



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 7 August 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 7 August 2019

The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea) took the chair at 9:30.

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL 2019

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (09:46): I move:

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

- (1) Not call on orders of the day committee reports.
- (2) Permit consideration of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 to continue until 1.45 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 6 August 2019.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (09:47): Today I talk about women's choice. The Sydney media has framed the debate on the bill around the notion of women's choice. I note, however, that a woman's choice is very much dependent on the availability of services. In my rural electorate of Murray, the New South Wales Government has gradually stripped away women's health services. So-called "women's rights", enshrined in law, are severely restricted thanks to government cost cutting. Women often have to travel several hours to bigger cities not only to access pregnancy termination services, but also if they choose to have a baby. When I was growing up, hospitals provided full maternity services and a complete range of health services for women and men. Since then, successive governments have gutted hospitals in Griffith, Leeton, Deniliquin, Finley, Wentworth and other small towns across Murray. I ask the New South Wales Government, when changing the laws, to consider the issue of equity and how accessible services are to women across the whole State, not just Sydney. The bill should be assessed as part of the five-year ministerial review, which is stipulated under clause 11.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian has been strong in her support for the bill and her support for women's rights. If she is fair dinkum about women's rights, she will ensure that all women have genuine access to vital health services rather than just abstract legal entitlements. I am currently lobbying for the creation of a specialist women's health service in Murrumbidgee Local Health District and Far West Local Health District to guarantee that women in rural New South Wales have the women's health services they need. This women's health service would be not only for pregnancy termination but also for services such as access to female doctors, cervical screening tests, breast examinations, contraception advice, family planning, pregnancy planning and support, and postnatal check-ups. Presently women in smaller towns struggle to access these basic services. I call on the Liberals and The Nationals to translate their new-found love of women's rights into funding for services in rural areas, ensuring these rights can be exercised. Regarding the central purpose of this bill, I agree abortion should not be a criminal offence.

My great-aunt died as a result of a backyard procedure many years ago. I believe something like that should never happen again and it is vital for women to have access to safe and lawful health services. Many people in my electorate have expressed strong views on the bill. I have received a number of phone calls, letters and a petition from those who have grave concerns about some of its provisions. I thank those who have taken the time to contact me. It is important in a democracy that everyone should have their say. I always try to ensure that my vote in Parliament is consistent with the majority view in my electorate. I have concerns with the bill. I feel the provision allowing a pregnancy to be terminated at 22 weeks may be too late. I believe that Tasmanian law allowing unrestricted abortion until 16 weeks—and requiring the consent of two doctors after this time—is a better option. But doctors tell me it is rare for pregnancies to be terminated beyond 16 weeks in other States—even if the law permits it to happen. A decision to end a pregnancy is not something a woman ever takes lightly.

New South Wales is the only State yet to decriminalise abortion. Our existing laws date back to 1900 and, while this bill is not perfect, I believe the time is right for change.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (09:51): First, I express my disappointment with the way this bill has been handled by the Government. The attempt last week by the Berejiklian Government to push this bill through the lower House—without the normal parliamentary review process—was a disgrace. It undermines not only the importance of this subject but also the parliamentary process of public review and consideration needed by members as representatives of our electorates. This attempt failed as the party room or caucus meetings of both major political parties refused to accept this breaking of parliamentary procedure and attempted forced lack of consultation with our constituencies about the bill. It is worth noting that the governments in the three States that have recently decriminalised abortion—Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland—facilitated wideranging and extensive public consultation, including initiating parliamentary inquiries and engaging with law reform bodies to examine the impact of such legislation. This is in stark contrast to the process the New South Wales Government has forced on this Parliament.

I also condemn the grandstanding of certain members of this Parliament—on both sides of the debate—who are attempting to use this highly emotive and important bill for nothing more than political gain without any real consideration of the impact that this issue has on our communities, especially the most vulnerable women. The Prospect electorate office and I have received hundreds of emails and phone calls about the bill in the past seven days. I have also held a number of meetings with ethnic and community organisations, religious leaders and church members, human rights organisations, women's right organisations, medical practitioners and paramedics. I thank them for spending the time to discuss the important issues encompassed in this bill and the issues associated with its enactment.

As the member for Prospect, my priority is to represent the views expressed to me by my community—namely, those persons, families and organisations within the electorate of Prospect. Further, my priority must also be to consider the impact that this bill and other government policies have on the lives of the community in the Prospect electorate. Over the past eight years we have seen government policies that have had serious and detrimental effects on members of the community within the Prospect electorate: the under-resourcing of the maternity ward at Fairfield Hospital, which led to the deaths of two newborns with a devastating impact on their families; and the dismantling of the workers compensation system, which has led to homelessness and suicide and has made families financially destitute. These are but two effects of this Government's policy decisions.

A woman experiencing an unexpected or unwanted pregnancy must be treated with respect, compassion and dignity. A woman's wellbeing must be a priority. They are not criminals and should not be treated as such. I am not aware of any evidence that the criminal law and the relevant sections of the Crimes Act 1900 have stopped a woman from having an abortion. A woman who is desperate does not consider the law but her situation. I have seen from my time in legal practice that a desperate person often undertakes extreme risks and often that will include alleged criminal behaviour. Further, no person has stated to me that a woman should be imprisoned if she chooses to have a termination. Rather, a woman must be given true choices that promote the best interests of themselves, their families—if that is a factor in their decisions—and that of their child if the pregnancy goes to full term.

When our healthcare or legal systems fail it disproportionately harms the most those with limited access to health care, isolated women in ethnic communities, people in lower socio-economic situations, people with mental health issues, the homeless and women affected by physical and sexual violence. In turn, a health professional must be able to provide their patient with the best care possible, without fear of criminal charges or other inappropriate sanctions. Abortion should not be the only option for a woman when she faces an unexpected or unwanted pregnancy. A woman must have choices and be able to decide her future. There must be an all-encompassing approach to a woman's reproductive health care, with a focus not just on the termination of pregnancy but also on emotional counselling, financial and family support, pathways to adoption and other social safety nets that should be provided to a woman so she can make an informed decision.

In Victoria, since the passing of equivalent legislation in 2008—and, as the House knows, this bill is based on that legislation—the State Government has come to the realisation that this holistic form of reproductive health care needs to be available to women when they are confronted with making a choice of whether to terminate a pregnancy. One such provider of this approach, which has received funding of \$50,000 from the Victorian Government and \$240,000 from the Federal Government, is The Babes Project, an organisation that works with women facing a crisis and a challenging pregnancy, and provides a proven perinatal program. In New South Wales a number of non-government organisations provide a similar model to The Babes Project, providing options and support to women and families navigating their choices and support around an unplanned pregnancy.

The organisations provide counselling, outreach, parenting and mentor support groups, material assistance and casework service referrals. Those services are readily available for young, vulnerable, pregnant

and/or parenting women as well as for their families who are in crisis. Since its launch in 2006, one such NGO has provided more than 1,200 pregnant and parenting women and their families with thousands of hours of counselling, mentoring and support. The service has always operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ensure that women can access the support they need at any time. The service supports women from Greater Western Sydney, the Central Coast, south-west Sydney, the Sydney CBD, the Illawarra and surrounding areas. Not-for-profit NGOs such as the one I have described must be supported financially by the New South Wales Government as they are key to providing women with real choice when facing an unexpected or unwanted pregnancy. Sadly, to my knowledge, the New South Wales Government provides little, or no, financial support to such NGOs, which must rely on private community or corporate donations via fundraising.

I now turn to the bill. I have a number of concerns about parts of the bill, concerns that have also been raised by people living in, and organisations based in, the Prospect electorate. In summary, they include, first, part 2, clause 5, which allows termination up to 22 weeks without considering that at 22 weeks a fetus has developed to such an extent that the fetus, if born, can live independently of the mother. Currently abortion providers in New South Wales will not accept a patient after the fetus is at 20 weeks. There are no legal protections for babies who are born alive after later-term abortions. I believe the bill must be amended to require that medical assistance be rendered in such a circumstance. A premature baby born at 22 weeks can survive. Yet if a fetus of the same gestation age is aborted and survives, is breathing and is alive there is no requirement that medical assistance be provided.

Part 2, clause 6 states that after 22 weeks a fetus may be terminated with the consent of two doctors. The clause gives a number of examples of circumstances that these two medical practitioners may consider. In my opinion, these doctors should be qualified neonatal medical professionals and the consideration of a termination should be on the grounds only of the woman's health and medical care or significant medical concerns for the fetus. Viable alternatives to termination should be offered to the woman, including adoption, financial support and other social safety nets as appropriate. Part 3, clause 10 allows for a woman to perform a termination on herself. No time frame is stated and this can be interpreted that self-termination is legal at any time during the pregnancy. This seriously concerns me as a woman attempting to terminate a pregnancy without medical professionals being involved in the process puts the woman at great risk. After 22 weeks there is a significant chance of the child being born alive and needing urgent medical assistance. [*Extension of time*]

We saw this graphically illustrated in the case of *DPP v Lasuladu* [2017] NSWLC 11. Ms Lasuladu, a mother of five and a resident of Toongabbie—which is within the electorate of Prospect—took drugs bought illegally from a black market provider and attempted to induce an abortion at 28 weeks. Fortunately, both Ms Lasuladu and the child's life were saved by the health professionals at Blacktown Hospital. Often such actions occur because of a lack of knowledge about what services are available. We cannot return to any form of backyard abortion. I do not believe a woman in such a situation should receive criminal penalties, but a system needs to be put in place so that the woman feels safe, receives education, counselling and comprehensive physical and mental medical care. Support is greatly needed when a woman is considering or attempting such an option. Currently in the New South Wales healthcare system there is no consistent or set process to facilitate such care.

Part 4, clause 11 states that operation of the Act must be reviewed after five years. I believe this to be too long a period before review and suggest that the Act be reviewed at two years or before. Schedule 2 to the bill introduces harsher penalties for those unqualified persons who perform or assist in termination of a pregnancy on another person by amending part 3, division 12 of the Crimes Act 1900. The maximum penalty is seven years imprisonment. I am pleased that the criminal law has been strengthened in this regard but suggest that the bill be further amended to include a similar criminal penalty for unqualified persons who attempt to terminate a pregnancy, not just those persons who succeed. I intend to move an amendment to the bill to reflect this reform.

I note during the debate that after cross-party discussions a number of amendments to the bill have been put forward by the Attorney General and other members and drafted by the Parliamentary Counsel. A number of those amendments reflect the concerns I have raised in the House today. Due to the reasons I have given today and the fact that there is overwhelming opposition to the bill within the electorate of Prospect, I cannot support the bill without further amendment. I thank the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (10:03): I have said that as this is my first conscience vote I will adopt the approach of seeking the views of those within my electorate. I can report that hundreds of people have responded and I have found incredible value in their support and insights. For that response and for its respectful nature, I thank them all. I use it to inform my thinking and to reach a decision that must also sit with my conscience. I acknowledge that there are strong views on both side of the debate. I acknowledge the intensely intimate decision that termination is for the woman involved. Importantly, I acknowledge our complex human experience.

Over the past 24 hours several members in this House, in speaking to the bill, have touched on their faith: some who are for the bill and some who are against the bill, but all giving it their utmost consideration. Know that

my faith is important too; I cannot hide that. It calls me to know that life is precious. It also calls me not to judge, to be compassionate, to listen. When we reach out and listen to each other, there we find wounded people on both sides of the debate. Both sides recognise that we should provide more support, more education and more care. I have spoken with senior members of the Government about this, and will continue to do so.

It is my understanding that termination of pregnancy is lawful across Australia and, indeed, within New South Wales, subject to medical advice. At the moment in New South Wales, an abortion is lawful if a medical practitioner forms a reasonable belief that it is necessary to prevent future serious physical or mental harm to the pregnant woman. If a doctor performs an abortion outside those parameters, the doctor and the patient both are in breach of the Crimes Act. If there is not a physical medical reason for the abortion, a woman who thinks she cannot cope with having a baby relies on the future risk to her mental health. In practice that is usually easily satisfied and we have abortion on demand in New South Wales, at least in the early stages of pregnancy. An online search readily demonstrates the reality of this, including online services. The bill seeks to remove abortion from its current location within the Crimes Act and place it within a separate legislative framework.

In my inaugural speech just a few months ago, I said that my compass point is the good people around me. I have found that many people, including many from a faith background, have a sense that the matter of abortion should not sit within the Crimes Act. The criminalisation of the woman through law is a blunt way to promote human dignity. Criminalisation leads to all involved being victims. I acknowledge the case to remove abortion from criminal law and place it in its own legislative framework. In saying that, I turn to the legislation presented to Parliament. Concerns have been raised with me with the bill in its current format. In particular, a new bill provides the ideal opportunity to speak clearly about informed consent and what it means in practice: in essence, a codification of the process in one legislative location. This is omitted from the bill. While there may be provision elsewhere, there is a question whether the bill should include explicit reference to informed consent. I understand that current practice involves specific acts of counselling to minors. Again, it would be most helpful all round if those guidelines were in the bill or in regulations.

It is welcome that the bill recognises the need to make provision for health professionals who have a conscientious objection. However, what I have heard from some health professionals in my electorate is that the bill does not encompass the full nature of what they regard as conscientious objection. Their case is that it is not a successful delivery of a conscientious objection if the health professional is still caught up in a process that ends in a termination. This matter is capable of amendment and I feel it is an important aspect to attend to. Concerns have been raised with me about the threshold of 22 weeks that allows for abortion on demand, although I understand that under current common law provisions there is no threshold. Concerns have also been raised that abortion is allowed to term, although again I understand that there is no restriction in current case law and I continue to seek to understand further how this currently operates in practice.

I have spoken with the member for Sydney about these concerns and I thank him for sharing his understandings with me. I see well-considered amendments as important to improve the bill and more fully express the intentions behind some of its key sections, but I would not like to see this lead to undue delay in taking the bill to a vote. It is possible that the bill will pass without amendment. However, I say to the member for Sydney that rather than the legislation being crafted by 15, it is possible for this Chamber to help build this legislation with you—to have the voice of this Chamber help address some of the concerns raised. I recognise the principle that abortion should be moved from its current position in the Crimes Act into its own legislative framework. I would like to see amendments that help address concerns held by members of our community before I can give my support to the bill. Irrespective of the outcome of this debate, for the individual the decision is and will always be profound—a decision that balances the preciousness of life with the complexity of human experience.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (10:10): I speak in debate on this historic piece of legislation, the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. From the outset, I say that whilst I have the position of shadow Minister for Health in my party, I do not speak from that perspective but I speak exclusively from the perspective of being the member for Keira. I will make a conscience vote on the passage of this legislation, as will the men and women elected to this place. We will be looking to our consciences when we make the vote and I have been clear with my community from the very beginning, as I always have been with conscience votes, that I have to come to terms with this issue and be comfortable with my vote.

I know that in making the decision to support this legislation I will let down people in my community. I know some people in my community are unhappy, upset, frustrated and annoyed that I have made my decision. I understand that, and I understand that there are people in my community who in the past have supported me at elections but perhaps will not support me in the future. But being a legislator is not easy. We do not get an easy run, and nor should we get an easy run. Today, for those reasons, is a very difficult day but it is one that I am very proud of because I am one of the people who sponsored this historic piece of legislation. I am proud because I will have an opportunity, long after I have left this place, to look back and know that I have contributed in a small way

to improving the quality of and access to health care and, most importantly, the dignity and health of women in their hour of need.

The debate, both in this place and in the public arena, has at times been both bitter and personal. But I say from the outset that I am proud to stand here in this House to support this bill. I am proud that I have had the opportunity to sponsor this bill and I am proud of the men and women who have worked tirelessly both in the establishment of this bill and over many, many years in bringing forward this reform. I am not proud that New South Wales is still debating a piece of legislation that is 119 years old. Furthermore, we are the only State or Territory in Australia not to have modernised our laws in relation to the termination of pregnancy.

The current legislation is inherently discriminatory. It has entrenched stigma, it is outdated and it is archaic. This decriminalisation should be viewed as an important step towards improving women's access to health care when they need it most. The current legislation has led to confusion, and by removing this as a criminal offence will allow doctors and medical practitioners to carry out their work without the fear of prosecution. I am a proud feminist. I come from a proud feminist family. Not every member of the community I represent shares my view. Whilst many will support the stance I have taken today, some will not, but I ask that they respect the fact that I have taken my time to come to this decision and that I have consulted widely and read widely on this matter. Every time this issue has been brought before this House I have supported it.

We have had difficult debates about this matter in the eight short years that I have been a member, and there had obviously been some very challenging debates on the matter previously. Going forward, decriminalisation of this healthcare service should be viewed as an important step towards improving access to women's health when they need it most. I emphasise the words "when they need it most". In all the conversations I have had with women who have had an abortion never once was it referred to—as it has been in this debate at times—as a form of contraceptive. That is not the case. This is a harrowing, difficult, challenging but deeply personal decision for a woman. No woman would take that decision lightly; nor would those who love her and give her counsel take the matter lightly.

Whilst the purpose of the bill is to decriminalise medical procedures for terminating pregnancies and to legislate a framework for lawful and unlawful terminations, for me, it is also about giving women access rights, dignity and safety. The bill will allow terminations on request for women who are up to 22 weeks pregnant if the termination is performed by a registered doctor. For women who are more than 22 weeks pregnant, terminations will be lawful if two doctors consider that the procedure should be performed after considering all the relevant medical circumstances. The bill creates obligations on doctors who have conscientious objections to disclose their objections to the patient, and refer the patient to another doctor whom they believe does not have a conscientious objection. This is in line with existing clinical practice and codes of conduct.

It is not the role of government to interfere with patients choosing to seek out options for medically appropriate treatment. Rather, it is the role of government to consider the need to provide safe, legal and affordable abortions. One of the things that has been raised with me—it has also been raised by a number of speakers in this debate—is access to terminations for women who live outside Sydney. It is an enormous personal and financial challenge for those women. I have met with women from the far South Coast who have had to pay a lot of money to access something that is easily obtainable and affordable for women who live in the city. That issue should not be lost in this debate.

Over the past week—and over previous months and years when this matter has been debated in some form—I have listened with interest to people who have said that they did not feel there was a need to rush the legislation through. As a legislator, I am of the strong opinion that protecting the rights of women to have access to safe abortions should be a high priority. No-one can say that this is the first time the issue of abortion and its decriminalisation has come before this place. I do not believe any legislator in this place can say that this is the first time they have put their mind to the issue. I am a man who will never have this experience. Therefore, I do not believe it is my place to deny any woman her reproductive rights.

There are hundreds of stories from women across New South Wales who have struggled to access a safe termination of pregnancy. Those women's circumstances and stories are diverse. I am not going to pretend that I know how they feel. As a man, I will never know exactly the excruciating, painstaking process that a woman has to go through when making a decision to terminate. But I can share some of their stories. I have heard women recount stories of incredibly dangerous efforts to end a pregnancy without suitable medical care. I have heard from others who are angry because they carried an unwanted pregnancy for far longer than they wished, simply because they were unable to find a doctor to perform the procedure. I heard from a 33-year-old woman in my electorate who grappled with this issue several years ago. After trying for some time, she eventually fell pregnant after fertility treatment. She was excited and then devastated to discover that some genetic issues were identified at the 12-week scan. For the next five weeks she had many tests and saw a number of doctors. Eventually she made the heartbreaking and difficult decision to terminate the pregnancy.

Today I speak for that woman and many of the other women who have talked to me over the past months and years when this issue has arisen. It is imperative for me to point out and recognise that the real life circumstances of abortion are not black and white. Women have fought hard to be able to get rights such as being able to vote and to be counted as a human being without a man attached. Surely in 2019 they have the right to make decisions over their body and their reproductive health. Denying those rights only makes for a negative impact on the progress made by the women's movement. [*Extension of time*]

In 2016 the Australian Election Study undertaken by the Australian National University found that almost 70 per cent of Australians agreed that women should be able to obtain abortions readily. In 2018 a study published by the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* found that 73 per cent of residents in New South Wales agreed with decriminalisation and believed abortion should be regulated as a healthcare service. Support services advise that it is not unheard of for women facing domestic violence or homelessness needing to seek urgent funding in order for them to access an abortion in New South Wales. Costs currently range from hundreds to thousands of dollars, depending on where you live. As I said earlier, and as other speakers have accurately highlighted, women in regional and rural New South Wales are more marginalised due to limited access to those procedures.

I want particularly to talk briefly about the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, run by General Manager Sally Stevenson, which has come out publicly to support the bill. The centre has indicated that this will allow it to better serve the women in the community in which it operates, and for that I thank it. Ms Stevenson has said that the centre offers pregnancy counselling and the vast majority of women know exactly what they want—and that is safe and affordable access to terminations. I thank the centre and other support services for their fantastic work supporting and advising women in crisis or going through a difficult period.

Both sides have the right to debate this issue and I certainly respect the views of the members in my community who have contacted me about this matter. Some, including my close friend Bob Ascoli, I will disappoint today. However, if this legislation is passed I hope that as the years progress women will have access to safe and affordable abortions and never again feel like a criminal and as though the State is punishing them for something that should be between only them and their doctor. Although there is opposition to the bill in my community and in my local churches—people of great faith have asked me strongly not to support it—I do not feel that those reasons give me the right to deny abortion or reproductive rights to women. As an elected member in this place, I want to show compassion in relation to this issue. As a feminist, I believe when a woman is denied the right to choose it hurts us all. I commend the bill to the House.

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the House a Chinese delegation, led by Mr Jia Xiaopan, and a representative from the Chinese Consulate, who are guests of the Legislative Council. I also welcome members of the public who are in the gallery.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (10:24): The Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 was introduced by the member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich. In recent media reports it has been suggested that this bill was introduced without consultation. This is far from the truth. Consultation has occurred far and wide. It has also been reported that there was no forward announcement of the bill coming to the House. The member for Sydney announced that this bill would be introduced as part of his election platform in March. I vehemently disagree that the bill has been rushed through the House—in fact, it is quite the opposite. Speaking as a Government Whip and someone interested in legislation, this bill could have been dealt with last Thursday in an hour and a half. That is far from what has been happening here last week and this week. I say to those who claim the bill has been rushed through that they need to pay more attention to what is happening within the House and do more homework on how things have been produced. The member for Sydney has been talking about this bill and planning it over a two-year period. It is a thorough and decent bill. Amendments will be moved later today; I will not be speaking to them. However, as the bill stands it is a great step forward.

For 119 years the reproductive health care of women in this State has been controlled by the Crimes Act 1900. This bill proposes to take this issue out of the Crimes Act and put it into the health realm, where it belongs. As a white, middle-aged man, it is quite disturbing to me that I am standing here making decisions on behalf of women. I am proud to support this bill today. People ask what politicians do—a matter such as this is a major part of what we are here for. It is not a popular thing within my electorate nor plenty of others. My office has experienced unprecedented levels of contact from constituents over this bill. It has been respectfully sending back information so that everybody is on the same page as I am. Over the past couple of weeks I have been reading extensively on the issue. I believe the member for Sydney has introduced a very sensible bill.

As I have said, I am a middle-aged white male making decisions on what my future family—my daughters-in-law, my granddaughters—will be faced with. If we are successful today in moving this issue out of the Crimes Act and into a medical wraparound service, I am quite proud and confident that is where it belongs. We should not even be discussing it the act of termination—it is ridiculous that we are having any discussions

about it. We should be talking about the legal ramifications. There has been a lot of conjecture about the figure of 22 weeks, but you have to put a timeline on something. The reading I have done suggests that most terminations performed over the past decade were in the first trimester and due mainly to deformities and issues with a child not being able to go full term. The percentage of late-term terminations is minor in the big picture. I heard a figure the other day that shocked me: We have had 26,000 terminations in New South Wales over the past decade. They are the ones that have been registered as medical procedures.

How many more are there? Hopefully the bill will encourage registration of every termination in this State. I am sure that people are performing backyard terminations in disgusting ways, putting women's health and lives under threat. I would like to see more wraparound services, to protect not only the doctors but also the patients who are seeking pregnancy termination. The media has raised the issue of unwanted pregnancies; however, unwanted pregnancies account for a small percentage of the 26,000 terminations over the past decade. A medical issue is the usual cause of a request for a termination. I support the bill in its current form. I am sure amendments will come before the House; however, it is a bit hard to talk on amendments before they are tabled. I will be supporting the bill, and I commend it to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (10:30): I make a contribution to debate on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. I especially acknowledge the member for Summer Hill and the member for Sydney for their availability when I sought clarification about certain elements of the proposed legislation. This is a difficult bill for any of a number of reasons, not the least of which is that members of Parliament are required to decide on a matter that concerns life, death and an individual's rights. Members enter this Parliament knowing that at times bills will arise that require us to make the most difficult of decisions on behalf of not only the people in our electorates but also all the people of New South Wales—decisions that pave the way for a stronger and better future for New South Wales. As bills come through the Parliament in volumes, we go through the process of assessing and judging each bill on its merits. However, there are bills such as the one currently before us that involve deep and personal factors that inform our final decisions—the views of the people we represent as local members of Parliament and our experiences and beliefs.

Most members know that my electorate is made up of a diverse range of people from different cultures, faiths and backgrounds. It is also an electorate in which the overwhelming majority practise their faith on a regular basis. The largest groups are Muslims and Maronites, but within my electorate are Melkite, Coptic, Greek Orthodox, Hindu and Buddhist believers too. There are also large numbers of people who do not list themselves as followers of a particular faith. I am privileged to be the member for such a diverse electorate in which differences are celebrated and customs, beliefs and rituals are respected. I could continue to elaborate on the profound respect I have for my constituents—I am sure other members could too—but ultimately what makes a member a true representative is his or her constituents. I cannot imagine drowning the voice of my community with just my conclusions on the bill.

When news rushed to us of this bill's introduction into Parliament, the first thing that came to mind was that I would not have enough time to hear what my constituents thought about it, that I had not heard from experts and that I did not have an inquiry to lean on for such important legislation. Unfortunately, the process of actively involving the entirety of the community has been limited in this case. We can bring the community along on most things and certainly social attitudes are changing. However, that happens through a gradual process that values, incorporates and evaluates a range of views. Last week on the radio the Premier acknowledged the sensitivities of the bill and emphasised the need to consider not only the bill's contents but also "what our constituents think".

Over the past week I have consulted with many groups with varying viewpoints. I have had honest discussions with spiritual leaders as well as community leaders and organisations. I have been approached by constituents and my office has received hundreds of emails and phone calls. From the outset, people were disappointed at how rushed the bill was and they wanted time for members to fully understand the proposed legislation and consult more broadly. Conversely, I have had people argue that the bill needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency as they do not want to see a protracted and divisive public consultation process. I respect that view as well. We cannot have a debate that tears our society apart. I have received correspondence from peak organisations, and I understand the member for Lane Cove has tabled copies of letters that we have all received. I thank all those who have taken the time to communicate with me.

In one instance I listened to an agonising story of a woman for whom keeping a child was impossible. Another terminated her pregnancy after escaping a domestic violence relationship. Both stories touched me and I could not fathom how difficult things were for them, nor could I ever pretend to understand how they would have felt. Another meeting had the most profound effect on me. It was with a mother who told me how she delivered what she termed her "miracle child". I listened intently as she took me through her pregnancy experience from 20 weeks. At her 20-week morphology scan she discovered her baby had a deformity that gave her a 35 per cent chance of survival and a poor outlook for the baby's future if she kept it. She was strongly advised to

have an abortion. This mother chose to keep her child. When the time came for delivery the child was taken straight to the Grace Centre, an intensive care unit for neonates in Westmead Hospital, where she spent three months being cared for by doctors and nurses. Despite all the odds being against this child, she survived and is now a happy 10-month-old. The joy this little baby is giving her family was obvious as the mother looked lovingly at her while sharing this story with me. Afterwards I reflected long and hard about how this child at 20 weeks could have been given up on, bar for the mother's choice to keep her.

Hearing those stories and consulting with my constituents last week has allowed me the opportunity to reflect deeply on the bill. This past week has helped me better understand the gravity of what this bill represents to the people of New South Wales and, most importantly, what it means for the women of New South Wales. It is clear that we are gathered in this Chamber debating an issue not only about life and death but also about choice and law. We are confronting a bill that not only alters the current law but also changes the way life and death is perceived. This is complex. There is no single reason that women have abortions and I do not profess to understand each individual struggle. I respect that there are sometimes circumstances way beyond a person's control, and for that reason I do not believe abortion should be illegal. Having said that, I believe the framework as proposed in the bill is far too broad simply to be labelled under a health reform bill.

I will not be supporting the bill for a number of reasons. However, I do not disagree with the contents of the bill as a whole. I do not disregard the struggles of women such as the ones I have spoken with who have experienced the ordeal of having to abort a baby. I respect that each abortion is unique and the reasons behind it quite complex. I cannot support the bill in its current form because I believe the bill does not merely seek to remove abortion from the Crimes Act—where it does not belong—and place it in another. I have serious concerns about a number of clauses in the bill. Other members have already provided a thorough breakdown of the sections, and I will not repeat them.

I briefly give my reasons for opposing the bill. I do not support the provision that allows a termination up to 22 weeks. This diminishes the value placed on a human life, especially knowing that at 22 weeks a fetus can be felt kicking by their mother and can suck their thumb. At 22 weeks the fetus can quite easily be referred to as a baby and has a strong chance of survival. I was given some statistics by supporters of this bill I met with that showed that over 90 per cent of abortions currently take place at or before 14 weeks. I find this much easier to comprehend and accept that the difference between the development of a fetus at 14 weeks and 22 weeks is quite marked. There is merit in assessing whether the provisions in the proposed legislation relating to 22 weeks be moved to 14 weeks and that abortion beyond this point requires specific criteria to be met that safeguard the unborn baby.

I cannot help but think that with additional time or a committee of inquiry, as has happened in other jurisdictions, those finer points could have been explored and we could have looked at all the options and consulted more widely. I acknowledge and respect that there are circumstances where late-term abortions must take place as a result of health conditions affecting the mother or fetus. Another concern I have about the bill relates to self-termination and the inadvertent loophole the section creates within the bill. I am fully aware that many people and groups argue that passing the bill is a step in the right direction for women and that decriminalising abortion from a century-old Act is the right thing to do. Let there be no doubt: I do not oppose change if it serves to enhance our pathway into the future. I cannot reconcile how the taking of a human life can be reduced to mere clauses in a document in which the language used to justify the reasons for termination is, at the very least, ambiguous and gives very little consideration to the magnitude and complexity of the issue. [*Extension of time*]

I cannot reconcile the fact that if a stillborn baby is delivered at 20 weeks a death certificate is issued, yet the bill sets the benchmark at 22 weeks. That does not sit well with me. The overwhelming majority of people in my electorate have expressed their sentiments clearly: They have voiced their concerns and made clear their objections to the bill. As I have stated many times, this is a complex issue and I do not want it reduced to polarised statements such as, "Those who support the bill place little value on life whilst those who oppose it are not progressive in their thinking."

All speakers before me have spoken with respect and frankness about something that sits heavily on their conscience and I acknowledge them for sharing their views sincerely. It is clear that regardless of what happens with the bill there is a strong consensus that access to safe abortions is necessary, and we recognise that a woman who chooses to abort a fetus is doing so because of complex, very personal and even tragic circumstances. I understand that amendments will be moved later in the debate and, like all members, I will assess them as they are presented. However, with such strong reservations about the bill as it currently stands and the large opposition to it from my electorate, I cannot support it.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (10:42): First of all, I thank and acknowledge the hundreds of residents from my electorate who have reached out to my office and to me over the past week or so. I want to let them know that I have read their

emails, letters and social media posts, and have had their phone calls to my office relayed to me by my staff. While I have not had a chance to respond to each one of them personally yet, I will certainly do so in the coming weeks. I have considered their views and the views that have been expressed to me on their behalf. I also thank my electorate office staff who have borne the brunt of hundreds of phone calls and emails, often with people telling harrowing stories of personal grief and terrible decisions that they have had to make but also hearing robust monologues in strident opposition to the bill. Often members forget that while we are here or in other parts of our electorates our staff bear the brunt of a lot of the decisions that we make, or are about to make, in this place. I acknowledge my staff.

It is important for everyone to understand, first and foremost, what this debate is and what it is not: It is not about whether abortion should be lawful, despite some people characterising it that way. Rather, the debate as I see it is primarily about two issues: whether the regulating of pregnancy terminations in New South Wales should be controlled via the Crimes Act 1900 and judge-made case law—in 1971 a judge gave his interpretation of the Crimes Act, which has held firm for 48 years—or whether the procedure should be governed and regulated by its own separate Act, a healthcare Act, as is being proposed and as it is in other jurisdictions in Australia. Secondly, it is about the nature of what constitutes those regulations, settings, thresholds, penalties and support that this Parliament wishes to impose to regulate, in a modern way, the procedure of terminating a pregnancy in this State. As far as I see the debate, those are the two aspects that this debate really hinges on.

Context is important in this discussion. There is no doubt that it is a delicate and emotive issue but context is important and so is history. Judge Levine's decision in the District Court of New South Wales in 1971 essentially ensured that aborting a pregnancy in New South Wales was lawful. Judge Levine in his decision identified the circumstances in which a lawful abortion could be performed and can still be performed today. The three requirements that he detailed in his judgement where a lawful abortion could be performed were: first, if there was consent of the patient; secondly, if the abortion was performed skilfully by a qualified medical practitioner; and, thirdly, if the medical practitioner had an honest belief on reasonable grounds that the operation was necessary to preserve the patient from serious danger to life or physical or mental health.

Since that judgement in 1971, abortions have gone on to become one of the most commonly performed medical procedures in the State. Regardless of one's view as to whether they should occur at all or to what degree, that is certainly the case, with an estimated more than 20,000 terminations occurring each year on average in New South Wales. On the information that we have all been apprised of in this House, around 95 per cent of those abortions occur before 14 weeks and it is estimated that less than 1 per cent occur after 24 weeks. But since 1900, when this Parliament passed the Crimes Act, aborting a pregnancy has been criminalised in our criminal code. It has been listed as a criminal offence but because of one judge in one court in 1971 it has been lawful under those circumstances that I outlined earlier.

I believe it is instructive to this debate to note that in the 48 years since Judge Levine's decision successive parliaments, countless members of both Houses of this Parliament and numerous governments have had the opportunity to overturn this judgement—this interpretation of the Crimes Act—in relation to the procedure of abortion but none of them has done so. It strikes me, therefore, that we have a situation of having a judgement made 48 years ago that no parliament, no member of Parliament and no government has overturned in this place. We have a medical procedure, which is essentially what terminating a pregnancy is—notwithstanding all the emotion and agonising decision that goes with that, it is essentially a medical procedure to abort a pregnancy—that is now relatively common.

One can debate whether that is a good thing. I have a view on that but it is not really important for this debate today. However, it happens—and it happens quite regularly—and we have not overturned this judgement from 1971. Clearly society has an attitude and a view that supports this procedure because if it did not we have had 48 years to overturn Judge Levine's decision, but that has not happened. It strikes me that, on the one hand, we have statute law that says one thing based in 1900 and, on the other hand, we have what is actually happening in New South Wales. This bill seeks to modernise our legislative framework—our laws in this State—to bring them up to speed with modern standards, modern community beliefs and community practices. The question is: Do we do that or do we leave the situation as it is?

My answer to that question is very firmly that our laws, our statute books, should be constantly evolving, not bound as if in a straitjacket. They should always be changed to meet the changing views, changing practices and changing community standards. If most people in this State were asked, they would have a view very similar to mine. The practice occurs now and our laws should reflect the fact that the community, by and large, is comfortable with that. We should be regulating the practice as a healthcare matter, not as a criminal matter. Clearly successive parliaments have agreed that it is not a crime; otherwise why have we allowed Judge Levine's decision to stand for 48 years if there is a belief in society that it should be criminalised? Society does not hold that belief, so the laws should be modernised.

Based on all the evidence available to me, when similar-style laws have been passed in other jurisdictions—and I will address the content later—the rates of abortion have continued to decrease steadily. I do not believe for an instant that that trend will change at all in New South Wales if this bill passes or does not pass this Parliament. But that belief alone is not a reason not to support this bill. The issue is about how the procedure should be regulated and what the regulations should look like. As many members who have preceded me in this debate have said, it is not a comfortable topic—particularly for me as a man. I do not have children of my own. I have never had a wife or a partner who has had to terminate a pregnancy.

Unlike many members of this House, I do not have personal experience to draw upon to bring to this debate. I have only the experiences of people to whom I have spoken in my electorate and my judgement as a parliamentary representative and leader of my community based on what I believe those in my community and the wider community of New South Wales want to see legislators do. I could go on and talk about the many logical and medical justifications for an abortion that have been documented by numerous speakers who have preceded me in this debate. I do not wish to reiterate that part of the debate because there is demonstrable medical evidence that supports medical justifications. [*Extension of time*]

In conclusion, I will say two things: I am of the strong belief that this bill is incredibly well intended. I am convinced of the need to modernise our laws to take regulating a reasonably common procedure out of the criminal code and away from the fragility of relying upon 1971 judge-made case law. I am absolutely convinced that this issue should be given its own standalone Act and regulated as a healthcare issue. But when we get to the content of the bill, that is where the waters become very murky. The majority view of the constituents who have contacted me—and I believe the majority view generally of my electorate—would be the issue of post-22 weeks gestation. I acknowledge the debate about the point at which a fetus or pregnancy becomes viable and that numerous medical opinions have been expressed. I will not delve into whether that point is 20 weeks, 21 weeks or 22 weeks. The proponents of the bill have settled on 22 weeks. I will not argue the point over 22 weeks.

However, I suggest that post-22 weeks I would support amendments during the Committee stage to address some of the concerns about how we treat terminations post-22 weeks versus pre-22 weeks and to ensure that terminations after 22 weeks are done sparingly, with all due support and information having been provided to the woman, and conducted in public hospitals or private hospitals by appropriately qualified people. Now, as we know, less than 1 per cent occur after 24 weeks. I would like to codify in a bill that passes this Parliament good practice that should and, from the evidence that I have heard, does happen in our medical facilities right now. I would feel a lot more comfortable about that, and I know a lot of my constituents would as well, if a number of their concerns were addressed as to how we treat in law a termination post-22 weeks—past the point of viability—and before.

Lastly, one of the major reasons I will be supporting the bill is to address what I believe, as a rural MP, is a massive inequity in the way women are able to access support and health services for terminating a pregnancy. Currently, if women in my electorate of Northern Tablelands make that agonising decision to terminate a pregnancy they are required to travel to either Newcastle or Coffs Harbour—those are the nearest clinics available to them. For those who live in Moree, that is nearly a 1,000 kilometre round trip. For those who are lucky enough to live in Armidale, it could be a 400 kilometre round trip. Those trips do not just happen—they cost money and women have to stay overnight.

If we make it more difficult for women to access facilities to terminate a pregnancy, it means that they get a termination later in the pregnancy, which we know from the medical evidence has inherent risk—the later you leave it, the riskier it is—or it drives them to seek resolution via other means that would fall completely outside the healthcare system, which no-one wants to see. It strikes me as hugely discriminatory that rural women have to travel vast distances to access termination facilities when women who are fortunate enough to live in larger peri-urban or urban centres do not. That is something I want to see addressed if the bill passes this Parliament. I fundamentally believe that is not fair. I came to this place to address issues such as the equity of access to services and facilities. When it comes to something like this, rural women should have the same level of access to support and services as their city counterparts do. That is something I feel very, very strongly about.

I will leave my last word in this debate to one of my constituents, who has asked to remain nameless. She is an Armidale resident who contacted me and my office. She wrote an opinion piece that yesterday appeared on page 25 of *The Sydney Morning Herald*. I encourage people to read it because it details her agonising decision to terminate a pregnancy very late—at 28 weeks—on medical grounds, and the support that she received from John Hunter Hospital at Newcastle and from the staff at the Armidale Rural Referral Hospital. The last paragraph of her opinion piece reads:

Every woman deserves the process I experienced, every single one. If you don't want an abortion then don't have one but don't leave the crime lurking in the law. Women—including those in late-term pregnancy—must have a chance to be informed and make a choice they do not take lightly or find easy. There was nothing easy about my decision; it was the hardest one I have ever made.

I do support the bill but I indicate that I will be looking to support some amendments to address my concerns and the concerns of my constituents as to the way in which we treat a termination post-22 weeks under the bill.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (10:58): I speak in support of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. I thank the member for Sydney and the other members in this place who worked to bring the bill to the Parliament. It locates abortion where it should be: in a health framework, given that it is a medical procedure. The bill decriminalises a practice that already takes place but allows it to be done within a framework of certainty rather than the framework of uncertainty that currently exists. It is a modest bill. It is long overdue; as we have heard, it is 119 years overdue. Some members saying that we need more time to consider and debate it. I entered this debate 50 years ago, so I have had plenty of time to consider this issue and the bill that is before the House. We could debate this matter until the cows come home but the views on this issue would not really shift because they are quite polarised and there is not much middle ground.

I support the bill because it is about women's rights. If we are balancing rights, then the rights of women must win out in this case. I respect the views of the hundreds of locals who have contacted me. Like the member for Northern Tablelands, I thank my staff for taking all the calls, answering hundreds of emails and having to listen to some harrowing stories and very strong opinions. When I was a member of the other place, in 1997 I talked about RU486. At the time, some of my colleagues who supported RU486 cautioned me by saying that if I were to raise the issue it might open the debate and create a backlash. They were nervous about it. The member for Northern Tablelands asked in his speech why, 48 years after Judge Levine's decision, we have not done anything about this issue. A lot of people have tried to do a lot about it but there was always resistance and it was always clear, despite various attempts in this place, that it would never pass the Parliament.

I spoke about RU486 in the other place in 2001, and here I am in 2019 still talking about abortion. This has been a long time coming, but it is time. Some members have said that making it law can have a negative impact on abortion rates. However, the World Health Organization—the eminent health organisation that we look to—tells us that laws do not really affect abortion rates one way or the other. I do not want to speak for long on this bill; over the past decades I have spoken a lot on this issue. I have spoken with groups of people, particularly groups of women, lobbied, advocated and always been a proponent of the need to decriminalise abortion. A few contributions over the last few days have referred to the law and the legal history of abortion. I refer to something from 1776-77 that most of us, particularly the lawyers, would know about—Blackstone's commentaries.

At that time, Blackstone confirmed the "born alive" rule. That came about in 1551-52 from Sir Edward Coke—as he became known—and formulated the "born alive" rule in common law, which holds that various criminal laws such as homicide and assault apply only to a child that is born alive. Some of us might have forgotten about some of those rules but if we trawl through the legal history that we have inherited we will find that abortion has been mentioned throughout. It was mentioned in the Code of Hammurabi in 1772 BC. It is fitting that we in New South Wales in this place, the Legislative Assembly, will finally decriminalise abortion so that women who need to, choose to or have to have an abortion can do so in a framework of certainty. The member for Northern Tablelands, who preceded me in this debate, spoke of the equity issue. I come from Lismore, which is a regional seat, and I know exactly what women there have had to go through. They have had to travel and do various other things to acquire a medical procedure that should be available at a local level, like all other medical procedures. With those words, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:04): I begin by commending my good mate the member for Sydney and my colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe, as well as the other members who have brought the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 to the House. Importantly, I thank the many members of my community who have reached out to me and whom I have reached out to. I want them all to know that their views are valued. Arguably, this issue is without any doubt one of the hardest ones that this House has had to deal with during my time in Parliament. I particularly thank the doctors and religious groups I have met with for sharing their views in a very respectful manner. I thank my friends who have contacted me. I also thank my colleagues. But most of all I thank, congratulate and commend all the women who have had the courage to speak out on this issue. Their experience is deeply personal and something that I will never truly understand as they do.

There are deeply held views on both sides of this argument. I deeply respect everyone and their views. This is a matter of conscience and that is why members will have a conscience vote on this bill. I always believe it is important for us to stand by the courage of our convictions and let our conscience be our guide. That is what I am doing when I make an assessment on this bill. I understand there will be amendments moved to address the 22-week issue. I will watch with interest and assess them. I have discussed this issue with the member for Sydney and I know that he has had meetings and will be giving further advice on these matters. I draw attention to the fact that the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Family Planning NSW and the Public Health Association of Australia support the bill, as do many women's health centres across our State.

I know that a lot of people are concerned about this 22-week threshold. Data from the international jurisdiction show that this threshold does not increase the total number of abortions. I say that again: It is suggested that the threshold does not increase the total number of abortions. It does increase the percentage of abortions that happen earlier in a pregnancy. The current Australian figures show that 94.6 per cent of abortions occur before 13 weeks and that 99.3 per cent of abortions occur before 20 weeks. There is something fundamental that we need to think about here: I believe there is an anomaly in the law in this State when a process is in place and is conducted indeed lawfully, yet a person—in this case a woman—is deemed to be a criminal.

I will tell a story about a friend I knew a while ago. She reached out to me when she read in *The Daily Telegraph* that I was providing principal support for this bill. She contacted me through Facebook and said, "Can I have a chat with you?" I rang her and she told me a story about when she was 19 years old. She was at university and had had a big night on the turps with all her friends, as uni students do. She went to bed and a young fellow thought it was his privilege and right to have his way with her. I would suggest—without making any speculation or allegation—that it was an alleged rape on that woman. I knew that this incident had happened and I was obviously deeply disturbed—you never like to hear about your friends going through experiences like that.

However, what I did not know is that she fell pregnant. Only two people knew of that story—she and her older brother, who drove her down to Sydney to terminate the pregnancy. I said, "That is unfathomable. How do you deal with this?" She said, "I couldn't tell my mum and dad that I even drank alcohol, that I was inebriated, that I had considered having sex before marriage and, importantly, that I was pregnant." Given the circumstances of that situation, I ask the House: Is that young woman a criminal? I say no. This is a young woman in a situation that I will never understand. She was put in a position to make an assessment and to do something that has probably scarred her for life. She is a very happily married woman today with a beautiful family and children but she probably lives with this memory every day of her life.

This is an anomaly of law that, according to current legislation, would see that woman as a criminal. That is not right or just. That is not a legislative platform that we should accept in society or in this great State. No other State in this country has that platform, only New South Wales. This bill seeks to amend that anomaly and I support the bill. I will address the legal aspect of this matter wherein New South Wales is the last remaining State to have abortion unamended in its criminal code. That law is antiquated. Those provisions under the Crimes Act 1900 in New South Wales are based on a regime in the United Kingdom that is over a century old and which was removed from UK law by the Abortion Act 1967. All Australian States and Territories have decriminalised abortion except for New South Wales, which continues to favour a penal approach over a regime of medical supervision.

The penal approach does not align with community expectations at all. It is inconsistent both within our State and around the country. The bill recognises and removes the antiquated provisions of the Crimes Act and establishes a statutory system for medical supervision of abortions in New South Wales. The current sections 82 to 84 of the Crimes Act 1900 are rarely prosecuted and effectively have no practical application in New South Wales. Since *R v Wald* it has been the case that a medical practitioner can perform a termination where they are operating under the honest belief, held on responsible grounds, that the termination is necessary to avoid serious danger to the woman's life or physical or mental health. This has been interpreted broadly such that the New South Wales courts may consider economic, social or medical grounds to determine serious danger. It has also been interpreted to include serious danger to a woman's mental state during pregnancy and also after pregnancy.

Those provisions of the Crimes Act have rarely been prosecuted and in most respects are a nullity. In recent cases where successful convictions have occurred, they target the vulnerable and the outcome has been the application of a good behaviour bond rather than incarceration. Despite the criminal provisions being a nullity, they still create uncertainty for both the medical practitioner and the applicant. There is no authoritative appeal judgement on the principles set out in *R v Wald* and there remains ambiguity about the definition of "unlawful" under the provisions. [*Extension of time*]

The decision in *R v Wald* was made by a single District Court judge and there was no later confirmatory decision by the Court of Criminal Appeal—that is, the highest criminal court in New South Wales. The bill provides more certainty for medical practitioners and their patients by deeming as legal a termination prior to 22 weeks gestation. For a termination after 22 weeks, the common law position is substantively maintained in the bill to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place—safeguards that currently do not exist. I suggest and argue that this bill puts tighter frameworks and processes in place to provide certainty for patients and doctors. That is the overwhelming advice I have received from the legal community and local doctors whom I have discussed this issue with. The bill creates more stringent tests than are currently in place, as the involvement of two medical doctors is required under the bill.

The inclusion of the common law position creates certainty for medical practitioners, who can conclusively rely on the statutory requirements as the standard their medical services must meet. International

data suggests that criminalising abortion does not reduce the rate of abortion but it does increase rates of maternal morbidity and mortality. Decriminalising abortion has been shown to reduce the rate of abortion. A legal framework that can assist in reducing the abortion rate and allow equity of access to health care is appropriate and necessary. As a result of this bill, I want to see the anomaly removed but I also want to see better support services for women. I cannot begin to imagine what those women must go through, not just because I am a male but because I have been very fortunate. I have two beautiful children and abortion would never have been a consideration for me or their mother. But not everyone is like me and we do not live in a perfect world. People confront different circumstances.

It is our place as legislators in this great State to ensure that there are laws and frameworks in place that do not persecute people or expose them to prejudice. It is our place to ensure the passage of law that is equitable and supports people. I say adamantly to the member for Sydney and to all those who are moving amendments that we must provide better support services for women in their time of need. The support services in our communities are clearly inadequate. This issue must be addressed. We cannot have blinkers on in relation to this matter. I will consider the amendments when they come before the House. I will continue to talk with the member for Sydney, I will continue to seek the counsel of my colleagues and I will continue to consult the community. I say to my community that I respect each and every one of you—the religious groups, women, doctors and lawyers. I know there are people who will not agree with my views on this matter, but I trust they understand and respect that I am making this decision from the bottom of my heart for the deepest and most correct reasons. I thank the House.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:18): I thank the House for the opportunity to comment on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. As a member of the Liberal Party, I am grateful to be able to have a free vote on this important bill. I make this contribution to set out my approach to the bill, the concerns my community have raised and my view so that the community I am here to represent understand my position and why I have taken it. I have received a considerable amount of correspondence on this issue from my constituents, a diverse number of groups and people. There have been informed and understandably emotive arguments urging me to both support and oppose the bill. I thank my community for taking the time to share their views with me.

Some views were incredibly personal. I believe in the basic freedoms of thought, worship, speech, association and choice, and I believe those freedoms extend to the rights of a woman and what she chooses to do with her body. In parallel, and in part in conflict with those beliefs, as set against the backdrop of this bill, I am a Christian who believes in the sanctity and sacredness of life. The Uniting Church encapsulates my view as a Christian with the following words:

We reject two extreme positions: that abortion should never be available; and that abortion should be regarded as simply another medical procedure. It is not possible to hold one position that can be applied in every case because people's circumstances will always be unique.

The New South Wales Crimes Act 1900 has contributed to the foundations of the peaceful and prosperous society we have today. In some circumstances, however, the legislation of that era struggles to adapt to modern society—not that it needs to or should reflect the whims of societal changes but more so the medical and technological improvements and, perhaps most importantly, the legal interpretations of those laws over decades of case law. It is my responsibility to represent the views of all in my community. For that reason, I will now set out the main themes of concern that my community have raised with me about this bill in its current form—namely, the potential lack of oversight for late-term abortion after 22 weeks, the possibility of sex-selective abortion, abortion for reasons of financial hardship, the lack of a cooling-off period after a decision has been made and concerns around a lack of respect for doctors and medical professionals who have a conscientious objection. The moral and social challenges in this legislation have been debated at great length in this place. The Hon. Rob Stokes, in his speech to this bill, said:

Pregnancy and motherhood have unalterable consequences for a woman's life and a woman should have access to support and information to guide her choice about her body and her future. The difficulty is and always has been that potential human beings have rights too and those rights need to be recognised and balanced.

The Hon. Rob Stokes and the Attorney General have formed some amendments that I believe will improve this bill—namely, to ensure informed choice is provided to every woman considering a termination and to respect the rights of medical practitioners to a reasonable choice about whether to conduct or to otherwise facilitate a termination in circumstances where they have a strong moral or ethical objection. I thank all members of my community who have taken the time to meet with me and to share their views—a diverse set of views—on this topic. Ultimately at the centre of this debate are the women who are making the most harrowing of decisions. I support the rights of a woman to have self-determination over her body and I believe abortion—a choice of absolute last resort—should be rare but not criminal. I thank members in this place.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:22): In this State a woman who seeks an abortion and those who provide abortion services are prima facie engaged in potentially criminal conduct regulated under the New

South Wales Crimes Act 1900, as this has been interpreted by the courts. Despite this, pregnancy termination does occur in this State and there are medical services that provide termination services. New South Wales is the only remaining Australian jurisdiction to regulate the termination of a pregnancy under criminal law. The Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 seeks to change that and decriminalise abortion in this State.

As members of the Legislative Assembly, we are enjoined to advance the common good of the people of New South Wales and to make laws for the peace, welfare and good government of New South Wales in all cases whatsoever. With that in mind, it is necessary for us to ask whether the current system of regulation around the termination of a pregnancy is appropriate and, if not, whether it would be improved by this bill. As a Labor member of Parliament, I note that Labor policy grants me a free vote on this matter. The policy states that NSW Labor believes any proposed changes to laws governing the termination of pregnancy should be treated as a matter of individual conscience.

A large number of constituents have contacted my office on this matter. I appreciate their views and the strong moral position that many of them bring to this matter. I have considered all the representations received by my office and I have spoken to all constituents who have asked to discuss the matter with me. I note that during the recent State election campaign Labor gave an undertaking to take this issue to the Law Reform Commission for a report. I also note that a large number of women I spoke to during the election campaign expressed their desire to see abortion removed from the criminal code. For those reasons, I will outline the bill for my constituents and address some of the concerns raised with me and explain my position on the bill. I provide this explanation to all my constituents who contacted my office.

The bill ensures that, on request, all terminations are lawful for women up to 22 weeks pregnant if performed by a registered doctor. After 22 weeks a termination will be lawful only if two doctors consider that the procedure should be performed after considering all the relevant medical circumstances and the woman's current and future physical, psychological and social circumstances. I am advised that 22 weeks was chosen on the advice of the Australian Medical Association and that it follows the recommendation of the Queensland Law Reform Commission and is in line with the Queensland Act. It is supported by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. I consider that the 22-week threshold improves the current arrangements. A number of my constituents said to me that the bill will allow late-term abortions. The bill will, in fact, improve the situation regarding late-term abortions by requiring the consent of two medical practitioners, as opposed to the current arrangements, which effectively allow an abortion to be procured up until full term.

The bill provides also that the Act must be reviewed within five years of its commencement, with a copy of the report to be provided to Parliament. That is a good element in the bill that provides a useful way for us to assess the appropriateness of any change to the way we regulate this matter in this State. If a registered health practitioner with a conscientious objection is asked to provide advice about a termination or to perform a termination, he or she must without delay refer or transfer the care of the person making the request to another registered health practitioner or health service provider who is believed to be able to provide the service and does not have a conscientious objection to it. I note that the existing Medical Board of Australia's *Good Medical Practice: A Code of Conduct for Doctors in Australia* states that doctors must not use their objection to impede access to legal treatment. I note also that the Australian Medical Association's position statement *Conscientious Objection 2019* requires doctors to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the patient's access to care is not impeded.

I believe the bill strikes an appropriate balance between those who may have a conscientious objection to providing termination services and women seeking access to reproductive health care. The bill strikes an appropriate balance for the regulation of the termination of pregnancy in this State. I believe it is appropriate that the regulation of reproductive health and the regulation around the termination of pregnancy be removed from the criminal code. This bill addresses appropriately many of the concerns held by the community. However, I will continue to consider any amendments that are put forward to the House during debate. On balance, I support the bill.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (11:29): I acknowledge the work of the member for Sydney and other members co-sponsoring the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 in developing it and bringing it before the House. I also acknowledge and thank the people of Hornsby who have contacted me via email, via phone and in person to speak to me about the bill. On both sides, in the main, their representations have been direct, sincere and respectful. With open hearts, many people of faith have spoken to me of their profound opposition to abortion and asked me to oppose this bill. Others, people of faith and people of no faith, have spoken of their support for the bill and its aims, and asked me to vote for the bill.

My purpose in speaking today is to return to every one of them the respect they have shown to me and explain on the record how I will vote on this bill. From its founding, the Liberal Party has embraced the enduring ideals of Edmund Burke on the role of members. Liberal legislators are not the cipher of any group, nor are we

bound to sectional interests. It is not our job to dance on the breeze of public opinion. As I said in my first speech in this place, it will always remain my first priority to do all I can to serve the community that has given me the enormous honour of electing me as their member of Parliament.

To use Burke's words, in this vote and in every vote to my constituents I owe my unbiased opinion, my mature judgment and my enlightened conscience. My electorate of Hornsby is incredibly diverse, and from one end to the other you can see people living their faith. People who are Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and myriad other faiths form the backbone of our community organisations. I have seen for myself the hard work and the sacrifices they make to help those who are down on their luck, to serve and protect women and families in crisis, and support people suffering physical and mental illness. These are not just things I have seen as their MP. I am the son of faithful Catholics. My mother is a daily communicant at her church. In my parents' loving example and in those who educated me at Riverview, I have borne witness to lives full of service, love and devotion to God and to their fellow man.

There is far too much careless bigotry against people of faith. So I place on record my respect for their deeply held beliefs, and their considered and thoughtful representations to me, and my appreciation for the good they do in our community. I am Catholic. I love the church. I love my faith. But it is not right to impose my faith on the people of this State. I came into this Parliament as a progressive Liberal, and as a progressive Liberal I proudly serve today. The principles of the Liberal Party are compatible with all faiths and none. For me, they reflect my deepest and most profound beliefs. They are my touchstones in life and in this Chamber. The first objective in the Liberal constitution dedicates our party to political liberty, and the freedom and dignity of man. Understood implicitly—but worth stating explicitly—is our dedication to the liberty, freedom and dignity of women. Freedom of choice and freedom of conscience are foundational Liberal beliefs.

Neither should rest on whether a decision accords with legislators' ideas of morality. Abortion falls on the fault line between the obligation of the State to protect life and the limit on the State's control over the sovereignty of the individual. It is an issue incapable of compromise. So my Liberal principles guide me to choosing the side of freedom of choice and freedom of conscience. It is, and must be, the law of the land not the law of any god or faith that prevails in New South Wales. Freedom derives from the rule of law. As legislators committed to protecting the rights and freedoms of our citizens, we must strive to ensure that all laws are certain in their application. Where the law is not certain there is no real freedom. Even where it is hard—and there is no issue harder than this one—the law must be clear. People must know where they stand. A pregnant woman contemplating abortion should not be uncertain whether her actions are a crime. Her doctor, in caring for her health, should not fear the policeman's knock.

It is right and proper that this bill allows a doctor with a conscientious objection to abortion to refer the patient or transfer their care to another doctor who they believe does not have a conscientious objection. And it is right and proper that the regulation of abortion be managed outside the Crimes Act. The judiciary has done its job in relation to abortion law. It has interpreted the law that Parliament handed down. The result is a patchwork quilt of uncertain criminality and variable penalty. As elected members of this Parliament, we cannot shirk responsibility for this issue because it is hard or uncomfortable. It is our sovereign role, our right and our privilege to make laws for the people of this State. They expect us to make laws that are sensible and certain. They respect our freedom of belief, but expect the laws we make to be secular in application. No role in my life weighs heavier on my conscience than being a legislator. My conscience says abortion should be regulated as a health issue, not a crime. I will be voting for this bill.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (11:35): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. Let's not sugar-coat this: Abortion is a highly sensitive matter about which many members of our community have very deeply and sincerely held beliefs. Legislative reform in this area should always be dealt with in a delicate, informed and respectful manner. I thank the hundreds of members of my community who have taken the time to get in contact with me and my office to put forth their views respectfully, whether they are for or against the proposed legislation. I think it is worth remembering that none of us is here to represent ourselves. We were all elected by our communities as their democratic representatives and I have always attempted to take that seriously. While we all come to this place with our own personal experiences that may have skewed our opinions on this or other contentious issues, our personal views should never diminish our responsibility to act as the guardians of our State's democracy and the representatives of our electorates.

That should mean engaging in full and frank discussions with our communities, subject matter experts, legal professionals and affected people, particularly when party discipline is not engaged and we are voting according to our consciences. I do not believe I am here to exercise my own conscience, but that of my community—informed by my privileged access to the professional services of the Parliament. Unfortunately, in this case I believe the hurried nature of this bill has undercut many of the democratic safeguards our community has a right to expect when amending a law. The proposed reform was essentially dropped in the media a few days

before it was introduced and the text of the bill will have been available to the public for less than a week if it is put to a vote today—and it will be.

Prior to legislative reform in both Victoria and Queensland the respective law reform commissions of those States were commissioned to review and propose the amendments that ultimately became law. In Victoria and Queensland this process lasted for approximately 12 months. In Tasmania public consultation and committee processes lasted for more than six months prior to the passage of its bill. Those robust processes enabled all views on the issues to be expressed publicly, considered and ultimately adopted into the State's laws. I support a similar process taking place in New South Wales. While I doubt the outcome will make all in our community happy, I believe it will provide at least procedural fairness to all interested in this issue.

As has been stated by some of those supporting the bill, abortion has been in the Crimes Act in New South Wales for over a century. As some of those opposing the bill have said, it effectively has been decriminalised as a matter of law for nearly 50 years. It would be nice if the two opposing sides here could acknowledge that both of those things are true. I do not accept the idea that this bill will open the floodgates to on-demand abortions any more than I believe the law in New South Wales currently prevents women from accessing abortion when they believe it to be necessary. I do not think abortion is a decision that is taken lightly or flippantly by any woman. To the contrary, I think it is a decision that women take very seriously indeed. The prevalence of so-called backyard abortion clinics or interstate travel before legal reform in various Australian jurisdictions demonstrates that women will continue to make these choices regardless of the law, because ultimately only the individual knows what is right for their circumstances.

I have no doubt that abortion sitting within the Crimes Act, as it currently does, is inappropriate in this day and age. I think most people recognise that the idea of abortion being a criminal offence and the stigma it causes to vulnerable women is wrong. However, it should be equally acknowledged that blanket statements that abortion is currently illegal in New South Wales, as I have heard many times in the past week, are disingenuous. I am highly concerned that women in this State who have read or heard this may now believe they are not currently able to obtain a legal, safe abortion in New South Wales.

I believe many issues involving abortion and a woman's right to choose deserve the attention of this place. Like so many other health services, serious service gaps remain in rural and regional New South Wales. We cannot truly speak about choices unless they are genuinely provided to every woman in our State. Similarly, counselling and support services during and after performing abortions are severely lacking. I have known many women who have been left feeling devastated after undergoing what can be a very traumatic procedure because they have not been provided with adequate support. Actions speak louder than words, and real choice requires appropriate levels of government servicing.

I am disappointed that members of the crossbench, who have otherwise promoted and supported the importance of parliamentary processes, committees and reviews, have abandoned those values in this case. I believe those processes are important in their own right. They exist to provide fairness and to meet the reasonable expectations of those who elected us. Procedural fairness, the opportunity for feedback and the contribution of experts have all become significant parts of our legislative processes because ultimately they produce better outcomes.

To conclude, I believe this bill will provide little substantive change and that legal tweaks of this nature should provide all interested citizens with the opportunity to make their view heard. I would have liked the opportunity to see legislation developed professionally by the NSW Law Reform Commission and the chance to fully discuss that with my community and stakeholders. However, the rushed nature of the bill has made that impossible, and at this stage I will likely abstain from voting on the bill as I do not believe I have a mandate to vote on this legislation one way or another. I do this knowing that I will not please people on either side of this argument, but for me it is the only choice I believe I can make.

I once again thank all those within my community—who I must say were very much split on this issue—for taking the time to contact me. I remind everybody that there is far more that unites us than the few issues that divide us, and that we should all strive to be above making theatre of very difficult issues of morality. I note that a number of amendments are likely to be moved, including by the Attorney General, and I will consider each of those in good faith, although I remain fundamentally concerned by the lack of process during the passage of this bill.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (11:44): I speak in support of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. I have listened carefully to all the arguments in this place and within my electorate. Many of those views have been diverse and divergent, but nothing I have heard so far has persuaded me to change my view in any way, including the proposed amendments, which I believe are just a distraction and a possible way to defer or oppose this bill. I am happy to listen to further amendments,

because they may make sense, but I am always suspicious of those who seek to make amendments: I believe it is a way to disguise trying to defer, delay or defeat a bill such as this. From early on, I was a co-sponsor of this bill and I expressed my views at the outset.

I have received some pretty confronting comments and opinions via texts and emails to my office and by phone. I am used to this, as I received similar threats never to vote for me again during the marriage equality debate, the greyhound debate and the safe access zones. But I am still here after 33 years in public life—17 years as a local councillor and 16 years in this place. I have learned that people who passionately oppose a bill or the way I intend to vote will always threaten not to vote for me. I say again: I am still here. I am 67 years of age, and a mother and a grandmother. I have had a lot of experiences in my lifetime and I have witnessed many friends and family members face up to having to consider having an abortion. I have come to my views steadfastly and without changing those views over a long period.

I sincerely thank the member for Sydney. I have heard that the member has a lot of political capital in this place, which means he has a lot of respect. I thank him for his advocacy and his willingness to brief members and other staff about his reasoning behind this bill and the justification for it. He is always willing to provide any information required by members of Parliament. I thank all members across the political divide who have advocated for this bill. In doing so, they are supporting young women—some of whom are faced with making an impossibly difficult decision. Surely we need to protect and nurture our young women. As members of Parliament, we are here to protect our communities and, in particular, vulnerable young women. I also acknowledge the efforts of the Minister for Health and Medical Research, who is surely in the best position to make a decision about the health of young women in this State.

I am steadfastly proud to support this bill and to have my name as a co-sponsor of this bill, despite the passionate arguments opposing it. I respect everybody's right to express an opposing view in this place. I value all those views and the courage of those who stand up to express them. I have always been known as somebody who has the courage of my convictions. I will stand up and courageously express those views when I think it is necessary to do so. A conscience vote gives us that opportunity. The bill is based on the Queensland and Victorian laws. Some in this place have suggested that we should have gone to the NSW Law Reform Commission to draft this bill. Surely we have had enough time to consider the views of our community. To those who have said we are acting in haste, I say we should have expected that this bill would land in this place at some stage this year—and now it has. It was considered in the other place, but it was defeated for various reasons. We have had enough time to consider our own consciences on this bill.

This should have been a simple debate—a simple debate about removing an anomalous situation where a medical procedure is legal, but still appears as a crime in the criminal code. That is no more than a simple anomaly. But of course we have had the unnecessary complication of those who wish to defer, delay or defeat the bill by those who simply oppose abortion. This is not about whether you oppose abortion or support abortion; we have moved on from those times, those generations that have gone before us—my generation, my mother's generation and my grandmother's generation—when women sought terminations in desperate and dangerous situations from backyard abortionists. They often underwent procedures that led to severe infections and often their death. In those times women listened to the old wives' tale of the hot mustard baths and tried to self-terminate—their implements of choice being crochet hooks and coat hangers. And that is a fact. Surely we are here to protect women and ensure that they do not have to go through those kinds of procedures again. Women will always try to seek an abortion or a termination if that is their desire. This is about a decision of a woman and her husband, boyfriend and doctor, not legislators. Please can we stay out of the way of women making decisions for themselves?

The bill will ensure that a legal uncertainty is lifted from doctors and their patients. Surely we do not want the spectre of a criminal act hanging over that decision as women go into the termination clinic. We do not want that for young women. We do not want them to regard themselves as criminals. Surely we do not want that hanging over their heads. All this prevarication about the 22 weeks is another distraction. Late-term abortions! This is about late-term abortions; this bill is actually more strict in its regulations than the current regulations. That is another distraction; that is another red herring thrown into the debate to defer, delay or defeat the bill. This bill provides more safe procedures at 22 weeks or post-22 weeks than currently exist. I have said that I will listen to the amendments. I have not heard anything about the amendments to convince me to vote for any of them, but I am happy to consider further amendments, if they come to this place.

Some very demeaning comments have been made towards women. For example, it will be like abortion on demand. Women will be able to walk into a hospital and demand an abortion—a bit like a drive-through service. It will not be like that. This is complex. There will be consultation with doctors and some time taken so that the woman can make her decision carefully. I believe the provisions in this bill are in line with modern community standards. I believe the many emails I received from constituents in my electorate are not reflective

of the thousands of others in my electorate who are, in this case, the silent majority who, I believe with all my heart, support this bill. I have been in politics for a long time—33 years—and I think I understand my electorate. I understood their views on marriage equality and I came out very early with my views on marriage equality. I understood them alright, because my region had the highest percentage of "yes" votes in the country.

I am a mother and a grandmother. People should not say to any of us who bear these views that we have no respect for human life. Of course we do. We all have respect for human life. Most men and women in this Chamber have had children and respect human life, but it is about respecting young women and their choices. They already have that choice, but we do not want to make criminals of them. They should not be considered criminals. I have talked to people in my electorate so many times about a range of views in my 33 years in public life. Women and men understand that decisions about their health should be made by them, in consultation with their doctors.

I get quite passionate about this issue because I have, from the outset, known and understood that this was coming. I thought about it. I knew what some of the views in my community would be—in particular, from the church, and I absolutely respect the church having different views from mine. But I do not think personal beliefs held by the church or some sections of the church should be imposed on others. I understand that if people do not wish to proceed with a termination, that is their right but please do not impose your values on others. We are talking about going back to 1900 and the Crimes Act, and we are just getting around to amending it. It is about time that we remove the anomalies—from 1900, for goodness sake! [*Extension of time*]

We do not want doctors in the precarious position of carrying out perhaps a criminal act. Lift those regulations, lift those restrictions and let women be free to make the most difficult of decisions without being harassed, without being intimidated and without being demeaned, as I think some of them have been in this debate. New South Wales is either the only State or one of the last States that has not decriminalised abortion. I have always believed New South Wales is the best State in Australia, and today we will right that wrong—hopefully. We will right that wrong and we will be the State that catches up with everybody else, just for a change. Put simply, this bill places a difficult decision solely in the hands of women—where it should be.

In 2019 women should not be fighting for the right to make a decision about their bodies. I implore all members and many of the men in this Chamber who will move amendments to stop dabbling in the lives of women. Stay out of the lives of women. Allow women to make that most difficult decision in consultation with the people best placed to do that. I understand we have academics and lawyers in this place who see that there could be complications in this bill. There are no complications in this bill—none. It is simple. It is straightforward. Remove the anomaly.

I do not mean to criticise members—even the Attorney General, who is next to me. I have the greatest respect for him. I do not mean to demean anybody with differing views. I value democracy in all its shapes, in all its divergence. I respect everybody who has spoken in this Chamber, as passionately as I oppose many of those views. I especially thank the Minister for Health and Medical Research, who has also received demeaning comments. He has considered this issue for some time, and put a lot of hard work and effort into this bill. I thank him for his contributions to the bill.

After this debate can we continue to be tolerant of each other, to be tolerant of difference, to be tolerant of my views in my electorate, as I know my electorate will be and as my electors have been? That is all I ask. If they do not wish to vote for any of us in this Chamber, that is their choice. I know that for some of the younger members that is risky—we all want to have our electors voting for us. We all want as many votes as we can get, but sometimes you have to do what you know is right. I do not think I know what is right here; I know it is the right thing to do. I implore all members to speak against the foreshadowed amendments that are designed to defeat and defer this bill. I will consider any sensible amendments that come before the House. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (11:57): I speak to the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. I stand here today with a range of emotions—frustration, sadness, gratitude and hope. I am frustrated—actually verging on angry—that we have to debate the simplest of things: the right for women to choose what happens with their own bodies. This is a fundamental human right that has been denied the women of New South Wales for too long. In fact, it has been denied us for 119 years. I am frustrated that some people consider that it is okay for a law that was introduced 119 years ago to dictate what women could do with their own body and that somehow it is still relevant to the society in which we now live. One hundred and nineteen years ago men, and only men, stood in this Chamber and undermined women's independence, limited their choices and criminalised them. Today we have the opportunity to right that wrong.

It is ridiculous that it has taken up until now to challenge this archaic law. It is not a coincidence that it has only come about because now there are women in this place. I acknowledge that many men both inside and

outside this Chamber are supportive of this bill, and that we would not be able to make this change without their support. But make no mistake: The bill has been brought about because of the strong, brave and courageous women who have fought for decades for women's rights to equality under the law. Early on, they realised that the only way to achieve it was to get more women into Parliament. I acknowledge the Women's Electoral Lobby [WEL] for its 47 years—almost half a century—of dedication to the fight for women's rights. I pay tribute to one founder of WEL in New South Wales, Wendy McCarthy, who is in the public gallery today. I thank Wendy and her comrades in arms, including Jozefa Sobski and Mary O'Sullivan and many others—I should not name individuals because there is a danger I might forget someone—for being here today and for all they have done. Through WEL they have led the NSW Pro-Choice Alliance made up of over 70 expert legal, health and community voices from across the State in support of the bill.

I recognise another WEL foundation member, the late Joan Bielski, AM, who fought for women's access to education as a foundation for improving women's autonomy, independence and participation in public life. Joan's brother, Frank Ward, lives in my electorate. Recently I gave him a hug on his ninetieth birthday. Frank shares his sister's passion for equality and social justice, and I know he supports the bill wholeheartedly. He said to me that women should expect love and compassion from this place. Frank is a legend like his sister. I can only imagine how much Joan would like to be here today, witnessing the fruits of her labours and those of so many other trailblazing women. I am grateful to those women and to everyone who has joined them and followed in their footsteps to bring us to this point. Without them, I would not even be here—let alone have this opportunity to change an outdated and unfair law. In contributing to the debate, I know I am just one woman at the end of a very long line of women who fought for this change for decades.

I am grateful to the many women who have shared their stories with me, with the media and with other people in this place about the deeply personal experience of having abortions, of supporting those who have made the difficult choice to have an abortion or who have delivered reproductive health services to those women. I am upset for the thousands upon thousands of women over too many years who have not had the opportunity to access an abortion safely and legally in New South Wales; women whose access to services has been limited by where they live or their ability to pay, who have suffered the stigma and shame of undertaking a criminal activity, and who have suffered harm or lost their lives because their choice was limited to unsafe and unsound practices.

I am also upset by the misinformation, founded on a complete lack of evidence, being promulgated by the opponents of the bill. Quite frankly, some of the claims being made inside and outside this Chamber are outrageous. To suggest that New South Wales will experience an escalation of abortions if the bill becomes law is nothing short of fanciful. Evidence from other jurisdictions shows that is simply not the case, and indeed fewer women have accessed abortions after the barrier of criminality has been removed. If people who oppose the bill on those grounds were genuinely concerned about reducing the number of women seeking abortions they would be arguing for improved access to sex education, contraceptive advice and contraceptives. The World Bank has recognised that education is the best contraception: The bill ought to be coupled with improved access to education.

I have heard the suggestion that removing abortion from the criminal code will not make a difference to access because women are not being prosecuted anyway and they can get an abortion if they want one courtesy of the precedent established in common law. That argument entirely misses the fact that many women lack access to services, especially those living in rural and remote New South Wales. The risk of criminal prosecution that hangs over the heads of health professionals and, critically, their insurers results in few services being available to women in rural and regional New South Wales. Because of the lack of professionals prepared to take the risk, women seeking abortions who live in rural and regional New South Wales are travelling hundreds of kilometres, and often interstate. The cost and toll on them and their families is inexcusable. Decriminalising abortion will help cure that. It will not happen overnight but it is the beginning of a change that must be made to ensure women in rural and regional New South Wales can access the services they need.

Another misleading argument is that the bill will allow women to access abortions on demand after 22 weeks, or indeed up until full term. Those arguments are hurtful to many. They fail to recognise that under the bill there will in fact be greater rigour than currently exists under common law. The argument fails to give any credence whatsoever to the professionalism of doctors and specialists who work in the field and who must adhere to professional obligations, ethics and standards when giving advice and opinion on terminations after 22 weeks. It does their professionalism, compassion and expertise a disservice to dismiss their important role in supporting women to make difficult, heartbreaking decisions. The argument also fails to give any credence to the experience of a woman in those circumstances.

It is demeaning to portray such women as asking for an abortion "on demand". Very few women terminate pregnancies after 22 weeks. Those who do terminate only do so on the advice of health professionals, often because their child may not survive birth or thrive when born or because the birth of the child risks the

woman's life. As a mother of three, I simply cannot imagine the heartache, anguish and trauma involved in that decision. It is a decision that should not be interfered with by members in this place. We have no right to do that, but currently we do it and we ought not to. It is a heartbreaking and private health decision to be made by a woman in consultation with her health professional and should not be a crime.

Whilst many emotions are raging within me, I do not approach this debate with mixed emotions. I steadfastly and purposefully support this bill, not only because abortion is a health and social issue and not a criminal issue but also because the law being proposed is the right law in its current form, without amendment. The bill largely reflects the laws of Victoria and Queensland, which have been tested and proved to work. The bill provides us with an opportunity to ensure that our laws reflect community expectations and standards. If you asked anyone in the street, very few would know that abortion is illegal.

Even after discussing the issue with my family over the past few weeks, I had a message last night from my 13-year-old daughter saying, "Wait! What? Abortion is illegal?!" It is simply unthinkable to my children and their generation that there could be any such control over the choices they may need to make in the future about their own bodies. It is not right that New South Wales is the only remaining State in Australia that criminalises abortion and that the women of this State do not have the same choices available to them as women everywhere else in Australia. Members have a conscience vote on the bill, so my own experiences have shaped my position on it—together with the beautiful, compassionate community of Port Stephens that I represent in this place. Overwhelmingly, the responses I have received from my constituents have been supportive of me and my support for the bill. [*Extension of time*]

I thank everyone who has shared their views respectfully with me, whether they support my views or oppose them. I do not thank the many people who have not shared their views respectfully. My support for the bill is offensive to some people, and I understand that. But, quite frankly, some of the pro-life campaigners do themselves and their position no favours by being offensive towards me and my staff. Calling me and my staff "baby killers" or "child murderers" is not respectful. I apologise to my caring staff, who did not sign up for that. I respect other people's right to have a different opinion from mine. I respect people whose moral code or faith rules out abortions for them. But I do not accept that they have a right to impose their morality on me or on any other woman in this State.

Amongst all those emotions, I have landed on a position of hope. I am hopeful that the Parliament will do the right thing and consign this archaic law to the bin, where it belongs. I am hopeful that women—regardless of where they live, how much money they have, their race, ethnicity, sexual preference or gender identity—will be able to access safe, legal and affordable abortions in New South Wales. Women in this State are entitled to the same freedoms and choices as women anywhere else in Australia. It is really not complicated. Many members in this Chamber are seeking to complicate it, but it is a way to defer, deflect and avoid a decision. It is simple: The outdated law has no place in a decent, fair and compassionate society.

It is time for us to catch up with the rest of Australia. It is time for New South Wales to trust women and the decisions they make about their own bodies. It is a matter of conscience and as a mother, as a woman who grew up in regional New South Wales and as a parliamentarian who lives in and proudly represents a beautiful regional community, I support women having choice. I support legal and safe abortions in New South Wales. I support the bill in its current form.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans)
(12:10): Proponents of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 use terms such as "archaic" to argue for the decriminalisation of abortion. It is argued that a provision that is over 100 years old and drafted by men must be archaic and out of step with current community values. I reject that argument. The gender of the enacting Parliament is a simple historical fact with no bearing on the outcome and no more relevant than the gender of the enacting Parliament for immunisation or voting rights. The longevity of the Crimes Act provision may speak more to the complexity of the issue rather than an incongruity with modern society. I will not arrogantly assume that there is one dominating community attitude to this. The demonstrations outside Parliament House alone would indicate a diversity of views, each deeply held. The Christian *Bible* is over 2,000 years old, its word underpinning many Western values. The age of a doctrine—whether enshrined in the *Bible*, other holy text or in 110-year-old legislation—can support an argument that some ideas are universal and enduring. Life, whether fully formed or viable, is worth protecting.

For our Christian community members, the answers are dictated by faith in the word of God. That belief should not be pushed aside as quaint or dogmatic. Their faith has significant history and support, and is fuelled by love for life—the mother's life and the life of the unborn child—created by God. We can try to remove heat from this debate by sterilising it with medical terms such as "simple procedure", but that simply denies the underlying issue. The bill is asking us to determine what we value as a society. It does not have to be a binary question of choice versus life but rather choices for life. Abortion is not an answer; it is a disempowerment and a

resignation to a lack of options. It is a situation where a woman has determined there are no other viable alternatives—socially, financially and psychologically. But then she subjects herself to the so-called simple procedure of aborting a life. I doubt whether any woman would categorise the procedure as simple or on par with removing a cyst, a wart or their tonsils.

The difficulty emanates from the uncomfortable truth that what is being removed is a life. Every parent would recall when they or their partner became pregnant. In that moment—along with possible fear, excitement and joy—comes the realisation of the enormity and wonder of life: a bunch of cells with the full database of genetic material to grow into a human being. For me, each of my children was born of love and I see them as gifts from God. I accept those gifts with reverence and honour. Many of my non-religious family and friends experience that same reverence and honour, which is generated by the appreciation that life is special, sacred and magical—even if it was unplanned, unexpected or inconvenient. What we propose in this House is to offer so-called legislated justifications to remove that life without pause or reflection. But we all have to ask ourselves: Are we addressing the conditions that push women into a corner of having no options? We are trying to apply a medical euphemism to somehow mask the enormity of the issue. How does this bill help women make choices?

In summary, I thank all of my constituents for their correspondence, including hundreds of emails, phone calls and letters on the issue. Everyone's opinion matters. The thing that stands out about my community that I respect immensely is their honesty. Issues of this magnitude test our resolve as politicians. We are representatives of the people and our vote is the voice of the State. We must do what is right. We must do what is respectful of the one thing we all have, and that is life.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:16): The Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 is a divisive issue in our community. There is a range of strongly held views across my electorate of Wagga Wagga and the State. I acknowledge that the decision to terminate a pregnancy is never an easy one and I do not wish to pass judgement on anyone in that situation. I bring to this debate my own personal perspective, which I have made clear on a number of occasions and which comes from my position as a Catholic and a doctor. Although this is a conscience vote, I have always maintained that I would listen to the views of my electorate. I have attempted to do that.

Since the announcement of the bill, my office has been inundated with phone calls, emails and letters from constituents who wished to share their views with me on the decriminalisation of termination services in New South Wales. Individuals and groups began contacting me as soon as it was suggested that the legislation could be introduced to Parliament. For that reason, I share my great disappointment regarding the lack of community consultation and opportunity for public comment in the debate. It is disappointing that on such an emotive issue there has not been time for the views of the community to be considered in more detail.

As such, I am appealing for greater consideration to be given to individuals and groups who have not had the opportunity to review the legislation effectively and provide their feedback. I became aware of the bill only a few days before it was introduced. I believe work must have been done on the bill for many months and I do not understand why that work could not have been shared with a longer period of consultation and committee review. With that in mind, I thank all those who have taken the time to share their thoughts and who have discussed their concerns and beliefs with me. I realise many have contacted me as part of organised campaigns but many people personally have also taken the time to contact me.

I have been moved by the testimony and stories of many people, including members of Parliament, who have had the courage to share them in this Chamber. Listening to women members sharing their stories yesterday was particularly moving. I thank those whom I have contacted for advice and who have been generous with their time, knowledge and opinions. I thank the member for Sydney, who arranged for representatives of the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and Family Planning NSW to be available for briefings this week. I thank the representatives whom I met today. I also note the respectful tone in which most contributions have been made in this debate. In making my deliberations on the bill I have been challenged like never before, but I realise that is nothing compared with the challenges women face in making the choice to terminate a pregnancy.

I have been researching the bill to gain a clear understanding of the legislation and health policies regarding access to termination services. I have consulted stakeholders representing both sides of the debate. I have learnt that the supporting arguments are as follows: similar legislation has been passed in every other State; the current legislation was passed many years ago and is arguably outdated; a woman has the right to make decisions about her body; the current legislation creates a situation where women feel they are treated as second-class citizens; and the legislation will make it safer for women to access termination services and will protect practising doctors. I acknowledge the bill's reference to the rights of women, who often continue to be a vulnerable group in our society. I accept that many women wish to have access to these services for their health.

I also recognise that there is an inequity in access to health services, especially for rural residents and for those of low socio-economic status. However, I have a number of concerns with the bill.

First, the fact that laws exist in other States or were made some time ago are not reasons alone to adopt a particular piece of legislation. Secondly, I note that terminations are currently undertaken in New South Wales—safely and legally. Decisions are made in the context of the mother's health. NSW Health has a policy clearly outlining a framework to support the review and development of local protocols for terminations of pregnancy and the policy supports access to those services. In the second reading debate members have indicated that 20,000 to 30,000 terminations take place in New South Wales each year.

I understand that the changes to laws in other States have not led to an increase in the number of terminations. Inequity of access to those health services should be addressed, but I do not believe the legislation does that. Stigma created by the criminal code could be addressed without changing the current processes in which there is a mandatory assessment of the health situation. My concern is that the legislation makes termination of pregnancy legal up to 22 weeks without reference to health issues or reasons including matters of significant crisis for the woman involved. In my view, that makes termination of pregnancy less of a health issue, not more, and opens up the possibility of choosing termination because of unwanted circumstances. For example, a decision could be made about bringing a child to term on the basis of gender.

As a health practitioner of 30 years, I have watched my health colleagues make great advances in the saving of neonatal life. When I first became a doctor it was unusual for a baby born at 28 weeks to survive. Now we have a quite reasonable expectation that those born at 24 weeks or younger will survive. It is likely that advances in technology will reduce that age further. Doctors and nurses in our health system and parents strive to save those lives. As a society, we expend great resources on it, and so we should. Therefore, it makes no sense to me that a baby at 22 weeks should not be considered to have rights. The principle of the rights of potential human beings is being ignored. I do not believe considering the rights of an unborn child downgrades the rights of women. I have listened to and read many stories about the difficulty women face in making a decision based on that principle. It is clear to me that almost all people regard it as a terrible decision to have to make. That says to me that almost all of us recognise that abortion is not just another procedure and there are issues to consider regarding the potential of unborn human beings.

That brings me to my third point, which is that the legislation does not include enough provision for counselling, access to crisis support, mental health support or other assistance to women in personal circumstances that might lead them to make a decision to terminate. Does the bill give women other choices? Is it just assumed that they will get those services at a consultation? If so, that is not good enough. Are women at risk of making a decision simply because there are no other options of support and assistance offered? Are we just making termination simpler and faster and enabling more doctors to carry out a termination regardless of their skill set and capacity? When we face crises in life, there needs to be a handbrake—particularly in medicine—to ensure the safety and wellbeing of patients. Does the bill remove that handbrake, taking the obligation for care away? Is this really what women need or do they need more available access to support services before making their decision?

Finally, the legislation requires health practitioners who do not support the termination of a pregnancy to refer patients to a practitioner who does. It is not clear why that has to take place if there is no health issue at stake. The Australian medical code of conduct requires a doctor to refer patients for treatment elsewhere if that practitioner cannot or will not provide necessary treatment. However, the bill requires the referral to take place whether or not there is a health issue. That is a significant impingement on religious freedom and conscientious objection. These concerns have convinced me to oppose the bill. I do not do so lightly, but it is the decision I have made. I do not accept that the legislation will improve access to termination services. I do not accept that it will make things safer for women. I am concerned that the bill undermines the rights of potential humans and impacts on religious freedom. For those reasons, I will not be supporting the bill and I will be seeking to introduce amendments.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): I remind people in the public gallery that members are to be heard in silence.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (12:26): I contribute to the second reading debate on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. Abortion is an emotionally charged subject, and understandably so. We are talking about a procedure that terminates pregnancy; terminates life. Equally, it is a procedure that impacts a woman's body, giving rise to discussion of a "woman's right to choose". I understand that many in the Miranda electorate have strong views on the matter that are sincerely and deeply held. Whilst I have the utmost respect for people's views on both sides of the debate, the overwhelming nature of the correspondence and phone calls received by my electorate office over the past few days has been to articulate strong opposition to the bill. I thank my community for exercising their voice and expressing their opinion on this important issue.

In my first speech in this place I put on record that I hold conservative values. I have been raised as part of the Greek Orthodox Church and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that my faith influences my values and the person that I am. Notwithstanding that, I believe it is my duty as a legislator to objectively assess the suitability of the bill. Let me make this clear: The bill is not about whether we permit abortion in this State. A lawful abortion is in fact legal in New South Wales under the current law. An unlawful abortion is illegal in New South Wales under the current law. That is why around 20,000 terminations were performed in New South Wales in the past year. The purpose of the bill is to decriminalise procedures for terminating pregnancies and to legislate a framework for lawful and unlawful terminations.

With that in mind, I consider the proposed legislation to be unsuitable on three grounds: the 22-week threshold, the late-term abortion provisions and the necessity for a practitioner with a conscientious objection to refer the termination to another practitioner. I turn to the threshold of 22 weeks gestation. Under the bill, a termination by a medical practitioner may be performed upon a person who is not more than 22 weeks pregnant. However, after 22 weeks, although the termination by a medical practitioner may still be performed, a second medical practitioner must be consulted and additional criteria applied. When addressing the reason for the 22-week threshold, the member stated in his second reading speech:

Twenty-two weeks was chosen with the advice of the AMA and follows the recommendations of the Queensland Law Reform Commission and is in line with the Queensland Act. Furthermore, in his contribution to the second reading debate the Minister for Health and Medical Research suggested that the 22-week threshold will bring New South Wales into line with other jurisdictions. It has been made abundantly clear that this bill is closely modelled upon experiences predominantly from Queensland, but also from Victoria. However, it would be remiss of me not to note that there are other Australian jurisdictions with lower thresholds, namely 20 weeks in Western Australia and 16 weeks in Tasmania. I believe either threshold would have been more appropriate than the proposed 22 weeks.

I understand from a report by the Queensland Law Reform Commission that a gestational limit of 22 weeks marks the stage immediately before the threshold of viability under current clinical practice. However, in November 2017 the journal *Pediatrics* published a case report on what is possibly the most premature known survivor to date—a female infant resuscitated after delivery at 21 weeks and four days of gestation. The medical profession has clearly formed the view that the threshold should be drawn at 22 weeks. However, if medical evidence demonstrates that a fetus can survive outside the womb at 22 weeks, I have to question why this bill extends rights to women in isolation and does not create any rights for the fetus. I cannot in good conscience support a bill that does not consider any rights for this life in addition to those of the woman. I believe it is our responsibility to govern and legislate for both.

I am also troubled by the open-endedness of the bill's late-term termination provisions for a number of reasons. Advocates for the bill suggest that the provisions are sound, as a termination may only be completed after two medical practitioners have been consulted and both consider that, in all the circumstances, the termination should be performed. A constituent shared the following story with me when asking me to carefully consider my vote on this bill:

My personal story is that I have had six children via caesarean. My first four boys were all born within five years. I rang the hospital when I found out I was pregnant with my fourth child, with a simple question about the pregnancy, and rather than answering my question, the obstetrician I spoke to immediately offered me an abortion.

I wasn't seeking an abortion, and my question was not about that at all. The argument that it is difficult for women who want an abortion to find a willing doctor is not at all true from my experience.

The point I wish to highlight from her experience is how the predisposition of any medical practitioner to a situation can potentially have a significant influence on the outcome. In one sense, that is hardly surprising as we are all human. But it is critical when providing a professional service that objectivity and neutrality are the guiding principles if one's true desire is to ensure that the pregnant woman can make an informed and independent choice. I note that the bill provides that doctors are to "consider". The precise meaning of the word "consider" is not at all clear to me. It does not, for example, appear to necessarily require a formal medical review like the medical panel processes currently employed in hospitals for all manner of medical decisions, including for pregnancy terminations for 20 weeks or more, as is current practice.

I remain deeply uncomfortable with the breadth of the test outlined in clause 6 (2) (b), whereby the medical practitioner must consider "the person's current and future physical, psychological and social circumstances". Pragmatically, I accept that this bill is likely to succeed and so whatever system is put in place to deal with late-term abortions must be direct, robust and thorough and not left to nebulous concepts in words or phrases including "consider", "future" and "social circumstances". The elasticity of clause 6 (2) is in my opinion a complete abrogation of our role as legislators. This bill has been couched as a bill about women's reproductive health, and yet it leaves me wanting. There are numerous references to termination in the bill, and yet no mention of the support so many women desperately want and need.

I have to question why the proposed legislation does not provide women with access to counselling. I cannot imagine the difficulty or emotional anguish that a woman considering or accessing a termination would be experiencing. I have heard so many stories as we have considered both this bill and the safe access zone bill in the last Parliament, and the one thing that is abundantly clear to me is that we should provide women with more support. I appreciate that support means different things to different people. Whether it be through counselling, family support or pathways to adoption, women should be able to access the support they need. It is heartbreaking to hear stories of women sitting in the procedure chair, having been given a cup of orange juice and a cookie, and considering what they have just done. We can do better.

As there are two sides to this debate, the Government should likewise support both. For example, it has come to my attention that in the financial year ended 30 June 2018, the NSW Ministry of Health provided \$9.5 million in funding to Family Planning NSW. Yet I am unaware of a single organisation that is not pro-choice and which provides pregnancy support services and alternative information for women receiving any funding at all. If choice is to mean anything, it must be fully informed, not partially informed. There are many fantastic organisations that provide pregnancy support services to women who may be struggling. They include but are not limited to Diamond Women's Support, Zoe's Place, Sara's Place and, most recently, Hope House, which I understand has now been operating for just two weeks.

Real choice requires real access to services for all women. I ask the Government to consider providing funding to organisations that provide extra support to women who are making this difficult decision. I acknowledge that the member for Prospect made similar comments in his contribution. I understand that a number of amendments to the bill will be forthcoming. I will support amendments that seek to improve the legislative framework currently presented by the bill. I appreciate that, as I am a woman, some will be disappointed with my position. To that I say it takes more courage to defend your convictions than to remain a silent part of the majority. As I have outlined, I cannot in good conscience support the bill as it stands.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:36): The Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 is an opportunity to provide certainty in the pregnancy termination process for women, to provide clarity for medical professionals, and to remove the criminality of abortions. I pay tribute to all those who have participated respectfully in this debate. I thank the many hundreds of people who have contacted my office for expressing their views in a respectful manner. Any bill introduced into this Parliament regarding moral or societal conscience issues will result in advocacy of polarised views. Dealing with these difficult issues requires true leadership, transparency and empathy towards opinions so as to deliver the best possible outcomes.

This bill is difficult and complex and has far-reaching implications. It is unfair to try to apply a binary code to people, organisations or religious institutions as being either for or against this bill and therefore discounting their views if they do not suit one's thoughts. This issue is complex and the people of New South Wales are calling out for leadership and guidance. Like most in this Parliament, I have grappled with my personal beliefs, my religious faith and the responses from my community, but to a large extent, with approximately 30,000 abortions taking place per year, the debate on whether to allow abortions is over.

The overwhelming belief of most people in this Parliament is that the termination of pregnancies is a health issue rather than a criminal issue. We also understand that the decision to abort is a profound decision that has long-term physical or mental consequences and therefore we must treat women with utmost respect and support during this time. Laws are developed in Parliament to deal with so-called grey areas and difficult-to-define situations. Laws provide a framework so that we can know with some confidence that women have had appropriate support in coming to their decision and that medical practitioners and allied health support people have acted fairly and transparently.

Unfortunately, I am concerned about the process by which this bill has come to Parliament for discussion and also about a number of aspects of the bill. I am disappointed to see that, with the Fifty-Seventh Parliament having been formed less than five months ago, a self-nominated group of parliamentarians has sought advice from like-minded people, developed their own laws and then dropped them into Parliament at short notice for a quick decision. They failed to reach out and bring the majority of people in New South Wales along this difficult but important journey. Whilst it is always good to see what other parliaments have done, the people of New South Wales should not and must not be denied an opportunity to put their opinions forward for consideration.

We have heard from many speakers, including the member for Lane Cove, who outlined the lengthy and detailed consultation process in Queensland and other places. Yet in New South Wales we are denied this. The proponents have been quick to attack religious organisations for their opposition, but many—including the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Andrew Fisher, in his letter to all parliamentarians—accept that other States have liberalised abortion laws but those decisions were made after community consultation, submissions and hearing from local constituents.

There would have been less resistance to this bill if there had been reasonable consultation. My electorate office has had approximately 300 emails or phone calls; only a few were in favour of the bill and the rest were against it. Many of the constituents in my electorate have raised important issues regarding this bill, and demand appropriate consideration and responses. The proponents of this bill say their focus is on a replication of current common law and removing the stress and the stigma involved with abortion—as well as decriminalising abortions. Unfortunately, the bill goes way beyond its aims.

The vast majority of people who have contacted my office were female. For members to stand here and give the impression that every woman is asking for a change to these laws is false; therefore, I am representing the views of many women who have been silenced by the actions of this Parliament in denying them a voice. The following are extracts of emails or messages that I have received. Fiona, a nurse, said:

Law reform needs to ensure pregnant mums feel supported and ensure the safety of the unborn baby and the mum. I believe life begins at conception. Nurses are called to 'do no harm'. Nurses need to be advocates for the voiceless, unborn baby patients. By ending an unborn baby's life we are doing great harm to their human right to life.

It is interesting to note that nurses talk about the sanctity of life whilst doctors are focusing on the abortion process. I am happy to take counsel from medical practitioners and eminent medical advisory boards, but I must say they are not always right. The member for Wollondilly outlined many failed medical procedures. We know many medical practitioners are worried about medical negligence claims or criminality through being involved in abortions and therefore have a vested interest in decreasing or eliminating any compliance requirements.

I was surprised to note the extensive requirements of doctors in disclosing treatment plans to patients as outlined by the Minister for Health and Medical Research. This does not happen in reality. It is a cop-out to say we have systems in place to deal with complaints or that the legal system can deal with them, as we all know these processes take a long time and are costly. We have read about Dr Mark Hobart refusing to undertake sex-selective abortion and now being disciplined by the Medical Board of Victoria. Many people have raised concerns regarding the advice and support women get in coming to a final decision to terminate or not. There are numerous articles about women giving conflicting signals to keep or terminate a baby, but the doctor steering them to an abortion. These comments are further supported by an email from Margaret, who states:

The bill contains no mention of, or protections for vulnerable women who too often find themselves distressed and feeling as if they have no option other than abortion. In fact, this bill does not even mention the word 'woman' once.

My constituents are asking why we are legislating to completely exclude pro-life doctors from the decision-making process. Whilst it is accepted that patients ought to be referred to a wide range of other medical practitioners, pro-life doctors ought not to be completely excluded. Judy said:

The mother has a right over her own body.

I wholeheartedly agree. But she and her baby are completely separate entities. Her unborn child is not her body—it belongs to itself. It comprises replicas of half her DNA but the other half of the unborn baby's DNA is not from her. The meshing of DNA from two different people creates a completely separate individual. The unborn baby is not the mother. The mother should never have the sole right to determine the penalty for her child. Theresa said the abortion bill:

... will mean babies with the "wrong" gender will be aborted.

Kim said:

Women are already pressured by family, friends and partners to commit an abortion against their will. Imagine if it is completely legal?

Those women expect their views and concerns to be adequately addressed by this Parliament. Without an appropriate parliamentary inquiry, their views and questions will not be taken into account and they will feel let down by this Parliament. I also wish to highlight a prominent environmentalist—a male—who said:

It is a sad day for society when parliamentarians forsake defenceless human beings, in miniature, in the womb. Parliamentarians will be doing this by voting to legalise what is, effectively, murder. I regret using such an emotive term as 'murder' but that is what the deliberate killing of a human being is.

These are legitimate concerns raised by my community. Yes, opinions may be extremely confronting but nevertheless a parliamentary committee should address these issues as well as consider suitable amendments to the legislation. [*Extension of time*]

In summary, concerns expressed to me include: No reason is required to abort under 22 weeks, which is significantly different from current requirements. Is 22 weeks appropriate or is some other time required? There are no safeguards against a woman being coerced by her partner, family or "so-called" friends into having an abortion and no understanding of whether that has occurred. Domestic violence via undue pressure exerted on women is not addressed in this bill as the decision to abort up to 22 weeks can be a unilateral decision without

discussion with medical professionals. The bill does nothing to address the perverse behaviour of sex-selection, as evidenced in Victoria and other jurisdictions. This practice does happen and the bill, by remaining silent on this issue, supports this practice.

People have expressed concerns that after 22 weeks a doctor need only consult with another doctor to gain consent. The second doctor does not need to meet the woman. Where is the accountability as to whether the first doctor has provided full disclosure? There are too many examples where doctors have got their diagnosis wrong or have given their interpretation of what they think is best for the patient, which has turned out to be less than acceptable when other opinions have been sought. People have real concerns about late-term abortions. Whilst the bill refers to some medical examinations, there is nothing to stop a woman ignoring medical advice and undertaking self-administered abortion.

The member for Granville addressed this issue and clearly articulated the problems associated with it. This might be a rare example but nonetheless it is something that this Parliament must address. The bill does nothing to improve access to family planning services or medical or crisis support services. Almost every speaker has raised that point. It is clear that the vast majority of members of this Parliament and the people of this State want terminations to be decriminalised and treated as a health issue. But this bill goes way beyond the currently accepted situation. The bill fails to appropriately address the many concerns raised by the people of New South Wales.

It is time to treat women and the people of New South Wales with respect and have a proper inquiry. We need to get the balance right with a law that respects women's rights, recognises the rights of the unborn—particularly regarding late-term pregnancies—and ensures the provision of support services across this State. The test for this bill is to support women grappling with the decision about abortion. It must be dealt with with compassion, respect and dignity within the framework of options and proper support. The bill fails this test. Based on the problems raised by the bill, the lack of appropriate consultation with the community and the overwhelming rejection from the constituents of Blacktown, I cannot support the bill in its current form.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:48): The Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 has forced all of us to do some soul-searching in the past week. I have heard strong views expressed from both sides in what is a very emotional and personal debate. I have taken on board the views of my electorate and of both sides of this debate. I have listened to the considered contributions that others have made in this place, some of which have given me pause for thought. I reiterate my respect for those views.

I cannot imagine the emotional trauma that someone goes through in making the decision to terminate a pregnancy. I do not believe it is a decision that anyone makes easily or one they will not revisit many times in their life. We know from the many incredibly personal stories that have been shared with us in this Chamber that it is a decision people struggle with. They should not also have to struggle with the potential legal consequences of that decision. They should not have to struggle to access a service within hundreds of kilometres of home because doctors are fearful of offering that service in the current legal climate.

As legislators, our role in this place must surely be to ensure that people are well informed and well supported as they make this difficult decision. It is also our role to ensure that legislation is modernised and appropriate for the times. On the matter of abortion, New South Wales can be considered to be out of step with other jurisdictions. I cannot be convinced that it is in any way appropriate for there to remain the potential for women to face criminal charges in exercising what is already a very difficult choice, sometimes under horrific circumstances. Nor can I accept that it is appropriate for there to be criminal ramifications for the doctors who provide this choice. Doctors too must have a right to choose. Doctors will not be forced to perform or participate in terminations where doing so conflicts with their personal beliefs.

I also note the obligation on doctors who have a conscientious objection to refer patients to other doctors to provide advice and care. I understand that a number of amendments will be made to improve the bill—amendments that I believe are very important. After reading and hearing about a number of these amendments, I will make a final decision—one that will voice the concerns that have been raised with me and the concerns that have been expressed in this House, and a decision that will ensure we have a strengthened bill.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:52): I acknowledge country and all our Aboriginal brothers and sisters on this very important day. I thank the spirits of Aboriginal people who are here with us today and I emphasise the different world views and spiritual beliefs that are a part of our communities, our State and our Australian culture. Aboriginal culture and beliefs have always respected women's business as women's business. Abortion is a reality in our community and it is available in New South Wales, yet in the antiquated laws of this State it remains part of the Crimes Act 1900.

I support the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 beside my colleagues from all sides of Parliament who have sponsored the bill in the House; beside more than 70 organisations that offer strong support, including the Pro-Choice Alliance, the Human Rights Law Centre and Fair Agenda; beside the Australian Medical Association, Domestic Violence NSW, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and Family Planning NSW; beside a majority of community members, as no public opinion poll in Australia in 50 years has found a popular majority opposed to access to abortion and no opinion poll has shown more than 5 per cent to 10 per cent of voters opposed to abortion; beside the fabulous teams at the Women's Electoral Lobby, EMILY's List and Our Bodies Our Choices; beside members of the Uniting Church, the Anglican Church and many other progressive church leaders in New South Wales; beside the Central Coast Women's Health Centre, the Central Coast Legal Centre, Gosford Gynaecology Centre and the organisations in my electorate and across the coast who support women seeking terminations; and beside many individuals and groups in my community and from across New South Wales who have contacted my office to share their support of this bill. They are all advocates for the decriminalisation of abortion and equity of access to abortion services, and I thank them.

I also thank every person who has contacted my office urging me to see alternative views. Nearly 100 per cent of communication with my office over the past week has been about this issue, spanning the breadth of opinion. I point out that this access to communication is an elitist mechanism privileging those with computers, internet access and computer literacy. It privileges the already privileged members of our community. I thank the Gosford electorate office team, who also have had the privilege of sharing deeply personal stories and who have endured a number of aggressive telephone calls and emails over the past few weeks. Our bodies are our own—choices by women for women. Today in the New South Wales Parliament we are responsible for shaping a society of diversity and choice, yet on the other side of the House there are still a whole bunch of men helping us with this decision. We decide what we do with our uterus, and nobody else.

This law is about dignity. Every woman who has had a termination has a story and an emotional experience connected to her choice. I do not believe it has been an easy journey for any one of those women. Many community members have contacted our office team at Gosford—constituents and people living beyond the Gosford electorate—to voice their concerns. In a conscience vote it is important to have shared a real emotional connection to the perceptions of individuals and groups within our community. I thank them so much for their input and for voicing their concerns, and I thank them for taking the time to contact me and to meet with me. I am honoured to represent the people of the Gosford electorate and the people of New South Wales.

Today I will be voting for a better future for the women of this State. I apologise to those who have reached out and asked me to vote differently. I believe voices must be heard and the truth must be told. It seems that our community is polarised by two very different opinions on the topic of termination. Yet to me it seems the relevance here is not about an opinion on termination as the option of termination already exists in New South Wales and has been used by a number of women in our State since 1971, and before then. We have heard some very personal experiences of members of this House during this debate.

I reflect also on the circumstances of many who have contacted our office to express their opposition to the legalisation of abortion. Those women—and there are a number—have called our office and shared their stories of being forced to have an abortion that has not been their choice. Delving deeper into those conversations, it is apparent that their action has rarely been accompanied by appropriate counselling or support. Incredibly sadly, this is the truth for women in New South Wales regardless of whether termination is illegal or legal. In addition to this legislation, we must provide education and support structures for women in our society.

So many women have shared their termination stories with me, not only during the past week but also during my time as an elected representative of our community and in my role as a support person of other women and friends. I heard from a young girl who had unprotected sex for the first time, fell pregnant and coordinated an appointment through the university medical centre. She travelled on the train to a clinic amongst tall trees in Strathfield. She was told to put a pad between her legs after the procedure, to take a week off sport and to get on with her life. She caught the train home alone. This woman is now a very successful member of our community.

I heard from a woman who, after her second child with her second husband, who refused to have a vasectomy, fell pregnant with a child that she did not want due to the state of her mental health. This led her to a termination for which she was made to feel guilty by people around her. Yet 30 years later she is confident—with her two amazing adult children beside her—that her decision then was the right decision for her. This woman is also a very successful member of our community. There are many such stories from women in my electorate and beyond. Today a member of my staff said, "This is my story. Can you read it out in Parliament?"

It is a story that so many told about the hardship of making the decision and the deep, personal connection to that story and life beyond that story. I am astounded by the number of personal, heartfelt, emotional stories shared by women, yet no emotional personal stories of termination have been shared with my office by men. I ask

myself: What are the experiences that have impacted people's opinions and their perceived right to have an opinion that contributes to their willingness to influence this law? Whilst I have heard many opinions based on Christian ethos, I check in here in Parliament that there are many different views of Christianity and alternative cultural views on the relationship between a woman and a fetus and the energetic existence of the fetus beyond a termination.

Some members of our community have a different understanding about life after death and reincarnation and the importance of bringing up children in a supported space of love. This influences their choice. Conservative religion frames one perception and yet there are many other world views of life and the continuity of life. I thank the religious believers of New South Wales and beyond who have moved on to speak in support of this bill and recognise the needs and freedoms of women—your voices are very important. Abortion within the Crimes Act was introduced to the Parliament in 1900, when it was all blokes in this place. Millicent Preston-Stanley was elected as the first woman in Parliament in 1925 and began the campaign for women's issues.

In my opinion, this remains a misogynistic law that impacts government, health, religion and more. We aim in this Parliament, 119 years later, to make what is already happening across New South Wales legal. Currently, women and doctors can face up to 10 years in prison. Criminalisation breeds further stigma. It brings increased costs, pressures practitioners and makes women in regional and rural communities further disadvantaged. Under the current legislation those who are already facing barriers such as language, colour, bank account and exposure to violence are further disadvantaged. This law needs to change.

Under the current legislation the woman who is raped is treated more as a criminal than the man who rapes her—she needs this law to change. There is the women living with violence and without choice, whose option for leaving is profoundly impacted by lack of choice—she needs this law to change. We must move to ensure that abortion is free, safe and legal, not a geographic, cultural, socio-economically inequitably accessible crime. Abortion must be accessible under Medicare, in all of New South Wales, with access to appropriate counselling, care and support. [*Extension of time*]

One hundred and nineteen years later, the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 reflects the expectations of the majority of the members of the public—that termination is a medical process and should not be a criminal act. I speak in support of putting women's health and reproductive rights into the health framework, where it should be. This bill recognises a doctor's right to conscientiously object, and that protection is instilled in the bill. Within the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019, both women and health practitioners will be judged on safety rather than criminality in seeking and providing the termination of pregnancy.

Abortion was legalised in the Soviet Union in 1920, Iceland in 1935, France in 1975 and Norway in 1978, and the Parliament of New Zealand yesterday announced plans to legalise abortion. This bill will bring New South Wales into line with every other State and Territory in Australia. We are the last jurisdiction to make this change; we are the last frontier. With the conservatives in power, I am scared for the future of this nation and this State as some of their ideas are not for the greater good of our society. I will be embarrassed, as a progressive woman in New South Wales, if this is not the last time we are forced to vote on such a reform.

This bill will set a framework. Based on evidence, nothing in this bill will increase the number of terminations. As a wheelchair user in the New South Wales Parliament, there is a weird assumption that I bring the expertise and understanding of people with disabilities to this place—and maybe I do. On this legislation, I have not wanted to drill down into the deep psyche of my friends with disabilities who were "born different" about the impact this concept has on them. At 22 weeks some elements of disability can be detected. I point out that I have fantastic friends who were born with spina bifida or lumbar sacral agenesis, friends who were born without limbs and others who have degenerative disabilities as a result of genetic inheritances.

My friends live incredible lives and are great contributors to our society regardless of their diverse abilities. I will continue to highlight the ability of people living with disabilities and their right to live fabulous lives. With appropriate government support—unlike under the current Federal Liberal Government that has robbed \$1.6 million from the NDIS—we will continue to build an Australia where people with disabilities are respected, valued and fully included. Today in this Parliament I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues who have fought for this change and sponsored this bill.

I particularly thank Penny Sharpe, MLC, for the work she has done in the other place to bring this bill to the Parliament. I commend member for Sydney for his work in leading this debate. Thank you to everyone who was able to join us outside Parliament this week and last week, and so many times previously. We really appreciate your support and I am thrilled that some of you were there in the photo sent to me by one of my constituents of similar action outside Parliament in 1972. A heartfelt thank you to all the women and men who have fought for our right to autonomy. We were reminded this week about the ad taken out by prominent women 50 years ago who had sought abortions and were imploring the police to arrest them. While community opinion has changed

markedly in 50 years, the law has not followed. We stand on the shoulders of the Pro-Choice Alliance in trying to remove abortion from the Crimes Act.

Though it is an exciting honour to be here in the Parliament voting on this bill today, it did not start with us in Parliament and nor did it start with the Pro-Choice Alliance. This started with my mum, with our mothers and our grandmothers before us who have fought for the rights and the voice of women in New South Wales, Australia and around the world. We want children to be born into families of love. We want families to be able to live happy lives. We want to allow teenagers and adult women who become pregnant to make a choice and get on with their lives and achieve the dreams they seek. I thank Our Bodies Our Choices and in particular Claire Pullen, who has been working very closely with women on the Central Coast to spread the word and raise awareness.

I acknowledge the brave women and men—doctors, nurses, counsellors and activists—who have stood up and will continue to stand up for the rights of women. I acknowledge the Central Coast Women's Abortion Collective, who met in my office in 2017 to work on the best possible strategy to support the delivery of this legislation in our community and to a wider New South Wales. A special thank you to Sally Joep, Robyn Rex, Pat Simmons, Carole Davidson and Debbie Notara for their time and energy in communicating this important message across the Central Coast. Thank you for all the work you do to continue to empower women in our community. I thank the Women's Health Centres across New South Wales. There are fantastic facilities in Wyong, Wyoming and Woy Woy that continue to support thousands of women each year with limited financial resources—incredible intellectual knowledge and profound support, love and a deep caring that only a sisterhood can offer other women.

I thank all those working in the sector who know the stories, and who have helped women over and over again. They know that these are not just stories; these are women's lives. This is not frivolous. It is not about parliamentary procedure; it is about vital women's services. It could happen in your family. Sometimes it is a secret and sometimes it is a lie. These are experiences that touch women across our community. Most mornings I pass 85-year-old Joan when I walk my dog. Last Monday morning she grabbed my hand and said, "Dear, I hope this goes through on behalf of the women of New South Wales."

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (13:08): Madam Temporary Speaker Hornery, I am not standing here before you as a feminist, nor as an archaic female. I am here as a woman who is a mother. That alone is a gift from God and I am blessed to have two beautiful children. I am a woman who has never had an abortion. I do not presume to know what a woman could experience emotionally or physically when she makes a decision to terminate her pregnancy, and I do not judge her. I do feel for her and the pain of realising that a heartbeat that was given life will never see the light of day. My philosophy is driven by my Christian values. I am pro-life.

Currently, one in four pregnancies are terminated and in New South Wales there are 30,000 abortions per year—that is 82 babies a day. It is a sobering thought, and so the case to say that New South Wales laws are archaic does not sit right with me because abortion currently can be performed in this State. I have heard that those who support this bill believe it decriminalises the action, which relieves the minds of women who have this procedure. I understand that logic. My issue is that the rights of the unborn child are silent. This bill ignores that right. The inconvenient truth that there is a life growing every day in gestation cannot be ignored. I am troubled by the open-endedness of this bill for late-term abortions. The unborn child has no voice and is clearly discriminated against. Throughout the bill the unborn child is referred to as "the termination". Just because the baby has not been born, does not mean it is not living. I find that abhorrent and offensive, in the same way that I noted the word "person" rather than "woman" is referred to at least 31 times throughout this bill.

I cannot defend this bill. It represents what I and many in my community do not support. In the brief time that Hawkesbury constituents have become aware of this bill before Parliament, I have received very concerned emails and calls with over 90 per cent of callers who have contacted my office against this bill and only 10 per cent in favour. I have heard the message from the majority of quiet Australians in Hawkesbury, who are angered and desperate to be represented in this House. They ask: Why has this been rushed through Parliament? Why has there been no proper consultation? Should we have met with religious leaders to seek their opinion? Good government listens and responds, and I have to ask: Have we done enough consultation? This bill is divisive. It is an emotional issue that has given rise to opinions that I do not agree with, but I respect your right to express your views. Last week I received an email from one of my constituents that I would like to share with the House:

Dear Robyn,

I am thankful the Premier decided to delay discussion on the legislation of the wanton murder of unborn children.

Children are not a commodity that you can return or get rid of because you have changed your mind or don't like the colour!

The first question to ask is WHY?

Why are male politicians pushing so hard for this bill?

What do they hope to gain by this bill? An easy way to get out of their obligations and responsibilities?

Why is there even a need?

In this country there is no excuse or need for abortion with the exception of where the mother's life is put at risk.

Contraception is readily available to any woman if she doesn't desire to have children.

Sex education starts in school.

ALL woman today know that unprotected sex can lead to pregnancy.

Some years ago, after my beautiful 15yr old niece conceived a child as a result of rape, her father, my brother, came to me to ask me to convince her to abort the child. Something I couldn't do.

I did however, discuss adoption and the challenges of raising a little one on her own and offered support including having them both live with us and/or raising the baby for her.

She gave birth to a beautiful baby girl then went back with government assistance to complete her education and is now an accomplished accountant, beautiful mother and happy grandmother.

Before any life is taken, counselling in the alternatives and the long-term effects of the decision should be mandatory.

What research studies have been done on woman who have had abortions?

The State should look at ways to better educate girls and women in caring for their bodies and the use of contraception.

Easier adoption should be considered for the families desperate for a child of their own.

And I have to ask; Where does it end?

Two doctors decide a baby can die—How long before two doctors can decide your life or mine is not worth saving?

They are not talking about ill children, they are talking about inconvenient children! Life, all life is precious.

I ask you as a woman to put forward the case for life!

A woman's right to carry her child without being pressured to abort if not convenient or possibly not perfect or her husband or partner no longer want the child or it's the wrong sex.

Our daughters and granddaughters have the right to carry their babies to full term without the pressures legalising abortion would place on them.

Regards.

This is a conscience vote; my conscience is clear. I cannot support this bill as it stands.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:15): I note that we have travelled many pathways to this place and we bring our different experiences to this House, particularly at times when there is a conscience vote. Along the route we meet people who touch us in different emotional ways. My career before being elected to Parliament was as a primary school teacher. Through my career, I dealt with young children and their families and heard about the best aspects of our community and sometimes the worst aspects of our community. I say from the outset that I will be supporting the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 and I will put in context where my views on this bill come from by relating a couple of stories.

I start by talking about a young woman from a rural community who travelled away from her home community to go to university. Whilst at university she was subject to date rape. She felt very alone and chose, in consultation with her parents, to have an abortion. That very important decision has been with her ever since; it does not go away or disappear. Today that young woman has gone on to be very successful in her career. She now has children and she is providing for those children the life that they deserve. While she will always reflect on her decision, she told me that she does not regret it because at the time it was the right thing for her to do and she had the choice to have an abortion.

In contrast, I want to talk about a very sad case that deeply affected me when I was a young school principal and is affecting my view of this topic. This young woman became pregnant and was convinced to go through with the pregnancy even though she did not want to do so. She told me about her life and her experiences. She told me about some of the difficulties that she had had since the birth of her child and how the birth had affected her mental health. Whilst she dearly loved the child, not long after giving birth she took her own life. Her point, quite simply, was that she did not have a choice.

I recognise that this bill is about choice, about making sure we have a framework that enables people to make the right decisions for them. I am never going to judge anyone for that decision. I will not condemn people who do not believe in abortion because that is their right and their choice. But, equally, I will not condemn people who for medical, social or emotional reasons choose to have an abortion, because that is their choice and they

have to do what is best for them. Earlier today I was asked to read another story onto the *Hansard* record and I am happy to do so. It states:

My name is Catherine and I would like to contribute my story to the NSW Parliament about my experience as a 19 year old who unexpectedly fell pregnant and had an abortion.

I was living with my then boyfriend in Bondi and I had the world at my feet. My period was late and I sensed changes were occurring in my body.

I did not have a regular GP at the time and I was recommended to a wonderful woman doctor in Wollstonecraft. She did not judge me and she assisted me with my tremendously hard decision to have an abortion.

I vividly remember the day in May 1989 travelling to a Surry Hills clinic at 11 weeks pregnant for the termination. Thankfully, there were no protesters out the front of the clinic to badger me. I have, to this day, kept the pamphlet that was given to me about post-operative care after the procedure. I don't know why I have done this. Maybe this is to remind me what a difficult but necessary decision I had to make 31 years ago.

My boyfriend supported me however his biggest concern was that his religious mother and father would be devastated knowing what I was about to do. We kept it a secret and ended up drifting apart.

I believe that no woman would make a decision to have an abortion light heartedly as some believe. This Bill, before the NSW Parliament, would not encourage abortion to become just another form of birth control.

My decision at 19 was the right one. Today, I have a wonderful, supportive husband and two beautiful teenage daughters who are the apple of my eye. For them as women, I believe that they should be able to make decisions about their bodies without fear of being labelled a criminal in NSW.

I wholeheartedly support that position. As the member for Northern Tablelands said, this bill is about bringing the law up to speed with what actually happens in the community. We have to hold that very squarely in our minds. We have to understand that since 1971 in this State there have been legal reasons to have abortions, yet the criminal law still makes it technically illegal. That in itself is a barrier to choice by both medical professionals as well as people who have to make the decisions. We as a Parliament have an obligation to make sure we put in place structures in the community to support the community—not create barriers or reasons that adversely affect the lives of people because we have one view or another.

We have to make sure there is an overarching framework that protects people—that protects women and their right to make decisions about themselves. I have two teenage daughters and I speak today on their behalf. I do not know what is ahead of them. I hope their lives are perfect, as all dads do, but at the same time I have a responsibility to support and stand by them, whatever happens with them. In my privileged position in this place, on their behalf I want to make sure that they can make the decision that is the best for them of their own volition and with support. We must remember that that is our job as legislators. We all have our personal positions. I am a person of faith—although I admit I sometimes have trouble with organised religion. I attend church and I have to say I have become quite cynical about some of the things that happen there. But my own moral purpose is very clear in my head. I was baptised Anglican and currently I attend the Uniting Church with my wife. I am buoyed by the fact that the Anglican Bishop of Newcastle wrote to all MPs in our area and put a very sensible position. I think many members have read the full letter. He said, in part:

After careful reflection, I encourage you to support the overarching proposal to move the legal management of the termination of pregnancy from the criminal code. The healthcare regulatory framework is a better place for governing the complex decision-making associated with pregnancy and matters associated with conscience.

That is a sensible position and it is backed up by the Uniting Church as well. That is their position and they have also written to MPs to put that position. I know and I respect that other religions have different positions. But again we have to make decisions for our whole community—not parts of our community but the whole community. My community is diverse as well. I have to make sure when I am in this place I make decisions that will affect and support every single person living in my community. I take that obligation very clearly and very seriously. [*Extension of time*]

As other members' offices and staff have, my office and staff have received many calls and 133 emails. Of those, the majority were probably against the bill but only a small proportion lived in my electorate. I received other correspondence from across the State. As I said, I respect their views and I encourage and support their ability to put those views to me. But through the stories I have recounted today I know I have a responsibility—even though as others have said we will upset some people when we vote in particular ways in this place, as we do on every piece of legislation—to ensure that that one person who has to make one of the most heart-wrenching decisions of their life has a real choice to make.

I am regional MP. Others have mentioned that one of the issues we have to deal with, which this legislation does not but this Parliament must seriously consider, is that it only becomes a real choice when people have equal access to services no matter where they live—that no matter what part of the State you come from you have equal access to those services when you need them. I endorse all the remarks from right across the House

that say there needs to be more money, more resources and more emphasis put into those areas. People do not have a true choice when their opportunities are limited. Again, I think the member for Northern Tablelands said a person who lives in Moree has to make a 1,000 kilometre round trip. That is not real choice or real opportunity. We have to do better.

If we do not support this legislation as it is then we are sending a terrible message to the community. We are saying that, on the one hand, we are prepared to accept that a legal decision in 1971 says abortions can happen but, as a Parliament, we are not prepared and do not have the strength to change the law to reflect that. In other words, we are happy for it to happen underground, out of sight, and we do not think about it, but we are not happy to show moral conviction and say that the laws of the State should reflect the practice in the community. I think that is a very important distinction.

In terms of people having trouble with provisions in the framework of the bill, I say that if this bill does not pass there is no framework, essentially, after 22 weeks. There is no framework after 22 weeks—none exists. At the moment those decisions are made by individual doctors or health professionals and there is no framework in place to set any other stipulation. Yet in every other State and Territory there is a framework. Again, as a legislator in New South Wales—the biggest State—looking after our community, I am not prepared to say it is too hard and do nothing. We have to do something. We have to make sure that it is in the health framework. That is constantly under review and if it needs to be changed it can be modified. To stop now because we are scared of not getting it right is an abrogation of duty. I am not prepared to fail my two teenage daughters on that point.

I thank every person who contributed to debate on the bill and everyone involved in bringing the bill to the House. Previous reform proposals have failed on several occasions but hopefully the bill before the House will pass with broad agreement. I think I can safely say that most people agree abortion should not be regulated in the criminal code. There are still some issues but we must be brave and take a stand and make a decision. We cannot run away from it. We cannot have more committees and more investigations. The evidence is out there. If members have not read and understood the bill or have not looked at the Queensland Law Reform Commission's report and other inquiries, that is not the fault of those who rely on us. Our responsibility is to learn, educate ourselves and understand. I strongly support the bill. I will look at the proposed amendments but I am very happy with the construction of the bill. My community will judge me for my views but I have a very clear conscience that I am acting in the best interests of my whole community.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSON (Upper Hunter) (13:31): I make a contribution to the debate on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. This is an extremely personal subject for many people. I make no judgement of anyone. As we go through life we come across people in all sorts of circumstances who make decisions, the reasons for which are beyond our knowledge and ability to understand. We must respect their decisions; we do not always understand people's situations. From the outset, I confirm that I completely and utterly support women in their choice to do what they feel is best. Abortion is real and warranted in circumstances—and members have mentioned many instances—for example, where rape or domestic violence and other issues have been central to why a female may have become pregnant.

I do not believe this should be a political issue, about Left or Right ideology in politics or what we as a society understand politics to be. In fact, politics is about human nature. For so long as humans are in the world we will all be political in some way, shape or form. In every family, office, classroom—everywhere you go—there is politics, not just in the New South Wales Parliament. My overarching view is about one thing only: It is purely and utterly about humanity. Humans are wondrous and we will never get to understand them. We go through our lives and try our best to understand what humans are all about. Individuals often go through their lives and do not understand what their own lives have been about. Nevertheless, it is a wondrous gift to be able to walk this earth in the first instance. Humans are not perfect—I am not and nor is anyone in this place. We should never expect humans to be perfect. It is okay for people to make mistakes and to make decisions they may possibly regret. It is about learning.

To that point, I will talk about an experience from my own life. My biological mother was in a far-from-perfect marriage. My biological father was an alcoholic with all sorts of issues. My mother had miscarried before giving birth to me and after me she lost another child at six weeks of age through sudden infant death syndrome, or cot death. I was born in Crown Street Women's Hospital as a result of a series of decisions my biological mother made. I am a '64 drop. I am 55 years of age—or 50 plus GST, as I like to say. At that time there was little or no support for women in the terrible situation my mother was in. My mother would have struggled with the issue of "Do I or don't I abort?" And rightly so. She made her decision, rightly or wrongly. As a result, I was adopted and not aborted.

I know I am not the only member in this Parliament who was adopted. I know that others in this world have been given the opportunity to live, grow, make mistakes, experience life, test their boundaries, stand against the establishment and do all the wonderful things humans like to do in setting themselves up for a fulfilling,

comforting and rewarding life, not only for themselves as individuals but also for those around them. I have two kids whom I love dearly and am extremely proud of. They have had their hardships and will, no doubt, continue to have them. Like the member for Wyong said, regardless of what happens to my children, their mother and I will always support them in their choices, whether or not we agree with them, and in the circumstances in which they find themselves.

How many others are in my position? How many others have been given the opportunity through adoption, as opposed to abortion, to experience the wonders of life and to do everything that humans, with all their frailties, can do? Many of my constituents have contacted me and the vast majority—approximately 85 per cent to 90 per cent—are urging me not to vote for the bill. When I became a member of Parliament, I said that I will represent the views of the vast majority of my electorate on issues of morality. I consider this bill an issue of morality, leaving the technical matters aside. As a result, I will not vote for the bill in its current form. I am happy to consider any amendments that are put before the House but I cannot, in all conscience, bring myself to vote against what most people, I believe—not just in my electorate but in many electorates—consider to be a basic human right, a basic decent standard that humans should apply in this life in making the most of the gift that has been given to them.

It has been mentioned that it is now legal to have abortions. But there is a legal option and an unlawful option. This law may be 119 years old but just because back then all the members of Parliament were male does not mean they were all stupid or that they did not care. There are protections in the Crimes Act because there are terrible people out there who do terrible things, some of which have been documented in this debate. There have been horrific circumstances where doctors have done the wrong thing and have been prosecuted under this legislation, as they should be. We do not want those protections for women to be lost. I want women to retain the ability to say to doctors, "I have gone through extremely difficult circumstances. I have made my choices, I trusted you and you did the wrong thing." [*Extension of time*]

If a woman places her intimate trust in a doctor to do the right thing and to support her in her decision and the doctor does the wrong thing, then that doctor should be held to account. I have no problem with that. I do not want women to lose those protections. It has been argued that it is the other way around but I do not believe that. I believe the Crimes Act contains a set of protections to support women in whatever decision they make for reasons they believe are right at the time, just like my mother did. I know about my mother's and father's story because I was adopted by an auntie and uncle. I had the good fortune of having a wonderful relationship with my maternal grandparents, aunts and uncles. I am so glad I did and that my adopted parents gave me the opportunity to have that contact. It has enriched my life and has played a significant part in making me who I am. I do not regret any of it. I do not regret the reasons that we are debating the bill. It is time to put humanity front and centre. I urge every member of this Parliament to put their political beliefs and ideologies aside and bring to the front and centre the value of humanity, whether born or unborn.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (13:43): I make a contribution to this debate to outline to my constituents my reasons for supporting the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. As representatives, we should be up-front with our constituents and when we make decisions on issues, particularly issues of conscience, we should not be afraid to outline why we have done so. It is the right thing to do. Not all my constituents will be happy with my support for the bill. But in considering all aspects of the bill I can arrive at no reason that I should stand in the way while women who seek terminations and the doctors who perform them risk criminal sanction.

I thank all the people who have emailed me and called my office over the past week. Their views were divided and the reasons they gave in support of their position varied. However, in the scheme of things their number was a tiny proportion of the number of people who live in the Wollongong electorate. In this debate, when passions can be high and issues are difficult, context is important. An important context is that the bill is not about abortion. Over the past few days—and over the past few weeks and months and years—the issue of the continued criminality of abortion in New South Wales has been raised with me on many occasions. For me, this is not a new issue but one where the time has come for it to be dealt with properly. As we consider the bill, I reflect on all those conversations.

Debate interrupted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): 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 the guests from my electorate and also from the Chatswood Executive Business Lions Club, including Mike Li, Michelle Lam, Angela Lam-Li, Kingsley Lam-Li,

Yeyan Cheng and Leo Yibo Xu. I also welcome to the Chamber senior school leaders from Chatswood High School, Glenside Rudolf Steiner School, Mercy Catholic College and Willoughby Girls High School, guests of the Premier, and member for Willoughby. I welcome to the Chamber Mark and Kath Croxford of Kiama Downs, guests of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, and member for Kiama. Welcome to Fraser Ellis, South Australian member for Narungga, guest of the Government Whip, and member for Terrigal.

I welcome Anthony Radic, a Rouse Hill High School student who is currently working for the member for Castle Hill, and Anthony's grandmother Nedeljka Radic, guests of the member for Castle Hill. I welcome the Mayor of Camden, Councillor Theresa Fedeli, and Camden Council General Manager Ron Moore. I acknowledge Maya, Hayley, Caitlyn and Sophie from Woonona East Public School's year 6 environmental team, together with their principal, Emily Corcoran, guests of the member for Keira—who I hope will demonstrate how schoolchildren should behave.

I also acknowledge residents from the Lake Macquarie electorate who are in the gallery today, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge Jan Bynon, former long-serving foundation member of the Hunter Medical Research Institute, and Melissa Histon-Browning founder and CEO of Got Your Back Sista, guests of the member for Maitland. Finally, I welcome participants of the Introduction to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly Public Sector Seminar. I met with the participants this morning and trust that they are finding today's proceedings useful and informative. In particular, I thank the Government Whip, the Opposition Whip, the member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Balmain for attending and assisting with the seminar. We welcome you all to the Chamber.

Rulings

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

The SPEAKER: I draw the attention of members to Sessional Order 108A regarding community recognition statements. In particular, I remind members that community recognition statements are intended to highlight the efforts and achievements of people within our local communities. Community recognition statements must not contain matters of policy, requests for the Government, the House or another body to take or not take some form of action, or criticisms or negative reflections on any person, including members, office holders, the Government, the Opposition or a third party.

Without giving particular examples, there have been transgressions recently and I ask members to be conscious of the intent of and the rules regarding community recognition statements. As we have all been informed, members now have the opportunity to table one written community recognition statement per day by emailing them to assemblycrs@parliament.nsw.gov.au on a sitting day for publication in the *Hansard* for that day, as long as they are submitted before 12 o'clock. Following feedback from the table office, I confirm that written statements must not exceed 200 words—including the heading and statement—must be submitted by 12 o'clock and should be sent from either the member's email address or that of their electorate office.

Announcements

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY SPORT

The SPEAKER: I applaud the spirit of parliamentarians across our Commonwealth as shown during the recent inter-parliamentary netball and cricket matches played in London during the winter recess. New South Wales was well represented. I acknowledge our Australian representatives, including the member for Coogee and the member for Auburn as well as the member for Oxley, who was assisted by her daughter, Emily Pavey. In netball, our parliamentary representatives defeated the British side in front of the House of Commons and valiantly tied with the New Zealand team.

Further, the members for Coogee and for Auburn helped to secure a cricket victory for New South Wales by defeating New Zealand, ably assisted by the Hon. Damien Tudehope's son, Tom. It is hoped that the memorable wicket of the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh that the members for Coogee and for Auburn took does not have diplomatic repercussions, especially given that the Bangladesh High Commissioner and Consul General are visiting the Parliament this afternoon—I am not sure why, but they are most welcome. I acknowledge them in anticipation of our meeting this afternoon, together with the members for Prospect and for Oatley. Thank you to all those involved in those sporting activities for their participation and good sportsmanship. I trust that we will all play by the rules and treat each other with similar respect as we move to question time shortly.

Question Time

The SPEAKER: I note that yesterday was the noisiest question time that I have experienced during my time as Speaker. At the end of question time six or seven members were on three calls to order.

Mr John Barilaro: Throw them out.

The SPEAKER: I call the Deputy Premier to order for the first time. I will be a little tougher today because I sense that my limits are being tested, so I will push back. I do not want any member to miss today's important vote—a conscience vote.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. I put members on notice upfront that I will be a bit tougher today because their behaviour yesterday was not acceptable.

NSW BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:26): My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. Given the shocking scale of the crisis in the building industry, his new Building Commissioner must have real powers and boots on the ground. How many inspectors will the commissioner have at his disposal to conduct spot audits of building sites?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:27): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question and her continued interest in broader reforms to give New South Wales the quality transparency and accountability that it needs on the back of what Labor failed to do for so many years.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I have been pretty patient with the Opposition so far, but there are a few home truths that members might not want to hear.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I know it is uncomfortable for members opposite but they may want to listen to this very carefully.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: There are a couple of statements that I think some opposite may still remember. The most often stated problem with the system is that it is too over regulated.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. We have been very specific, in line with your direction, Mr Speaker. The question asked: How many inspectors will the commissioner have at his disposal to conduct spot audits of building sites? Members on this side of the House have taken direction from you. It is a specific question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister was making some introductory comments, but I remind him to address the specificity of the question at some stage.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Another statement was that ordinary people share frustrations about the lack of common sense in the system and the seemingly unnecessary layer upon layer of rules and regulations, and that the bill will remove unnecessary regulations. They are not my words; those are the words of former Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Craig Knowles. Welcome to the party.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: Mr Speaker—

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: This is a very serious matter. People have been displaced from their homes and the Minister is not answering the question.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Members may also be interested to know that Craig Knowles is the same Labor Party operative who chaired the Murray-Darling Basin Authority in 2011.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. If the point of order is about relevance I do not want to hear it because I have just ruled on that. I will give the Minister a chance to answer the specificity of the question.

If his time gets down to a minute and a half and he still has not addressed the specifics then I am happy to take another point of order on relevance. But at the moment the Minister has been making introductory and generally contextual comments.

Ms Jodi McKay: We have followed your instructions, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, I understand that. I have given you some guidance as to what I intend to do in a minute and a half if the Minister's answer has not become more relevant. The Minister has the call.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and we are taking this very seriously. The Building Commissioner was appointed last week—as I recall that was on time, as we said the commissioner would be appointed by July. The Building Commissioner, Mr David Chandler, does not start until 14 August but he is so keen to start with us that he was in my office today, talking about the reforms—the broader suite of reforms—that we will be implementing. The Shergold Weir report is about to be part of the biggest shake-up in the construction industry in this State's history. Part of that Shergold Weir report was the implementation of a Building Commissioner, and we have done that. Today we met with the Building Commissioner—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to Standing Order 129. The question was specific.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I am happy for the Leader of the Opposition to read the question again.

Ms Jodi McKay: Thank you. How many inspectors will the commissioner have at his disposal to conduct spot audits of building sites?

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to be more relevant to what was a very specific question.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I know it is pretty uncomfortable for those opposite. This happened on your watch so just sit and listen and you might understand that we are talking about broader reforms with the Building Commissioner.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. You do not know how many inspectors will be there on the ground. The Minister has no idea. Now he is taking directions from the Premier. He stuffed up his portfolio yesterday. At least tell us how many inspectors.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Mr Speaker, I am hurt; I am deeply hurt by those comments. Holy Toledo, is that the best you've got? Two ears, one mouth; listen to what I am about to tell you in relation to the Building Commissioner. You will understand—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: I observe that Opposition members are not allowing the Minister to answer the question by taking up his time.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is a longstanding tradition in this House that the member with the call should address his comments through the Chair. Further, yelling across the Chamber in such an aggressive way is outrageous.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: We seek an extension of time for two minutes so that the Minister can answer the question.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira did not ask the question. The member who asked the question must make that request.

WESTERN SYDNEY TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:33): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on what the Government is doing to address traffic congestion in western Sydney, and are there any alternatives?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:33): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. I know that many of us care about reducing congestion and stress for everybody throughout our State, but especially in western Sydney where people are travelling longer distances on the most congested roads and rail networks in the State. Before I proceed to outline progress and provide updates to the House, I acknowledge all the students in the gallery. It is Education Week. I commend all the great work you, your teachers and principals are doing throughout the great State of New South Wales. Welcome, and thank you! Today

the Government was very pleased to receive an update on the new M4 tunnels—a project that was announced by Labor governments in 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2008. Labor did not do any work on it. No work was done until the Liberals-Nationals came to government. Those tunnels opened on 13 July. I am pleased to update the House that on a given work day an average of 82,000 trips are taken in the new M4 tunnels, which exceeds expectations.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am also pleased to say that travel time savings on the tunnels are recorded. On average, people taking those 82,000 trips save up to 20 minutes. In the morning peak, people save on average 17 minutes; but in the evening peak, people save on average 45 minutes.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Good news!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is extremely good news.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: They can't bear it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They can't handle the truth. Now many Labor members use those tunnels and their constituents use those tunnels. Labor members should just say thank you to the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals for those tunnels. The M4 tunnels are just stage one of WestConnex.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: More to come.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I acknowledge the interjection by the former Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. There absolutely is more to come.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am very pleased to say that this Government is duplicating the M5 East. We are also providing a link between the M4 and the M5. We are building the Sydney Gateway projects, improving airport access and also improving the roads around the airport. It is not just the road network that the Government is investing in for western Sydney. I am pleased to provide the House with an update on the Sydney Metro Northwest, which has immeasurable benefits—and not just for those who are saving hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars on tolls and other costs. It is also freeing up traffic on our congested motorway network, which has a very big positive impact for western Sydney. I am pleased to say there have been more than four million trips on the Sydney Metro Northwest in just over two months.

The SPEAKER: The member for Londonderry and the member for Canterbury will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know that many members of this House, which includes members from western Sydney and the north-west of Sydney, are already experiencing the benefits—as is everybody from the northern approach to the bridge. Obviously, having fewer people in cars reduces traffic congestion. I am also pleased to update the House that, in addition to WestConnex and the next stages of the metro, the Government is investing in a number of other projects throughout western Sydney that are all toll free. The Government is spending \$4.1 billion on upgrades and new roads to connect to the new Western Sydney Airport. Those upgrades include the new Northern Road, Bringelly Road, Mulgoa Road and Mamre Road. I know that the members for Mulgoa and for Penrith, in particular, have been arguing for a very long time about much-needed upgrades to those roads. When I visit those communities that is the issue I am asked about more than any other.

I am also pleased to inform the House that the Smart Motorway projects are coming online and are having a positive impact. That is something else that many western Sydney residents deeply appreciate. But Government members know that what the people of New South Wales have had a taste of since the election is just the tip of the iceberg. The Government is very excited and optimistic about the benefits of reducing congestion, increased productivity, less stress and less cost that residents throughout western Sydney will experience. The question I have for Labor members is: Why will they not support any of these projects? Why do they not support the extension of the metro and WestConnex, which has proved to be a big benefit? [*Extension of time*]

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 130.

[*A Government member interjected.*]

To answer the question, it is because we would not trust Government members to run a bath. That is why.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Swansea wish to take a point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: I draw your attention to the clock.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank all members of this House who care about western Sydney residents and reducing traffic congestion. As I was saying, there is so much more to come. We know how much it means to people who move around our communities to have less stress, less congestion and less to pay. But it is obvious that Opposition members cannot bring themselves to get on board the infrastructure revolution that is occurring in New South Wales. What Labor members cannot handle is that less congestion in residential streets is a positive benefit for many of their communities.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I was interested to hear about two quotes of validation from the new Leader of the Opposition. On 9 July she said, "The challenge for us moving towards 2023 is to figure out what road projects are underway"—I think we all have a good idea about that—"but also what we can stop and what we can't stop." All Labor members care about are the projects they want to cancel, and there will be nothing new for western Sydney. The Leader of the Opposition will have to improve her criticism. She then said, "For Gladys, it's all about the big building projects." Yes, it is.

NSW BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:41): My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation.

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

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: In February the Minister announced the creation of a building commissioner, whom he has appointed on an annual salary of \$475,000. I draw the Minister's attention to this year's budget papers and ask: Will the Minister point out where in the budget the money is allocated for his commissioner to do the work?

The SPEAKER: Government members will remain silent. I warn the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health and Medical Research.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:42): The budget was handed down in June, and it is now August. The Opposition is just now getting to this question. Part of a broader suite of reforms in the Shergold Weir report—I might add that I was not Minister at the time—was appointment of a building commissioner. The Building Commissioner, Mr David Chandler, will have every resource he needs to do the job and fix up the mess left by Labor.

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting. The member for Canterbury is on her final warning. I call the member for Wyong to order for the first time.

WATER SECURITY

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSON (Upper Hunter) (14:43): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will he update the House on how the Liberal-Nationals Government is addressing the priorities of regional communities, and are there any alternatives?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:43): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, he travels throughout the State and has seen the impact of drought. This afternoon in this House Opposition members have asked a series of questions but dare not raise the issue of drought. Labor Opposition members do not talk about water.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Oh yes, we do! You should get here around five o'clock.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: See the reaction? Whenever Government members talk about drought, Labor members talk about politics. When Government members talk about water, Labor members play politics.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The members on this side of the House do not play politics.

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

Ms Kate Washington: We have read the reports by the Natural Resources Commission that says those opposite brought the country into drought three years early.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: No wonder the public think politicians live in a bubble because when we talk about issues we are playing politics with their lives. We debate many different issues in this place and this week we are consumed in debate on a controversial but emotive and serious issue. As the Minister for Regional New South Wales and Leader of The Nationals, it is my job to make sure that we remain focused on the number one issue that affects the people of regional New South Wales—that is, the drought and the impending water shortage crisis.

Ms Kate Washington: That you brought on three years early. You're responsible.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite are yelling across the Chamber but they do not want to recognise the lack of rain, the lack of inflows to the river system—

Mr David Mehan: It's all somebody else's fault, John. It's all mother nature.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Hang on, is the member for Cessnock saying that we are not in drought? Is that what you are saying? You're an idiot.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: Under Standing Order 77 a member may not anticipate a debate that is on the *Business Paper*. The matter listed to be debated at five o'clock today is specifically on this issue.

The SPEAKER: The broad subject matter is not in anticipation—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It is not five o'clock yet. We will debate it at five o'clock.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: You raised it and now you take a point of order on your own point of order.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It's a bloody circus over there.

Ms Yasmin Catley: You're not sensitive about the water issue are you, John?

Ms Lynda Voltz: It would be appreciated if the Minister did not interrupt you, Mr Speaker, while you are giving a ruling.

The SPEAKER: The broad mentioning of water does not specifically relate to the motion that will be before the House later today. Members can talk in a broad sense about the same subject matter. They are not anticipating the actual motion that will be before the House this afternoon. The Deputy Premier is in order. The Minister will continue.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear from the member for Port Stephens.

Ms Kate Washington: I draw to your attention, Mr Speaker, the disorderly language that has been used by the Deputy Premier on two occasions when he has not had the call.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Terrigal to order for the first time. I call the member for Upper Hunter to order for the first time.

Ms Kate Washington: The Deputy Premier should be asked to withdraw the comments he made.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear a specific reference. Is there a specific reference that the member is asking him to withdraw?

Ms Kate Washington: I will not repeat the words he said across the Chamber. It is not up to me. Ask the Deputy Premier what he said.

The SPEAKER: Will the Deputy Premier withdraw his comment?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I called the member for Cessnock an idiot. Because I have a lot of respect for the member for Cessnock I will withdraw that comment. But I will not be lectured to by you, potty-mouth. I will not be lectured to by potty-mouth in relation to language in this Chamber.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will not refer to the member for Port Stephens in those terms. The Minister has the call. The Clerk will restart the clock.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It is funny that when I mention drought and water the members opposite want to play games. We have seen that action this afternoon. Places like Dubbo and Bathurst are going to run out of water, possibly in 12 months. Places like Tamworth are under pressure and may run out of water in 12 months;

Guyra is down to 30 days and Tenterfield 160 days. These are serious issues about the livelihood of people in regional New South Wales. The members opposite keep wanting to play politics. They do not want to recognise that there is no rainfall and that inflows are at 1.5 per cent. They do not want to recognise climate change and the impact that is having on our communities. That is what we are getting from the Labor Party.

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

Ms Kate Washington: The only reason you are talking about it is the politics.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 74 (2). It is obvious that the Minister is trying to create a quarrel across the Chamber. The Deputy Premier is sensitive when we talk about water.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. The Deputy Premier is speaking passionately, but he is in order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am not sensitive. I will tell you what I am sensitive about: the total disrespect from the Labor Party for regional New South Wales. That is what I am sensitive about. I make no apologies about coming into this Chamber and raising the issue of water. Members opposite are shutting me down by taking points of order. In the five minutes I have to answer the question they have jumped up half a dozen times. Why? They do not want to talk about regional New South Wales. The only time they will talk about regional New South Wales is during an election when they put on a brand-new Akubra hat and trot out through the regions and play politics. That is the Labor Party.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That is the Labor Party's best form. The Government wants a sustainable and viable regional New South Wales. We are investing \$170 million in infrastructure—

[A member interjected.]

Helen, be careful what you say when it comes to water.

Ms Prue Car: Point of order: Clearly the Deputy Premier is having a hard time. He should refer to members by their correct title and not throw allegations across the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Deputy Premier will continue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Government is investing \$170 million— *[Extension of time]*

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Londonderry is correct; I acknowledge the member for Murray. She should be very careful what she says about water. In relation to stimulating regional New South Wales, the Government is investing in infrastructure and local projects, including water projects. We have invested \$30 million to fund another reservoir, another resource, in Dubbo to make sure we do not run out of water in 12 months time. We are funding projects across the regions to make sure that our communities are confident in knowing that the people in Macquarie Street are focused on what is happening in the bush. We have allocated \$8.2 million for the construction of a second water storage in Nyngan, \$2.2 million to augment bore water in Coonabarabran and \$2 million for the Albert Priest Channel from Nyngan to Cobar. These are some of the initial investments and there are more to come.

The Minister for Water, Property and Housing will talk further about infrastructure and future infrastructure projects for regional New South Wales and short-term projects to meet the current crisis. Let me use the word "crisis". This is not an overreaction; it is a genuine crisis. I spent the winter recess travelling throughout regional New South Wales, community to community, to all corners of this State, talking to people about the issues. I can tell members that this House is not debating the issues that reflect the aspirations and concerns of regional New South Wales. We have to change that narrative. I guarantee that at five o'clock members opposite will play politics in the debate on water.

Ms Kate Washington: Only because we are going to hold you to account.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Leader of the Opposition comes out of a farmers' conference and repeats on air, making a fool of herself, that The Nationals have brought on the drought. Think about it: The Nationals are the reason that the State is in drought! If that does not show members opposite are playing politics nothing will.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I have finished my answer.

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order relates to Standing Order 77. The Deputy Premier has strayed into a matter on the *Business Paper*.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier has finished his answer. I will give an update on the members who are on multiple calls to order: The member for Kogarah is on two, the member for Canterbury is on three, the member for Londonderry is on two, the member for Keira is on two and the member for Port Stephens is on two.

NSW BUILDING COMMISSIONER

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:52): My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. Given the Minister's new Building Commissioner has no money in the budget, no inspectors on the ground and, according to the job description, "no line of authority over other agencies"—

Mr Ryan Park: What does he do?

Ms JODI McKAY: —what does he do?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:53): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. She could go to *Hansard* and look at what we talked about last week. That is the answer. It is all there.

Ms Prue Car: I would not be pointing to *Hansard* if I were you.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: It is all there in *Hansard* as to what the Building Commissioner will do, as part of the Shergold Weir report and the 24 recommendations. Obviously members opposite are not good listeners but they may be good readers. I encourage them to go back to *Hansard*, because that is where the answer is.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. I call the member for Maitland to order for the first time.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:54): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering public transport projects to meet unprecedented demand by residents and visitors to New South Wales, and are there any alternatives?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:55): I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question. Since forming Government in 2011, the Government has delivered 41,783 additional weekly public transport services. In the past 12 months we have had a 4.7 per cent increase in patronage on the public transport network across the State. As a result, we are seeing around 35,000 buses, 3,200 extra train services, close to 400 extra ferry services, of course those 90 extra Newcastle ferry services, 120 extra Manly Fast Ferry services, 220 extra weekly inner west services, 1,536 extra weekly Newcastle Light Rail services and, of course, that wonderful metro train that is now delivering 1,729 services per week. This comes at a time when we are seeing incredible growth in the city, which is driving the way that people get around.

The SPEAKER: That is enough from the member for Auburn and the member for Swansea.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We have seen a 38 per cent growth rate in our train network, including 30 per cent growth over the past five years. In raw numbers, that has gone from 300 million passenger trips up to 420 million passenger trips every year. We also run more services than any other suburban rail network in the country, with more than 3,000 trains per day versus 1,000, for instance, in Perth. We have seen the addition of an extra 1,500 weekly services into places like western Sydney. Our bus network is growing astonishingly. It has had 55 per cent growth over the past eight years. There were more than 16 million additional trips on buses in the Opal network in the 2017-2018 financial year.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is why we have allocated another \$25 million to provide an extra 2,850 bus services per week over the next year. On that note, we also have the B-Line, which is a fantastic success story. Patronage on the B-Line has grown by 13 per cent in the past six months. There have been almost seven million passenger trips on B-Line in the past 12 months and a total of 10½ million trips since the service started back in November 2017. That is 575,000 passenger trips a month. Since we opened the Sydney Metro

Northwest 72 days ago, it has had more than 4.3 million passenger trips. Since we adjusted the bus services in the area last month, there has been a 13 per cent increase in Monday-to-Friday patronage on the metro train. We are now running it at four-minute headways.

Since we opened the metro, we have seen a reduction of cars on the M2 of approximately 107,000 compared with the same period—May to July. The arrival of the metro has taken the strain off a lot of the existing network. Some stations have experienced a drop in usage of almost 20 per cent during the morning peak. Members will be pleased to know that Opal data is showing a big shift on the T1 Western line as customers at many stations from Seven Hills through to Richmond are getting on the metro instead of the existing Sydney Trains network. As a result, crowding on the Western line on morning peak hour trains from Richmond to Schofield has been reduced by around 7 per cent and it has been reduced by 5 per cent overall on the Western line.

As we all know, we are also seeing the building of the metro city project. Having been down in the tunnel yesterday, I might say it is progressing incredibly well. In fact, there have been some weeks where one tunnel boring machine has dug more than 300 metres in that week. Everyone would have noticed the Premier and I down at Circular Quay last week with the new tram, which is going really well in terms of its testing—absolutely. In Newcastle there is an incredible success story. Members will be pleased to know that Newcastle Light Rail is operating at 2030 projections. Since it opened, there have been over 570,000 trips on Newcastle Light Rail.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That is around 3,000 trips a day. I do not know where the member for Newcastle is right now. He is up there on the backbench. What an absolutely incredible outcome in terms of Newcastle's light rail. [*Extension of time*]

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I got this letter—everybody should be really happy about this—from a person from Newcastle, a fine upstanding citizen in Newcastle and someone for whom I have absolute and complete admiration. This fine gentleman has written to me, wanting an expansion of the Newcastle Light Rail. I will not name this person, but I am starting to get a feel for who this person might be. In relation to the member for Newcastle and this fine gentleman who wrote to me, I am happy to give him free rides when the light rail is opened, because I am sure this gentleman who has written to me has been riding the tram every day—maybe to his office. Maybe that office is in Hunter Street.

I have this observation to make: I am upset that the member for Newcastle has been moved from his usual seat. There is no doubt about it: I absolutely love the member for Newcastle. In 2007 there was a preselection for Newcastle involving the good member, and the good member was not successful because the member for Strathfield won that preselection. I was horrified to learn that the current member for Newcastle was not able to win that preselection at the time because he was living overseas. Guess where he was? He was in Cuba. He is the human Cuban missile crisis. It is "Crackers does Cuba"; it is "Crackers goes Castro". I love the member for Cuba. Thank you, member for Newcastle, for your letter. [*Time expired.*]

THE HON. BRONNIE TAYLOR, MLC

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:02): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Did the Deputy Premier's former parliamentary secretary, Bronwyn Taylor, ever speak to him or make direct representations to him regarding investigations into the alleged illegal land clearing of properties she owns or has an interest in?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:02): I have bad news for the Labor Party. I was quite successful at the last election, with a 9 per cent swing towards me, and part of the secret ingredient to that success was my close relationship with Bronnie Taylor. Bronnie and I have represented the people of the Monaro well. Remember that old bloke, Steve Whan, the member who was recycled from the lower House to the upper House and then went back to being a candidate? It is the Labor Party that has let down my electorate. Bronnie and I have worked together and have had plenty of conversations on the issues that are important to the people of the Monaro. It is unfortunate that we have here the typical Labor approach of using coward's castle to attack an individual. In this case, Labor members have spent the past couple of months in the upper House attacking Bronnie Taylor and her family's interests because, God forbid, we have a member in this House who is an actual farmer, producing and employing. I acknowledge the member for Murray.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I acknowledge the member for Murray. She is a water farmer. You have to be careful, taking water.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the Treasurer to order for the first time. I call the member for Swansea to order for the third time. I call the Minister for Health and Medical Research to order for the first time.

Mr Philip Donato: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73—improper imputations. I have been listening very patiently to the Deputy Premier over the past couple of days in relation to imputations and adverse inferences about the member for Murray. If he wants to do that he should do it by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough.

Mr Philip Donato: Talk about coward's castle? Go outside and say it, buddy.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Orange to order for the first time. The Deputy Premier has been within the standing orders, but he should be careful not to go beyond them. The Deputy Premier will continue and members will remain silent.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am more than happy to listen to the member for Orange, but I would advise him to use his inside voice because it makes it easier to understand him. The member for Orange should be careful whom he calls a friend and whom he aligns himself with because certain things come through. We know that the member for Orange has relied heavily on the Labor Party, we can hear the cheer squad—

Ms Prue Car: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I am happy to hear the point of order, but it had better be something new.

Ms Prue Car: I know the Deputy Premier needs some help on this.

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

Ms Prue Car: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. On your direction, Mr Speaker, this question was very specific: Did Bronwyn Taylor ever speak or make direct representations to you as Deputy Premier regarding the issue?

The SPEAKER: I remind the Deputy Premier of the question.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Londonderry jumps up on a point of order and calls it "the issue" because she does not what the issue is. She does not actually know what the question was.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Yasmin Catley: I am happy to provide the Deputy Premier with some assistance there—

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that. I do not need any more help on that. I have directed the Deputy Premier to be—

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is alleged land clearing, just so we are clear.

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Swansea to remove herself from the Chamber until the end of question time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: There is my first scalp. The alleged issue—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Ever humble, John, aren't you?

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Swansea to remove herself from the Chamber until the end of question time. If the member for Swansea continues to interject she will be out of the Chamber until tomorrow.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Swansea left the Chamber at 15:07.]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I can advise that the Office of Environment and Heritage has conducted investigations and there has been no further action.

Ms Kate Washington: Was that based on self-assessment?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite ask a question, we give them an answer and they do not like the answer. They want to play politics. They want to attack a member from the other House who does not have the ability to represent herself here. They have been using the Chamber for two months to attack her with the Hon. Walt Secord—weasel Secord; weasel Walt—up there hiding behind coward's castle, attacking—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Deputy Premier wants to cast aspersions on anybody in this House or in the other House he must do it by way of separate substantive motion.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: This is like going fishing. This is so easy.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will be careful.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In their questions they have cast aspersions on me and on Bronnie Taylor. They do not like to get their own back. I have answered the question. The investigation is done and dusted and there is no more to see. Those opposite do not care about the truth. They cannot handle the truth. The truth is that Bronnie Taylor is a fantastic upper House member and a fantastic representative of regional New South Wales. I will not be surprised when the Opposition asks another question about Bronnie Taylor and her connection to her volunteer husband with the Country Universities Centre. I will wait for that question so I can enjoy my time answering again. The people of regional New South Wales are lucky to have someone like Bronnie Taylor representing regional New South Wales in a way that the Labor Party could not even dream of.

WATER SECURITY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:19): My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is continuing to deliver water security across New South Wales, and are there any alternatives?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:09): I thank the member for Dubbo for his important question. As the Premier and Deputy Premier have highlighted here today, we have a severe water shortage across New South Wales for our farmers, our towns and our communities. This is the worst drought on record. The northern basin is where our communities are hurting, yet those opposite would like it to be about politics. The Leader of the Opposition made an absolute fool of herself in front of the New South Wales farmers by suggesting this drought was our fault—

Ms Jodi McKay: The Nationals caused a drought.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: You have no sense. For somebody who was born in Gloucester, you should have an understanding that a community like Tenterfield, that potentially has only a few months water supply left, has no irrigation—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I am happy to refer you to the Natural Resources Commission report, which says you caused the drought three years earlier—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue. There is no point of order. I warn the Leader of the Opposition not to abuse the standing orders.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I am sorry. I wanted to use this opportunity today to talk about communities like Tamworth, Dubbo and Bathurst—communities and local members that I have met with today and yesterday and the day before. We are in an emergency situation and you want to politicise this drought. You are better than that. You should be better than that. This State deserves an Opposition that is better than that—

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: The Minister must direct her remarks through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. I ask the Minister to direct—

Mr Chris Minns: Also, they accused us of being political on this issue three years ago when we asked about Humphries—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue. The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I will direct my comments through the Chair. The fact is that the Opposition in this State does not understand that the inflows into that northern basin are at about 1.5 per cent of the average and that has been the case for three years. When I took over the Roads portfolio one of the biggest challenges I had was that the Newell Highway was cut for six weeks because of the rains in the spring of 2016. We had

magnificent rainfall through that period—Burrendong Dam was full, the Bogan River was flowing and the Menindee Lakes were full, but since that time three years ago we have had simply no rain. That is not my fault, that is not the Deputy Premier's fault, that is not The Nationals fault and to suggest otherwise is a disgrace. We are dealing with climate variability, we are dealing with climate change and we are dealing with communities that are on their knees. If you want to come into this Chamber and blame a political party, you make a fool of yourself and you make a fool of regional New South Wales. Without water storages and without dams we have no water for these town and these communities.—

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: That is why, while we are in the midst of this current drought that is devastating our State, we are also putting the plans in place to give us drought security, because you did nothing for 16 years—

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: It is the same point of order. The Minister must direct her comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld.

Mr Chris Minns: And I dare you to defend Kevin Humphries. The National Party—

The SPEAKER: That is enough! I call the member for Kogarah to order for the third time. I upheld the member's point of order, but then he went beyond it.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: What we are doing is planning for the future plus we are also giving security to our towns and our communities. The work we are doing in Tamworth, creating that pipeline from Chaffey Dam down from the Dungowan village, will give the city of Tamworth an extra six months of water. But we are in a real challenge, because members on the other side want to blame somebody.

The SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale and the member for Ku-ring-gai will keep quiet.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: They want to blame us, they want to blame my party for a situation that has been created simply by a lack of rain. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the first time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The only reason we have water in many of the rivers and streams—and it is not flowing as we want it to—

The SPEAKER: Members will remain silent. This is a serious topic.

Mr Clayton Barr: You keep draining Menindee Lake.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Cessnock, who said we pumped the Darling dry. You are a fool.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: I ask the Minister to withdraw that comment.

The SPEAKER: Minister, you have been asked to withdraw the comment. Are you willing to withdraw it?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I do not think that he is a fool, but that was a foolish statement because the fact is the last time water was pumped by an A-class licence, which is what those opposite are referring to, in that river was in 2017 and it was 5,611 megalitres. Do members know how many megalitres of water went past Bourke that same year? It was 2,426,885 megalitres. The fact is that we are in drought.

[*An Opposition member interjected.*]

It is right. It is right!

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We are in drought. We have flows through the river system because we have catchments like Burrendong, like other rivers.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We have catchments.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The point is, and those opposite simply do not understand this, we have water still in the system because of the dam.

The SPEAKER: The member for Kogarah is on his final warning.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We need to create more dams and more opportunities, and that is what we are asking the Commonwealth to work on with us.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We want to raise Pindari, we want a new dam on the Mole River and we will do Wyangala Dam. We will create opportunities for more water storage so we can get through these climatic events. It would be in the interests of those opposite to support our communities and to support us in this journey.

SOCIAL HOUSING SAFETY AUDITS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:16): There is a lot of male fragility in the House today. My question is—

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Newtown that her comment was totally inappropriate.

Ms JENNY LEONG: My question is directed to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. Considering that safety audits in 2010 and 2017 identified that priority action was required for 125 George Street, Redfern, and last week a fire resulted in the tragic death of a resident, will the Minister explain what safety measures were implemented in response to the audits and what has been done since to address the safety and maintenance concerns of residents?

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (15:17): I thank the member for Newtown for her question and I thank all members of the House for their concerns about social housing tenants. I extend my thoughts and prayers to those who were impacted by this terrible fire last Friday. I am sure all members of the House extend their condolences to the family and the neighbours for the loss of the person concerned. I have been briefed on this matter and the latest information I have is that Housing staff attended the day of the fire that the member references and all the neighbours who were affected were offered every support, including additional housing support. I advise the member that the Land and Housing Corporation will continue to work with my department to review the matter, but my latest advice is that as this matter is subject to a police investigation it would be inappropriate to comment at this time.

PUBLIC SPACES

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:18): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is ensuring that quality public spaces are a priority for New South Wales, and are there any other alternatives?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (15:18): I thank the member for Manly for his question and for his passionate advocacy to protect the public spaces that characterise his community. His electorate is in a particularly beautiful part of this fair State and this great city. I know we are all proud of the parks that constitute our electorates. The member for Manly has some beautiful places in his electorate such as North Head, with its incredible heritage, as well as great places like Manly Dam and the incredible beaches and public spaces that are part of them. Like everyone in this House, I too enjoy our State's great public spaces. Today the Treasurer and I had the opportunity to go out into the Domain for a little jog. I have been used to Opposition staff members taking photos of me when I am out for a jog, which is gratifying, but today I went out with the Treasurer.

Mr Ryan Park: I missed you in the gym.

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira is on his final warning.

Mr ROB STOKES: We will get to the gym. The Treasurer and I went out for a bit of a frolic and as we went out we met the member for Cessnock. I know the member for Cessnock has been a little focused on today, but we invited him to come for a jog with us. He declined.

Mr Clayton Barr: Because?

Mr ROB STOKES: I think he was a bit intimidated.

Mr Clayton Barr: I said I had already been out for a run.

Mr ROB STOKES: He says he had already been out for a run. It is great to get out into the public spaces of this great, fair city. Indeed, sometimes I prefer getting out into the public spaces to being in the confines

of a gym, for example. It is not because I am similarly intimidated by, for example, the vision of the member for Newcastle—chiselled and, let's face it, hirsute—doing some Pilates in the gym.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: As fascinating as the exercise habits are of most of the members the Minister has named, my point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about the protection of open spaces, which is very important in this State, and I ask you to bring the Minister back to it.

Mr ROB STOKES: Can I agree with the point of order, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: On that basis, I uphold the point of order.

Mr ROB STOKES: Someone needed to do it, and I appreciate that. So many great cities around the world have great parks. Our vision for Sydney, however, is for it to be a city within a park, and so much of that great work we have to build upon with the incredible—even World Heritage listed—parklands that surround our city. Those in the south of the city, for example, have great places like Kamay National Park and the Royal National Park. As anyone from the shire will attest, the Royal is the first national park in the world. To the west of the city there is the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park. In my neck of the woods up in the north and in your neck of the woods, Mr Speaker, we have Garigal and Ku-ring-gai Chase national parks. There are incredible places around this fair city.

We have a vision to ensure that not only do we have the great parks that we have inherited from the past, not just in Sydney but right across this wonderful State, but also as we build more and more of the hard, physical infrastructure upon which the prosperity and future of this city and this State depend, it is not just about railways, roads, schools and hospitals and all that important infrastructure; it is also about the public spaces and the parks that are the context for so much of our lives. In a symbol of just how important green open and public spaces are, the Premier has instructed me to deliver on two important priorities for her Government: first, to increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes walk of quality, green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023; and, secondly, to increase the tree canopy and green cover across Greater Sydney by planting one million trees by 2022. [*Extension of time*]

Those are ambitious targets that set the strategic direction for planning for this city and State, and show the policy motivation of this Government to deliver a city within a park. Great urbanists like Ebenezer Howard have talked about creating the garden cities of tomorrow. While he wrote that 100 years ago, what motivated him continues to motivate this Government today: making sure everyone in this city and in this State has access to usable, green, open spaces that provide a great context in which people can work, live and play.

Documents

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 7 August 2019.

Committees

STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)

Membership

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That:

- (1) Wendy Elizabeth Lindsay be appointed to serve on the Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety) in place of Gabrielle Cecilia Upton, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:27): I was saying prior to question time that I can see no reason that we need to have terminations in the criminal code. There is no reason this Parliament should be standing in the way of a reform that means women seeking a termination and the doctors performing them will not be at risk of criminal sanction. This issue was not raised in the past few days but the over weeks, months and years before

that. The issue of the continued criminality of abortion in New South Wales has been on people's minds. This is not a new issue but the time has come for it to be dealt with properly. As we consider the bill before us, I reflect on the conversations I have had. Pretty much all of them were with women who have for years sought for terminations to be removed from the criminal code. They knew it was time and I know it is time to change a law that has no reason to exist and can no longer be justified when considered through the prism of modern society.

For me, retaining a law that allows women who seek a termination and those who conduct them to be punishable by up to 10 years in jail is simply wrong. The passage of this bill will change a law that was made in this place 119 years ago by a Parliament that was at the time made up entirely of men. I think that aspect of the current law is an important one to reflect on. When the law was made, women in New South Wales did not have a vote let alone a say on this issue that is fundamentally important to them. I appreciate that when the law was made it was a different time in human history. It was made while looking at and considering the world in a different way, but for me that is not a sufficient reason to retain the law.

The fact that for the past 119 years this Parliament has not had the courage to change the current law is not a sufficient reason to retain it. The fact that 119 years ago a Parliament of men decided that women's reproductive rights should be a matter for the criminal law rather than health practice is not a sufficient reason to retain the current law. It is for those reasons that I support the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. It is a reform that is well overdue. If the bill passes into law, for the first time in over a century women's reproductive rights in New South Wales will be clearly set out in a law that reflects modern expectations. The passage of the bill would establish a framework.

I do not subscribe to the assertion made by some that its passage will encourage more terminations to be sought. Having spoken with women who have confided in me that they have had terminations, I know the idea that a single law to govern terminations in New South Wales will not lead to more. That will simply not be the case. Rather, it will provide a degree of certainty to women who seek terminations. None of the women I have spoken with who have had a termination sought it lightly. They considered the issue deeply and, where possible, spoke with their partner and even their friends and family. Having had those conversations, I can see no reason to stand in the way of, delay or constrain the removal of the current provisions from the Crimes Act.

In arriving at my position, I have discussed the issue at length with many women, including my wife. As many members know, she is a strong woman who is more than capable of standing up for herself—but in this debate she cannot. She will not get a voice in this Chamber or a vote on this bill, but I will. In discussing the bill, we both understood that it is a difficult topic for many. In the contributions before mine and—I am confident—in those that will come after mine, the difficult issues that we are all grappling with are obvious. The bill includes issues that Alison and I have considered deeply, in particular terminations beyond 22 weeks. That provision makes many people uncomfortable. It has been the subject of many emails that have been sent to my office and to me directly. I indicate that I have read every single one of them.

I do not come to this debate ill-informed. I come to this debate having done my own research. However, the safeguards contained in the bill are right and necessary. Many of the claims made about late-term terminations simply do not reflect the content of the bill. I understand that around 1 per cent of terminations are carried out beyond 22 weeks and are generally because of a genetic or other abnormality that only becomes apparent later in pregnancy. The provisions in the bill not only provide for a sufficient period for consideration of all the issues stemming from the results of scans but also impose an additional requirement for a second medical practitioner to be involved in the decision. That is a stricter condition than currently applies in New South Wales. It is the right condition to include in the bill.

The passage of the bill will bring an end to a legal anachronism and will introduce a better system of governing terminations in New South Wales. It imposes no new requirements on doctors. In coming to my own views and conclusion about the bill, I reflected on the fact that I have a firm belief that a woman should be free to make her own decisions about pregnancy and termination. My role in this debate is to make every effort to put the structures in place to allow that to happen. By doing so, we will remove the temptation for some men to reassert their will upon a woman's decision. I am not qualified—and would never hold myself out to be qualified—to make that decision on behalf of any woman. I am certainly reminded of that fact by those close to me who have spoken to me directly about this bill, including my wife, Alison, as well as Jessica Malcolm-Roberts and Summer May Finlay, who have contacted me directly.

The bottom line for me is that I believe terminations should be safe and infrequent but legal. If this bill does not pass the Parliament, terminations in New South Wales will still be safe—because we have a good healthcare system—they will continue to be infrequent but they will not be legal. That is unfair. It is wrong. We have before us the opportunity to fix this for all women. It is time to pass this bill. It is time to decriminalise abortion in New South Wales.

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (15:35): From the outset, I indicate that I have listened to members from both sides of the House and to all different views on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. I have listened intently and with respect, regardless of my personal view. I oppose this bill. Even though I do not support it, I say to those who do support the bill that I believe it has holes in it that will need to be addressed with amendments. I am sure that will happen later tonight. One problem I have with the bill is that there is no mention of informed consent by the patient. I understand that informed consent has to be obtained before all medical procedures, but I am aware that many members see that as an omission from the bill. From listening to members of Parliament yesterday, last night and today, it is clear to me that they are extremely passionate about this controversial and emotive bill. It is also clear to me that members have polar opposite views on the bill, and my observation is that the community does as well. That only makes this challenge even greater.

My personal view is that, as my default position, I do not believe in the termination of an unborn child. Termination should be a choice of last resort. I say that as a father of four young girls and as a practising Catholic. Having said that, I appreciate that in extreme situations—such as when the mother's life is at risk by continuing with the pregnancy—termination of an unborn child may be the only option. Much of this debate seems to me to be about at what point human life begins. For me, it is at conception. That is not only because of my religious beliefs but also because of scientific reasoning. My scientific belief on when life begins is best summed up by Dr Condic, Associate Professor of Neurobiology, and Adjunct Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Utah School of Medicine. Dr Condic says:

The conclusion that human life begins at sperm-egg fusion is uncontested, objective, based on the universally accepted scientific method of distinguishing different cell types from each other and on ample scientific evidence (thousands of independent, peer-reviewed publications).

Moreover, it is entirely independent of any specific ethical, moral, political, or religious view of human life or of human embryos.

Indeed, this definition does not directly address the central ethical question surrounding the embryo: What value ought society place on human life at the earliest stages of development? A neutral examination of the evidence merely establishes the onset of a new human life at a scientifically well-defined "moment of conception", a conclusion that unequivocally indicates that human embryos from the one-cell stage forward are indeed living individuals of the human species; i.e., human beings.

Consider these facts: A human life begins at conception, at six weeks a baby's heart begins to beat, at 12 weeks all the baby's organs have formed and at 16 weeks the unborn baby will begin to respond to sounds outside the womb. Therefore I ask: When do the unborn child's human rights begin? I have read and re-read this bill, I have listed the items that concern me and I have outlined my position on it. The first objects of the bill are as follows:

- (a) to enable a termination of a pregnancy to be performed by a medical practitioner on a person who is not more than 22 weeks pregnant,
- (b) to enable a termination of a pregnancy to be performed by a medical practitioner on a person who is more than 22 weeks pregnant in certain circumstances,

Those are addressed in clauses 5 and 6 of part 2 of the bill. As I have stated, I do not support the termination of an unborn child being performed on women who are less than or more than 22 weeks pregnant without relevant medical circumstances and without the woman's current and future physical, psychological and social circumstances being taken into account. The fourth object of the bill is:

- (d) to require a registered health practitioner who has a conscientious objection to the performance of a termination on a person to disclose the objection and refer the person to another practitioner who does not have a conscientious objection,

That is addressed in clause 8 (3). I do not support the requirement that a registered health practitioner who has a conscientious objection is required to refer the woman to another practitioner who does not have a conscientious objection. By doing so, a registered health practitioner who has a conscientious objection is being forced to assist in a process they do not agree with.

In the limited time we have had to consult with our constituents my office has received communications from 190 residents of the Camden electorate—not lobby groups or pro-life or pro-choice groups. Of those constituents, 88 per cent opposed the bill. I sincerely thank the constituents who have let me know their view on this bill and how I should vote, regardless of whether they support or oppose it. Incidentally, Alan Jones has been running a poll on 2GB that commenced at 8.00 a.m. today. By 10.00 a.m. 3,600 votes had been cast, with 83 per cent of respondents not supporting the bill. While that is not an official survey, it certainly shows that many people oppose the bill. In my inaugural speech I stated that "every decision I make as the member for Camden I will make with the people of Camden at the forefront of my mind". Based on the feedback that I have received to date from my constituents, coupled with my personal views, I oppose the bill.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:43): My contribution to debate on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 will be brief. The bill concerns matters pertaining to abortion. I acknowledge the fact that the bill is sensitive in nature and should not be taken lightly. As a father and as a person of Christian Orthodox faith, I have many concerns regarding the bill. Today I will voice the views of the constituents in my electorate as

well as my own views. Over the past week or so I have had a lot of time to think about the changes that this bill seeks to introduce. I have also heard from a number of my constituents who have strongly voiced their views on this matter.

Of the many emails and phone calls I have received, 99 per cent of constituents have overwhelmingly expressed their opposition to the bill, citing that it impedes on the right to life of an individual and pointing out how it breaches the many moral grounds among the cultures that make up my diverse electorate. Some have suggested that the name of the bill is a misnomer and it should be called the "Reproduction Termination Health Reform Bill 2019". I acknowledge the many religious and community leaders who have also written to me in relation to the bill. I will briefly delve into some of the specific provisions that it seeks to introduce. Part 3 clause 10 introduces a provision that allows a woman to perform a termination on herself. I strongly believe that is a grey area because the bill does not state any specific criteria in which it would be deemed lawful from a legal perspective. As such, without a specific cut-off time frame noted in the bill for a woman to enact a self-termination it could be interpreted that a self-termination is legal at any time during the pregnancy process.

I also note that the bill will seek to allow for an abortion to be carried out well and truly into the second trimester of a pregnancy, which is approximately 5½ months. My constituents and I hold ethical and moral concerns that a woman could walk into a medical clinic and request an abortion without a medical practitioner inquiring about the reason for the termination. Moreover, I reiterate the fact that there has not been an in-depth public consultation process instigated to look into this matter, as the member for Rockdale mentioned earlier today.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind people in the public gallery that it is not permissible to take photographs with cameras or phones. Photographs are not allowed unless permission has been obtained from the Speaker's office. Please delete them.

Mr NICK LALICH: Before similar amendments were passed in our neighbouring States, thorough consultation processes were put in place to canvass public opinion in order for members of Parliament to better understand the benefits and implications that such laws may impose. Without such a process being carried out in New South Wales, there is no way in any shape or form that I can support the bill. I feel as though the bill has impeded upon the democratic processes and protocols by which this Parliament should abide. I also feel that the formation of this bill has betrayed my constituents during the process.

Furthermore, there have been many misconceptions in regard to how abortion may be deemed illegal in New South Wales. In his decision in *R v Wald* in 1971, Judge Levine set a precedent in legalising abortion in New South Wales. As a law enacted from a judge, three main requirements were needed in order for an abortion to be carried out—namely, if there was the consent of the patient; if the abortion was skilfully performed by a qualified medical practitioner; and if the medical practitioner had an honest belief on reasonable grounds that the operation was necessary to preserve the patient from serious danger to life or physical or mental health. In light of that, those who have stated that under the current legislation abortions are illegal should review the decision by Judge Levine.

Recently two female friends of the family told me that many years ago they underwent what we called in those days a curette. They were not terminations; they were curettes in which a woman's womb was cleaned out if she was not feeling the best or did not want to go through with a pregnancy. The two women who had curettes did not mention whether they underwent them for financial or health reasons, but today they still have great remorse. They indicated that had their children lived they would be at least 50 years old. It is pretty sad to think that their children could have been productive citizens of this State. Perhaps they could have been members of this Parliament. We will never know, but they were never given the chance to be born. On that note, I state on the public record that I will unequivocally stand by my constituents in opposing this bill.

Since I have been a member of Parliament, I have always told my colleagues that I do not vote in this Chamber on my conscience or on my beliefs; I go with how my constituents want me to vote. My constituents voted for me to be in this place to do their bidding and what they wished me to do, not what I feel I should do or what my religion tells me to do. In this case, I believe we all have the same belief, and I will definitely be voting against this bill. I believe that should this bill pass this House it will give way to a procedure that is fatal and flawed and it will impede on the right of life. I acknowledge the hard work that the member for Sydney has put into the bill, as well as the co-signatories from both sides of this House. I thank all members for carrying out such a respectful debate on this issue, despite the opposing views carried by members. In light of all the views expressed by my constituents in my electorate of Cabramatta, and in light of my moral beliefs, I cannot support the bill and what it is trying to introduce. As such, I will not support the bill.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:51): I note from the outset of my contribution to the debate on Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 that very little notice was given prior to this legislation being

introduced in the House with the intention to rush it through all stages as quickly as possible. Legislation that governs matters as serious as abortion should be afforded due process and members of this Parliament should be allowed sufficient time to not only examine the bill but also conduct broad community consultation to ensure that our communities' voices are heard on such important matters. Irrespective of conflicting views in this debate, every person across New South Wales deserves the opportunity to discuss their opinion on matters of conscience with their elected representative. We are their voice in Parliament and their views deserve to be considered.

If it were not for the quarrelling and division of several senior Liberal members and Ministers on the content of this bill, I have no doubt it would have successfully been rushed through all stages last week. I extend my sincere appreciation to those people in my community who have taken the time to contact my office and make their voices heard on this very important issue. I thank the hundreds of my constituents who have called, emailed or dropped in to my office for taking the time to ensure that I am aware of their wish that I take their views into consideration when considering the bill before the House.

I have also been contacted by local community and religious leaders who have expressed their overwhelming opposition to the bill. As a practising Roman Catholic, I cannot deny that my religious beliefs have played a part in shaping my view. My conscience guides me in this debate to oppose the bill before us. In taking that stance, I need to voice the overwhelming view of the electorate I represent. I know that my decision to oppose the bill will be a disappointment to some in the community. However, I am guided by the many constituents who have implored me to oppose the bill. This is not a decision I have taken lightly. I have considered all factors put before me and I have respectfully and openly considered all viewpoints, but my conscience will not allow me to support the bill.

The overwhelming view of my community—the people I have been elected to represent—that I should oppose the bill has led me to my decision. If we, as legislators, are serious about supporting women who are faced with the dilemma of pursuing an abortion and subsequently make the heartfelt decision to go ahead with the procedure then we must ensure that adequate services are available for women for the sake of their physical and mental health. I say that, knowing there may be grave circumstances in which a woman has no choice but to terminate a pregnancy. As a man, I will never be able to walk in that woman's shoes. I fully support women who make that choice, irrespective of my conscience view. A woman might seek an abortion for a variety of reasons. I commend the health professionals who ensure that is done safely and that the wellbeing of the woman remains paramount.

The object of the bill is to reform the laws of New South Wales pertaining to termination of pregnancy and to regulate the conduct of health practitioners who perform terminations. New section 5 in part 2 of the bill sets out the various conditions that will legally allow a medical practitioner to perform a termination on a person who is not more than 22 weeks pregnant. The gestational limit of 22 weeks represents the stage immediately before the threshold of viability under current clinical practice; any terminations performed after 22 weeks would involve greater complexity and heightened risk to the woman. I am at odds with the conditions set out in the bill allowing for the termination of a fetus past the 22-week gestation period. I am aware that exceptional circumstances relating to the viability of the fetus and the wellbeing of the mother may necessitate that. However, I do not think enough consideration has been given to women who seek to have an abortion simply because they believe they are not at a stage in their lives where they are ready to become a mother or that they do not have the financial means to provide for their child.

I will tell members about one such case. A 16-year-old woman was too afraid to tell her parents she was pregnant, let alone have the courage to raise a child on her own. Yes, abortion was an option but, instead, she took advantage of the social support available to her. With next to no help from the baby's father, she went ahead with the pregnancy. The pregnancy was not without complications, and her daughter was born at only 26 weeks' gestation. With intensive care and support for both baby and mother, her daughter thrived and grew into a beautiful baby. This bill allows for a termination of a fetus at 26 weeks. If the young mother had pursued the termination option, her daughter, who is now 17 years of age and on the brink of carving out a brilliant future, would not be here today. If that young mum had not had support, she would have aborted her baby and the world would be worse off for not having the chance to bask in the light and beauty that her beautiful daughter radiates.

As a legislator, I cannot support the bill due to the provisions regarding late-term abortions. I cannot support a bill that legally allows for the termination of a fetus that, if given the chance, would grow into a healthy child. That cements my opposition to the bill. However, I do support the need for support services to ensure that women know they have a choice to continue with their pregnancy and that support will be available to them. Faced with a heartbreaking decision, they should know that they are not alone and that abortion is not the only option.

As a father of four, I know all too well the trials and tribulations that come with having children and the hardships faced throughout stages of pregnancy. My wife, Melissa, had a very complicated pregnancy with

our twins, and I remember vividly the difficulties we faced. At several points we believed the pregnancy would not go full term. It broke our hearts. The thought that our twins might not be born after a long struggle to conceive them became too much to cope with. Due to the great health care and support we received in western Sydney, our twins were born at 35 weeks gestation. Every woman in New South Wales should have access to quality public health care and support, just like my wife did, so they are not faced with the decision to terminate because of complications during pregnancy.

Regardless of where women live and their ability to pay, they must have equitable access to adequate health care so that they can make well-informed decisions. My twins were fully formed human beings at birth, each weighing just over two kilograms. They could hear, see, breathe and cry. My conscience does not allow me to support a bill that permits termination of a fetus at 35 weeks. Unless medical professionals are acting to save the life of the mother, terminating a fetus at that stage is something I find difficult to come to terms with. I am reminded of the fragility of life when I think about the birth of my twins. We could not hold our children for several weeks while they were monitored and nurtured by the trained medical professionals in the neonatal ward who helped them develop and grow into happy, healthy babies. The twins are now 14 years of age and I could not imagine life without them. [*Extension of time*]

I simply cannot support the possibility that a child as old as my twins were at birth can have its life willingly cut short before having the opportunity to take a breath. Every child deserves a fighting chance, just like my twins. Who are we to deny them the right to life? As a legislator, I want to be the voice for the voiceless. I am not blind to the fact that abortions are happening in New South Wales and have been happening for a long time. I do not deny that the bill before us today was born from the best intentions and is an attempt to provide some certainty and reassurance regarding a grey area in law concerning a very serious and contentious issue.

We need legislation that provides the appropriate protections for everybody involved; not only for the woman and supporting medical staff but also for the child. As legislators, we need to ensure that all women, particularly the vulnerable, have access to health care and support services. Regardless of where they live or their financial capacity, women deserve health care to ensure they know that abortion is not their only option when faced with an unwanted or complicated pregnancy. I cannot accept a bill that legislates for late-term abortions. It is clear from the contributions from members so far that the Chamber is divided and members have vastly contrasting opinions.

The multiple emails I received from members opposite during the first day of debate regarding proposed amendments to the bill truly emphasise how far off the mark the proposed legislation has landed. Its shortcomings should have been identified during the consultation and review process prior to the bill being introduced into the House. Unfortunately, that did not take place and the bill was presented to members shortly before its introduction. In matters of great significance such as this, members should have been afforded time to conduct extensive consultations prior to debate on the bill. Once again, I thank the hundreds of individuals who have taken the time to contact my office to ensure their voices are heard on this very important issue. I oppose the bill before the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:04): I make a contribution to debate on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. I have listened to views of members of Parliament and my office has received hundreds of emails from various people. In almost all those submissions, one thing is for sure: Nobody knows what the actual law is in New South Wales. The assertion of some members that sections 82 to 84 of the Crimes Act 1900 make abortion illegal in this State and, therefore, it needs to be decriminalised, is erroneous because the law is not contained only in sections of the statute but in a body of law that also encompasses decisions of the court, called the common law.

It is wrong to assert that that is the basis of this legislation. Most people who have contacted my office seem to think that abortion is illegal in New South Wales and that this bill proposes to make it legal. That view is also wrong. For almost 50 years, New South Wales law has permitted abortion. The common law as determined by the courts has consistently applied the principles determined by District Court Judge Levine in *R v Wald* [1971] 3 DCR (NSW) 25. The principles say that where a woman honestly and reasonably believes on any economic, social or medical ground or reason that the pregnancy constitutes a serious danger to her physical or mental health, that woman has the right to terminate a pregnancy. The courts have declared the law to be that the relevant factors for determining whether the pregnancy constituted a threat to the physical or mental health of the mother included the social and economic circumstances that would apply subsequent to the birth of the child. That is a decision of the Court of Appeal in *CES v Superclinics (Australia) Pty Ltd* [1995] 38 NSWLR 47. In 1995 then Premier Bob Carr observed:

In my view, abortion is a matter responsibly left for discussion between a woman and a doctor, and that's the position we will take in this state.

Bob Carr's position merely reflected the common law of the State. Effectively, that means that since 1971 abortion by demand has existed in New South Wales. Therefore, the question is: Why the need for this legislation at all? My experience as a member of this House has indicated that whenever legislation that serves very little purpose is introduced there are always unintended consequences. With the best will in the world the Parliament does not always get it right. At best, even if it engages in a detailed consultation process, the Parliament cannot possibly foresee at the time of enacting the legislation every conceivable act of a person or organisation that it attempts to regulate. Therefore, it has to trust the courts to interpret the legislation in the future. At worst, the Parliament legislates because of a newspaper headline or a broadcaster's opinion for purposes other than the real reason that legislation is enacted.

Legislating simply for some philosophical view always has unintended consequences. On one view, a part of this bill is far more restrictive than the common law. I am sure that is not what the sponsors of the bill intend. I am critical of the fact that a normal legislative consultation process has not been engaged in. That is not because of my philosophical view on abortion but because we have not enabled people to have their input properly. Many hundreds of people have contacted my electorate office and most are opposed to the bill. I want to tell them that their understanding of the law in New South Wales is wrong and that abortion is permitted in New South Wales. I wanted their input on the bill but I was denied that opportunity, even though I have been able to write to them. Before I vote on the bill they will not have an opportunity to get back to me.

I know this is a conscience vote. Government members have said that the way the bill has been rushed through is not appropriate, but it was they who on last Thursday voted to treat it as Government business. The bill is not in accordance with any resolution of the House to suspend standing and sessional orders. The reality is that people are entitled to be consulted, not because most people who have been vocal are opposed to the bill but because this issue requires decisions that take people's views into consideration as best as we can. This issue has divided nations around the world. To this day, the world's most powerful democracy is bitterly divided on this issue. The United States Supreme Court decision in *Roe v Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973) that a woman has the right to have an abortion without Executive restriction has divided the nation to this day. Associate justices are appointed to the United States Supreme Court—either nominated by the Executive or approved by the Senate—based upon whether they will overturn the *Roe v Wade* ruling. The issue is usually divisive. I accept that in Australia and New South Wales the community is slowly moving to a more progressive way.

We have seen that in the debate and plebiscite on gay marriage. I discern that the community is beginning to move in the area of this bill too, but we want them to move with the Parliament. We want them to have their say. We want them to not feel disenfranchised. But I believe we have done just that in the way in which we have embarked upon that exercise. However, despite their being denied their right to consult, despite the House considering a bill in breach of its own standing and sessional orders, I am required to come to a view about the bill with the help of my knowledge of human affairs, of the law and of my philosophical position. I told this House on 7 June 2018 in the Public Health Amendment (Safe Access To Reproductive Clinics) Bill 2018 my long-held view. [*Extension of time*]

Prior to *R v Wald* and *Roe v Wade* I believed in the right of women to choose. I reject the pro-life or the pro-choice badges. I believe a woman has a right to choose. During my lifetime I have known people who have terminated pregnancies and faced that position. I have supported people and acted for them. I have witnessed the results of the scars that are left. I do not think a single woman who is pregnant arrives at the decision to terminate a pregnancy lightly, and I had those views confirmed by the obstetricians I spoke to yesterday. As a young teenager myself, when sex before marriage was taboo, when contraception was taboo—let alone abortion being legal—I saw the impact on schoolchildren from religious families, who struggled to tell their families about a pregnancy, let alone secure a termination when it was illegal, hard to obtain and contrary to the philosophy of their families.

In the late sixties I saw and heard about the backyard abortionists—the unqualified people who terminated pregnancies and injured women and girls who were desperate for a termination. No law will ever stop abortion happening because no law is going to impede a woman's right to choose. The US Supreme Court recognised that in 1973 and the courts of New South Wales have recognised that since 1971. No man should impose his view upon a woman's right to choose because they can never place themselves in that position. It is fine to have a religious belief or philosophical belief; it is fine to try to advocate those views. But for somebody like me, who will never, ever be in that position, I cannot vote to impose that view on a pregnant woman. Accordingly, I will do what I have done virtually my entire teenage and adult life: I will support the concept of a woman's right to choose and if I am required to vote on the bill, despite my concern about its utility, I will vote in favour of it.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:17): I contribute to debate on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019, introduced by the member for Sydney. I make it clear from the outset that I will vote against the bill. As stated in my inaugural speech:

I am by no means perfect in the practice of my faith but my faith is important to me and I respect that religion, and we are blessed to have many, is important to the vast majority of people in Bankstown. While I am committed to representing people who have a faith, I am also equally committed to representing those who choose not to have one.

Our electors do not demand that we support them on all socially conservative policies but they do demand that we do not turn up our noses or sneer at their sincerely held beliefs. I make it very clear today that I was deeply upset when I received an email on Saturday 27 July—I think it was late, from memory around 10.00 p.m.—from the member for Sydney, who advised that it was his intention to announce the next day that he would introduce the bill. In his email he provided a copy of the bill and a brief, one-page explanation. There was also a document from the Australian Medical Association [AMA], indicating its support of the legislation and thanking the member for Sydney for the opportunity to be consulted on the drafting of the bill. I found that offensive as I thought of how many organisations and people, as well as our community, that were not afforded that same opportunity. I am delighted the AMA was afforded that opportunity but I note that not all GPs and doctors are members of the AMA—in fact, I believe it is only a small percentage.

It concerns me that whilst some were privy to the drafting of the bill—and there were 15 co-sponsors—I had no idea. As a member of the Labor Party, I had no idea that members in my caucus were participating in a working party that was drafting the bill. I had no idea that members of the Government, including the health Minister, were partaking in the co-sponsoring of the bill. I am not judging members on the fact that they were doing that—they are well within their rights as parliamentarians to co-sponsor a bill; they are well within their rights to advocate their views on this issue; and they are well within their rights to introduce legislation in this place. I am concerned about the rights that were denied to other parliamentarians in this place and the communities that we represent, which were denied the same opportunity to be thoroughly briefed and to have their views and opinions heard with respect to this matter. I reiterate that we cannot always agree on every issue in this place and electors understand that. But being open and transparent and mindful of how sensitive this debate is, is important.

As parliamentarians, each of us has one vote in this place and we represent almost the same number of people in our respective electorates—there is no one person who has more votes; we all have equal votes. It is an immense privilege that is bestowed upon us by those who elect us to be members of Parliament. It is a privilege that I have never, ever taken for granted—and never will. I make clear that I am not passing judgement on any individual who may seek or who has sought a termination. That is an important point. While I have my view and my faith, I understand that people have different views and we all have different circumstances in life and personal challenges. I cannot and will not judge any person who has ever found themselves in this position. I acknowledge that there are a number of members, across the political divide, who have shared their personal stories and I respect what they have placed on *Hansard*. I understand that each of them has the right to their view and I do not pass judgement in any way, shape or form on any of my colleagues in this place.

I am calling for—and I think I have the right to call for this—an adequate inquiry. I am surprised that the approach of ramming through the legislation has been approved by the Premier and those closest to her—because let us be very clear, the bill could not be rammed through this place without a green light being given somewhere. The member for Sydney is an Independent member and, whilst he has a lot of status and stature and so forth and is quite well known for being an advocate on many different issues—and he is certainly representing the views of the majority of his electorate—he must have had some sort of support and assurances that the legislation would be rammed through this Parliament fairly quickly.

Whilst I am delighted that I can speak in this House, I am only one person from the electorate of Bankstown. I would have liked for constituents in my electorate both for and against this issue to have been afforded the opportunity to participate in an inquiry. I have spoken with people at the Bankstown Women's Health Centre who provide all sorts of different advice on this matter. They would like to have had the opportunity to participate as well, as would many religious and community organisations in my electorate. I have been inundated with many, many letters opposing this bill and only two supporting the bill. [*Extension of time*]

I will go through some of my concerns about the bill. We know that abortion right now is lawful in New South Wales. I want to make that point: It is lawful. No-one is proposing that it be unlawful. I have not heard a single person in this Chamber suggest that it should be unlawful. It is currently lawful in New South Wales. At the moment we have a very robust system in New South Wales—one that is designed to protect women, doctors and all parties involved in what is often a life-changing decision for the majority of women who have to make it.

Current New South Wales Ministry of Health policy includes a framework for the termination of pregnancies and it ensures that a range of quite strict protections are in place. I will table that framework at the end of my speech. It outlines particular circumstances with respect to abortion when it is sought up to 13 weeks—an assessment of need must be undertaken after appropriate counselling has been offered. And if an abortion is sought between 13 and 20 weeks an assessment of need is undertaken by a treating medical practitioner in

consultation with the woman after appropriate testing and counselling has been offered and the treating medical practitioner has been provided with the results and reports.

In New South Wales even now women can have late-term abortions under certain requirements. This legislation will now permit a person to have an abortion post-22 weeks provided that medical practitioners consider "that in all the circumstances the termination should be performed". There is no provision in the proposed legislation for the assessments to be conducted independently and it is unclear whether there is a requirement for the second practitioner to assess the individual personally. I do not think that is the case. Currently there is a multidisciplinary team of two doctors, a psychiatrist and a fourth independent person who provide advice and assistance to the treating doctor. I think the idea and the argument that the bill is more stringent than the current system is flawed—I do not think that is right. I am taking that advice directly from the policy directive of the New South Wales Ministry for Health as to how abortions are to be undertaken in New South Wales as we speak.

The health and wellbeing of the woman has been the primary and sole consideration in New South Wales since the *R v Wald* case in 1971. This bill seeks to widen these requirements by removing the need for necessity and including social circumstances as a consideration. There are many other changes. I do not think I will have the time to go through everything that the legislation imposes, but it certainly does impose an obligation upon a medical practitioner who is asked to perform a termination or asked to consider whether a termination should be performed and who has a conscientious objection to the performance of the termination. This legislation requires a doctor who has a conscientious objection to disclose that objection to the patient and to refer or transfer the patient to a doctor or health practitioner who does not have a conscientious objection.

As I understand it, right now there are medical conduct standards in place that require a doctor to make referrals on the basis of a health need. I listened intently as the member for Wagga Wagga, a practising doctor, spoke in this place. I acknowledge the comments he made in relation to this area, a sensitive area of both law and health. I note that the bill does not provide for the collection or reporting of statistical data in relation to the number of procedures requested and performed and that there will be no separation of any data collected in relation to when the request beyond 22 weeks might be due to health needs, fetal abnormality or social circumstance. None of those differentiations will happen.

I again note that there are so many amendments being presented by many members of Parliament in this place. I have received emails from the member for Riverstone, who will be moving amendments. The member for Prospect will be moving an amendment or two. The member for Wagga Wagga also foreshadowed in his speech that he will be moving amendments. The member for Pittwater and the member for Cronulla have both indicated that they will be moving amendments. For all I know, there might be other amendments suggested later this evening and tomorrow. That is a large number of amendments that we, as parliamentarians, will be asked to assess in a very short period and, given it will likely happen after hours, it will be difficult to access advice on the respective amendments.

I remember standing here last year when I was trying to fight, with the support of my colleagues, for children who would potentially be forced into adoptions and trying to fix the horrible situation of vulnerable women and vulnerable children in this State not being provided with the appropriate level of care, services and support that they need. I spoke in this place for 6½ hours because I absolutely fundamentally objected to what was being proposed by the then Minister for Family and Community Services. I wish the same passion evident in this debate had existed in that debate, because what concerned me so much about the issues raised in that legislation was that we were dealing with families, children and women who desperately need assistance.

In my time as shadow Minister for family and community services, I met with women who talked with me about their personal situations. I have met with women who were told and directed by people that they would have been better off having an abortion than having their own child. I have met women with very different views on what abortion means to them, which brought the issue home to me such that I understood I cannot always look at issues just from a faith-based viewpoint. I have to understand that I represent people who do not have a faith, but who are vulnerable and who need support and care. At no stage would I ever support making abortion unlawful. I could not support the idea of having backyard abortions in New South Wales. I want appropriate care for women. I think we have a robust, strong system already in place. I read these directives from the Ministry of Health and see that we do: We ensure there is counselling, we ensure there is support and we ensure that there are multidisciplinary teams available to provide advice in those difficult circumstances.

A dear friend of mine who is extremely religious had to have an abortion. Her baby had a fetal abnormality and she was advised by her obstetrician that the child would almost certainly die in her womb. That was a profoundly horrific and difficult circumstance for her to go through. As a member of my faith, she had to go undertake confession and communion and was provided with support. There was an understanding. I saw how difficult that was for her. It took her at least two years to recover and in many respects I think she still has not

recovered from that abortion. It is for those reasons that I think the practice of abortion has to be lawful in New South Wales—and it is lawful.

I again reiterate that I think it is so unfortunate and I am deeply upset about the way this bill has been brought into this place. I respect all the co-sponsors of this bill. I have worked with them in different ways in this House. Sometimes we have been on the same side, arguing about other legislation in this place. I find the idea that "we know how many yeses and noes there are going to be" very difficult. "We are just going to ram through this legislation. It is after the State election and we don't care anymore. There is nobody that we need to answer to. Let's just ram through the legislation." That is not the right way; it is not the right approach. It is really offensive that we are proceeding in this manner with such important legislation. I understand that it means so much to the co-sponsors of the bill. It means something to each of us who is speaking on the bill in this House. But it also means so much to the millions of people in New South Wales who also want to have their say.

I would have liked to have better understood all the processes and procedures that are currently in place. I would have liked to have known what rural and regional women need, where the inequity for health care lies for many of those regional and rural electorates. Nothing in this bill will provide additional supports for women. Nothing in this bill will better fund women's health centres. Nothing in this bill will ensure that the proper supports are in place. We already have a very robust system. We could have made that a better system. We could have spent some time working in this place and in an inquiry—which would have been chaired by the Government—where there would have been an opportunity to allow all different organisations to have their view known.

I acknowledge the religious leaders who have written to me. They are important to me. I acknowledge the Coptic Orthodox Diocese who wrote to me. I acknowledge Archbishop Anthony Fisher and his statement. I also acknowledge Archbishop Makarios from the Greek Diocese and the many other Christian and Muslim organisations that have written to me. I also acknowledge that non-religious organisations have written to me in support of the bill. I understand that they are also entitled to write in support of this legislation. It would have been great to have heard from all of them in a proper inquiry; it would have been great to have had a public hearing. It is a great shame that the Parliament has chosen not to have a Legislative Assembly inquiry. I hope that members of this Parliament, though they may support this bill, at least allow a public inquiry. Albeit a brief one, we still need to have a public inquiry.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (16:37): I speak in favour of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. Fundamentally, this bill supports my long-held personal position about women being able to choose what happens to their bodies and being in control of their own reproductive rights. I also have a slightly different view about this bill from that of many people who have expressed views on both sides of the argument. This bill is not radical, nor is it historic. This is a relatively simple bill that is designed to move the law in this State closer to where most people in Australia are today—that is to recognise there are people who do not support the position of abortion and there are plenty of people who do. We have heard that in each of the contributions to debate by members in this Chamber.

I am humbled and also very proud to be able to participate in this debate. Conscience debates in this Chamber often bring out the best in representatives of the community as they weigh up their personal issues and experiences and listen to members of their constituency and stakeholders. Often the debate in these conscience discussions is much more enlightened than it is in the day-to-day legislative framework that exists here. Fundamentally, as has been expressed by many people over the past couple of days, we already know a legal framework for abortion already exists in the State. This is not about saying that abortions are illegal in New South Wales but it does remove the last vestiges of the idea that abortion could be a criminal act by removing it from the Crimes Act 1900. This is a good thing. It is a recognition of the progress that has happened as a society here in New South Wales. This House, as the custodian of the laws by which we live in our society, should be able to update those laws to reflect the ideas that exist within the community.

It is particularly important to recognise through the course of this debate the process under which this has happened. There have been some sinister observations about the way the Parliament has functioned. This conscience vote has allowed every member of this Parliament to participate in this debate. It was brought forward as a private member's bill—a right that is available to every single member in this place. The day we stop allowing members to bring forward private members' business is the day that we start to erode a fundamental component that underpins the just society that we are employed to represent in this place. As it is a private member's bill, every member of this Chamber has the opportunity to bring forward amendments and their views on the bill. This is how this Parliament is designed to function. The functionality of this Parliament is about finding a compromise position, a way in which we can keep moving forward so that our laws reflect the mindset of our community.

My long-held view about abortion and reproductive rights is that abortions should be safe, legal and rare. That is a phrase that has been used by many members in this debate. From a "safe" perspective, I heard the health Minister go through in great detail all the safeguards that currently exist in New South Wales that would not

change under this bill. In fact, the bill will enhance safeguards, particularly for women who are in the very difficult position of having to make the decision about what happens to their bodies in the post-22 week period. I hold faith in NSW Health and health practitioners who have much greater experience than I will ever have. It is important that we do not undermine the institution of the health Minister, health practitioners and people who have the experience to offer advice as to how we do this. I take great comfort from the information provided to us in those speeches.

There is no doubt that abortion is already legal in New South Wales but this bill removes that last uncomfortable component defining abortion as an illegal act. Removing it from the Crimes Act puts a full stop next to the concept of "legal" in that statement of "safe, legal and rare". Many members on both sides of this debate have said time and again that this debate is not about making abortion more accessible; it is about making sure that women are informed and have all the support that they require to make one of the most important and difficult decisions they will ever have to make in their lives. This bill reinforces the concept of safe, legal and rare. It strengthens the law around abortion. It supports women and, fundamentally, it supports the concept of reproductive health being safe, legal and rare in New South Wales.

We should never talk about division and disruption when we are talking about an issue of conscience in this House. We should encourage members to bring forward their own ideas and to participate in the parliamentary practice of amending a bill. If they believe they can improve the bill, then bring forward those amendments. This is what separates parliamentarians from opinion writers in newspapers. Parliamentarians are the people who are designing the laws of the State, they are representing the interests of the people who elected them and they do so guided by their conscience. That is exactly what we are doing today with this bill. I support it and commend it to the House.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (16:43): I am the last of some 65 speakers who have contributed so far to debate on the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. The instigator of this private member's bill will give his speech in reply tomorrow. Tomorrow will be an important day. In life we all want to be loved, we want to be safe, we want to be cared for and we want compassion. In many ways if you look at what people describe as division in this debate, we all want everybody in our community—regardless of faith, belief or background or where they live—to be respected, loved and cared for. It was flagged publicly very clearly back on 6 March in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that legislation was going to be brought before this Parliament in this term to decriminalise abortion. That is the first principle of this bill. It can be argued that it is a 1900 Act and that subsequent case law ultimately governs whether it is legal or illegal, but let us park that to one side and reflect on what we are talking about.

I cannot imagine what it must feel like as an individual to have to make a decision whether to terminate a pregnancy. I cannot do that—I will never walk in those shoes. But coming from the country and knowing the lack of support services in some areas across the State and having represented a community in the country for 17 years where in many cases there has not even been an available obstetrician or gynaecologist, I cannot begin to imagine how much harder that walk must be. I am concerned about the amendments that will be brought before us tomorrow. Possibly there will be amendments that I support, but this Parliament should not get into the business of starting to prescribe and codify very extensively some of the much-needed practices of our medical profession in working with our communities and with individuals.

I have heard in discussions this week phrases such as "abortion on demand" and I have heard discussion about whether abortion can happen the day before birth. I spoke to Dr Nigel Lyons, one of our leading clinicians for 30 years, and asked him to provide me with some information relating specifically to termination of a pregnancy at 22 weeks. He told me that terminations after 22 weeks are considered only where there is a major chromosome or genetic development in the brain or the heart, for example, which would mean severe or life-limiting problems for the fetus if carried to term. Dr Lyons said that another consideration is a life-threatening illness or complication for the pregnant woman. He said that these procedures are carried out only in highly specialised services by an expert team that includes an obstetrician, a fetomaternal specialist, a genetic specialist, and mental health and social workers.

I then decided to further satisfy myself by looking at the framework for terminations in New South Wales public health organisations. Their policy directive is quite clear and sets out the processes around 13 weeks gestation, 13 to 20 weeks gestation and greater than 20 weeks gestation, and the involvement of the local health districts in engaging with a multidisciplinary team in that regard. That is the process now. The bill does not define life at 22 weeks; at 22 weeks it requires a second doctor to be involved in the decision whether to terminate. The fact is that 95 per cent of terminations happen prior to 14 weeks. I asked Dr Lyons what percentage happen at 22 weeks, which has been largely the focus of this debate over the past couple of days. Dr Lyons said it was 1 per cent. I asked him whether there is any data that proves that fetal abnormalities that might be identified through an ultrasound at 18, 19 or 20 weeks can quantify that number. He said it is well in excess of the majority.

Those termination procedures happen in public hospitals. Coming from the country, I am nervous enough as it is with some of the stigma that is attached to country hospitals. Country communities tend to be very small and everybody knows your business. Privacy is an issue. In my part of the world women travel hundreds of kilometres to access reproductive health services, quite often to the Australian Capital Territory. I am aware of a facility in another cross-border community where the doctors, despite being in another State, have written to all members to make some observations in relation to the Crimes Act and how women are travelling hundreds and hundreds of kilometres.

Regardless of one's viewpoint, I hope that a proper analysis and assessment of reproductive health support—and it goes beyond a relationship between a doctor and a woman and potentially her family—will result in better on-the-ground support in country areas. I have observed in the data collected in other jurisdictions generally over the past 15 years that the abortion rate has declined. That indicates to me that there has been better education, potentially better advancements in contraception, greater awareness and, ultimately, improvement in medical services. Health is an evolving science, which means that our laws must adapt and change. There is no doubt that when we have a Crimes Act of 1900 on which case law has been built that is not the best approach. That is why it is key that we recognise what this debate is truly about.

I urge everybody to look very closely at the pregnancy framework for terminations in public hospitals in New South Wales. It does not apply in private hospitals and maybe that is something that should happen. I am also very conscious, again from a regional perspective, that potentially we will see amendments tomorrow that are about a doctor's conscientious right to not have to refer. The reality is that in some communities in this State there is only one doctor and if that doctor has a conscientious objection what happens to that woman? Where does she turn? That is why I urge all my colleagues to look very closely at the rural and regional impact of amendments put before the House tomorrow. Much has been said about the Government's involvement in this bill. I remind the House that the member for Sydney said very clearly on 6 March in one of our major newspapers, in the middle of a State election campaign, that he was going to bring this bill to Parliament. [*Extension of time*]

The member for Sydney made it clear back in March that he was going to do exactly what he has done. He said at the time that the preference would be for a Government-backed bill but that if that did not happen he would be seeking a multipartisan private member's bill. There was no secret. There was no Government agenda. The Premier stated very clearly at the time that she would like to see what the legislation looked like before indicating support, and the then Leader of the Opposition said likewise. Every parliamentarian was aware of the bill. That said, this has been an incredibly respectful debate. I have been concerned about things that have been said and done beyond this Parliament and I know that some of my strongest party supporters and some members of the community have strong views about the bill. I will not allow that to determine my decision-making on the regulation of pregnancy terminations in this State. It should not sit in a Crimes Act and I urge members to consider that point.

A public inquiry will be held next week in which stakeholders can participate. Should the bill pass tomorrow, the upper House will go through the same exercise as this House has and will debate the bill and propose amendments. If any amendments are passed in the upper House the bill will return to the lower House for members to give it further consideration. That will happen over the weeks ahead. I say to everybody that respect is key. I do believe when it comes to the issue before us that nobody should be treated as being in a category. We know that there are women who have suffered sexual assault or are in a domestic violence situation who have to rely on these services. We know that 95 per cent of terminations happen prior to 14 weeks. There may be a raft of reasons why a woman accesses these services. But every person who relies on these services is an individual with individual circumstances and an individual pathway. What an incredibly painful and unimaginable pathway that individual must go through. That is why our laws must have respect at their core.

The objects of the bill go to the heart and core of how we all want to feel and be respected as we enjoy life. Our Parliament must be mindful of any person who has to walk that journey, be it alone or with the support of a loved one or a friend. Politicians need to be very careful if they want to start codifying medical practices. We need to leave it to the experts, which is why regulations and policy directives come into play. I will reserve my judgement on the amendments. I am confident that the respect shown throughout the 65 contributions so far will continue tomorrow. I commend the bill to the House and recognise the member for Sydney for his work on this bill. I ask members to remember that this bill is about individual pathways and collectively supporting people in our community who are in incredibly difficult circumstances.

Debate interrupted.

RACING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019**First Reading**

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Kevin Anderson, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (17:00):

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Racing Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.

Debate adjourned.

*Public Interest Debate***WATER MANAGEMENT**

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the report of the Natural Resources Commissioner, Dr John Keniry, reviewing the 2012 Water Sharing Plan for the Barwon-Darling river system.
- (2) Acknowledges the findings of the report that the river system below Bourke was pushed into hydrological drought three years earlier than the upstream sections of the river.
- (3) Calls on the Government to endorse the position of the Deputy Premier for a royal commission into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan for the purpose of openness, transparency and accountability.

Two weeks ago the Natural Resources Commissioner, Dr John Keniry, released his *Draft Water Sharing Plan Review* for the Barwon-Darling river system. The 2012 water sharing plan—ironically named in hindsight—was devised and signed off under the supervision of former National Party water Minister Katrina Hodgkinson. A range of issues has been raised about this sign-off process, which seems to have ignored departmental advice and the best available science at that time. The 2012 plan was inexplicably and dramatically changed at the eleventh hour at the apparent behest of the Minister herself. These dramatic changes appeared to have favoured a very small number of irrigators, at least one of which was a National Party donor.

The last-minute, dramatic changes significantly increased the value of existing water licences and the value of landholdings in favour of a select few. As a double windfall for some of those select few, the Federal Government is now proposing buybacks of these valuable—since 2012—water entitlements. Welcome to water sharing in the Barwon-Darling river system in the northern part of this State under the Liberal-Nationals Government at both State and Federal levels. It should be noted that ICAC investigations are ongoing. I turn to the Keniry report, which reviews the 2012 water sharing plan and the devastating social and environmental impacts that have been consequential to that plan. Here are but a few of Dr Keniry's comments in the opening summary:

The Barwon-Darling is an ecosystem in crisis.

...

... changes to the water sharing rules in the Plan area have resulted in an increased allowance for extractive use at lower flow classes that are critical to the environment. These provisions benefit the economic interests of a few upstream users over the ecological and social needs of the many.

...

... there is clear evidence to indicate that the Plan rules are resulting in more frequent and longer cease to flow periods.

...

Expert opinion suggests extractions pushed the river below Bourke into hydrological drought three years earlier than the upstream sections of the river.

...

Social outcomes under the Plan have also been unsatisfactory.

...

Cultural outcomes as stated in the Plan have also not been achieved, particularly in relation to native title.

By any measure, it is fair to say that Dr Keniry's words and findings are not a glowing endorsement of the 2012 plan as it currently stands. Keniry goes on to note that prior to the 2012 plan, during a time of low flows, only

small pipes could be used to pump out essential water to allow immediate use for irrigation of permanent plantings and stock but that after the 2012 plan was announced pipes and pumps that allowed water to be taken at 16 times the rate could be taken during low-flow periods and stored in property dams for later use. This was a massive shift in protecting low-water flows.

Keniry also takes the incredible step of declaring that the effects of drought were brought about three years earlier than normal for communities south of Bourke as a result of the river system essentially being pumped dry by a very small number of massive upstream irrigators, with devastating consequences for the environment, the people and the wellbeing of all other farmers downstream. One other finding worthy of note is the link between the human-induced absence of critical flows that could have prevented water stagnation and massive temperature variations. These flows could have prevented the growth of blue-green algae and could have prevented the deoxygenation of the river system—all of which contributed to more than one million fish dying in the river system.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I cannot hear the member.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: These fish kills are worth noting with regard to paragraph (3) of the motion. In January 2019, after the third mass fish kill, Deputy Premier John Barilaro finally found his way out to the Menindee to see the social and environmental devastation for himself. His words in the lead-up to this event were to the effect that New South Wales did not need its own State-based royal commission.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Government members will come to order. The Minister for Customer Services will resume his seat.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: However, at a meeting with the community the Deputy Premier changed his tune and his words. He told the meeting, "I think one of the best comments to come out of today was a royal commission where you actually can cross borders, cross jurisdictions and get a clear picture of the whole basin plan." In effect, the Deputy Premier was suggesting a Federal royal commission as part of the solution. I ask: Is it the position of the Leader of The Nationals in New South Wales, the Deputy Premier, that he believes a Federal royal commission is necessary or were the comments by the Deputy Premier another of his insincere, convenient and deceitful words of choice to wriggle out of a tricky situation by saying what he thinks the locals want to hear, albeit that he has no plan, no intention and no means by which to back up what he says?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Government members will come to order. I cannot hear the member. I call the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services to order for the first time.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I urge the Government to think very carefully about its natural inclination to reject this motion. It will express much to the people of New South Wales on who Government members really are and how much their word really means.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:08): Do those opposite want to know who we are and what we stand for? We stand for our regional communities. We stand for population growth in our regional communities. We stand for jobs and we stand for opportunities.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We stand for our communities to grow and thrive, and we recognise that water is a very big part of that. Today the Leader of the Opposition, who is not worthy of the job, was blaming—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I want complete silence or members will be booted out of the Chamber. Go ahead and make my day. The Minister will continue.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We back our communities. South Australia would love the fact that Labor could one day be in charge of this State because those opposite want to send our opportunities, our growth, our farming sector to South Australia. The important facts are that no matter how much those opposite want to spin it and no matter what they say no water has been extracted by A-class licences since 2018. The member for Barwon and I had a very important meeting in the past week because the member and I share the belief that our communities deserve to grow and thrive. Giving them the opportunity to do that is about water and it is also about the truth. Does the member for Cessnock blame himself for the drought in Cessnock? He represents Cessnock; does he blame himself for the drought in Cessnock?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Essentially, the member for Cessnock is suggesting that in 2018 there were 2,426 gigalitres of water in the river that passed through Bourke. Do those opposite know what percentage the

A-class licences took out of the river that year? It was 0.23 per cent of irrigated water, and it was not the cause of the situation in Menindee. Those opposite should focus on the fact that we had an allocation that we had to meet for South Australia. They should focus on the fact that there was a 10 degree variation in the climate that week and that variation helped to create the situation. This is about having good and honest conversations with our communities. The Government wants to put infrastructure back into our communities to give our communities security and better water opportunities. They need the opportunity to water our crops, our vegetables, our fixed crops, our grapes and our cotton. All of it needs to be supported, not derided.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The member for Cessnock has had water tankers from Hunter Water take water to communities in his electorate. Is it my fault that there is a drought in Cessnock or is it the fact that it has not rained sufficiently in three years? I have read the report and I am aware that the member for Cessnock is blaming the result in Menindee on the 0.23 per cent of extraction during that period.

Mr John Barilaro: What did Mick Keelty say?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The Deputy Premier asks about Mick Keelty. In the past week Mick Keelty has pointed out that New South Wales is now front and centre and doing the best job in Australia in compliance and in putting 150 Natural Resources Access Regulator [NRAR] inspectors on the ground because we do not want dirty, rotten irrigators who steal water.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Customer Service to order for the first time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: We support good irrigators. We support those who are compliant. We support those who support our communities in a decent, honest way. That is why Mick Keelty has applauded what New South Wales has done.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale has been asked to come to order on at least seven occasions.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The more those opposite talk down irrigation, the more they talk down farmers, the fewer opportunities there will be for the member for Barwon and all other regional members who want our communities to thrive, employ, support exports and grow regional New South Wales.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:13): I thank the member for Cessnock, and Shadow Minister for Water for moving this very important motion today. To be clear, all this motion is asking for is, first, for Government members to acknowledge the findings of the report issued by one of its own independent agencies; and, secondly, for Government members to support the Deputy Premier's call for a royal commission into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. That is the motion that is before the House today. It is an issue of extreme importance to all the people of New South Wales. It is of critical importance to the many regional and rural communities that are currently experiencing drought. The Nationals members often reflect, I believe genuinely, on the immense hardship facing their and other communities. The drought is a very sad reality but it does not excuse the poor decision-making of this Government that has accelerated, prolonged and exacerbated the drought. Governments for the large part have spent decades building up resilience, supporting farmers and industry to improve efficiency and building infrastructure that reinforces communities to access their water. However, these long-term investments in New South Wales have been trashed by the Liberal-Nationals Government and the decisions it has made. It is not Labor saying this—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: It is today.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: It is today because none of you has been prepared to admit it. It is certainly not the Opposition making a political point; it is the Natural Resources Commission [NRC] that has made those findings. The NRC is an agency independent of this Government. The commission has reviewed the Government's mismanagement of water and investigated its decision-making and it has been scathing in its assessment. When the Government's own agency makes scathing findings there is something very seriously wrong. But The Nationals are in denial: It is not their problem! One of the most disgusting findings of the NRC—and not one member of The Nationals wants to admit it—is that the Government's water allocation decisions pushed rural, regional and remote communities into drought three years earlier than the natural cycle. That is the what Natural Resources Commissioner found. Those opposite may shake their heads but that is what the Government's independent agency has found. It found three years of suffering in communities that did not need to occur—farmers going broke, small business owners closing down, small communities suffering and struggling to survive. It is a disgrace and those opposite should be ashamed, but they are not.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: They have the same ideology now as they had then—big water to big irrigators and everyone else can just make do with platitudes in Parliament.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Instead of owning up and acknowledging the Natural Resources Commission's finding, we had the indignity today of listening to the Deputy Premier crow in this Chamber about The Nationals standing up for drought-affected communities. The level of arrogance and hypocrisy we see in this place is astounding.

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

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Causing a drought and being found out, and the Deputy Premier was standing in Parliament and promoting himself as the voice for the bush. The next thing in his playbook will be that The Nationals will start attacking and undermining the Natural Resources Commission because it had the audacity to tell the truth. Well, suck it up. This is how it is meant to work: The Government makes decisions, the Government is responsible for those decisions and the Government is to be held to account for those decisions. The Government does not think it should be held to account. The Deputy Premier thinks he can say what he likes, wherever he likes and to whomever he likes, depending on his audience. The Deputy Premier's campaign for Canberra is well and truly on but that does not excuse him saying one thing in the bush and the opposite when he is in Sydney.

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

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The Deputy Premier, when speaking to locals in Menindee, supported a royal commission inquiry into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. But have we heard anything from the Deputy Premier since on that matter? Not a thing. He could have raised it when the water Ministers met last week. Was it raised at that time? Do Government members back the Deputy Premier's call? We will be waiting for a long time for the Deputy Premier to admit any failings. He would prefer to blame everyone else: Labor, South Australia. He will start blaming the Libs next.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I call the member for Drummoyne to order for the second time.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: All we are asking today is for the Government to support its own independent agency's finding and to back its Deputy Premier, who is second in charge. That is it. That is all Government members have to decide to do today. [*Time expired.*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind members that a number of them are on one, two or three calls to order—and the member for Rockdale has been called to order on seven calls occasions. He will be removed from the Chamber if he continues to interject.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (17:18): For the record, I love this new format under the new standing orders. It is wonderful to have an opportunity to debate important issues like this—even though it is, excuse the pun, a Clayton's debate.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Perhaps because I am in the chair.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: No, it is not because you are in the chair. It is important to dull down a bit of the rhetoric and look at the facts. I am glad that the member for Port Stephens talked about the draft report of the Natural Resources Commission [NRC] because it contains some very interesting pieces of information. For the benefit of the House, as the Minister for Water, Property and Housing touched on, if we look at Class A water licence holders—which seems to be the topic of conversation—in the 2017-18 water year, which was actually the last time Class A water holders were actually allowed to pump anything, they pumped 5,611 megalitres.

Mr Michael Daley: How do you know?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. If the member for Maroubra wants to speak he will have an opportunity to do so after the Minister has completed his contribution to the debate.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: Is this the farmer from Maroubra with his Akubra on? No Akubra today. The Opposition wants to talk about the NRC report. I am talking about figures that are drawn from the independent authority. In 2017, 5,611 megalitres were pumped. At the same time, 2,427,000 megalitres flowed past Bourke and filled up the Menindee Lakes. Class A water holders pumped 5,611 megalitres and 2,427,000 flowed past Bourke. Since 2016-17, when Menindee was last full, over 1,000,000 megalitres have been lost to evaporation. The members opposite do not acknowledge that but they are the facts.

In the northern and far western valleys in New South Wales, as the Minister for Water, Property and Housing has said, we have had the driest seven years in terms of inflows on record. With all those figures combined and with the driest period of inflows, it is not surprising that we are in this situation. It is amazing that at a conference of NSW Farmers the Leader of the Opposition said that the New South Wales Nationals caused this drought—not that we brought it forward by three years. The people who were at that conference included Dennis Hazelwood who is a farmer from Dundee, Peter Petty who is the Mayor of Tenterfield and who farms around Tenterfield, Mike Naughton from Glencoe, and Libby Martin from Wongwibinda—all of who have farms.

Mr John Barilaro: Those opposite have no idea where you are talking about.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: For the benefit of the Opposition, it is outside Sydney and it is not anywhere near saltwater. It is actually inland freshwater. Those people have properties that are not anywhere near the Murray-Darling Basin and yet they are in the most crippling drought. I urge the Leader of the Opposition to visit those people and tell them that The Nationals have caused the drought. If the Leader of the Opposition did not hear them at the NSW Farmers conference, they were the same people who were yelling out when those statements were made. They were offensive comments and untrue.

Ms Kate Washington: They are all Nats, mate.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: No they are not. To make that comment shows how you do not understand country people or country communities at all. It is actually quite offensive to say that. Those are some of the facts that the independent authority revealed that do not appear in any of the speeches from those on the Government benches.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will remain silent. She has had an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: It is important to have these discussions in this place because water, drought and everything to do with regional communities are critical issues. Members on this side of the House will not take an independent report and bring it into this place to score political points. Rather, we will address the substantive issues that country communities are facing.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (17:24): The motion moved by the member for Cessnock is sensible. It is designed to give effect to the words of the Deputy Premier. We want him to be a man of his word and to keep the promises he made during the last State election campaign. The truth is that for the past nine years members opposite have literally sold the people of New South Wales up the river. It is not even a metaphor: We have the report to prove it. I will tell you where this newfound bullishness on water over the past nine years comes from—virtually nothing. The National Party lost the electorate of Murray and the electorate of Barwon, and all of a sudden it cares about water issues in regional New South Wales. Where were National Party members when the fish were dying? Where were you, John? You were nowhere to be seen!

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members are not helping the member for Kogarah.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The truth of the matter is the Liberal-Nationals Government caused this drought three years before it should have come to the lower parts of the Darling—

[A Government member interjected.]

That's what the report says, mate. They covered it up every time the Opposition asked a question, and now they refuse to do anything about it. They refuse to do it. Yesterday in question time the Deputy Premier informed the House—I listen sometimes, John—and I quote:

Those opposite want to talk about historic events in this State and we say we have fixed them.

The report handed down two weeks ago by the Natural Resources Commission stated:

... steps to improve water management need to be accelerated and further extended.

It goes on to state:

The rules effectively prioritise upstream water users, resulting in impacts ... downstream.

In other words, the Government has had nine years to do something about it and, despite the scandals, the corruption, the investigation, they have done bugger all about it! Now we are in this situation. But it gets worse! When the report was handed down on 25 July 2019—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members are not helping.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I will read from *The Australian* and the article headlined "Minister to mull changes after drought blame revealed." The article goes on to state that the Minister "will consider changing water

extraction arrangements after the damning report." After the Matthews report, the Senate report, the Natural Resources Access Regulator report, the ACCC report, the Australian royal commission report, the Murray-Darling Basin Royal Commission Report, the Natural Resources Commission report and a probable ICAC report, the water Minister still needs to mull it over.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. I call the Minister for Water, Property and Housing to order for the first time.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: What has the Minister been doing for five months? Do we have to rent a plane and fly over Sydney before she acts? The Minister has done nothing for the past five months except play netball in London by the sounds of it. That is all we have heard from the water Minister!

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: For the past five months she has done absolutely nothing! For God's sake, if the National Party is not responsible for water management in this State, get up and defend Kevin Humphreys. If the National Party is not responsible for this mess, get up and defend Kevin Humphreys. And I tell you this—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: You're a grub!

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister can call me that if she wants to. Charities today are providing water to rural and regional towns because those opposite cannot do it. Bob Geldof started Live Aid in 1985 to bring water to Africa. It is happening in Australia right now because of the management of the National Party.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: National Party members say they represent the bush, but it is nothing but a disgrace. Those opposite say we are playing politics with this issue: They said the same thing three years ago when we asked questions about it in this House. That was six or seven reports ago before a million dead fish in the Menindee Lakes, before they lost the electorate of Murray and the electorate of Barwon, and before country communities right across this State were in open revolt at the leadership and tenure of the water Minister. It is very simple: If the premise of our argument is incorrect, members opposite will get up in this debate and defend the tenure of Katrina Hodgkinson and Kevin Humphreys in their ministerial positions in the ministry of water.

I had my problems with the Hon. Niall Blair, the former regional water Minister, but at the end of the day he tried to do something about it. The current water Minister has been asleep at the wheel. Members opposite give it to members on this side of the House every day. We give a little bit back and they go to water! This is what Badger Bates, Elder of the Barkindji people, says:

In the last five years our elders are giving up and dying. ... our young people are committing suicide. And it's hurting because of the river. How can I teach culture when they're taking our beloved Barka away?

There is one guilty party, and it is the National Party. [*Time expired.*]

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (17:29): I congratulate you, Mr Assistant Speaker, on your management of this afternoon's debate. It is funny, a couple of hours ago in question time I said members opposite had not raised a question on drought and water. Two hours later they are debating water. Isn't that fantastic? They are taking the lead from the National Party.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will be removed from the Chamber if he continues to interject.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I make a note for the member for Kogarah, because when he leaves this place tonight he has the opportunity to go home and spend time with his family. I am sure he will be able to do that, but regional and rural members in this House have to spend the week here away from our families, away from time—

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

Just shut up for a second! Shut up! Right?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Some members opposite get the chance to go home. The member for Kogarah has chosen—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Deputy Premier will resume his seat. The member for Rockdale will remove himself from the Chamber for 15 minutes under Standing Order 249A.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber 17:30.*]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Kogarah chose this debate to attack the water Minister, the member for Oxley, because she chose to spend a little time away in the winter recess, like many members who took time off during the winter recess to spend time with their families. The Minister chose to go abroad with her daughter, spend some time with her family and enjoy an overseas trip; yet, members opposite attack her.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I remind the member for Swansea that she has already been removed from the Chamber once today.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: This is the reality: Members who represent, live and raise families in regional and rural New South Wales do so because they care, and that is the case across the political divide. I will not be lectured by the member for Kogarah. When he gets the chance to go home tonight, members of regional and rural electorates do not. We cherish our time off and we cherish the opportunity to spend time with our families. Members opposite do not like the truth.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the Deputy Premier.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Just one month ago—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens is pushing her luck today.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: One month ago in *The Maitland Mercury*, Clayton Barr, the member for Cessnock, was quoted as saying:

I need to learn [a lot] about the Murray-Darling Basin and irrigators' rights - who buys them, what ownership means and how they are traded and [how they are] sold.

And around theft. Judging from the question today, the member for Cessnock clearly has a lot to learn.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Maybe he should ask the member for Murray about water rights—how they are traded, sold and stolen. Let me remind the member of Cessnock of this and here is my question to him, because he raised it: Has he been to Menindee? Has he been to Bourke as shadow water Minister? I bet you any money he has not even been to Singleton, which is down the road. Maybe if he went there and visited the communities we represent, he would understand it.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will come to order. I am sure that he does not want to be removed from the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If the shadow Minister went out there rather than choosing this Chamber to attack members of Parliament and to attack our communities, maybe he would get a better understanding. We have already heard the water Minister and the agriculture Minister talk about inflows, the lack of rain and drought—and they are actual facts—as well as the amount of irrigation that was taken and the amount of water that has been flowing in the environment.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We have provided the facts, but members opposite choose to ignore them. Have we made some errors? We have said yes. We have accepted that, but we have also challenged the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and we have challenged South Australia. Members opposite are "team South Australia", let me add; they are fighting for South Australia. What is their solution? They come into this House and their solution is to blame the National Party for causing the drought.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Gosford will be removed from the Chamber if she continues to interject.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I ask the member for Cessnock, who represents the Hunter area and the Cessnock region: Is he at fault for the drought in his backyard? Does he blame his irrigators? Does he blame his farmers? Does he actually blame the mines in his electorate for this drought or does he blame the ghosts of Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald? Does he blame himself? What is the solution? More forced water buybacks? Is that what the member for Cessnock is going to argue for? Is he going to take more water licences away from the people? That is a big question.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Maitland, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Swansea and the member for Gosford will come to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I challenged the Opposition in question time today for a debate on water, but I also challenged members opposite not to politicise it. But what have they done? They have politicised it. The member for Kogarah attacks the Minister for Water, Property and Housing for time out with the family, but he

chooses to come to this place. He is a grub for attacking a Minister. In the winter recess I travelled the State, but I did not see him out in the regions or in the corners of the State. Yet he wants to lecture the National Party and blame it. God help us if members opposite end up on the Government benches and are ever in charge of the prosperity of regional New South Wales, because at the end of the day the Labor Party will always use drought, water and regional communities as a political football. It is an absolute disgrace.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale is looking for a friend; do not be that friend—you will be removed.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:35): I am sorry to disappoint members: I will not beat my chest or put on a show. This is a serious matter for people of the Barwon electorate. I speak in support of the call from the member for Cessnock to the Government to follow through with a royal commission into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Over the past 15 months the issue that has been continually raised with me is water—the lack of it, the management of it and the pain people are living through because of drought management. There is no greater example than as detailed in the Keniry review of the Barwon-Darling water sharing plan. I do not deny that this is the worst drought on record. I am not calling on the Government to make it rain.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: And you're not blaming our party.

Mr ROY BUTLER: Good timing! I have publicly praised the current Ministers about their response to the drought. However, the Keniry review has confirmed what the people of Barwon and Murray already knew: There are many problems with aspects of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, especially the Barwon-Darling water sharing plan. There are problems with the way it was developed and the way the Government implemented it. Our constituents rightly insist on answers, accountability and resolution of those poor decisions. It is time the Government drew a line in the sand and supported an independent, well-resourced and authoritative inquiry into previous government decision-making, those who were involved in those processes and their impacts on the river system. How did those actions bring drought to the Lower Darling early? The Keniry report laid it all on the table. To say that the revelations in the report shocked the public is to deny the fact that those issues and the actions of individuals were well known in the community. Water users, industry and communities have been calling out for years for the issues to be brought to light.

Recently criticism of South Australia's water management has amplified, but I have to call into question the timing of the passionate attack on the Lower Lakes this week. South Australia's actions are not new. Where was this umbrage years ago? Where was the noise about South Australia when government and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority drained seven years supply of drinking water from Menindee Lakes? Why is there all the talk about South Australia now—at the exact time as the release of the damning Keniry report, which revealed that the 2012 rule changes by the then water Minister brought on the early onset of hydrological drought below Bourke? We must look at problems at both ends of the Murray-Darling Basin—the mismanagement, the wastage and the bad decisions across our river system. That is why we need an independent public inquiry like a royal commission.

Calls across the community are growing louder. Last month at its conference in Sydney, NSW Farmers formally called for a royal commission. I say to all members in this place that they can support the Deputy Premier's call for a royal commission into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Today we can match words with actions and get the transparency that the public has been calling for and deserves. This is an opportunity for everyone in the Chamber to restore public confidence, to take responsibility, to acknowledge previous mistakes and to prove to the people of New South Wales that we are serious about righting wrongs and about dealing with the legacy of previous actors.

I am not playing politics; I do not think I know how—I am not cut from that cloth. I cannot play politics as the people who will face the scrutiny of an inquiry are not even here in any more. It is about past decisions and past actions, about addressing the legitimate concern of the people of New South Wales and making sure that we learn from the history to protect our future. A resource as vital as water demands the highest level of transparency and accountability. A comprehensive review is the only way we can start to rebuild public trust in government and water planning across regional New South Wales. A royal commission will not bring the water back. It will not make it rain. It will not make up for years of failing to plan for water variability in regional New South Wales, the responsibility for which sits on both sides of the House. But it might bring back some faith that government can be held to account.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I acknowledge former Premier John Fahey, who is in the adviser's gallery today. He is a guest of the member for Blacktown. We welcome Mr Fahey, an outstanding Premier. We also welcome the member for Blacktown to the Government benches.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:40): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions from the members representing the electorates of Oxley, Port Stephens, Northern Tablelands, Kogarah, Monaro and Barwon. I could say a lot about the contributions, but I will concentrate on one because there was a bit of interjection and play across the Chamber about it. When the member for Northern Tablelands was talking about measurement of the water being drawn from the river over recent periods, the interjection was, "How do you know?" The fact is that Mr Keniry, in his report, was quite damning in his assessment of the ability to measure whatever water is being taken and he suggested, for the help of the Government, immediate and urgent action to install better, more accurate, reliable and real-time ability to measure water being pumped. I thank and acknowledge the Government for defining how much water has been taken in terms of what we can measure, but Keniry basically said we must do more.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: And we're doing the work.

Mr John Barilaro: We're doing it.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I agree, you are doing more—it is a work in progress. The question was put from the Opposite side as to how we know the figures are right. Everyone should focus on the three points in the motion for the last minute of my contribution. The first point of the motion is that the House notes the report of the Natural Resources Commission. Has the report been tabled? Yes. Does any member want to say it has not been tabled? The motion asks the House to acknowledge the findings of the report that the river system below Bourke was pushed into hydrological drought three years earlier than the upstream sections of the river. That is in the report. Does any member want to contest that that is not in the report?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Three years early, not "earlier".

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Three years earlier than necessary. Does any member want to contest that that is not in the report? We all agree on the first two points. The third point of the motion states that the Deputy Premier publicly called for a Federal royal commission and this motion is asking members to back that in. Does any member suggest that The Nationals did not do that? If members can agree on all three points of the motion, can we all agree that there will be unanimous support for the motion? I put the motion to the House. It is the least political motion that could have come before the House; it is about water. I urge all members to support the motion.

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

The House divided.

Ayes44

Noes47

Majority.....3

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
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
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N
McDermott, Dr H
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
O'Neill, Dr M
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T.F.
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dalton, Mrs H
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McGirr, Dr J
Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Saffin, Ms J
Tesch, Ms L
Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M

NOES

Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Smith, Mr N
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Gulaptis, Mr C
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

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

Motion negatived.

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

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing with the Legislative Assembly's nominations.

*Bills***RACING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019****Second Reading Speech**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (17:51):

The Racing Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 amends five pieces of legislation and significantly enhances regulation of thoroughbred and harness racing in New South Wales. Through the bill, the Government will continue its support for a competitive and sustainable racing industry in New South Wales, with high standards of integrity. It does so in the following ways: by providing Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW with powers to compel unlicensed persons to attend inquiries and produce documents or things, subject to approval from the Supreme Court; by allowing the commissioner of the NSW Police Force to direct that someone is excluded from New South Wales racecourses if it is in the public interest; by allowing the Racing Appeals Tribunal to manage its caseload more flexibly and receive advice from expert assessors; by updating penalties for failing to attend a hearing of the Racing Appeals Tribunal; by codifying the power of Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW in relation to racing rules; and by dissolving the tax reduction trust fund to allow the greyhound racing industry's share of wagering tax parity reforms to flow directly to Greyhound Racing NSW.

As to the detail of the bill, the racing industry contributes in excess of \$3.3 billion to the New South Wales economy and sustains more than 27,500 full-time equivalent jobs across the State. The industry is also a source of enjoyment for the many people who attend and watch race events in metropolitan and regional New South Wales. Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW are responsible for controlling, supervising and regulating thoroughbred and harness racing, respectively, in this State. In so doing, they balance the critical tasks of fostering industry growth, upholding the integrity of racing and maintaining high standards of animal welfare. The powers and functions of Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW are set out in the Thoroughbred Racing Act 1996 and the Harness Racing Act 2009, respectively. Under these Acts, Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW have broad powers to investigate and address threats to integrity, animal welfare and the activities of registered industry participants and racing clubs, as well as any other matters related to these racing codes.

Threats to racing integrity come in many forms, ranging from breaches of riding and driving rules to serious issues such as the systemic use of performance-enhancing substances and criminal interference in betting activities and race fixing. These matters can negatively affect industry growth, public confidence in the industry, animal welfare and wagering revenue. Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW expend significant resources on integrity measures annually to ensure a fair and competitive industry for participants and punters. The efforts of both controlling bodies, particularly their stewarding and integrity personnel, are to be commended.

However, the lack of authority for racing stewards to question unlicensed industry participants has the potential to undermine the controlling bodies' ability to fully investigate threats to racing integrity. In recent years,

persons relevant to investigations but not licensed by racing authorities have refused to cooperate with stewards inquiries. Additionally, judicial bodies in other jurisdictions have questioned the power of racing authorities in respect of unlicensed persons. Unlicensed persons may be on the periphery of an investigation but hold information that could establish critical facts about an identified threat to the integrity of racing. While the New South Wales racing controlling bodies have powers to warn off persons from attending the State's racecourses, the fact-finding investigation will be incomplete, presenting an ongoing integrity risk to the racing industry.

Examples of unlicensed and unregistered participants include racegoers, bettors, suppliers of unapproved or prohibited substances, industry licence holders who hand in their licence to avoid disciplinary action, and organised crime figures. These individuals may hold key information about integrity and animal welfare risks. However, under current legislation regulatory bodies cannot compel them to attend inquiries. I am informed that over the past five years a number of investigations by both Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW have been frustrated by the controlling bodies' inability to compel unlicensed persons to provide relevant information.

In 2014 the New South Wales Government commissioned a report on the powers of Racing NSW in respect of compelling unlicensed persons to produce documents, attend hearings by stewards and answer questions at such hearings. The report, prepared by the Racing Appeals Tribunal's Mr David Armati, highlighted the seriousness of the regulatory gap in relation to unlicensed persons and recommended that compulsion powers be granted to both Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW. Mr Armati's report was tabled in Parliament as an attachment to the 2014 statutory reviews of the Thoroughbred Racing Act and the Australian Jockey and Sydney Turf Clubs Merger Act 2010. The report also recommended that criminal sanctions apply for non-compliance with a compulsion order, including a monetary penalty and term of imprisonment.

Consistent with the Armati report recommendations, this bill amends the Harness Racing Act and Thoroughbred Racing Act to empower Harness Racing NSW and Racing NSW respectively to compel persons to attend a special inquiry and provide relevant information. The bill includes the failure of a person to comply with a compulsion order as an offence, with a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units or six months imprisonment, or both. It is important to note that under the Greyhound Racing Act 2017 inspectors of the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission already have extensive investigation and enforcement powers, including to require any person—whether a participant or not—to furnish information or records and to attend a hearing and answer questions. Penalties apply for persons who fail to comply with such a requirement, furnish false information or intentionally delay or obstruct a commission inspector.

Achieving consistency across the racing industry is critical and it is imperative that Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW also have the necessary powers to address threats to racing integrity. Under the proposed model, Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW will be required to obtain authorisation from the Supreme Court to exercise statutory compulsion powers. In applying to the court, a racing controlling body is required to be reasonably satisfied that a person has relevant information and is unwilling to provide that information to a special inquiry. However, the bill also provides for a controlling body to apply to the court for authorisation of compulsion powers if it is reasonably satisfied that a person has relevant information and exceptional circumstances exist that require a compulsion power without first asking the person to provide this information voluntarily. The exceptional circumstances provision protects against the loss of relevant information to a special inquiry in situations where there is a very high likelihood this information will be lost if a person is first asked to comply voluntarily with a request for information.

The controlling body must persuade the court that there is a threat to the integrity of racing and must comply with a number of legislated requirements in making each application, which will be determined by the court on a case-by-case basis. In making its determination on whether a racing controlling body may use compulsion powers, the court must consider the nature of the threat, the value of the information sought, the likelihood that the unregistered person has this information, the likelihood that the person would be unwilling to provide this information, the nature of exceptional circumstances if relevant and the potential harm that may be caused to the unregistered person if they are required to provide self-incriminating evidence.

If the court grants leave to use compulsion powers, the racing controlling body can issue a person with a notice to attend the inquiry and provide relevant information, documents or things. A compelled person is not excused from attending an inquiry or providing information on the grounds of self-incrimination. Where a person fails to comply with a notice, the matter will be dealt with summarily before the Local Court. The bill includes a number of safeguards, including the right of a compelled person to be represented by a lawyer. It also requires that the racing controlling body be assisted in its proceedings by an Australian legal practitioner of at least seven years standing. This legal practitioner is required to inform the compelled person of the effect of compulsion orders, to provide a warning that failure to comply with a compulsion order is an offence and of the requirement to provide potentially self-incriminating evidence.

While the bill provides that a person is not excused from the requirement to provide information under the relevant provisions on the basis of self-incrimination, it also provides that this information is not admissible in any other disciplinary, civil or criminal proceedings against that person, except for proceedings under the relevant legislation. Together, these safeguards provide appropriate protection for compelled persons and ensure that sufficient checks and balances are in place. The bill also requires the Minister to undertake a review of the level of penalties in respect of non-compliance with a compulsion order to determine whether it remains valid and appropriate for securing the objects of the applicable amendments.

I now turn to exclusion orders. A further gap in the integrity controls for New South Wales racing is the inability of the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force to exercise powers to exclude persons from attending the State's racecourses in a manner similar to powers in respect of casinos pursuant to the Casino Control Act 1992. This contrasts with the powers of the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, who has powers to exclude persons from both Victorian racecourses and its casino. The extension of the commissioner's exclusion powers to New South Wales racecourses would add another layer of protection to the State's racing industry, including by reducing opportunities for organised crime figures to exploit the industry for the purposes of certain criminal activities, such as money laundering. As such, the bill amends the Betting and Racing Act 1998 to provide the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force with authority to ban persons from entering or remaining on any racecourse in New South Wales.

The new section 15B of the Betting and Racing Act sets out the main principles of this regime, which will require the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force to consider whether it is in the public interest to exclude an individual from racecourses. A racecourse exclusion order issued by the commissioner applies to all licensed racecourses in New South Wales at any time during which there is a race meeting at the racecourse. Under the amendments, the commissioner must notify the individual subject to the exclusion order, if the person can be reasonably found, and each controlling body and appropriate interstate authorities.

Racing controlling bodies will be responsible for providing a copy of the order to each registered racing club. A person who breaches an exclusion order may be subject to a maximum penalty of 50 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both. While the proposed powers and penalties are similar to police-directed exclusion powers under the Casino Control Act, there are some key differences with the proposed racecourse exclusion orders to ensure the legislation reflects contemporary standards and is effective in a racing context. In making a racecourse exclusion order, the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force must be of the opinion that it is in the public interest to do so. This is similar to provisions in corresponding Victorian legislation that empowers the Chief Commissioner of Victorian Police to exclude persons from Victorian racecourses.

Unlike in Victoria, racing controlling authorities will be required to inform racing clubs of all exclusion orders in force. This additional obligation ensures buy-in from clubs and assists in reducing the enforcement burden on New South Wales police. As is appropriate with this type of administrative decision, a person subject to an exclusion order can apply to New South Wales police seeking reasons for the decision to issue an exclusion order. Additionally, the bill proposes appeal rights, allowing a person subject to an exclusion order to appeal the decision to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

In both circumstances, and as is reflected in similar provisions across New South Wales legislation, the bill limits the disclosure of criminal intelligence information where reasons for the decision or an appeal is sought. The proposed amendment to the Betting and Racing Act creates an additional layer of support to allow the NSW Police Force and racing authorities to protect the racing industry from threats to its integrity. The bill also amends the Racing Appeals Tribunal Act 1983 to provide greater flexibility for the tribunal to distribute cases. Currently, the Tribunal Act limits the circumstances in which persons appointed to act as the tribunal are able to hear cases, impacting the efficient handling of caseloads and curtailing opportunities for persons appointed to act as the tribunal to develop experience in the hearing of racing appeals.

The bill amends the Tribunal Act to allow persons appointed to act as the tribunal to do so on occasions or in respect of appeals as the tribunal directs, and for the Minister to establish an order of seniority of persons appointed to act as the tribunal. These amendments will improve efficiency in the hearing of tribunal appeals, while increasing the experience of persons appointed to act as the tribunal and providing opportunities for effective succession planning. The bill also proposes to expand the provisions of section 8A of the Tribunal Act, which currently allows the tribunal to receive advice from racing experts. The amendments will allow the tribunal to appoint an expert assessor with knowledge, expertise and experience in any relevant subject area, meaning that the tribunal has access to a broader range of expertise to inform decisions.

Under the Tribunal Act, the tribunal is empowered to compel any person to appear as a witness at a hearing. Failing to attend is an offence that carries a maximum penalty of five penalty units. The bill increases the maximum penalty to 100 penalty units, six months imprisonment, or both, consistent with penalties for non-compliance with compulsion orders for Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW. The bill also allows staff from

any racing controlling body to be appointed to assist the tribunal, sharing this responsibility across the racing codes and increasing the number of people available to assist the tribunal. Finally, the bill modernises the service of documents, allowing them to be served by email. This provides administrative efficiencies and meets community expectations regarding the electronic service of documents.

I turn now to the rules of racing. The bill proposes to amend the Thoroughbred Racing Act to explicitly set out the power of Racing NSW to make, amend and repeal rules. A power to make, amend and repeal rules is currently implied by the Thoroughbred Racing Act, which assigns Racing NSW as the State's principal club under the *Australian Rules of Racing*. Those rules are made by Racing Australia and are adopted by the principal club of each State. They also provide for principal clubs to supplement them with their own local rules. For the avoidance of doubt, the bill makes it clear that Racing NSW has the power to make, amend and repeal rules for the control and regulation of horseracing and the exercise of its functions.

A similar amendment is proposed to the Harness Racing Act. While Harness Racing NSW has a legislated power to make rules, the amendment will make it explicit that the controlling authority can also amend and repeal rules. Making these powers explicit will enhance transparency and create consistency with powers under the Greyhound Racing Act, which sets out an explicit power for the commission to make, amend and repeal rules. Amendments in the bill will provide consistency across the racing codes and bring legislation into line with current practice. Minor miscellaneous and housekeeping amendments are also proposed to both the Harness Racing Act and the Thoroughbred Racing Act.

I turn now to the winding up of the Tax Reduction Trust Fund. The bill proposes minor amendments to the Totalizator Act 1997 and the Totalizator Regulation 2012 to wind up the Tax Reduction Trust Fund and allow the distribution of greyhound racing's share of wagering tax parity revenues directly to Greyhound Racing NSW. Parliament enacted amendments to racing and wagering legislation in 2015 to reduce New South Wales wagering tax rates over a five-year period until they are in line with Victorian rates in 2020. Revenue from wagering tax parity reforms is distributed amongst the three controlling bodies, with payments currently being made directly to Racing NSW and Harness Racing NSW.

At the time the fund was established the future of the greyhound racing industry was uncertain. Establishing the fund allowed revenue for the greyhound racing industry to be quarantined and held on trust. Since the introduction of the New South Wales Government's greyhound racing reforms, the balance of the fund has been paid to Greyhound Racing NSW on a quarterly basis. The bill winds up the fund and provides that all payments are made directly to the relevant controlling body, removing the unnecessary administrative burden to facilitate quarterly transfers from the fund to Greyhound Racing NSW. It is important that racing legislation remains relevant and continues to meet the expectations of the community and the industry. The changes proposed in this bill will provide racing controlling bodies and the New South Wales Commissioner of Police with a greater level of control over matters that pose a threat to the integrity of racing. This will ensure that racing remains a fair and competitive sport, with high levels of public confidence. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Private Members' Statements

HOMELESSNESS WEEK

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (18:14): Members have debated some very challenging legislation this week, but it is also Homelessness Week. This is an opportunity to create awareness in our communities to highlight the people who are less fortunate than us. Close to 38,000 people are sleeping rough on any given night in this State. They are either couch surfing or they are sleeping in overcrowded, unsuitable accommodation. Members in this place can and must do better to ensure that the number of people who are experiencing homelessness is reduced. I last addressed homelessness in this Chamber during my opposition speech on the budget. I was grateful for the opportunity to raise awareness and to ask Parliament to work together to try to eradicate homelessness. The late Bob Hawke said:

The things which are most important don't always scream the loudest.

New South Wales has a crisis in that on any given night across the communities we represent tens of thousands of people do not have a home. The number of people who are homeless in the State has increased by 37 per cent, which is more than double the national average. Those people are not numbers; they have names and they have stories that must be shared more often in this place. We must give them a voice. Homeless people gather a few metres from here to spend the night on cold concrete. In New South Wales and Australia in 2019 we can and must do better. A third of people who are homeless are fleeing domestic and family violence. They do not choose to be homeless. This set of circumstances has come their way. These people are down on their luck and they are desperate to change that.

In August NSW Labor will be hosting a homelessness forum. Experts from across the field are invited to help us understand what we need to do from a short-, medium- and long-term perspective. We want to ensure that we depoliticise this issue wherever possible. The 38,000 people who will sleep rough tonight, who will not have a stable home and who will be at risk of suffering both physical and emotional harm, need this place to do better. We want to ensure that we get the policies and the initiatives right. This week we have debated highly emotional legislation. I have seen people from across the community and from different faiths share their views. I would like to think that same level of support is provided to people who are homeless and who are doing it tough across our communities.

I will touch on two organisations among many that are doing great work. The first is Lou's Place. The badge I wear today is one of the handmade badges being put together by women across New South Wales. It has been explained that a lot of love and care has gone into making every batch. Each badge takes over an hour to cut, write, assemble and sew. The words written on each badge were chosen by the women of Lou's Place to remind us that housing is about much more than just accommodation. The word I have is "dignity", and that is very important. I commend the work of Lou's Place and the work of all homeless services across New South Wales.

The other organisation that is near and dear to my heart is the Wollongong Homeless Hub. It is doing fantastic work both in the community I represent and across the Illawarra region. The hub is available to people in times of need. It has been an honour and a great privilege to work with the homeless hub and its clients over the past eight years. I have had the opportunity to meet many people who are doing it tough. They explain in such an eloquent way the circumstances that have caused them to reach this point. We need to hear more of those stories so that we see homeless people not as numbers, economic statistics or social burdens, but as people from families, people with stories and people this State must focus on. We must ensure that by the end of this term of Parliament we have significantly reduced the number of people who are sleeping rough in unsupported accommodation and who are homeless in New South Wales.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (18:19): This week we celebrate Education Week, a time to acknowledge the hard work of over 2,200 principals and 65,000 teachers, as well as the 800,000 students right across New South Wales. Education Week celebrates the achievements of so many in public education but more so acknowledges the broader work of our school communities who so often are essential to the success of our local public schools. Education Week is a time to remind students that they have a voice, are valued and are cared for.

It is so important that we instil these values in our children when they are at school. Investing in them is an investment in our future and we are giving them the opportunity to shape the world. The theme this year is Every Student, Every Voice. This is about ensuring every child in New South Wales feels empowered to speak out about what they believe in and feels encouraged to become an engaged global citizen. As we celebrate our schools and our school communities during Education Week, I particularly congratulate the Terara Public School community in my electorate. Terara Public School is a wonderful little school on the South Coast that has been educating local students for well over 130 years.

Just under 100 students attend Terara Public School. The success of the school community in supporting students and instilling important values and lessons in our future generations is often noted. I particularly single out Terara Public School as the school community was recently shocked and dismayed by potential changes to its operation. Some in the community even believed the school was scheduled for closure. Let me be clear: As long as I am the member for South Coast, I will never allow the closure of Terara Public School. I do, however, express extreme disappointment on behalf of the Terara Public School community following a recent letter it received from the Department of Education.

This news from the department was perceived by many as a future reduction in enrolment numbers, an inability of siblings to attend school together and even a potential closure of the school. Upon hearing the news, I immediately contacted the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC—whom I will be meeting with tomorrow—as well as the southern regional director to express my concerns and those of my community. I sincerely thank the Minister for her responsiveness and understanding, and I will continue to work with her to ensure that we listen to the school community and meet the needs of a small school such as Terara Public School now and into the future.

I can confirm that the recent updates to the policy will not affect the viability of the school. Students have always been entitled to enrol in their local public school, with principals able to accept out-of-area enrolments if places are available, and Terara Public School will continue to operate under this longstanding policy. If the school has capacity, out-of-area applications for siblings of current students are given priority. As they have in the past, exceptional circumstances will also be considered when assessing out-of-area enrolment applications. The theme

of Education Week is Every Student, Every Voice, and the voices of the Terara Public School community have certainly been heard. They have now been heard by this Parliament and will continue to be heard. I look forward to working with the school community, particularly the P&C, to ensure the future success of Terara Public School.

It is important that we as a government listen to the concerns and needs of our communities. Just last year 10,000 residents signed a petition calling on the Government to provide additional educational facilities for the southern Shoalhaven. We have since purchased the former Shoalhaven Anglican School site and work is progressing to finalise plans for its future. The New South Wales Government's budget also delivered funding to commence planning for a new public primary school for the Worrigee/South Nowra region, as well as relocation of the Budawang School to the Shoalhaven Anglican School site.

Funding has also been received to clear the maintenance backlog at all South Coast schools and we are delivering hundreds of new teachers and support staff for our region. As the member for South Coast and a former teacher, I will continue to listen and respond to the needs of my community, delivering essential upgrades to our facilities and being a strong voice to government and this Parliament. I could talk at length about some of the achievements of our public schools, and I will do that in the future. In this address I wanted to dissipate some of the fears of the Terara Public School community that arose through a misunderstanding of communication it received. There will be no closure of Terara Public School as long as I am the member for South Coast.

COFFS HARBOUR SUNNY'S BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:23): Businesses on the Coffs Coast are highly regarded for their pursuit of excellence, creativity, professionalism and innovation. Our local family firms are renowned for their leadership in many fields of enterprise and for their willingness to have a go. I admire the business community in my electorate for demonstrating initiative, showing resilience during tough times and being the key driver of economic growth in our region. Success should be embraced, celebrated and rewarded, and we certainly know how to do that with flair and style in my local community. The prestigious Sunny's Business Awards recently celebrated its seventeenth anniversary as a leading independent small business awards program on the Coffs Coast. The Coffs Harbour Chamber of Commerce is the proud custodian of the awards, led by chamber president Martin Wells and his hardworking committee.

I congratulate each of the 2019 finalists on what they have achieved and are continuing to achieve. The Outstanding Young Employee 18-30 category included: Siobhan McCowat from Two Tails Wines, Mel Crossland from Fuji Xerox Business Centre Mid North Coast, Jasmine Swe from Fresh Dental Care, Hannah Elliot from Studio M Medi Spa and winner Letisha Johnston from TerryWhite Chemmart. The winner of the Outstanding Young Entrepreneur 18-30 category was Jemma Frame from the Coffs Coast Hair Studio. The Outstanding Business Leader 31 plus category included Barbara Haigh from the Laser Lounge Coffs Harbour, Kirsty Christensen from Fresh Dental Care, Madonna Bannerman from Two Tails Wines, Tanya Maloney from TerryWhite Chemmart Coffs Harbour, Brad Plummer from Mr Plummer and winner Anna McAfee from LinkedInLocal.

The Outstanding Employer of Choice category included: DFM Financial Group, Fresh Dental Care, Mr Plummer, Startup Superstar, Amato Slapp Engineering, Elite Scanning Solutions, Cath Fowler Marketing, Studio M Medi Spa, the Little Upholstery Shop and winner Resource Design and Management. The Excellence in Micro Business category included: Coffs Coast Hair Studio, Jim's Fencing Coffs Harbour South and winner Coffs Coast Surf Tours. The Excellence in Small Business category included: Resource Design and Management, Two Tails Wines, the Observatory Holiday Apartments, Mr Plummer, Coastal Wardrobes and winner Sportspower Super Warehouse Coffs Harbour. The Excellence in Business category included Key Employment and winner DFM Financial Group. The Excellence in Innovation category included: Resource Design and Management, the Observatory Holiday Apartments and winner Key Employment.

The Excellence in Sustainability category included: Bishop Druitt College, Jim's Fencing Coffs Harbour South, Fuji Xerox Business Centre and winner Affirmations Australia. The Excellence in Social Enterprise category included Octec Employment Services, Coffs Coast Hair Studio, the Laser Lounge Coffs Harbour, the Copy Centre, TerryWhite Chemmart Coffs Harbour and winner the Australian Centre for Eating Disorders. The Local Producer category included: Wood We Create, Two Tails Wines and winner Oz Group Co-op Limited. The Marketing and Advertising Award category included: Fresh Dental Care, the Observatory Holiday Apartments, the Fuji Xerox Business Centre and winner the Laser Lounge Coffs Harbour. The Professional Services category included: Resource Design and Management, Amato Slapp Engineering, Fresh Dental Care, Cath Fowler Marketing and co-winners Coffs Harbour City Council, the Six Degrees Co-Working Hub and Coastal Media.

The Professional Development and Training category included: the Laser Lounge Coffs Harbour, Mr Plummer and winner Fresh Dental Care. The Excellence in Business Practices category included: Resource Design and Management, Jim's Fencing Coffs Harbour South, Key Employment and winner Mr Plummer. The

Tourism and Attractions category included Two Tails Wines and winner Coffs Coast Surf Tours. The Accommodation, Hotels Clubs and Bars category included: Pacific Bay Resort, the Observatory Holiday Apartments and winner Riverside Holiday Resort Urunga. The Excellence in Workplace Inclusion category included: Tarraray Pet Retreat, Octec Employment Services and winner Riverside Holiday Resort Urunga. The winners advance to judging in the regional business awards and I wish them well. Small businesses are the backbone of communities such as Coffs Harbour and it is important that we recognise the hard work they do.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:28): As the member for Bankstown, I have the honour and privilege of representing an area that is rich in cultural diversity. Bankstown is not just a thriving multicultural community; it also has a large and active multi-faith population. Almost 80 per cent of residents of my electorate identify as having a faith and being religious—well above the national figure. New South Wales is the largest multi-faith State, with 65.5 per cent of people in the last census identifying themselves as having a religion, compared with 60.5 per cent nationally. Bankstown residents identify as a range of religions, with almost 40 per cent identifying as Christian, including 20.8 per cent who identify as Catholic, 4.5 per cent who identify as Anglican and 5.6 per cent who identify as Eastern Orthodox.

The remaining 8.6 per cent follow other denominations of Christianity. Twenty-seven per cent of Bankstown residents identify as Muslim and 9.8 per cent identify as Buddhist. As a result, Bankstown is blessed to have a large number of places of worship and we also have many religious schools. I note that St Euphemia College is in my electorate and I also have a number of Catholic primary and high schools in my electorate along with a number of Islamic schools and language schools that provide lessons in faith within their curriculums. I acknowledge the many religious organisations and institutions in my electorate.

I also note, however, that we do not have the necessary human rights laws in place in our State to protect people practising their faith. We know that there has been bipartisan agreement to introduce legislation at the Federal level to correct this anomaly. At this stage there is no such legislation in New South Wales, despite the Ruddock review recommending that there needs to be legislation in New South Wales with respect to religious freedom. I acknowledge that a number of my colleagues from across the political divide—30 members of Parliament from both Chambers—were part of the inaugural Parliamentary Friends of Religious Freedom, of which I am co-chair. I thank each of them for being part of this association and I acknowledge Damien Tudehope, who is the co-chair of the association.

The topic of religious rights is raised regularly with me, particularly by residents of Bankstown. Many of these people are not only devoutly religious but also Labor supporters. They do not demand that Labor support them on all socially conservative policies, but they would like their right to practise their faith to be recognised. I to acknowledge the many people in my electorate who are striving to ensure that their religious rights are enshrined in legislation in New South Wales. I thank my many colleagues who joined me today in pursuit of ensuring that there will be activities, events, forums and a working party as we follow our aim of gaining religious freedom rights in New South Wales. We will embark on what the Ruddock review has asked New South Wales to do, which is to strengthen laws so that they are on a par with the legislation of other States and Territories. In recent weeks many residents of Bankstown have written to me to raise a variety of different issues, particularly issues pertaining to their rights to religious freedom and ensuring that reforms are introduced in New South Wales to safeguard the religious freedoms that are important to many residents across the State, and particularly in my electorate of Bankstown.

JEWISHCARE NSW

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (16:59): JewishCare NSW is a community services organisation in my electorate of Vaucluse with a proud record of service to the Jewish community and beyond. It is located in Woollahra and it provides child and family services, mental health programs, disability services and community aged services and offers over 25 programs that help 4,000 people each year across the State. My first contact with JewishCare as the local member was in 2011 when it applied for funding to the NSW Community Building Partnership program and I was able to assist. Its work makes a real difference to real people and that is why I will continue to support it strongly. On Thursday 18 July 2019, I took part in the official opening of the newly refurbished Jewish Folk Centre on Saber Street, Woollahra, just around the corner from JewishCare. About a year ago, the boards of each organisation started working together on a project to reinvigorate the folk centre for more community use.

Due to the vision of JewishCare's immediate past president Allan Vidor, AM, that project is now a reality. The Jewish Folk Centre has over 200 members and is used to host events and language teaching programs for Israeli-Australians. Now the folk centre has a shiny new industrial kitchen, a totally refurbished main hall with new paint and refreshed flooring and it will be home to the many programs JewishCare has to offer, five days a

week. One of the main programs that will run out of the folk centre is Our Kitchen Hand—a program that teaches food and cooking skills to people living with a disability. To run the program, accessible benchtops, ovens and a new accessible toilet were needed and have now been installed. The folk centre is also now home to the JDay Program—a day program for participants with a disability to make friends in a group environment. The program is tailored to participants and includes music, dancing and arts and crafts.

I am proud of what JewishCare and the folk centre have been able to achieve together. In addition to Allan Vidor, I congratulate current President Jason Sandler, the JewishCare board, Chief Executive Officer Claire Vernon and Executive Officer Warren Hurst, and folk centre Co-Presidents Miri Orden and David Nathan, who were also absolutely instrumental in the project. I also mention the good work of JewishCare staff including Rolene the occupational therapist and Chris the facilities manager as well as Suzi, Elena, Alyson and Nikki. A special part of the opening was the thanks extended to the contractors who were integral to delivering the project between JewishCare and the Jewish Folk Centre.

Significant to the project were the contributions of Toga Group, Modern Painting Group, Axis Plumbing Group, Winnings Appliances, P&G Joinery, Sunny Interiors, Reece Bathroom and Plumbing, European Timber Flooring, Versatile ceramics, Belvia Services, ACES, Corrs Chambers Westgarth, Mecone Sydney, Robert Bird Group, SJB Interiors, Steve Watson Partners, Wood & Grieve Engineers and solicitor Henry Frydman. A lot of those groups were local to my electorate and are wonderful community constituents, as well as being contributors on this joint project.

The opening was also attended by Woollahra Mayor Peter Cavanagh and Waverley Councillor Sally Betts. Congratulations to JewishCare and the folk centre. They have come together in a way that I would expect. They are both fantastic standalone organisations in my electorate, but on this occasion they have joined together to make themselves more powerful. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

PORT MACQUARIE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:37): Today I recognise a special anniversary for women in my electorate: the ninetieth birthday of the Country Women's Association [CWA] Port Macquarie Branch, which was celebrated recently. That is 90 years of being a strong voice for the marginalised and less fortunate in our community. On 1 August the CWA Port Macquarie Branch marked its special birthday at the Port City Bowling Club to celebrate its accomplishments and to recognise those who worked hard to establish the organisation—one that continues to grow today. When anyone references the CWA, I know we think scones, jam and cream—in that order—but to country women and regional communities across Australia it is so much more. On 12 March 1929 in Port Macquarie a group of motivated women decided that an organisation was required to support women living in isolated country communities who lacked access to basic healthcare facilities because of their geography. Times were hard then as money was tight, with the expectation that women would stay at home and look after the children.

The first CWA branch in Port Macquarie was formed with inaugural president, Mrs A.C. Elliott, elected and 19 members signed up and ready to serve the community. The women wasted no time in getting to work on a variety of community services and projects, including the Hastings District Hospital in its first few years. The group held fundraising events, including dances, card parties, socials, street stalls, and sold Christmas cards and calendars. At the end of its second year membership had grown to 26 and the community began to recognise the growing contribution made by its local CWA branch. As the number of branch members grew, so did the enormity of the local CWA fundraising initiatives. By the early 1950s the branch was planning to build its own baby health centre and meeting rooms, with the dream coming to fruition in 1956—what a tremendous achievement.

The CWA now had a permanent home to hold its meetings and to plan for future projects. Some would say that this was the CWA Port Macquarie branch's single biggest accomplishment. Over time, however, the outdated rooms did not meet the needs of the organisation. It was decided in the late 1990s to acquire new rooms. Through sheer determination, many hours of fundraising and successful government grant applications, the new CWA buildings were opened in November 2004, where people can still enjoy the hospitality provided by our volunteer country women.

Our amazing women of the Port Macquarie branch have helped contribute to the \$11.5 million that New South Wales CWA has raised. Fundraising is generated through the Port Macquarie Tea Rooms, with a major focus on youth education initiatives as well as sponsoring the cooking section at the local agricultural shows each year. The branch also contributes financially to Papua New Guinea through International Director Ruth Durrant donating money, clothing and stationery for schoolchildren. In 2018 CWA Port Macquarie donated \$20,000 towards the Drought Appeal to support farmers and their local communities. I recognise life members: Joan Bird who, come October, will have served 60 years; Shirley Kilpatrick, a member for 36 years; and Margaret Oswald and Margaret Roberts, OAM, for dedicating 50 years of service to the Port Macquarie CWA branch.

Although I was unable to attend the ninetieth birthday celebrations, I was pleased to learn that Mr Ian Thomson—grandson of Mrs A. C. Elliott, the founding president—was invited to open proceedings to commemorate his late grandmother's significant contribution to the CWA Port Macquarie branch. I extend my congratulations to committee members Colleen Carmody, Jill Adams and Alice Miller and to the hardworking women that made this event possible. I congratulate the CWA Port Macquarie branch on its 90 years of service and commitment to women and our local community.

**SUPERINTENDENT COMMANDER PETER LENNON, APM, AND DETECTIVE
SUPERINTENDENT WAYNE MURRAY**

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:41): I acknowledge the service and contributions that retired Superintendent Commander Peter Lennon, APM, and retired Detective Superintendent Wayne Murray have made to my community of Cabramatta over their time of service in the NSW Police Force. Over their combined 79 years or so of service, Mr Lennon and Mr Murray served in various roles within the NSW Police Force before settling in as commanders of the local area command. In the time that both men served, initiatives like Coffee with a Cop was born, crime rates dropped and differing cultures united together as a community. In particular, Mr Lennon served his last nine years of his remarkable 40-year career in the NSW Police Force as the commander of Fairfield Police Area Command. Mr Murray, as a commander of Cabramatta Local Area Command, served his last three years in the Traffic and Highway Patrol Command.

No matter how big the task or the circumstances, the people in my community were always able to count on both men to deliver fairness, justice and help to those who needed it the most. Both the Fairfield and Cabramatta communities would not be where they are today without the contribution of both men. There are simply not enough words to show how much they have given to my community. Police officers, in particular, are the ones whom we look to when we are in danger. They put their lives on the line so that ordinary people like us can get home safe and sound. They work long hours and on public holidays. They miss important family events such as birthdays, yet they do not expect anything from ordinary people like us.

That is why it is fitting that both men received march-out ceremonies by the NSW Police Force. I cannot begin to imagine how much of a sacrifice both those men have made throughout their honourable careers serving on the front line of my community. But I can say this: Our communities are a safer place today because of their actions. Words cannot express how grateful and indebted I am for their service over the past few decades. I wish both men a well-deserved retirement. I thank them on behalf of members on both sides of the House and my community of Fairfield and Cabramatta for their service to this State and this nation. I wish Mr Lennon all the best with his travel plans and I wish Mr Murray all the best with his fishing and outdoor adventures. May both men have long and fruitful retirements.

YAZIDI COMMUNITY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:44): Last weekend I attended an incredibly sobering and sorrowful function in Armidale that truly highlighted to me how lucky we are to live in this wonderful country. Saturday 3 August 2019 marked the five-year anniversary of the Mount Sinjar attempted genocide of the Yazidi people of northern Iraq by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS]. It was the seventy-fourth attempt to eliminate the Yazidi people, who are one of the oldest religious and ethnic communities on the planet. The attack at the hands of Islamic State militants saw thousands of the Yazidi people killed, taken hostage, kidnapped, raped or burned, as well as suffering other atrocities.

I am proud to say that the Armidale community in the Northern Tablelands electorate is now home to 400 lovely, wonderful, kind and grateful Yazidi people as part of the Commonwealth Government's humanitarian migration resettlement program. The weekend's event was hosted by the Armidale Ex-Services Memorial Club and organised by two English-speaking Yazidi people, Hasan Saffuk and Dr Sarbast Qassim. It was a successful function to raise awareness of their people's plight, while bringing the Yazidi and Armidale communities even closer together. The Yazidi are largely from the Sinjar province of northern Iraq and are followers of a religion that believes the Yazidi were the first people created in the Garden of Eden.

In 2014, following a bloody military campaign to capture the city of Mosul, Islamic State militants moved west into the Sinjar area with the aim of converting non-Muslim populations, such as the Yazidis, to Islam. What actually occurred was a horrific massacre. Because of the rapid advance of ISIS, 200,000 Yazidi people fled to Mount Sinjar without any food, water or medicine. ISIS blockaded the mountain range, preventing vital resources getting to those people. During the first two days of the siege more than 120 elderly people and children died of thirst, hundreds of women were kidnapped and men were killed in the fighting. The situation lasted until 7 August, when then United States President Barack Obama ordered an air strike on the ridge to break the ISIS blockade of the area.

As I mentioned, this was not the first but the seventy-fourth attempted genocide of the Yazidis. They are such a resilient people. Since the ISIS incursion, it is estimated that 430,000 Yazidis have been displaced around the world. It has been a whole-of-community effort to bring these people to the Northern Tablelands, and I must say that we absolutely love having them. I mention the hard work of Lucinda Wright and Jeff Siegel of Settlement Services International [SSI], as well as the Armidale Sanctuary Humanitarian Settlement Inc, Dr Robin Jones and all of their team. Together with SSI, they have been integral in finding families a place to live in town, connecting them with general practitioners and health services, enrolling them in free English classes at TAFE, helping with employment and helping their students integrate into local schools.

The Yazidi young people are loving it in the schools and are not only quickly picking up the English language but also starting to outperform some of the local students. It amazes me how resilient young people are. Like sponges, they are able to absorb and bounce back despite the atrocities they have faced. They have embraced with gusto their new community and new life. Currently 133 people have embarked on the Adult Migrant English Program at TAFE, which is critical, and 59 Yazidi children are enrolled in the intensive English school at Armidale Secondary College. Sarah Mills, Renee Thomas, Angela Preiebbenow, Carol McKinney, Annie Kannety and Jackie Davidson are teaching the students, who are gaining in confidence all the time. I thank the Armidale Rotary Club, Christopher Clifton from the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors and everyone in the Armidale community who has welcomed the Yazidi people. It was a wonderful function but also a sorrowful one. It was also a happy occasion when we embraced and welcomed our new brothers and sisters. We stand with them to create a new, strong, safe and prosperous future for the Yazidi people in our community.

CENTRAL COAST AIRPORT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:50): The Central Coast Airport, formerly known as the Warnervale Airport, has been the subject of controversy in the local news recently. There is a lot of misinformation in the community, so I want to set the record straight. In the early 2000s there was a push to turn the former Warnervale airfield—it is a landing strip and is not under Civil Aviation Safety Authority regulation—into the biggest freight airport in New South Wales. At the time local residents were not impressed by that idea. My predecessor, the then member for Wyong, Paul Crittenden, worked with the then Labor Government and the crossbenchers in the upper House to pass the Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Act 1996 to protect the interests of the community.

Time went on and the Central Coast Aero Club began operating, as it still does, out of the airport. Most of the community does not complain about the aero club. Members of the club fly light planes and undertake training and maintenance. Residents who live in the area, of which I am one, have come to accept the airport and the role it fulfils in the community. However, Wyong Shire Council, in the final days before its amalgamation into the Central Coast Council, came up with an idea to grow a regional airport. The first site it looked at was at Bushells Ridge but that site was found to be inappropriate. The council then spent a lot of ratepayers' money and bought land at Kiar Ridge but that site also proved inappropriate. The council finally settled on increasing the size of Warnervale Airport again.

In 2013 the council commissioned a report to look at options for the airport, which it kept secret. The report set out four options: do nothing and leave the airport as it is; sell it off as an industrial estate; have the council develop it and operate it as an industrial estate; or increase the size of the airport and turn it into a regional airport. The fourth option had the lowest score. The report said that the worst option for ratepayers was to develop it into a regional airport. However, the council hid that report and then developed what was called the Central Coast Airport master plan. The master plan included an eight-stage expansion plan. Work began at the airport at considerable cost to ratepayers. The council came into conflict with the current State Government when it asked for the Act to be revoked.

The electorate of Lake Macquarie—then, as now, represented by Greg Piper—borders the western edge of my electorate of Wyong. Greg Piper and I agreed to seek a review of the Act. The then planning Minister, Rob Stokes, carried out a 12-month review that was finally finished by his ministerial successor, Minister Roberts. The Government recommended not only that the Act stay in place but also that it be strengthened to protect the community. There is now a dispute between the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the Office of Environment and Heritage over works done at the airport, which have triggered the provision of the Act that limits the number of movements per year. That is when the controversy started because it now impacts on the Central Coast Aero Club. The club is technically in breach of the Act but that is not the fault of the aero club. I support the club being able to remain there. It is the fault of the council because of its actions in increasing the size of the runway without asking.

The Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Act, which the council is trying to get rid of—as it did before—is there to protect the community. The Act does not say that the size of the airport cannot be increased; it says that ministerial approval must be sought and that proper studies must be done to make sure the community is protected.

I support the aero club, I support maintaining the current airstrip, with some small growth, and I support the retention of the Act to make sure that our community is protected and proper studies are done if there is a plan to fully develop the airport. That is the truth and those are the facts that I will be pushing in the local media.

HUME DAM

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:55): The turning of the first sod for the construction of the Hume Dam took place on 28 November 1919 by Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, Governor-General of Australia. This was the first step in a journey of construction that took 17 years to complete, as Federal and State governments looked for ways to help ensure water security for humans, animals and the environment. The Hume Dam is a major dam that is located approximately 16 kilometres from the City of Albury. When full, the dam has a maximum depth of 40 metres and it holds back the water from the reservoir, which is named Lake Hume. Hume Dam is considered to be of State heritage significance due to its economic, environmental, aesthetic and social values. Overall, the dam and lake hold a volume of water approximately six times that of Sydney Harbour. The dam was built to help with flood mitigation and irrigation and to provide hydro-electric power and assist with conservation in times of drought and flood. This followed years of drought in the second half of the 1890s, which culminated with a record dry year in 1902. An interstate royal commission was established, the findings of which included the need for additional water storage to be built.

From 1903 to 1913 discussions were held to ascertain the best way to establish an irrigation scheme that would best serve the southern Riverina and northern Victoria. Those discussions focused on finding the best possible solutions to regulate and share the resource provided by the Murray River. The Hume Dam was constructed where water is captured from much of the Australian Alps and includes areas that receive rain and snowfall in excess of 2,000 millimetres per year. Those factors combined to make the site of the Hume Dam a particularly attractive one, as our forebears sought to provide water security for the generations to follow. The wall is over one kilometre long and towers 60 metres above river level. The wall has been modified on a regular basis since construction finished in 1936. From 1950 to 1961, storage was enlarged by adding 29 spillway gates as well as an additional parapet wall and two extra earthen embankments that prevented water flowing out on the Victorian side of the border.

In addition to water storage, the dam provides electricity through a hydro-electric power station, which came into service in 1957 with a 50 megawatt capacity. In 2000 its capacity was upgraded to provide a total of 58 megawatts. As I travel throughout my electorate, I constantly come into contact with people who are suffering as a result of the devastating drought. Imagine, if you will, how much worse this would be if our forebears had not had the vision to build the Hume Dam. Even the Hume Dam does not make it possible for us to completely droughtproof the Murray-Darling Basin. Drought is a natural part of our climate and will always be a factor in the lives of people in New South Wales. It is not just people who suffer; animals, fish and birds rely on the basin for their very survival. Managing water flow along the Murray River provides significant challenges as we walk a fine line between a healthy environment and ensuring that there is enough water for wildlife, agriculture and general human consumption.

The river is not one, long, beautiful pipeline that runs from the alps of New South Wales to Goolwa in South Australia. Rather, it has wider, narrower, higher and lower sections along the way that have a huge impact on the way water is managed. An example of this can be found at the Barmah Choke. The choke occurs at a point in the river between Deniliquin and Moama where an uplift in the land happened about 25,000 years ago. This caused a narrowing of the river and resulted in an area that floods more readily than other parts, meaning that even in dry times the amount of water released from Hume Dam must be managed carefully to ensure that as little as possible is wasted further downstream. The choke is a mitigating factor to be considered when authorities decide how much water can be released. Floodwaters at the Barmah Choke are considered to be part of water allocations rather than being classified as floodwater, meaning that, in effect, landholders do not receive the same allocation as others along the river.

The people in the area tell me that they want that to be changed. Many local families have a longstanding history on the land. They are passionate about what they do and are committed to working effectively within environmental limitations. They rely on the land for their livelihoods and understand the importance of working with, and not against, nature. On that basis, they do not want to see any further degradation of their precious natural resources. Australia is highly affected by variable weather patterns that impact our ability to store water for drinking, agricultural and environmental use.

Today many people are working hard to ensure that the water captured and stored by the Hume Dam is put to good use in food production for the nation. I tip my hat to farmers and workers such as Mark Robertson, Gabrielle Copeland and Troy Maugher, who continue to help make the Murray-Darling Basin the food bowl of Australia. In November this year we will celebrate the centenary of the commencement of the infrastructure

project that has done so much to provide a level of prosperity, security and life for so many along the mighty Murray.

COOGEE ELECTORATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (19:00): Tonight I speak about planning in my local area, in particular the impact of out-of-control spot rezoning on my community. For those who do not know, spot rezoning is the rezoning of a specific area of land different from the zoning of a neighbouring property. In theory, it can be used to help meet important community and business needs—for instance, permitting a school or light industry in a residential area, or the building of culturally significant structures such as the Opera House. Such considerations have always been important and a focus of decision-making at local government level by elected and appointed officials whose job is not only to recognise the community's interests but also to balance them with the broader public interest, including the needs of future residents and the State, nation and even global requirements.

Let us be clear: Spot rezoning has been used very successfully by developers, and the interests of communities all over New South Wales have been trodden into the ground. The overriding of local government control and the exploitation of rezoning by developers are interrelated. Put simply, spot rezoning in New South Wales has resulted in a major shift of power and influence from the community to developers. Under this Government, the needs and wishes of local communities have been ignored, scorned and laughed at. Control over the future of our suburbs and how they will look has changed for the worse. The endless construction of apartment buildings, bridges over roads going nowhere and replacing roads with freeways have already destroyed the character of many areas.

The abandonment of community say and influence is best demonstrated by this Government's spot rezoning provisions. The Government's low regard for local government and its elected representatives is embodied in its preference for key development applications, including spot rezoning, to be exercised far from the communities most affected by the decisions. The Government's disdain for ordinary citizens and for their duly elected local councillors is truly shocking and is a major attack on the democratic process—although I doubt this Government's capacity to understand or care about the implications of its actions.

We have before us a government that is fixated on toll roads and poor governance, that sees infrastructure only in bricks and concrete, and that lacks the capacity to understand the value of the people, their lives and their values. This Government sees no value in history or tradition, in old buildings or tributes, or even our Anzacs; it is afflicted with a fascination for the new. In my electorate of Coogee the implications of spot rezoning are enormous and fiercely contested by the community. For instance, in the eastern suburbs, Waverley Council twice rejected a proposal to build two 12-storey apartment blocks overlooking the heritage-listed Centennial Park between Oxford Street and Syd Einfeld Drive at Bondi Junction, known as the West Oxford Street development. The independent planning panel recommended the project for approval, despite major concerns about potential overshadowing of the park, demolition of heritage terrace houses and traffic congestion.

Spot rezoning has become common place. The planning Minister has drawn decision-making powers to himself and annihilated the power of the community and its elected local government representatives. Spot rezoning has become the norm; the Government has successfully replaced the power of the community with the power of developers. I am a great advocate for local government. I have huge respect for those representatives of the community who, with very little remuneration or benefit, spend many hours disseminating information, talking with residents and generally working to achieve the best outcomes for their community. As a councillor on Waverley Council, I know firsthand the great job being done by elected and appointed local government officials all over the State. Underpinning the current spot rezoning scheme is a prejudice that officials at this level are somehow unable or unwilling to make brave decisions and that necessary rezoning would not occur.

I have huge respect for those members of my electorate who continue to stand up for the community and seek better outcomes for their suburbs—people such as those currently fighting the overdevelopment and loss of local culture at the old Bronte RSL Club site, in Charing Cross, at West Oxford Street and at the Waverley Bowling Club. Those people deserve better governance and fairer decision-making structures than they have experienced in the past few years. As a person who loves my electorate deeply, I would also love to see greater respect paid to our history and to the preservation of our buildings and environment.

BLUE MOUNTAINS LIBERAL PARTY BRANCH

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:06): Tonight I record some disturbing developments unfolding within the Blue Mountains Liberal Party in my electorate. I am fortunate to count among my constituents a number of intelligent, thoughtful and reasonable Liberals. Some might be surprised to hear me acknowledge that. Over many years of local political involvement I have met Liberals with whom I disagree on most ideological matters but who I know are decent people who put the needs of their community first and who

do the best they can to serve them. However, working against these local Liberals is a cancerous cabal of pro-development, hard-right factional thugs who have begun infiltrating the Blue Mountains Liberal Party and trying to oust the sensible centrists. This cabal wants to put our local environmental plan through the shredder, install its own candidates on our council and usher a new white shoe brigade across the Nepean River and into the mountains.

In an extraordinary development, the Liberals have taken to stalking and spying on one another in the dark of night as their preselection ballots heat up ahead of the next council election. The *Blue Mountains Gazette* revealed this week that former Liberal Mayor Daniel Myles was the subject of an attempted sting operation by the president of the Liberals' local government conference, Timothy Donelan. Timothy is a wine merchant from Faulconbridge. I understand that he seeks to discredit Daniel Myles by producing evidence of an imagined political friendship with Labor Mayor Mark Greenhill. In the dark of night last Tuesday Timothy Donelan parked his car across the road from the Springwood home of Daniel Myles with a digital camera. He denies that he did this in the hope of catching Daniel Myles being given a lift to the council meeting in Katoomba by the Labor mayor.

Mr Myles would be within his rights to wonder what he had done to deserve this kind of political espionage from his own side. The truth is it is because he is a free-thinking Liberal councillor who has pushed back against the cancerous developer lobby within the Blue Mountains Liberals. Now this cancerous cabal is coming after his preselection. It seeks to install the failed Liberal State candidate Owen Laffin in Mr Myles' position on the Liberal council ticket. Mr Laffin is a right-wing conservative fundamentalist in the same tradition as the failed former Liberal member for Blue Mountains, Roza Sage. Likewise in Ward 4, the Liberals are seeking to replace Brendan Christie, whom I am less sympathetic towards, with Jo Bromilow.

Ms Bromilow has spoken at council meetings against the local environmental plan and against character zoning. She is also a Liberal Government appointee to the Forum on Western Sydney Airport, or FOWSA—an acronym most people would mistakenly think stood for "Friends of Western Sydney Airport". I should add that the State and Federal Liberals in the Blue Mountains are just as dishonest and just as unprincipled. On 22 March a text message was circulated amongst Liberals in the Blue Mountains, purporting to be from me, which called upon people to "kick the right-wing arses" of Liberals in the Blue Mountains. This was later shared on the Facebook pages of Councillor Brendan Christie and State Liberal candidate Owen Laffin in an attempt to smear me before the State election.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Point of order: There are two points of order. First, private members' statements are meant to be about local electorates and the good things that are happening there. A number of names have been mentioned and under Standing Order 73 that should be done by substantive motion, not by private members' statement.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I uphold the points of order under Standing Order 77 and Standing Order 73. The member for Blue Mountains will continue, but I ask the member to be careful.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: So there are really good things that happen in the Blue Mountains and there are sometimes very difficult issues that we need to address. The Blue Mountains Liberals are in a lot of trouble at the moment. Last week in the local newspaper the Federal Liberal candidate claimed to be a victim of trolls and bullies—she must surely be having a lend of us. I am happy to send her the dossier I have on Mr Bennett or Benjamin Matthews or "Matty Ben Boy"—all fake names he uses on social media to discredit us; to discredit the good people. In his professional life Mr Bennett describes himself as a real estate agent and a property developer—would you look at that!

Mr Kevin Conolly: Point of order: It is Standing Order 73 and I did think you gave the member some latitude and some advice. I am not sure that she took the advice.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: She sort of did and she sort of did not. The member's time has expired. There is no point of order.

TRIBUTE TO CALLILE JOHN YARAD

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:11): I pay tribute to a great man from Taree, Callile John Yarad—known as John Yarad—who passed away very recently. The information I will provide comes from the wonderful eulogy given by Merrick Spicer. John's grandparents, who were Lebanese Christians, came to Australia from Lebanon in 1894 and settled in the Dalby region of Queensland. They initially farmed, then took over a shop in the local town and, sometime later, moved to Sydney to make a future for their family. John's father, Michael Callile Yarad—Mick—met and married a woman who had recently arrived from Lebanon by the name of "Angel". They met at an Orthodox Church function. Mick and Angel settled in Taree with their children, John and Laurice. John's father saw an opportunity and bought the property on the corner of Victoria and Pulteney

streets, Taree, which came to be known as "Yarad's corner". Those premises are still there and are operated by the family. The move to Taree occurred in 1933, shortly after John was born.

John went to high school in Taree and he and his brother, Bruce, also went to St Joseph's College at Hunters Hill. John was very involved in the community and had numerous successes. His sporting prowess started to show itself when he was at Joeys. He was taught how to box and he was a very good boxer. He played and showed a great love of rugby union. Upon turning 18, he commenced 12 months national service in the army and became an army cook. When asked why, he said that the cooks drove jeeps and the soldiers marched. John loved army life and apart from being a cook he continued to excel in sport. He played rugby union for the battalion football team and was runner-up in the final of the inter-battalion all services boxing—that is to say, at that point he was the second-best boxer in Australia of all the national service enlistees. When John finished national service he returned to work for the family business, where his brother, Bruce, was also working.

On 1 July 1956 their father, Mick, gave each of them a key to the shop. That was free; however, the shop was not—it took the brothers years to pay their father back for the business. John excelled in retail and was loved by his customers. Immediately after he and Bruce started working together they incorporated the company as Yarads Proprietary Limited. John was the inaugural CEO and his aim was to make Yarads "the" store—something special; the flagship menswear store in Australia. Yarads became a city store in the country and attracted clientele from miles around, as it still does. John was a great salesman and great at picking trends in fashion—not that you would ever guess that if you saw him in the past 10 or 15 years.

One of John's innovations in retail was to put the name of the shop on the outside of sponsored jumpers—a common thing now, but John was a trailblazer. Some Yarad's tracksuits were seen at a soccer game at Wembley Stadium. He was an ideas man all his life. This year a credit product known as Afterpay came on to the market. It allows the customer to take the goods home and pay later. It was John who championed that idea in the 1960s. He started the idea of running accounts at the menswear store. At that time Taree had a population of 5,000 or 6,000 people. Yarad's ran approximately 1,000 active accounts. People would come in, dress the way they wanted to dress and walk out paying a small deposit. John trusted and had faith in people, and in the far majority of cases his trust was well placed. He was a generous man. He regularly gave away clothes to people who needed them. Stories of his generosity to people in need or people that he perceived as being worthy of support abound.

John, who went to work aged 14 years and nine months, retired in 2007. He and Bruce had worked together in the shop for approximately 54 years. Bruce recalls there was not a day when they would not argue about something, but the arguments never lasted more than a few minutes and the love they had for each other saw them work together as a wonderful team for in excess of five decades. John was a wonderful sportsman throughout his life in all manner of sports. He was a boxer of some repute. He was a track cyclist and achieved some success in local competitions. He was a great dancer. He and his late wife, Rae, were known as the jitterbug and jive champions of the area. He was a great surf lifesaver, involved in the Taree Old Bar Surf Life Saving Club. He was involved with that club for many years. He was a very powerful swimmer and was the recognised belt swimmer for the club. He was a water skier.

John was an enthusiastic horse rider—an endurance rider, riding long distances and enjoying some success. He was a pigeon fancier, a sporting interest not many of us knew about. He was a good snooker and billiards player. For the past 30 years or more one of John's major sporting interests was game fishing. His civic involvement included Apex. He was the treasurer at Dundaloo, president of the Taree branch of the Spastic Council and a director of Valley Industries, helping people with disabilities. He was a counsellor with the Young Offenders Intervention Program and arranged for the man of the match for the Sydney rugby league grand final to come to Taree as his guest. He was involved in many organisations. John was recognised for feats of bravery when he swam out in a flood and rescued people, and also took his boat out in heavy seas to save a ship at sea.

CAMDEN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (19:16): On 6 July I attended the Camden Youth Empowerment Project Multicultural Festival. I was honoured to also represent the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans, John Sidoti. One of the many great strengths of our State is its diversity and success as a multicultural society within Australia. The families and individuals of New South Wales hail from over 225 birthplaces constituting 307 different ancestries and speaking 215 unique languages. The Camden area sees this wealth of potential that people of diverse backgrounds bring to the community. Camden is one of the State's fastest-growing electorates. With this growth, we have seen people from all over the globe choose to call Camden home. According to data from the 2016 Census, the top five languages spoken at home other than English include Arabic, Italian, Spanish, Hindi and Mandarin. The top birthplaces outside Australia for the Camden area range from the United Kingdom and New Zealand to India, the Philippines, Fiji, Italy and China—and more recently Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan.

The Camden Youth Empowerment Project Multicultural Festival was organised by local young people for local young people to celebrate the wonderful diversity and social cohesion in the Camden area. The festival was the result of months of hard work by two groups of young people who came together as the Camden Youth Empowerment Project to help increase the participation of young people in new opportunities, such as youth events and skilled development workshops. I thank the participants of the Camden Youth Empowerment Project, who are local youths aged 12 to 25 who live, work or study in the Camden area. I also thank YMCA NSW CEO Sussanah Le Bron, and executive leader of community services Louisa McKay for helping organise the festival. Further, this event demonstrates the commitment of the New South Wales State Government to supporting communities across the State. The event would not have been possible without government investment in local communities through support and financial assistance from programs such as the Family and Community Services Youth Opportunities funding program. This program has seen the Family and Community Services commit over \$50,000 to make this and other Youth Empowerment Project activities possible.

With young people aged between 12 and 25 years making up 20 per cent of the population of Camden, those investments allow the families and individuals who call Camden home to proudly share their cultural and linguistic heritage and foster greater opportunities for Camden's young people. The number of new schools set to be built in Camden over the coming years as well as the TAFE skills exchange that will be established near the Western Sydney International Airport—also known as the Nancy-Bird Walton airport—will ensure that the Government continues to maximise the potential of young people. I thank all residents who attended the festival and gave their time to mark it as a memorable event for the Camden community.

SERVICE NSW CENTRES

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:20): On behalf of all my constituents, I speak now for one sole purpose: to demand that a Service NSW centre is established in my electorate. My constituents pay their taxes, so I ask the Berejiklian Government to make sure that they have access to basic government services. Shellharbour is the only electorate in the Illawarra that does not have a dedicated Service NSW centre. In 2015 the Liberal Government came to the conclusion that the Shellharbour Motor Registry should be shut down, despite there being a significant population increase in my electorate. To assist with this transition, a temporary Service NSW digital kiosk was set up at Stockland Shellharbour. That kiosk was shut down in 2017, which was over two years ago. Where are the plans to replace this vital avenue to basic government services that people need? They are non-existent. Where is this Government's commitment to the residents of Shellharbour?

I will share a story told to me by a Dapto resident. She is 65 years old and disabled. She lives off her pension and cannot afford to have the internet connected to her house. To access basic government services, and due to the lack of adequate bus services in Dapto, she has to walk for over 35 minutes to the nearest bus stop and then wait for a bus that comes once every hour. She then has a further 48-minute bus trip to the closest Service NSW centre in the neighbouring Wollongong electorate, which is over 18 km away. Once she arrives in Warrawong, she then has to cross several sets of lights before finally reaching her destination. She has to spend half a day of her time just getting to a Service NSW centre. Her story is just one of hundreds flooding my office. So again I ask: Where are the plans to replace this vital avenue to basic government services? Where is this Government's commitment to the residents of Shellharbour? I have been talking about this issue for the past six years. At the opening of the 100th Service NSW centre in June, the boasting words of the Minister for Customer Service were:

Service NSW has transformed how the customer interacts with Government, by creating a one-stop shop for registrations, licences and cost of living savings. Gone are the bad old days of waiting in long queues and rushing all over town to get things done ... and we have more to do. Watch this space.

The Minister does not need to worry. I am watching this space and I will keep watching, but I promise him that I will not be doing it quietly because in my electorate we are still in the bad old days. We are not just rushing across town but into towns in other electorates to access this one-stop shop. I am not sure whether Shellharbour is on Minister Dominello's radar—I do not think so. Only three weeks ago the Minister responded to my letter calling for a Service NSW centre by saying that there are no plans to add an additional centre. First, we do not need an additional centre; just one will do to ensure that the people who live in the Shellharbour electorate have access to all the vital services they need so that their lives can continue in a meaningful way. Secondly, the reason given is—for the lack of a better word—ridiculous.

PARRAMATTA MISSION

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (19:26): Mr Temporary Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to have you in the chair presiding over this private member's statement. I congratulate you on the fantastic work you are doing throughout the electorate of Oatley and New South Wales. You are certainly a champion for your area. I commend Parramatta Mission for all its hard work in the community. Parramatta Mission is proudly part of the Uniting Church in Australia. It is a church-based community

transforming lives and has been a parish mission for over 45 years. It can trace its history back to its first church in Parramatta in 1821 under its first minister, Reverend Samuel Leigh in 1815.

Today Parramatta Mission, from its three congregations, has a footprint across New South Wales. Parramatta Mission seeks to positively impact the lives of many people and the communities it engages with. Parramatta Mission achieves this via its pastoral, mental health, clinical, housing and hospitality initiatives, which enable the mission to provide services supported by its congregations, highly passionate staff and dedicated volunteers. I thank the Parramatta Mission's 400 staff and 250 active volunteers who deliver more than 70 services assisting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the local community and supporting people to lead fulfilling and independent lives.

Parramatta Mission provides crisis and transitional accommodation to youth, men, women and families, including those escaping domestic or family violence or at risk of homelessness. Forty-five families from all over Australia stayed at Wesley Apartments in 2017-18 to be close to their loved ones who were undergoing treatment at Westmead Hospital. The average length of the stay was 51 days. Parramatta Mission provides food, accommodation and support services to assist the most vulnerable people. This includes crisis and transitional accommodation, meals and emergency food assistance. Parramatta Mission community services specialise in youth, men, women, family, domestic violence and meal services. Through its Meals Plus program, it provides emergency food assistance, laundry and shower facilities, financial counselling, legal advice by visiting solicitors, housing advocacy, Centrelink outreach services and referral to accommodation services. Meals Plus provided 39,932 meals over 2017-18 and is entirely funded by Parramatta Mission through the generosity of its supporters.

Parramatta Mission fed more than 500 people at its 2018 annual community Christmas Day lunch. Parramatta Mission also works to assist people living with mental illness, family members or carers of people with mental illness, young people, those living in crisis and vulnerable communities or groups. In 2017-18 the Parramatta Mission Mental Health Services assisted more than 21,479 people, including 3,344 young people through nine services; 2,003 adults assisted through 22 services; 1,147 people facing homelessness through 11 services; 651 carers through six services; and over 14,334 crisis calls through one service. Parramatta Mission is part of the Lifeline Australia and works through Lifeline Western Sydney.

I thank the church council and board for their leadership and the time they give in a voluntary capacity. In particular, I thank Chairperson Ian Gray, Karen Banfield, Christine Bayliss Kelly, Bruce Bennetts, Ruth Cameron, Reverend Manas Ghosh, Reverend Keith Hamilton, Amelia Koh-Butler, Clive Pearson, Mary Pearson, David Norris, Jan Robson, Emosi Rogoimuri, Robyne Stalder, Sam Sadrata, Robert Key, Geoff Stephenson, Siti Nasalo, Sosi Toa, Robert Pullan, Elizabeth Wickham, Chris Grover, Marica Sadrata, Lyall Weaver, Katelyn Barakat, Jo Armstrong, Chantal Nagib and Ulysses Chioatto. I also commend all the partnerships with community and religious groups, corporate groups, donors and individuals who provide finances and volunteer to undertake this work—in particular, David Webster from the Thomson Automotive Group. Those collaborative partnerships build communities and transform lives.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)
(19:30): Nothing is more important than providing a quality education for our children. Empowering children to speak up and be at their best is the focus of Education Week in 2019, which was launched by the Premier at St Marys North Public School in conjunction with the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, who was in attendance at Dubbo College. This Government is investing record funding in education to provide students with state-of-the-art facilities that includes delivery of over 119 new and upgraded schools through a \$6.7 billion investment.

This is the sixty-fifth year of Education Week, which celebrates New South Wales public education and communicates the achievement of schools, students, staff and families. Among the events planned are open days, special assemblies, performances and principals swapping schools. Thanks to the Government's strong economic management, we have announced a budget that has an additional 4,600 teachers statewide. In my electorate of Penrith the Government is investing in a number of schools and infrastructure upgrades. The Kingswood High School hall is under construction now. Emu Plains Public School is using Community Building Partnerships to create a new multipurpose hardcourt. Penrith Public School has been upgraded and completed. It opened earlier this year and included a new two-storey building, 12 permanent teaching spaces within the existing campus, associated toilets, minor refurbishments up to the existing heritage building and improved open play spaces.

The Government committed to build a new learning centre at Cranebrook High School, a new multipurpose at Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School and a new multipurpose hall at Jamison High School. Lapstone Public School is receiving a library and an administration building—and I congratulate that school community on the fantastic work it has done. Kingswood Park Public School is receiving upgraded

playground facilities and a new covered outdoor learning area [COLA]. Kingswood South Public School is receiving a new COLA and a new basketball court. York Public School has upgraded facilities and shade cloths. Braddock Public School is getting a new crossing supervisor. There are plenty of things happening right across the Penrith community.

The Government is also investing in air conditioning across all our schools. The expanded Bump It Up program is being rolled out across schools in Penrith and across New South Wales. Bump It Up will identify students who are doing well or who have the opportunity for the greatest capacity to achieve top two NAPLAN bands. Local target initiatives will also be implemented to improve their performance in reading and numeracy and enhance their overall educational outcomes. The Government is also introducing the High Potential and Gifted education policy to identify students who will benefit from being challenged in areas in which they show talent. Under the program, students will have access to personalised learning approaches depending on their ability and will be given the chance to learn above their age.

The Government has announced \$120 million in before- and after-school care over the next four years, including \$50 million to help schools to buy new equipment and expand their facilities. It is my strong view that Penrith is the OOSH—or out-of-school hours—capital of New South Wales, with all those working parents coming to school in the morning and late in the afternoon. This Government has announced \$40 million in rental subsidies for service providers at public schools if they can demonstrate that savings have been passed on to families and \$20 million to help schools where a standalone service may not be viable, including smaller schools in rural and remote communities. Thirty-five mobile dental clinics will provide checks and basic dental care to up to 136,000 primary school children, which has been made possible by an investment of more than \$70 million over four years. It was fantastic to launch that program at Penrith South Public School with the Premier last week.

I am delighted to report that schools across my electorate have embraced Education Week in a variety of ways. Penrith Public School will hold its annual Pedlar's Fair this Friday, with all proceeds from the day going towards projects at the school. Samuel Terry Public School will celebrate Education Week on 21 August, which will be combined with Grandparents Day and performances by students as part of a Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea. Penrith South Public School will hold a fabulous open day offering families the chance to visit the school and undertake the Family Passport Walk to highlight their wonderful learning spaces, visit a book fair and engage in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] activities that will be supported by year 10 Jamison High School students who will assist the primary school students and their teachers to undertake a variety of STEM activities including making rockets, floating sail boats and designing engineering structures such as Lego bridges, tower platforms and a pendulum swing.

Next Tuesday Glenbrook Public School is holding an open day highlighting the school choir, band and individual students. Kingswood Public School will hold a book fair. Those are all fantastic things that will celebrate what happens right across the Penrith community. I take this opportunity during Education Week to thank our local schools and communities for the outstanding contributions they continue to make to ensure that students across the Penrith electorate get the high-quality educational experience they deserve.

NSW HEALTH WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:36): Early last Sunday morning at Auburn Hospital a man was arrested after abusing nurses and assaulting police. That was not the only arrest at a hospital last weekend, with another arrest of a person with a mental health illness at Nepean Hospital. While working in a hospital is always challenging, the behaviour of some can make it more than just challenging. Health staff, particularly in emergency departments and our paramedics on the street, are there to assist others in their hour of need. However, it comes at a cost to our health workers, who are at times exposed to violent and aggressive behaviour, including assaults. Whether they are on the front line as police officers or paramedics or working in an emergency ward at a hospital, they are dealing with people in our community with some of the most complex needs, including mental health problems and drug dependency. That can make their work very dangerous and challenging. It also often means that they are on the front line in dealing with violent behaviour.

Our health workers deserve to be protected when they turn up to their place of work to tend to the sick and injured. They do not deserve to face abuse, bad behaviour and violence, yet the evidence suggests that a spiralling level of violence is faced by health workers. Auburn Hospital is one of the most important institutions in the electorate of Auburn. Every day the nurses, midwives, doctors, security staff and administrators make the lives of those in need a little bit better. But the growing violence and challenging behaviour of patients—and sometimes their families—causes distress for health workers and makes their job more difficult. There has been a series of serious incidents in our hospitals. They include a 2016 incident at Nepean Hospital when a patient attacked health workers and also managed to disarm a police officer. All members of this House are aware of stories of abusive drug-affected partners and alcohol-fuelled violence perpetrated against health workers trying to assist.

While a committee review is underway in the other place, it is important to recall that one of the driving reasons for the lockout laws was the amount of violence our health workers were exposed to—particularly paramedics on the street and workers at emergency wards late at night and in the early hours of the morning. In February 2016 the former Minister for Health issued a press release outlining an agreed to 12-point action plan following a roundtable held with health workers, their union and the Government. It followed the 2016 incident at Nepean Hospital. A shooting at Nepean Hospital in late 2018 following a patient allegedly pulling a knife and threatening a security guard means it is now well past time that the Government ensured that all 12 points of the action plan were honoured.

A recent study was undertaken on behalf of the Nurses and Midwives' Association in response to the current health Minister's review of safety in our public hospitals. The Anderson report found that 47 per cent of nurses and midwives had experienced violence at work in the week prior to completing the survey; 80 per cent had experienced violence at work in the six months prior to completing the survey; and 76 per cent perceived that the frequency of violent episodes was increasing. It also found that whilst 94 per cent had experienced violence in emergency departments in the six months prior to the study, violence was not restricted to emergency departments; 58 per cent had also experienced violence in midwifery; 85 per cent in intensive care units, high care units and coronary care units; and 82 per cent in medical surgery.

Last week 22,000 health workers held a four-hour strike, urging the Government to meet all the requirements in the 12-point action plan and improve the safety and security of health workers. It is important to remember how exposed and dangerous this work can be. The horrific murder of nurse Sandra Hoare while serving the community she loved is forever etched in the memories of everyone across New South Wales. It is important that we do everything we can to keep our health workers safe. The incident over the weekend at Auburn Hospital and yet another attack at Nepean Hospital reminds us how vigilant we need to be to reduce the violence and aggression that paramedics, nurses and doctors face every day. One place all workers should feel safe is in our public health system.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (19:40): The electorate of Wollondilly has a strong rural background with much character and is home to the magnificent Southern Highlands. It includes national parks, state recreation areas and is also a thriving tourist destination for suburban Sydney. I am discovering more of the magnificent countryside and the hidden treasures in my electorate. Each week brings a new experience in nature. However, being situated on the fringes of Greater Sydney presents planning challenges that inevitably put pressure on development, and the need for alternative land use is constant. During the recent election campaign my opponents were very critical of development in Wollondilly, which was seen as haphazard and reactionary. I think responsible, innovative and appropriate development is necessary in my electorate, and it must be done strategically.

Not long ago the neighbouring electorate of Camden was just another semi-rural landscape with extensive, large land holdings. Now there is a large-scale housing development, and infrastructure is growing rapidly. The Badgerys Creek Airport and the aerotropolis will create more pressure for development. My wish and my vision for Wollondilly is that it will retain its rural character while also enabling balanced development that reflects the nature of the landscape. There is much antagonism towards new development for its inappropriate character, rather than opposition towards the development itself. It is vital to ensure that when development takes place, as it must, proper regard is given to the quality and the identity of heritage in my electorate.

Encouraging high-quality, innovative designs for development is a big priority for me. I have had discussions with both the Hon. Lou Amato, MLC, and the Hon. Mark Latham, MLC, from the other place, both of whom are residents in my electorate—along with many former Ministers and Premiers. I sought their views and their advice on a vision for Wollondilly. They also want to ensure that development aligns with the rural landscape of the electorate. The provision of rural residential developments on large blocks should be encouraged. In years to come I do not want to see governments, councils or planning authorities suddenly force large housing developments on the Wollondilly area because the activity at Badgerys Creek Airport and the aerotropolis exceeded expectations.

One of the other challenges in my electorate is job creation. The majority of people who live in my electorate commute long distances for work. I would like to see the provision of a State environmental planning policy as part of the planning process to help businesses and councils build business parks and thereby turbocharge job creation. In many respects, my electorate is similar to the Thames Valley, an area north-west of London. It too is a tourist destination, with beautiful rolling hills that acts as a circuit-breaker from the intense housing development on the outskirts of London. That area uses an innovative approach to development called village design statements. The statements describe the distinctive characteristics of the area. They also provide guidelines to developers and planners to help manage development so that the essential character of the village or town can

remain. The statements are produced in consultation with local residents, council and the relevant planning authorities. They are about helping local communities to help themselves by showing how they can participate in and influence the way the planning system operates locally.

Village design statements offer a framework for engaging local people in constructive debate about how to help ensure that new development in an area fits its surroundings and is in keeping with local character. I am not suggesting that this system should be used in Wollondilly, but it shows that with proper community engagement appropriate development can be embraced. In the Thames Valley this process has been successful in managing development. Perhaps we can learn from that process and ensure that Wollondilly will continue to retain its rural landscape.

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT POLICY

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:45): I speak tonight on government procurement in regional New South Wales. Last financial year New South Wales government agencies spent around \$28 billion on goods, services and construction and over the past five years spending has increased by an average of \$2.2 billion per annum. In addition, the Government has committed \$87.2 billion over the next four years for critical infrastructure. That is a good thing. I recently joined the Deputy Premier to announce \$5.8 million in funding for projects in the Barwon electorate. Under the Drought Stimulus Package, projects have been fast-tracked to provide stimulus for towns during the protracted drought. I have spoken at length about the need to get money circulating back through our communities—the importance of cash in people's pockets. Money injected into our country towns will change hands many times. In the NSW Government: Small and Medium Enterprise and Regional Procurement Policy, the Government's policy to support small and medium enterprises through government procurement, Minister Barilaro said in his ministerial message:

Small businesses play a key role in creating jobs, educating our workforces and supporting local economies throughout New South Wales. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that the 736,000 small businesses across this State work seamlessly with government through procurement.

This policy states that the Government has the option of purchasing goods and services valued up to \$50,000 directly from a small business. It also allows agencies to purchase up to a maximum of \$10,000 from any supplier even where a whole-of-government arrangement—a contract—is in place. These exemptions mean that government agencies have the ability to purchase things like stationary, printers and office furniture from small local businesses. However, the policy does not go far enough to support small businesses. It should say that State government agencies are "required" to buy from small local businesses. In requiring government agencies to buy locally, any pushback from Treasury would be voided.

It is vital that Treasury realises the positive impact spending in small regional businesses would have for those communities. If government agencies were required to buy from local small businesses the policy would ensure much-needed cash flow to small businesses in regional New South Wales. However, the policy does not cover procurement related to construction projects, which is where the funding under the Drought Stimulus Package is to be spent. In a recent meeting with one of the 13 local councils across the Barwon electorate, the general manager raised with me an issue regarding contractors working on a highway upgrade outside of town. A search of the contractor's business name showed that the company was registered in Queensland. How will those projects benefit local businesses and help them weather this protracted drought when councils come to me with stories such as this one? What makes that example more concerning is that an interstate company is getting the work and the New South Wales taxpayer dollars in front of companies or even councils in this State.

When people buy from locally owned companies significantly more of that money is used to purchase from other local businesses and service providers, which further strengthens the economy of the whole community. Imagine what would happen to our regional communities from the cash injection that would come with a government contract being awarded to a local business? A number of studies around the world have shown that when a good or service is purchased locally there is a multiplier effect. The multiplier results from the fact that independently owned local businesses recirculate their revenue. In other words, going local creates more local wealth and more local jobs. The multiplier effect is comprised of three elements: direct, indirect and induced impacts. A direct impact is spending by a business in the local economy to operate its business, including inventory, utilities, equipment and to pay employees.

Indirect impacts happen as the local business spends dollars at other businesses as they re-circulate. An induced impact is the additional consumer spending that happens as employees, business owners and others spend their income in the local economy. Recently I attended a local rugby game in Brewarrina. It was not the name of a large nationwide company on the front of the players' jerseys or hanging on the sign of a fence; it was those of the local businesses. When we invest in local businesses, they invest in the community. They sponsor local footy teams, kick the tin to sponsor local charities, employ people and make our communities good places to live. I ask the Government—and it is now more important than ever due to the dire conditions in regional New South

Wales—to immediately put in place a policy that biases local companies. Any policy needs to provide an environment where local contractors and the council have a bias to ensure that Drought Stimulus Package money genuinely stimulates the local communities that are being hit hard by this protracted drought.

ORANGE PALLIATIVE CARE FACILITY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:50): I have spoken in this House about palliative care on a number of occasions. In 2011 Orange lost its dedicated palliative care service when the Orange Base Hospital closed and hospital services were relocated to the Orange Health Service minus a palliative care ward. The Orange Push for Palliative Care's 10,000 signature petition for a dedicated palliative care facility in Orange, which was tabled and debated in this House, gathered momentum for the return of dedicated palliative care services for the Orange community. Ultimately the dedication, passion and cohesion of so many people in the Orange community pressured a reluctant government into delivering the dedicated palliative care facility that our community demanded be returned to them.

On Monday 25 March 2019 UnitingCare's newly refurbished Parkwood palliative care facility opened its doors to provide a purpose-designed, four-bed, public-private funded palliative care service. Since opening, Parkwood's team of dedicated, caring and compassionate staff have been receiving and caring for patients in their final weeks and days. The space has warmly accommodated patients' loved ones to gather closely in their final moments together. Whilst I recognise the staff who are caring for palliative patients around the clock at Parkwood—in particular Parkwood's service manager, Helen Mobbs—for going above and beyond in their roles, I recognise also the following special people and organisations who have given, and continue to give, their time and efforts to support this vital service for patients and their families.

I thank Orange Push for Palliative Care for its support, artwork, information packs, advocacy, garden liaison, fundraising and provisions at Parkwood. I thank president Jenny Hazelton, vice-president Tracy Wilkinson, secretary Gail Pringle, treasurer Leanne Boss, publicity officer Janice Harris and members Sheelagh Tancred, Kay Dawes, Clair Thompson, John McDonogh, Mary Rose Moses, Sister Mary Trainor, Jann Porges, Peter Brown, Margaret West, Kate O'Connell, Elizabeth Griffin and Janice Dubavs. I thank Catherine and Tony Cheney, Kezz Brett, the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service, Fem and Courtney Hawke, and Brad and Suzie Stuart for donated and loaned artwork.

I thank artists Joy Engelman and Josephine Jagger-Manners for conducting Orange Push for Palliative Care's art exhibition and for showcasing artworks. I thank the Orange Hospital Auxiliary, which is responsible for providing care packs for patients and families; kitchen provisions, including a coffee maker, crockery and cutlery; and bedspreads. I thank president Tracy Wilkinson, vice-president Jenny Thornton, second vice-president Pat Devonish, secretary Pat Yates, treasurer Lyn Clemow and assistant treasurer Carl Baker. I thank Sister Mary Trainor of the Bloomfield Hospital Auxiliary for the garden bench. I thank Dr Ken Hazelton, Dr Joseph McRae and general practitioners from every practice in Orange.

Thank you to the Orange palliative care team, led by Dr Louis Christie. Thank you to the quilters, Kate Baxter, Jackie Blomfeld and Naomie Anders, and Marion Gosper for quilting material. Thank you to the Quilt Whisperers—Kathy McRae, Glenda White, Judy Beattie, Lorraine Short, Carol Cornish, Helen Knox, Denise Schmuch, Toni Dingle, Jenny Cutler and Karen Zosso. Thank you to Orange North Rotary for the garden sanctuary, led by past and present presidents Bruce Whitley and Terry Hinchcliff. Thank you to the Mayor of Orange, Reg Kidd; deputy mayor Sam Romano; former deputy mayor Joanne McRae and councillors Mario Previtera, Jason Hamling, Kevin Duffy, Glenn Taylor, Jeff Whitton, Stephen Nugent, Scott Munro, Tony Miletto and Russell Turner of Orange City Council for their unconditional support of this service. It is the passionate commitment of those people and organisations that gives me the confidence that together we will cement this vital service into permanency for the Orange community. On behalf of the Orange community, I thank them all.

DUNMORE LAKES SAND EXTRACTION PROJECT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (19:55): In my inaugural speech in this place I talked about how important preserving and protecting our local environment is for me and our community. Since becoming a local MP, I have been strident in standing up for our community on such important matters as coal seam gas in water catchments as well as the need to preserve and protect prime agricultural land and farmland from destruction. But tonight I bring to the attention of the House both my and our community's opposition to a proposal for the Dunmore Lakes sand extraction project. I will outline the reasons for opposing this application that covers two areas, known as 5A and 5B.

First, the proposal before the Independent Planning Commission is a modification to an existing consent. Indeed, sand mining in our region is not new. However, when this application was approved in 1999 only four

stages of the original sand mine were sought. In what seems to be an extraordinary stretch, the applicant has asked for a modification to an old consent for a fifth stage at a location over a kilometre away. When only four stages were applied for, it seems odd that a modification could be considered in this way. It is with concern I note a similar move in relation to extensions of a sand mine at Gerroa. Unlike the existing extraction areas, the proposed site has the potential to impact on coastal wetlands and endangered ecological communities such as the Bangalay Sand Forest, in addition to impacts on tourism and the scenic amenity so valued by residents and all who visit my beautiful electorate.

Secondly, having been heavily involved in the development of the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Plan, I am acutely aware that this plan identified strategic assets in our region. These include sandmining assets. The proposed extraction area known as 5B was not identified as a mineral resource area in the plan. The Shellharbour Local Environment Plan has also identified part of the proposed extraction area as E3 Environmental Management. Both the local and State strategic documents simply do not permit this proposal due to the manner and form of this application. Thirdly, I note that the environmental assessment shows that stage 5A covers flood-prone land including Rocklow Creek. Stage 5B covers the Minnamurra River.

Our community holds concerns that an extractive industry of this nature could result in ground surface erosion and result in siltation of local waterways. Indeed, locals will tell you that the area covered by 5B is very low lying, which could have deleterious impacts on groundwater resources and surface water with significant impacts of adjacent wetlands. Those risks are simply too great to satisfy a mining company. My concerns around groundwater and hydrology are compounded when considering the proximity of this proposal to the Minnamurra Waste Recycling Depot. If this matter is not given surgical attention, like our community I am concerned that leachate-contaminated ground under the landfill could move towards the dredging site or the neighbouring estuary and the impacts if that should occur. From the documents available, the attention given to this concern is manifestly inadequate.

Fourthly, I am concerned that neither council nor the community have been given access to the 5B area to undertake an inspection. I would ask the department to allow a small delegation of councillors and community representatives to inspect the site—after all, what does the department have to hide? Two public meetings have been held in relation to this matter, the second one attracting over 1,000 people. A community resolution was passed. For the benefit of the House, it read: This meeting of concerned residents of Kiama, Shellharbour and the wider community present are totally opposed to any sand mining proposal in the flood plain and on land adjacent Riverside Drive adjoining the Minnamurra River. We are in full support of both Shellharbour City Council and Kiama Municipal Council who are strongly opposed to this proposal. It was moved by the Friends of the Minnamurra River, who have been active on this particular proposal.

It is also important to note that both the Kiama and Shellharbour City councils oppose this proposal. Time does not permit me to go into the level of detail I would like to provide on each of the above points of concern. However, this proposal simply burdens our community and our natural environment beyond any reasonable expectation. From the manner in which this proposal has been lodged, through to the bewildering lack of detail on key questions that must be answered by the assessor, this proposal raises far too many questions that have simply not been resolved. For these reasons I join with my local community in opposing this proposal. When an application of this significance is made it is important to have sound detail. It is this detail and these questions that I ask the assessors to consider when determining this application. I call on the Independent Planning Commission to reject this proposal.

HILLS HAWKS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (20:00): Every Saturday through the winter months the parks in my electorate of Hornsby are filled with kids playing and enjoying soccer. We have a number of wonderful local soccer clubs that I am proud to represent, none more so than Hills Hawks Football Club. The club, based in Galston, has over 500 registered players and is celebrating 50 years of football this year. It is an impressive milestone and I am pleased to be able to take this opportunity to congratulate them in this Chamber. The club started in 1969 following a conversation between some mums at Galston shops about how they wanted a place for their kids to play sport. One of those mums was Lee Kars. Her husband, John, had played soccer for many years. They went to the Hills District Memorial Club, which had recently set up a sports and social club to foster activities in the local area. With growing support from local families who did not want their boys playing rugby league, the first Galston soccer team was established.

They decided to join the local soccer competition—the Gladesville Hornsby Football Association—which is the same association the club still plays in today. The first committee was made up of Hans Mattura, John Kars and Don Johnson. They put a call out to local kids as well as knocked on doors in the neighbourhood to sign kids up to the team. They managed to put together four teams that first year. Many of the teams did not

know much about soccer—most just did it for fitness or fun. Jeff Willemsen, who played in the first under 10 team, said the team did not do too well at first but it did not take long to get the hang of it.

In true Galston style, his team had a pony, Penny, as their mascot who would wear the club's strip of green and gold and lead the team out for the coin toss. And while they did not have the greatest start, all four teams ended up doing pretty well—finishing runners-up in their respective premierships. The club was then up and running, and in the second year the club saw 60 registered players sign up. Local duck farmer Harry Willemsen took over as president in 1972. He would hold four trainings a week and if something had to be cancelled his wife, Leny, would ring each and every player to let them know. How she would have enjoyed the ease of text messages and WhatsApp groups like we have today!

By the 1980s, the club was fielding 1st grade sides and had produced many representative players. The club also had a number of coaches who earned their accreditation through the Australian Soccer Federation. In 1984 we saw the first ever Gala Day, which realised over \$1,000 to purchase new gear for the teams. It was also the first year it fielded a Premier League team. A sense of community is something I love about the area of Galston, and it shows through the dedicated group of volunteers at Hills Hawks. From the start, they have had the backing of the community and the support of hardworking volunteers. In the 1990s they decided to invest in their volunteers by paying for coaches to be accredited. This idea saw over 20 coaches go through the training. And boy did it pay off, with five premiers and five champions in the 1995 season.

Currently the hardworking volunteer committee is headed up by President Ian Robertson, and is supported by Peter Grocott, Robert Annabel, Richard Breatnach, Jodi Fraser, Ben Dickson, James Cotrona, Michael Coffey, Melissa Thomson, Karen Robertson, Carolyn Dawson, Georgina Hillman, Tracy Salmon, Chris Childs, Adam Smith, Marc Hickson, Ana Carolina and Lucas Periera. The club also has a number of life memberships awarded to those volunteers who have gone above and beyond: Geoff Bartlett, Harry Willemsen, Beryl Peebles, Jim Jupp, Ian Marriott, Ian Kerr, Ken Darcy, Mike Donohoe, Paul Thomas, Sue Chizzoniti, Kelvin Riordan, Gary Callaghan, Colin Munn, Steve Howlett, Greg Peebles, Julie Peebles, Joe Basha, Jeff Willemsen, John Ross, Greg Freeman, Michael Rosier, Deborah McCranor, Michael Coffey, Debbie Freeman, Monty Edwards, Stephen May, Barrie Pike, Alf Galeano, Tullio Forestieri, Ray Seguna, Peter Thomson and Louise Seguna.

I congratulate the Hills Hawks Football Club on an amazing 50 years. To every volunteer who has helped coach a team, work on the committee or referee a game, thank you sincerely. To each and every player, I hope you have worn the green and gold with pride. The club has a wonderful 50-year history and I have no doubt that another 50 great years are ahead in the future. Go the Hawks!

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:04): Last week was Local Government Week. I take this opportunity to highlight the significant contribution that our local councils make to communities across the State and to talk about the local governments in my electorate. The Seven Hills electorate contains the Blacktown City Council, The Hills Shire Council and City of Parramatta local government areas, each of which delivers essential and vital services to local residents. The theme of this year's Local Government Week was "Your Council", which highlighted councils' achievements, successes and accomplishments beyond those three known terms of roads, rates and rubbish. Between them, Blacktown City Council, The Hills Shire Council and the City of Parramatta operate and manage nine public swimming pool complexes, 120 public halls, 16 public libraries, 5,456 hectares of open space and 3,051 kilometres of road. With a population of over 768,000 residents across the three local government areas and a revenue of more than \$712 million per year, our local councils can be better described as thriving businesses that serve our communities and deliver essential infrastructure and services on a daily basis.

I am pleased to support a government that supports our local councils. Since this Government's election in 2011, over \$9 billion in funding for vital infrastructure and services has been awarded to councils to ensure that important projects are delivered across our communities. Those projects include local road upgrades, new and improved cycleways across our communities, graffiti reduction and eradication programs, animal shelter maintenance and upgrades, heritage grants to protect our important and historic buildings and facilities, and waste management. All of this is done in partnership with our local councils and our communities benefit much. Since the 2011 election, the New South Wales Government has invested over half a billion dollars across the Blacktown City Council, The Hills Shire Council and the City of Parramatta local government areas, which represents a significant investment for the future of our communities. We are working with councils to ensure that it is easy for local residents to do business with them by linking more transactions to MyServiceNSW accounts, which helps people save time and money by delivering more digital service options.

Across the Blacktown City Council, The Hills Shire Council and the City of Parramatta local government areas 2,589 pets have been registered via the new online registry since its launch in October 2018. Across New

South Wales 12,813 cat and dog owners have utilised the online service, and an additional 1,556 owners have paid 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 our 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 Government reimburses 80 per cent of lifetime registration fees for animals in local government areas as well as those registered from eligible shelters. Over \$3.3 million has been allocated across the Blacktown City Council, The Hills Shire Council and the City of Parramatta local government areas from the Government's companion animal lifetime registration fees to assist councils to fund animal shelters, ranger services, dog recreation areas and education and awareness activities across each local government area.

I thank the local mayors and councillors for their ongoing contribution to our community, as well as the 2,837 staff who work across the Blacktown City Council, The Hills Shire Council and the City of Parramatta 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 celebrate Local Government Week, I take this opportunity to sincerely thank those working in our councils and acknowledge the great work they do each and every day to make our community a much better place.

EDUCATION WEEK

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:09): This week, 5 to 9 August 2019, is Education Week. It is a week worth celebrating, and this year the theme is "Every student, every voice". As The Nationals member for Cootamundra, I have 78 schools in my electorate. Total enrolments range from four at Wyangala to 580 at Young High School—that is a lot of voices. They are regional voices, and are many and varied. They are culturally and linguistically diverse, and unique in their experiences and the lives they lead in the bush. This week is a week to celebrate student empowerment and how the New South Wales public education system gives students the skills they need to have and express a voice during their own educational journey and as engaged global citizens. When I visit my electorate's 63 government and 15 non-government schools, I run into some pretty inspirational voices, like the voices of Beckom Public School's nine students who used persuasive language taught to them by their dedicated teachers to make formal representations to their mayor for the installation of a pump track in town.

Recently at Narrandera High School I met the 14 NSW Rural Fire Service Secondary School Cadet Program graduates who had just completed an eight-week course, giving them skills that will last a lifetime. The students examined fire behaviour, were taught essential fire safety techniques and gained an appreciation of the work our emergency services do in this State. The cadet program also offers students the opportunity to experience firsthand the commitment and camaraderie that comes with volunteering. It is the second year the school has offered this wonderful program.

Thanks to the generosity of the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, I recently secured \$4,000 to enable the student leadership team to come to Sydney for the National Young Leaders Day. Yesterday I received a beautiful letter about this opportunity from the Narrandera Public School parliament's minister for communities, the Hon. Thomas Wickes. In the spirit of this year's Education Week theme of hearing and valuing our students' voices, I would like to read an excerpt from his letter:

Firstly I would like to start by thanking you for giving our student leadership team the opportunity to go to Sydney for the National Young Leader's Day in Term 1.

In Sydney, we got to see speakers like ... Tim Diamond, Cate Campbell and Holly Ferling. They all taught us valuable lessons like to never give up and to aim to do better for the world. It was very inspiring to hear how they overcame life challenges to become successful in their chosen fields.

We also got to go on the trains and ferries and do many more things that normally we wouldn't be able to do in our town. Some of us had never been to Sydney and it was the first time for many of these experiences. We are all very thankful for what you have done to support us in developing our leadership skills.

I thank Narrandera Public School for this eloquent and beautiful account of your time in Sydney. I look forward to attending the school parliament in the near future. I congratulate the school and all of its students on such practical and active political engagement. As well as promoting volunteering and political advocacy, it is wonderful to see our schools across the electorate instilling the virtues of sustainability and environmentalism in future generations. Last week I had the pleasure of visiting Matong Public School for National Tree Day—a wonderful small school in the Coolamon shire that is big on passion and purpose.

I thank the principal, Kerri McPherson, the school captains and year 4 student, Jacob, for giving me a hand with my tree planting. Student voice is about more than just having a say. Valuing and actioning the ideas, opinions and expertise of all students has significant impact on student wellbeing. We would all do well to take direction from younger people, and I believe this year's Education Week is a great opportunity for adults both in and out of our education system to get behind this theme and start actively listening. We will all be better for it.

STATE BUDGET AND CENTRAL COAST

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:13): A strong New South Wales budget means the Government can build a better New South Wales, and that is happening on the Central Coast across all portfolio areas. In the area of health, the Government is investing more than half a billion dollars in redeveloping both Gosford and Wyong hospitals. When it comes to roads and transport, the Government has invested billions of dollars in better roads since coming to Government in 2011. Some key projects in my electorate include the \$20 million upgrade to Empire Bay Drive roundabout at Kincumber and the \$387 million duplication of Central Coast Highway between Tumbi Road and Bateau Bay Road. Today I will focus on how the New South Wales Liberal Government is building a better education system in my electorate of Terrigal.

We know that 75,500 new residents will call the Central Coast home between 2016 and 2036. This places significant demand on the different services—including education—that the Government provides to communities. That is why the Government announced funding in the 2017 budget for 15 new classrooms at Wamberal Public School and 10 new classrooms at Terrigal Public School. Last month I hosted the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, at the two schools. The major upgrades total a \$21 million investment in our local education facilities. Obviously we want our children—the next generation—to have the best education possible. Providing high-quality classrooms and other school facilities is a key part of that. At Wamberal Public School the construction project is worth a total of \$13.5 million. It is due for completion early next year and will provide 15 new classrooms, which are called flexible learning spaces; upgrade the existing administration area and staff block; extend the existing hall; upgrade the canteen and student toilets; and, importantly, convert two existing classrooms to special education classrooms, with an area for activities.

At Terrigal Public School, the construction project equals a \$7.5 million investment by the New South Wales Liberal Government. The project involves 10 new, flexible, permanent teaching spaces, an upgrade of administration facilities, better staff amenities and improved student amenities. The project will replace all demountables at each of these schools. This is how our strong New South Wales budget position can be used to provide a better education and a better future for young people. This Government will invest \$6.7 billion over the next four years to deliver more than 190 new and upgraded schools to support communities across New South Wales, including on the beautiful Central Coast. This is the largest investment in public education infrastructure in the history of New South Wales.

The Government is committed to providing all students with comfortable learning environments, which is why \$500 million is being spent on sustainable air conditioning systems in classrooms and libraries. This Cooler Classrooms Fund is being targeted at schools that need it most. Schools in areas that have an average air temperature above 30 degrees in January will automatically receive air conditioning. I note that schools with an average temperature below 30 degrees in the month of January can also apply for funds. I have been strongly encouraging schools in the Terrigal electorate to apply, and I know a number have applied for round two of the Cooler Classrooms Fund.

All new and upgraded schools that this Government is building will receive air conditioning in their new and upgraded classrooms and libraries. This is fantastic news for the Central Coast community as it means the 25 new classrooms at Terrigal and Wamberal will be air conditioned. In addition, a record \$1.3 billion is being spent on school maintenance over five years. This will wipe out the backlog to zero—the first time this has happened in the State's history. This Government inherited a \$1 billion school maintenance backlog from the former Labor Government and we will now be reducing that backlog to zero. In the past year alone, maintenance spending to fix the backlog has occurred at Avoca Beach Public School, Brisbania Public School, Chertsey Primary School, Copacabana Public School, Empire Bay Public School, Erina Heights Public School, Erina High School, Holgate Public School, Kincumber High School, Kincumber Public School, Pretty Beach Public School, Terrigal High School, Terrigal Public School, Wamberal Public School and the fantastic Woodport Public School.

Every school in my electorate of Terrigal is benefiting and will continue to benefit while the backlog is cleared between now and July 2020. Whether it be making small grants to support community-led projects in schools or investing \$13.5 million to build 15 new classrooms, I acknowledge the work of this Government in providing better educational facilities for the people of the Central Coast, especially all the schools in the Terrigal electorate. The school leaders from Woodport Public School visited Parliament House yesterday. They are delighted about the upgrades. Principal Judy Boland said she cannot believe that, for the first time in the school's history, there will be no maintenance backlog within the next two years. This Government is getting on and delivering for the people of the Central Coast.

*Community Recognition Statements***THE HILLS SCHOOL**

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:19): As it is Education Week, I speak about a fantastic educational community in my electorate of Seven Hills—The Hills School at Mary Street, Northmead. Recently I had the pleasure of inspecting the school's farm with students and the relieving principal, Mr Mark Gosbell. I was fortunate to hand over a Premier's Discretionary Fund grant worth \$3,000 to the school's P&C association president, Mrs Monique Fenech, to assist in the creation of a new vegetable garden. The farm is much loved by the students, just as the new vegetable garden will be. It is a great way for students to engage with nature and the environment. I also note the actively engaged and dedicated teachers, support staff and P&C at The Hills School. The school has been commended by the Department of Education and has received grants from organisations for its educational programs. It is a pleasure to represent and be a part of such a great school community.

BONDI ICEBERGS CLUB

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:19): I congratulate the Bondi Icebergs Club on its fantastic ninetieth birthday celebrations. In 1929 a group of local lifesavers who were trying to stay fit over the winter founded the club. They drew up the club's constitution, including the 15B rule, which states that to maintain membership swimmers must compete on three Sundays out of four for five years. The rule is still in place. The club's ninetieth anniversary ball was a wonderful event to celebrate its rich history. I thank president Benn Dullard and the rest of the board of directors for having me. I congratulate them on hosting a fantastic event. Happy birthday!

DARCEY MALONE

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (20:20): On Friday 14 June I attended the Wests Sports Council Annual Awards Dinner where Darcey Malone was awarded the Elite Sportsperson of the Year award. Darcey started playing soccer at Mount Annan Mustangs Soccer Club before moving to the Macarthur Rams, the Macarthur regional representative team. Last year she represented New South Wales in the under 17s State team and was their youngest player. She is now a part of the Football NSW Institute. Ahead of the 2018-19 W-League season Darcey was invited to train with Sydney FC. She made her debut as a substitute in round one against the Western Sydney Wanderers. She retained her spot in the squad for the following round against Melbourne City and made another appearance. Darcey has also represented Australia as a Junior Matilda and was named in the 23-person Junior Matildas squad for the 2019 AFC Qualifiers. I again congratulate her.

CHILEAN NAVAL SHIP ESMERALDA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:21): On Saturday 3 August 2019 it was a pleasure to join the Chilean community of Sydney and Fairfield and my parliamentary colleague the member for Blacktown, Stephen Bali, MP, in welcoming the crew of *Esmeralda*, which is Chile's naval tall ship and training vessel for sailors and officers. It is a magnificent vessel. I thank Commanding Officer Claudio Maldonado for explaining the history and significance of *Esmeralda*. During the night guests were entertained by the *Esmeralda* band and local Sydney Chilean performers and musicians. The night would not have been possible without the support of the CEO of City Tattersalls Club, Mr Marcelo Veloz, President of the Chilean Australian Association Mr Cristian Escobar and Navarra Venues. I was also honoured to meet the Ambassador of Chile, Mr Patricio Powell, Mrs Powell and the Defence and Naval Attaché in Australia, Captain Andres Biggs, and Mrs Biggs. Special thanks to Consul General of Chile, Mr Humberto Molina Reyes, his wife, City Tattersalls Club, Captain Andres Biggs, the Chilean Australian Association and the ambassador.

TERRIGAL FORESHORE WAR MEMORIAL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:22): Tonight I highlight a beautiful war memorial in my electorate of Terrigal. Terrigal Foreshore War Memorial is a combination of the existing Terrigal War Memorial, the historic Erina District War Memorial and the new Brothers in Arms sculpture. The sculpture, created by local artist Leasha Craig, is a beautiful representation of two soldiers assisting one another in combat. The Erina District War Memorial is a large, white structure that commemorates service personnel from Erina, Terrigal, Wamberal, Matcham, Kincumber and more. It was first unveiled in 1923 and possesses an enormous amount of history. I was delighted to secure \$80,000 through the Infrastructure Grants program and \$10,000 from the Community War Memorials Fund to make the project a reality. I pay tribute to Peter White, Michael Tabone and all members of the Terrigal Wamberal RSL Sub-Branch. They have been persistent and have worked incredibly hard with me to make the project a reality. I congratulate the Terrigal Wamberal RSL Sub-Branch.

LAKE MACQUARIE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (20:23): On 12 July I was pleased to attend the annual Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards Gala Dinner. These awards celebrate the depth and diversity of local business enterprises in the city of Lake Macquarie. The quality of this year's nominees was again outstanding. In a packed room were almost 50 finalists across 14 categories and their supporters. This year a significant number of the winners again came from my electorate of Charlestown. Congratulations to the Outstanding Young Employee of the Year, Jess Kiely, from A Growing Understanding Speech Pathology; Design Anthology in Gateshead for Excellence in Small Business; R&R Murphy in Gateshead for Excellence in Export; and Allambi Care in Charlestown on winning both the Excellence in Social Enterprise and Contribution to the City awards. I also congratulate Simon Ashley on winning the Outstanding Business Leader award for his ATUNE Health Centres. Well done to all the winners.

JESSICA PENGILLEY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:24): I spoke recently in this House about Dubbo's growing reputation as the hub of New South Wales when it comes to emergency services. This was on show again last week when Jessica Pengilley won a prestigious award at the Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards. A trainee operator with the Dubbo Rescue Squad, Jessica was the recipient of the Dorothy Hennessy, OAM, Emergency Services Youth Scholarship. She was presented the award by Dorothy herself, along with the emergency services Minister, David Elliott. This award was created by my predecessor in the Dubbo electorate, Troy Grant, in his capacity as the former Minister for Emergency Services. It provides \$1,000 for a volunteer aged up to 21 years for training and educational materials or equipment. Although a trainee, Jessica has been to search and rescues, completed extensive road crash training scenarios and provided traffic control and first-aid support. She is now plans to do a course to enhance her ability to work with children and families who have experienced trauma. I congratulate her on this award and wish her well for the future.

LOVE SEA FOOD TASTES PORT STEPHENS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:25): The seafood of Port Stephens is so good that the only way to celebrate it is to create a month-long festival about it. The Love Sea Food Tastes Port Stephens festival is the combination of two long-running events: the Love Sea Food festival and the Tastes of the Bay weekend. These two events have merged to create a month of events commencing 1 August and culminating in the Tastes Port Stephens weekend on 31 August and 1 September. The month-long festival features gala dinners, cooking classes, bay cruises, golf, behind-the-scenes tours, musical performances and so much more.

Congratulations to Destination Port Stephens and the Tomaree Business Chamber on their efforts to make this festival such a success. I also thank event partners, including the Newcastle Commercial Fishermen's Co-operative and Port Stephens Council. It is wonderful to see the Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries offering behind-the-scenes tours and showing both locals and visitors why supporting and protecting our fisheries industry is so important. I invite everyone to join me at the Tastes Port Stephens weekend to taste delicious seafood and enjoy beautiful Port Stephens.

TEMORA JET BOAT CHALLENGE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:27): Anyone who knows me well knows that I drive five to 10 kilometres below the speed limit at any given time. It is safe to say that a jet boat pulling 9.9Gs in under 42 seconds is not my natural habitat. Narelle Pellow of Temora challenged me to partake in the jet boat challenge to raise money for the Temora and District Education Fund. The fund was established to provide much-needed financial assistance and support to local youth to help them achieve their education and training goals. My deepest thanks to Ms Pellow from the jet boat Racing organisation for raising \$1,300 for the education fund. My thanks also to fellow Temora lad and Australian champion Scott Krause for the absolute privilege of riding in the KAOS 37.

WADALBA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:27): I congratulate Wadalba Community School on its twentieth anniversary. Each student, teacher and staff member should be proud of the progress and development of the school. You are all making a difference. The school motto is "Progress with pride". Wadalba has three core values of respect, responsibility and excellence. Wadalba is one of the few schools to teach children right through from kindergarten to year 12, creating opportunities for students regardless of their stage of education. Currently the school accommodates 1,366 students. I congratulate principal Jason McGrath—my former boss—and all the staff and students at Wadalba Community School for reaching this milestone. I hope you will enjoy this very special celebration.

GEORGES RIVER MASTERS SOFTBALL

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (20:28): The Georges River Masters Softball competition was held last weekend at Kelso Park in my electorate of East Hills. It was a beautiful day. I enjoyed watching the women's and men's teams competing, some team members having travelled from as far as New Zealand. The Masters series is a weekend-long competition, with over 40 games played in three divisions. On Sunday I was happy to present all the winning teams with their medals for their marathon efforts. I particularly mention Joanne Newman, whose team won the bronze medal. She is the pitcher for the Revesby Heights softball club team. I recognised Jo on the day for her lifelong and outstanding service to the sport of softball. This is Jo's fiftieth consecutive year of playing softball for Revesby Heights. I cannot believe her arm still works after pitching softballs for all those years! Many years ago I played in an A-reserve grade team with Jo for the Revesby Heights club. Jo has always been an amazing role model for those who have had the good fortune to play alongside her. She has trained many, many people over those 50 years. I congratulate her and hope that she has many more runs around the diamond.

SOUL SOUP CENTRAL COAST

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:29): During Homelessness Week in New South Wales I am thrilled to acknowledge the arrival of Soul Soup on the Central Coast. Congratulations to everyone involved and a special rap to Nathan Griffiths for his passion and commitment as the frontline guy delivering assistance to those less fortunate in our community. Soul Soup's board and team of supportive volunteers, including regular visitors from St Joseph's Catholic College, have worked hard to establish a great resource that delivers not just warm soup but wraparound care and support for people sleeping rough.

Soul Soup's weekly visits to Kibble Park and the Deepwater Plaza car park in Woy Woy have a regular clientele, who are warmed in the knowledge of respectful human contact, a bowl of good, hearty tucker and the odd timely birthday celebration. Parked alongside the fabulous Orange Sky Laundry, which offers clothes-washing facilities, our rough sleepers are appreciative of any additional support. Special thanks to Ettalong Diggers and Davistown RSL for supplying the ingredients for the delicious soups. Whilst New South Wales Government support for those sleeping rough is often lacking, I am proud to live in a community where NGOs are doing all they can to fill the gap.

PORT MACQUARIE LIONS CLUB

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:30): I recognise the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of the Port Macquarie Lions Club, which will be held on 11 September at the Lions Den, Port Macquarie. It will be a day to remember past members who set the foundation working towards the Lions International principle of "We serve". A milestone by any measure, this event commemorates the 250,000 hours dedicated by members since the club's inception in 1959. During this period the Port Macquarie Lions have raised an astounding \$1.5 million to support a number of projects, from the purchase and installation of bus shelters at Port Macquarie Base Hospital to redevelopments of Gaol Point and securing a new Mustang walker for young children. In the past the organisation has coordinated fundraising events such as the Manning Part Auction and Cash for Cans project.

Under the leadership of President Mark Youngblutt and his team of volunteers, the organisation works passionately each year to deliver two highly anticipated events on the family calendar: the annual Duck Show and Kite Festival. It is often said that our volunteer service organisations are the backbone of our communities, and this could not be truer in describing the Port Macquarie Lions Club. Although I will be unable to attend the celebrations on 11 September, I congratulate the club on its enormous contribution to assisting people in need, locally and across the world.

KU CRUSADER PRESCHOOL MARRICKVILLE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:31): I congratulate KU Crusader Preschool in Marrickville on opening its brand-new playground. With the addition of bridges, plants, a dry creek bed and a water pump, the playground is now a bush oasis filled with potential for adventure and, no doubt, a few more well-earned scraped knees. Preschools like KU Crusader show us the tremendous impact that quality preschool education has on a child's development and that every part of a child's educational experience matters, including play. KU Crusader has been providing care for over 120 years, and in Marrickville for over 70 years. It is always a pleasure to visit the centre and see happy children, who are learning and supported by passionate, dedicated staff. I thank KU Crusader and the staff, educators and parents who made this spectacular new playground a reality.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN DIVALL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:32): I pay tribute to Mr John Divall, a successful businessman and grazier who was well known, humble and respected in Goulburn and surrounding communities. Mr Divall passed away peacefully on 29 June 2019. He was Goulburn born and bred. Busy with milk runs and paper runs before and after school, Mr Divall was an entrepreneur from a young age. He started a fruit business growing potatoes at Taralga and Crookwell and sold the produce from the back of his truck. He would bag the produce and take it to the Sydney markets. He soon realised that he was returning to Goulburn with an empty truck and figured he might as well bring back produce with him and sell it. He later established Divall's Fruit Shop on Bourke Street with his brother Peter. John and his family moved to Carrick 50 years ago where the family farm and quarry are located. John saw an opportunity to develop the land and the quarry, and so Divall's Earthmoving and Bulk Haulage business began. The business currently employs over 250 people and is owned and operated by Mr Divall's sons, Andy and Michael. Mr Divall leaves a wonderful legacy.

ROB MCDONNELL

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:33): On behalf of the Fairfield electorate, I pay tribute to Mr Rob McDonnell for giving over 35 years of loyal service to the students at Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield and to the wider community. He was a brilliant maths teacher, and the results over the years spoke for themselves—especially the year 10 and HSC results. It was sad to say goodbye to such a dedicated and hardworking teacher, who was also a world-renowned soccer coach. My wife, Melissa, and I had the wonderful opportunity to work with Rob over the years and to call him a dear friend and colleague. On behalf of the Fairfield electorate and the thousands of students who were taught by Mr Rob McDonnell, we wish him well in retirement. I thank "Macca" for his years of service to Fairfield.

LOAVES AND FISHES FOOD STORE

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:34): Tucked away in one of Coffs Harbour's industrial precincts, a dynamic organisation brings hope to those doing it tough in my electorate. Loaves and Fishes—an Abundant Life Church initiative—supports 4,800 Coffs Coast families by providing them with groceries at about a third of supermarket prices. Food and household items are sourced from Foodbank Australia and other local businesses, while emergency food parcels help those in crisis. The other benefit is that food is saved from going to landfill. The important work of the Loaves and Fishes food store goes hand in hand with the service provided by its op shop and the overall mission of Abundant Life Church. I enjoyed my recent visit to Loaves and Fishes to congratulate it on its inspiring ministry and practical help for those in need. I thank Abundant Life Church founder Senior Pastor Russell Jones, Loaves and Fishes Manager Wayne Crowther, supervisor and chief storeman, Ray Webb, and the support team for their warm hospitality and devotion.

WENDY GILLESPIE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:35): It is an honour to commend the work of Wendy Gillespie, "the Pelican Lady", on her passion and commitment to caring for the pelicans of Brisbane Water. Not only does Wendy regularly paddle out across the Brisbane Water catching and then rehabilitating sick pelicans, but also she contributes to our local informal tourism industry. Wendy, supported by the Woy Woy Fishermen's Wharf, regularly feeds our local pelicans and offers educational and photo opportunities to tourists from near and far. Wendy continues to conduct her own personal research into our local pelican breeding community, which is the closest of any to the Australian urban environment, and advocates for the wellbeing of seabirds in the Gosford and Terrigal electorates. Wendy spends her own and locally fundraised money rehabilitating sick birds back to health with the support of Taronga Zoo. Thank you to Wendy Gillespie.

SEAN MCALLISTER

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (20:36): I have always had a love of cricket and I was pleased to see Sean McAllister of Westleigh named a community champion by Cricket Australia. Sean is just 15 years old and is not only playing cricket but also coaching a number of teams, including the first ever girls team for the Thornleigh Cricket Club. It started when his sister, Maeve, who was 10 at the time, desperately wanted to play cricket but could not find a team to play with. With the help of their mum, Veryan—an amazing woman—they put together the first all-girls cricket team for Thornleigh. Twelve-year-old Sean stepped up and offered to coach the team when no parents would do it. He even used his pocket money to buy his sister a bat—what a good brother! Three years on, the Thornleigh Cricket Club now has two female teams and Sean is still coaching. He coaches the Thornleigh Woolworths Cricket Blast junior team, and is assistant coach of the Pennant Hills High School girls team and the Northern District Cricket Club's under-15 girls Brewer Shield squad. I thank Sean for passing on his love of cricket to future girl stars of the game. I look forward to watching his star continue to rise.

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET FULTON

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:37): It was a sad day for Australians on 24 July 2019 as we mourned the loss of the iconic Ms Margaret Fulton, aged 94 years. For many, Margaret was known as the first real Australian television MasterChef. For others of ethnic backgrounds, we remember her as the face of Bessemer cookware. My mother, Domenica Zangari, has been a Bessemer cookware representative for 35 years. During this time mum met Margaret on many occasions at the Bessemer head office. Mum always commented on her warm smile and care for those around her. Margaret was a wonderful ambassador for Bessemer but she was also a supporter of multicultural women who were seeking career paths in party planning and cooking. She was an inspiration to many women and a wonderful role model. Let us as a House today offer our condolences to the wider family of Ms Margaret Fulton during this difficult time of sorrow. Vale, Margaret Fulton.

KINGS LANGLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:38): As it is Education Week, I once again speak in this place about the great achievements of Kings Langley Public School. The school prides itself on good academic and sporting records. I recognise the school's under-11 rugby league team, coached by Ms Miklečić. On 12 June the under-11s competed in the Parramatta All Schools Knockout competition. They were undefeated and represented the Parramatta district at the New South Wales All Schools Rugby League Gala Day, which was held today. Kings Langley Public School's senior girls netball team, coached by Ms Allen, recently competed in the Western Sydney Knockout competition. The school's senior netball team was also undefeated and will represent the Sydney West School Sport Association in the State tournament later this school term. I wish the best of luck to Kings Langley Public School's under-11 rugby league side and the senior girls netball team in their upcoming representative matches.

TRIBUTE TO ALLAN COOK

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:39): Sadly, Surf Life Saving Central Coast and life guard legend Allan Cook passed away recently. On Sunday his friends and family gathered for a memorial service in his honour. The Central Coast community gathered at Toowoona Bay to pay its respects to a man who not only saved lives, but also changed them. I had the honour of knowing Allan as I grew up through Umina Surf Life Saving Club—he was a role model and an inspiration. Cookie, as he was known, coordinated the Wyong Shire Life Guards for many years and was on watch at Toowoona Bay himself. My condolences to Shayne, Daniel, Hayley and the whole Cook family. Surf Life Saving Central Coast has lost a legend. Rest in peace, Allan Cook.

CRYTELE HOMES

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (20:40): I congratulate Daniel Lettieri and the staff at Crystele Homes on winning the Australian Small Business Champion Awards in the Home Builder/Renovations category. I recognise also the outstanding contributions of small businesses to both the local community and the national economy. I commend Crystele Homes for its outstanding service, commitment, leadership, endurance, courage, innovation and generosity, all of which contributed to its success. Finally, I wish Crystele Homes continued business success in the future.

WIRREANDA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:41): There is no better way to celebrate Education Week than watching students enjoying and celebrating their wonderful school. This week I was delighted to attend Wirreanda Public School's Education Week assembly. I congratulate the impressive school leaders on hosting the assembly with confidence. The dance groups were amazing. I particularly enjoyed the boys' sassy hip-hop group. I congratulate Principal Philippa Young, Deputy Principal Sue Wilson and Ms Erin O'Brien who pulled the assembly together. It was wonderful to learn about the new Connected Communities program in place at the school which is giving students connections across the school and ensuring every student feels valued. At Wirreanda Public School in Medowie every student is given their voice.

WOODPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:41): Woodport Public School student leaders, Principal Judy Boland and staff had a very exciting day here in Parliament House yesterday. They had the opportunity to meet Premier Gladys Berejiklian and the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. The students presented both the Premier and the Minister with Woodport Public School tote bags. The students were impeccably behaved, so much so that a member of the public called in to the school to commend them for their behaviour on the train trip down from the Central Coast to Parliament House. That was acknowledged by the Premier yesterday in question time. I highlight also the achievement of Woodport's school captain, the fantastic Bree Spalding, who, reaching the finals of the 100-metre backstroke, ran fifth and third in the medley relay at

Thursday's national swimming championships. As a former backstroker, I commend Bree for her efforts; it is a great sport. Bree swam in the heats and finished as stated before. She has done a fantastic job representing her family, her entire community and of course the outstanding Woodport Public School.

TATHRA RESERVE LANDCARE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (20:43): Last Sunday morning I joined the very hardworking group of volunteers for a working bee at the Tathra Reserve Landcare site in Kotara South. Seven eager residents from the local area turned up bright and early on a beautiful sunny winter's day to remove privet in order to re-establish remnant rainforest. Hats off to Andrew, the leader of the group, for his passion and dedication in establishing the site. Tathra Reserve is a member of the Lake Macquarie Landcare Network, which aims to restore, rehabilitate and conserve the natural environment. I take time today to thank all the land carers in my electorate of Charlestown for their commitment and for giving up their time to protect our natural environment for future generations to enjoy. Landcare groups are truly valued in my electorate.

DUBBO TOURISM

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:44): I formally commend the Regional Tourism Awards run by Destination NSW that were held at the Taronga Western Plains Zoo recently to recognise tourism operators in the regions of Destination Country and Outback. The finalists in all categories were of a very high standard and it is worth noting some of the winners. The Mudgee Region Tourism had an incredible night, being inducted into the Hall of Fame for Destination Marketing and winning the Visitor Information Services Gold Award for the third year in a row. Congratulations to Cara George and her entire team at Mudgee.

Mudgee also featured in the different accommodation categories with silver awards to the Park Vue Motel and Peppertree Hill, and gold awards for Kirsten Serviced Accommodation and Sierra Escape. Manera Heights Apartments in Dubbo also won a silver award. The Dubbo Regional Council featured prominently, winning gold in Destination Marketing while the Old Dubbo Gaol won gold in the cultural tourism category as well as a bronze award for best tourism attraction. Well done to all who took part. I am encouraging everyone to make a difference during this drought by visiting our regional and rural areas to support local businesses.

VIETNAM VETERANS PEACEKEEPERS & PEACEMAKERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA CENTRAL COAST SUB-BRANCH INCORPORATED

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:45): Tonight I congratulate the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association of Australia Central Coast Sub-Branch. This amazing group, which is based at Ettalong Beach, emulates the true spirit of our community and the importance of mateship. The Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association provide a place of love, support and caring for members and vets in our community. Whether active or not active, the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers & Peacemakers Association members have an eye on vulnerable vets. They have a fabulous team that includes welfare coordinators, who are very quick to go into bat strongly for those in need.

The team regularly holds a mighty service on Anzac Day that is widely supported by vets and community members from across the coast. Their around-the-table biweekly cuppas, or weekly cuppas held twice, are a welcoming place with tea and coffee, cake and treats for whoever comes through the door from both near and far. The support and love for returned service men, women and their families is profound. I commend to the House the association's very important work and presence in our community.

TERRIGAL BEACH PUBLIC TOILETS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:46): Last March I was working with my community, which signed a local petition to assist me to "fix the stink" at the Terrigal Beach public toilets. Recently I announced funding of \$240,000 from the Stronger Communities Fund to refurbish the Terrigal Beach public toilets and change rooms. This is a fantastic project. I am so proud to have been able to work side by side with my local community to secure the \$240,000 from the Stronger Communities Fund to refurbish the toilets and "fix that stink". I pay tribute to all members of my community who got on board and supported the project.

It is with thanks to our strong New South Wales budget that I am able to fix our local schools, our hospitals, our roads infrastructure and of course our public toilets. The refurbishment includes improvements to the look and amenity of the public toilets, change rooms and installation of improved ventilation. I again thank the hundreds of people who supported me in securing the funding to make the project a reality. The New South Wales Liberal Government does not just make promises—we deliver them.

SANDRA EADIE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:47): I recognise Sandra Eadie, an amazing woman who has been instrumental in transforming the traditional Chinese sport, dragon boating, in the local town of Port Macquarie. Sandra Eadie joined the Flamin' Dragons Port Macquarie Club in 2007 and has served in a number of positions within the organisation. She has contributed immensely in local and State regattas and subcommittee management teams. On Saturday 27 July the Flamin' Dragons awarded Sandra with life membership at the Seasalt restaurant in recognition of her longstanding and active contribution over a 12-year period at the club. During this time she operated as a senior level 1 coach, focusing directly on training and growing membership as her core passion and ambition, which greatly attributed to the depth and success at the club's State and nationals championships.

Over time, Sandra qualified as a level 3 official. She officiated at many regattas along the entire length of the North Coast. Her service as part of a well-balanced team official was a major factor in the lead-up to Flamin' Dragons Port Macquarie being awarded the 2019 NSW Dragon Boat Club of the Year. As one of the longest-serving board members and the longest continuous serving club captain at the Flamin' Dragons, Sandra's hard work and dedication has made the Flamin' Dragons club what it is today. With over 100 members aging from 12 to 82, I am privileged to see on a weekly basis the mighty pink and blue paddlers on the Hastings River—thanks to Sandra's role within the organisation.

CENTRAL COAST HIGHWAY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:48): The first step of the \$387 million Central Coast Highway upgrade is well and truly underway. I am so proud to be part of a Liberal-Nationals Government that is delivering for the people of the Central Coast. The Government announced a record \$387 million to upgrade the highway. Planning will soon commence on the Central Coast Highway duplication between Wamberal and Bateau Bay with \$19.5 million having been allocated to this project by the New South Wales Government as part of the whole funding amount of \$387 million. The project involves highway duplication on one of the stretches of road in my electorate that carries the heaviest load of traffic.

The highway upgrade is all about the New South Wales Government delivering for the 26,000 motorists who use that stretch of road every day. It is a highly used section of road infrastructure. I reiterate how great it is to be part of a Government whose strong budget position allows delivery of congestion-busting projects like the \$387 million Central Coast Highway upgrade. I thank the Premier for her support for this project and for our community. All the people who live in Forrester's Beach and Wamberal will benefit from this incredible infrastructure. I reiterate this project is testament to the Liberal-Nationals Government delivering for the people on the Central Coast.

JAIMY MIKHAEL

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I rise to commend Mr. Jaimy Mikhael, a local business owner in my electorate who has recently been awarded Barber of the Year at the Australia Hair Industry Awards. After coming to Australia on as an Iraqi refugee following fleeing his war-torn country at 10 years of age, Mr. Mikhael has tirelessly worked to contribute to the local society and is now the proud owner of two barbering businesses in the heartland of Mount Druitt. After opening up the immensely popular 'Styles by Jaimy' in 2011, Mr. Mikhael was unable to keep up with demand and has recently opened the 'Gentlemen's Barber Club'. I thank Mr. Mikhael for all his efforts in the local area and look forward seeing him achieving great success in the future.

MARGARET-ANNE HAYES

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today, I would like to give a special mention to Margaret-Anne Hayes. Margaret has been labelled the 'gem' of Ku-ring-gai for her outstanding involvement in our local community. She has been voted four times for senior Australian of the Year and has been awarded the Eva Kolling Award for Philanthropy and Local Woman of the Year in 2014. Since turning 60, she has run 2 half marathons and skydived on two occasions from 14,000 and 15,000ft respectively. Margaret is also a humanitarian, an author of two novels and a motivational speaker. Since joining the Can Too foundation in 2007, she has raised over \$250,000 towards cancer research and aims to raise another \$250,000 in the lead up to her 80th birthday in just 10 months time. Margaret is an enthusiastic and dynamic fundraiser, doing everything from jumping out of planes, holding formal dinners, competing in fun runs and making homemade chutney. The Hornsby community wishes Margaret all the best, in her future endeavours of fundraising and her future plans to become a personal trainer for women over fifty. She is an asset to our community and I want to personally congratulate her on all of her achievements. Well done Margaret.

PROFESSOR GEOFFREY ISBISTER, AM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—I would like to Professor Geoffrey Isbister in New South Wales Parliament today on being made a Member of the Order of Australia in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. Based at the Calvary Mater Hospital in Newcastle, and the University of Newcastle, Professor Isbister's ground-breaking research into snake and spider anti-venom has led to important new discoveries. Much of his research has challenged long held views about the treatment of poisoned and envenomed patients, including whether anti-venom works. The fruits of his research have made clinicians re-look at what evidence there is for the productive use of various treatments. Dr Isbister's work in establishing the Australian Snakebite Project has helped to define the required dosage of snake anti-venom, potentially saving millions of dollars for emergency health-care providers across the country. This honour recognises Dr Isbister's significant service to medical research in the field of toxicology. I am delighted to congratulate him on behalf of the people of the City of Newcastle and the Hunter Region.

LITTLE WINGS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—Today I give thanks to the Maitland individuals, organisations and businesses who work to support the charity Little Wings, which brings sick children to major centres where they can access specialised medical services. Many of the sick children fly from remote areas around NSW into Maitland's own Royal Newcastle Aero Club, at Rutherford. At Rutherford they are met by volunteer Michael See, a Maitland grandfather of seven, who transports young patients and their family members from the airport to the John Hunter Hospital for treatment. Little Wings relies on volunteers, and donations, to perform its crucial service. Its mantra is 'keeping families together'. A recent sale of artworks from a Maitland exhibition resulted in a generous donation to Little Wings. I understand that the Maitland Classic Motor Association is also a strong supporter. Last year Little Wings undertook more than 400 runs for families across our state, easing financial burdens on families, emotional strain and travel fatigue. Thank you all, for all you do, to help keep Little Wings in the air.

JOHN WRIGHT

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to John Wright of Evans Head who was recently inducted into the Hall of Fame at the Richmond Valley Business Awards. John has been a strong advocate for the Evans Head area for many years and recognises the importance of tourism to this beautiful coastal town. To assist in attracting tourists to the area, John has initiated the Experience Evans Head Guide and produced yearly editions of this Guide for a number of years. John has worked hard to ensure that local businesses and the community are given every opportunity to succeed. Evans Head is truly blessed to have someone with John's knowledge and experience supporting and promoting the town and I wish John all the best in the future.

SYDNEY SONATA SINGERS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Recently I visited the Philippine Language and Cultural Association of Australia to announce \$5,000 to support the annual Sydney Sonata Cultural Concert. Now in its tenth year, the Sydney Sonata Singers cultural concert, brings together seniors with Filipino backgrounds. This funding will support the delivery of the concert, which celebrates classical and traditional Filipino folksongs, held every May. I wish to congratulate President Mr Japon, Founder and choirmaster Mr Tagudin and all of the Sydney Sonata Singers on their successful grant! Congratulations on your terrific concert! I have met people whose mental health has been strengthened from the social connectedness that singing groups deliver. Many participants are older and as people age the risk of becoming socially disconnected grows especially when people move into retirement or begin to face health challenges. I commend the NSW Government on supporting community choirs through the 'Sing Your Age' grant process. The project offers grants to support the creation of new singing groups for older people, or the inclusion of older people in existing singing groups. Participation in singing programs and choirs provide older people the opportunity to stay active and connect with their communities.

FORMER IRAQI COACH SAADI TOMA

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I recently had the wonderful opportunity to meet with Mr Saadi Toma, former Coach of the Iraqi National Soccer Team who is well known and respected throughout football circles around the world. Now as a local resident of Fairfield, it's great to hear Mr Toma's plans to not only teach and instil his vast soccer knowledge and skills to local players, but to bestow his wealth of knowledge and wisdom to up-skill and train our local coaches. I look forward to seeing these great plans come to fruition and I wish Mr Toma all the very best. I have no doubt his contributions will be of tremendous benefit to our community and for football throughout our region.

LISMORE BUSINESS AWARDS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate the Lismore Chamber of Commerce and Industry Board and CEOs for the successful holding of the 2019 Lismore Business Awards, held on Saturday the 20th July 2019. The Awards night was by all accounts as reported in the Northern Star (Friday 26th July 2019) a gala event. An event where all local businesses downed tools, glammed up and had some fun. I congratulate all businesses who participated in the process as it takes time.

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Health, Care & Wellness Industries: LISMORE KARATE PTY LTD TRADING SUCCES MARTIAL
ARTS

Outstanding Business Leader: NAARAH RODWELL, CASPA SERVICES LTD

Outstanding Employer of Choice: NGUNYA JARJUM CHILD & FAMILY NETWORK

Outstanding Young Employee: JAYDE MCMURRAY, CASPA SERVICES LTD

Outstanding Young Entrepreneur: JOEL JENSEN, JOEL JENSEN CONSTRUCTIONS

Professional Services: EVERYDAY-LEGAL

Retail & Personal Services: LAZULI SISTERS HAIR & MAKEUP STUDIO

Start Up Superstar: NORTHERN RIVERS PODIATRY NATHAN MONTGOMERY

Tourism & Visitor Experience: LISMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Trade Construction & Manufacturing: ARMSIGN PTY LTD

Excellence in Workplace Health & Safety: MORTGAGE CHOICE NORTHERN RIVERS.

LIZOTTE'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Lizotte's is a pillar of the cultural and entertainment life of the western suburbs, and on Sunday 2 June they celebrated their tenth anniversary. With 2381 shows over the last ten years, and many more to come, Lizotte's has been showcasing local artists and hosting visitors. My thanks to Brian and Jo Lizotte for transforming a dormant theatre into a thriving hub of Wallsend nightlife and to the students of Lambton High School, James Bennett, Mitch Capone, Chloe Parker, Lachlan Edwards, Piper Butcher, Dexter Moore, Rehab Brass Band, Ty Peshorn Band with special guests and Circus Avalon for helping them celebrate the anniversary.

BAMBIGI

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—It is an absolute privilege for me today to recognise an outstanding and inspiring member of the community of Griffith - 13 year old Piper Stewart. In 2018 Piper noticed that there were no other Aboriginal kids in her swim school. After discussions with her mum Piper established the organisation Bambigi which means "to swim" in the Wiradjuri language. Bambigi funds 6 months of swimming lessons for Aboriginal kids in the Griffith region and, in the last 2 years, have supported over 80 kids, teaching them to swim and about water safety. Recently Piper organised a 3 hour swim-a-thon where she raised \$4000. With those funds, Bambigi will be able to provide swimming lessons for approximately 50 more Aboriginal children for 6 months. During the swim-a-thon, Piper herself swam an incredible 384 laps, covering a total distance of 9.6km in 3 hours. Congratulations Piper on your recent fundraising success. The work you have done in establishing Bambigi and enabling Aboriginal children in our community to learn to swim and about water safety is phenomenal!

ALBATROSS MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—I congratulate the Albatross Musical Theatre Company on the staging of their most recent production – 'Wicked'. Congratulations in particular to Molly Stewart and Hannah Garbo who played main characters Elphaba and Galinda, displaying not only their extraordinary acting abilities but also their phenomenal and powerful singing voices. Also to be

commended are Naomi Dootson who played Madame Morrible as well as Alexander Morgan, Luc-Pierre Tannous, Morgan Dootson, Paul Fraser and Mark Harris, as well as all the fantastic members of the chorus, stage crew, set designers, directors and an ensemble of amazing volunteers who ensure productions of such quality are continually staged in the Shoalhaven.

I thank members of the Albatross Musical Theatre Company, particularly President Laura Turner, Vice-President Ron Hawthorne, hard working secretary Marie De La Torre, Treasurer Velma Walker, Public Officer John Bryant as well as all General Committee members on their dedication and work in their most recent production. I look forward to attending – and recommend Members book in their diaries now – their next show – The Addams Family!

NORTHERN CYPRUS TURKISH ASSOCIATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the Northern Cyprus Turkish Association (NCTA). The NCTA held an event on 19 July to commemorate Peace and Freedom Day which is a public holiday in North Cyprus on 20 July. The function was addressed by NCTA President Zehra Ali, and Turkish Consul General Melih Karalar. Also present was Fairfield's Deputy Mayor Sera Yilmaz. The 20 July event commemorates events in Cyprus in 1974. The NCTA is a community based association formed in 1953. It is made up of families who cherish and celebrate the cultural connection of Turkish Cypriots living in NSW. The Association also has a language and culture school.

PARTNERSHIP TO PROTECT THE RICHMOND RIVER

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I commend North Coast Local Land Services and Ballina Shire Council on working together on a project to protect the Richmond River. The two organisations will protect the Richmond from sediment run off by sealing 13 dirt roads in the Emigrant Creek Catchment Area and other actions. The two-year investment, funded from the NSW Government's Marine Estate Management Strategy, is contributing to water quality improvements in the Richmond River as part of a broader project being led by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Ballina Shire Council will focus on sealing approximately eight kilometres of dirt roads to ensure that road base matter does not flow into waterways during heavy rain or flooding, the Office of Environment and Heritage will monitor water quality to document improvements and North Coast Local Land Services will undertake river bank revegetation and other erosion control works on priority sites. This is a welcome project but the Richmond River needs a much broader scale plan and investment from the NSW and Australian governments to dramatically improve the poor water quality of the majority of the Richmond River and its catchment.

ROUSE HILL RHINOS PINK DAY

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—Last Sunday, I had the honour of once again attending the incredible Rouse Hill Rhinos Junior Rugby League Pink Day event where they turned their home ground at Wrights Road, Pink! This event supports not only the Breast Cancer Foundation every year but they also select a second charity to support and they split the funds 50/50. This year they selected the Black Dog Institute who do incredible work especially with the younger generation who are of a similar age of the Clubs players. There were over 450 players from 34 teams each wearing a sponsored and personalised pink jersey playing 16 games on the field, and a total of approximately 600 people enjoying all of the extra activities such as rides, stalls and raffles raising money for these two causes. Since the Club commenced running this event in 2012, the Club has raised an incredible \$91,500. A contribution that should be recognised. I would like to commend Debbie Sills – the Coordinator of this event, as well as club President, Paul Fuda, Vice President, Michael Perkins, Treasurer Craig Mackay, and Club Secretary Rowena Mezzomo for this amazing event, and for the support they have given the various charities over the years.

ENID WEBSTER

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I'd like to wish Lake Macquarie resident Enid Webster all the very best when she competes in this Sunday's City To Surf at the spritely age of 98. This year's event will be Enid's fifth. Despite being ill and undergoing surgery just a few months ago, Enid is determined to finish the 14-kilometre course after missing last year's event due to a chest infection. Enid has been a vegetarian for 81 years and puts her longevity and determination down to eating well and exercising. In fact her training regime includes walking 10,000 steps a day, but she managed 30,000 in one day last month as she ramped up her training.

It was Enid's neighbour in Cooranbong who inspired her to do the City to Surf for the first time in 2014 when she was aged 92. She'll be out there this Sunday wearing her Adventist Development and Relief Agency T-shirt and supported by relatives including some of her five children, nine grandchildren and

10 great-grandchildren. Enid's hoping to finish the course this year in under three hours. I wish her well and acknowledge her extraordinary determination and spirit.

MELIS SALIH AND BRITTNEY ROBINSON

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I draw the attention of the House to Melis Salih and Brittney Robinson, two students in Year 12 at Holsworthy High School. These two girls set up a cake stall at the Holsworthy High School Federal polling place, serving a range of baked goods, including over 200 cupcakes. The money raised at the cake stall is going towards the Mbuyu Foundation, an NGO training people in Uganda, and providing essential health care education. Brittney's Aunt and Uncle are the founders of the NGO, so it's a cause her family is particularly passionate about. Melis also saw this fundraiser as a great opportunity to serve others during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. It is always encouraging to see young people take initiative and selflessly serve the most vulnerable people in our global community. I thank Melis and Brittney for their wonderful fundraiser and wish them all the best with their endeavours.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Lilli Pilli Patisserie Café for winning the bakery and cake shop category in the 2019 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. The café won chefs bake all their fresh gourmet pies, sausage rolls, cakes, pastries and bread on site. This bakery is the great example of a small business operating around the clock to serve its community. I congratulate Seabeauty Medispa for winning the competitive of Beauty Services category in the 2019 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Seabeauty Medispa follows a three dimensional approach to skincare, namely topical, nutrition and mindset.

I congratulate Michelle Hyslop, the owner and senior skin technician, who has been in the beauty and skin care industry since 2002. I congratulate Inbetween Tangerine for winning the Fashion Shop category in the 2019 Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. The shop aims to provide customers with quality, high-end, bohemian-chic pieces mixed in with fast fashion that is still affordable. The owners travelled extensively to Europe, United Kingdom, South America, Africa and Asia to source jewellery and accessories that cannot be found in Australia, as well as locally designed fashion pieces.

WOONONA EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira)—Woonona East Public school year six environment team recently invited me to visit their school to discuss the important issues of waste management, concerns for the environment and the need to reduce plastics in our community. These passionate, educated, well researched young students named Maya, Hayley, Caitlyn and Sophie are the future of our State and give me so much hope for change. The topic of environment is something I am contacted about frequently by my youngest constituents. They want action, they want their environment protected and they are genuinely worried about their environmental future.

These four students have introduced composting at the Woonona East Pubic School. They have reduced the use of single plastics in the playground and also helped to produce an edible vegetable garden but most importantly they called on the Government for real action on climate change. I am very grateful for the opportunity of spending time with these young leaders in our community and proud of the achievements they have made at school and in their community. Congratulations must go to the environmental team at Woonona East Public school. Keep up the great work Maya, Hayley, Caitlin and Sophie.

GRANVILLE SOUTH CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn)—I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful work of students and teachers at Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School in producing their annual showcase "Brave" celebrating the talents and achievements of their artistic students. Of particular note were the individual performances of Ektemel Ajouz and Nuno Salsinha alongside a particularly joyful rendition of Sing Sing Sing by the Support Dance Crew led by Ms Menezes and Mrs Armont. With dance, drama, and even circus on the programme it is safe to say that Granville South CAPA High School has plenty of talent to work with in the coming years. A special note should be made of two particular performances. The work of the Pacifika Ensemble in presenting Ta'u Koula and Samoa Lo'u atunuu pele/o a' u o le Samoa was a great piece by the students involved. Another outstanding highlight was the rendition of Isn't He Lovely by Joshua Latukefu, Ektemel Ajouz and Nuno Salsinha in honour of the recent birth of the first child of their teacher Mrs Collins. Congratulations to both the teachers and the students on their outstanding work.

FRIENDS OF CALLAN PARK

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)— Today I recognise the work of the Friends of Callan Park, one of my community's most robust and longstanding advocacy organisations. Callan Park and Broughton Hall form a

uniquely valuable site that is used and greatly treasured by the local community and wider Sydney. For 20 years, Friends of Callan Park have worked tirelessly to protect and promote this site. In particular I would like to acknowledge the work of long-term president and co-founder Hall Greenland and the work of past president and co-founder Dr Jean Lennane.

I also acknowledge the many community members who have campaigned for Callan Park and thank them for their outstanding work and diligence in the community — including the current executive – Roslyn Burge, Carole Allen, Margaret Armstrong, Cynthia Nadai, Lyn Latella, Doreen Mars, Romy Baker, Sue Steedman, Peter Gray, Roger Parkes, Paul Power, Vera-Ann Hannaford, Fergus Fricke, Peter Longhurst, Craig Channels, Philip Marsh, Dan Sturrock, Loretta Picone and Inner West councillors Rochelle Porteous and John Stamolis. This is not to mention all those 1000s of resident supporters who have letterboxed, marched and attended meetings over the past decades.

LUMINOSITY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—The much anticipated annual Luminosity Youth Summit was held in my electorate at the Glasshouse in Port Macquarie from 24th to 26th July 2019. Luminosity is best described as a once in a lifetime experience for young people aged 15 to 25 years. Now in its seventh year, the event comprises of high profile presenters and local business leaders who engage young people through a series of workshops and interactive sessions aimed to create an action plan to assist our regional and rural youth plan for the future.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with Charlotte Salt, Lewis Kranitis, Zac Terley and Jenni Cooper – just four of the dozens of youth delegates sponsored to attend Luminosity. For them, it was an opportunity to develop new skills and to ask for advice relating to their future career ambitions. Co-founder of Luminosity and Chair Kate Wood-Foye was jubilant to again announce a sold-out event with 400 young people from across the State registered to participate in the empowering and motivational experience. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the NSW Government for funding support of \$50,000 joining with other local businesses and organisations sponsoring Luminosity Summit.

BAULKHAM HILLS TOPS THE STATE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—More than 250,000 Creative Kids vouchers have been downloaded in just six months, with families across the Baulkham Hills electorate leading the way to save on the cost of creative and cultural learning activities. This program complements the hugely popular Active Kids vouchers, which was doubled to two vouchers per child at the beginning of July, to support the participation of children and young people in sport and active recreation. Since these programs are critical to a child's growth and development, I am delighted that there has been a significant uptake of vouchers in Baulkham Hills where parents will keep even more money in their back pocket while their kids stay happy and healthy.

KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL SERVICE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)—On Saturday 27th July 2019, I was very pleased to attend the Korean War Memorial Service at Walsh Park in Bomaderry with veterans and dignitaries including Deputy Consul General of Korea Mr Su-Chang Cho. I would also like to acknowledge Mr Bob Morris OAM, and Master of Ceremonies Noel Jackson and Mr Bill Smith, who delivered the Memorial Address on Korea, all three of whom are veterans of the Korean War. I also acknowledge Mr Bob O'Grady, President of the Bomaderry RSL Sub Branch. The signing of the Armistice in Korea on 27 July 1953 marked the end of a phase of war unique in the annals of war. Twenty one United Nations joined together to form a United Nations Force to uphold a United Nations Cause. The Navies Armies and Air Forces of the British Commonwealth Countries combined and fought as a fully integrated division with the United Nations Forces with distinction. Lest We Forget.

HANSEN YUNCKEN

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work by Hansen Yuncken as the contractor undertaking the \$110 million, 220-bed expansion of the Bathurst Correctional Centre. Construction started in July 2018 and is on track to be completed by mid 2020. This is a massive project for Bathurst and is delivering major benefits to the wider local community. Expanding the centre in Bathurst will not only accommodate the increasing prison population, but will also deliver modern infrastructure for the safety of prison officers and inmate rehabilitation.

As a gesture of goodwill and thanks to their hard-working subbies, Hansen Yuncken invited the Lions Club of Bathurst Macquarie to bring their new food van on site to cook a barbecue lunch for the estimated

250 sub-contractors working on the site at any one time. I had the pleasure of joining the dedicated Lions Club volunteers cooking the barbecue who were keen to show off their impressive new food van which was made possible thanks to support from the NSW Government of \$10,000. This really is a great example of Hansen Yuncken being a great community partner and I am sure their subbies appreciated this initiative.

SCOTTISH DANCING ASSOCIATION'S DEBUTANTES BALL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was delighted to attend the Scottish Dancing Association of Australia's Annual Debutantes Ball on 22nd of June at the Mount Pritchard Community Club. It was an honour to officially open the ball and receive the Debutantes, who performed their dances beautifully and are a credit to the Scottish Dancing Association. I would like to thank Association President Ms Karen McPhillips and her husband Mr Brett Carr for extending their kind invitation to this event and for their warm hospitality. I would also like to acknowledge Matron of Honour Elizabeth Munro and all of the event organisers for their contribution to the evening's success. It was great to see so many young people participating in this time honoured tradition and to see all the action of Highland dancing at its best in an evening of community fun.

MALCOLM TOWLE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—Following more than 25 years of service in the management of the Penrith Division of St John Ambulance, Superintendent Mr. Malcolm Towle MStJ has stepped down from his position for some well-earned rest and to spend more time with his family. He will however continue on as a valued member and mentor of the organisation. Malcolm has been involved with many community projects behind the scenes over his many years of service and these have included the 2000 Olympic Torch Relay planning committee in 1999, the Medical Commander for the Olympic White Water, Rowing and Athletics Precincts, first-aid at fire staging areas at Panthers, the Invictus games, as a member of the Penrith Local Emergency Management Committee, as well of thousands of volunteer hours each year. He has also represented St John Ambulance Australia by providing First-Aid at the London Olympic Games, and when visiting Canada. Malcom is to be commended for his outstanding service to St John Ambulance and to the wider community. (MStJ is Member of the Order of St John)

PLANET YOUTH PROGRAM

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I recently had the honour of meeting Marrickville Youth Resource Centre staff working to roll out the Planet Youth Program across my electorate with the support of the Alcohol and Drug Foundation. For over 60 years, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation has led the way in championing evidence based drug and alcohol intervention measures and research. The Planet Youth Program represents a new chapter in their important work, and involves workers touring local schools, conducting qualitative surveys of students about drug use, and tailoring programs to help deliver drug and alcohol prevention strategies.

The program is being trialled in my electorate and is collecting critical data, assessing community infrastructure, and engaging the local community to reduce the risk factors of drug and alcohol use in young people, a key plank in harm minimisation. In Iceland, where the program began, alcohol, tobacco and drug use fell significantly between 1998 and 2008, as well as reductions in bullying and juvenile crime. I welcome this trial and recognise the important long term investment in our youth that this program represents, and congratulate the Marrickville Youth Resource Centre and Alcohol and Drug Foundation on this important project.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD MOSMAN COUNCIL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I rise to congratulate Mosman Council on their recent recognition at the Local Government New South Wales Gala Awards night. Mosman Council were acknowledged for the 'Best Local Youth Week' as well as being awarded the Leo Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Award for 'New Sacred' and finally, Mosman Council were also nominated for a Local Government NSW RH Dougherty Award – for 'Innovation in Special Events' for their T5 Tank Sound Project. The Leo Kelly OAM Arts and Culture Awards are in memory of the late councillor Leo Kelly, a champion of the arts. New Sacred is an exhibition developed by Mosman Council in partnership with City of Parramatta Council and resulted in efficiencies greater than could normally be achieved by the two separate councils. I congratulate the staff at Mosman Council on this fantastic initiative and their work in celebrating our local community.

MANNING RIVER DRAGON BOAT CLUB REGATTA

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I inform the house that last weekend the mighty Manning River welcomed 21 Dragon Boat clubs from across the state. The Manning River Dragon Boat Club hosted a hugely successful Regatta thanks in part to Mother Nature who provided perfect paddling weather. Of the 21 teams who competed there were a number of community teams including Vision Kitchens, Old Bar Community team, BreakThru and Northcott. Thanks must go to our local emergency services who were on hand

over the weekend as well as all the members from the Manning River Dragon Boat Club who helped co-ordinate and manage the event led by President Jennifer Nightingale.

The Great Lakes Pearl Dragons enjoyed another successful outing at the Regatta over the weekend, winning the women's 200m race. Coached by Rejane Chapman and with Australian Aurora's team member Wendy Orman at lead stroke, the women edged out rivals Camden Haven in a photo finish. Pearl Dragons' president Denise Marr said it was an extremely fast race. Saturday saw paddlers compete in the 100 metre Dash for Cash Race, with the Western Waratahs winning and donating the \$500 prize money to the Royal Flying Doctors Service.

PETER AND AUDRY MCCALLUM SERVICE TO WAVERLEY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—I rise today to speak about Peter and Audrey McCallum, who are exemplary Waverley Community members. Peter is a well-known Bronte local who was Principal of Bronte Public school for 17 years. He has been a strong advocate for better public education, transport and for the rights of young people. Peter's contribution to the people of Waverley and beyond has taken many forms over many decades. I have been personally touched by his gently but firm co-ordination of the young people at ANZAC Day commemorations held in Waverley Park.

The McCallum's have a strong passion for celebrating and preserving Waverley local history and have been prominent in the Waverley historical society. I ask that the next time you walk into the Prince of Wales Hospital, take a moment to read the history of the hospital displayed on the wall and you can thank Audrey for this wonderful enlightening display of history! It is hard to name an organisation or cause that has not benefited from the McCallum's service! I take this opportunity to give a heartfelt thank you to Peter and Audrey. Thank you for making Waverley a richer place to live.

SOPHIE ALLISTER

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Local year 12 student, Sophie Allister, a studious and committed student of Gosford High School in my electorate has obtained a scholarship to attend the Australian National University in Canberra next year. The Tuckwell Scholarship which is awarded to only 25 students across the country means Sophie will be able to study at ANU and receive \$25,000 every year for five years towards her undergraduate studies. Sophie was able to successfully navigate the application process which required her to submit her academic record, recommendations and have an interview with the university all while studying for her Higher School Certificate. It is so refreshing to see intelligent young women in my community being acknowledged and assisted to achieve their personal best in their education and I congratulate Sophie on her successful application. I know Sophie will go on to achieve great success during her time at university and I look forward to following her progress throughout her studies. Congratulations Sophie and make our community proud!

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:49 until
Thursday 8 August 2019 at 09:30.**