



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 20 August 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 20 August 2019

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (RMS DISSOLUTION) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 1 August 2019.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (12:16): Before I make a contribution to the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019, I acknowledge Vicky Isabella Weston, is an exchange student from Denmark, who is in the public gallery. It is her birthday, and I welcome her to the Legislative Assembly. The Opposition has been watching the rollout of this legislation very closely since its original introduction as part of the budget omnibus bills in June this year. The legislation was suddenly, and perhaps unexpectedly, introduced in this House and then the other place as part of the budget process while the Government was in the midst of negotiations with the unions. The principles of negotiation with affected unions and workers in those departments is extremely important and one the Opposition holds very dear.

Heaven forbid, should a clause, condition, benefit or monetary amount that pertains to members of Parliament be talked about, this House would hold weeks of inquiries to investigate, and perhaps fair enough. If a disagreement about the arrangements relating to the parliamentary gymnasium can make the front pages of *The Daily Telegraph*, it seems in no way unreasonable, illogical or uncooperative that public servants are concerned and, indeed, asking questions about their place of work. It was made more confusing by the fact that the Minister in the other place suggested to the affected unions that legislation was not needed but then introduced it under the cover of the budget bills. It is perhaps unsurprising that schedule 5 of that legislation was not included in the bill before it became law.

It is my understanding that negotiations with the relevant unions have progressed well since the Government's defeat in the other place—perhaps because of that defeat. Several of the issues presented to the Government have been agreed to but remain absent from the legislation at this time. In principle, the Opposition does not oppose the merging of Roads and Maritime Services into the authority of Transport for NSW. It makes sense to us to pursue an administrative and bureaucratic change to rein in the operation and decision-making capabilities of Roads and Maritime Services. It is worrying that an important managerial or strategic change in the administration of transport is being implemented in the ninth year of the New South Wales Government after it has spent, by its own admission, many billions of dollars on the transport and roads portfolios. It is also worrying that although the merger is essential in the proper management of roads, rail, transport and planning, the legislation has in effect been delayed by close to a decade.

Opposition members support a process of reining in the approach of Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], due in many respects to our own experiences with the department. In my electorate of Kogarah the Government, through the RMS department, is embarking on what I regard as a senseless decision to place clearways through vibrant town centres like Forest Road at Bexley simply to improve travel time during non-peak periods. That goes to the short title of the bill about better management of RMS and the transport department, as well as to the shameful document circulated by the Government entitled *Proposed new and extended clearways and alternative business parking on Stoney Creek Road and Forest Road*.

Mr Mark Coure: But my community loves it; my community wants it.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Let me be the first person in Parliament to congratulate the member for Oatley on the birth of his second boy, named Sam.

The SPEAKER: That is very gracious of the member for Kogarah. I join with him in congratulating Adla, Mark and James on the birth of Sam, but I ask the member for Oatley to resist from interjecting.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The proposal would extend clearways in that part of Sydney from 6.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. on weekends. I am left with the distinct and troubling realisation that parts of the Government are approaching transport policy on clearways exclusively in the context of the movement of cars, not on the vibrancy of commerce or the provision of employment, and not in the context of economic centres such as Bexley that grow and change. In the many meetings that the member for Kogarah and I have had on those important issues the Chamber of Commerce in Bexley has told us comprehensively that by working together the businesses had lifted Bexley out of the doldrums and turned it into a centre of economic growth and employment. They had worked incredibly hard on it. I am sure Mr Speaker knows that that part of Sydney is not located on a train line, yet those businesses have worked together and made that suburban centre a fantastic magnet for business and commerce.

I am left with the troubling realisation that the Government believes King Street, which is admittedly dense and often congested, is the worst-operating street in Sydney whereas Parramatta Road, which has clearways right through it but in many parts is barren of commercial activity, is the best. If the purpose of the bill is for the new Minister for Transport and Roads to take control of RMS and guide decision-making so as not to hurt those businesses, particularly by the implementation of clearways, then that is an admirable ambition. I can only guess that it is proposals such as the Bexley clearways, which is spelled out in a document that I am happy to table in the House, that have prompted the Minister to place the merged department at the heart of the transport planning process. Nothing would demonstrate better to the taxpayers of New South Wales a renewed commitment to coordinated planning and resource allocation in transportation than if the Minister in his speech in reply promised to cancel the clearways project in Bexley and save the livelihoods of the people in the businesses affected. It would be a fantastic opportunity for the member for Bega, and Minister for Transport and Roads, to show that he is a fighter for the little guy.

He would be hailed as a fighter for the underdog on the streets of Kogarah. He might not be getting much love from the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, but he would get a lot of love from the shopkeepers in the electorate of Kogarah. As the late Ronald Reagan said, "... government is not the solution to our problems; government is the problem." When it comes to the RMS and its clearway proposal in Bexley, the late Ronald Reagan was right. This is a great opportunity for the Minister to unambiguously say to the people of south-west Sydney that he is on their side. I urge him to make that decision at the earliest available opportunity.

The Opposition will not oppose this legislation as it is presented in this House, but we reserve the right to move amendments in the other place to protect in legislative form the rights of workers affected by it. Those amendments have been spelled out in numerous correspondences with the department and Unions NSW. The Minister is well aware of the foreshadowed amendments, but I will outline them in *Hansard* for the benefit of members. We foreshadow that the Opposition will move amendments to ensure: that there is a no net detriment principle applied as a result of the merger; that there be no forced redundancies for a period of four years and that no privatisations be considered for a similar period; that the Government commitment to no job losses extend to Wollongong, Newcastle, the Central Coast and the Blue Mountains; and that Transport for NSW commits to maintaining key conditions in the RMS award. The Opposition will circulate those proposed amendments in the other place well before the Committee stage and will work with affected parties to ensure that to the extent possible the principles mentioned above can be written in legislative form during the amendment phase. During his second reading speech the Minister said:

This reorganisation will deliver better planning and service delivery and, as a result, better outcomes. No matter where you live in this State, the Government has made a very clear commitment that, by merging RMS staff with Transport for NSW staff, we can grow the bureaucracy in the bush. We want to deliver more jobs in the country to better plan our transport, logistics and freight movements across the regions.

That is a laudable goal. I expect that all regional MPs will be lining up to ask the Minister for Transport and Roads exactly how many jobs they can expect in their regional and country electorates over the coming three years. The Opposition will hold the Minister to his august goal. I hope it is not just a stretch goal from Transport for NSW but is what I would consider a rolled gold promise to grow the bureaucracy in the bush and deliver more jobs in the transport cluster to country New South Wales.

I will end with a question for the Minister. Opposition MPs would be interested to hear from him what prompted this legislation in the ninth year of this Government and which of the decisions of his predecessors in the transport ministry, along with his colleagues in roads and Treasury, prompted him to decide that he needs to rein in RMS? What quantum of government money has been spent and in what areas of Sydney that has caused the Minister to be so irritated that he has taken what I regard on the whole to be a laudable decision to merge the departments? It would benefit me, as the newly minted shadow Minister for Transport, to hear which of the Minister colleagues' decisions and decision-making processes he considers to be so subpar that they have made RMS go off the rails, so to speak.

What decisions has the Minister seen up close that have gone so far off the rails that he has been prompted to take the pretty extraordinary decision to move RMS into Transport for NSW and have a merger of this scale? Again, I am not criticising the Minister; I am just interested in the decision-making process. The Opposition will watch this legislation closely. We hope that negotiations between affected public sector unions and the Government are ongoing and that they can be resolved. I can report that in my discussions with the unions I have heard that many of the outstanding issues have been agreed to. I hope that the process continues and that we can have a coordinated transport authority in New South Wales.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:29): I am pleased to speak in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019 and to outline the benefits that the reorganisation of the transport cluster will bring to the people of this State. In April the Premier announced the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's key priorities for its term of government. Transport has a critical role to play in delivering on a number of these priorities, including building a stronger economy, delivering well-connected communities with quality local environments and making the customer the centre of everything we do. It is well known that the electorate of North Shore has one of the highest rates of public transport usage across the State. We are also fortunate that a number of local investments are being made in our roads, in the metro and in other transport initiatives. It is important that we reflect on the way in which we make those decisions and administer those projects.

A range of changes have been made to the New South Wales government sector. These changes have been designed to deliver on our priorities and commitments to the community by giving an even greater focus to social reforms and to regional New South Wales. The reorganisation of Transport for NSW is designed to create a fully integrated transport agency capable of delivering on the Government's commitments. The integration of Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] is a sensible and logical next step for Transport for NSW as the lead agency in the transport cluster. It will fully integrate every area of transport under a single and unified banner. It will also break down any residual silos that frustrate effective service delivery, including in regional areas. This bill is an important element in achieving this aim. It will put beyond doubt the merging of the functions of RMS into the transport cluster, and it will ensure that there are no gaps in the proper exercise of those functions.

The Government is determined to continue to deliver on its integrated transport plans for New South Wales, in particular the outcomes set out in the Future Transport Strategy 2056. That strategy is an update of the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan. It involves a suite of strategies and plans for transport to be developed in concert with the Greater Sydney Commission's Greater Sydney Region Plan, Infrastructure NSW's State Infrastructure Strategy and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's regional plans to provide an integrated vision for the State. The Future Transport Strategy 2056 sets out a 40-year vision, directions and outcomes framework for customer mobility in New South Wales. It will guide transport investment over the longer term and be delivered through a series of supporting plans. But to continue to deliver on these plans we must change the way we work.

It is critical that all New South Wales government agencies in the transport cluster look to operate and work together differently. A key ingredient will be Transport for NSW having the right structure in place to ensure that the various areas work more closely together, and to focus on the different needs of urban and regional New South Wales in a holistic way that puts the needs of the customer before the mode of transport. The second ingredient will be to focus on being smarter with taxpayers' money. We recognise that Transport for NSW needs to be smarter in how it uses taxpayers' money so that we can spend more time delivering better customer service. Last, but by no means least, we need to focus on our people—our hardworking public servants in the transport service—so that we can deliver on our commitments to the communities of this great State. The Government is committed to improving the experience of working at Transport for NSW by making it a place where everyone can listen, act, think and lead for the benefit of communities and customers.

In April this year the program of change began and, significantly, staff and unions have been engaged in the process every step of the way. Indeed, staff and union comments and insights informed the final design of the divisional structure, including the settlement of the boundary between the Greater Sydney division and the regional and other metropolitan division. Unions were provided with the boundary proposal and the opportunity to ask questions about how it would work. Their questions were formally responded to. Staff feedback emphasised the safety function of the transport cluster and the significance of its environmental impact, which led to the designation of the safety, environment and regulation division.

Creating new divisions and assigning staff to them is an important first step; it is hardly the end of the story. The transformation of Transport for NSW into an integrated transport agency that takes a holistic approach to the challenge of facilitating multimodal, safe and sustainable transport services for the urban and regional communities of this State will take time, and it will require further input from staff and unions. I am informed that senior managers at Transport for NSW are holding regular briefing sessions with staff to inform them of

developments and to provide opportunities for feedback and input into the establishment of the new divisions. At the same time, senior leaders of the cluster are also holding regular consultation sessions with employee representative bodies, in accordance with the provisions of relevant industrial awards. This collaborative approach is to be applauded. Bringing staff together on designing and delivering customer-centred, safe and sustainable services is the way forward.

In my electorate of North Shore we are heavily reliant on a range of different initiatives that the Government is undertaking, particularly in transport. I will go through some of those. My community does not see transport, roads, cycling and active transport as different functions of our government and services. My community sees it as all about journeys—how to get from A to B in a safe and efficient way. Currently a number of different projects are underway in my electorate, the most exciting of which—I have to choose between a few—is the Sydney Metro project. We have allocated another \$5.3 billion over four years for the next stage of the project, including work at the Victoria Cross, North Sydney, and the Crows Nest metro stations—and I was at Crows Nest for both of the tunnel-boring machine breakthroughs.

I congratulate the Minister for Transport and Roads on the work he is doing and the whole Sydney Metro team. The turn-up-and-go service that has been so incredibly welcomed in the north-west will be a completely game-changing project for my community; adding new metro stations at Crows Nest and Victoria Cross is an investment in the mobility and accessibility of my constituents. To think of what is happening underground in our city every single day, I commend the project team on the work they are doing to minimise the impacts on our communities and for making sure that they are communicating the whole way. Shortly the tunnel-boring machine will arrive at Victoria Cross, North Sydney. That will be an exciting day for our community—the next phase in bringing the metro to North Sydney and the North Shore.

The Sydney Metro program also supports the school apprenticeship program. It is important to reflect on the role of Government in investing in skills for the future and the way in which we use government infrastructure projects to catalyse skills growth and development for students across the State. I met with two of those students at the Crows Nest metro. One was working in construction and was the only girl on the project. She was eager to go into a construction role after completing her studies. I also met a young man who was working in the finance side of the project. The skills that we are investing in our students will give them pathways into the future. It is something the Government should be congratulated on.

The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link project is probably the next most exciting project for my electorate—for probably 40 years or so it has been called for. We are now at a point where the arterial roads—Military and Spit roads—are already over capacity. That is spilling through to the back streets, which are residential and have become rat runs, significantly impacting local communities. The only government that would deliver the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link is a Liberal government, and we have made that commitment. In the next financial year we have budgeted \$165 million to progress the crucial planning and preconstruction stage. The tunnel itself will have a transformational impact on the local community. It is expected to reduce travel times to North Sydney and Mosman upwards of 30 per cent, with the expectation of reducing traffic across the Spit Bridge by up to 15 per cent.

Mr James Griffin: Hear, hear!

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I acknowledge the member for Manly's excitement about the tunnel and about getting traffic off my local streets. I acknowledge the work of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link team within the Transport for New South Wales cluster and the work that they are doing to get this project right for our community. As I mentioned earlier with the metro, there are often impacts on our communities with these major transformational infrastructure projects. But I applaud the work they are doing to minimise those impacts. [*Extension of time*]

So much transport is happening in my electorate of North Shore that I wanted to speak a bit more about it. I now move on to our buses. If anyone has not been on the B-line buses, I implore them to get on board. Those buses are the most exciting change in public transport, before the metro turned up, that anyone could experience. Cruising across the Harbour Bridge on the top deck of a B-line bus is a beautiful experience; you do not get the same views as you do in a car or on a single-decker bus. It has significantly changed traffic flows on Military Road and eased the congestion that we are facing on our local streets and on those residential back streets. People constantly stop me in the street to tell me how much they love the B-line and what a wonderful service it is—they love the new buses. This is something that is really part of the transformational attitude we have towards customer service and towards getting passenger journeys right. We have also made a number of other changes to get things right for our local community. One of those is introducing new stops for Spit Junction on the E88 and E89 bus routes to make sure that we have got the right level of services for our communities. We will continue investing in our bus services to make sure that we can have a safe, reliable commute for my communities.

There probably is no better way to commute than across Sydney Harbour on a ferry. Our ferry customers are receiving a major boost with additional services. During our last term of government we introduced the new F4 Cross Harbour and F7 Double Bay ferry routes. The F4 improved the connections between the North Shore, the Eastern Suburbs and the Sydney CBD, so it was really the first ferry route that connected the North Shore, the Eastern Suburbs and the city. It connected into us at Milsons Point and McMahon's Point. I know that has been greatly appreciated, particularly with the connection into Barangaroo as well.

We have also announced that we are going to undertake upgrades to the wharf at High Street in North Sydney, South Mosman wharf and Taronga Zoo wharf to improve accessibility and service provision there. I know that people love our ferry services and they also love the new Emerald class of ferries, which have capacity for 400 customers and provide improved access for our less mobile customers, including people with prams—something that the Assistant Speaker and I know a lot about—and make sure that people can get around safely and efficiently.

I turn to the way in which our local train services are being addressed, particularly by the Minister and by Transport for NSW, by this approach to customer service and by ensuring we are getting things right for not just those who use our services but also those who are impacted by them. I acknowledge and thank the Chief Executive Officer of Sydney Trains, Howard Collins, who joined me last week in Wollstonecraft with the Waverton Wollstonecraft Rail Noise Action Group—a group that the Assistant Speaker in a previous role as parliamentary secretary had also met with—and progressed their concerns about significant levels of rail noise along the Waverton-Wollstonecraft rail bends, which are the tightest bends in the Sydney rail network.

Howard Collins had been to the location on a number of occasions and is working through a series of different initiatives to improve and reduce the noise impacts on our community. Sydney Trains has done that, for instance, by introducing TORFMAs—that is top of rail friction modification agents—which are effectively lubricants for the trains. Sydney Trains is also starting a trial on dampeners to try to impact that noise. I know that Sydney Trains is going to keep working on new ideas and initiatives to make sure that we minimise the impacts that our network can have on residents, particularly the downstream impacts of some of our incredible investments in increasing public transport services. I will keep working with Sydney Trains and with the Minister and his team on that.

Lastly I reflect on one of the bugbears of my community that we are still working on a solution for, and that is the Beauty Point rat run. Yesterday I met with representatives of RMS—now under the Transport for NSW cluster—and spoke with them about this again. Those who live on the other side of the Spit, like the member for Manly, would know that Beauty Point has some beautiful residential streets and some tight, narrow streets going past Beauty Point Public School, which have been used for a long time as a rat run for residents from the northern beaches to try to avoid Military Road. One of the reasons we are doing so much work to reduce the level of congestion on Military Road is to take that pressure off our backstreets.

I have previously asked the Minister for Transport and Roads for Beauty Point rat run to be closed to traffic entering from Spit Road, and today I reiterate that request. It is important for us to think about local safety and the risks and hazards that are faced by my local residents in Beauty Point. I will continue to advocate for that closure and for additional changes to be made to make our back roads safe, because while we know we are in between the city and many people's homes and are seen as a place that people commute through, these are also our homes, our streets and our schools. We want to make sure they are safe for our kids getting to and from school.

I thank the Minister and his team, the previous Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Melinda Pavey, and former Roads and Maritime Services agency staff for the way that issue has been approached. They are working on it. It is an incredibly challenging issue for us but I will continue to ensure that I advocate for the interests of my community in that way. As I said, this bill is necessary but alone it is not sufficient to ensure that Transport for NSW is best placed to deliver on the priorities of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. The bill is Parliament's opportunity to ensure that the great collaborative and customer-focused work that is already being done within the cluster is adequately supported by an appropriate legislative framework. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (12:44): I speak on the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019. This bill provides a legislative framework to integrate Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] into a consolidated transport authority. Schedule 1 dissolves RMS and transfers its functions, assets, rights and liabilities to Transport for NSW. As outlined in the Minister's second reading speech, schedule 2 makes consequential amendments that give effect to the dissolution of RMS in the Roads Act 1993 and other transport related regulations. Along with my Labor colleagues I support this bill in principle and acknowledge the potential public policy benefits of a consolidated agency with responsibility for transport and roads in New South Wales.

I hope that this will end a siloed approach that has facilitated the Government's continued obsession with toll roads at the expense of public transport, pedestrians and cyclists. I hope it will see public transport advocates given equal importance, which I note was not the case when the Government excluded public transport options in the business case to justify WestConnex. I hope that this merger will give greater prominence to active transport projects and corridors as championed by residents, organisations and indeed the Great Sydney Commission. I hope it will mean genuine consultation is finally given to how we may retrofit our suburbs to improve walkability and transport access. And I hope it will mean we design greenfield developments in ways that increase public transport.

Since being elected as the member for Summer Hill in 2015, I have worked with countless residents to oppose and mitigate the very worst of this Government's WestConnex project. The project has been an unmitigated disaster for so many inner west residents, particularly those in Haberfield, Ashfield and St Peters. In this place I have regularly raised issues such as unfair property acquisitions, the levelling of irreplaceable Federation homes, construction chaos, rat-running, as well as significant health concerns—including air pollution and asbestos management in the construction phase—raised by residents who are living right next to the construction of this project. Despite its impacts, the Government has continued to add more and more arms to this tollway—despite clear evidence that public transport would better serve our growing city.

Labor has consistently argued that the discount rate formula applied to infrastructure cost-benefit analysis needs to change. The Grattan Institute reports that slashing the current 7 per cent rate would increase the attractiveness of rail and public transport projects. It has been also been revealed that public transport options were excluded when considering the business case for WestConnex. That is as clear an indication as you can get that the Government's interests tend to lie with roads over rail or other public transport. In her testimony to the parliamentary inquiry into WestConnex, Dr Michelle Zeibots, a transport expert from the University of Technology Sydney said:

... I believe that many people within TfNSW at that time as well as the Minister did comprehend the need to improve public transport, but were 'out manoeuvred' by others in their political party who preferred urban motorway development. That these same people do not rely on empirical data or a strong 'evidence base' when formulating their positions is evident in the stark difference between the material outcomes that have been achieved by these motorways and the 'beliefs and ideals' expressed before construction that were used to justify them.

While the M4 East tunnels opened a few weeks ago, we have still not seen the two lanes of dedicated rapid transit that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces promised in his conditions of consent to the project. Reports suggesting that the Government is now looking to push the promise out by potentially five years—but in fact there is no set timetable—and to suggest that we will satisfy those conditions of the consent with a rail project that will not be built for years is frankly unbelievable and betrays the communities along Parramatta Road. I call on the Minister to deliver on his promise and on his conditions of consent and to deliver that public transport along Parramatta Road. The community is right to look at the Government's track record when it comes to the bill before us—the consolidation of RMS and Transport for NSW. The community does not accept and nor indeed do those of us on this side of the House accept an arrangement that sees much-needed transport priorities for our city and our State consumed instead with an ideological obsession with toll roads.

This bill was first proposed in conjunction with budget bills but it has been delayed as a result of pressure on the Government to properly engage with the affected workers and the unions that represent them. The merger impacts countless workers across the transport and road industries and, as flagged by the shadow Minister the member for Kogarah, there are a number of very reasonable expectations that must be met for those workers.

I will highlight those four expectations. The first is that a no net detriment principle applies and that any disagreement be referred to the Industrial Relations Commission [IRC]. The second is that there be no forced redundancies for a period of four years and that no privatisations be considered in that time. The third is that the Government extend its "no regional job loss" commitment to Wollongong, Newcastle, the Central Coast and the Blue Mountains. The fourth is that the Government commit to maintaining key conditions in the RMS awards. Let us be clear: Industrial matters are very important to these workers. Their expectations are reasonable and the level of concern is understandable.

The Government has privatised Sydney ferries, Newcastle buses and inner west buses and there are rumours that more privatisation of bus services is to come. The Minister has made it clear on a number of occasions, including in his second reading speech on this bill, that he sees the future of transportation in New South Wales as fully automated. It is understandable that that causes a level of distress for the workers within the industry. In fact, the Minister noted that a move to full automation was one of the pressing needs for this bill.

Last month *The Sydney Morning Herald* revealed Transport for NSW's reform program through a series of freedom of information requests. The documents, dated March this year, reveal plans to raise public transport fares; to sell, rezone or develop hundreds of State-owned properties; to overhaul road levies; and "to cut up to \$1.9 billion a year from staff costs within 10 years". The Minister needs to make clear that this bill is not about

reducing our transport workforce. He needs to make a clear commitment that the jobs of those affected by this merger are safe and clearly indicate that this bill is not about further sell-offs of public transport.

The proposed merger has raised many opportunities and, frankly, many hopes in the community and amongst stakeholders working in and around active transport. For too long the needs of pedestrians and cyclists have been sidelined by RMS in favour of the flow of traffic. Our city is now paying big time for the preferential treatment that is given to cars. Sydney is creaking at the seams. Congestion on our roads is a critical issue affecting workers, families and our economy. I have long argued that active transport is a critical piece of the puzzle in reducing congestion on our roads, improving our health, strengthening communities and reducing carbon emissions.

Improving walkability is a key indicator for the Greater Sydney Commission in its objective to "celebrate diversity and put people at the heart of planning". Its *Pulse of Greater Sydney* document, released only a few weeks ago, reports that 18 per cent of all trips taken in the Greater Sydney region in 2017-18 were walking trips. That is not many, so there is plenty of room for improvement. However, when we dig deeper into the data, a different but important story emerges. In the city's eastern district—home to many of our more affluent suburbs—32 per cent of all trips were walking trips. The walking rate in the central Sydney district stands at 15 per cent; in the western district of the city the figure is a low 10 per cent. [*Extension of time*]

That means that nine times out of 10 western Sydney residents are getting into their car to go to work, to school or to the shops. Why? What is different for a person who lives in Penrith compared to a person who lives in Paddington? Let us be clear: It is not that one group loves their car or that one group just loves to walk. That is not the case at all. There is a clear discrepancy in the infrastructure available for those who wish to walk or cycle in western Sydney. I am talking about shaded, pleasant and interesting footpaths to walk on or safe, separated cycleways to ride on. In many parts of western Sydney those options are just not available. We are not moving quickly enough to invest properly in that infrastructure to make connected, walkable suburbs, particularly in greenfield developments. So many of our suburbs are built for cars, with twisting cul-de-sacs that privilege driving and literally put up walls to walking.

We need to focus on policies that make walking and cycling real options for everyone across Greater Sydney. For example, how can we make travelling to and from school by foot or by bike safer for kids, including fixing the ridiculous formula that is currently used to allocate crossing guards and pedestrian crossings around schools? How can we re-conceive our roads to give greater access and prominence to pedestrians and cyclists, including amending the hierarchies of our roads to give greater prominence to active transport corridors? When investing in big ticket transport infrastructure, what opportunities are we missing to include alternative modes of active transport? What innovations can change the way we move in the future, including the uptake of electronic bikes, scooters and skateboards?

Many active transport stakeholders have reported to me that they are hopeful that this bill will provide a new platform and greater prominence for active transport solutions. I am an optimist but the Government's record on active transport demands scrutiny. Since coming to power in 2011 the Government has declared a war on cyclists. It has ripped up cycleways and increased fines on cyclists. The Government also contemplated forcing cyclists, including children, to have a licence and to register their bikes. The Government talks a very big game on active transport but still we see only a very small proportion of the budget spent on active transport. Of the \$15.1 billion allocated to new transport capital expenditure in the most recent budget, only 0.38 per cent, or \$57 million, will be invested in new walking and cycling infrastructure projects. That is very little when we consider that every one of us is an active transport user, every one of us walks daily.

In comparison, in its publication *Global Outlook on Walking and Cycling* the United Nations recommends that governments should spend 20 per cent of their total transport budget on non-motorised and active transport. That is 20 per cent versus 0.38 per cent. Despite big promises in the New South Wales election, we are still waiting to see the money from this Government flow to some of the projects it promised, including, for example, the inner west GreenWay, which has been delayed by years due to delays in approvals from Sydney Trains. Similarly, the Eastern Suburbs cycleway has been tied up in red tape and awaiting approvals. The Minister has been silent on the Sydney Cycle Network and the flagged trials of electronic scooters have been on again/off again and the Government does not seem to have a solution in sight. A lot of money was promised but those projects have been held up and have not progressed. As a result, we are all losing out. I remind the House that every one of us partakes in active transport every day. We must make those options real options for everyone across Greater Sydney. I hope that this bill will reform the siloed approach we have seen so far and will support active transport as a real option for Sydney.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:58): I am pleased to support the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019 and to outline to members the benefits that the reorganisation of the transport cluster will bring to the people of this State, particularly to those

living in regional communities. The bill will focus on bringing together two separate parts of the transport cluster: Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services. The Roads and Maritime Services will be dissolved and the bill provides that its functions will in future be performed by Transport for NSW. The transport cluster is being reorganised to deliver better integrated service delivery across all modes, to keep driving better customer outcomes and to put a greater focus on creating better places for people across New South Wales no matter where they live.

This includes the creation of a new regional and outer metropolitan division focused on addressing the distinct needs of communities outside Greater Sydney—in particular, supporting the delivery of the Government's big, bold vision for improving roads and transport connectivity in the bush. The greater focus on regional areas will ensure that decision-making happens at the appropriate level to ensure that local community needs are met in a timely manner. The new regional division will try new things. The Government will do things differently in our regions. We will respond to the needs of customers in regional New South Wales. That is why we have already announced that we will look at new bus trials and train routes.

This is about going into isolated communities. This is about providing connectivity. This is about providing opportunity for those people to live longer in their homes. The benefit provided by these train routes and new coaches will support those communities and give the people in those regional areas the same level of access that those in metropolitan communities might already experience. We have communities that are growing. We have identified additional bus services to be provided for regional growth communities. Only recently I was out at Parkes, which has just invested in a new transit lounge. Why is this important? It means that now those in the surrounding villages and towns will be able to come to Parkes and stop over in the transit lounge before they have that connectivity—whether it be a cab, a coach or train services—to link up with other communities. This is what the Government is doing. The bill will ensure that we strongly support those in regional communities.

The integration of Roads and Maritime services functions and work teams into Transport for NSW is a key component of the transport cluster reorganisation. It will provide customers and the community with full integration of every area of transport under a single and unified transport banner. Transport for NSW, and Roads and Maritime Services already work very closely together on a day-to-day basis. In regional areas many offices and worksites are already co-located. This is not expected to change. However, through the bill the full integration of Roads and Maritime Services into Transport for NSW will mean there are no organisational barriers to realising the full benefits of integrated and coordinated services. It will also ensure the breaking down of any residual silos that frustrate effective service delivery. It will encourage even closer collaboration to ensure that we take a holistic view of the challenges and opportunities that exist in regional areas. Importantly, this integration will not result in job losses in rural and regional areas.

This is the next logical step for Transport for NSW. It will ensure all parts of the business are focused on delivering the Government's Future Transport 2056 strategy. Integrating Roads and Maritime Services into Transport for NSW will make it a lot easier for customers, industry, councils and other government agencies to effectively engage in transport matters. Integration will result in increased accountability and transparency for all transport stakeholders involved. The new operating model will ensure decision-making happens in a timely matter, and decisions truly reflect customer needs and expectations. The new operating model also means resources will be better targeted to areas of greatest need and priority. It will encourage better coordination and collaboration, allowing Transport to respond nimbly and creatively to changes in the operating environment. Transport is a technology business; it is in a period of unrivalled growth, change and disruption. The new operating model will position Transport to be more agile in responding to emerging challenges and to identifying ways that improved transport connectivity can unlock opportunity for individuals and business.

The new Transport for NSW structure includes two new geographically focused service and operational divisions—one focusing on Greater Sydney and the other on the diverse regions of our State outside of Sydney. These new divisions will provide a single point of accountability for the transport and road networks in any given community in New South Wales. The two divisions are focused on providing a customer and community-focused approach to planning and delivery. This will make it easier for customers and communities to engage with Transport for NSW. The Greater Sydney division includes Sydney Trains, Sydney Metro and the State Transit Authority with the chief executives of each of these entities committed to working closely and cooperatively with the deputy secretary of that division to ensure integrated service delivery and operations in the Greater Sydney area. The maritime division of the current Roads and Maritime Services is also located in this division and it is that part of Roads and Maritime Services known as RMS Sydney division.

The regional and outer metropolitan division focuses on the regions as well as Newcastle and Wollongong. It includes NSW TrainLink and the RMS regional and freight division, except for that part of the division dealing with freight that has transitioned to the Freight team in another part of the new Transport for NSW, the customer strategy and technology division. Again, this will ensure integrated service delivery and operations in the diverse regions of our State focusing on the varying needs and challenges that arise in different

locations. With this bill the New South Wales Government is once again demonstrating its commitment to the regions. As we have said, all the time, it is the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government that recognises that many in our regional and rural communities are doing it tough. Better connecting our communities and unlocking opportunities through improved transport and road links will be a key priority for this Government. This bill will support those connections. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (13:06): I speak briefly on the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019. I say at the outset that while Labor is not opposed to this bill we will move amendments in the other place. As many members in this place would know, Roads and Maritime Services[RMS] has increasingly become a law unto itself. I can only hope that through this merger process the cowboy attitude of the RMS will be reined in, although I am worried that it may simply create a bigger bully. It would come as no surprise to members of this place that community support for road projects is perhaps at its lowest level ever. This is despite increased congestion and travel times constricting the growth of our city. However, when you look at the way the RMS has taken to consulting with local communities when rolling out any new infrastructure project it becomes clear why there is so much community resentment at their actions.

During the recent proposal for 24-hour clearways along Stoney Creek Road and Forest Road in the St George area, it has quite frankly been insulting how little regard the RMS has paid to my community's views. The RMS has advertised community consultation events that it has simply not turned up to. It has failed to return calls from interested residents. One local councillor was even told that the RMS representatives would not speak with council at all. Where an agency like the RMS would have once sent out traffic engineers and professional experts to engage with concerned locals, it now hires agency temps with no experience or interest in the area of roads and transport so that it can tick the box that it has engaged with the community. When did the RMS forget that it was a public service, there to serve the public and not its own agenda?

On the upside, an integrated approach to transport and roads in New South Wales is long overdue. We must recognise that our public transport and road systems do not operate independently of each other. It is mad to have two agencies that have to work in tandem, often at loggerheads over priorities and budgeting. Hopefully, this merger will result in the Government abandoning its ideological worship of new toll roads and starting to allow genuine cost-benefit comparisons of public transport projects against the new roads. In 2017 leaked cabinet documents revealed that train journey times from Wollongong to Sydney would be slashed by up to 20 minutes if the Government built a \$3.6 billion rail tunnel. Thousands of people already commute from Wollongong to Sydney for work every day.

This investment would have given Wollongong commuters another half hour with their families every single day as well as eased the strain of population growth in metropolitan Sydney by allowing more people to make that journey. Instead, billions of dollars are being spent on the first stage of the F6 extension—a four-kilometre tunnel that starts and ends in my electorate of Rockdale that the RMS's own figures show will significantly increase traffic congestion on local streets. One would be forgiven for thinking this white-elephant project was designed to funnel more traffic into the WestConnex to fatten it up for sale. This Ponzi scheme approach to public policy that the RMS seems to have adopted cannot go on, and I hope this merger will be the last bizarre decision it makes—although I somewhat doubt it.

Just over the six months to June this year travel times along many major arterial roads have continued to increase. Travel times on Alison Road in Sydney's eastern suburbs are 15 per cent worse in the morning peak and 20 per cent worse in the evening peak. Travel times on Camden Valley Way in south-west Sydney have become 50 per cent worse during the evening peak, and Campbelltown Road is 10 per cent to 20 per cent worse. Castle Hill Road in north-west Sydney is more than 15 per cent worse in both the morning and evening peaks. It takes twice as long to travel along the Eastern Distributor than it did six months ago. General Holmes Drive is nearly 10 per cent worse in the mornings—as I experienced this morning—and 40 per cent worse in the evenings. Heathcote Road is nearly 10 per cent worse during both the morning and evening peaks, as are Homebush Drive and the Hume Highway. The M4 between Eastern Creek and Clyde is nearly 50 per cent worse in the morning peak than it was six months ago, as is the M5 and the M5 East during the evening peak.

Outside Sydney, Maitland Road is 50 per cent slower in the morning and evening; Mona Vale Road is more than 10 per cent slower in the morning; Narellan Road is 30 per cent slower in the morning and 10 per cent slower in the evening; the Newcastle Link Road is 10 per cent slower in the morning and 5 per cent slower in the evening; Old Windsor Road is more than 10 per cent slower in the morning and 5 per cent slower in the evening; the Pacific Highway past Newcastle is more than 5 per cent slower in both the morning and the evening; Rookwood Road is 20 per cent worse during the morning peak; Seven Hills Road is more than 10 per cent worse inbound and outbound; Springhill Road in Wollongong is 20 per cent worse during the evening peak; and The Grand Parade in my electorate is more than 10 per cent worse in the mornings than it was six months ago. Across New South Wales commutes are becoming longer every month, which is creating justified distrust in the RMS.

It is little wonder that the people of New South Wales are increasingly sceptical of road projects when they are treated with such open contempt by the responsible agency. It shows disdain for real community consultation while outcomes continue to decline. The RMS needs to listen to local communities instead of pretending that it knows what is best for them. Despite decades of promises, endless political discussion and pointscoreing, daily commutes are longer and congestion is worse. Sydney is the undisputed congestion capital of Australia—a truly shameful title. The people of New South Wales are badly in need of solutions and the RMS is badly in need of an attitude change. Perhaps being subsumed into Transport for NSW may offer that change, although I would like to see it first. The Minister for Transport and Roads is not the most popular person on the other side of the House at the moment but I have great hopes that he will be able to deliver some real reform, not just another rebranding exercise.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (13:13): I support the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019. The purpose of the bill is to dissolve Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and transfer its assets, rights, liabilities and functions to Transport for NSW. Roads and Maritime Services was established on 1 November 2011 under section 46 of the Transport Administration Act 1988 and is the operating agency delivering value for New South Wales customers and the community through safe, efficient and quality road and maritime networks as part of the transport system. The RMS manages a network that includes 18,000 kilometres of State roads, nearly 3,000 kilometres of regional and local roads, 5,000 bridges and major culverts, 22 tunnels, 4,000 traffic signal sites and approximately 12,000 other traffic facilities, systems and corridor assets. The list goes on.

This network demonstrates the importance of roads to the New South Wales Government and the people of New South Wales. Let me state this very clearly: The transport cluster is being reorganised to deliver a better customer experience to the people of New South Wales, no matter where they live. We are putting the needs of customers first and the mode of transport second. The new operating model will put transport in the pole position to deliver on the Premier's Priorities for the current term of government, including the focus on well-connected communities with quality local environments and putting the customer at the centre of everything we do.

The Premier announced the restructure of the New South Wales Government sector, including the merging of Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services, in early April this year. On 4 April 2019, two days after the new Cabinet was sworn in, the first meeting with employee representatives and parties took place. Transport for NSW has met with the unions at least 13 times since the integration was announced. This includes a number of meetings and consultation sessions following presentation of the previous version of this bill to the Parliament, which members will recall the Labor Party opposed. The reality is that last month members of the Labor Party voted to retain what was formerly the Roads and Traffic Authority and is now Roads and Maritime Services and leave it to operate in a silo.

Debate interrupted.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to extend a very warm welcome to my guests, the Hon. Gania Mussagy, MP, the Hon. Ana Dimitri, MP, and Elsa Botão from the Mozambique Assembleia Da Republica. I enjoyed a light lunch meeting with them today in the Speaker's room and understand that they will meet with the member for Wallsend and others from the Commonwealth Women's Parliamentarians group this afternoon.

I welcome to the Chamber the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and member for Kiama's mother, Margaret Bowcher. Welcome also to his guests Dennis and Marilyn O'Keefe, and Tom and Diane McKeever. I acknowledge Terrigal Public School students accompanied by the Deputy Principal, Clint Lowe, and parent Richard Ivens, guests of member for Terrigal and the Government Whip. I also acknowledge Jennifer Hoar in the gallery, who works for the member for Dubbo. I also acknowledge Dr Adrian Zammit, CEO of NSW Landcare, John McLoughlin, Operations Manager of NSW Landcare, and Samantha Stratton, Marketing Officer, NSW Landcare, guests of the member for Ballina. Finally, I welcome the Hon. Robyn Parker, former member for Maitland, who is in the gallery today. Welcome back, Robyn, and we recognise your service in both Houses of this Parliament.

*Announcements***MEMBER FOR OATLEY**

The SPEAKER: On behalf of the House, I express a warm welcome to the world to Samuel Anthony Coure, or Sam, who was born on the morning of Friday 9 August 2019, to parents Adla and Mark Coure, the member for Oatley. Congratulations to Adla, Mark and big brother, James.

*Rulings***QUESTIONS ON ALTERNATIVE POLICIES OR RELATED MATTERS**

The SPEAKER (14:22): In response to the point of order taken by the member for Keira on 1 August and further to my preliminary ruling of 8 August, these are the guidelines I want to apply in relation to the use of the additional words or phrases "related matters", "other matters" and "are there any alternative policies" often added at the end of questions without notice. As stated by my predecessors, the purpose of questions should be to seek factual information, press for action, and/or hold the Government to account. The use of such additional phrases is open-ended. Instead of seeking information, they invite Ministers to pass comment or debate the matter, which is contrary to Standing Order 130. The additional words also invite multiple questions and answers in the one question, or ask about alternatives that are not within a Minister's portfolio. As such, I ask that members be mindful of how they frame their questions. In particular, members should endeavour to ask concise questions that do not specifically invite comment on or explanation of alternative policies. If needed, I will invite members using these additional words to rephrase their questions.

STANDING ORDER NO. 73

The SPEAKER (14:23): As is often noted, proceedings in this House can be robust. This place affords members the right to freedom of speech. But the freedom of speech must also be balanced with the obligation to speak respectfully. Standing Order 73 provides that: imputations of improper motives and personal reflections on members of either House are disorderly other than by substantive motion. The ruling I am now making on Standing Order 73 is informed by the large number of rulings given from the Chair in previous Parliaments. Previous rulings distinguish between:

- (1) Sustained attacks on individual members based on character, motive or particular allegations of misconduct; and
- (2) Relevant criticism of government policy, and the decision-making and actions of Ministers, members or others.

Standing Order 73 is not aimed at this second type of negative comment, including those comments directed more widely, such as members of a political party. This will be my perspective when ruling on future points of order regarding Standing Order 73 or when considering potential withdrawal of relevant remarks. I will continue to uphold the rights of members on both sides to speak freely during proceedings, mindful of the need to strike an appropriate balance in regulating debate. Statements or allegations made under the guise of questions without notice may be ruled out of order. I remind members that they can use various provisions in the standing orders to object to undue attacks on their character and seek to correct the public record.

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message regarding the administration of the Government.

*Question Time***ESSENTIAL ENERGY JOB CUTS**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:27): My question is directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Having caused trauma and distress for hundreds of Essential Energy workers in rural and regional New South Wales—these are job losses, Deputy Premier, and I would not laugh.

Mr John Barilaro: Am I laughing? You're the one who went to Port Macquarie.

The SPEAKER: I will ask the Deputy Premier to desist. The Leader of the Opposition should not be distracted by him.

Ms JODI McKAY: Having caused trauma and distress for hundreds of Essential Energy workers in rural and regional New South Wales, why has it taken the Minister five weeks to finally do something?

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

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:28): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. This Government takes regional jobs seriously. This is a very serious issue. There is a huge drought going on at the moment and there are major concerns in rural and regional communities about job losses in the regions. Today I intend to issue a directive to the Chief Executive Officer of Essential Energy to halt the proposed job losses.

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

Mr MATT KEAN: This is an issue we on this side of the House take very seriously. We are concerned about any jobs losses at any time and will continue to be so. Everyone on this side of the House is committed to ensuring that our economy is strong so that we can create new jobs and opportunities for those who live not only in the regions but also in the cities. That is something that we have done from the day this Government was elected and it is something we will continue to do. I, as the Minister for Energy and Environment, will continue to stand up not only for regional workers but also for those who want to see lower energy prices and reliable energy in New South Wales. I am delighted to have issued the directive. I am delighted to have worked with the Liberal-Nationals Government and I thank it for its leadership in standing up for the bush on this important issue.

WESTERN SYDNEY INVESTMENT

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:29): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on her recent trade mission to the United Kingdom and Germany? What will it mean for healthy investment in New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30): I thank the member for Camden for his question. We know that the new airport city we are building around Badgerys Creek, the aerotropolis, will not just boost jobs for western Sydney but also boost jobs in transport links to Macarthur and also to the north-west. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us to build a greenfield city. Before I went to the United Kingdom and Germany I was extremely pleased that the New South Wales Government had already secured—I had a target of 10—13 memorandums of understanding with both Australian and global companies, mainly in Asia and North America, to bring critical jobs to that precinct including a mega TAFE and a single campus multi-university precinct which will be the first of its kind in Australia.

I was also keen to ensure that we have diversified investment at that site. We want jobs to be created not just by fantastic Australian and Asian companies but also by those in the United Kingdom and Europe, in particular, and that is why I decided to go to those two places last week. I am pleased to say that in each country we signed two additional memorandums of understanding. Whilst I was in the United Kingdom I became the first Australian official to meet with the new trade Minister in the United Kingdom. We know that on 31 October when Brexit occurs—and we do not know yet whether it is a hard or soft Brexit—New South Wales is open for business and welcomes companies from the United Kingdom to invest. The first memorandum of understanding was signed with a well-known global company called BAE Systems. BAE Systems is one of the largest defence companies of the planet. It specialises in aerospace and also security technology. Having a memorandum of understanding signed with that major player enhances the jobs—

Ms Kate Washington: They are already at Williamstown.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Exactly. Those opposite say "They are already here" but the memorandum of understanding ensures they will also be in the new western Sydney airport precinct. BAE Systems will build on its existing footprint in New South Wales but western Sydney will have brand-new facilities which have a close relationship with all the companies setting up shop there to drive innovation. I want New South Wales to be the manufacturing capital of not just Australia but also our region. That is why we are bringing these jobs to New South Wales. You may not care about workers—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What those on the opposite side cannot handle is that we are the party of the workers over here. We support jobs and we support our workers.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They can complain all they like but this Government pounces on opportunities and makes sure that it brings jobs to New South Wales. I was also pleased in the United Kingdom to visit Sheffield which, some may know, suffered enormous consequences when the coal industry left that city. Sheffield has replaced that industry with advanced manufacturing. In Sheffield I saw a revitalised region where its model for advanced manufacturing and research will be replicated in western Sydney. Their model brings together technical expertise through their equivalent TAFE system. Industry-led universities are providing the skills and opportunities for young people to work in industries that will be operating at the western Sydney

precinct. Whilst I was in Germany I was also able to sign two significant memorandums of understanding which are very exciting for the people of this State. The first one was with GE Additive which has its head office in Munich. GE Additive are the world leaders in 3D printing for metals, as opposed to plastics.

Mr David Elliott: Medals?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Metals, sorry.

Mr David Elliott: McDermott got excited.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes, I know. Point taken. [*Extension of time*]

GE Additive is the world leader in providing things from medical devices, whether it is hip replacements or body parts to things like aerospace, parts for jet engines, parts for rockets and parts for medical devices. Having an advanced manufacturing company like GE Additive in western Sydney ensures that we will be creating the manufacturing jobs of the future in that precinct which gives heart to all of us. The final memorandum of understanding [MoU] we signed whilst there was with DB Schenker, which is the major railway company in Germany. The important thing about this MoU is that DB Schenker is a global leader in freight and logistics with a specific interest in agribusiness and how to get goods to market more quickly. In essence, it will be vital to ensuring that produce that arrives at the Western Sydney Airport will reach its destination markets within 36 hours. When you think about the future plans announced by Sydney Markets and the opportunities, in particular, opening up for the central west of New South Wales to get goods to market their quickly, and making sure—

Ms Kate Washington: What about the Port of Newcastle?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You don't even understand what you are talking about. You have no idea!

Ms Kate Washington: You've constrained the Port of Newcastle. People can't get their stuff to market.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You've got no idea.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am pleased to say that Minister Ayres, who has responsibility for the aerotropolis, will now be hard at work turning the MoUs into action on the ground. We had an aim to ensure that we have companies from the UK and Germany in New South Wales, and we will. We wanted to make sure that we are setting up the process to have the manufacturing capital of the nation and the region in New South Wales, and we will. We are all about jobs because members opposite talk a lot but we are the party for the workers.

ESSENTIAL ENERGY JOB CUTS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:37): My question is directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Will the Minister guarantee that all 500 job cuts at Essential Energy will not just be halted, as you announced today, but permanently abandoned?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (14:37): I thank the member for Swansea for her question. We all know there is only one job those opposite are interested in, and that is the Leader of the Opposition's job. After a long probation period which included rejection from the Liberal Party, I might add, she is still on her probation. No-one wants to see a more successful probation than the member for Swansea.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being relevant at all. We are talking about people's jobs.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant.

Mr MATT KEAN: The question was about jobs. The number one referee for the Leader of the Opposition is the member for Swansea so of course she is interested in the Leader of the Opposition having a successful probation period.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was not just about jobs. It was: "Will you guarantee that all 500 job cuts at Essential Energy will not just be halted but permanently abandoned?" It was very specific.

The SPEAKER: The Minister was about 40 seconds into his answer, at best. He was talking about jobs and making preliminary comments. As I have indicated previously, Ministers are entitled to make some broad-ranging preliminary comments that broadly relate to the question, which he was doing.

Mr MATT KEAN: Members on this side of the House are very interested in jobs. In fact, the Government has created over 79,000 jobs in the regions since coming to office: No-one has done more for the regions of this State than the Liberal-Nationals Government—whether it be record investment in infrastructure, schools, roads, hospitals or creating new jobs in New South Wales.

Ms Prue Car: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister has been asked a very specific question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant to jobs. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time.

Mr MATT KEAN: I know the member for Londonderry is very interested in one job—and that is the Leader of the Opposition's job. It may be shocking to learn that some people do not want to see the Leader of the Opposition succeed in her job. I know Mr Speaker is interested in the Leader of the Opposition's job, but not as interested as those opposite. I was shocked to learn that one person who does not want to see the Leader of the Opposition succeed in her role is the ICAC Commissioner!

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is about 500 jobs at Essential Energy and the Minister has talked about everything but those jobs.

The SPEAKER: At some stage soon the Minister is expected to return to the leave of the question regarding Essential Energy.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am happy to talk about Essential Energy jobs, which is why we are working through the statutory process to issue a directive to halt the job losses. The press release, read by members opposite, stated that we are working through the statutory process.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. You are not saving those 500 jobs.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I have told the member how to take a point of order.

Mr MATT KEAN: No-one falls for the Leader of the Opposition's confected outrage on this issue. She could not even be bothered going up there to speak to the affected workers. She only discovered this issue when she read about it in *The Daily Telegraph*.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time. That is not how a point of order is taken.

Mr MATT KEAN: I note with interest a public statement from ICAC that says an inquiry will be starting on Monday, 26 August 2019, as part of an investigation conducted into allegations concerning political donations.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: It will be of no surprise that my point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being remotely relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to return to the leave of the question regarding Essential Energy.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am talking about jobs. I am talking about lots of jobs. I am talking about the fact that this Government has created over 100,000 new jobs in the regions since its election to government. That is what Coalition governments do—create jobs, build strong economies, invest in infrastructure and deliver for communities right around New South Wales. We will continue to do that.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. As you directed, the Minister needs to answer the question concerning Essential Energy.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to be relevant.

Mr MATT KEAN: I commend the chief executive officer of Essential Energy who has listened to the Government and who is concerned about putting downward pressure on electricity prices and about protecting jobs in the bush. I thank John Cleland for working constructively with the Government over the past few days. This Government will always work to prioritise the interests of our communities. We have done that today, we have done that since being elected, and we will continue to do that for the good people of New South Wales.

REGIONAL JOBS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:43): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will he update the House on how the Government is fighting to protect jobs in regional New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Before the Deputy Premier starts his answer we will wait for silence. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. During the last sitting week two members were removed from the Chamber for a short time. Some members might have heard my opinion that I do not particularly like Standing Order 249A. I ordered members to be removed from the Chamber for a short period because there was a conscience vote and I did not want to disenfranchise them from the ability to vote, but I will generally use Standing Order 249, which means members will be removed from the Chamber until the end of the sitting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:44): I thank the member for Port Macquarie, who has been at the forefront of protecting important jobs in her community in the midst of us facing one of the toughest droughts. I will build off the Opposition's last question to the energy Minister. I do not think today is the day to bring greater anxiety to the workers of Essential Energy. For over a month we have been calling on Essential Energy to come to a decision on protecting those jobs. Last week when I was at Port Macquarie it was clear that Essential Energy could not come to that decision because of a number of reasons. Today the energy Minister should be commended because he is giving a directive to Essential Energy to give that guarantee. Members opposite know that the real issue at hand is the 183 jobs that could possibly have been lost this week. Guess what, that is not going to happen.

Furthermore, over the months ahead Essential Energy will work with the Government to find other efficiencies beyond jobs. Essential Energy workers could not get a greater win. In future we can have a debate about other jobs in this House but today the reality is that we have protected those jobs. It is what we were asked to do. That is why we did not play politics with it and that is why, after the question by the member for Lismore in our last sitting, members opposite have chosen for the very first time to talk about the Essential Energy jobs.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The reality is that we have sat down with stakeholders such as the Electrical Trades Union [ETU]—whom I would normally not call my friends—to work through a way forward to protect those jobs and end the anxiety. Today is not the day for the Labor Party to continue creating that anxiety in regional areas. We are going through the worst drought. We have lost 20,000 to 30,000 jobs in the agriculture sector but thank goodness for the Liberal-Nationals Government that is creating jobs. This Government creates jobs. Since coming to office it has created over 100,000 jobs. We have linked jobs to our infrastructure pipeline so that we ensure that the regions feel the prosperity of those jobs. We have made the announcements about more police, teachers and nurses in regional New South Wales. We have unlocked the potential of the private sector by recycling assets and investing in enabling infrastructure to unlock more jobs.

Members opposite have absolutely opposed those programs and legislations in debate. They opposed the jobs that we are celebrating in regional New South Wales because they stick to their old knitting and they are not prepared to make tough decisions to see investment in the regions. I will not be lectured by members opposite about jobs. I acknowledge that the Leader of the Opposition chose to go to Port Macquarie last Wednesday. Unfortunately, she met with the wrong union about the jobs; she did not meet with the ETU. Instead of giving assurances to workers about what the Labor Party was going to do about the jobs, she did nothing but bring them greater anxiety. I was there on Thursday and the local journos asked me questions about comments made by the Leader of the Opposition that brought greater anxiety on the workers. She said publicly that the jobs were going to be lost that following Friday.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Deputy Premier wants to debate why Labor supports the 500 workers at Essential Energy then move it.

The SPEAKER: That is enough. There is no point of order. The Deputy Premier will continue.

Mr Greg Warren: And we will be here all night because we do and you do not.

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown clearly did not hear my ruling earlier. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If the Labor Party were genuine about protecting those jobs, they would be celebrating that no jobs will be lost at Essential Energy, but instead they want to create more anxiety. I do not understand that a party that was founded on the workers has today abandoned the workers of this State.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Yasmin Catley: They're thanking us, John. They know. They've been ringing up thanking us.

Ms Jodie Harrison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms Jodie Harrison: The Deputy Premier is inferring improper motives.

The SPEAKER: I wish members had properly listened to my ruling earlier today. The Deputy Premier has not breached Standing Order 73. The Deputy Premier will continue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I heard the comment from across the political aisle that the Labor Party have been getting phone calls to thank them for the jobs that have been saved at Essential today. I ask Labor Party members: What did they do? They turned up at a quarter to midnight, met the wrong union and created greater anxiety for the people of Port Macquarie and regional and rural New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

Members opposite will not acknowledge the strong members of Government, who are vocal and who fought for and delivered security to those men and women. They get to go home tonight to their families assured that they have jobs. That is the difference between the Government and the Labor Opposition. Today it chose to create greater anxiety for those people. I will not accept that.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I look at our track record and the jobs that we have created and supported and the jobs that we will continue to fight for every day. This Government must make tough decisions that will build prosperity and enable our regions and this State to grow. They cannot turn up at a quarter to midnight in the regions, don an akubra hat and pretend to understand regional and rural New South Wales. They cannot do that because regional communities can see through a fraud. Last week we saw a political stunt by the Labor Party. While we were working with the stakeholders, including the ETU, Labor was pulling the levers behind closed doors.

I was disappointed in the ETU's commentary on Thursday because it knew our dialogue was open and that we were working behind closed doors about those jobs. The ETU must have got driving instructions from Sussex Street to back in the Labor Party to cause greater anxiety. This is the first and last time that I will work with the ETU to create prosperity in this State. What the ETU did was clear: It will put politics in front of people every time. The Labor Party will use the union movement and the ETU to play political games with our communities. Thank goodness for the Liberal-Nationals Government fighting for regional New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Keira, the member for Londonderry and the member for Swansea that they are on three calls to order. I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on two calls to order.

ESSENTIAL ENERGY JOB CUTS

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:52): My question is directed to the Premier. On 18 June the Premier said:

... the Government has proudly made the decision to make sure we protect all of our jobs in rural and regional New South Wales.

Will the Premier give a guarantee that all 500 jobs at Essential Energy are safe?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:52): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I put some facts before the House. Firstly, I am incredibly proud that in the past four years our Government has created nearly 79,000 new jobs in rural and regional New South Wales. That was an increase of nearly 8 per cent on the similar period previously. We have created more jobs in regional New South Wales than all other regions in Australia combined. The Government's infrastructure program in the bush is helping prop up communities that are being savaged by the drought. We need to remember that and put it into context. Notwithstanding the horrific impacts of the drought in rural and regional New South Wales, there is still jobs growth because our Government is working overtime building infrastructure—utilities and local roads—that are supporting local businesses. We know how critical that is beyond the farm gate.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In relation to Essential Energy—how am I being irrelevant, Mr Speaker?

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

Ms Jodi McKay: No, please keep going if you are finally going to talk about Essential Energy.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In relation to Essential Energy, we say the following: Firstly, I commend the organisation because under its leadership energy bills in the bush have been reduced by \$700, which is a lot of money for families. Having said that, every member of the Government appreciates what local jobs mean to communities. That is why we have taken very serious and appropriate action today by formally intervening to ensure that those jobs are kept safe. We also need to get the facts on the table. Essential Energy is required by the regulators to meet savings requirements to ensure energy prices are kept down. Essential Energy has heard what the Government has said and then said: Okay. We will come back with alternatives on savings measures to ensure that energy prices stay down, because that is critical as well. This Government is not only working hard to protect jobs, but it is also working hard to keep energy prices down. They are complex issues that those opposite do not understand.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: How is this irrelevant?

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

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question is: Could you give a guarantee that all 500 jobs at Essential Energy are safe? It is a yes or no answer.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said today, through the energy Minister the Government has formally requested that a hold be put on all those jobs. Essential Energy has agreed to come back to the Government with alternative proposals. That means they have said: We will not cut jobs. We will look at the alternatives to the proposals that we put forward to the Government and to the people. That is a huge win for the people of New South Wales and for regional New South Wales. Those opposite do not appreciate that the Government is addressing the complex issues relating to this specific matter. I take this opportunity to commend every member of Parliament for defending their communities and local jobs.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. If the point of order relates to relevance, the Premier is being relevant to the question asked. If the point of order is something else, I will hear it.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough.

Ms Jodi McKay: This is about a guarantee on all 500 jobs. It is a yes or no.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant to the question asked. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not sure what the Leader of the Opposition does not understand. Have you worked out what the GST is yet and how much everything costs?

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. Do not raise relevance. If your point of order is something else, I am happy to hear it.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 59, tedious repetition. The Leader of the Opposition and the 500 workers want to know why the Premier will not intervene and save their jobs nor answer the question.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I find it very concerning that when I am updating the House on a serious issue regarding jobs that those opposite just want to play politics. The fact is that yesterday all those jobs were going; today they are not. That is a fact.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I want to assure the people of regional New South Wales that we will continue to provide jobs growth and invest in infrastructure, the likes of which this State has never seen before in

the bush. Our rural and regional communities have received infrastructure projects that they did not receive under those opposite. Notwithstanding this, we know that in the context of the drought that three jobs in one city, one town or one community can make a difference. I also put on record that whilst we will fight for jobs, we will also fight for lower electricity prices because that is important to people in rural and regional New South Wales.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:58): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on the opportunities and risks to the New South Wales economy?

Mr Chris Minns: How is your list going?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:59): I feel sorry for you, mate. I mean, you went to Princeton to sit over there. The best years of your life are just passing you by. Those opposite are so bad and we are so good that for the last few weeks we have been the Government and the Opposition. We have made the Opposition redundant because they are so bad. As Oscar Wilde said, the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about. That is the New South Wales Labor Party. This is a great question from the member for Seven Hills, which was once a Labor electorate and now is a staunch Liberal electorate. It is a Tory electorate. The member for Seven Hills knows, like we on this side of the House, that the New South Wales economy continues to power along.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Our record investment in infrastructure is driving jobs growth right across the State, adding half a percentage point to our economic growth over the next two years.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The reality is we can build record amounts of infrastructure because we know how to manage money well. Those investments in infrastructure right across the State, including in regional New South Wales, will ensure that wherever we live in our great State, New South Wales will be the best place to live, to work, to run a business and to raise a family. I have said this before. Those investments that we on this side of the House are making could never have happened under those opposite because they oppose asset recycling. They opposed it at the last election and at the one before that. They tried to run a scare campaign on privatisation in 2011 and in 2015. How did that go for them? They have lost two elections in a row and it is not going to be third time lucky. Our infrastructure investment does not just provide jobs and growth; it translates into business confidence as well. Just last week, the National Australia Bank released its monthly business survey results for July. The results showed that business confidence again rose to its highest level since April last year and is above its decade average. In contrast, we can look at Labor States.

Ms Kate Washington: What are you going to sell off next?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We will probably buy Queensland the way we are going. While Trump is buying Greenland, we may as well buy Queensland. Lazy Labor States around the country are making business confidence crash. It is our investments here with a Liberal philosophy—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Treasurer was asked about the economy of New South Wales, not the economy of other States. I ask you to bring him back to New South Wales, if you don't mind.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is a great comparison—the Labor way and the Liberal-Nationals way. The business community is feeling more confident because the people of New South Wales have rejected Labor's big taxing, big unions and big regulation agenda that it took to the last election.

Ms Kate Washington: What?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: At the 2019 election Labor ran a campaign of increasing taxes on the people of New South Wales by a billion dollars. Your mates in Canberra did exactly the same thing.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We on this side of the House believe in lower taxes, lower regulation and greater freedom of opportunity for people across the State.

Ms Kate Washington: But how many seats did you lose, Dom?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: How many seats did you lose at the Federal election? How many seats have you lost? How have you been in opposition for the past eight years? You are halfway through.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the member for Cessnock on his point of order. I remind the Treasurer that it is best not to engage with members who are interjecting. I will control those interjections.

Mr Clayton Barr: You have pre-empted my point of order, Mr Speaker. I was going to ask that the Treasurer address his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: I stopped the clock because the Treasurer has been responding to interjections rather than speaking through the Chair.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Perhaps they should not interject.

The SPEAKER: That is the point I am making. I ask Opposition members not to interject; I will control that. The Treasurer will continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We saw that the Premier and the Minister for Customer Service were out today. They were not just talking about lower taxes but also about cost of living measures and the \$1.5 billion in savings for families across this State. We know cost of living is an issue for families and because of our strong financial management, we are able to leverage that and put more money back into the hip pockets of families across the State, regardless of their stage in life. Through Service NSW we are seeing great savings for families, whether it is lower energy bills or young kids getting involved in sport. I commend the Minister for Customer Service and the Premier for their great work. Those members opposite want to talk about taxes. As well as Labor's \$1 billion, Federal Labor wanted to put \$387 billion of new taxes on the people of our great country. [*Extension of time*]

Let us go back to infrastructure because the infrastructure investment in this State is not only driving the economy but also significantly driving jobs growth. Members opposite are asking about jobs growth. It is our infrastructure investment that is creating jobs growth across the board. There is a big risk emerging to our infrastructure investment and that is the Labor-backed union movement. Today I found an article in *The Australian Financial Review* which states that the CFMEU is seeking to lock in pay rises forever. Five per cent is part of a new agreement. The CFMEU wants 5 per cent pay rises. That is three times the rate of inflation. It also wants a day off every second week of the year. That sounds pretty conservative because members opposite take four days off. The CFMEU wants a ban on pouring concrete after 11.00 a.m.—it gets a little bit hot after 11.00 a.m.! It wants employees to make compulsory contributions to the union movement. That is not a workplace agreement; that is a blatant extortion racket.

What will the effect be on all those infrastructure projects? It will increase costs to the taxpayers across the State, the good people of New South Wales. Who will pay for it? The people of New South Wales. Any risk to that infrastructure investment is a risk to our economy. I call on the Leader of the Opposition, who is apparently concerned about jobs, to condemn the CFMEU, but she will not. Just like the CFMEU supported her in her little vote against the member for Kogarah, birds of a feather—John Setka and the Leader of the Opposition—flock together.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:07): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. If, as he told *The Daily Telegraph* yesterday, The Greens have dictated the Coalition's water policy and he and the Premier are to blame for not delivering, why does he not finally follow through with his promise to rip up the Coalition agreement?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:07): I think those members opposite are a little bit confused. It was the Labor Party federally—remember Gillard—who did a deal with The Greens to govern this country and it sent it broke. I am really surprised at that.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In my view, the question relates to the fact that The Greens have stopped governments in the past building dams and water infrastructure. At this time, when we are going through the toughest drought in this State, we need to build water infrastructure. We are paying today for the sins of decisions decades ago. There is not a dam or pipeline that The Greens or the Opposition support. There is no difference between Labor and The Greens when it comes to the Broken Hill pipeline. Did the Labor Party support it? No, it

did not. It used it as a political football. If it was not for that pipeline today, the people in Broken Hill would be out of water. Those members opposite are happy to see a community on stage six water restrictions because they want to play politics and run political campaigns on the misery of regional New South Wales. I would rather go to an election on the prosperity of regional New South Wales. That is the difference between the Government and members opposite.

We should have learned from the millennium drought to put ideology aside and put forward ideas. I commend the Minister for Water, Property and Housing for significant projects such as raising the Wyangala Dam wall. I heard nothing in the 2019 election from the Labor Party about drought. There was no drought policy, no water policy—not even a water infrastructure policy. The Government put \$1.4 billion aside. It said it would use every cent of the proceeds from the Snowy Hydro fund—\$4.2 billion—to build infrastructure. That is why we are building right now. We are about to switch on the pipeline from Malpas Dam to Guyra so that community does not run out of water. That is why we are raising the Wyangala Dam wall at a cost of \$650 million. That is why we are looking at Dungowan Dam.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: I did wait two minutes to give the Deputy Premier the opportunity to talk about what is relevant to the question.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier is not answering the question. He needs to say if he is going to tear up the agreement or not. Is he or is he not going to tear up the Coalition agreement?

The SPEAKER: The question referred to water policy. The Deputy Premier is being relevant to the question asked.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: At the end of the day I make no apology that I spend every day in this State as Deputy Premier, Leader of The Nationals, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade fighting for regional communities. I make no apologies and I will go into the party room, into Cabinet, and I will be part of this Government. I am always prepared to get a bloody nose fighting for what is fair and for what is right; members opposite would not. Members opposite will not say what needs to be said if their puppet masters—the faction leaders—pull the strings. A great example of that is Joel Fitzgibbon. Before the 2019 election he was anti-agriculture and anti-mining. He bought into the climate change debate and sacrificed his community. This guy held his electorate with a 15 per cent to 20 per cent margin, but he scraped over the line. Joel Fitzgibbon post-election is saying, "Bye-bye Bill Shorten. I'm pro-agriculture and pro-mining. Bara, can I work with you on scope three emissions?" He has been enlightened. He has seen the light because the difference is that I am prepared to have a fight.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Deputy Premier is now talking about the Federal election. Old H.R. Pufnstuf over here needs to get back to the New South Wales issue. Rev it up, Johnny. Rev it up!

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will continue. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the third time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I will tell the House what upsets those members opposite. I have just received a text in the middle of question time. Members opposite might know Justin Page, who heads up the Electrical Trades Union [ETU]. The text reads, "Well done, John. Credit where credit is due. You put your arse on the line. The ETU acknowledges it." At the end of the day, members on this side of the House are members of Parliament who are community champions. We have the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Tamworth—

Ms Trish Doyle: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the first time.

Ms Trish Doyle: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Are you just the boy who cried wolf?

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will continue.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We have some kids here from one of the local public schools—I do apologise for the language. As they will see from today, the reality is that often in politics we debate the big stuff and the little stuff. Today I am proud, as the Leader of The Nationals, as a member of the Liberal-Nationals Government,

in partnership with the Premier and in partnership with the Coalition to have delivered for regional New South Wales. Those members opposite come into this place and use politics. I make no apologies. I will always fight—and we always do—for regional New South Wales.

WATER SECURITY

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:13): 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?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:13): I thank the member for Miranda for her question. She knows how important it is for us to invest in long-term water security to build the resilience of our communities. It is not just the country that is suffering drought but also the cities. That is why we have plans in place and why we are taking the community—whether it is the city or the country—on the journey of understanding and respecting our water supplies. Currently the catchments in Sydney are at 51.1 per cent. This time last year they were at 65.8 per cent and in 2017 they were at 91 per cent. That is the biggest and fastest decline in water storage in Sydney ever recorded. Sydney is at level 1 water restrictions and the trigger point for level 2 is fast approaching. But we are in a position to support the communities most in need—whether in the country or in the city—because we manage the economy. We balance the books and we are ready for situations such as this.

Over the past two weeks the Government has announced further work to secure water for Greater Sydney with preliminary planning for the expansion of the Sydney Desalination Plant [SDP] as our dam levels continue to drop. The desalination plant is playing a significant role in maintaining Sydney's water supply. In fact, at the end of July—two months ahead of schedule—the SDP reached full production. The desalination plant is now producing on average 250 million litres of water per day, which is approximately 15 per cent of Sydney's water supply. Water is already reaching the node for the electorate of Miranda, as well as the nodes for the electorates of Coogee, Maroubra and Rockdale.

On the weekend before last I accompanied the Attorney General to his electorate of Cronulla to see the desalination plant at full capacity and the benefits that are already being felt from this investment. Since the plant was turned on in January, dam depletion rates have improved by around 0.2 per cent per week. But should the drought worsen, and water levels continue to drop, we will be ready to act immediately and, if needed, we will increase the water supply capacity of the desalination plant—our insurance policy for Greater Sydney. The Government knows how important it is to plan and prepare for the future. Those opposite waited until dam levels were in the range of 30 per cent before they started to plan for desalination.

Through a strong economic performance and thoughtful policies the right settings can be put in place to ensure we have a plan for the future. But the SDP is not the only measure we are taking to ensure water for the future. I congratulate the people of the Sydney region because water consumption over the summer period decreased by 7 per cent. That was not only as a result of a good advertising campaign but also because communities in Sydney saw what was playing out in regional New South Wales. They wanted to show respect for what country communities are going through and to ensure their continued access to water.

The number of frontline staff at Sydney Water has increased by 57 per cent and those staff are dealing with reducing leaks caused by the drought. During drought the ground contracts and water pipes are placed under further pressure. In the 2017-18 financial year Sydney Water recycled almost 43 gegalitres of water, but there is still more to do in terms of recycling and to ensure that water leaks are stopped. We are investing over \$1.8 billion to support our regions through this drought. As well as a focus on the drought, we need to do our best to be more resilient into the future because we all rely on water to survive.

In 2017-18 New South Wales produced 23 per cent of Australia's total agricultural production—worth around \$13 billion. That represents the food in our kitchens, cafeterias, grocery stores, schools and hospitals. As the Deputy Premier has pointed out, unless we support our regions Sydney's prices will go up and our economy will feel the sweat of the regions in the heat. If we do not use this drought as the catalyst to urgently build new dams and new water infrastructure we will be letting our communities down. Those opposite are not interested in dams and they are not supporting us, but we have written to the Deputy Prime Minister with a number of priority water projects to start building in this term of government. [*Extension of time*]

As the Deputy Premier highlighted, he was able to secure \$1.4 billion from the Snowy Hydro fund to put into water infrastructure. An amount of \$650 million has been set aside for Wyangala Dam, as well as other exciting projects around the State, including underground dams and a proposed dam on Mole River in the north of the State. This is the type of work we want to do in cooperation with the Federal Government, but we also have money assured for the people of New South Wales with the \$1.4 billion secured by the Deputy Premier. There

has never been a better time to do this work than while we are in drought and while the conversations are happening. Recent research showed that 78 per cent of the population expect and support us to build more dams; that is what we will do. We will support our communities through this drought and we will plan for the future. We will build dams and give support to communities across New South Wales.

REGIONAL FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:19): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Three years ago there was a centralisation of coronial autopsy services. Since then regional and rural families, and their communities, have suffered long and heartbreaking delays waiting for the body of a loved one to return for a funeral. Will the Minister update the House on what progress the Government has made to address coronial autopsy delays?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:20): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question on this extremely serious issue. As the health Minister I am also very aware and concerned about the issue. This matter first came to my attention when the former member for Wagga Wagga raised the fact that some people in his local community wanted to have a local forensic pathology unit. The current member has also discussed the same possibilities, although I think he understands the challenges. A number of members from both sides of the House have also raised this issue with me, including the member for Cootamundra, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Lismore, the member for Kiama and the member for Mulgoa. This is a very difficult issue.

In an ideal world there would be forensic pathologists across our very large State. Unfortunately, in Australia—and worldwide—there is a shortage of forensic pathologists. As a result of that, as the member identified, we now have three separate centralised locations. One location is the brand-new \$90 million facility at Lidcombe. The Attorney General and I worked together on this, and on 11 December last year the Attorney General had the pleasure of opening that facility. We also have facilities at Newcastle and Wollongong but the challenge is the shortage in the number of forensic pathologists. In a meeting, held about 18 months ago, forensic pathologists from Newcastle postulated that there was no real answer.

Earlier this year we had a terrible delay issue at the Newcastle facility—where family members whose loved one was transported from Wagga Wagga to Newcastle were waiting for their autopsy or coronial matter to be addressed. That situation has led to the Government looking more broadly at various issues. One issue we have been addressing is why there is a requirement for a coronial investigation in this State when a patient has not seen a general practitioner for six months. As the member for Wagga Wagga is aware, the Attorney General and I have been working on that issue and we hope to make announcements on change in the near future. The possibility of issues being addressed locally has also been raised with us—if the local hospital has the capacity for MRIs, CT scans and the capacity for taking blood. The Government is certainly very conscious of it.

I am happy to announce to the House that I have asked the member for Wagga Wagga to be actively engaged with the Government on this issue. He is looking at what we have determined we need to do—looking from the beginning to the end. We are not just looking at the lack of forensic pathologists but at how can we address each of the two issues that I have been working on with the Attorney General, the member for Wagga Wagga and others. But there is a range of other factors.

It has been identified in this beginning-to-end process that, for example, the people who often get sent out when someone dies in what are not considered to be suspicious circumstances are the youngest police in the local area command. There could be issues around their training or they could be reluctant to sign off and do things because they are cautious. There is also the issue of whether to get a GP involved. Some GPs are not necessarily well trained in that area and they are reluctant to take the responsibility on. So there is a problem right from the beginning through to the end with families having to wait for the results of a post-mortem. We can do a lot of work on this issue. The member for Wagga Wagga is working with us on this. [*Extension of time*]

I believe we should follow what we understand are the major issues, and hopefully the Attorney General and I will be able to address a couple of those shortly. I have indicated to the Ministry of Health that we should look also at one of the issues that the member raised with me—the lack of social workers and the capacity to give families guidance. The member for Wagga Wagga brought in a family who had a terrible situation with their young son—I will not name that young fellow or his family—and it is testament to that family that it brought home the powerful impact that a lack of an outcome can have on families who are already traumatised. Other members, particularly the member for Cootamundra, have spoken to me about other examples. To sit and listen to their agony and sorrow and to hear how the length of time for the results of a post-mortem has added to their agony should give us all a great sense of urgency to find some better ways to address this issue.

As I said, announcements will be made as soon as the Attorney General and I have addressed these issues. We will continue the work that the member for Wagga Wagga is involved in with other members of the House. I should also acknowledge that the member for Orange and the member for Barwon have raised this issue with me. They have gone back and worked constructively in their electorates. I appreciate local members—whether they are Independent, Labor, Liberal or in the National Party—talking to me about these issues and then going back to their electorates and working constructively. We should all benefit from that and I believe the community will benefit in due course.

WESTERN SYDNEY JOBS AND INVESTMENT

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (15:27): My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering jobs and investment for western Sydney?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (15:27): I thank the member for Mulgoa for her question. She has been doing an outstanding job as a passionate advocate focused on creating job opportunities not only in her community but also across western Sydney. When we first came to office in the Penrith local government area, where she is a local representative, the unemployment rate was 6.2 per cent. Today it is 3.5 per cent. That only happens when you have a clear, focused strategy on growing the economy. Not just a growing economy in the heart of Sydney but right across western Sydney and into regional New South Wales.

That is why across the regions we have been able to create 15,000 new jobs over the past 12 months. In the last quarter 12,963 jobs were created by July, with a participation rate of 65.9 per cent. These are the things that are driving job opportunities for people right across New South Wales. The New South Wales Government has a clear vision and strategy for growing jobs across western Sydney. It is centred around our parkland city—the third city of the three cities in Sydney—and at the core of that is our aerotropolis strategy. It is about leveraging the \$5 billion of investment that has gone into the new airport and making sure that it is fully integrated into western Sydney—exactly what the aerotropolis will deliver.

Last week I travelled to the United Kingdom and Germany with the Premier to lock in the next four memorandums of understanding to drive job opportunities across western Sydney. We have already heard that there is a clear focus on aerospace, defence and advanced manufacturing. They will be the value-added jobs that will allow knowledge jobs to be created across western Sydney, using the aerotropolis as an investment-attraction location. This is not a zero-sum game. It does not mean you have to take BAE Systems jobs away from Newcastle or Nowra; it is about growing job opportunities. This is a company that is already forecasting jobs growths from 4,500 to 10,000 in Australia. We have got more than enough space and more than enough expertise across New South Wales to allow companies such as BAE Systems to grow in western Sydney.

We want to be able to leverage out of organisations like GE Additive and develop 3D printing so that businesses that are across advanced manufacturing in Australia can plug into a global supply chain. We want to be able to leverage our commitment to have a mega TAFE in western Sydney at the aerotropolis to bring those advanced manufacturing skills to young people based in western Sydney, they will have jobs not just for today but jobs that will continue to be there as the economy evolves and changes. This is about making sure western Sydney stays a dynamic economy. We also want to ensure that things move around western Sydney. That is why an organisation like DB Schenker, one of the largest and most efficient freight logistics companies anywhere in the world, has decided to come on board and partner with the aerotropolis. These are the companies that we are bringing on.

We are also learning from organisations like the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre at the University of Sheffield, which is linking up with our universities to ensure that we are doing the research in advanced manufacturing and are able to plug in to the new businesses and truly get leverage out of the airport. We are investing in north-south rail to ensure that places between Penrith, the airport and the south-west of Sydney can access the airport. But what I am most concerned about is that we still see from the Opposition a lack of commitment to the airport in western Sydney. We still hear members of the Labor Party speaking with forked tongues to communities that still have people who oppose the investment in the airport and who oppose investments in the aerotropolis. They refuse to back this Government's initiatives to create jobs, particularly knowledge-based jobs, in western Sydney.

They should learn from people like the member for Mulgoa, the member for Camden and the member for Bankstown, who are working hard in their communities to say that they want these knowledge-based jobs in western Sydney. They want to be able to get leverage out of the billions of dollars we are investing in infrastructure to make sure those jobs are closer to where people are at home. Over the next 20 years the aerotropolis and our investments across the Western Parkland City will generate 200,000 jobs so that people across western Sydney

will have jobs closer to where they live. This is about making sure we change the economic opportunities for people right across the west. I say with full confidence that only this side of the House has a clear economic plan to grow those jobs. [*Extension of time*]

Off the back of the work that the Premier has done in markets such as in the United Kingdom, Germany and the rest of the European Union is the work that we will leverage out of the free-trade agreements that we have as a nation with the new markets emerging in north Asia such as in Japan and Korea, and the work that we are doing across regional New South Wales to improve the freight and logistics supply chains that will allow us to take our skills, expertise, produce and services and export those on the world stage. Australia must continue to move towards being a nation that continues to export its products and services on the world stage.

We are a small country and if we want to continue to lift our standard of living we have got to be able to operate on the world stage. The aerotropolis will become western Sydney's gateway to that world stage—the place to put our products on the world stage, the place to allow our services to interact with new markets, the place where we can invest in new skills for young people and the place where we can connect western Sydney to regional New South Wales. Over the past eight years this Government has come to understand the economic value of western Sydney. We have a clear vision and we are making a clear investment in economic infrastructure to ensure that we are creating jobs not only for today but also well and truly into the future.

Members

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The SPEAKER: I only ever make mention of significant personal milestones with the consent of the relevant member. In that vein, I acknowledge and congratulate the member for Tweed on his recent engagement. I also acknowledge birthdays in the past week of the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Miranda.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 3/57

Ms FELICITY WILSON: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 3/57*, dated 20 August 2019.

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Ms FELICITY WILSON: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 3/57*.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Hay Shire Council

Petition requesting that the Government sack Hay Shire Council, appoint an administrator and conduct an investigation into the alleged corruption and unfair dismissal of an employee, received from **Ms Helen Dalton**.

Bills

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN BILL 2019

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Gareth Ward, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (15:37): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Children's Guardian Bill 2019. This bill introduces important amendments aimed at protecting our children. It embodies the Government's ongoing commitment to protecting the safety and wellbeing of children in New South Wales. It is wonderful to have my mother, Margaret Bowcher, in the gallery today. Like all parents across the State, my mother strived to create a safe household and a solid upbringing for her children. That should be the right of every single child in this State. I am sure my mother will agree that this bill strengthens the existing platform we have as a State to make sure that we make New South Wales the safest place to raise a child.

This bill will create a new Act for the Children's Guardian. It will create key powers, functions and responsibilities to ensure that we continue as a State government to implement responses to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, to implement the Government's decision to transfer New South Wales reportable conduct framework and the Official Community Visitor scheme from the Ombudsman's office to the Office of the Children's Guardian, and to deliver improvements to the scheme providing independent oversight of responses to child abuse and neglect. These amendments seek to ensure that the child protection framework in New South Wales continues to evolve to address any gaps in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children in this State—to make sure that it has the most rigorous and most compelling set of rules in relation to protecting children.

It represents an important step in the Government's continuous improvement to the New South Wales framework protecting our children. The bill has five key elements. Firstly, it creates a new Act consolidating the Children's Guardian key powers, functions and responsibilities in one Act. It extracts the Children's Guardian's adoption functions from the Adoption Act 2000, and the Children's Guardian's children employment functions and responsibilities regarding accreditation, monitoring and registration of out-of-home care from the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. It will establish the Children's Guardian's expanded regulatory role, provide clarity for the sector and clearly recognise the Children's Guardian's independent statutory office.

Secondly, the Children's Guardian is to oversee and coordinate official community visitors, being a function transferred from the responsibility of the Ombudsman under the Community Services (Complaints, Review and Monitoring) Act 1993. The Official Community Visitor scheme provides a framework for autonomous statutory appointees to visit accommodation services for children, young people, people with disabilities and people living in licensed boarding houses. Oversight of this scheme will be transferred to the Children's Guardian but only insofar as the program relates to children, noting that the equivalent function for adults with disability has already been transferred to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner through legislation I introduced into this House earlier in the year.

Thirdly, the bill implements the Government's decision to transfer functions for the reportable conduct scheme from the Ombudsman's office to the Office of the Children's Guardian. The Government announced the transfer of this scheme in October last year and this bill delivers on that commitment. The royal commission recognised the New South Wales reportable conduct scheme as the most robust across the country. That is why the royal commission recommended the New South Wales scheme be nationally adopted. The announcement to transfer the scheme was made following suggestions by the royal commission that the agency responsible for implementing the Child Safe Standards regulatory scheme should also have the responsibility for the reportable conduct scheme.

The royal commission further noted advantages in vesting the responsibility for the reportable conduct scheme with the same agency that administers the Working With Children Check. This Government closely considered each recommendation and observation by the royal commission. Bringing these functions under one roof will deliver a cohesive approach to auditing, researching, reviewing and capacity building with the many thousands of agencies operating in the child protection sphere, and provide stronger safeguards for children in this State. The reportable conduct scheme is an integral tool in the New South Wales child protection framework. Child mistreatment and abuse in any form is heinous, unacceptable and disgusting. New South Wales has led the development of schemes to uphold the safety of children, including through the establishment of the country's first reportable conduct scheme two decades ago.

This scheme provides for independent oversight of the handling of child abuse and neglect allegations against employees of certain government and non-government entities. There will be no diminution of existing powers exercised under the scheme with the transfer. The scheme currently obliges heads of entities to notify the Ombudsman of any reportable allegation or conviction involving its employees. The scheme also obliges the Ombudsman to monitor each agency's investigation and handling of those allegations. This provides independent oversight of institutional responses to complaints of child abuse and neglect across multiple sectors. The transfer of functions will result in greater integration and streamlining of oversight arrangements for safeguarding children in New South Wales.

Fourthly, the bill makes discrete changes to the reportable conduct scheme. These proposed changes draw on elements of the frameworks in comparable jurisdictions. This is consistent with the royal commission's recommendations, which noted the importance and benefits of national harmonisation of reportable conduct frameworks. The amendments also address gaps recognised by the royal commission and loopholes highlighted recently in the media to ensure that the scheme clearly applies to contractors and subcontractors delivering services to children. Members would recall the case that was cited in relation to a Mosman swimming coach.

This Government will continue to ensure that the scheme we have to oversight workplace child abuse allegations are as robust and responsive as they need to be. And, quite frankly, as they should be. Critical information about individuals and entities of concern cannot fall through the cracks. These amendments will extend the reportable conduct scheme to cover the outside work conduct of employees of public authorities, which includes local councils, who are required to, or do, hold a Working With Children Check. Volunteers in public authorities who deliver services to children will also have their outside work conduct covered. The amendments also extend the scheme to cover the inside and outside work of contractors and subcontractors of all entities if they hold or should hold a Working With Children Check.

That is, if a contracting dance instructor who holds or is required to hold a Working With Children Check working under a local council has committed offences against children outside work, that conduct comes within the scope of the scheme. It is not just the work of a contractor or subcontractor inside an organisation, it is also the work they may do outside. The bill will ensure that any actions against children that should be reported are captured, reported, investigated and dealt with. Significantly, the amendments will extend the scheme to consistently cover religious bodies, which will come within the scheme from 30 January 2020. Any person in a religious body who holds or is required to hold a Working With Children Check for the purposes of their engagement will come within the scheme's scope.

This means that ministers, priests, rabbis and muftis are covered, as are any other roles in the religious body involving activities primarily related to children, including youth groups, youth camps, teaching children and child care. New South Wales' existing reportable conduct scheme currently has an inconsistent approach regarding religious bodies, with some religious organisations coming within the jurisdiction for certain aspects of their work, and others falling outside of that jurisdiction. This bill will address this anomaly, as it should. The amendments will also make discrete changes including by imposing a statutory obligation on agencies to investigate allegations of reportable conduct—prescribing a notification time frame of seven days and 30 days—enabling administrative review of Children's Guardian initiated investigation decisions by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT], and clarifying the definition of reportable conduct.

These discrete changes will address gaps in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and will ensure consistent coverage. Fifthly and finally, the bill will implement the royal commission's recommendations regarding mandatory reporting and protections for reporters. Although New South Wales already has a strong mandatory reporting scheme contained in section 27 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, the New South Wales Government is committed to making it stronger in compliance with recommendations made by the royal commission. This bill will also build on existing protections for people who make reports to the Department of Communities and Justice in good faith by providing these reporters with protection against all civil and criminal liability.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Part 1 and part 2 set out the name of the Act, commencement dates and the Act's application and interpretation. Part 3 contains the objects and principles that inform and reinforce the purpose of the legislation. The simplicity and directness of the bill's objects are key. The Children's Guardian protects children by promoting and regulating the quality of organisations and the people providing services to children. This object is at the core of the Children's Guardian's work and this entire legislation. The paramount consideration and guiding principles recognise that in achieving this object, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child and children, including protection from child abuse, is to be the paramount consideration in decision-making, and the operation of the Act and its framework.

In undertaking decision-making, the rules of procedural fairness are to be taken into account, as is the requirement to consider the least intrusive intervention in the life of a child and the child's family, and to ensure that out-of-home care provides a safe, nurturing, stable and secure environment for each and every child. Part 4 transfers the reportable conduct scheme which is currently in part 3A of the Ombudsman's Act 1974. The transfer of functions will provide the Children's Guardian with the Ombudsman's existing powers to monitor and investigate a reportable conduct allegation. Powers in administering the scheme are set out at schedules 2 and 3 to the bill.

Proposed changes to the reportable conduct scheme draw on elements of the frameworks in comparable jurisdictions, as I mentioned earlier, such as Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, to enhance and improve the New South Wales scheme. This is consistent with recommendations made by the royal commission, which

noted the importance and benefits of national harmonisation of reportable conduct frameworks. The bill makes discrete changes to address gaps in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and will ensure consistent coverage of reportable conduct requirements in relation to an employee's conduct inside and outside of work where those persons have contact with children in their employment.

This bill will clearly identify and clarify the definition of reportable conduct. To date, the legislation has not defined sub-elements of what comes within its scope. The Office of the Children's Guardian has worked closely with the NSW Ombudsman's office in developing the definitions under the scheme. The new reportable conduct definition will better clarify elements in the existing definition that have to date been undefined in the legislation. The new definition will also more transparently cover the elements of conduct that are interpreted as coming within the scope of the scheme. The definitions draw on the elements of existing offences. For example, neglect draws on the existing definition at section 228 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, but will not be held to the same criminal standard. This will assist in implementing the scheme in that there will be a body of existing case law to inform conduct that does or does not fall within scope.

Reportable conduct will cover conduct including: any sexual offence against, with or in the presence of a child, sexual misconduct with, towards or in the presence of a child, ill-treatment of a child, neglect of a child, an assault against a child, an offence under section 43B, which is the failure to reduce or remove risk of child becoming victim of child abuse or section 316A, concealing child abuse, of the Crimes Act 1900, and behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child. In addition to providing greater clarity by defining key terms, the bill also requires that heads of relevant entities or the Children's Guardian to consider whether the reportable allegation relates to conduct that is in breach of or contrary to professional standards, codes of conduct and accepted community standards. This requirement is to ensure an objective assessment of the conduct against established standards.

A key change to the scheme is to target its scope to the provision of children's services. The existing scheme under the Ombudsman applies to designated government agencies, designated non-government agencies and other public authorities. The heads of these entities are required to advise the Ombudsman where there is a reportable allegation against an employee. The scheme applies to any conduct, both inside and outside of work, of employees of designated government agencies and designated non-government agencies. The scheme also applies to conduct that arises inside work of employees of all public authorities. Maintaining the status quo, the bill continues to apply the scheme to any conduct, both inside and outside of work, of employees of designated government agencies and designated non-government agencies as currently defined under the Ombudsman Act.

These entities will now be referred to as schedule 1 entities. It will also continue to apply to inside work conduct of employees of public authorities as currently defined who do not hold or are not required to hold a Working With Children Check. An employee includes an individual employed by or in an entity whereby for example an employee of the Crown is employed in a relevant government sector agency. These amendments will make a targeted extension of the scheme to cover the outside work conduct of employees of public authorities, which includes local councils, who are required to or do hold a Working With Children Check for the purposes of their work with an entity. This is targeted to those employees in public authorities who have contact with children.

Public authorities such as local councils will be required to report in a number of areas including the inside work conduct relating to all of their employees and volunteers, which is currently the case, and, if they hold a Working With Children Check for the purposes of their work with the entity, the inside and outside work conduct relating to employees, volunteers and contractors. For example, if an employee of a local council provides dance lessons as part of his or her work and holds, or is required to hold, a Working With Children Check for the purposes of that work, and commits a sexual offence against a child outside of work hours, the local council will be under an obligation to inform the Children's Guardian if it is aware of the allegation. An employee's sexual offences, regardless of whether they are committed inside or outside the work context, is to be reportable conduct, given that it is directly relevant to that employee being engaged in child-related work.

The term "employee" will extend the scheme to cover the inside and outside work of contractors and subcontractors of all entities covered under the scheme if the contractor holds, or is required to hold, a Working With Children Check for the purposes of their work with an entity. This means that the head of the entity would be required to report to the Children's Guardian about reportable conduct occurring both in and out of work in relation to the conduct of those contractors of which the head of the entity is aware. Contractors who hold, or require, a Working With Children Check for the purposes of their work will now be treated consistently, regardless of whether the entity they work for under the Ombudsman's current scheme is a designated government agency, a designated non-government agency or a public authority.

The intention is that the scheme apply to any person working for, under the auspices of, or on behalf of an entity currently coming within the scheme, to the extent that person is required to, or does, hold a Working

With Children Check for the purpose of that work. The scheme is intended to cover those contracted to provide a service within, on behalf of, or under a contract with an entity coming within the scheme. The rationale for including employees who hold a Working With Children Check for the purposes of their work with the entity, but who may not be required to hold the check by the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, is that if an employer requires an employee, volunteer or contractor to have a check then they must also be obliged to take on the reporting responsibilities in relation to those persons.

There are currently only a small number of religious bodies coming under the reportable conduct scheme. For example, agencies under the authority of a Catholic Bishop of New South Wales that provides substitute residential care for children are within the existing reportable conduct scheme, while other religious bodies are not. This scheme will now consistently cover religious bodies in relation to clergy and persons in any other role in the religious body who have, or need, a Working With Children Check. This includes roles in a religious body involving activities primarily related to children, including youth groups, youth camps, teaching children and child care. Religious bodies will come within the scheme from 30 January 2020 to enable further consultation and capacity building with the sector.

I note that religious bodies have supported these suggested changes. Under the amendments, religious bodies will be required to report to the Children's Guardian on any inside and outside work conduct of clergy and any other person including employees, volunteers and contractors who hold or are required to hold a Working With Children Check for the purposes of their work with the entity. Being so targeted, it will not extend to all members of the congregation, thereby avoiding undue regulatory burden on religious bodies and their members.

If a reportable conduct allegation is made against a priest, minister, rabbi, mufti or any other religious leader then the new law is clear. The entity in which that person operates will need to investigate the allegation and notify the Office of the Children's Guardian, which will oversee that investigation to ensure it is transparent and accountable. This is the same obligation as is held by any other organisation or entity. These amendments are a major step forward in protecting children who spend time in religious and faith-based institutions. In addition to these targeted expansions of the scheme to those delivering children's services, this bill also makes discrete changes to the scheme. This bill seeks to streamline reporting obligations and reducing regulatory burden on entities. This bill will be a single, simple entry point for most entities to reduce their reporting and administrative burdens.

The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2013 and the reportable conduct scheme currently create separate reporting requirements under each framework, potentially allowing gaps to occur. The working with children Act requires a reporting body to notify the Children's Guardian where its child-related worker has engaged in conduct referred to in clause 2 of schedule 1 to the Act. This includes any sexual offence committed against, with, or in the presence of a child. By January 2020 the majority of reporting bodies under the working with children Act are intended to come within the reportable conduct scheme, given they are religious bodies. To reduce duplicative reporting requirements, this bill will collapse reporting requirements into the reportable conduct scheme and remove the reporting requirements under the working with children Act once all entities from that framework come within the reportable conduct scheme.

Under the existing scheme, entities must notify the Ombudsman "as soon as practicable" of a reportable allegation or conviction and in any event within 30 days. This bill create a two-stage notification requirement. The head of an entity is to notify within seven working days of becoming aware of the allegation or conviction and to provide a 30-day report on the investigation or an interim report. This seeks to mitigate a risk that an employee will continue to have contact with children for up to a month, even though they may present an ongoing risk to children. The two-staged process provides the Children's Guardian with an update on the status of the investigation at 30 days. We are also strengthening the scheme by applying a 10 penalty unit penalty if entities do not notify or provide an update at the seven- and 30-day time frame without reasonable excuse.

It is not acceptable for the head of an entity to be aware of a risk to children and not advise the Children's Guardian. These provisions send an unequivocal message that this Government takes the safety of children incredibly seriously. Certain entities may have legitimate reasons for not commencing or reporting on conduct. For example, an employee may be associated with a number of entities and the relevant conduct may already be being investigated by another entity. The Children's Guardian may exempt the head of an entity in these circumstances from commencing or continuing an investigation and from the requirement to provide an entity report or interim report.

There will be a statutory obligation on agencies to investigate, make findings with reasons, and provide information about what action, if any, is to be taken with respect to an allegation that is brought before it. This scheme is an allegation-based risk-mitigation framework. This bill makes amendments to be very clear: An entity must notify reportable conduct, an entity must investigate reportable conduct and an entity must make findings and take action, such as remedial or disciplinary action, in relation to reportable conduct. The Children's Guardian

will be able to monitor an entity's investigation and will also have the power to conduct an own-motion investigation if it is in the public interest to do so. If an entity is not doing a good job of investigating a case, the Children's Guardian can step in.

This scheme seeks to balance competing principles of procedural fairness for a person who is the subject of an allegation with ensuring the protection of children in our State. Under the existing framework, the Ombudsman may monitor an investigation or conduct an own-motion investigation, but reportable conduct findings are not reviewable by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. These amendments enable NCAT reviews of Children's Guardian-initiated investigation findings. Consistent with the Working With Children Check framework, a decision will not be subject to internal review prior to proceeding to NCAT. Further review mechanisms include the Children's Guardian review of an entity's investigation and complaints about the process of a Children's Guardian investigation, which may be made by any person with sufficient interest to the Ombudsman.

Part 5 of the bill extracts the Children's Guardian's existing powers, functions and responsibilities regarding out-of-home care from the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. This includes extracting the Children's Guardian's powers of accreditation, registration and monitoring of statutory, supported and voluntary out-of-home care. Part 6 of the bill extracts the Children's Guardian's existing powers, functions and responsibilities relating to children's employment from the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 into the new Children's Guardian Act. Part 7 of the bill extracts the Children's Guardian's existing powers, functions and responsibilities relating to adoption from the Adoption Act 2000 into the new Children's Guardian Act. Part 8 of the bill sets out the process of appointment, vacancy and removal from office of the Children's Guardian. This part largely replicates the Children's Guardian's key powers, functions and responsibilities as set out in the existing Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

Discrete changes will draw on elements of the Ombudsman Act 1974 regarding the Children's Guardian's removal from office and appointment of statutory officers. The Children's Guardian may now be removed from office by the Governor upon the address of both Houses of Parliament. The Children's Guardian can also appoint one or more statutory officers. Section 125 will set out the expanded regulatory role of the Children's Guardian to include reportable conduct, oversight and coordination of official community visitors and, consistent with the royal commission's recommendations, the legislative lever to establish and maintain a register of residential care workers in out-of-home care. This register, which is anticipated to be operational in 2020, will provide a mechanism for out-of-home residential care providers to exchange information about the safety and suitability of residential care workers prior to making a decision whether to engage a person.

There will be parliamentary joint committee oversight of the Children's Guardian's functions in relation to reportable conduct, as is already the case for the Working With Children Check frameworks. This will ensure that the transfer of reportable conduct functions will not result in any diminution of current oversight. The bill will replicate the information exchange provision that currently applies to the secretary of the department under section 248 of the care Act. This will ensure that the Children's Guardian can share information with a relevant body, which includes prescribed bodies under the care framework. Noting that the guardian will now have an expanded regulatory role, this will enable information of concern to be provided to entities on the same basis as the secretary already does.

The bill also makes a discrete expansion to the Children's Guardian existing information exchange powers at section 186A of the care Act, which will be transferred into this legislation. The provision currently enables the Children's Guardian to share information with police and other investigative agencies. This legislation will clarify that the Children's Guardian can refer matters to interstate and to Commonwealth police and investigative agencies. This small change recognises the new regulatory environment with the commencement of the Commonwealth National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Part 9 will transfer the Official Community Visitor scheme from the Ombudsman to the Children's Guardian. The Official Community Visitor scheme under the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 provides a framework for autonomous statutory appointees to visit accommodation services for children, young people, people with disabilities, and people living in licensed boarding houses. The bill enables the Minister to appoint, on the Children's Guardian's recommendation, official community visitors who have functions relating to children who reside in visitable services, which are an accommodation service where a child in care using the service is in the full-time care of the service provider. An official community visitor can enter and inspect a visitable service, confer alone with a child who is resident, or a person employed at the service, inspect relevant documents and provide the Minister and the Children's Guardian with advice or information relating to the conduct of the place.

Official community visitors can also provide information about independent advocacy services to help children in the presentation of a grievance or matter of concern, and encourage the promotion of legal and human

rights of children using visitable services. The equivalent Official Community Visitor scheme in relation to adult disability services and assisted boarding houses has been transferred from the Ombudsman to the Ageing and Disability Services Commissioner, as per legislation I introduced into this House earlier this year. Official community visitors can consider matters raised by children themselves, or raised by staff or people having a genuine concern for their welfare, interests and conditions. They can provide information about, and assist, children to obtain advocacy services that can help them with grievances or concerns. Official community visitors can refer those grievances or concerns, if reasonable and practicable to do so, to the providers of the relevant services or to other appropriate bodies.

Part 10 replicates the existing administrative review functions that apply to decisions within the Children's Guardian's existing portfolio responsibility. One new decision to be included in the list of existing decisions that can be appealed to NCAT will be administrative review of Office of the Children's Guardian-initiated investigation findings. Part 11 sets out the offences regarding information protection, including under the reportable conduct scheme. Part 12 contains a range of operational and miscellaneous provisions such as delegation by the Minister and the regulation-making power. Under the schedules to the bill, amendments are made in relation to mandatory reporting. This strengthens the existing mandatory reporter scheme by expanding its application to people in religious ministry, people who provide religion-based activities to children and registered psychologists providing professional services as psychologists. People who fall within these categories will be required to make a report to the Department of Communities and Justice if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm and those grounds arise during the course of, or from, their work or their duties.

The bill amends section 29 of the care Act to build on existing protections for people who make reports to the Department of Communities and Justice in good faith by providing these reporters with protection against all civil and criminal liability. The bill also inserts two new provisions into the care Act to provide new protections for people who make child protection reports. Proposed section 29AAA applies to reports made to institutions engaging in child-related work and protects reporters who make a report in good faith from liability in defamation and civil and criminal liability. It also provides that the report does not constitute a breach of professional etiquette or ethics, or amount to unprofessional conduct. The protections extend to people who provided information to the reporter or who were otherwise concerned in the making of the report. Proposed section 29AB applies to reports made to the Department of Communities and Justice and institutions engaging in child-related work and protects reporters against retribution for making, or proposing to make, a report.

Increasing the categories of mandatory reporter and providing greater protections for people making a report will result in increased reporting of child abuse and neglect, allowing the Department of Communities and Justice to prevent children from being abused, or put a stop to abuse that is already occurring. The royal commission highlighted the pervasiveness of child abuse through its work, the complex trauma and cumulative effects over the long term for individual victims, and the ripple effects on families and communities. This Government is currently engaged in important work to implement the commission's recommendations. The reportable conduct framework, and the transfer of functions to the Children's Guardian, is an integral piece in the puzzle.

While the reportable conduct scheme cannot protect against people who are yet to engage in child abuse and misconduct, it is one tool in a broader framework in New South Wales for responding to people who we know, or suspect, should not be working with children. The most effective approach must be multifaceted, with organisations adopting careful recruitment processes, appropriate training and supervision, robust processes for investigating complaints, a culture of valuing children and young people's participation, and risk management systems centred around children's rights. The reportable conduct scheme seeks to monitor and oversight those objectives. However, importantly, this must be a shared approach across the community. This is something in which every member of this House and this community should be invested.

This bill represents an important step, but there is always more to be done, and we will do that work together. The new Children's Guardian legislation increases clarity and visibility of the independence of the Children's Guardian's regulatory role. The protection of our children from abuse is of paramount importance to this Government. We will do whatever we reasonably can to keep our children safe. Through this bill, the Government is delivering on its commitment and seeking to ensure the child protection framework in New South Wales continues to evolve to address any gaps in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

LAKE MACQUARIE SMELTER SITE (PERPETUAL CARE OF LAND) BILL 2019**First Reading****Bill introduced on motion by Ms Melinda Pavey, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading Speech****Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (16:14):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Lake Macquarie Smelter Site (Perpetual Care of Land) Bill 2019, which will ensure that land at the site of the former lead and zinc smelter at Boolaroo at Lake Macquarie is managed properly in perpetuity. This will reduce any risk to the environment and the community from residual contamination produced over the 100 years or more of the smelter's operation. The smelter ceased operation in 2003 and extensive remediation works have since been carried out on the former smelter site. These works involved the construction of a containment cell on the site to encapsulate the contaminated material excavated from it. The physical construction of the cell was completed about two to three years ago. It now spans over 20 hectares and contains about 1.9 million cubic metres of material. Associated infrastructure includes a water or leachate treatment plant that treats water collected from the site of the cell.

The cell and associated water treatment plant will require ongoing maintenance and repair or replacement of components in the longer term, including potentially the capping of the cell. There are other areas of the former smelter site, such as Munibung Hill, that are now rezoned for environmental conservation and also require ongoing environmental management. These were unable to be fully remediated because of the hilly nature of their terrain and existing vegetation cover. To understand the Government's reasons for introducing the bill, it is necessary that I briefly outline what has occurred on the former smelter site since the early 2000s. The site is owned by Pasminco Cockle Creek Smelter Pty Ltd, a company that has been subject to a deed of company arrangement since 2002. Before that, the company, with other companies in the Pasminco Group, had been placed in voluntary administration. I will refer to Pasminco Cockle Creek Smelter Pty Ltd simply as "Pasminco".

In 2003 the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] issued Pasminco with a remediation order under the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997—now known as a management order—for the whole of the site then owned by Pasminco. In February 2007 the then Minister for Planning granted a project approval under the now repealed part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 for the remediation of the site, including the construction of the cell. Successive stages of the remediation works have been subject to site audits by an expert site auditor accredited by the EPA under the Contaminated Land Management Act. Following site audits, areas of the former smelter site were excised from the remediation order and were able to be rezoned for light industrial, business or residential purposes. Indeed, on what was once part of the smelter site Cardiff Central Industrial Estate has been created and to the south-west of the containment cell there is now a Bunnings store and a residential development.

The 2007 project approval requires Pasminco to put in place a funding framework for the long-term environmental management of the containment cell and other land that has been zoned for environmental conservation. More specifically, the project approval requires Pasminco to ensure that a public positive covenant applied to the site of the containment cell before the construction of the cell was completed. That covenant, among other things, should have addressed the long-term management, operation, maintenance and monitoring of the containment cell as well as funding to sustain that long-term management. No covenant has been put in place or even prepared by Pasminco, despite discussions and negotiations with the external administrators of the company over a protracted period.

In 2018, because of the unwillingness of Pasminco to engage in further negotiations with the former Department of Planning and Environment and the EPA over a proposal to secure long-term funding of the costs of managing the cell and other land, the Government amended State Environmental Planning Policy No 55—Remediation of Land. This ensured that no further subdivision of the former smelter site could occur until adequate arrangements for the perpetual care of the cell, its associated infrastructure and the land zoned for environmental conservation were in place, reflecting the conditions of the 2007 project approval. In mid-2017 the external administrators estimated that \$21.5 million would be sufficient to support the long-term management of the cell and other land zoned for environmental conservation. The former Department of Planning and Environment engaged an environmental consultant to identify future liabilities in relation to the long-term management of the containment cell and water treatment plant and review the costs provided by the external administrators that were largely unsupported by evidence or analysis.

Following the provision of a number of reports by the consultants, financial modelling was obtained externally in relation to the net present value of the future costs of long-term management. In 2019 the Waste

Assets Management Corporation [WAMC], a government agency with particular expertise in managing contaminated landfills, refined the estimate of average annual costs, working with the external administrators. On those refined costs estimates, the net present value of future costs has been assessed as approximately \$67 million. Despite the sale of significant portions of the former smelter site, the only remaining potential asset of Pasminco appears to be the land surrounding the containment cell zoned for residential, business or industrial purposes. The value of that land, even when subdivided from the containment cell, is unlikely to exceed the net present value of the cost in perpetuity of maintaining the containment cell, its associated infrastructure and other land. The external administrators have already advised those creditors who are bound by the deed of company arrangement that they are unlikely to receive any further dividend, having received eight interim distributions since 2004, totalling about \$550 million on estimates of Government advisers.

Government advisers understand that Pasminco will be placed in liquidation in the near future. These circumstances mean it is inevitable that responsibility for the long-term management of the containment cell and other land will devolve to the Government, as the Government of course will not allow any risks posed by residual contamination to be left unmanaged. The bill before the House recognises that inevitability, prevents further diminution of the value of the remaining land through the accruing of further debt by the external administrators and allows the activation of significant areas of the site for housing and jobs. The bill will transfer the ownership of that part of the former smelter site remaining in Pasminco's ownership to the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation, a New South Wales government agency established under the Growth Centres (Development Corporations) Act 1974. The development corporation will take on the liabilities of Pasminco in relation to the long-term management of the containment cell and other land that Pasminco has failed to address.

The Waste Assets Management Corporation will assume the day-to-day management of the containment cell. The development corporation—based, as it is, in the Hunter region and with its sound record of promoting the development of nearby Newcastle and revitalising its CBD—is uniquely positioned to ensure that the development potential of the land surrounding the cell can be realised. It will release that land for housing and industrial and business development, thereby generating jobs and boosting the local economy. An assessment prepared for Lake Macquarie City Council estimated that the proposed development for the site would generate 1,600 long-term jobs, with a further 1,300 multiplier-induced jobs across the broader economic area. Approximately 1,000 construction jobs would likely be generated and at least 600 homes could potentially be built. The bill will ensure that there is no further delay in the development of this important site.

I turn now to the provisions of the bill. Key concepts used in the bill are set out in clause 3. First, the term "former smelter site" is defined by reference to the four lots of land that, on the introduction of the bill, remain in Pasminco's ownership. As already mentioned, some of the land on which smelter operations took place has already been sold off. For the information of members, I will also table an illustration of the site, showing those four lots. The location of the containment cell on the site can be identified readily by looking at the land zoning maps adopted by the Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014, which shows the containment cell zoned for special activities—hazardous storage establishment. I seek leave to table the document.

Leave granted.

Document tabled.

Another key concept in the bill is that of contaminated land. That reflects the descriptions in clause 22 of State Environmental Planning Policy No 55 of the land for which adequate arrangements for its perpetual care need to be made before the site to which that clause applies can be subdivided or otherwise developed. In particular, the reference in the bill's definition of "contaminated land" to land within the environmental conservation zone E2 under the Lake Macquarie Local Environmental Plan 2014 immediately before 31 August 2018 reflects the commencement of clause 22 on that date.

Clause 5 transfers the smelter site, defined as outlined, to the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation on the vesting day, which is the day on which clause 5 commences. While the clause transfers the interest of the registered proprietor of the site—that is, Pasminco—other interests are preserved, such as easements, rights of access and even leasehold interests held by utilities, such as telecommunications corporations, with respect to infrastructure and equipment on Munibung Hill. However, any interest that is merely protected by a caveat and not recorded on the title of the land will be extinguished. For example, any interest in the land asserted by Fiddletown Investments Limited—a company incorporated in the British Virgin Islands—on the basis of a recent loan facility provided to Pasminco will be extinguished.

Clause 6 converts the interests in land transferred to the development corporation or extinguished to rights to compensation under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991. Because of the unique characteristics of the site—particularly, of course, the containment cell and its associated infrastructure—the bill modifies or clarifies aspects of determining compensation under the just terms Act. Most importantly, the bill

makes it clear that the net present value of the future costs, in perpetuity, of managing—including repairing and replacing if necessary—the containment cell and its associated infrastructure, and maintaining and managing the site of the cell and the land zoned for environmental conservation is to be taken into account in determining the compensation to which any person is entitled under the just terms Act.

Any positive value that some of the land or lots may have—if considered separately to the land on which the containment cell is located, for example, and just having regard to its zoning for residential, industrial or business purposes—must be offset by the liability attached to the containment cell and its associated infrastructure, such as the water treatment plant and other land that requires long-term environmental management. Clause 6 (10) requires a person, such as the Valuer General, to have regard to estimates of the future costs in relation to the contaminated land and their net present value provided by a government agency or obtained by it. Current estimates by the Waste Assets Management Corporation, the New South Wales Government agency with expertise in this area, has put the annual average cost at slightly more than \$1 million. On that basis, the net present value of the cost of managing the contaminated land in perpetuity has been estimated as being in the order of \$67 million. That is likely to exceed the value of the land zoned for residential, industrial or business purposes surrounding the containment cell, once subdivided from the containment cell site.

Under clause 6 (8), the value of the land must be determined taking into account the restrictions on the use of the former smelter site as they applied immediately before notice of the introduction of the bill was given, imposed by or under another Act. These include not just clause 22 of State Environmental Planning Policy No 55—Remediation of Land, but also the restrictions on carrying out complying development on the site under State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008, introduced at the same time as clause 22. They also include the conditions of the 2007 project approval requiring a funding framework to be put in place. Clause 7 sets out the responsibilities of the owner of the containment cell site, which on the vesting day will, of course, be the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation.

The provisions of clause 7 reflect the conditions of the 2007 project approval, which require the proponent to prepare and implement a long-term environmental management plan for the containment cell. That plan, both under the bill and under the conditions of the project approval, requires the approval of the planning secretary and the Environment Protection Authority before its implementation. Clause 8 contains similar provisions for the remainder of the land that requires long-term environmental management, such as Munibung Hill, zoned for environmental conservation. The owner of that land has the general responsibility for managing the land to protect the environment and the public from any risk from residual contamination on the land. Clause 9 applies to that part of the former smelter site that can be developed—that is, the land surrounding the cell that is zoned for residential, industrial or business uses. The owner, Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation, on the vesting day is to facilitate the development of that land and for that purpose has available to it the powers under the Growth Centres (Development Corporations) Act. It can subdivide and sell that land.

Indeed, part of the site is subject to a contract of purchase and sale with Greencapital Australia Pty Ltd, which already owns a lot next to Munibung Hill that was once part of the site of the smelter operations, and is currently carrying out subdivision works for the purpose of housing. While that contract will not be preserved, clause 9 (3) will allow the development corporation to negotiate a new contract with Greencapital without first having to put the land on the market in recognition of the significant presence that Greencapital has already established in the area and the investments it has made. I am advised that it is the intention of the development corporation to do so. Further, the development corporation can deal directly with other third parties who have expressed an interest in purchasing land, such as IKEA, which still has a caveat on the title of part of the land.

Clause 10 ensures that the proceeds of the sale of the land around the containment cell received by the development corporation are quarantined for the purpose of managing the contaminated land in perpetuity. The clause establishes the Containment Cell Perpetual Care Fund into which proceeds of sale are to be paid after the development corporation deducts its costs and any other money appropriated for the purposes of the fund. The purposes for which money can be paid out of the fund are limited to those related to the responsibilities given to the owner or owners of land transferred by the bill. The money in the fund can be invested by the development corporation or other government agency that becomes an owner of the land. Clauses 12 and 13 provide the flexibility required for the management of the contaminated land over the long term.

As I have mentioned already, it is envisaged that the Waste Assets Management Corporation will continue to manage the containment cell and its associated infrastructure under an arrangement with the development corporation from the day on which the land is transferred to the development corporation, as it has the necessary expertise in this area. Clause 13 will clearly empower the WAMC to exercise the functions under clause 7 of the bill—and indeed clause 8—of the owner of the containment cell site under such an arrangement. In addition, functions of an owner may be formally delegated to the employee of another government agency, such as WAMC.

That brings me to schedule 1 to the bill, which provides a mechanism for the land that is to be vested in the development corporation to be transferred to another government agency, including the local council with the council's consent. It is proposed that, after the development corporation has subdivided the land and created a separate lot for the containment cell and the water treatment plant, that lot will be formally transferred to WAMC. Of course, given that the contaminants such as lead and cadmium in the containment cell will not decay and will remain on the site indefinitely, it is inevitable that management for the cell will pass eventually to new government bodies. Schedule 1 recognises that by allowing land to be readily transferred by order of the Governor that amends part 2 of the schedule to include a description of the land and the government agency to whom the land is transferred. Finally, schedule 2 contains savings and transitional provisions and allows regulations to be made of a savings or transitional nature consequent on the enactment of the proposed Act or the making of an order transferring land.

The Government is committed to regional New South Wales. The Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation is well placed to stimulate the activation of the site of the former smelter operations, which of course played a central role in the economy of the region throughout the twentieth century. Boolaroo will be revitalised by the new housing that will be built on this site and the construction jobs and long-term employment opportunities that light industries and businesses on the site will generate. At the same time, the environment and the health of the community will be protected. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (RMS DISSOLUTION) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:34): As I was saying, the Government has given assurances to the union movement regarding the protection of award terms and conditions. I reiterate the words of the Minister for Transport and Roads last month in this place. He said:

I have a clear message for Labor members: You want to retain the Roads and Maritime Services and not integrate RMS into public transport. We believe the integration is eminently sensible and in the community interest.

The Government has given a very clear undertaking that we are going to grow jobs in Transport for NSW with the merging of Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and Transport for NSW in the bush, which will mean more jobs based in the regions to support our transport network. The Government has also given the undertaking that this is not about job cuts; it is about jobs growth for Transport for NSW in regional areas. That undertaking has been lost on the Opposition. Members of the Labor Party appear to be anti-jobs in the bush. They want to keep in place all the challenges and all the problems in relation to the RMS.

The New South Wales Government and Transport for NSW take consultation with employees and their representative bodies seriously. The meetings have included the transport secretary on a number of occasions. Practical steps to achieve the integration of Roads and Maritime Services into Transport for NSW were finalised on 1 July 2019. When complete, this will fully integrate every area of transport under a single and unified transport banner. There is no change to the employment status of any staff members as a result of the transition to a single agency. All Roads and Maritime Services staff and Transport for NSW staff are already members of the same transport service, as distinct from the public service. The transport secretary exercises employer functions in relation to all members of the transport service. All staff remain members of the transport service and the transport secretary remains their employer.

The administrative changes to achieve integration have already been made. On 1 July 2019 Roads and Maritime Services staff were transitioned into the new divisions of Transport for NSW in a lift-and-shift process where they and their teams were moved, intact, into the new divisions. All that has changed in this transition is the senior reporting lines. Roads and Maritime Services staff remain on their current awards, as do staff of Transport for NSW and all the other transport agencies. The current Transport for NSW and RMS awards have reached their nominal expiry dates and have been renegotiated. I am informed that three RMS awards have been made by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission and are now operational. Negotiations have concluded for the two outstanding RMS and Transport for NSW awards, with agreement in principle reached on 31 July 2019. The transport secretary has made a firm commitment that these awards will continue to apply to the groups of employees to which they currently apply.

I understand from the Minister for Transport and Roads that this position has been settled by agreement between the parties and is reflected in the terms of the four RMS awards. These awards also set out clear principles for the consultation process for dealing with any organisational changes during the life of the new awards. Each of the new awards will have a two-year term. This has been endorsed by the Wages Policy Taskforce. The task

force initially authorised only one-year terms, but it was persuaded to extend the authorisation to two years for all transport awards after further representations on behalf of the transport secretary. Transport for NSW is continuing a program of ongoing consultation with staff and unions about the reorganisation. As I have already noted, the Minister for Transport and Roads has confirmed to me that consultation with staff and unions has taken place and will continue to take place in accordance with the applicable awards. This consultation has included a briefing for unions on the terms of the bill now before us.

I am advised that unions are of the view that they do not see anything in the provisions of this bill that in any way impacts adversely on the conditions of employment of their members employed in RMS—or indeed of any staff of Transport for NSW. This is not a bill about jobs or conditions of employment; it is a bill to dissolve RMS and transfer its functions to Transport for NSW. The staff who perform those functions have already moved into the new Transport for NSW operating model. By drawing various functions together, Transport for NSW will be better placed to deliver the mobility services that customers need whilst continuing to respond to an ever-changing operating environment. Integrating Roads and Maritime Services into Transport for NSW will make it easier for staff, customers, industry, councils and other government agencies to engage effectively on transport matters. The new operating model will simplify decision-making and ensure that decisions truly reflect customer needs and expectations.

I am very excited about projects that will continue to benefit constituents of the Miranda electorate under the new operating model. One of these great projects is the F6 extension stage one. This project will connect President Avenue at Kogarah to the new M5 motorway at Arncliffe, bypass up to 23 sets of traffic lights, remove over 2,000 trucks a day from surface roads and return local streets to local communities. These are all things that the people of Miranda and southern Sydney want. Another project worth noting is the Linden Street upgrade. The Linden Street corridor is a key east-west connection between Bangor Bypass and Princes Highway. It is used by around 6,000 motorists and 500 bus passengers an hour in peak periods and is crucial to keeping people moving around the Sutherland shire and the Greater Sydney area. At present, the Linden Street corridor struggles under the strain of peak hour traffic, leaving people travelling between Menai and Sutherland sitting in a queue of traffic.

Under the new Transport for NSW operating model, the New South Wales Government is adding an extra lane between River Road and Leonay Street, Sutherland, and upgrading three intersections along the corridor to ease congestion at this pinch point. These changes will benefit around 65,000 motorists daily, return up to eight minutes to the constituents of Miranda every day and improve safety for all road users. I know that the constituents of the Miranda electorate will be well served by this new road model, as will the constituents of Oatley and all other areas of Sydney, but my focus will always be on southern Sydney. With that in mind, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:41): As the shadow Minister, and member for Kogarah, has indicated, the Opposition will not oppose the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019. However, I will bring a few thoughts to the debate as somebody who has had a long history with Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and its predecessor, the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA]. Considering my father, John Daley, worked for the Department of Main Roads [DMR], you could say that my family has had a long history with this department and its various iterations. Indeed, in 2008 I was hugely privileged to be appointed as the Minister for Roads, and I presided over the RTA at that time. The RTA and the RMS came after the DMR. The RTA was established by Wal Murray and the Greiner Liberal Government nearly 30 years ago. It continued in that form basically unchanged through 16 years of Labor government for one simple reason: It was the most responsive organisation to government-initiated projects for the community and ran the most effective and honest tender processes in the country.

Whilst we support the bill—and the Government is proceeding with it on the basis that an integrated transport model is better—I cannot help but think there is a bit of overkill on this, and that the Government has planned this from the day the O'Farrell Government came to office. In about 2012 in an interview with *The Australian Financial Review* I warned that one of the concerns I had in relation to the public service in New South Wales was that it was maligned, attacked and dumbed down by the Liberal Government when it came to office in 2011. One of the things the Government did when it shed 20,000 to 30,000 jobs in the public sector, while promising to keep so-called frontline staff, was take out a whole stratum of people in the public service.

Mr David Elliott: Middle managers.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Yes, and the Minister opposite me thinks he is being smart by saying "middle managers". I warned, when that happened, that it would be the dumbing down of the public service in New South Wales. In fact, I was absolutely correct. We just need to look at the disaster that has underpinned the light rail and WestConnex and other projects in this State in the Transport and Roads portfolio since 2011 to see that the public service in have been denuded of some of their best staff. I know, because I am still in contact with them. So much so, that when we look at planning for WestConnex—

[A Government member interjected.]

I will, in a minute. That used to be done in-house. WestConnex could not be designed in-house. The Government had to go to the private sector and pay through the nose for what the RTA and the DMR would have done on their ear, with the capable people who worked for them. The DMR was created in 1932 and the RTA was created under the Greiner Government with Wal Murray as the Minister. What makes the Roads portfolio in New South Wales different to other States is its sheer size. A particular type of engineering skill is needed for roads, soil science, drainage, and water management. All those experts were resident within the specialist roads body.

One of its achievements—and there were many—was the creation of the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System, or SCATS, that runs traffic lights all over New South Wales. It was software that was designed in-house by the RTA and exported to 20 countries around the world; they were leaders, project managers and contract managers. The Government is lacking the skill of contract managers, having wasted \$14 billion in overruns and projects blowing out because of its contract managers. The RTA were the best in the business. When the Government took out middle managers, those capabilities went. Now it pays through the nose for the private sector to do that sort of work.

Mr David Elliott: So did you.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Would you be quiet?

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The RTA created the first design, construct, maintain contract in New South Wales for the Pacific Highway and led the way in public-private partnerships [PPPs]. Some of those are still in place and have served the State well. The Roads portfolio has been one of the biggest drivers for economic development in this State. When we look at the sheer size of New South Wales, we need a specialist road manager for delivery. We began the process of integrating the planning phase of roads and transport when we were in government. There is an argument that specialist bodies are needed to deliver operational tasks. Specialist people are needed to deliver buses in the bus sector and trains in the rail sector. Experts in the RTA and RMS delivered in the roads sector, which provided many jobs across New South Wales. Their great expertise assisted councils, particularly with flood management. When roads were washed away and culverts were destroyed in floods, it was the RTA and its expert engineers that helped councils fix them.

The RTA was a specialist body and a lot of that specialisation has been lost because the people have been let go. Absorbing the RMS into Transport for NSW will create a distinct lack of accountability and there will be no focus on the specialist knowledge that is required for roads and rail that has resided in those departments. There will be a generic worker and a loss of capability. I do not have to predict the results because we have seen it in the past eight years. Those skills have been lost to government and are now outsourced to the private sector. I know people who used to work for the RTA and RMS who are now working for the private sector. They are getting paid much more and billing the Government at three times the rate they were being paid in the RTA and RMS. That is the Liberal Coalition way of governing. It is not our way of governing. One of the things that the RTA and RMS specialised in was innovative bridge design. For example, the RTA designed the Anzac Bridge in-house and maintained the Sydney Harbour Bridge from 1932. As the Minister for Roads, I was very proud to have collected the very last cash toll at one of the old collection booths before the Harbour Bridge toll became cashless.

Terrific people worked at the DMR, the RTA and RMS. I thank some of those who worked with me, particularly RTA CEO Les Wielinga, who later became the CEO of Transport for NSW. He started with the RTA as a cadet in 1972 and that is one thing it used to do very well. It would take on 20 cadets a year and train them as engineers. Many people such as Les Wielinga and Mike Bushby, who took over as CEO after him, spent their entire working life as absolute world-renowned experts in the RTA. There were others: Director Anne King, John Whelan and Brian Watters, who was one of the best in the world at dealing with the development sample of road projects and ensuring that concepts were ready when the government needed them. He was always thinking ahead.

[Extension of time]

I remember when the global financial crisis hit that we needed some projects quickly. Brian Watters, an amazing man, opened his top drawer and had concept plans worked out for extensions and duplications of the Pacific Highway around New South Wales that were shovel ready. I do not think those people exist in the RMS today or in Transport for NSW. I thank my friend Phil Mahoney, who led the way when the highway was being duplicated through the Blue Mountains. It was a very difficult project and a lot of people did not want it to proceed. He worked with communities along the way—all the towns and villages in the mountains—and they came to accept that the duplication through the Blue Mountains was necessary. It is a testament to the terrific work that he did, particularly in mapping some of the heritage items there. When they cut away some of the old highway to

resurface it, duplicate it and widen it, they discovered that the old convict-built roads underneath the bitumen pavement that had been laid many decades later were still in very good condition. Phil made sure that was all documented and not lost and that the environment was protected. The work he and others, such as Bob Higgins, did on the Pacific Highway is a great testament to the RMS.

Today it is sad to hear people say that the RMS was an agency that was out of control and that it rode roughshod over communities. I have to say that has only been the case since 2011. Before then, people such as Mike Veysey and others were directors in particular regions and their job was to take care of members of Parliament. We had their mobile numbers and when there were problems in local communities, we could ring up those men and women and they would visit our electorate office and walk down the road and talk to residents to see what the problem was, and they would fix it. All those positions went. Terrific people such as Mike Veysey are gone and a number of positions have been abolished. Whilst some good people still work for the RMS, the culture has changed. It is not the fault of the RMS or the people who work there, but it is the result of directions they have received from their political masters.

I will defend the RMS and the RTA as excellent departments that contributed a great deal to economic growth—the growth of communities, the Roads portfolio and jobs. Their expertise and the passing on of knowledge has been lost but that is what happens when Tory governments get elected. The Opposition does not oppose the bill but when it comes to things like this, I do not trust this Government and nor do many of the good people who work for the RTA.

Mr David Elliott: The people of New South Wales didn't trust you.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: You be quiet because you are very rude and you should just be quiet.

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: You should be quiet. You are a rude man. Just be quiet.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Minister will come to order. I will boot you both out.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I thank the people who have worked for the RTA and the RMS. In many ways I think it is a sad and a very avoidable day. But, as I said, this is what happens when Tory governments are elected.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:55): I speak on behalf of The Greens in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019. At its core the bill has a positive objective and that is to improve coordination, management, responsiveness and to provide a new focus on transport planning by amending the Act to dissolve Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and to ensure that the assets, rights and liabilities of RMS are transferred to Transport for NSW; it will actually bring them together.

Interestingly, this was the approach that we took to the last election. I am glad to see that the Liberal Party is taking on some of our policies. We believe that there should be improved coordination between roads and transport planning. We need to provide quality infrastructure where and when it is needed and we obviously need an integrated transport cluster to do that. Of course we want to make sure that workers are not left worse off as a result of this merger and I understand we will be moving some amendments in the other place to ensure that is the case.

What is critical is that road planning needs to be done in a more coordinated fashion. We take the view, as the evidence demonstrates, that building more large motorways encourages more people to drive. It is called induced demand. It is a well-known phenomenon around the world. People pull down motorways around the world—because when supply is increased the demand will follow. People transition out of other modes of transport and onto the road network. We do not believe we should encourage more people to drive. It locks them into expensive tolls, which fleeces the people of western Sydney in particular, and also ensures a car-dependent urban sprawl type of city.

We know that motorways promote urban sprawl and car dependence and high transport costs. We believe focus should be on public transport first. If we do move to road investment, it needs to be tested against public transport options. We have heard talk of the F6. There is a Cabinet directive that is specifically against comparing that to public transport options. It is a test. Regardless of what happens with this coordination or dissolution, we need to rigorously test every transport proposal that comes before us. We know that public transport should come first but, sadly, we have seen such a focus on motorways that it has undermined people's confidence in RMS—at least in my community—and now Transurban.

In a recently published article in *The Conversation*, Dr Christopher Stanton of the University of Sydney identified that almost \$23 billion worth of cash and public assets, enabling work and incentives have been poured into WestConnex. That needs to be addressed by the Government. It is not free because motorists pay for it. The enabling works are incredibly expensive, not to mention the toll cashback and the vehicle registration cashback scheme, which is pouring money into the pockets of Transurban. It is a huge reallocation of funds from the public sector to the private sector and that includes the multibillion-dollar airport connection that was originally part of the justification for WestConnex. That was dropped but has been taken on by the public sector. The bill has a lot of merit. I believe there is something positive at the heart of it.

Debate interrupted.

Public Interest Debate

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that farmers and rural communities are doing it tough right across New South Wales as they deal with the worst drought on record.
- (2) Notes the Government and Parliament are committed to supporting farmers for as long as it takes.

I thank the House for the indulgence to talk about the issue of drought across New South Wales. I know I have spoken a number of times about the impact of the devastating dry that we are having across New South Wales, as have other members of Parliament who are based in rural areas. Since records have been kept, it is officially the worst drought our State has ever experienced. As of today 95.2 per cent of the State is officially in drought, which is one of the top three drought categories: drought affected, drought or, ultimately, severe drought. It is an issue that impacts everyone, not only country people, farmers, small business people and their families. It is really testing the social fabric and cohesion of a number of our communities and their viability. Drought is a critical issue for everyone in New South Wales and, I believe, Australia.

If we do not get relief in the form of long, drenching rains in the spring season, even people in Sydney will begin to see very clearly the effects of this drought. It will affect them in their hip pockets and by way of further water restrictions. I note the water Minister has just entered the Chamber and I am sure she will cover that issue later in the debate. This drought is officially the longest we have experienced and the most severe. The lack of rainfall means the soil moisture profiles are completely depleted and in many parts of our State, particularly the northern areas, we have missed a third winter crop. The south of the State will also lose another winter crop unless follow-up rains are forthcoming soon.

Unfortunately, the forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology is grim. There is reduced likelihood of average rainfall over the next three months and realistically there is nothing that would give anyone on the land or in rural New South Wales any great hope looking forward as far as Christmas. But miracles do happen. Every day many people—not only members in this Chamber but also people on the land and in our communities—are looking to the sky in the hope that things will break and they will find themselves under a storm. The impact of this drought has been enormous, not only on agriculture production but also on the New South Wales economy.

Since the 2018-19 financial year the drought is estimated to have cost the New South Wales economy over \$5.7 billion. Total employment across rural New South Wales has also been drought affected with an estimated 20,000 fewer full-time equivalent jobs in the 2019-20 financial year. Those of us on both sides in this Chamber and on the crossbench who live in rural areas know that there is not a single town—certainly that I have been to, and I doubt there would be one—in country New South Wales that has not seen a number of struggling businesses either close their doors or lay off a number of employees. Unfortunately, that is just the nature of the devastating impacts of this drought.

The slaughter rates in this State for cattle and sheep in particular have never been higher, and whilst commodity prices are still relatively high for stock that are in good condition the big problem is that we are kicking that sort of problem down the road. As farmers choose to make business decisions that see them destock—either reducing stock to core breeders or getting rid of all stock on their place—to get a financial return now, assuming stock are in reasonable nick, the big problem will come when the season turns around and they have a property but no stock and they may have no money or they may have maxed out their equity to buy back into the market. You do not need to be in rural New South Wales or even be a farmer to know that as soon as the season turns around prices will absolutely skyrocket.

The most sobering statistic of all in the economics of drought is that the current fiscal year forecast for the current financial year is that all farm profits across the State will reduce by almost 200 per cent compared with 2016-17. Not only are these farms not productive, but they also cost farmers money—if they are breeders or croppers they are eating into their equity to keep hold of their property just to keep things afloat in the hope that things will turn around. The only thing keeping many of these people in the game is that at the same time as this has been happening, in some cases their property values have gone up, which gives them a little bit of extra equity to play with with their banks.

At this point I will say something nice about the banks for once. All the financial institutions have been quite flexible in working with farmers. At this stage I am not aware of any financial institutions foreclosing on any farmers. I thank the financial industry for being understanding to this point and working with our farmers. The Government has responded to this drought as it should, and it will continue to respond in spades. A \$1.8 billion package is on the table and there will be more to come. This is a situation that affects everyone in the State; it is devastating. We will continue as a Parliament and a Government to stand with our farmers.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:07): I draw the attention of the House to the slight change made by the Minister to the wording of the motion, which I support and endorse. There was a little bit of concern about the motion because the Government was saying that the New South Wales Government is committed to our farmers. We were preparing to move an amendment to say that it was all members of Parliament. The Minister essentially did that by saying it is the New South Wales Government and the Parliament. All members of Parliament care deeply about this issue. We want a better outcome in this very complex and dire situation we find ourselves in.

Last week I had the terrific good fortune to travel up through Dubbo, into Bourke and across to Brewarrina, Walgett and Moree, down to Narrabri and back down to Cessnock. I saw a lot of dry land and I met a lot of wonderful people. The drought is not just about effects on the land. I met with mayors, general managers, irrigators and community groups. There is so much to be understood about the impact the drought is having in the towns, on farming communities and businesses. While a significant portion of the local economy might be driven by agriculture, if the work is not there because there is no rain and no water, the money is not there; and if the money is not there people are not putting money back into the economy.

I heard one story of how one of those drought-affected towns is losing all of its builders, electricians and plumbers because no-one is working in agriculture and people do not have money to spend on renovations or extensions, or to build new homes. Those young tradesmen and tradeswomen are taking their families and leaving town. Some of those towns have lost 20 per cent or 30 per cent of their population. Imagine a population of 1,800 people dropping down to 1,200—that is an enormous drop. Young families have taken their kids out of school and have left, and they may never go back. But they have to find work, they have to go somewhere where someone is building and constructing because that will put money in their pocket so that they can put a roof over the head and put food on the table. You can understand the imperative for them to leave these towns.

That then changes the whole social dynamic within those communities. If a town has a population of 1,800 and 600 people leave—a significant portion of them being working people—a town is left with a different balance of people who are working, and people who are relying on welfare benefits and support from different government agencies to get by. In some of the main streets in those towns, unfortunately, some of the business entities that are thriving, or surviving at the very least, are government agencies. There is a significant portion of welfare support in the economics of those communities.

This is all troubling because it means that when the rain does come and when the waters do flow the problems of those communities will not be entirely solved: There may be an intergenerational legacy of this current drought, not only for stock and fodder but also for the social fabric of the communities in those places. It is indeed a tough time and there is nothing we can do in this Chamber to make it rain. We need to support those communities in any way, shape or form we can. I asked one of the mayors and the general managers I spoke to what the New South Wales Parliament, a Treasurer or a government could do to support them. They were seeking stimulus packages for local councils so that they can put some of their local tradesmen and tradeswomen to work and not have to lay off some of their workers.

They are always the largest groups of employees in those local communities and the councils want to keep the workers they have employed; they want to try to bring in some extra employment for some of the other workers so that they can give them a wage to get them by and give them some productive times—whether that means a little bit of money for a small footpath project or rebuilding some grandstands at the local showground or something like that. We all have to stand together united to support these communities—not only the farmers but also the communities at large—across the benches, the crossbenches and the whole lot. I thank the member for his motion today. I recognise that there are a lot of hard yards ahead of us, but we will do it together.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:12):

I acknowledge this important motion and I also acknowledge the very sincere way in which the member for Cessnock just addressed the Chamber. I genuinely look forward to working with him—our side with his side—to build infrastructure and dams across regional New South Wales. I acknowledge that the member for Cessnock went on a big road trip and saw a lot of communities doing it tough. I am glad that he is working with us to provide some solutions. I also highlight some concerns I have in relation to some criticisms around the Wentworth to Broken Hill pipeline, a pipeline for which we allocated \$500 million, but which came in under that amount.

I share with the House some conversations that WaterNSW, the deliverer of that pipeline, had with the Broken Hill community. Of those surveyed, 81 per cent rated the water quality before the pipeline as bad; now 74 per cent say the water is good. Four hundred residents who were polled support what the Government did just in the nick of time to deliver water to that community in March, and credit goes to former Minister Niall Blair in achieving that goal. However, I will call out some behaviour of the member for Barwon and the independent MLC Justin Field because it questions their integrity. We have delivered that pipeline, yet those members have been using that pipeline to belittle and demean what we achieved. They, particularly Justin Field, gave the names of my staff to news outlets—staff who have been helping the community and staff who met on a number of occasions with Mr Field.

I am very disappointed in that behaviour because we acted with honour and integrity and that has not been reciprocated. Importantly, I note that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party leader Robert Borsak has threatened to never support the Berejiklian Government again. What does that mean for the member for Barwon, the member for Murray and the member for Orange? Will they block every piece of legislation and reform on water? Is that what they are proposing? I am sure their communities would like to know about that. I also point out that the crossbench are divided. The member for Murray wants the South Australian Lower Lakes to return to their natural saltwater state—a very worthy plan. However, the member for Barwon has been down to Adelaide just this week speaking to the ABC—

Mr Chris Minns: He went to Adelaide? Shame! He has gone to Adelaide.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The member for Kogarah will not be on the side of New South Wales. The member for Kogarah is on the side of China. It is very important to highlight—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I am on the side of New South Wales. I am on the side of Australia. The member for Kogarah is on the other side. I am very disappointed. The member for Kogarah does not have New South Wales' interests at heart. In a very important talk with the ABC the member for Barwon said he did not think the criticism of South Australia is justified. Forgive me for not having a clear picture of exactly what it is those in the Shooters party want; I do not think they know themselves. We on this side are on team New South Wales. We want water infrastructure. We are supporting those communities with \$1.8 billion infrastructure to ensure that we get through this drought.

South Australia must lift its game and meet its obligations under the Murray Darling Basin Authority. The Deputy Premier and I are calling for it to do so. It is not appropriate for a member of New South Wales Parliament to say that any criticism of South Australia is unjustified. New South Wales is in drought. As I noted in question time today, it is the most severe drought ever recorded in New South Wales. Over the past two years dam levels have dropped 0.4 per cent per week—50 per cent greater than in the Millennium drought. Over the past 18 months storage levels have dropped 30 per cent across New South Wales; the rate of water depletion is unprecedented. The official climate forecast released by the Bureau of Meteorology continues to indicate a higher chance of drier than average conditions across New South Wales into spring. We will stand beside New South Wales and our communities. [*Time expired.*]

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:17): I thought this was going to be a bit of a love-in where we could actually talk about supporting farmers. I did not realise it was going to be an attack on political parties. Regional members well know that farming is a precarious occupation in this day and age. Six days after I started in this Parliament we had massive super storms and floods, and January last year was the driest year in my electorate since 1932. On behalf of my constituents I have been meeting with different Government members—I even met with Scot MacDonald, the former Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter—the member for Port Stephens and our local Federal member. We asked if we could get some tankers from the emergency services because some farmers in our area cannot water their vegetable crops. We have dairy farmers who cannot flush their irrigation equipment. We also have some people who are just not able to get any drinking water.

We made representations to all the appropriate Ministers. We got a speedy response—after 4½ months— from the former Minister for Primary Industries saying, "Sorry, we cannot help you." Pretty sad.

We want to work with the Government. We will do whatever we can to help the people in our State. A lot of members on this side of the House have been visiting regional New South Wales. I have been to Lismore, Murwillumbah, Tweed, Coffs Harbour, Nambucca and Casino, and before that I was in Gloucester, Clarence, Kempsey, Macksville and Wauchope. I have been continually talking to farmers in those communities. Before the election I was at Moree, Armadale, Guyra and Inverell. When I was shadow Minister for Small Business I went into those communities and I saw small business owners struggling. Inverell lost 13 shops in the two weeks before I arrived and on the day I arrived after the Tingha fires they lost another two. There is just not enough support for them. We need to do more for our communities.

I remember living in Walcha as a young woman. I had to shop in Armidale because the shops in Walcha did not have what you wanted. That is exactly what is happening now. People from Inverell have to go to Armidale for things they used to be able to get in town. What happens when they get to Armidale? They do not see anyone they know, their friends or neighbours. They do not have that incidental caring, incidental counselling and support. All they get from those opposite is a counselling number. The Government is not adequately supporting those communities and we need to do more. The people in the bush are talking about the billions and billions of dollars being spent on infrastructure in Sydney and they are not getting it in their communities. Every time they see a crane in the sky over Sydney they are worried. All they see is their chance at a life for their children and their families—

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Their stock and crops are dying while this Government focuses on Sydney. We need to do so much better. We will not do it by picking on members who are standing up for their communities. As members of Parliament we represent all of New South Wales and we should all work together for drought relief. The Government has not moved quickly enough. We know that and they know that. It should have done more; its lack of action is embarrassing. Last year 13,000 people in my electorate signed a petition to get more relief from this Government. It just has taken too long. Mick Veitch, the former shadow Minister for Primary Industries, and I were holding roundtables about this in December 2017. This Government needed to do more. This drought will not get solved by thoughts and prayers for rain. It certainly will not be solved by those opposite taking pot shots against the Chamber.

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

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:22): I speak about the action that occurs in my electorate of Albury.

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

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: We must work to support our farmers in this drought. Across this Chamber we share an understanding that primary production is the lifeblood of rural and regional communities in our State. We all acknowledge that this drought is prolonged and widespread, and that rainfall totals are well below the average. I see firsthand in my electorate the challenges our farmers, their families and regional communities face. The NSW State Seasonal Update for July 2019 shows that the Albury electorate is categorised as "drought affected and intensifying". The part to the west is "recovering" and recent winter rains have meant that we are better placed than the north-west of the State.

My conversations with communities in our area—Boree Creek, Walbundrie and Holbrook—show that there is potential for this season, but there is a real requirement for a spring to capitalise on what was generally a tough year. Parts of southern New South Wales have benefited from higher rainfall totals. However, the region is highly dependent on follow-up rainfall. Unfortunately, at the end of July the official climate outlook released by the Bureau of Meteorology continues to indicate a reduced likelihood of receiving rainfall across New South Wales for the next three months.

We acknowledge and share an understanding of the importance of the drought. Our Government is responding. Both the water Minister and the agriculture Minister have announced that the Liberal-Nationals Government will supply almost \$1.8 billion in drought assistance, including the \$1 billion Farm Innovation Fund. This Government has provided \$358 million in low-interest Farm Innovation Fund loans to 2,129 farmers to improve on-farm infrastructure and drought resilience. Our local NSW Farmers representative, Daniel Brear, tells me that this assistance in the Albury electorate has helped and is appreciated. It is worth noting that financial aid directed to agriculture benefits the communities that receive that assistance.

Money is often spent locally and has flow-on benefits right back to government. There is a demonstrated impact on associated small business such as contractors and shearers. Those are the words used by people on the ground in my electorate today. Our support also recognises that keeping stock as healthy as possible is one of the key ways we can support our farmers. This is why we have funded fodder transport subsidies that fully cover the

cost of donated fodder transport. We have also disbursed a total of \$68 million in drought transport subsidies to more than 9,000 farmers. These subsidies cover up to 50 per cent of the cost of transporting fodder, water and stock.

There are also other measures on offer for farmers, their families and regional communities. We have put on the table \$100 million to cut the cost of farming, including waivers for Local Land Services rates and fixed water charges. Farmers in Jerilderie tell me how important it is to waive these Local Land Services rates. We have also announced a \$170 million dollar package to stimulate local businesses and subsidies for preschool payments for drought-impacted families. I am pleased to inform the House that as at 18 August 2019 more than \$12 million in drought assistance had been approved in the Albury electorate.

It is important to recognise that despite the dry conditions New South Wales is still home to some of the best food and fibre in the world, reflecting the innovation, determination and resilience of our farmers. Our local NSW Farmers representatives tell me that local farmers have been encouraged by the stance taken by the Deputy Premier and water Minister in support of New South Wales at the recent ministerial council. We must put New South Wales farmers at the forefront of our minds as we chart the course on water and drought. I remain committed, as do all members on this side of the House, to standing side by side with regional New South Wales, and providing the support and assistance our farmers and their families need.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:27): I acknowledge the hardship of rural and regional families as they deal with what is known as the worst drought that we have seen in New South Wales. In this State we have not seen a drought such as this for more than 100 years. There is no doubt that it will last. It has been classed as a major drought event—99 per cent of the State is in drought. Some areas in the Murray-Darling Basin are experiencing the lowest soil moisture levels on record and almost all of the State is below average, very much below average or the lowest on record. This drought is unprecedented. There is no doubt it is affecting our regional and rural communities in a serious way.

The member for Cessnock certainly expressed how it is important that we think about the broader community and make sure that the New South Wales Parliament does not ruin rural communities by providing incorrect support. Farmers and rural communities are key contributors to our economy, with Aussie farmers exporting almost \$45 billion in 2016-17. They export over 77 per cent of what they grow and produce on the land. However, the drought has hit these farmers hard and many are waiting to see if there will be rain over the next six weeks. If there is not there will be another season of no crops. It is incredibly sad. We have heard many sad stories from regional and rural communities, and our thoughts are with those families who are struggling terribly.

Natural events such as drought have an extremely significant effect upon our regional communities as a whole. It is not just jobs at the farm gate. It is job losses that we see in the towns, in the food processing factories and in community services. There are industries across this State that rely heavily on water. Let me look towards those many abattoirs that are scattered throughout this State employing up to 10,000 workers. Those workers are concerned: If they do not have a job where are they going to live and how are they going to support their families? It is important to remember that we must support all of our workers in rural New South Wales. We know the mining industry creates and generates incredible economic support for this State and we also know the amount of water that the industry uses.

We must make sure we support workers in rural communities to prosper and grow. Our local councils are finding it difficult to fix roads because they do not have the water that is a necessary component for roads to be built across the State. Earlier this year I visited Condobolin to view the site for a new nickel mine. The mine is set to bring hundreds of jobs to Condobolin, but of course, given the drought and the lack of water, it too is at risk. We must keep local jobs in local towns. What we do not need to do is to cut public service jobs. I advise the House that between 2011 and 2016 New South Wales public service jobs shrank across regional New South Wales: 9.3 per cent in Cootamundra, 3.3 per cent in Barwon, 3.3 per cent in Murray and 1.1 per cent in Bathurst. This cannot continue.

We have to make sure as a Parliament that the Government stops attacking public sector workers. It is critical to retain the nurses and teachers, and other public service jobs in rural and regional areas to ensure the communities continue to prosper. If we do not offer those jobs the communities will collapse—it will be on our heads if that occurs. The Government must commit to retaining critical public service jobs in regional and rural towns across New South Wales. Today we heard from the Premier and the energy Minister that there is no guarantee that the Essential Energy jobs will be saved—putting a halt on something is not a guarantee. They skirted around the question and unfortunately more regional and rural jobs are now at risk. This Government must guarantee those workers will have a job at Christmas.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:33): I am flattered that the member for Oxley is following my movements. I am more than happy for the Minister to travel the length and breadth of the Murray-Darling Basin

with me at any time to gain a better understanding of the situation. I am happy to go with her. This drought is breaking records, pushing families and communities to the brink, and it is getting worse. Farms that have never destocked in their hundred year plus history have sold all their livestock. Farmers that had enough hay in storage for years of drought have used their last bale. Some croppers have enough left for one last planting, one last roll of the dice and others have nothing left to start again. Farmers who have never complained, who have gotten on with the job and have put food on our tables are asking for assistance. When farmers cannot put in a crop, contractors, truck drivers and seed suppliers cannot turn a profit. Where is the help for these agriculture-related businesses?

This Government is not doing enough, we are not doing enough, this Parliament is not doing enough to support our farmers and farming communities. Many farmers and agriculture-related businesses in my electorate are facing financial ruin. There is simply not enough money circulating in our towns. I am taking phone calls from farmers' wives expressing very real fears about the wellbeing of their husbands—sadly, farmers in my electorate are taking their own lives. This is the reality in western New South Wales. It is time the Government provides immediate support to our farmers. It is time to stop focusing on drought preparedness and planning and the Government commending itself on the availability of more loans for farmers. When a person crashes a car, we do not send a team of planners to tell them how we will fix the road; we send emergency help. We need to make sure everyone is okay before we plan to prevent the next crash. That is the type of urgent response that is needed for this protracted drought.

This drought must be treated as a natural disaster. The Government must move beyond planning teams, go further than preparedness measures and start sending in immediate assistance. More loans and more debt for farmers is not the solution. Cash in people's pockets is the solution. More money in people's pockets means more money circulating in towns. It will allow our farming communities to gain a bit of a reprieve. People do not need cash for luxury items. They need money to pay their rego, buy fuel to get around and put food on the table. What we do not need to do is saddle farmers with more debt. That debt will hang over their heads when the drought breaks and slow recovery when we will need an accelerated recovery.

We can do five things to support farmers and farming communities: provide immediate rate relief through cash or local voucher rebates; provide cash grants to allow outstanding creditors to be paid; transition legacy loans into zero or low-interest loans; establish a resowing and restocking grant to allow farmers to show their commercial and government financiers that they have the capacity to generate income when rain returns; and provide financial support for employers to retain employees, for farm and local businesses to retain employees and their families in the local economy. This will allow a more rapid return to production when conditions change. This drought is not going anywhere. I would love it to rain. I would welcome biblical amounts of rain across the State, but we cannot make that happen. What we can do is ensure that we provide the right support for our drought-affected communities. I move:

That the motion be amended by inserting:

- (3) Demands the Government urgently injects cash into the most drought-affected communities including through immediate cash grants to allow cash creditors to be paid; cash rebates on local government rates; the transition of legacy loans; and the establishment of a resowing and restocking grant to allow farmers to show their commercial and government creditors a capacity to generate income when rain returns.
- (4) Urges the Government to lead the way by adopting these measures as policy and urges the Commonwealth Government to do the same.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:37): I seek leave to move an amendment.

Leave not granted.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (17:37): In reply: I thank the member for Cessnock, my colleague the Minister for Water, Property and Housing and the member for Oxley, the shadow Minister for Primary Industries and the member for Maitland, the member for Albury, the member for Swansea and the member for Barwon for their contributions to this very important discussion on drought. I wish to comment on a few of the points that were raised. The member for Maitland made a statement about the Government acting too late and she spoke about a roundtable that was held in 2017 by Labor. The State Government first acted on drought back in February 2015, with a \$300 million drought strategy. While the roundtable was held by the Opposition in 2017, the Government had already acted in February 2015.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Not in my community, Adam.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: I did not interrupt you. I did not say a word when you were speaking. I listened respectfully, so please do the same for me. In terms of the assistance that has been provided—and I acknowledge the comments of the member for Barwon and I thank him for them, because the member is genuine

about supporting his communities—wherever you go in regional New South Wales, everyone has an idea or a suggestion about how we can respond to drought. The challenge for governments is a difficult one, because no matter what government does or what levers it can pull, often it is never going to be enough. Droughts are a natural part of farming enterprise. You can prepare as much as you can, but sometimes unfortunately the conditions just beat you because your farming enterprise is not large enough, you do not have the economies of scale, you have used as much equity as you can to prepare as well as you can, but in the end the drought is just too much. It is too severe and you have exhausted all the resources at your disposal.

Governments have a role: drought transport subsidies, the Farm Innovation Fund, the Drought Assistance Fund, transport subsidies to charities, the Local Land Services rates, waiving fixed water charges, emergency town water—you name it. This Government has allocated \$1.8 billion to drought assistance. It is not all about preparedness; it is about assistance now and helping resilience for the next inevitable drought. Can governments do more? Of course they can, but the \$1.8 billion package is not all this Government is going to do. I have been to Canberra on a number of occasions to talk with the Commonwealth about working more collaboratively, rather than the Commonwealth going off and doing its thing and saying, "That is a State problem. You guys handle it yourselves." I do not think that is the most productive way. I commend the motion to the House and I thank all members for contributing to this important discussion. I am sure we will have many more discussions on this topic.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): The question is that the amendment of the member for Barwon be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes42
Noes47
Majority.....5

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Donato, Mr P
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Butler, Mr R
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dalton, Mrs H
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N
McDermott, Dr H
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
O'Neill, Dr M
Saffin, Ms J
Voltz, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McGirr, Dr J
Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Perrottet, Mr D
Preston, Ms R
Saunders, Mr D
Smith, Mr N
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Gulaptis, Mr C
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tuckerman, Mrs W
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Williams, Mrs L

Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Cotsis, Ms S

Henskens, Mr A

Amendment negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): The question is that the motion moved by the member for Northern Tablelands be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.*Private Members' Statements***SHELLHARBOUR SERVICE CENTRE**

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:50): I speak about inconvenience. Last Tuesday and today the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, the member for Kiama and former Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra who is in the Chamber, spoke publicly about how the Commonwealth Bank is failing its regional customers. I agree with him. The Commonwealth ATM in Bomaderry will shut down, a decision, which, in his own words, "will inconvenience locals particularly seniors, most of whom will now be forced to cross the river into Nowra to make ATM withdrawals". The Minister said this is another case of banks putting profits first and people last. I agree; it is a disappointment when banks put people last. But it is a disgrace when the New South Wales Government does the exact same thing.

Let me tell the Minister exactly how he and his Liberal team are putting Shellharbour last. Let me tell him about inconvenience. When my constituents want a new licence, where do they go? They go to another electorate. When my constituents want a seniors card, where do they go? They go to another electorate. When my constituents want a disability permit, where do they go? They go to another electorate. Every single day the Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales is the cause of inconvenience for all of my constituents. Every single day the Minister, the member for Kiama, and his crew put the people of Shellharbour dead last. Shellharbour is the only electorate in the Illawarra without a Service NSW centre. My constituents cannot access any vital or government services in my area.

My constituents pay their taxes so why do they miss out? Meanwhile the Minister for Customer Service has boasted about opening his 100th service centre in New South Wales. Yet two years ago the same careless Government shut down the Service NSW kiosk in Shellharbour. In fact, I am not sure whether the Minister even knows that in May he wrote to me, in his words, "no current plan to introduce an additional Service NSW" in my electorate. It might be slightly inconvenient for the Minister to see that we do not have even a single Service NSW centre to service the over 63,000 constituents in my electorate, let alone an "additional" one. To add to the disgrace of this Government, Minister Dominello then rambled in subsequent correspondence justifying why Shellharbour does not have a centre. He stated that Service NSW identifies potential locations based on the following factors: distance to the nearest centre, utilisation of the nearest centre and the estimated population growth of the region.

The figures provided by the Minister show that since 1 June 2018, more than 113,000 customers were served at the Warrawong Service NSW centre, more than 50,000 customers were also served at the Wollongong Service NSW centre and during this same period, over 31,000 customers were served at the Kiama Service NSW centre. That shows the utilisation. In relation to the distance, the neighbouring electorate of Wollongong has two centres only nine kilometres apart. Considering we have none, we also fulfil that requirement. Shame on this Government. It must be that Shellharbour does not have a significant estimated population increase. In June in Nyngan the Minister grinned when he opened his 100th Service NSW centre. He boasted how the bad old days of waiting are gone. He said that Service NSW centres are for everyone. But Nyngan, located in Barwon, has the highest rate of population decline in any electorate in New South Wales. According to the 2016 census, Barwon was the only electorate in New South Wales to record a decline, yet the newest Service NSW centre was built there.

Meanwhile, my electorate is bursting at the seams. Outside of Sydney, the West Dapto Urban Release is one of the largest growth areas in New South Wales. In the next decade over 50,000 additional people are expected in 19,000 new dwellings. The people of Shellharbour deserve a Service NSW centre and I will continue to demand it until their needs are met. Members on this side of the Chamber are committed to establishing a Service NSW

centre and to putting the people of New South Wales first. Unlike the member for Kiama, Opposition members do not just use words—they commit to action. Prior to the March 2019 election, NSW Labor vowed to open a Service NSW centre in Dapto. It stands by that commitment and I will continue to fight to ensure that the people of Dapto and West Dapto have access.

CITY OF LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:55): I congratulate the City of Liverpool and District Historical Society Inc on its sixtieth year since being founded in 1959. The historical society has been doing a wonderful job documenting the vibrant history of Liverpool, which dates back to 7 November 1810 when Governor Lachlan Macquarie founded the town and named it in honour of the then Earl of Liverpool. The Liverpool historical society was created by a small group of people from several Liverpool families such as the Fitzpatrick family, Collimore family, Rowe family, Kelly family, Hill family and Harvard family.

The founders' legacy has been upheld and passed down the generations. It is now preserved by the current President, Mr Glen op den Brouw, who has been doing an outstanding job. I thank him for his commitment to leading the City of Liverpool and District Historical Society. He is a very involved Liverpool resident and no-one doubts his passion and love for the area. Individuals like Mr op den Brouw are prominent in all successful communities—organising, motivating and bringing people together. Liverpool's historical society occupied several locations before its current location, including the old Liverpool Hospital/TAFE building, the now demolished Colonial Hall, the old Liverpool Courthouse and the Liverpool Bicentennial Museum. The historical collection boasts approximately 10,000 items of significance, accumulated over the decades leading up to the society's sixtieth anniversary, and is currently stored under the Liverpool City Library in Eber's Bunker.

The City of Liverpool and District Historical Society has posted some historic photographs on its website for the general public to view, including photos of the Liverpool Paper Mill taken in 1876, which has undergone significant change recently. It has become a community hub in Liverpool: a major precinct with a new restaurant complex and units. The website also features photos of Liverpool's first school house, Liverpool's Commercial Hotel and many photos of past residents, such as Richard Sadleir who was Liverpool's first mayor. The website provides a vivid timeline representing the local area's progress throughout the years. The timeline notes the construction of Liverpool's first school house in 1811, the locations where church services were conducted until the construction of St Luke's Anglican Church in 1818, the completion of the road from Liverpool to Sydney in 1813, the founding of the District Council of Liverpool in 1848, the opening of the "new" Liverpool Hospital in 1958, and the declaration of the City of Liverpool on 9 November 1960—great strides taken by one of the oldest urban settlements in Australia.

Recently I have been fortunate to have the Hammondville history exhibition on display in my Holsworthy electorate office, courtesy of the Liverpool historical society. The exhibition documents the development of Hammondville over the decades and the vision of Reverend Hammond who dedicated his life to helping people build a community that is still thriving today. I am proud to represent a local area with such a rich historical fabric. The Liverpool historical society holds regular events and meetings to help educate our community about its past. Events such as Conversation with Herb Taylor and his memories of Liverpool Motor Club, Insider Tour of Warwick Farm Racecourse, Insider Tour of Denham Court Church and Cemetery with Alan James, and an upcoming event on 24 August Guest Speaker: Pat Murray's Liverpool memories and photos. We also have John Paul Young coming in a few days' time. Those events are a crucial glue in our community, helping residents stay aware of the times and developments that made them who they are today.

The Liverpool historical society would not be as successful as it is today without the help of the many volunteers who are the lifeblood of the organisation. I thank them all for their contribution. I thank all the families who have gone out of their way to share their valuable family history and help build the society's archives to inform future generations of their stories of struggles, perseverance and victory. Again, I congratulate the Liverpool historical society's President, Mr Glen op den Brouw, and the fabulous volunteers on reaching that impressive milestone of 60 years of memories. I look forward to seeing what else the society will be able to achieve in the near future. I know that it will be documented and preserved by the society for many decades to come. With that in mind, I encourage all local residents to donate to the society. Hopefully, the society will have new premises soon so it can move out of the bunker—which literally is a bunker—and into a proper, purpose-built facility so it can be a successful society for years to come.

COWRA BREAKOUT COMMEMORATION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:00): Monday, 5 August 2019, marked 75 years since the cold stillness of a Cowra night was shattered by the clarion call of a bugle. The prisoner-of-war camp in the town at the north-east corner of the Cootamundra electorate was about to witness the largest prison escape of World War II. Number 12 Prisoner of War Compound was a major prisoner-of-war camp where 4,000 Axis military

personnel and civilians were detained. In early August 1944 a decision was made to split the prisoners and send low-ranking soldiers to Hay.

This decree caused strong resentment, leading to secret meetings among prisoners. A vote was taken; a course of action chosen. And so, in the early hours of a Saturday 75 years ago, hundreds of Japanese prisoners of war rose up against the soldiers of 22nd Garrison Battalion and tried to flee. The Australians faced overwhelming force. The battalion was made up of mostly old or disabled veterans and young men who were considered physically unfit for service at the front line. Warning shots were fired in vain. Three mobs of screaming prisoners, armed with knives, baseball bats and nail-studded clubs, made their bid for freedom.

Privates Ben Hardy and Ralph Jones trained their Vickers machine gun on the escapees, but they were soon overwhelmed. They were two of the four Australian soldiers lost in the escape and ensuing manhunt. Crucially, Private Hardy disabled the machine gun as his dying act, and the bravery of the two men that night was recognised posthumously with the George Cross. Within 10 days of the breakout, all survivors were recaptured—359 had escaped and others had taken their own lives or had been killed by their countrymen. The final death toll stood at 231 Japanese soldiers and four Australians. No civilians were harmed. The leaders of the breakout had ordered the escapees not to attack any residents of Cowra and the soldiers complied.

The dead from the breakout were buried in what became the Japanese War Cemetery, the only such cemetery in Australia. They rest alongside their countrymen who were shot down over northern Australia and civilian internees who died in Australia during the war. At first the cemetery was tended on an informal basis by members of the Cowra RSL Sub-Branch as a mark of respect for the fallen soldiers. That kind and respectful decision, made at a time when sentiments remained strong, sowed the seeds for an ever-growing relationship between Cowra and Japan.

Strengthening that bond, the cemetery land was ceded to Japan in 1963 and eight years later Cowra proposed a Japanese garden to celebrate the growing link. The Japanese Government agreed to support the development as a sign of thanks for the respectful treatment of Japan's war dead. Cowra is now home to an absolutely stunning garden, designed by world-renowned architect Ken Nakajima. Its manicured hedges, waterfalls, streams, lakes, and a traditional Edo cottage provide wonderful serenity and a place of calm reflection that annually draws more than 40,000 visitors from Japan and Australia. The five-hectare garden, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere, is complemented by a cultural centre displaying Japanese artworks and artefacts. To celebrate the arrival of spring, each September Cowra hosts a cherry blossom festival as well as guided tours and talks focusing on Japanese landscape design. The Festival of International Understanding broadens Cowra's desire to forge overseas bonds, with a different country providing the theme each year.

Cowra is the keystone in the arch that has been built between Japan and Australia following the war, and no more so than commemoration of the breakout. A partial re-enactment of the event was signalled by Cowra farmer Gordon Rolls, whose father, Private Alfred James Rolls, had been the sentry who fired the first shots to alert his mates. The sole remaining survivor of that night made the journey back to where he had been as a 23-year-old and had decided that he would rather die than remain a prisoner of war. But the message that the now 98-year-old shared on his return was simple and powerful. He said:

I don't want any young person to do the things we have done.

Cowra has devoted much of its passion and energy into building positive relationships with our neighbours across the seas. The community has taken a tragedy and converted it into a power for positive change. It has worked hard, and has been persistent and successful. I congratulate mayor Bill West, the Cowra Shire Council and the Cowra Breakout Association on working so hard to create four days of remembrance, celebration and reflection.

FERRAGOSTO CELEBRATIONS

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans)
(18:05): Last Sunday, 18 August, marked the twenty-second anniversary of the Ferragosto Street Fair in my electorate. The fair was held on Great North Road in Five Dock. It was a pleasure to represent the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, at the event. I also acknowledge the other distinguished guests in attendance including Mayor of Canada Bay Councillor Angelo Tsirekas, Federal member for Reid Dr Fiona Martin, Italian senator Dr Francesco Giacobbe and Canada Bay councillors. In Italy, Ferragosto is a public holiday celebrated on 15 August. It is a huge celebration throughout the country that marks the peak of Italian summer when many Italians go on vacation. Italians celebrate Ferragosto by attending church, sharing a big meal with family and friends and then visiting the town centre, or piazza, where there is usually a concert or an outdoor festival such as a street fair.

It is estimated that Ferragosto has been celebrated since the year 18 BC when Emperor Augustus created a holiday, Feriae Augusti or the festivals of Augustus, to provide a period of rest after the harvest. Ferragosto is also a religious holiday as it coincides with the feast of the Assumption of Mary. On Sunday the event began with

a procession, as a typical street fair in Italy would. It was very special to participate in the procession led by All Hallows church, Isole Eolie association and the Giuseppe Verdi Band along Great North Road. The Ferragosto Street Fair is organised by the City of Canada Bay Council and is proudly sponsored by the New South Wales Government, which has committed \$300,000 in funding over four years to support it.

The event is an opportunity for the community to celebrate what it is to be Italian—the culture, entertainment and cuisine. The success of Ferragosto is attributed to its inclusiveness: It is a celebration that is open to all. It is an opportunity for those of Italian heritage to continue a longstanding tradition. It is also an opportunity for those of varying cultural backgrounds to learn more about another culture or the area they live in. Such events build harmony and are so important in ensuring that New South Wales remains a thriving multicultural State. I pay tribute to the pioneers on council some 20 years ago, in particular former councillor Tony Fasanella and Councillor Michael Megna, and the Five Dock Chamber of Commerce—the Ferragosto Street Fair was their brainchild.

The first Ferragosto in Five Dock started on the back of a ute in the Waterview Street car park. Today the Ferragosto Street Fair draws over 100,000 people to Great North Road. It has now become one of the best and most loved street fairs in the State and, in fact, one of the most prominent Italian events in the country. With more than 300 stalls, this event offers it all—food, merchandise, dance, comedy and music performances, fashion shows, children's activities, cooking demonstrations, amusement rides and even Italian-manufactured cars and bikes on display.

There are more than 270,000 Italian Australians in New South Wales and the inner west has strong links with Italian culture. Five Dock is the perfect place to hold such an event. I am proud of our heritage. It is very special to celebrate Italian culture and traditions in this way. I acknowledge and thank General Manager of Canada Bay Council Mr Peter Gainsford, staff and elected representatives of the City of Canada Bay Council for their commitment to the wonderful event. Every year Ferragosto is marketed as the best yet and every year it gets bigger and better. The countdown is on for next year.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (18:09): It was Winston Churchill who coined the term "black dog" to describe his own depression. He popularised the phrase, "I've got a black dog on my back", referring to how depression would weigh him down and was never far away. In a nod to that famous origin, the black dog is also symbolically used as the logo for one of Australia's leading mental health organisations, the Black Dog Institute. The logo features a victory sign that casts the shadow of a black dog and provides a metaphor for a disorder that is lurking in the background constantly. It acknowledges that depression can indeed shadow the sufferer even when their mood is upbeat and victorious.

The logo carries a subtle message of hope to avoid any suggestion that you can simply pull yourself out of it. The concept walks the essential fine line by neither trivialising the black dog nor turning it into a monster. It also provides a talking point and a new way to help destigmatise a mental illness that many people experience. In fact, one in 20 Australians is affected by depression each year. The World Health Organization estimates that depression will be the number one health concern by 2030. It was with this in mind that I hosted my latest Mental Health Matters forum in July entitled Depression: Living With The Black Dog. A staggering 170 people braved a cold evening to hear from a range of informative speakers, including one brave man, Mr Wayne Wigham, who shared his own lived experience with depression.

The evening was also an opportunity to connect with a range of local health service providers, ask questions and share information. The success of the evening followed on from my previous forums on young people and anxiety in 2017, and body image and eating disorders in 2018. I was proud to facilitate my latest forum in partnership with local mental health advocate Cheryl Paradella of Beautiful Minds, the Black Dog Institute, headspace Campbelltown and South Western Sydney Primary Health Network. Increasing our conversations about mental health can help break down stigma, raise greater awareness and inspire action. The time to act is now: Early intervention and access to treatment are essential to helping people with a mental illness.

We have certainly made progress when it comes to talking about mental health, but our journey continues to ensure that people in our community receive the level of care they deserve. Conversations about mental health should be as normal and everyday as conversations about physical health. We do not ever shy away from talking about diabetes, asthma or cancer, nor should we shy away from speaking about our mental health because it affects us all. Depressive disorders often start at a young age. They reduce people's functioning and are often recurring. For those reasons, depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide in terms of total years lost due to disability. Depression results from a complex interaction of social, psychological and biological factors, and can affect anyone from young people to seniors. It can cause the affected person to suffer greatly and function poorly at work, at school and in the family.

Signs and symptoms of depression include depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure in previously enjoyable activities, decreased energy, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep and/or appetite, poor concentration and thoughts of suicide. Moreover, depression often comes with symptoms of anxiety. Depression is treatable with psychological therapies or antidepressant medication, or a combination of these. In severe cases, biological treatments like electroconvulsive therapies can also be effective. A range of self-care strategies such as exercise, a healthy diet, relaxation techniques, good sleep hygiene and positive social connections have proven to assist people with depression. Importantly, as a society we must continue the conversation on mental health because mental health matters. A conversation is a simple act, but it can also be powerful enough to help save a life. Talking with others about issues that affect us, we realise that we are not alone, that our individual struggles are shared by many and that there are people who care and, importantly, that there are people who can help.

Delivering support services, fostering empathy and providing programs that encourage connections with the community are all ways to help people with mental illness to live their full potential. We must act urgently. More Australian teenagers are in severe psychological distress than five years ago. Every day at least six Australians die from suicide and a further 30 people will attempt to take their own life. Words are easy to speak; actions, however, speak volumes. I see the real and urgent need for action every single day in my electorate. That is why I am committed to raising awareness of mental health, it is why I will continue to host my Mental Health Matters forums and it is why I will do all I can to continue the important conversation on mental health—because mental health matters. It matters to me and it matters to us all.

DUBBO ELECTORATE TOURISM

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:14): As a proud advocate for the Dubbo electorate, I speak today to commend some of the tourism leaders of our region. Recently the Great Big Adventure Pass was launched at the jewel in the crown of regional New South Wales tourism, Taronga Western Plains Zoo. The pass, which has been in development and planning for the past 18 months, will be available to purchase online from September and allows access to four attractions: the zoo, the new Royal Flying Doctor Service [RFDS] Visitor Experience, Old Dubbo Gaol and the Wellington Caves. This is another example of collaboration among organisations, and it will do terrific things for Dubbo and the wider central and western regions. I was interested to hear from Taronga Western Plains Zoo director Steve Hinks recently that, for the five-year period to December 2018, the average length of stay for visitors to the Dubbo local government area was 2.2 nights. They plan to increase that figure.

Tourism generates an estimated \$308 million for the Dubbo region annually and employs over 1,600 people. They plan to increase those figures as well. Tourism is a vital industry and one that truly benefits everyone, so the concept of those groups working together to keep people in the region for longer is one that I certainly endorse. Recently the Dubbo electorate was treated to a visit from my friend and colleague the Hon. Stuart Ayres, Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney. I was proud to take the Minister for a trip around the ever-developing Taronga Western Plains Zoo, where he got a firsthand look at what is being achieved not only in tourism but also in the area of animal conservation. I am looking forward to a visit from another colleague Minister for Energy and Environment Matt Kean, in the near future.

The wonderful thing about the Great Big Adventure Pass is that, while the zoo is the most well-known location on the ticket, it is complemented by three other amazing and unique attractions. The Royal Flying Doctors Service Visitor Experience, while yet to be opened, is an amazing complex that not only provides an insight into what the RFDS does, but also recognises those who make the service the Australian icon that it truly is. Minister Ayres was given a sneak peek inside the facility recently and to say he was blown away is an understatement. Dubbo Regional Council has also played a major role in the development of the Great Big Adventure Pass through the inclusion of two of its major attractions: the Old Dubbo Gaol and the Wellington Caves.

The gaol is a true step back in time and tells many tales about the history of the city, back to a time when hangings were commonplace and the pitch black of solitary confinement was a way of keeping prisoners in check. Through the hard work of the council and its employees, the gaol has taken on a new lease of life in recent years with the implementation of a range of new events and it is growing as a destination for those who visit our region. But it is not just all about Dubbo. About 45 minutes down the road we have the Wellington Caves—a wonderful natural attraction that is somewhat of a hidden gem in the Central West tourism scene. However, it is recognised around the world as an incredible megafauna site. Through this pass, opportunities for the Wellington Caves will continue to grow.

The Great Big Adventure Pass will include a special rate at each participating attraction and additional discounts at participating businesses. It is no secret—we have spoken about it today—that regional New South Wales is suffering as a result of the drought and, while the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is doing everything it can to help the bush, there is something everyone can do: take a trip to a country town or regional city. The Deputy Premier said it reasonably well recently when he encouraged people to go to Bathurst rather than Bali. I would clarify that a bit by encouraging people to go to Dubbo rather than Dublin, Mudgee rather than Munich,

or Narromine rather than Noumea, or to head to our local version of Wellington rather than crossing the ditch. The Central West of New South Wales is truly the best part of the best State in the best country in the world, so come and visit.

Many people deserve a huge amount of credit for making the Great Big Adventure Pass a reality. First, I thank Steve Hinks and his team at Taronga Western Plains Zoo, including Shallon McReaddie and Mandy Turner. It would have been easy for the zoo, as the big-ticket item of the region, to rest on its laurels and keep dominating. Instead, it has taken a look at the big picture and wants to be part of showing off what our region has to offer overall. Special credit also goes to Jamie Angus and Josie Howard from Dubbo Regional Council, who have overseen so many good things that have happened at the gaol and at the caves and who played a big role in having those sites included in the pass.

I also thank Katrina Williams from Dubbo Regional Council. Finally, I thank the Royal Flying Doctor Service, in particular Kendall Graham, Lyn Penson, Andy Moore and John Larkin—also known as "Larko". This new facility will be an absolute game changer, so well done to them all. I invite my colleagues in this place and the wider population to come and spend a few days in the Dubbo electorate, take up the Great Big Adventure Pass and experience what our region has to offer. It might be dry, but do not drive on by. Now is the perfect time to visit and support businesses, see the sights, stay a few nights and share experiences with your friends.

EAST HILLS CHARITY CAR SHOW

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:19): I recently attended a great event in the East Hills electorate—the East Hills Charity Car Show. Kelso Park in Panania hosted the show and, with the weather playing its part, it was a sensational day. The East Hills Charity Car Show has been held annually since 2015 and at each staging of the show the organising committee has conducted fundraising for a different charity. In previous years the car show has assisted the NSW Rural Fire Service, Kids with Cancer Foundation Australia, Prostate Cancer Foundation Australia and Angel Flight Australia. This year the East Hills Charity Car Show raised funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association of NSW. At any one time in Australia around 2,000 people are affected by motor neurone disease, with around 800 Australians dying from the disease each year. The Motor Neurone Disease Association provides information, support and education for people living with motor neurone disease as well as their families, friends and carers.

The East Hills Charity Car Show committee of Glen Waud, Ruth Le Bas, Richard Noonan, Kerry Jeffs, Douglas Walther, Stephen Julian and Peter Puntton selected the Motor Neurone Disease Association as their charity of choice this year because of local resident Rhonda Mealey. She had been a committed, long-term branch member since 1999 and had represented the branch for over 10 years as the women's council branch delegate. She was passionate about her area of East Hills and about the Liberal Party. She would put up her hand to help at election time, doing whatever needed to be done for the branch and the party. Rhonda died from motor neurone disease in November 2018 after a short battle.

I also have lost family and friends to this insidious disease. Robert Duckworth, my husband's uncle, was a fit and healthy man who passed away from the disease, as did one of my fellow Picnic Point High School students, Glenn Watts. Glenn was taken from this world far too early and left behind a young family. Motor neurone disease would seem to have no rhyme or reason, and I was very happy to help on the barbecue that day to assist in raising funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association. The East Hills Charity Car show committee presented Mr Graham Opie, the CEO of the Motor Neurone Disease Association of NSW, with a cheque for \$11,000. I thank all the car enthusiasts who came and displayed their pride and joy that day, and all the attendees and local residents who came along to have a stickybeak.

The show was a fascinating exhibition of motor cars. Visitors were able to get up close to an array of cars ranging from the 1920s right through to modern supercars. Awards were presented for many different categories and the winners were announced at a special presentation on the day. Each of the categories was sponsored by a local business and some of those sponsors included: Bennett Elder Smash Repairs, Pac Performance Racing, Just Sport, Paperway Products, Rincap Automotive, TAG Automotive, Carbotech, Solano's Smash and Restoration, Shannons Car Insurance, Panania Diggers, Panania RSL Soccer Club, and T&G Insurance Brokers—just to name a few. Without sponsors, events like the East Hills Charity Car Show certainly could not take place.

The stalls and live local entertainment were well received by those who visited. The car show was supported by a number of local musicians who added to the atmosphere, including Brett Green and a local band called MRS, which is short for Meat Raffle Support—best name for a band ever! MRS is comprised of Judex Jasmin, Russell Vincent and Gabby Gabriel. I recognise Ben who was looking after the Motor Neurone Disease Association stall. The stall was selling merchandise, raising awareness and promoting the research that is

being undertaken into motor neurone disease. The East Hills Charity Car Show is a highly worthy and well-received local event, and I wish it every success with future shows.

HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (18:24): Recently there was an extraordinary story in the *Newcastle Herald*. Twenty-seven-year-old Jessica McCourt received an urgently needed donor kidney thanks to the generosity of lifelong family friend Sharon Maskell and 12 complete strangers, as well as the ingenuity and skill of surgical teams around the country. Fourteen surgeries were performed, which enabled a complex organ swap. Seven people, including Jessica, got a new lease on life thanks to donor kidneys and seven people, including Sharon, gave one of the greatest gifts possible to give. I thank all those involved in the process, from the donors to the recipients, to the surgeons and support staff. I single out Jessica's surgeon, Dr Munish Heer, at the John Hunter Hospital. This story showcases the best of our health system—generosity, skill and the capacity for unmatched kindness.

Unfortunately, not every story is like Jessica's. Recently I was contacted by people who are on seemingly endless surgical waiting lists and whose conditions have been classed as "non-urgent". Those people are forced to languish for months—often in great pain with a vastly diminished quality of life—awaiting treatment. I share some of those stories with the House, stories that illustrate the crisis this has become. Steve came into my office in late June. His young son, Ryan, was diagnosed with a range of conditions, including autism, which renders him non-verbal. Ryan had been suffering from an ear infection for months, which was causing him great pain. Unfortunately, after the antibiotics failed, his doctor could not treat the condition properly. Ryan needs to be put under anaesthetic, as his autism—combined with anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder—makes physical medical intervention next to impossible. Ryan was put on a long waiting list because his case was considered non-urgent, and his condition is getting increasingly worse.

Not long after, Ian emailed about his issues with the public health system. Ian has bilateral cataracts and they were getting worse. As a disability support worker, he needs to drive for his job and was understandably concerned that unless his condition was treated very soon it would progress even further. Ian, who spends his working life helping other people, was in a vulnerable state and found himself on a long waiting list as his vision got progressively worse. In late July, Melissa told me about ongoing issues with her shoulder. She was on the waiting list to see an orthopaedic surgeon from 2014 to 2017, and was on the table at Belmont Hospital when the anaesthetist decided to cancel the surgery, deeming Melissa a high-risk patient. She finally received surgical treatment at the John Hunter Hospital but the planned arthroscopy became "manipulation under anaesthetic". This inevitably made her situation worse, resulting in her losing the use of almost all her shoulder. Melissa is a carer for her 79-year-old dad, is in great pain and still has months to wait before she can have her problem solved.

I made representations on behalf of all three people and, thankfully, both young Ryan's case and Ian's have been addressed. We are still waiting to find out what can be done to help Melissa. I worry how many people might be in a similar situation but do not know to reach out. The Government must look at these waiting lists seriously, and I hope that it attends particularly to waiting lists at the John Hunter Hospital and the Mater Hospital. Something needs to be done; action must be taken. New South Wales should have a world-class health system, and I want it to be that way. Let us fix this waiting list situation.

PICTON STONEQUARRY CREEK

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (18:28): On 5 June 2016 there was a once-in-a-generation rainfall event in Wollondilly shire. As a result, the flooding of the Stonequarry Creek caused a catastrophic event in the centre of Picton, with the main street engulfed by water. Picton was a scene of utter devastation after the wild weather saw the Stonequarry Creek break its banks, unleashing massive floodwaters onto the main street and town. Shattered business owners along Picton's main road, Argyle Street, cleared the remains of their stores and possessions, attempting to salvage what they could from the mess. Owners of La Crema Cafe, Sam and El Mileto, estimate that well over \$200,000 worth of damage was done to the building and equipment, as well as stock. They had outlaid considerable money to set up the business and were just starting to make it back and planning to reinvest. Sam is typical of all the business owners in the main street whose livelihoods were devastated.

The George IV Inn, which was built in 1835—it is one of Picton's most popular weekend hangouts for bike and motor enthusiasts and one of Australia's oldest pubs—was almost completely submerged by the storms. It took over two years for the inn to reopen. In addition, the local St Anthony's Catholic Parish Primary School was badly affected and was closed for the remainder of term. At St Mark's Anglican Church, Picton, over two metres of water caused extensive damage within the church building. Even today, Argyle Street business owners are fearful whenever heavy rainfall occurs. Local newsagent Tony Higgs has visited my electorate office to reinforce this, and just last week local resident Colin Essex spoke on behalf of many residents when he expressed growing concern about the lack of action from any level of government.

The creek is maintained by Wollondilly Shire Council. But since 2016 it has taken little action to maintain the creek and guard against future extreme storms. Studies and community consultations have been done, but as yet there has been little action to address the root cause of the flooding. During the recent election campaign I launched a petition calling on the New South Wales Government to assist Wollondilly Shire Council clean up Picton Stonequarry Creek. Treasurer Perrottet assisted me in launching the petition. The response was immediate, and many local residents and business owners rushed to sign the petition. Even today, shopkeepers in Argyle Street and others seek to sign the petition. My proposal is to reinvigorate Stonequarry Creek, which would require constructing a two- to three-metre wide pathway from the Picton Botanic Gardens, running alongside the Picton Stonequarry Creek towards Maldon, for recreational use and environmental protection.

Residents using the pathway will have the ability to inform Wollondilly council of extreme weed growth and tree damage in the area; they will be able to consult with council and let it know if things overflow. The Picton Stonequarry Creek requires serious clean-up work. This is important for the long-term financial viability of small businesses in Picton. Many business owners who have spoken to me are keen to invest but are reluctant to do so because of the current situation. The clean-up work requires the clearing of weed growth and logjams that caused the storm damage in 2016. This will assist with flood mitigation and protect businesses owners on Argyle Street, where the most damage was done.

The Government is planning considerable expenditure on flood mitigation work for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley. I call on it to allocate funds in the upcoming budget to assist Wollondilly Shire Council and local businesses to provide similar protection for the Picton area. This project will also have the additional benefit of giving the local community a valuable recreational resource. This issue is the single most important one to affect the town of Picton. I am sure that cooperation from Wollondilly Shire Council and local residents and financial support from the State Government will help to fix the problem.

PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER PAY EQUITY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:33): On 13 August I met with representatives of the Fairfield Teachers Association to discuss the pay equity of public school teachers. I will also attend a meeting on 26 August with the Blacktown Teachers Association to discuss this issue. This is a serious issue affecting the hundreds of teachers in the Prospect electorate and thousands throughout New South Wales. These teachers dedicate their time and energy to making sure that the public schools in Prospect are able to educate our children and equip them with the skills necessary for the rest of their lives. It is the dedication of our teachers that ensures students at Prairiewood High School achieve outstanding academic results. It is the teachers who ensure that Bossley Park High School can support the refugee community in Prospect and help them to integrate into Australian life. Teachers are the ones who ensure that our schools such as Girraween Public School can cater to our multicultural communities and act as a community hub. There are many other examples of the outstanding work of our teachers throughout the electorate.

New South Wales teachers do not enter the profession for the money; they do it because they care about the children in their charge. Our teachers are working to ensure that the students who are the future of our State have the best possible education. To me, this makes it even more abhorrent that they are being paid unfairly. The 2016 introduction of standards based remuneration for teachers in New South Wales has led to significant inconsistencies in pay for teachers employed before and after this change. Teachers employed before 2016 are now paid less than those who were employed after 2016, despite being more experienced and often mentoring the new teachers. The transition to this new pay scheme has led to a disparity in the pay for teachers at all New South Wales government schools. Teachers initially employed under the common incremental salary scale prior to 2016 are, in many cases, now being paid less than those who started work after 2016.

The NSW Teachers Federation had been trying to work with the NSW Department of Education and with the Hon. Rob Stokes, MP, former Minister for Education. This was to no avail because the department and former Minister were unwilling to budge from the rigid wage cap imposed on New South Wales public servants, including our important teachers. The unwillingness of this Liberal Government and its education department to negotiate in good faith with the NSW Teachers Federation to address an obviously unfair system of wage setting for our teachers is simply not good enough. Our teachers work hard every day to ensure that our children have the best possible education and opportunities in life. We owe it to them to ensure that they are paid fairly for the work they do.

I call on the Berejiklian Government to stop hiding behind the Public Sector Wages Policy and to work constructively with the NSW Teachers Federation to address this issue and ensure that teachers are paid fairly and equitably for the work they do. All independent schools have already moved to fix a similar issue with their teachers. They made the choice to transition all teachers employed after 1 January 2014 directly to standards based remuneration, and the Berejiklian Government should do the same. All our public school teachers should be

treated fairly and paid based on their experience, not on whether they were employed before or after the pay structures were changed.

This is an opportunity for the new Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC, to show that she can work constructively with our teachers and in the best interests of New South Wales children. This is an opportunity for the State Government to show that it cares about those whom we entrust to educate our children. Teachers in Prospect deserve more than excuses; they deserve to be paid fairly for the work they do. This issue can be resolved as soon as the Berejiklian Government accepts the pay inequality among our teachers. This important matter should have been resolved as soon as the NSW Teachers Federation raised it. It must be resolved now so that our teachers do not continue to be underpaid.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN DIVALL

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:38): I pay homage 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. Mr Divall was Goulburn born and bred. Busy with milk runs and paper runs before and after school, Mr Divall was entrepreneurial at a young age. John Divall started a fruit business growing potatoes at Taralga and Crookwell and sold that 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 coming back to Goulburn with an empty truck, and so figured that he might as well bring produce back with him and sell it. Initially he did this from the back of his truck. He later established Divall's Fruit Shop in Bourke Street with his brother Peter.

In 1969 John and his wife, Rose, bought land containing a small quarry on Carrick Road. The quarry had been running as a small concern for about 30 years before its acquisition by John. John and Rose moved the family to the farm and saw an opportunity to develop the land and the quarry, and so the Divall's Earthmoving and Bulk Haulage business began. On the back of the success of his farm and the earthmoving business, John was able to expand his pastoral interests to Stockinbingal and West Wyalong. John was also a member of his local NSW Rural Fire Service brigade for over 50 years, after joining in 1969. In 2017 he was honoured for his long service and commitment to the community. He was also a long and fervent supporter of the Goulburn Crescent School.

Mr Divall's foresight, intelligence, generosity and kindness to the Goulburn community will be greatly missed. He leaves a wonderful, proud legacy to his wife, Rose, and their children, Jacquie, Mick, Kim and Andy. The family business currently employs over 250 people in the Goulburn electorate. The Divall businesses are major contributors within the Goulburn economy but they also contribute to social organisations and many charities throughout the region. They are known for their generosity and community spirit, which is strongly reflected in the community sentiment expressed since John's passing. It makes me proud to be the member representing such a supportive community, and the community will be forever grateful for the contributions made by Mr John Divall.

NEWCASTLE CYCLIST SAFETY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:40): In Newcastle we are getting pretty used to being let down by this Government. Our buses were sold and our public transport network suffered. Our port was flogged off and our hopes for a high-intensity container terminal were left in tatters. Our highly anticipated cruise ship terminal now seems nothing more than a pipedream. However, the propensity for this Government to pull the rug from underneath the people of Newcastle is not new. Let me go back to a confidential cabinet document dated December 2013 that discussed the preferred route for Newcastle's light rail. It stated:

As light rail along the rail corridor is located away from cars, buses and other on-road transport, this option avoids the need to make changes to traffic signals, on-street parking, taxi stops, loading zones or planned, separated cycleways on Hunter Street.

The Government ignored that advice at greater cost to the taxpayers and greater inconvenience to future users, all to buddy up to their developer mates. The light rail has been constructed but the Government completely forgot to plan for active transport and cycleways as part of the \$700 million light rail project. Almost six years on from that document, the effects of that villainy are still being felt. But I am not talking about inconvenience or expense; I am talking about the safety of cyclists.

The following are a few headlines from the *Newcastle Herald*: from 16 November 2018, "Cyclists say mounting Hunter Street accident toll a clear sign of a major problem"; from 21 March 2019, "Cycleways advocate says funding needed for dedicated paths in Newcastle following fatality"; from 11 July 2019, "Cyclist dies of head injuries after accident on the light rail tracks in Newcastle"; from 27 July 2019, "Bike riders call for better cycleway network after two deaths in Newcastle CBD"; and from 31 July 2019, "Newcastle cafe owners have seen at least 10 cycling crashes at light rail 'problem' intersection". Those headlines go back nine months but the accidents date back to the removal of barricades around the light rail construction zone and reopening of Hunter Street to traffic.

That is almost 12 months of abrasions, almost 12 months of broken bones, almost 12 months of proven dangerous conditions for Newcastle cyclists, and what improvements do we have to show for it? We have a few green signs warning cyclists to be careful. You will have to excuse me for not passing on my thanks for them, but I am not sure who is currently serving as Minister for the Obvious. That is not just a poor response from the Coalition Government; it is negligent. Sick of this Government's inaction, last week I invited our shadow Minister for Active Transport, Jo Haylen, to Newcastle to host a roundtable with stakeholders including the police, the University of Newcastle, Newcastle City Council and representatives from the cycling community. If this Government will not do something about it, Labor will.

Some great ideas came out of this roundtable, including the need to work collaboratively to secure New South Wales Government active transport funding for cycleways projects and the huge benefits that improved cycleway connection has for the revitalisation of Newcastle. Everyone agreed on one thing—a dedicated east-west CBD cycleway to get from Union Street to Pacific Park. We have heard this idea before; it is quite similar to a particular Cabinet document from December 2013, which stated:

As light rail along the rail corridor is located away from cars, buses and on-road transport, this option avoids the need to make changes to traffic signals, on-street parking, taxi stops, loading zones or planned, separated cycleways.

Planned, separated cycleways—planned, in fact, under the then transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian. She is the Premier now, she can make this right. The facilities for cyclists are not just inadequate, they are downright dangerous. This Government has a golden opportunity to make a golden promise to deliver a world-class transport network that provides amenity and safety for all of its users, including cyclists. This is another infrastructure bungle brought to you by the O'Farrell-Baird-Berejiklian Government, but it can be fixed. The Premier planned those cycleways, she should deliver them. In fact, the Premier promised \$330 million for active transport over the next five years, and Newcastle wants its fair share of that funding.

INVERELL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:45): As members know, many times in this House I have spoken about my great pride in representing all the communities of the Northern Tablelands. Our region is doing it very hard at the moment in drought but it is the strength and the resilience of our communities and the people within them that I draw great inspiration from. There is no greater exemplar of that resilience, strength and unity of hope and also determination to defeat the impacts of drought and to prevail than the Inverell community. Inverell is a burgeoning regional centre, the fastest-growing community in northern inland New South Wales, and it was an absolute pleasure to attend the Inverell Chamber of Commerce Business Awards recently. Those business awards were reintroduced after a three-year hiatus. There was no better time to bring back the Inverell Chamber of Commerce Business Awards than right now in the midst of the worst drought we have ever seen.

Despite the drought and the devastation and despite a number of businesses struggling and laying off employees or even closing, there are so many success stories that should be celebrated and so many opportunities for people to get together, have a beer, have a chat, have a laugh, celebrate some positivity and get some real community spirit going. I was absolutely delighted to see the Inverell RSM Club packed to the rafters with more than 300 people in the auditorium for the 2019 business awards. There were more than 150 nominations for 14 awards across 10 categories. It was brilliant.

I congratulate Chamber President Nicky Lavender, Vice President John McGregor, Treasurer Tracy Oppy, Membership Engagement Officer Danielle Ewen and Publicity Officer Peter Caddey, who did a brilliant job as emcee on the evening. Peter is a class act; he not only heads Tourism Inverell but he is a man for all seasons. All in all the chamber did a brilliant job with its leadership on the night and it was a brilliant celebration of what makes Inverell so strong—particularly the business community and the young entrepreneurs. To have 14 nominations with half of those under the age of 30 in the Start Up Superstar category was amazing. Many new businesses and young entrepreneurs are establishing even in the midst of drought.

What makes Inverell stand out from other categories, even in the big inland cities like Tamworth, is that Inverell is not heavily franchised. The Inverell CBD consists of almost entirely locally owned and operated businesses—none of the big retail names or the big franchises. That is why Inverell is so much more resilient and able to withstand the impacts of drought compared with other communities that are heavily franchised, where the profits and decisions are made away from our local rural towns. For the benefit of the House I will run through some of the winners of the categories.

The Excellence in Business Sole Trader winner was Bounce Fitness and highly commended were Dixie Lane and Positive Health Studio. The winner of Excellence in Business 2-5 Employees was Blair Athol Estate. Kim Kelleher and Pauline do an amazing job out there. It is a beautiful place to stay and some of us stayed there during The Nationals conference recently. Highly commended in that category were Bakers Barn and Clover and

Co Home. The winner of Excellence in Business 6-14 Employees was McMahon Structural. Anka and Ben McMahon, two young people—even younger, I think, than the member for Manly—are doing a great job in building homes in Inverell and around the region. Highly commended in that category were Inverell 4WD and Campbell & Freebairn Chemist, which is always a great place to get some medication on a Sunday morning.

Excellence in Business 15+ Employees winner was Real Pet Food Inverell. It is a real success story with more than 90 employees. It is growing pet food and is not impacted so much by drought, and it is part of that burgeoning business community that is in the 90 to 150 employees range. Highly commended in that category were Bindaree Beef, which employs 600 to 700 locals in Inverell, and McLean Care, which is a wonderful aged-care facility. Excellence in Social Enterprise winner was Best Community Connections, a strain of BEST Employment Solutions, which does wonderful work in the community for people with disability. Highly commended were Sapphire Academy of Sport and Inverell Senior Citizens Welfare Association. The Employer of Choice was Campbell & Freebairn Chemist—you cannot get much better than them—and highly commended was The Bridge Coffee Lounge.

Excellence in Customer Service winner was Gowrie Vet Clinic. Gundi and her team do a brilliant job. I am taking Alfie the wonder dog there shortly for his annual vaccination and I will be using my voucher from the Inverell and District Value Book to get 50 per cent off. People should buy those books from The Brew Shed or Blair Athol Estate to support local businesses. The Start Up Superstar winner was Dermadesigns Beauty and Laser Clinic. Excellence in Innovation winner was McLean Care. The Overall Best Inverell Business for the year was Real Pet Food Inverell. Well done to all. It was a brilliant night. Go Inverell!

COST OF LIVING

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:51): Tonight I discuss the struggles that many low-income households are going through in the Swansea electorate. I recently met with volunteers from the local Belmont and Swansea St Vincent de Paul Society, which does fantastic work across our community and in communities across New South Wales. We discussed how cost-of-living pressures are impacting some of the most vulnerable in the electorate. The work of those volunteers is tireless. The Belmont branch alone conducts around 1,000 interviews a year with clients. They told me that rental stress, where families spend 30 per cent or more of their income on rent, is a growing and serious problem in our community. In Belmont 58 per cent of clients are suffering from rental stress; in Swansea that number is 45 per cent.

While the Government has announced an expansion of public housing it appears that Swansea is being left behind. Many of St Vincent de Paul's clients in my electorate would like the option to live in public housing to keep costs down, yet they have been forced into unaffordable private rentals due to a lack of social and public housing. I am aware that more public housing is being developed at Glendale in the Wallsend electorate. Unfortunately, in Swansea we are still waiting. The development of more affordable housing must be an infrastructure priority for the Government to tackle homelessness and the housing crisis in New South Wales.

Another major concern raised by my local St Vincent de Paul volunteers was the administration of the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance [EAPA] scheme. Under the current EAPA scheme an individual is limited to \$300 every six months but can apply for exceptional circumstances to extend the \$300 limit. In 2018 the Belmont St Vincent de Paul Society branch distributed \$36,000 worth of EAPA vouchers and the Swansea branch distributed a staggering \$40,000 worth of vouchers. In 2019 each branch has been allocated only \$11,000 for the first six months. Clearly that shortfall is noticeable—one just has to do the maths. In July alone the Belmont branch distributed \$3,600 worth of EAPA vouchers. Clearly there is not enough assistance for those who need it most.

As well as the allocation of EAPA vouchers to local charities being cut back, the criteria for exceptional circumstances has become much more stringent and tougher to access. One volunteer recounted the story of a woman on the Newstart Allowance who, after paying rent, had just \$30 a week left to cover all of her other expenses. The volunteer applied for an additional \$900 under exceptional circumstances on behalf of that woman but was rejected, before being later approved for an additional \$300. That is not an unusual tale. Many people are struggling in my community just like that poor woman. The problem is not only the unfair criteria but also the administration of the program itself. Numerous volunteers express concerns over cumbersome paperwork and administration.

EAPA applications are frequently handled by volunteer-based charity organisations, so we need to ensure that the system is as easy to navigate as possible. There is a better way. The volunteers I spoke to referred to the Utility relief grant scheme as a better operating model. This scheme was introduced by the Victorian Government and offers relief payments to vulnerable low-income households for overdue electricity, gas and water bills. Those payments are available for Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card and veterans' Gold Card holders who

spend more than 30 per cent of their household income on rent. Individuals are entitled to \$650 for each utility or \$1,300 for a single source of energy such as electricity over a two-year period.

Unlike the EAPA scheme, the Utility relief grant scheme is administered by retailers and the Victorian Government, which is taking pressure off volunteer-run organisations like the St Vincent de Paul branch in the Swansea electorate. We are in the midst of a housing crisis. Many people are doing it tough in the Swansea electorate and in other electorates around the State. We need to urgently prioritise low cost, affordable housing and we need to reform the EAPA scheme to take the pressure off families struggling to pay their bills. This hardship is being experienced across New South Wales. While the Government is lauding the fact that they are spending a lot of money on infrastructure, we need to make sure that social infrastructure is also funded well. We need to help the most vulnerable in this State—for that we will be known and rewarded. We need to make sure that we are helping the people who are doing it tough and who cannot afford to turn on the lights.

TRIBUTE TO KERRY HINES

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:56): Last Wednesday Coffs Harbour awoke to the news that one of its brightest stars, Kerry Hines, had lost her battle with illness. I met Kerry Hines and her husband, Chris, about 10 years ago through their iconic hot pink branded real estate business Unrealestate when I worked with them to create some new marketing materials. Kerry's professionalism, hard work, dedication, energy, enthusiasm, and her ability to inject her personality into Unrealestate has seen it grow from strength to strength. Kerry's passion for all things Coffs Coast extended into a four-year stint on Coffs Harbour City Council and a stint as vice-president of the Coffs Harbour Chamber of Commerce. She was also a board member of the CanDo Cancer Trust and GenHealth, which encompasses headspace in Coffs Harbour and Grafton as well as the Coffs Harbour Women's Health Centre. Through Unrealestate, Kerry and Chris were long-term sponsors of the Sawtell Panthers Rugby League Club, major sponsors of Coast Out, sponsors of the Coffs Harbour International Buskers Festival and major sponsors of Comics on the Run for Camp Quality.

Kerry was born in the Sunnyside Hospital in Coffs Harbour. She attended Narranga Primary School and later, Orara High School. It was during her early school years that she had her first brush with fame when she presented flowers to Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Coffs Harbour. After studying English, psychology and history at the University of New England in Armidale, Kerry lived life to the fullest and travelled extensively. It was not until 1993 that Kerry moved back to Coffs Harbour. Kerry met Chris 10 years later and they started their real estate business. A few years later their business won an award for best small agency in the State at the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales Awards for Excellence and collected many local awards on the way.

But Kerry was much more than just her work. In her own words, Kerry said she and Chris have "a big, boisterous and precious" family. In Chris' words, "Kerry was a perfect wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, and a friend to all who knew her." Kerry is survived by her children Jesse, Jamie-Lee, Georgia, Marshall, Patrick and Natalie, her grandchildren and her husband, Chris. Kerry's funeral will be held tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. in the Hogbin Drive Chapel and the family has asked that no-one wears black as per Kerry's wishes. Donations can be made to the CanDo Cancer Trust in lieu of flowers.

Kerry wanted Coffs Harbour to be a place that cared for everyone and that provided opportunities for everyone. I will always appreciate her support for me in my new role. Both Kerry and I ran for pre-selection for Coffs Harbour and she supported me and my Federal counterpart 110 per cent during both elections. Such was her work ethic and her integrity during both campaigns that no-one would have guessed how sick she was. Her stoic and brave fight meant that most Coffs Harbour residents had no idea she was sick and they were shocked to learn of her passing. She was much loved by our community and at every opportunity advanced the cause of our region. Coffs Harbour will not be the same without Kerry Hines.

PINCH POINT PROGRAMS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (18:59): The New South Wales Government is delivering more road projects than ever before. On 21 February 2019 this Government announced a commitment of \$40 million for the Linden Street project. This upgrade is well overdue and is just another example of this Government delivering for southern Sydney. The Government's responsible fiscal management has allowed for the State to spend more on local projects that will make a big difference in the lives of locals. This project will significantly impact the constituents of my electorate and beyond. I have been told time and again how difficult Bangor Bypass traffic is during peak hour with traffic banked up around a kilometre. Linden Street is one of Sutherland's busiest corridors. I am so pleased that motorists, cyclists and pedestrians will now experience a safer and more reliable journey. I thank all the community who contacted me in support of this project. Together, we made it happen.

The project will include widening Linden Street and upgrading the River Road and Linden Street intersection to allow dual right turns from Linden Street northbound. An extra lane will be added at Linden Street

and The Grand Parade with traffic lights being adjusted to give more green light time for the busiest of queues of traffic. Improvements will also benefit local pedestrians and cyclists, which will allow for traffic to keep moving and bust congestion. It will save travellers up to eight minutes on a daily return journey in busy periods between Menai and Sutherland. This project will benefit around 65,000 motorists every day as it is a key east-west connection between the Princes Highway and the Bangor Bypass. During peak periods around 6,000 motorists and 500 bus passengers use the corridor each hour, which is crucial to keeping people moving around the Sutherland Shire.

The \$40 million commitment is on top of the \$300 million Gateway to the South program which has seen the completion of five pinch points. Five are still underway and a further eight are in the final stages of planning. Over the next three years, The Liberal-Nationals Government will deliver projects in 22 locations. Pinch points are traffic congestion points, intersections or short lengths of road where traffic comes to a bottleneck, which slows down the broader network. They cause the build-up of traffic and travel delays at those spots and on the wider road network. The New South Wales Government is committed to working along the pinch points with more than \$1.5 billion being committed to ease congestion on existing roads across Sydney. Last week it was announced that community consultation was open for the Linden Street upgrade, allowing residents around the area to have their say. Community consultation closed at 5.00 p.m. last Monday. The improvements will allow motorists who use this road each day to have safer, more reliable and shorter trips. By spending less time in traffic they will have more time to do things with their loved ones.

The community can see the plans in many ways for more details. Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] has made it very easy for residents to get in contact to provide feedback. The community is able to complete online surveys through the RMS website and talk face to face with the project team leaders. Last week sessions started on how to send an email or to call a project manager. The projects team and the community can have their views heard at either Club on East in Sutherland or Menai Marketplace. This Government is committed to keeping our roads moving so drivers can spend less time sitting in traffic and more time doing the things they like.

The Pinch Point Programs has been expanded under the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government to remove even more bottlenecks to keep drivers moving. This Government also invested \$25 million into drone technology and virtual messaging so that more of the road network can be monitored in real time and incidents can be reported and cleared faster. I thank the Premier for her support for this project. Recently the Premier visited the Heathcote electorate and I was able to show her firsthand the traffic issues and she recognised the need for the Linden Street project immediately.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:04): I acknowledge the contribution made by my colleague the member for Heathcote in talking about the pinch point and congestion busting methods that are being rolled out across his electorate and Sutherland Shire. I particularly acknowledge his hard work, dedication and advocacy on the issue of the Linden Street upgrade. I know how delighted his constituents are going to be when that project is rolled out. One side of the road is in the Heathcote electorate and the other side of the road is in the Miranda electorate. I am well informed how well it will be received by the community and how much the entire Sutherland Shire is looking forward to the upgrade, particularly the western side of Linden Street. It has been faced with that backlog across the Woronora River crossing. I commend the member for Heathcote on his private member's statement this evening.

REGIONAL HEALTH CARE

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:05): Today I talk about health care in the third world. I have recently returned from a desperate part of the planet where the sick, the injured and the dying cannot access basic health services. It is a place where a woman had to drive three hours after being raped because nobody in her local hospital was able to administer a rape kit; an old man who broke his finger had to travel two hours to get the bone set and was then forced to make his own way home; and a teenager who attempted suicide on a Saturday was told to wait until Monday for treatment because there were no services available on the weekend.

In maternity wards new mothers are turfed out of their beds 48 hours after caesarean births and 24 hours after normal births due to budget cutbacks. Even the dead cannot escape Government neglect in this area. The recently deceased have to be transported for more than eight hours for an autopsy, while grieving relatives wait up to six weeks to hold the funeral. This part of the world is called the Murray electorate—a region of more than 100,000 people. Similar stories are told across regional New South Wales. Good hardworking people in the towns of Griffith, Leeton, Deniliquin, Finley, Wentworth, Hay, Hillston and Moama are all suffering due to declining health care.

Successive governments have gutted regional public hospital services during a period when we have needed them more than ever—during drought, dreadful water mismanagement, industry closures and growing rates of drug addiction and depression. Lack of money is not the problem in one of the richest and most prosperous

countries in the world. Indeed, this Government brags about its huge surplus thanks to all the taxes we are paying and the sale of our hard-earned assets. They even tell us spending on health is increasing in real terms. Sadly, the extra money has lined the pockets of bureaucrats, propped up private healthcare facilities and been sucked into big city services—all at our expense.

Waste, mismanagement, a fetish for privatisation and a devaluing of human life beyond the Blue Mountains has brought us to our knees. This Government loves its private hospitals and wants to see them even in low population towns where a market barely exists. In Griffith the Government stripped the public hospital of its services and equipment and gave them to the nearby private hospital to keep it profitable. Public healthcare ought to be the first priority in a first-world country, but it is merely an afterthought in much of this State. We were promised services to fix broken bones at Griffith Base Hospital 20 years ago—we are still waiting.

I have asked the Health Minister for timelines on much-needed upgrades to Deniliquin, Leeton and Griffith hospitals. I have had no response; it is not a priority. What irks the people of Murray is watching how fast Government can act when their corporate donors want something done. The unthinkable happened recently in Far West New South Wales when the Government scoped, planned, built and fully completed a massive \$500 million rural project in just over two years. The National Party told us the 270-kilometre Broken Hill pipeline was needed to provide drinking water to Broken Hill. They kept the business case secret. We have just found out the pipeline was all about protecting water for their corporate mates in the northern basin.

I call on the Government to treat a sick child in Deniliquin with the same level of urgency it gives to wealthy water traders in Sydney. I realise there are many challenges when it comes to rural health; it is not something that we can fix overnight. During the election campaign the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party devised a 10-point plan to address the rural healthcare crisis. After talking to regional doctors and health staff we proposed incentive packages to attract doctors, streamlining registration processes, bringing back local boards, establishing a fund for regional hospital equipment, boosting patient transport services, ceasing all public hospital privatisation plans and conducting an inquiry into bullying. They are some of the steps that will take us in the right direction. I am happy to work with any member in Parliament, regardless of their party, to devise a rescue plan for regional health care. Let us get our priorities right and make the health and safety of regional families our number one concern.

ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:09): Inner west residents are passionate about cycling and walking, not just because we love our bikes but because we know active transport is a critical piece of the puzzle in busting congestion, improving public health, strengthening communities and reducing carbon emissions. When people think of active transport they think of so-called MAMLs, middle aged men in lycra. But active transport is also about families walking to and from school. It is about commuters who want real choice when it comes to their journeys to work. It is about designing welcoming and accessible spaces that promote healthy living and it is about rethinking the ways we reduce congestion, lift productivity and improve our environment.

It is far from a fringe issue. In fact, MAMLs have been onto something all this time. Sydney is an outdoor city with sparkling beaches and boundless skies, but when visitors arrive they often remark that Sydney is a city designed for cars. Sitting at around 5.6 per cent, Sydney's share of active transport is low compared to other global cities. Comparably, London is over 20 per cent, Berlin is 43 per cent and Barcelona is 47 per cent. A 2017 study from Bicycle NSW reports that only 12.5 per cent of Sydneysiders ride a bike at least once a month and that only 26 per cent of those cyclists are women.

Walking rates are also low. The Greater Sydney Commission reports that only 18 per cent of all trips taken across Sydney are walking trips. When we dig deeper into the data the real story emerges. In the eastern Sydney district, which has some of our more affluent suburbs, 32 per cent of all trips were walking trips. In the Western Sydney district the figure is 10 per cent. That means nine times out of 10 Western Sydney residents are getting into their car to get to work, school or to the shops compared to six out of 10 in the east. And why wouldn't they? In Western Sydney we have not invested in the infrastructure to make cycling or walking possible, including footpaths, street trees, shaded paths and separated cycleways. At the same time, we are failing to ensure that new greenfield developments are connected walkable suburbs. This is a clear equity issue and we have to do more to give Western Sydney residents, and indeed all residents across Greater Sydney, access to all transport options. There is so much we can do to make Sydney a more active city. We can start by doing what other global cities do and use pedestrian council sensors to more accurately measure the number of pedestrians on our streets.

We accurately count the number of cars on our roads, but still rely on half-yearly manual counts to determine the number of people who walk in our city. That lack of data contributes to under-investment in the footpaths, lighting, street trees, and phasing of traffic lights, all of which we need to make walking safe and desirable. We can invest in infrastructure to make cycling safe, including separated bike lanes, fine-grain

connections and major projects like the GreenWay, eastern suburbs cycleway and Newcastle cycling strategy. Importantly, we must improve safety around our schools. Many parents and carers tell me they would love for their kids to walk to school but think it is too dangerous. A recent study shows two-thirds of kids are driven to school rather than walking or riding a bike.

We can re-vision our road network to better balance movement and place, expanding the ways we use our road and transport corridors to improve liveability and reduce congestion. We can consider mode-shift targets away from cars to public and active transport. It is not because we do not like cars but because as our city grows to nine million people by 2056 our roads will just not be able to support movement across the city. Better active transport and supporting great public transport is crucial to ensuring our city keeps working. We can invest in rail trails and supercharge tourism in regional communities. We can improve walking trails in our precious national parks and in Sydney we can deliver a Bondi to Manly walk. Labor knows just how important active transport is for our cities, suburbs and regions, as well as for our economy, environment and health. We will champion active transport and I look forward to continuing to work with residents, cyclists, pedestrians and all stakeholders to put active transport firmly on the agenda.

LINDFIELD VILLAGE HUB

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:14): In the past 12 years the Ku-ring-gai area, including Lindfield, has absorbed a large number of new dwellings after the previous Labor Government required the rezoning of various local areas to accommodate high-density residential dwellings. The Lindfield Village Hub, a planned development by Ku-ring-gai Council, is now pushing the limits of the community's tolerance further by suggesting buildings of up to 14 stories in Lindfield. The history of the Lindfield Village Hub began when the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government proposed to buy a council-owned car park to build an above-ground commuter car park. The community welcomed the car park commitment, but suggested improved local amenities be included in the plan, enlisting the support of the council.

The Government acquiesced and subsequently moved some of the proposed commuter car parking spots to the eastern side of Lindfield as part of the separate Lindfield Village Green project. In October 2012 Support Lindfield, a local community group, was formed as a local community voice. It is a dedicated and skilled community-based group that promotes sensible redevelopment in the public interest. It focuses on delivering valuable community facilities in a reasonable way that has broad local support and public input, and not at the cost of unacceptable overdevelopment. Whilst I support a balanced and sensible new Lindfield Village Hub, I cannot support the application as currently proposed by Ku-ring-gai Council, nor does Support Lindfield.

Normally the community would look to council to resist such a proposal on its behalf, but I chose to speak at a council public forum last week about the proposal on behalf of the community due to the apparent, or at least perceived, conflict of interest within council. The development area in question was only up-zoned from a community land car park to permit seven stories of residential development because the council promised to build a range of community facilities within the proposed development. Needless to say, after almost four years the council has not delivered on that earlier commitment and agreement with the local community. The maximum height permitted for any building in Lindfield is currently seven stories, and now the council wants to spot rezone on its own site for up to 14 stories. This would set a bad and dangerous precedent, and is extremely hard to justify.

Whilst there is public interest in enhanced or extra community facilities, that does not justify the overdevelopment proposed. It is generally viewed as excessive, with defective methodology and insufficient transparency on costs and benefits, including for the existing library site earmarked for sale by council. The public has clearly rejected the current proposal. The council must communicate with the community in a much better fashion. The delivery of new dwellings in the Ku-ring-gai Council area over the past 12 years has more than satisfied previous State Government requirements. Should further action be required to deliver additional housing in the future, the council should consider how it might rezone for additional residential buildings across the whole municipality, rather than just on one site to its own advantage.

I reiterate my support for a sensible Lindfield Village Hub project for the community that includes commuter car parking funded by the State Government. However, I confirm that I cannot support the current proposal, primarily because it is not in a properly balanced public interest. Also, a pedestrian bridge over the Pacific Highway, which is a related issue, is something I strongly support. I intend to relay my views to the New South Wales planning Minister, as appropriate, following the council's decision at its meeting tonight.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:18): I thank the member for Davidson for his passionate contribution in support of the wonderful suburb of Lindfield, which is a classic suburb designed in accordance with the principles of the garden suburb movement. It has a mix of great architectural styles and has an important character that is important to maintain. I listened with concern to the comments of the member for Davidson. Obviously the Government is keen to ensure that we have a greater supply

of homes, and different types and tenures of homes. But they do need to be designed appropriately in the right places, supported by the right infrastructure and developed in accordance with a vision determined by local people. Hopefully the council can work with its community. I will listen intently to the representations of the member for Davidson following the council's decision this evening.

GRANVILLE AFGHAN COMMUNITY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:19): Yesterday marked 100 years since Afghanistan's independence from Britain. This is a proud occasion for all Afghans, especially those in the electorate of Granville, which hosts one of the largest Afghan populations in Australia, centred around Merrylands. Last night the Afghan embassy hosted a wonderful reception at Parliament House to mark 100 years since independence and 50 years since formal diplomatic ties were established between Australia and Afghanistan. But ties between the two countries predate that time. In 1859 Afghan migrants first came to Australia to support Burke and Wills in their exploration of central Australia, and for many decades afterwards provided camel-based transport and freight to inland Australia, eventually bringing 20,000 camels into the country. The Ghan train is named in their honour. In 1861 the first mosque in Australia was built in Marree, South Australia, by Afghan cameleers, and in 1887 Afghan cameleers built the first mosque in New South Wales at Broken Hill.

The next large waves of Afghan migration to Australia occurred after the Soviet invasion of 1979 and the civil war that followed the Soviet withdrawal in 1988. More recently there were migrations after the 2001 United States invasion to overthrow the then Taliban government, with 87 per cent of Afghan Australians arriving since 2006. The Afghan community in my area is from the most recent waves of refugees. They have fled dictatorship and/or terrorism to make a new life in Australia, free and safe. And whilst they have made a new home here, there are often traumatic reminders of the suffering they endured whenever there is another terrorist attack or further fighting in Afghanistan. In the first six months of this year there were almost 4,000 civilian casualties.

On behalf of the community I represent, I pay my respects to the families and friends of all those who lost their lives in the bombing of the wedding hall in Kabul over the weekend, where 63 of around 1,000 wedding guests were killed in a brutal attack by ISIS, which has become increasingly active in Afghanistan over the past five years. Another 182 guests were injured. The wedding guests were mainly Hazaras and Shia, like most of the Afghan refugees who have settled in Australia in recent years. This is a tragedy and a crime in a country that has suffered disproportionately from terrorism. Yesterday, to coincide with the centenary of independence, there were further bombings, with 10 bombings in Jalalabad that injured dozens of people. Every time this happens it is a horrifying reminder to our local Afghan community of what they have left behind, the destruction of a country they love and the reasons they had to flee.

Whilst settling in a new country is extremely challenging, especially after enduring trauma, the Afghan community in my electorate is thriving and contributing greatly to the local area. They are active in the school communities, especially in Merrylands at Merrylands East, Merrylands and Hilltop Road public schools and, of course, Holroyd High School, which has supported so many students from refugee backgrounds. The local mosque, Nabi Akram, has operated for well over a decade and I have been delighted to visit on many occasions. The mosque is thriving and is now seeking to build a bigger facility for the growing community, which includes people from a wide range of Afghan ethnic groups.

Merrylands has become quite famous for the great selection of Afghan restaurants, including Kabul House, LaSani and Zeenat. Merrylands Road comes alive during Nowruz celebrations, with all Afghan and Persian businesses decorating their shops and restaurants with wheatgrass and goldfish to welcome in the new year, which coincides with the arrival of the Northern Hemisphere spring. The Afghan community has also established a large number of sporting and welfare groups to bring the community together and support one another. I recently joined one such group, the Sadat Welfare Sports Association, for its cricket presentation night. Its competition involved New South Wales police teams and teams from other refugee communities, including the Tamil refugee team, Oceans 12. It was the second year of the competition and I am sure it will not be the last. The association's passion for cricket and community is huge.

Afghan professionals are succeeding in many fields. Afghan Australian fashion designer Anjilla Seddeqi, who is based in Parramatta, is featured in this month's *Harper's Bazaar*. Anjilla migrated to Australia from Afghanistan as a child, studied law at university, became a refugee lawyer and is now a designer. Her story is one of many from the Afghan community. Their strength and determination is characteristic of their country of birth, whose centenary we celebrated yesterday. On 19 August 1919 Emir Amānullāh Khān declared Afghanistan's foreign policy independent of Britain after the Third Anglo-Afghan War and the signing of the Anglo-Afghan Treaty, which commenced the full movement to independence—independence that was defended during the Soviet invasion and subsequent occupation.

Since 2001 there has been progress. Following the overthrow of the Taliban government, democratic elections, freedom of speech, women's empowerment and the rule of law have all been strengthened. Despite the frequent terrorist attacks, there has been significant investment in infrastructure in recent years and economic growth. During this period the relationship between Australia and Afghanistan has strengthened. Over 25,000 Australian men and women served in Afghanistan alongside the Afghan army and security forces. Even more Afghans have sought refuge in Australia during this period. These are strong links—links I see every day. They add significantly to our wonderful modern Australia. I congratulate all Afghan Australians on the centenary of Afghanistan's independence and thank them for the great contribution they are making to Australia.

DARK SKY PARKS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:25): Today I will talk about dark sky parks in New South Wales generally and in my electorate of Pittwater. I recently had the pleasure to meet with Marnie Ogg of the Australasian Dark Sky Alliance. Marnie brought me an exciting proposal to turn Barrenjoey headland, the northernmost tip of my neck of the woods, into a dark sky park. Dark sky parks are designated areas with exceptional starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is protected from artificial light pollution, which is the impact of light from human-made sources as a result of urban development—most notably outdoor lighting. The parks are protected for their scientific, natural, educational or cultural heritage values and for public enjoyment. They are critical to animals and plants that need a regular interval of light and dark to know when to eat, sleep, hunt, migrate and reproduce. Dark sky parks can be found all over the world, from South Korea to the Netherlands and the United States.

In 2016 I was proud to create Australia's only dark sky park—the first in the Southern Hemisphere. The park lies within the Warrumbungle National Park, near Coonabarabran in the Central West. It supports astronomy at Australia's most important visible-light observatory at Siding Spring by ensuring the dark night sky is free of light pollution. It was a great feat that has had fantastic ecological and tourism benefits for this important area, which attracts over 24,000 visitors and injects over \$5 million into the local economy. Stargazing in the Warrumbungles is a fantastic experience and I encourage all members to experience it at least once in their lifetime; they will be back. In the park, light pollution is reduced by using only shielded lighting that directs light downwards, avoiding any upward-facing lighting, mitigating the impact of dust and the night-time operation of some industrial activities, and minimising the number and duration of lighting in public areas to ensure they operate only when they are required.

Outside of the proposal for my community that Marnie brought to me, we spoke of ways that the State Government and councils can work to protect our spectacular night sky and our ability to enjoy our beautiful view of the Southern Cross and Milky Way. We can consider adding shields to streetlights or using softer energy-efficient lighting indoors and out. Councils and the operators of public buildings may consider introducing lighting control policies so that lights are used only when necessary for safety or security and ensuring they are positioned to effectively target only those areas needing to be illuminated. Councils could also consider following the example being set in Vienna, where 50 per cent of streetlights are turned off between 12 a.m. and 5 a.m., when few people are out and about—saving money and energy.

Cumberland Council and Tweed Shire Council are currently considering policy ideas to reduce light pollution that were put forward by New South Wales school students as part of the Government's first Dark Sky school competition. Tomorrow I will meet the winners of the competition, from Lidcombe Public School, who were chosen from a field of more than 4,500 student entries for their innovative and creative ideas to protect the dark night sky. These small changes to lighting controls to minimise light pollution could have a big impact on our natural environment and our ability to enjoy the night sky. I am happy to support furthering the cause of Marnie Ogg and the Australasian Dark Sky Alliance.

I thank Marnie for her advocacy and I thank the Northern Beaches Council for its support of her proposal for Barrenjoey headland. I would like to see more dark sky parks pop up across New South Wales, with community support, and will fully engage with Marnie's proposal. In my role as member for Pittwater and as Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, I am keen to advocate for ways to minimise light pollution in our towns and cities. I want New South Wales residents to be able continue to enjoy the special joy of a clear view of the stars and southern sky on a clear, dark night well into the future.

Looking down at our cities and towns from above, planners talk of the need to preserve a green belt separating town from country and articulating the space in between our urban centres. Looking up from our cities and towns, we also need to think of a black belt where the wonders, wildness and freedom of a truly dark night sky can be enjoyed and appreciated. I remember some years ago going for a run late at night and ending up on Narrabeen headland towards the southern end of my electorate, looking over the headland at the wildness of a dark sky over the ocean, the tame lights of the city behind me. As I stood there on a cold winter's night with a strong westerly breeze, I started to see the curtain of the aurora australis down over the Southern Ocean. These

are the sorts of joys we can truly enjoy if we are conscious of our surroundings and of the way in which we use light. If we can save energy and money in doing so and preserve beautiful vistas for future generations to enjoy, we should look at it.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN CHALK

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:30): Sadly, on Friday 2 August one of rugby league's great administrators, John Chalk, AM, passed away. It is a measure of the man that in mourning his passing and celebrating his life, family and friends from his childhood were joined by international athletes, former State and Federal Ministers, senior members of the international Olympic movement and members of the judiciary. Whether you were one of the country's greatest Olympians or simply a plumbing apprentice he worked with, to John Chalk you were all his mates. Chalkie—as almost everyone, including myself, knew him—grew up in Drummoyne and was engaged with his sporting loves, sailing and rugby league, from an early age. His first involvement with rugby league was as a ball boy for the Balmain Tigers in 1955, which began a lifelong connection with the Tigers.

In a feat that would be very hard to match, John was involved in rugby league administration for each of the past 55 years in succession. He was a manager and selector for successful Balmain Tigers junior teams from the 1970s onwards, joined the board of the Tigers in 1985 and became chairman in 1997. Chalkie was the inaugural chair of Wests Tigers and it was fantastic to see the current squad form a guard of honour for him at his funeral. In 2001 he joined the board of the New South Wales Rugby League, the Australian Rugby League and the National Rugby League and was chair of the former two from 2010 to 2012. In 2012 John, along with his fellow directors, stepped down from his positions to create the Australian Rugby League Commission.

John was a key architect in the creation of the commission, arguing for the sport to ensure its governance structure matched the professionalism on the field and allowed rugby league to thrive. When the idea was raised at the Australian Rugby League board meeting in 2010, he urged those involved "to park all our egos" in the interest of the sport moving forward. As he said, "Old people have memories, young people have dreams." Sydney Olympic Park, in my electorate of Auburn, is home to the New South Wales Rugby League Centre of Excellence. As one of rugby league's pre-eminent administrators and a life member of the New South Wales Rugby League, John has a room named in his honour at that new facility.

It is difficult to overstate the influence John Chalk had on rugby league and its administration in modern times. Australian Rugby League Commission chairman and former Queensland Premier Peter Beattie described him as "a visionary" who "never lost his sense of inclusiveness or his humility at any level of the game, no matter who he engaged with". Former Premier of New South Wales and Chalk's successor as Wests Tigers chair Barry O'Farrell said he was "a rare combination of business acumen, passion for rugby league and decency". In 2016 John was made a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to rugby league as an administrator at the State and national level and to Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. At the Tigers many young footballers from all backgrounds were mentored by Chalkie and welcomed into his and wife Lyn's home—all in service to the club, the game and the community he treasured.

Sport and recreation in Australia is built on the backs of people like John Chalk, who put egos aside and volunteer their time for the sports and activities they love. There would be no greater honour for a man like Chalkie than being awarded life membership of the organisations which began his love of sport: Drummoyne Sailing Club and Balmain Tigers Rugby League Football Club. His service to rugby league represents a connection to the game's roots as a working-class ornament: a plumber from Balmain who rose to the top of sporting administration, who was just as adept chatting to a tradie over a schooner at the Riverview Hotel or negotiating with the top brass in business and politics about the governance and future of a major professional sport. Former Premier Neville Wran famously said, "Balmain boys don't cry," but I can assure you many a tear has been shed around the peninsula at the passing of John Chalk.

EDUCATION WEEK AND KU-RING-GAI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:34): While State members of Parliament were preoccupied here in Macquarie Street a couple of weeks ago, our public schools participated in the sixty-fifth New South Wales Education Week. The theme for this year's Education Week was "Every student, every voice," celebrating that every child in New South Wales feels empowered to speak out about what they believe in and know that they will be supported when they have the courage to express their views. More broadly, Education Week is about acknowledging and celebrating the richness and diversity of the entire school community—not just the students, although they are understandably the primary focus, but also those who care for them at home, the Parents & Citizens Association, the before- and after-school carers and the teachers who provide valuable learning experiences.

I have, on several occasions, spoken in this place about the high quality of the public schools in Ku-ring-gai. Two weeks ago I took the opportunity to visit Warrawee Public School and Beaumont Road Public School in Killara to participate in their Education Week activities. Warrawee's effervescent principal and new grandmother Carrie Robertson had just enough time to welcome me before donning her Tigger onesie to supervise the first event of the school's open morning. This was a parade of students and teachers dressed up as their favourite book characters. Not surprisingly there were a few Harry Potters, but there were many others too, including three little pigs and my old favourite the Cat in the Hat. A lot of effort had been put into the costumes by the teachers, as well, but what impressed me just as much was the size of the crowd of onlookers—the proud relatives. That included grandparents, because the school incorporated the annual Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day in the festivities.

It truly was an occasion that the entire school community embraced. The parents and grandparents who subsequently spent some time in the open classrooms would no doubt have seen, and possibly smelled, something new. In furtherance of the New South Wales Government's commitment in January this year to put an additional \$449 million towards clearing the school maintenance backlog by July 2020, all of the internal areas of Warrawee's permanent buildings are being painted at no cost to the school. Already there is a freshness about the place and the revitalisation of the old buildings seems to have energised everybody in the school.

From Warrawee, I travelled to Beaumont Road, with the eager anticipation of participating in some of its renowned student-led reporting sessions. I was not disappointed. These popular sessions, an initiative of the enthusiastic and very experienced principal, Malcolm McDonald, see the students individually giving their parents a personal account of their educational progress. Almost 100 per cent of parents ensure that they are involved in what is a unique and rewarding experience, and the process no doubt enhances both the students' confidence and their powers of oral expression.

I was also given a guided tour of the school's art show, which was a visual demonstration not only of the artistic ability of many of the students but also of the quality of the tuition that they receive at Beaumont Road. Mr McDonald and the Parents & Citizens Association have been very proactive in recent years in planning and ultimately making improvements to this popular East Killara school. With the assistance of Government grants, they have funded and overseen the construction of a new multi-purpose building and shade sails over the playground, and they are hoping shortly to construct a new all-purpose surface for the games court. However, the first thing that I noticed when I arrived at the school was the upgraded roofing, asphaltting and painting—again, all thanks to the Government's maintenance backlog clearance program. Mr McDonald takes great pride in the appearance of the school and it is looking magnificent. In addition to open classrooms and music and artistic performances by their students, Killara Public School, Pymble Public School, Wahroonga Public School and Normanhurst Public School all hosted book fairs that provided a range of great books for the students to buy.

Killara Public School also held a book fair in conjunction with its showcase and at Turramurra Public School a performing arts concert with dancing—including dance gymnastics—band and choral performances were the focus of the Open Day and Grandparents' Day. Due to my parliamentary commitments, I did not have the opportunity to join in on all of those activities but I am informed they were universally a great success. I am, however, personally aware that West Pymble, Wahroonga, Turramurra, Turramurra North and Normanhurst public schools have all recently been the beneficiaries of attractive Colorbond steel roof replacements, as the Government's unbridled maintenance program continues. The principal of Turramurra North has recently remarked that the students happily experienced a temporary inconvenience for the benefit of "leak-free rainy days", while West Pymble Public School's principal has described the new appearance of the school's buildings as fantastic.

The permanent classrooms at most of Ku-ring-gai's schools have been painted this year. Some now have new fencing and others have upgraded toilet blocks and new carpet. It is a long time since the schools have looked this good. I speak of these maintenance works in Education Week because the two are not unrelated. Investment in our school children is an investment in our future and if we want them to thrive as students and to become engaged citizens, then it is incumbent on us to provide them with the best possible environment in which to do so. I am proud to be part of a Government that recognises and takes active steps to ensure our students reach their full potential. I am glad that Education Week activities in Ku-ring-gai were so successful.

Community Recognition Statements

ST PETER CHANEL CHURCH

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:39): I wish to pay tribute to one of the bedrocks of the local community, St Peter Chanel Church at Berala, on the church dedication and centenary celebrations of their first mass. The church originated in a small church building in Third Avenue, Berala, following the end of World War I. A church school was later built on the hill and the school hall became the venue for fellowship activities and

the sacraments until the construction of a new church was completed in 1959. To mark the centenary celebration, a relic of St Peter Chanel was installed in the altar for public veneration. The well-attended mass for the dedication saw an overflowing church. The procession included members of the Islander community, as St Peter Chanel is the only Catholic saint in the Pacific. It was a reminder of St Peter Chanel's work in Polynesia before his death on the orders of a local chief. I would like to congratulate the clergy and parishioners of St Peter Chanel on this important milestone for the church—the centenary of the first mass and diamond jubilee of the construction of the church.

TRIBUTE TO PHIL FOGARTY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:40): I rise to recognise the recent sad passing of former crown lands project manager Phil Fogarty. Phil was a dedicated public servant throughout his career, which commenced in Bourke in 1981 as a district soil conservationist and rangeland officer, working for the organisation for over 10 years across north-west New South Wales. In 1993, he joined the crown lands department, where he served in a number of roles and worked his way up to become district manager for Armidale and Moree, responsible for managing 13 employees and developing policies and procedures before moving to the Coffs Harbour office.

Phil's expertise in stakeholder engagement and management, and his ability to combine information and to bring government agencies and stakeholders together, resulted in significant positive outcomes. During his time on the coast, Phil worked on many projects between the far North Coast and Great Lakes, including a significant amount of work in the Port Macquarie area, where I had the privilege to get to know him. Following the many meetings I had with Phil, it became evident that his knowledge, dedication and professionalism were admirable. I was very appreciative of his genuine efforts to assist my office with local portfolio issues and his enthusiasm and commitment to effectively serve the people of New South Wales. I extend to Phil's wife Bev and his children Nicole, Jim and Madi, my deepest condolences. Vale Phil Fogarty.

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:41): For 40 years, Marrickville Legal Centre has provided essential legal support to some of the most vulnerable in the inner west community. Our legal system can be daunting and inaccessible, and the dedicated staff at the centre support people to navigate it, with specialist programs supporting young people, low-income families and individuals, women escaping domestic and family violence, as well as tenants and those facing housing stress. As well as providing frontline support, the centre has been a leading voice in policy reform, particularly in relation to tenancies and homelessness support.

For 40 years, the centre has been a leading voice in the fight for progressive change and social justice, and later this week, I look forward to joining former Justice Michael Kirby and others to celebrate this important milestone. I extend my support and my heartfelt thanks to all the staff and volunteers at the Marrickville Legal Centre, and wish them all the best for the next 40 years.

ARMIDALE SPORTING SHOOTERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:42): I recognise Armidale Sporting Shooters Association of Australia junior shooters Patrick Simpson and Tiffany Tarrant on their fantastic results at the National Benchrest Rimfire Championships held recently. I particularly commend Patrick Simpson on winning the trophy for first junior in the heavy rimfire event, and Tiffany Tarrant for placing third in the juniors event for the international rimfire bench rest, as well as winning two screamer patches in the heavy rimfire event. Those are commendable achievements indeed.

I recognise the talent and dedication of Patrick and Tiffany as they also won the junior silver and gold medals in the grouping competition, and placed second and first in the hunter class competition at an inter-club shoot in Glen Innes in March. We are fortunate in the Northern Tablelands to have so many talented shooters who hit the mark in so many ways. Tiffany and Patrick are just two wonderful examples of very talented shooters in our region.

GREYSTANES HIGH SCHOOL AND NAIDOC WEEK

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:44): On 5 August 2019 I had the pleasure of joining the Greystanes High School for their NAIDOC Week celebrations. The day was entertaining and informative, including a demonstration of a smoking ceremony, various guest speakers and barbecuing kangaroo and crocodile. NAIDOC is celebrated every year to celebrate the history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I encourage every community to engage in NAIDOC celebrations to sustain the traditions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It was great to see students, parents, carers and staff take part as we celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements. Students were awarded for

their great work in academics and community services. I acknowledge acting principal Thomas Panagiotakis and community liaison officer Trish Booth for all their hard work in organising such a tremendous event.

SIR JOSEPH BANKS HIGH SCHOOL BREAKFAST CLUB

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (19:44): Everyone knows breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but for different reasons some students do not have the opportunity to have breakfast at home. On Wednesday morning I attended the breakfast club at Sir Joseph Banks High School. The breakfast club is hosted by the school's P&C association and run by the students who prepare and serve the food. P&C President Robin Boland was determined to ensure that students have enough fuel for the day to assist with their learning and has been very active in getting the breakfast club off the ground. The P&C association has also raised funds for chilled water refilling stations at the school so that students can stay hydrated during the day. This assists the students to save money on plastic water bottles, as well as saving the environment from unwanted plastic waste. I commend Sir Joseph Banks High School P&C and Robin for all the great work they are doing and I thank them for hosting a great brekkie for myself and the students.

DANI CAMPBELL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:45): I bring to the attention of the House Mr Dani Campbell, a Kanahooka resident, and I would like to spotlight his incredible contribution to skateboarding. The 21-year-old young talent spends hours and hours training, which earned him the national title of Australian Skateboarding Champion earlier this year. This fantastic achievement only fuelled his fire to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Following an impressive community fundraising campaign, Mr Campbell now has his chance and he travelled to Los Angeles in late July to compete against the world's best. Good luck to Mr Campbell, win or lose, Shellharbour is extremely proud of you.

KAYE SCOTT

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:46): Wahroonga boxer Kaye Scott claimed a national title at the Australian National Boxing Championship in Melbourne in June. "Scotty", as she is known, is no stranger to success. In 2014 she captained the Australian Boxing Team at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and qualified for the quarterfinals in the middleweight division. Two years later she became the most successful amateur Australian boxer at a world championship when she claimed a silver medal in the light heavyweight division in Kazakhstan. After dropping two weight divisions, in 2017 Scotty won the New South Wales State title in the welterweight division, qualified for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and went on to win the bronze medal. That result has only sharpened her focus on qualifying for the 2020 Olympics, with last month's triumph over Reesha Lewis filling her with confidence that she will indeed make her Olympic debut. I wish Scotty all the best for the world championships in October and the official Olympic qualifying period commencing in December.

CENTRAL COAST WOMEN IN SERVICE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:47): Huge congratulations to every woman involved in organising our fabulous celebration of women in service on the Central Coast. Women—and two men, including the member for Wyong—from across the coast joined to recognise the tireless work of women's service organisations who contribute so much to our community. It was moving to admire representatives from leading women's service organisations each light a candle of friendship. I take a moment to recognise and thank each of these community leaders and candle holders: from Zonta Club of Central Coast, Sue Johnston; Central Coast Community Women's Health, Edwyna Appel; Country Women's Association, Bev Britton; BPW Central Coast, Patricia Harrison; Soroptimist International—Brisbane Waters, Lorraine Cook; Didi Foundation, Jan Pryor; Tuggerah Lakes Arts Society, Rasheeda Flight; Central Coast Council—Status of Women Advisory Group, Councillor Lisa Matthews; Rotary, Sandy Hunt Sharman; and Coast Shelter. We also heard from Iranian Australian Saba Vasefi, academic, feminist filmmaker, poet and human rights activist who shared poetry, song and a translation of her journey as a feminist activist in Iran to Australia as refugee and celebrate her contribution to our nation. Love and gratitude to all women who serve our community!

CENTRAL COAST ANIMAL CARE FACILITY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:48): As patron of the Central Coast Animal Care Facility, I am delighted to inform the House that the Central Coast Animal Care Facility has been nominated as a finalist in the Companion Animal Rescue Awards. This national award attracts 1,000 entries each year. It is a way to acknowledge "excellence and innovation" in animal rescue. This is exactly what is happening at Central Coast Animal Care Facility, whose staff use social media as a tool to reach the local community and spread news about dogs in need of a new home. The facility also has a "no kill" policy and as patron I am so proud of their efforts in rehoming hundreds and hundreds of pets. I have an enormous amount of respect for all staff and volunteers at the

Central Coast Animal Care Facility who do this work. I pay tribute to the incredible Dee Walton and Kim Pickavance and thank them for all they do for our community. Congratulations again on this very well-deserved nomination and I wish them the best of luck.

GLENN O'DELL

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (19:49): Today I applaud the heroic actions of Newcastle's Glenn O'Dell, who rescued a young girl from a burning building on the weekend. Shortly before 11.00 p.m. on Saturday a fire took hold of a terrace house on Beaumont Street in Islington. Mr O'Dell, who lives across the street, heard the smashing of glass and went outside to be told by the resident of the burning terrace that, amongst others, there was a young girl in the neighbouring home. Despite the intense heat, Mr O'Dell kicked the front door open and raced upstairs to grab the young girl, who had not been woken by the activated smoke alarm. He also ensured the safety of the terrace's other residents. Without Mr O'Dell's intervention many lives could have been lost. His courage in the face of extreme danger is to be highly commended. Well done and thank you, Glenn. Newcastle is proud. You are a true hero!

KU-RING-GAI WILDFLOWER ART AND GARDEN FESTIVAL

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (19:50): Australia is home to some of the most striking flowers and other flora in the world. So I am pleased that I will soon be attending the annual Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Art and Garden Festival in my electorate of Davidson at St. Ives. This year's festival will be held on Sunday 25 August. The attractions will include an Australian wildlife display, children's craft workshops, plant sales, live music and food and drink stalls. An environmentally themed sculpture walk will be launched this year, with a total of \$5,000 in cash prizes, partly funded through the Ku-ring-gai environmental levy. I commend the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden for encouraging artists and sculptors to demonstrate the use of recycled materials in their artwork. I also congratulate them for introducing a special children's category this year. Well done to the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden and all those involved in its activities including Ku-ring-gai Council.

CHARLESTOWN MEALS ON WHEELS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:51): Happy fiftieth anniversary to Charlestown Meals on Wheels! The wonderful volunteers at Charlestown deliver delicious lunches to those who cannot cook for themselves. Not only do the volunteers deliver home-style cooked meals, importantly they provide social interaction, a friendly face and a bit of a chat for many people who find it hard to get out. Every three-course meal is delivered hot and fresh by one of the 160 volunteers, many of whom have been giving up their precious time for years to help others. One is Horst Kuegler, a former marine engineer, who has been working in the Charlestown kitchen for 20 years and really enjoys the camaraderie of Charlestown Meals on Wheels. Charlestown Meals on Wheels operates out of a cottage, which was gifted to them by Charlestown Rotary back in 1974. To this day, all the meals are cooked, plated up and despatched from that cottage. So it is fitting that Charlestown Rotary was joining the Meals on Wheels volunteers at today's celebration at Central Leagues Club. Congratulations and thank you to everyone at Charlestown Meals on Wheels.

HAWKESBURY HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:52): I wish to pay tribute to the Hawkesbury branch of the United Hospital Auxiliaries. This volunteer group is now in its eighty-third year of service to the community. I had the privilege of attending the recent annual general meeting, where the committee announced that in the past 23 years over \$1.7 million had been raised by this branch of volunteers for much needed hospital equipment. The branch has 82 active members and 22 inactive members, who due to illness or age are unable to work within the hospital although they still support the branch. I thank all 104 current members, as well as all past members for their tireless devotion to a wonderful cause.

TRIBUTE TO ALLAN COOK

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:53): Allan Cook, aged 67, recently passed away. I pass on my respects and my sincere condolences to his family. Allan was a resident of my electorate and was well known and respected as a Wyong Shire lifeguard and a lifeguard supervisor for many years. He retired from his role with council in 2011, after 34 years of service and more than 1,000 rescues. A memorial celebrating his life was held on 4 August at Toowoong Bay Surf Life Saving Club. The turnout was a testament to his service to the community. Allan is remembered as a modest man, who was held in high regard by the community. He is survived by his wife, Shayne, and their two children, Daniel and Hayley. I acknowledge his support of the Australian Labor Party on the Central Coast over many years. He will be sorely missed. Vale, Allan Cook.

AMAHLI WALSH

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:54): I recognise 14-year-old Amahli Walsh, a passionate advocate for cancer research, who sacrificed her lovely locks to support the Love Your Sister charity. Cutting years of hair growth from your head is not a simple task for a young girl but Amahli is not deterred if it will make a difference for someone enduring treatment. Amahli's initial target was to raise \$500 for two reasons: to allow her chopped hair to be used for wigs for those in need and to support the Love Your Sister Charity. Already her campaign has raised \$616 and she is confident that by leading by example she will help to encourage more people to follow in her footsteps to support those facing illness and hair loss.

The Love Your Sister charity commenced when co-founder Connie Johnson was inspired to create a campaign to vanquish all cancers following her personal diagnosis with breast cancer. Proudly supporting his sister, Australian actor Samuel Johnson decided to unicycle around the country to raise awareness about the need for all women to have a mammogram. Amahli understands first-hand the tragedy of losing someone close to her with cancer and has sadly also personally witnessed the detrimental impacts to a person's dignity when suffering from hair loss. By raising money for the Love Your Sister charity, Amahli is optimistic that one day we might find a cure so that no one has to suffer from a cancer prognosis.

LEE ACADEMY TUGGERAH

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:55): I congratulate the Lee Academy Tuggerah for being voted to go straight through to the semifinals of *Australia's Got Talent*. An acrobatic dance routine was put together by Lee Academy studio director Jo Cotterill. The acrobatic dance group auditioned for the hit Channel 7 show with a spectacular dance routine, wowing the judges with their talent and strength while all four judges gave them a standing ovation and the acrobatic dance group earning themselves the Golden Buzzer. Lee Academy's studio is an inspiring dance company for students of the performing arts on the Central Coast. Well done to director Jo Cotterill and the acrobatic dance group for supporting the Central Coast. Good luck in *Australia's Got Talent*.

LONA-MAY DENNIS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:56): I congratulate Lona-May Dennis from Inverell on being named 2019 Young Volunteer of the Year for the New England and north west region for her work with the Cerebral Palsy Alliance. Lona-May Dennis has amazing passion for helping people with cerebral palsy in the community, but particularly her efforts in caring for her sister, Amber Dennis, who has cerebral palsy. I recognise Lona-May and Amber Dennis because they are the first participants from the New England region to take part in the Krazy Kosci Klimb, which covers 18.4 kilometres from Charlotte's Pass to the top of Mount Kosciuszko before returning to Charlotte's Pass. As a regional finalist, Lona-May Dennis has been invited to the gala State ceremony in Sydney to celebrate the New South Wales Volunteer of the Year awards. I wish her all the very best and congratulate and thank her on behalf of the community.

LUKE BAILEY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:57): I inform the House of Luke Bailey who is the winner of the Kurt Fearnley Scholarship. The scholarship will allow this Wingham wheelchair racer to move fulltime to Newcastle for training and competition. Luke who is 21-years-old is hoping that this will help him qualify for the world championships this November in Dubai, and ultimately the Paralympics. His scholarship win was recently announced and Kurt was on hand to make the presentation. Luke Bailey returned from Switzerland last year rated tenth in the world in the 100 metre sprint, and with him being able to train daily with this move to Newcastle he is hoping to better his times. I wish Luke all the best and look forward to cheering on our next Paralympian. Go Luke!

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:58): On 14 August 2019 I had the privilege to attend a Victory in the Pacific commemoration service at Cabravale Memorial Park. Victory in the Pacific Day commemorates the day on which the empire of Japan surrendered and ended World War II. I had the honour to march in solidarity with Australian, British, American and New Zealand veterans and their families. The community commemorated the victory through speeches, hymns and the laying of wreaths. I was honoured to join our local community, RSL sub-branches, the NSW Police Force, serving Defence Force members, my parliamentary colleagues and the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AO, QC, to commemorate this important day. I acknowledge Chairperson of the Victory in the Pacific Committee, Ray James, and Vice President of the Cabravale Diggers Club, Les Eldridge. We will never forget the sacrifices of those men and women who gave their lives to protect our freedom. Lest We Forget.

NEWCASTLE WOMEN'S COUNTRY RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:59): I congratulate the Newcastle Women's Country Rugby League team on its emphatic 24-10 win over the Mounties in the Harvey Norman New South Wales Women's Grand Final. The Mounties were first to put points on the board at ANZ Stadium; however, tries to Bobbi Law and Kylie Hilder saw Newcastle go into the half-time break with a 12-6 lead. The Mounties also struck first after the break; however, Tayla Predebon hit back before late points from Simone Smith solidified the victory. Newcastle Women's Country Rugby League displayed phenomenal speed and formidable defence, showcasing skill and strength that is sure to inspire young girls to strap on the boots. I congratulate Newcastle Women's Country Rugby League. I cannot wait to see them do it again.

COFFS HARBOUR PARKRUN

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:00): A few weeks ago in the height of winter Katie Hunter from my electoral office asked me to participate in a Saturday morning park run at seven o'clock—a five-kilometre timed event. It is a free event held in many towns and cities across the world. Our local council was going to charge for the use of the park but after my intervention it came to its senses and waived the fees. Coffs Harbour Parkrun started in June 2017. It averages about 100 runners a week, and up to 150 or 160 in the warmer months. It is run by Ed Brazier, Elisabeth Brazier, Michelle Versluys, Keith Williams and David Goodwin. As a former runner I thought I could win this five kilometre event. In the first two laps I overtook everyone ahead of me but after that younger and older people progressively passed me. I was stuffed like a turducken for the rest of the week!

MARY LEET

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:01): It was an absolute delight to recognise Mary Leet with a NSW Seniors Achievement award. Celebrated with good friends at beautiful Alloura Waters, in Davistown, over cakes and tea, Mary has contributed so much to our community. Mary has been the driving force behind the craft group workers and has also contributed to Rotary, Gosford Hospital, the Samaritans both here and overseas. She remains busy knitting trauma teddies and clothes for premature babies in our local community. The celebratory gathering was a reflection of great friendships over many years, love and laughter shared over craft and joy in the adorable Alloura Waters facility, settled on the Davistown peninsula within the beautiful Brisbane Water. In the words of her very good friend Joan Reber, "I would like to highly recommend Mary for public recognition of her life's timeless effort; she has given to the community both here and abroad for so many years". Mary is another well respected, very charitable lady of the Central Coast. Cheers to Mary and her contributions.

MAX POTENTIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:02): I recognise the terrific young people who recently completed the Max Potential leadership program through Club Mudgee. Max Potential pairs enthusiastic young people who are passionate about helping their community with mentors who guide them in delivering a community project. I was honoured to meet students at a recent showcase: Abbey Hamilton, Abilee Cummins, Adrienne Diplas, Ashton Breadsell, Claire Finter, Clare Busch, Emma Wissner, Hope Norris, Sammy Barnes and Sarah Gatley. Great work team! I cannot wait to see what you will achieve as future leaders in our region. I really enjoyed hearing about their community projects, sharing some of their journeys and presenting some awards. And to the mentors—Mat Croake, Jennifer Crust, Zheyang Sun, Bruce Roberts, Fatima Ryan, Chandelle Newbigging, Jen Consadine, Amanda Roach, Amber Pescud and Alison Whittaker—I thank them so much for lending their time and knowledge to help these young people grow.

MINGARA ATHLETICS CLUB

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:03): On Friday 28 June I attended the Mingara Athletics Club annual general meeting and awards night. I was grateful to again be invited to another of the club's successful events. I acknowledge the 2018-19 management committee, including Greg Ashe, Geoff Crumpton, Margaret Beardslee, Sally Hunt, Nathanael Shergold and Cheryl Rowe for their continuing hard work and efforts over the past year. I pay significant acknowledgment and best wishes to Greg Ashe who provided his fourteenth and final president's report on the night, having stepped down from the role. I welcome incoming president, Bob Graham, and look forward to working with him and the new management committee of the club for the benefit of the community. Special mention should also be given to all nominees and recipients of the athletic club awards on the night for the 2018-2019 season. I am always impressed with the diverse range of talent we have on the Central Coast and the remarkable results we exhibit in track and field. Congratulations again to the club for a successful evening.

AVALON BEACH SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (20:04): I congratulate the Avalon Beach Surf Life Saving Club—the Australian Surf Club of the Year. The Avalon boat rowers, led by Nathan and Mel Wellings this weekend, put on an extraordinary fundraising event for two local charities: Gotcha4Life, led by the wonderful and irrepressible local Pittwater resident Gus Worland, and One Eighty, an Avalon-based charity that focuses on mental health and well-being, particularly among young people. It was great to see the community support shown by Steven Pearce, the CEO of Surf Lifesaving NSW, who participated in a 24-hour rowing festival. Several rowing machines were arrayed in the club and participants rowed for an hour each over a 24-hour period. Everyone involved put in a huge effort. I thank them all on behalf of a grateful community.

NEWCASTLE NETBALL ASSOCIATION OPENS TEAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:05): I congratulate Newcastle Netball Association's opens team on being named State champions at the 2019 Netball NSW Senior State Titles event. The team went through the gruelling three-day competition undefeated, scoring more than 560 goals across 18 short games. It is their second State title in three years, coming off the back of a second-place finish in 2018. As the highest ranked regional team in the competition this year, the opens team also won the Pat Weston OAM Country Champions Cup for the third year in a row. Georgia McVey was a stand-out performer in defence and the dedication of long-serving coach, Traci Baber, ensured the team's success. To see Newcastle Netball Association consistently achieve such wonderful results is a credit to the hard work and commitment of the players, coaches, managers and supporters. I congratulate all involved. Here's to another title!

TRIBUTE TO TONY STEVENS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (20:06): Tony Stevens died last week, aged almost 95. Tony was an inspirational crusader for a cause in support of children, both healthy and disabled, for over 60 years. His book *The Last Gamble & The Years Between* tells the story of his life and the challenging fight for a "simple" plan: He built rollerskating rinks, protecting children from injury whilst skating on roads, footpaths and other unsafe areas. The rinks also financially supported children with disabilities. Tony fought council procrastination and political difficulties, whilst championing rollerskating facilities in the Bankstown, Blacktown, Fairfield and Liverpool communities.

A lifelong skater, he turned the Sydney Harbour Bridge into a skating rink in 1974, skated around Australia for 40 days, and skated from Sydney to Canberra at the age of 83—all for a cause. Tony campaigned outside this House on Macquarie Street and he welcomed the introduction of the NDIS, having fought for such a scheme since the Whitlam years. Tony's son, Larry, who had Down syndrome and only lived to 52, was clearly a motivating force. Roger Lovell of Young Adults Disabled Association summed up Tony as "a man of principle, integrity, humility, devotion, truth, dedication, care, compassion, empathy and wisdom." He will be remembered with fondness and admiration by many.

PETER FISHER

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:07): I celebrate the work of a talented member of the Gosford electorate, Peter Fisher. After a great career teaching English as a second language, Peter has retired but has not hit the couch. For the past three and a half years he has been working on his book *Among the Ferns: Rainforest History and Heritage on the NSW Central Coast*. It will cover many details of the beautiful rainforest pockets and gullies of the Central Coast, including Somersby Falls, Waterfall Bay waterfalls, Katandra, Rumbalara, Strickland and more. Peter emphasises human interaction with these areas, focusing on the remaining heritage evidence.

Evidence of the past includes timber getting, quarrying, water collecting, fern collecting, flower collecting and tourism. Peter shared fabulous photos and a wealth of information with me, making me curious to go and explore for myself. The book will emphasise existing walking trails, local secret sights, botany at the layperson's level and will encourage locals and tourists to explore the beautiful Central Coast. It is in a fabulously bound, almost-final-edit version, dotted with pencilled changes and I cannot wait for Peter's self-published book. I thank Peter and wish him all the best.

CENTRAL COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:08): I congratulate the Central Coast Academy of Sport on its success at the national 3x3 Big Hustle Uni basketball tournament recently held at the University of Sydney. The team members for the Central Coast were Richmond Whitmore, Jacob Cracknell, Ollie Robilliard and Tye McGann. They were awarded silver. I congratulate those fine young men on their success and on the immense effort and dedication they put into the competition. They are all former students of the University of Newcastle

and are currently contracted to the Central Coast Academy of Sport, led by Ian "Moose" Robilliard, OAM. The academy is producing the next generation of national and international sporting champions from local suburbs on the Central Coast. I congratulate Richmond Whitmore, Jacob Cracknell, Ollie Robilliard and Tye McGann on their outstanding effort in securing a silver medal at the national 3x3 Big Hustle Uni basketball tournament.

ALLAN BENSON

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:09): I acknowledge Allan Benson of Ourimbah, a valued member of the Central Coast community, and what he does to make our community a great place. He is involved in many community activities and is one of the people who makes the Central Coast a great place to live. Allan is involved in the Central Coast Group of Birding NSW, a very large group on the Central Coast of dedicated twitchers who most recently identified regent honeyeaters as having returned to the Central Coast in some numbers in the Blue Haven area. Allan was one of the first on the scene to identify and record the birds' return and make sure local authorities were aware of their presence so they can be protected. Allan is also media spokesperson for the local SES service. He is a dedicated member of the Ourimbah Region Residents Association. I thank Allan on behalf of the whole of the Central Coast community.

ONE80TC

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:11): On 2 August 2019 I attended ONE80TC's Rebuilders Dinner. ONE80TC is a Christian organisation with the purpose of rescuing lives from the devastating effects of alcohol and drug addiction. At the dinner I had the pleasure of celebrating the achievements of former students and graduates of ONE80TC who have successfully transformed their lives and have now resettled in the community. It was great to have them share their stories of transformation with the current students. I congratulate all former students and graduates on the transformation of their lives and wish the same for all current and future students. I commend and thank CEO Mark Hill and everyone at ONE80TC for their dedication to turning lives around and putting them on the path to success.

ALEEYAH CLIFFORD AND RUBY HACKETT

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:11): I acknowledge the efforts and activism of Merewether High School students Aleeyah Clifford and Ruby Hackett who organised a pro-choice rally and march in Newcastle last month. These remarkable young women drew around 200 people to the Our Bodies Our Choices rally in Civic Park. They led a march through Newcastle streets and organised guest speakers, attracting participants from all walks of life. It was a true representation of the diversity of lives that the issue touches. Aleeyah and Ruby are both 16 years old. It was wonderful to see these young women stand up and tackle this important issue with courage and confidence. I congratulate them both.

LACHLAN WILLIAMS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (20:12): Lachie Williams is an up-and-coming star in the Manning. He has been selected to play in the under-18s rugby league team to tour England in November. Lachie played for grand finalist Old Bar in last season's group three under-18s. However, he moved to the Wingham Tigers this year. He alternated between the Tigers and the Taree Red Rovers in his junior footy days. Lachie believes his off-season training with the Cronulla Sharks SG Ball squad was pivotal to him being selected. The selected squad will be away for two weeks and will play three games. This will be the second time he has represented Country, having gone to New Zealand with the under-16 side two years ago. I wish Lachie well on his trip to the United Kingdom and wish the whole team every success in the games ahead.

KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge members of the Korean War Veterans Association and veterans across our nation as we acknowledge the 66th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice of the Korean War. A service was recently held in Walsh Park at Bomaderry to commemorate the event with the Deputy Consul General of the Republic of Korea, Mr Suchang Cho in attendance as well as local members of the Korean War Veterans Association remembrance committee, and community representatives.

I pay tribute to members of the Korean War Veterans Association particularly Bob Morris and Rod Coupland, who for years have fought for recognition of veterans and ensured that what is so often regarded as 'The Forgotten War' is commemorated and acknowledged. I also thank Mavis Morris and Alice Burns, two stalwarts for the veteran community across the Shoalhaven who alongside our veterans have ensured that communities right across New South Wales and Australia remember and pay tribute to our fallen soldiers and those who returned home.

BEATS AWARDS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I congratulate the Murwillumbah & District Business Chamber for holding the successful 2019 Business Excellence Awards Tweed Shire (BEATS) Saturday August 3rd 2019. I congratulate all businesses who participated. Winners were: Excellence in Community Services & Social Enterprise - Tweed Byron & Ballina Community Transport Inc.; Excellence in Sustainability - SAE Group Pty Ltd; Excellence in Innovation - Virtus Heritage Pty Ltd; Retail & Personal Services - Luxe Elopements; Business & Professional Services - Summerland Financial Services; Health, Care & Wellness Industries - Rainbow Living Probiotics; Trade, Construction & Manufacturing - Harding's Earthmoving; Tourism & Visitor Experience - North Star Holiday Resort; Outstanding Employer of Choice - Varela & Swift Pharmacy; Outstanding Young Employee - Caitlyn Knight - SAE Group Pty Ltd; Outstanding Young Employee - Sudhager Sivabalan - Smile Street; Outstanding Young Entrepreneur - Aysha Sun - Brandit Creative; Outstanding Young Entrepreneur - Lauren Budd - Misfits Training Club; Outstanding Business Leader - Donna Simone Masing - Global Performance Therapy; Start Up Superstar - Blue Ginger Picnics; Excellence in Micro Business – Artable; Excellence in Small Business - Dona Cholita; Excellence in Business - Harding's Earthmoving; People's Choice Award - Carol's Place; Business of the Year - Harding's Earthmoving.

BEN WEST

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—When most people are relaxing on a Sunday morning, you can find Ben West of Casino in thigh-high cold water in the Richmond River endeavouring to keep the River as clean as possible by dragging shopping trolleys out of the mud. Ben takes the trolleys from the River, places them on the riverbank and contacts the supermarkets to come and collect them. Ben is ably assisted by other volunteers when he needs additional help to rescue some of the more difficult trolleys that are snagged. He also picks up rubbish on his walks to and from the River. A truly awesome job from one of the quiet achievers of our community. Well done Ben.

KU-RING-GAI ART SOCIETY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—As part of the Berejiklian NSW Government, I'm pleased that the arts across NSW are going from strength to strength, with \$800 million dedicated to the arts in this year's budget. Locally, I recently opened the Ku-ring-gai Art Society's 54th Annual Awards Exhibition. I was awed by the talent of all the artists in the exhibition, with beautiful and varied works evoking a range of emotions. The 285 or so works on display were oils, pastels, watercolours, acrylics, drawings, prints and mixed media. They ranged from portraits and still life to bold expansive landscapes. One of the favourites that grabbed me was the captivatingly pensive, 'Elder Bushman' by Afra Beukers, which won an award. It is very pleasing that the Ku-ring-gai Art Society have grown locally in my electorate from small beginnings more than 50 years ago. They continue to attract enthusiastic members and have become possibly the most successful society of its kind in NSW. Congratulations to all concerned.

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS EXPO

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—It was a pleasure to visit the Inaugural Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce Business Expo on Saturday, 10th August 2019 at Bankstown Sports Club and meet some of the many exhibitors on display. The theme of this year's expo was 'Connections Creating the Future' which aims to emphasise manufacturing and the importance of innovation and teamwork. The creativity and innovation on display from both new, as well as established local businesses was very impressive and the expo is a fantastic way of showcasing the amazing businesses we have on offer in our region. I praise Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce CEO Mr Wally Mehanna and the Board of Directors for their efforts in promoting our region's businesses and for hosting this inaugural expo. I acknowledge and congratulate the Chamber on the success of this inaugural event.

TRIBUTE TO AUNTY GLADYS NIMMITT

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I rise to recognise Aunty Gladys Nimmitt who passed away on 23 July this year. I knew Aunty Gladys from her involvement in the community and in particular her role as an Aboriginal Community representative on the Community 2168 Management Committee. She was also a long-term community member on the Liverpool Council Aboriginal Consultative Committee. She was also a member of the Gandangarra Local Aboriginal Land Council. She was heavily involved in a number of community groups including the NAIDOC Week working group at Liverpool. She made an important contribution to our area and she will be missed.

IAIN WINTON—MY CRONULLA

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—I congratulate Iain Winton of Caringbah South on the publication of his collection of poems *My Cronulla*. Mr Winton has always wanted to promote Cronulla and decided that a book containing a collection of poems and his photos from growing up in the area was the best way to do so. The back cover proclaims: "My Cronulla is Iain Winton's paean of praise to the place where he has made his home in the country that he adopted and that adopted him when he was a teenager. He has observed, loved, photographed and written about Sutherland Shire and its people for 60 years. This collection lets us share his delight in its open places and its secrets." Some of the poems shed a light on Cronulla events and icons past and present like Joe's Milk Bar. Mr Winton is due to publish his memoir *The Last of the Lucky Childhoods* this year. The memoir is an account of growing up in Glasgow in 1940s and 1950s.

BRIAN DEE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Brian Dee is a long-serving Justice of the Peace in the Wallsend electorate, having been a JP now for 55 years. He received a 50 year certificate from the then-Attorney General which he displays proudly, and he bills himself as the only mobile JP in the state of New South Wales. Brian goes to people who need his services, rather than expecting them to come to him, and he advertises his services with business cards, a very prominent sign on his front fence, signage on his car and monogrammed polo shirts. He goes out of his way to help people who need his services, staying open most of the year and offering help to people who need JP services outside of normal business hours. I commend Brian on his fifty-five years of community service, his tireless work and his commitment to helping those in need.

GERRINGONG ROTARY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)—On Sunday 30th of June, I attended the Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise 16th Annual Changeover Luncheon. I am very humbled to now be an Honorary Member of the Club. I would like to acknowledge the incoming office bearers and board of Directors for 2019-2020 including President Sandra McCarthy, President Elect Brian Warren, Immediate Past President Tim Lawrence, Secretary Colin Watt, Minute Secretary Peter Mayes, Treasurer Andrejs Medenis. And also the Directors – Astrid Quinn, Tina Ballard, Pauline Thwaites, Bob Green, Sue Thomas and District Governor Peter Ford. I would also like to acknowledge Dr Christa Wood who has done an enormous amount of work and helped to secure a local funding grant for the very successful Social Dancing with Dementia program in Gerringong. Well done to all! And I look forward to participating in the annual Christmas Street Parade in December.

SHANKARLAL TRIVEDI

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)—I would like to acknowledge Mr Shankarlal Trivedi who recently passed away at age 107. Mr Trivedi was one of the oldest people to hold a passport in Australian history and was also Australia's oldest Hindu. A Kellyville local, Mr Trivedi moved to Australia in 2001 with his family. In 2017, at age 105 Mr Trivedi was determined to travel back to India to celebrate his great-grandson's wedding. He applied for his passport and jetted off not so long after to the state of Gujarat, in India, where he spent the first 80 years of his life to celebrate with family and friends. During his life he lived through two world wars and his country's independence from the British Empire. He was regarded as a celebrity within Hindu circles, celebrated for his community spirit. He has been described as a vibrant man and he had many friends – 450 of whom attended his funeral in July. His son Jagdish says the most important lesson he learned from his father was to "make the world slightly more beautiful than it is. Then one can say, 'I have lived a full life.'" Here's to Shankarlal.

MATESHIP FAIR

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education)—Earlier this month I had the honour of attending the Mateship Fair at Parramatta Riverside to celebrate Indian Independence Day and the United Indian Association Inc 25th Anniversary. I would like to congratulate United Indian Association Inc on reaching its silver anniversary and commend it for its valuable work over the past 25 years. The United Indian Association is the NSW's largest Indian Association and has been hosting successful events, that encourage social and community development, since 1994. This event attracts over 10,000 people every year to enjoy the many activities on offer which include a flag-raising ceremony, a parade, dance and music performances, rides and the chance to taste some truly delicious food. It was my pleasure to be able to attend the Mateship Fair and I thank the UIA for their continued efforts to promote closer relations between the Indian and wider Australian communities. Thank you, President Sreeni Pillamarri, for organising and inviting me to another thoroughly enjoyable day.

BOWER REUSE AND REPAIR CENTRE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Operating for over 20 years from the Addison Road Community Centre in Marrickville, the Bower Reuse and Repair Centre is a beacon of environmental leadership in our inner west community. The Bower is committed to reducing landfill and waste, and collects unwanted furniture and construction materials across 20 local government areas, giving unwanted items a new lease of life. In addition to their many programs, The Bower this year hosted the inaugural Art from Trash exhibition, showcasing a range of repurposed works made from recycled materials. The awards seek to encourage creativity and innovation when it comes to upcycling our waste.

Congratulations to Mia Sabel who won the People's Choice Award for her work titled Banksia, a lampshade made from 300 single use plastic bags collected from Woolworths and Coles. Ms Sabel's work highlights the damage single use plastics do to our environment and the impacts on sealife and ocean ecology. Congratulations to all the artists who entered the exhibition for your beautiful and thought provoking works, and congratulations to Guido and all at the Bower for another fantastic initiative.

TED HENEBERY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—Today I would like to congratulate Ted Henebery, from the Hornsby Lions Club on becoming the 5th Australian to be named Lions International Stamp Club President. Ted is a great man who has dedicated many hours to the Hornsby Lions Club and given back so much to our community. Ted was presented with the Presidency by past President Barry Palmer, who was the first Australian International president in 2013. In Australia the Lions Club, through the donation of stamps, has raised \$48,000 which has helped purchase walkers for children with cerebral palsy through their Children's Mobility Fund. The Hornsby Lions is by far one of the greatest community organisations we have in Hornsby and I thank them for their contribution. Congratulations Ted and I wish you all the best in your new role.

ASSYRIAN UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE AUSTRALIAN CHAPTER AND THE YOUNG ASSYRIANS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I rise to commend and congratulate the Assyrian Universal Alliance - Australian Chapter and the Young Assyrians for hosting the 9th Annual Assyria Day Conference on Sunday 30th June, 2019. We were joined on the evening by Professor Yildiz from the University of Salamanca, Spain in the Faculty of Philology, Department of Hebrew and Aramaic Studies. I would like to thank Professor Efrem Yildiz for providing his tremendous insight into the Assyrian Identity and their religious complexity on the evening. Your talk was incredibly detailed, insightful and was enjoyed by all in attendance. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the other speakers on the evening, Mr Khlapieel Bnyameen, Mr Peter Youkhana, Mr Hermiz Shahen and H.B. Mar Meelis Zaia for your contributions towards making the event a great success. Once again, congratulations to the Assyrian Universal Alliance and the organising committee for hosting another very successful Assyria Day Conference.

ANNUAL HILLS SHIRE SERVICE RECEPTION

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—On 9 August 2019, I was honoured to join the Mayor of The Hills Shire Council, Dr Michelle Byrne, to host The Hills' Annual Services Reception at The Pioneer Room within Castle Grand Community Centre in Castle Hill. We acknowledged our local Police and Emergency Services who give so much of themselves to the community and ask so little in return. We are indebted to all our unsung heroes and will never take for granted their commitment to protecting the community. We also recognised all Order of Australia recipients in The Hills District, including seven recipients from the Baulkham Hills electorate, who made an outstanding contribution to our society within their field, namely in sports, the arts, and service and community work. I felt privileged to be able to acknowledge the selfless feats of local individuals and community groups, and pay tribute to their extraordinary service to Australia and humanity at large.

ANSTO AND SHIREBIZ

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—Earlier this year the NSW Government announced a funding injection of \$12.5 million for the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation known as ANSTO. This investment will create a new Nuclear Medicine and Technology Hub generating an estimated 5,000 new jobs. I acknowledge the work of ShireBiz, in particular Tony Blain, in driving this major investment. In my office five years ago Tony and Barry Alchin, Chair of Shire Biz, hatched the idea of creating this science business space on ANSTO's site and here we are today with it now coming to fruition. I take this opportunity to thank Tony for his help over the years as he has greatly assisted me and my office. Tony is an active member of our community, he is my representative on the Sutherland Traffic and Safety Committee and has provided me with wise counsel for a variety of issues in my electorate.

KU CHELTENHAM MEMORIAL PRESCHOOL

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—Last week I attended the official opening of a new sandpit renovation at KU Cheltenham Memorial Preschool. The preschool is located adjacent to Cheltenham Girls' High School. In fact, both owe their very existence to the generosity of the Vicars family, which donated the land on which the school and the preschool now stand. The preschool has played a central role in the Cheltenham community for over 60 years. In fact, last week I was fortunate enough to meet parents who had attended the preschool themselves as children, and who now send their own children there.

For many of them, KU Cheltenham Memorial Preschool is an important place for their family. It's where the community comes together, it's where lifelong friendships are forged, and it's where they know their children will get a great start in life thanks to the caring, dedicated and professional team of early childhood educators. I do want to pay special tribute to them, and particularly to preschool Director Melanie Healey and KU CEO Christine Legge. I thank them and everyone who made last Thursday such a special occasion, and who gave me such a warm welcome to KU Cheltenham Memorial Preschool.

CANTON MIXED BOWLERS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong)—Congratulations to Canton Mixed Bowlers for raising \$2100 for the Shirley Shuttle. Barbara Galvin to honour the memory of her mother, set up the Shirley Shuttle to provide transport at nominal or no charge at all to cancer sufferers. Canton Mixed Bowlers hold a charity day each year where bowlers dress in pink, play bowls, run raffles and hold a cake auction and the money is donated to charity. The chosen charity this year was the Shirley Shuttle. The Shirley Shuttle provides an invaluable service to cancer patients from across the Central Coast.

Shirley Shuttle is not funded by the government and it relies solely on the volunteers, sponsors and donations. Contributing requires a lot of heart and selflessness. Congratulations to the bowlers, volunteers and sponsors working together who have raised \$2100. The bowlers wish to extend their thanks to Canton Beach Sports Club for waiving the green fees on the day. The local bowling community in the Wyong electorate often get together to raise important funds for community organisations. Once again a big thank you to the incredible members of the Canton Mixed Bowlers for their tremendous efforts in raising funds for the Shirley Shuttle.

NSW GOVERNMENT STATE REPRESENTATIVE AWARD

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Allison Barrett, Amanda Cocks and Keinanga Vaemolo on recently receiving. Allison, Amanda and Keinanga were awarded the prestigious State Representative Awards in recognition of their selection to represent New South Wales in the 2019 Australian Dragon Boat Championships, held earlier this year. The Australian Dragon Boat Championships is Australia's premier Dragon Boating event in which clubs from all states compete against one another for the title of National Champion. The annual championships attract nearly 3,000 competitors from clubs all around the country to participate in club vs club and State vs State races.

This year, the 22nd Annual Championships were held in Canberra, where all three sportswomen were awarded gold medals for their outstanding efforts in the 500 metre State v State Grand Finals. Allison and Amanda contributed to the NSW team's first place finish in the Senior B Division, and Keinanga in the Premier Division. I congratulate Allison, Amanda and Keinanga on their outstanding achievements and extend my best wishes for their future endeavours.

MANNING-GREAT LAKES TIP RIDERS MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—The Manning-Great Lakes Tip Riders Mountain Bike Club who over the last weekend hosted the Hardrock 6 Hour Mountain Bike race at the Kiwarra State Forest Mountain Bike Park. This will be the event's fourth year with more than 250 riders took part. Those competing included eight -time world champion Jason English, who won the race last year. Luke Brame, who has just returned from representing Australia in cross country events in Canada was another starter along with Michael Harris, winner of the Reef to Reef four day stage last week in North Queensland and our very own Former world superbike champion Troy Bayliss. The race is conducted over a timed format of six hours from 9am, with solo or team racers completing as many laps as possible or desired over that time. Riders have nominated from around NSW and Sunday's field will be the biggest in the events history. Congratulations to the organising committee for an excellent event and Thanks to many local businesses for their support including:

- Charlie Kennett - Pacific Blue Metal
- Bruce Pain - Regional Financial Solutions
- Pete Matuszny - Manning Valley Free Range Eggs

- Michael, Mags & Paul - Bourkes Bicycles

SOLAR MY SCHOOL FUNDRAISING EVENT

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Congratulations to Mosman Public School's P&C on their recent Solar my School film fundraising event. Mosman Public School is the first school in my electorate to pursue a solar project as part of the NSW Government's Solar my School program, and I am proud to support their endeavours to go solar. The night included a special screening of the film 2040 and a Q&A with the film's director Damon Gameau and the Member for Warringah. Mosman Public School's fundraising event is a step closer to 50kW solar power system they have planned. Thanks to the fundraising work of the parents and the students' sustainability committee, the students of Mosman Public School have already started learning about solar power.

The school chose the film to help inspire kids and parents to be more environmentally conscious. Having sold over five hundred tickets to the film screening, Mosman Public School so far have raised over \$18,400. Adding to this will be their bake sale fundraising at Artarmon Bunnings which I also attended. I would like to thank Jenni Hagland, Sarah Angus, Maggie Jackson and the many dedicated members of the Mosman Public School P&C for their organisation of these events.

SURRY HILLS COMMUNITY CONNECT

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—I draw the attention of this parliament to the 1 year anniversary event of the Surry Hills Community Connect in Northcott Public Housing estate on Thursday 15th August. I would like to congratulate the staff, volunteers and all others involved in the success of the Community Connect in assisting and enriching the lives of those in the Surry Hills Public housing community. The anniversary event included a welcome to country and smoking ceremony performed by Uncle Jimmy Smith and Lord Mayor from City of Sydney, Clover Moore, and I spoke to highlight the amazing work of the Surry Hills Community Connect.

The day included sport clinics, a photo booth, art and crafts, and lots of other stalls and activities. We were also treated to an incredible performance by the One Voice Redfern Choir made up of our talented public housing residents. The event was attended by over 200 people and I'd like to thank staff and volunteers: Roy Chikwem, Kira Weiss, Sacha Lapi, Charles Hunter, Marc Harry, Oscar McKinnon, Kelly Hartley, Nathan Dore, Barbara Clewden, Roman Jaremczuk, Ricky James, Wendy O'Donnell, Mary Elwasfi and Jack Franco.

ROOTY HILL

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—It is with great pleasure that I recognise and congratulate the Residential Gardens at Rooty Hill, Australia's only Spanish speaking aged care home on a recent initiative. Residential Gardens together with Blacktown Arts Centre initiated an artist-in-residence program. Artist and Flamenco Dancer, Pepa Molina spent two months at the nursing home, talking, dancing and listening to music with some of the 106 residents. Ms Molina has stated that from using those conversations and her deep research, she has been able to extract the essence of some of those conversations and turn them into a performance. The residents of the home, even those with dementia and Alzheimer's were engaged by the program which allowed residents some cultural expression and brought colour and movement to the facility, improving the general health of the residents.

Well done.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:13
until Wednesday 21 August 2019 at 09:30.**