworth Community CEO Ruth Kestermann, Sabina Kovadlo and Sandy Matrai from Centre on Ageing in Woollahra and Rose Bay resident Doune Macnaught-Thrush. I thank the local community for their patience along the way. There was a long lead time for this work and it took some time to complete. It is a great outcome and we are all proud of this project, which makes such a difference on a day-to-day level in my local community. I commend my private members' statement to the House.

CRAIG LAFFIN, OAM

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:17): I congratulate Mr Craig Laffin, OAM, on receiving an Order of Australia medal earlier this year and thank him for his service to various communities. In accordance with his strong Christian faith Mr Laffin has dedicated his life to being of service to others. He has created and been a vital part of a vast number of important organisations. He was the founding president of the Families and Friends of the First Australian Imperial Force. The creation of this organisation, dedicated to digger heritage, was proposed by Craig's late father, John Laffin, who was a military historian and author. Fittingly, Craig became the association's founding president in 2002 and served for four years before retiring from the position in 2006. Craig is a life member and was the editor of the organisation's *DIGGER* magazine. Craig also assists in organising the annual Combined British Forces Association's Anzac Day march in Sydney.

The wisdom, success and strong Christian values of thousands of people in the Hawkesbury are owed to Mr Laffin. He was the founding principal of Arndell Anglican College, which began in 1990. Whilst initially being established at Cattai, it subsequently moved to its present site in Oakville. Among the college's founding ethos and philosophy were that children were to be brought to Christ and accept Christian values and attitudes and that the college supported traditional family values that were recognised as being central to the spiritual and moral growth of each child. Mr Laffin served in the role as principal until 1994. The school's current philosophy and daily life are due to his great work in its foundation years. Mr Laffin was also the founder of William Clarke College in Kellyville and is the current director of development at Norwest Christian College. He is also an active member of St Matthew's Anglican Church in Windsor.

The extent and diversity of Mr Laffin's service are vast. Mr Laffin previously served as president of NSW Futsal. He has also coached State and national teams for 20 years. His service to others also involves having hosted a community radio show on WowFM for the Nepean district for over five years. He founded the Kurrajong Scarecrow Festival and also the Australia-Israel Friendship Association. Mr Laffin also developed the Interschool Equestrian Carnival at Arndell College and the Festival of Flags at Nagle College in Blacktown. The foundations laid by Mr Laffin will benefit various communities for generations to come. I congratulate him on receiving an Order of Australia medal and wish him all the very best as he contributes further.

JOHN ASQUITH

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:21): Tonight I acknowledge John Asquith on the occasion of his decision to step down after 20 years as chair of the Community Environment Network [CEN]. John has been a giant of the environmental protection and nature conservation movement in this State. Like many of my constituents, John came to the coast after obtaining a job with the Electricity Commission in 1978. With a passion for the environment cultivated as a young man who enjoyed bushwalking, John got involved with the group Coastal Residents Against Pollution in the fight to stop the Norah Head sewage outfall. John said of this time:

We had some gains, but lost the fight at the end of the day...

I learnt some valuable lessons during that time. Always go to the top man, always be polite, but don't be scared to represent your constituency, whatever environmental or community group you belong to.

John's next campaign was for the establishment of Wyrabalong National Park, which was a great success for the environment movement on the Central Coast. In 1999 John was invited to become chair of CEN, then in its second year of operation. The CEN was formed in 1997 as an overarching body to support individuals and groups on the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie. It is now involved in projects throughout New South Wales. CEN is a community group that works for ecologically sustainable development and against threats to it. CEN's achievements under the leadership of Mr Asquith have been numerous. CEN established Habitat for Wildlife, a scheme encouraging urban dwellers to plant natives in their gardens to provide food and water for birds.

To complement this the Wildplant Community Nursery was established in 2005. John said of this, "Planting a tree is the best thing anyone can do to help manage climate change." Incidentally, the nursery provides all the landscaping for each stage of the Pacific Highway upgrade being undertaken in my electorate. The enterprise is a great success on the Central Coast for our local environment movement. Waterwatch is another big success for CEN and is still going strong after 20 years. Over that time thousands of people have been trained to keep an eye on our waterways. CEN is now managing Waterwatch on a statewide level and is looking for opportunities to expand and grow the program throughout New South Wales. John said of Waterwatch: After being part of a pilot program for Land for Wildlife in 2002, we were invited to take over the whole program for NSW, and we are approaching 2,000 properties where landholders who wish to manage areas of wildlife habitat on their property have registered.

John is especially proud of the Central Coast Marine Discovery Centre at Terrigal. He said:

We started a committee in 2005, with a lot of other sectors working out what a marine centre should be and where. In 2009, the State Government made us trustee of the old Terrigal Tourism Centre and the marine centre was born.

In 2018 John Asquith was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, or OAM, for services to conservation and the environment in this State. John will stay on at the Community Environment Network as deputy chair in an advisory capacity. On standing down, John noted:

The organisation is in the best situation it's ever been in.

It's financially sound with good programs and great staff and it's the best time to hand over to a younger team.

They have to build CEN for the future, particularly in regard to climate change and engagement with a newer, younger base. The lack of substantial action on Climate Change means we need to encourage locals to live more sustainably.

I thank John for his service and congratulate him on what he has been able to achieve for the environment on the Central Coast and elsewhere in the State.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (18:25): I join the member for The Entrance in sincerely congratulating and thanking John Asquith for his outstanding contribution to not only the local environment movement and the Central Coast but also the wellbeing of our environment Australia-wide. People like John really do make a difference. As the Minister for Energy and Environment, I place on record my gratitude for the work that John has done through Coastal Residents Against Pollution, for establishing the Wyrabalong National Park and the Community Environment Network and for his focus on ecologically sustainable development. I know the amazing work that Waterwatch does in training people to keep an eye on our State's waterways. Who can forget the leadership shown by John and his team in delivering the Central Coast Marine Discovery Centre at Terrigal? John was awarded a much-deserved Order of Australia medal in recognition of his services to the environment. It is but a small token of the community's appreciation for the enormous contribution John has made to our State and country.

AWABA MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:26): There are a thousand good reasons to visit Lake Macquarie, but tonight I will inform the House about just one of them. A week ago I visited the Awaba Mountain Bike Park, which is operated by the Hunter Mountain Bike Association. It is not the first time I have

been there to open a new part of the facility or to deliver some good news on funding assistance—and I am very hopeful it will not be the last. Nestled in the spectacular Watagans National Park in the west of my electorate, the club has been quietly and efficiently creating a world-class destination for mountain bikers. The trails not only cater for the large mountain biking community in the Hunter region but also attract hundreds of visitors from Sydney and elsewhere every weekend. The club has hosted State and national race events.

When I visited the park in September last year it was to announce that I had been able to help to secure \$450,000 for the club from the State Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund. Thank you, State Government! That money is being used to build four completely new trails, expand others, install better signage and seats at rest points, improve the access road and event hub and create better trails for experienced riders. Among those new trails was one for adaptive MTB, which is the term given to the modified bikes used by disabled riders. When I was there I met a man called Hank Duchateau, a disabled rider in a custom-built three-wheeler. Hank and his wife live in Coffs Harbour but they regularly make the five-hour trip to Lake Macquarie so Hank can ride or compete at the Awaba facility.

Last week I was very pleased to have been invited back to be part of the official opening of another new track that the State funding has allowed for. The development trail is purpose built for a broader riding ability including families, children, beginners and young riders with a disability. The new trail is not just providing a world-class venue for families who like a casual ride in the national park but also introducing a new generation to competitive mountain bike racing. The Hunter Mountain Bike Association is the oldest of its type in New South Wales. It was formed in 1985 and held its first major event—the Paterson Classic—in the Hunter Valley to promote recreational and competitive mountain biking. In 2007, after a year of negotiations with the Forestry Corporation of NSW, the club was granted access to a large section of Watagans forest, which we now know as the Awaba Mountain Bike Park.

The initial trails were built by volunteers under the oversight of Forestry. They included general recreational trails for families, beginners and children and also more challenging cross-country and downhill trails. Those trails quickly became popular in the booming mountain biking community and enthusiasts from around the State came to use them. The club has continually sought to improve its trails, both old and new, and gained more national attention when it recently hosted national competitions in the downhill and cross-country disciplines. I should add that while all the work on the trails is done by volunteers, each trail needed to go through a Federal approval process and was guided by environmental impact statements from qualified ecologists to ensure that no damage was done to the flora and fauna of the national park. As I mentioned earlier, a dedicated trail for adaptive MTB riding by disabled riders was completed in 2016. The 1.6-kilometre track is used for both social and competitive rides and I am told it offers some exhilarating downhill sections for disabled riders. The Hunter Mountain Bike Association boasts a number of national title holders and world champions within its ranks.

While the club has done a tremendous job in promoting an active and healthy lifestyle, it is also doing a fantastic job in promoting the Lake Macquarie region. As I mentioned, every weekend the Awaba trails are attracting hundreds of people from the Sydney area and from areas further afield. Many visitors come in groups and stay nearby for the weekend, so the club is not just providing an all-inclusive world-class sporting venue; it has also created a genuine tourist destination for mountain bike enthusiasts that is helping to put Lake Macquarie on the tourist map. While I earlier acknowledged the funding assistance from the Government, I should also acknowledge DPI Forestry, Lake Macquarie City Council and the many volunteers who have assisted the club in so many ways. In particular, I acknowledge the tireless efforts of the club's executive including Clint Musgrave, Dallas Barham, Andrew Hardy, Rohan Betts, Dean Kozlik, Colleen Boyes and Andrew and Paula Gresham. I say well done to all involved.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:31): In Local Government Week I am pleased to speak about the Government's significant support for local councils across the State including in my own wonderful electorate of Wollondilly, which is God's country, as members of this House recognise. The Government provides significant support to our councils so they can provide infrastructure and services for communities to utilise and enjoy. In Local Government Week we will highlight the important role that council plays in local communities beyond roads, rates and rubbish. It is important to point out the support that the Government continues to provide to assist councils to enhance and grow important services for our communities.

Our councils provide a vast array of services beyond infrastructure. I am pleased to be part of a government that is supporting those services to grow. Recently the Government announced a significant increase in funding for our public libraries. Wingecarribee Shire Council has three libraries and Wollondilly Shire Council has two libraries that are set to receive a funding boost by the Government's injection of over \$36 million into our public libraries this year alone. A new model for our subsidy adjustment has been developed in consultation with stakeholders to ensure that all councils receive an equal share of the increased funding. Stakeholders have

overwhelmingly welcomed the additional funding, with the Library Council of New South Wales Public Libraries Consultative Committee unanimously supporting the funding strategy. More than \$100,000 in additional funding will be provided to councils across Wollondilly so that additional services can be provided to our local public libraries.

Wingecarribee Shire Council is located in the beautiful Southern Highlands, which I know the Minister for Energy and Environment loves visiting, with industries including dairy, beef and sheep production. The council is an important service provider to the local community that has a population of almost 50,000 across a large area. With four swimming pool complexes, 24 public halls and 1,214 kilometres of public roads to manage, the council's 430 staff do a fantastic job to assist our communities day in, day out. Wollondilly Shire Council is located on the western outskirts of Sydney and at the foothills of the Southern Highlands. The area is surrounded by spectacular natural beauty and rural pastures. The shire has a backdrop of gorges, ranges and plains and a number of small towns and villages that more than 51,000 residents call home. It is a great place to call home. The council runs two public swimming pools and 10 public halls, manages 346 hectares of public open space and maintains 865 kilometres of public roads. The 241 staff members of Wollondilly Shire Council provide the local community with important services and ensure that residents are able to get to the shops, drive to work and enjoy our local region.

As the member for Wollondilly I have seen firsthand the investment made by the New South Wales Government in our local towns and villages, and the impact on our economy and quality of life. In a large growing region the Government recognises the need to support our councils with funding for essential infrastructure and services. Since coming to government we have awarded over \$9 billion to local councils, including those in my electorate of Wollondilly. In Local Government Week I am proud to point out the contribution the Government makes to local councils across the State and recognise the services our councils provide to local residents beyond roads, rates and rubbish. As the member for Wollondilly I will continue to work with local councils to secure the funding we need for our communities. I wish the staff of all councils—from traffic controllers to cashiers, planners, engineers, administration staff, leisure centre operators, librarians and even our good councillors—a happy Local Government Week.

PORT OF NEWCASTLE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:36): The region wants it and The Nationals rank and file members want it, but still we are waiting for a commitment from Deputy Premier John Barilaro to back his own party members and support the removal of the container cap on the Port of Newcastle to allow the development of a container terminal. Since 2015 I have been advocating for this terminal and speaking in Parliament on this issue; the tide is finally turning. I never thought I would be in a position when I could say that I agree with the Moree branch of The Nationals; however, it seems we have found some common ground. It has now been a month since the Moree branch successfully took a motion to the NSW Nationals' annual general conference in support of the Port of Newcastle container terminal. The motion states:

That conference call for the NSW Nationals to ensure:

- a) That removal of all obstacles facing the Newcastle Container Terminal Expansion Plans, including the cap on the number of containers and the State Government fee payable on container exports and;
- b) The Port's development of a high intensity container terminal.

The motion states "removal of all obstacles". Such obstacles include the secret clause—not so secret anymore—in the port sale contract that imposes a cap and fee on container movements through Newcastle's port. Once again this shows blatant disregard for the people of Newcastle, the Hunter region and all of northern New South Wales, regions that would benefit from lower freight costs, improved freight transport times and greater opportunities for employment.

The cap in question stands at a mere 30,000 containers. If the port broke that threshold it would be required to pay \$100 for every additional container. Now 30,000 containers is about three ships' worth—not a great deal—but that amounts to around \$1 million per ship that would be sent down to Sydney and given to NSW Ports in compensation. As you can imagine, that dodgy deal has killed off the port's scope for expansion. What cost benefit would work with a million-dollar handbrake? Why build it if the economics do not add up? Again, new jobs for the people of the Hunter have been denied. Again, the boot has been stuck into the Hunter economy. Again, regional New South Wales has been short-changed.

It has been a month and we are still waiting for the Deputy Premier to back his own party members on the issue. Meanwhile, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is prosecuting NSW Ports on the deal that it believes is not only anti-competitive but also outright illegal. Our Opposition leader, Jodi McKay, has spoken out many times over many years about her support for the construction of a container terminal in Newcastle. Just days after The Nationals' motion Ms McKay said it was time for the party to put its money where

its mouth is, but while Mr Barilaro is its leader, unfortunately it seems it cannot. It is not the first time The Nationals have supported a container terminal being constructed in Newcastle.

In October 2018 *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported comments Mr Barilaro made at a forum for the Committee for Economic Development of Australia where he said that western New South Wales farmers and primary producers would "benefit from a container port in Newcastle". Now when he sits next to the Liberals, the Deputy Premier goes very quiet. When the dodgy deal was drawn up at the Cabinet table, it is clear Mr Barilaro and The Nationals did not stand up to their Liberal masters. Now Mr Barilaro has gone silent again, right when his own rank and file has spoken up. Without the members of The Nationals, where would the Deputy Premier be today? It is time Mr Barilaro showed the rank and file the respect they deserve and supported the resolution of his own party. Mr Barilaro, come on, back a competitive container terminal at the Port of Newcastle.

WESTERN SYDNEY ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (18:41): I do not intend to be quite as animated as the member for Newcastle, but I raise an important issue relating to infrastructure in north-west Sydney that will greatly impact on my electorate of Londonderry as well as the electorates of Riverstone and Hawkesbury. I raise the dire need for a significant investment to upgrade the Bandon Road bypass. The idea for the major road upgrade is to create a link between Windsor Road and Richmond Road. I speak on the issue on behalf of the many thousands of residents who are moving into the estate of Elara in Marsden Park, which is a rapidly growing community that I represent.

Stockland advises me that it occupies 10 homes per week. People are flocking to build their homes in Elara. The Bandon Road upgrade is significant because of the connection between Richmond Road and Windsor Road at the intersection of the Elara estate. It will provide a way for people to get into the Riverstone town centre, which is currently clogged with traffic, to access public transport at Vineyard station or Riverstone station. That is pertinent to the new residents I represent in Elara because at the moment they simply cannot get to any public transport or train station without a significant traffic nightmare. At Schofields station they cannot park their cars. They have tried in vain to get the Government to provide better bus services to Schofields so they can get to the city because employment opportunities that far west in Sydney simply do not exist.

Successive governments of both persuasions have encouraged land release in those areas but have not invested in employment opportunities, so our people still have to get on the train or the M7 or M2 to get to work in the city to pay mortgages for the beautiful new homes that they have built. That is the feedback that they give me. The upgrade will take the pressure off Garfield Road. It will allow Elara residents to get to Riverstone town centre and Vineyard station and give them greater accessibility to public transport, which is vital. The now Leader of the Opposition, who was the shadow Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and the shadow Minister for Transport during the recent election campaign, committed that Labor would provide \$150 million to commence planning for the upgrade of this important road. It is in the electorate of Riverstone, which is represented by a Government member, and so I am perplexed as to why this is not part of its so-called record infrastructure spend if it is in a Government member's electorate. It certainly impacts the community I am privileged to represent.

I am also perplexed by residents telling me today that they had been invited to go to public consultations about the need for the Bandon Road upgrade, but the Government has not committed any money to such an upgrade. There is an expectation that there might be some future work, but the Government has not committed to it. I am not sure what it is consulting on if zero money is attached to this upgrade, which was supposed to be completed when 25 per cent of the land in the north-west growth area had been released. The land release, in total, is now up to 28 per cent and that does not even include Schofields West and Marsden Park North. This land is being released at a rapid rate and, when opportunities arise for people to build homes once it is released, they are taking it up.

There is a need for this housing in western Sydney, but here I am again. I feel like a broken record on the need for infrastructure in growing communities. The Government talks a big game when it comes to infrastructure, but here is the member for Londonderry talking again about how we cannot get infrastructure in north-west Sydney or western Sydney. This is not humorous; it is real people's lives. They are forced to get into the city of Sydney to find work, when the cost of living in the city is almost out of control. I am pleading with the Government to come forward with some sort of plan for Bandon Road to take the pressure off these growing communities in north-west Sydney.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:46): Since the House last met I have travelled the length and breadth of the Northern Tablelands electorate meeting with farmers, small business owners and everyday constituents, hearing

directly what plans they have in place to deal with the drought should it continue into 2020. For many people, operators and farmers, the forecast is incredibly bleak, but they remain stoic and optimistic for good rains to come. Industries that directly support the farming sector like engineering, mechanics and agrimerchandise are doing it very hard as farmers constrict discretionary spending and stop buying products or using services as they bunker down and just try to survive.

For these businesses, top of mind is how they can save dollars and restrict outgoings, and many have taken the very difficult decision to put off staff. If these tough decisions are not made, families will not only leave our already struggling rural communities to find work but also take with them important skills and trades that will be vital when things turn around, and our businesses and our communities require those skills to get back on their feet. That is the great skills drain, a major impact of the drought that no-one seems to be talking about—not in the commentariat at least.

While this is a harsh reality there is a flipside to this coin. Despite the drought there has been a resurgence in young professionals returning to farming and returning to towns like Moree, Armidale and Inverell. They bring with them the experience, skills or business ethos they have learned in the region or away at university that can be applied both on and off farm. This was highlighted for me at the recent Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Foundation [RASF] scholarship presentation held at the University of New England in Armidale. The RASF provides financial scholarships on an annual basis to students who have shown a passion for rural issues and the determination to come back and make a difference in the bush.

Scholarships provide up to \$6,000 for full-time study or \$3,000 for part-time study across a calendar year for students either studying at university or learning a trade at TAFE. I acknowledge the chair of the RASF, Michael Millner; the board of directors; and the wonderful executive officer Cecilia Logan. Each year they do an amazing job of securing sponsors for the foundation, which helps to support our regional students and communities and many of its other programs.

Of the 12 students awarded scholarships at this year's ceremony in Armidale, three were from the Northern Tablelands. Cassie McBean is from the small community of Invergowrie, just outside Armidale. She is in her fourth year of studying a Bachelor of Medicine at the University of New England through the joint medical program. This is the fourth scholarship she has received from the foundation. After her studies, Cassie is hoping to become a qualified doctor and to stay in the local region. That is absolutely magnificent. The foundation is helping her to study in her local community, which will allow her to stay and practise medicine in her local community. There is nothing better than that.

Alistair Scott is another student receiving assistance and is three years into a Bachelor of Rural Science. Alistair's degree will equip him with the skills to solve agriculture problems both on farm and in business. With areas like Armidale grappling with the worst drought anyone has experienced, people with Alistair's specific skill set will be critical in coming up with innovative ways to assist farmers to cope with prolonged and inevitably more regular dry periods.

I also mention Ellen Coote from Moree, who is a wonderful young woman with so much promise. Ellen has commenced her studies to secure a Bachelor of Education, K-12, through the University of New England. Ellen is passionate about improving the outcomes of children in remote areas of the State. Similar to doctors, attracting quality teachers to our isolated rural communities can be difficult. I wish Ellen and the other recipients all the best with their studies. I thank the foundation for the wonderful work it does in supporting regional communities.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Northern Tablelands. It is encouraging to hear about qualified young people returning to our regional communities.

PAEDIATRIC CARDIAC SERVICES

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:51): I tell the story Peter Low and his son Cooper. Cooper was 10 days old when Peter and his wife took him to hospital with a viral illness. Transferred to Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick, it was unknown that he was suffering from myocarditis. Soon after arrival, Cooper went into cardiac arrest, needing CPR for 26 minutes. Without the presence of the cardiac surgical team at Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick, Cooper would not have survived. Recently the New South Wales Government put forward a proposal to stop paediatric cardiac services at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick. This issue affects people not only in the eastern suburbs but also across Sydney and New South Wales. The removal of paediatric cardiac services at Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick will have a direct impact on the Royal Women's Hospital, which is the only female-specific hospital in New South Wales where our most high-risk expectant mothers go to have their babies delivered.

Whether it is your child, a niece, a nephew or the child of a friend, paediatric cardiac services at the Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick are crucial in providing world-class health care for our most sick kids. In the face of a proposal to move all elective cardiac procedures to the Westmead campus, doctors have been fighting to retain cardiac services at Randwick. This is clearly an issue that strikes a chord in our community, as just last week more than 500 people gathered outside the hospital to protest this proposal. The proposal was put forward despite the fact that in February 2019 and December 2018 the Premier and the Minister for Health and Medical Research explicitly stated that the New South Wales Government was fully committed to maintaining paediatric cardiac services, including paediatric cardiac surgery, at both the Randwick and Westmead hospitals.

Whether it is by holding rallies, meeting with stakeholders or informing the public through the media, doctors at the Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick and the Royal Women's Hospital have spent countless hours advocating for the safety of children across Sydney and New South Wales. In response to their advocacy, doctors have received a threatening letter from the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network that they fear is an attempt to silence or even sack them. It is utterly disgraceful that doctors who are doing nothing but trying to ensure world-class medical services for our children now fear for their jobs.

To quote Dr Solomon from the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, "Does the Minister and the Ministry of Health really expect a group of senior doctors to simply lie down and accept the dire consequences for children's health at this campus by not speaking out?" Given the adversity they have faced, I thank all the doctors, nurses and allied health workers who have spoken up, including Dr Solomon, Dr Awad, Dr Russell and Dr Gray, for all of their advocacy. It is not easy to stand up to an entire Government, but their efforts have put children's safety at the forefront of this issue. I also thank my Federal parliamentary colleague Matt Thistlethwaite for raising this issue in the Federal Parliament. The actions of the department and the Minister have put children's lives at risk, and following through with the proposal would be catastrophic. Dr John Awad said:

At least two children alone in the last few months would have died were it not for the onsite services at Randwick.

It is clear that the Government either does not understand or does not care about the effect that this proposal will have. Given that the services cost approximately \$6 million a year, we must ask why the Government has put forward the proposal to remove them. Data obtained under the Government Information (Public Access) Act showed that surgery mortality outcomes at the two hospitals were extremely similar. NSW Health Secretary Elizabeth Koff has stated previously that it is important to have cardiac services at Randwick. We need to ask ourselves: Is the Government moving those services to save a mere \$6 million, right after it has had to spend over \$500 million because it botched the light rail contract with Acciona? I know that the Minister for Health and Medical Research feels that it is not his place to make clinical decisions about how our health system is run, but the buck stops with him. I ask him to please commit to the ongoing provision of paediatric cardiac services at the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick. The lives of our children depend on it.

MELROSE RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:56): I speak about my constituents living in the Melrose Retirement Village at Bungaree Road, Pendle Hill. The village is set on over three hectares of landscaped gardens, with 38 modern open-plan, largely self-contained units. Last week I was fortunate to visit the residents of the village for an outstanding afternoon tea and was able to see firsthand the balance struck at Melrose between independence and communal living. Melrose residents told me of the regularity with which they engaged in social and recreational activities such as arts and crafts, bingo, shuffleboard and a range of external entertainment services. The Melrose bus conducts weekly shopping trips for the residents, as well as regular day trips to places such as Watsons Bay, Manly, Cronulla and recently up to the Central Coast. Of course, some of the residents were quick to remind me that they still drive themselves and their neighbours around and, in many cases, are able to assist with charitable and community organisations throughout the Seven Hills electorate.

During my visit I learned of the facility upgrades that have been taking place at Melrose—most notably the upgrade and expansion of the main common room in the past eighteen months. The common room's exposed brick and timber panels have been covered and the walls have been brought to life with great splashes of modern colours and lots of fantastic decorations. The entertainment room at Melrose makes you feel as though you have entered a family living room, where classic hits play through the speakers and residents will sit for intimate performances by talented musicians from various local schools and organisations. The kitchen adjoining the common room has also been improved, with facilities doubled to accommodate all the residents when they come through for classes and meals, as well as residents and their families and friends when they receive visitors for special occasions. Through the creation of a dementia-specific unit at Melrose, the village now caters for residents who require ongoing care. It does a good job of ensuring that those residents can engage in many of the activities that their fellow residents enjoy.

Over a beautiful afternoon tea of delicate homemade cakes and slices, I made my way around the tables to hear tales of yesteryear and of great past deeds, and also to talk of today's issues and things in the local community that affect the residents. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to speak to the residents of Melrose about the important role that seniors play in our community. I was also able to demonstrate the importance the New South Wales Government places on that role through initiatives such as the NSW Seniors Festival in February, Grandparents Day in October and all the Government's policies and rebates designed specifically to improve the lives of our senior citizens. In July this year the Government continued its freeze of Senior Opal card travel to a maximum of \$2.50, no matter where people travel on the network. As members are undoubtedly aware, the price for seniors' travel has been frozen at \$2.50 per day since 2004.

I pay tribute to Barbara Knox and the team at Melrose, who were instrumental in making the afternoon possible. Amid the talk of upcoming fortnightly Devonshire teas, a number of Melrose residents asked me to acknowledge in this House the valuable role played by much-loved staff at Melrose, including Trish Henderson. Trish is known at Melrose for her spectacular home-cooked, three-course meals made for all residents as part of their happy-hour Friday afternoon activities in the main common room. Trish is also known for the extra care and special attention that she gives to all Melrose residents.

Members will agree that it is vital to acknowledge and encourage the selfless kindness and generosity that exists in our communities, especially when it comes to the care of the seniors in our electorates. Notwithstanding the important work being done by the Commonwealth's Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety in uncovering unscrupulous and sometimes criminal behaviour occurring in the aged-care sector, this behaviour is certainly the exception rather than the rule. I am proud to represent an electorate where many of my constituents work with great energy and diligence in the aged-care sector in wonderful places such as Melrose Retirement Village in Pendle Hill. They ensure that the lives of their residents—our parents and grandparents—are so much more fulfilling, and our entire community is better for their efforts. I thank all the staff and residents at Melrose for having me over for a cuppa, afternoon tea and a fantastic chat.

MINERAL HOUSE STAFF RELOCATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (19:01): The Government announced in May that 2,500 jobs would be cut from the New South Wales public sector. This is in addition to the more than 200 public sector jobs we know of that the Liberal Party and The Nationals have cut from my community in the past eight years. Cuts have been made to Crown Lands, Family and Community Services, Housing NSW, Community Health and Revenue NSW. I have now heard from a number of sources that some 200 workers based in Maitland's Mineral House will be moved to Newcastle sometime after the lease on the building expires on 31 December this year. Those workers are a vital and vibrant part of our CBD lunchtime economy.

Shifting jobs from Maitland to a central hub in the second-largest coastal city in New South Wales is yet another slap in the face for rural and regional New South Wales. It will have a devastating effect on our regional economy. I remind the Premier of the promises she made when my colleague the member for Cessnock asked her in this place to confirm that every regional public sector job would be maintained in its current community. The Premier's response was absolute. In part, she stated:

I assure every community in rural and regional New South Wales that their government jobs are protected ...

...

We know that three jobs in one town could be worth more than 30 jobs in another. We understand that. That is why the Government [will] make sure we protect all of our jobs in rural and regional New South Wales.

In light of this, I have written to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Minister for Finance and Small Business, the Minister for Energy and Environment, who is in this place, and the Premier herself. To date, I have received just one response to my correspondence—from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. It stated, "As this matter falls within the portfolio of the Special Minister of State, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, it has been referred to the Office of the Hon. Don Harwin for consideration." I still have no response. Just in case the matter was not referred, I have written also to the honourable member.

This response to my letter of 26 June 2019 was sent to my office on 19 July 2019—over three weeks after I sent the initial letter. The Minister is to be congratulated on responding in a more timely manner than the Premier or her other Ministers—or indeed the Minister sitting opposite in the Chamber. Actually, it is a pretty surprising response. I wrote to the Minister again last week to confirm that he really does not know where or how many of his current Maitland-based staff will be relocated after 31 December 2019. I know I am not a Minister, but I would have thought such matters were of interest to a Minister and that even if they were not of interest he could have asked someone in his agency in response to my request—such as the people who will be arranging

payroll, in charge of relocations and know what is going to happen. Strangely enough, a similar thing happened when I raised this issue, on notice, with the Deputy Premier in question 612 on 20 June this year. I asked:

Does the Planning, Industry and Environment (PIE) Cluster's plan announced in the NSW Budget 2019-20 to consolidate regional offices, which included staff from Orange, include any staff from the Maitland PIE office?

The Deputy Premier failed to answer the actual question about whether the consolidation of regional offices would include any staff from Maitland by shifting onto the topic of the staff at Orange and saying merely that there were "no plans to relocate staff from the Maitland office to the new Orange office". That is not an answer to the question I asked him. Meaningfully, he did not rule out any moves to the new Newcastle building. There has been much conjecture in the Hunter about which departments it will house. The Deputy Premier did, however, confirm that the lease on Minerals House will end on 31 December this year.

The Maitland Business Chamber is vitally concerned about these issues. It knows that the multiplier effect of money into an economy is about seven times. This means that there is potential for a \$90 million drop in economic activity in my city if this goes ahead. Despite the trouble and concern of the Maitland Business Chamber and a representation to the Premier, it has not received a word—diddly squat. There has been no response from this Premier. I have received only diversions, avoidance, obfuscation or stony silence from the Government, the Premier and her Ministers. Meanwhile, 350 people who work in Minerals House in Maitland wonder who will move to Newcastle, who will stay in Maitland and—this is the real kicker—which of the staff who move to Newcastle will have their jobs on the chopping block.

Those on this side of the Chamber know that this Government does not consider Newcastle a regional city when it comes to public service employment. Newcastle is considered a city in its own right, so if staff from my community are relocated to Newcastle there is no guarantee for those 350 jobs. I ask the Premier to guarantee that she will keep her word and not use sneaky, back-door deals to steal jobs from Maitland and ruin my community's economy.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:06): I acknowledge Local Government Week and highlight the significant contribution our local councils make to communities across the State, particularly in the Albury electorate. The theme of this year's Local Government Week is "Your Council", highlighting the achievements, successes and accomplishments of councils beyond roads, rates and rubbish. With a population of over 93,000 residents across the five local government areas contained within the Albury electorate, and revenue of over \$252 million each year, our local councils can be better described as thriving businesses serving our communities and delivering essential infrastructure and services on a daily basis. Across the Albury electorate Albury City Council, Federation Council, Greater Hume Shire Council, Murrumbidgee Council and Snowy Valleys Council deliver essential and vital services to local residents. These include operating and managing 20 public swimming pool complexes, 55 public halls, 14 public libraries and 2,990 hectares of open space. This is in addition to managing and maintain over 7,875 kilometres of road.

I am pleased to be part of a government that supports our local councils. Since the election of the New South Wales Government in 2011, over \$9 billion in funding for vital infrastructure and services has been awarded to councils, ensuring important projects and services across our communities are being delivered each and every day. These include local road upgrades, new and improved cycleways, graffiti reduction and eradication programs, animal shelter maintenance and upgrades, heritage grants to protect our important and historic buildings and facilities, and waste management. This is all done in partnership with our local councils, to our communities' benefit.

Our \$9 billion investment in local councils over the past eight years includes hundreds of millions of dollars invested in essential infrastructure and services across the Albury City Council, Federation Council, Greater Hume Shire Council, Murrumbidgee Council and Snowy Valleys Council local government areas, representing a significant investment for the future of our communities. The New South Wales Government is not just investing in local infrastructure; it is working with councils to ensure that it is easy for local residents to do business with them, by linking more and more transactions to the MyServiceNSW account, which is helping people save time and money by delivering more digital service options. Across the Albury, Federation, Greater Hume, Murrumbidgee and Snowy Valleys local government areas 389 pets have been registered via the new online registry since its launch in October 2018. Across New South Wales over 12,813 cat and dog owners have utilised the online service, with an additional 1,500 owners paying their pet registration fees via Service NSW since it was added as a convenient new method in November 2018.

The New South Wales Government recognises that councils are more than just roads, rates and rubbish. Councils play a significant role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our companion animals, which is why the New South Wales Government reimburses 80 per cent of lifetime registration for animals in the local government

area as well as those registered from eligible shelters. Over \$1.6 million has been allocated across these local government areas under the New South Wales Government's companion animals lifetime registration fees, assisting councils to fund animal shelters, ranger services, dog recreation areas and education and awareness activities across each local government area.

I thank our local mayors and councillors for their ongoing contribution to the local community as well as the more than 1,000 staff working across the Albury, Federation, Greater Hume, Murrumbidgee and Snowy Valleys local government areas. I will continue to work with our local mayors, general managers and councillors to secure additional funding for our region, and assist our councils to deliver the infrastructure our communities expect and deserve. As we acknowledge Local Government Week I again thank most sincerely those working within our councils, and acknowledge the work they do each and every day to better our community.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:11 until
Wednesday 31 July 2019 at 10:00.**