



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 26 September 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 26 September 2019

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL 2019

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the bill be taken into consideration forthwith.

Bills

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL 2019

Consideration in Detail

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 25 September 2019

No. 1 **No. 1 [c2019-124C]**

Page 2, proposed section 1, line 4. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead "This Act is the *Abortion Law Reform Act 2019*".

No. 2 **No. 1 [c2019-099]**

Page 3, proposed section 5, lines 6 and 7. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

(2) The medical practitioner may perform the termination on the person only if the medical practitioner has obtained informed consent to the termination from—

(a) the person, or

(b) if the person lacks the capacity to give informed consent to the termination, a person lawfully authorised to give consent on the person's behalf.

No. 3 **No. 1 [c2019-175B]**

Page 3, proposed section 6, lines 13 and 14. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

(a) the specialist medical practitioner, after considering the matters mentioned in subsection (3) and any advice received under subsection (4), considers that, in all the circumstances, there are sufficient grounds for the termination to be performed, and

No. 4 **No. 2 [c2019-175B]**

Page 3, proposed section 6, lines 16 and 17. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

medical practitioner who, after considering the matters mentioned in subsection (3), also considers that, in all the circumstances, there are sufficient grounds for the termination to be performed, and

No. 5 **No. 2 [c2019-099]**

Page 3, proposed section 6, lines 18 and 19. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

(c) the specialist medical practitioner has obtained informed consent to the termination from—

(i) the person, or

(ii) if the person lacks the capacity to give informed consent to the termination, a person lawfully authorised to give consent on the person's behalf, and

No. 6 **No. 3 [c2019-175B]**

Page 3, proposed section 6. Insert after line 33—

- (4) Without limiting subsection (3), the specialist medical practitioner may ask for advice about the proposed termination from a multi-disciplinary team or hospital advisory committee.
- No. 7 **No. 4 [c2019-175B]**
Page 3, proposed section 6. Insert after line 44—
Note. This section is intended to reflect the common law position on terminations at the time this Act was enacted, subject to the purposes and requirements of this Act.
- No. 8 **No. 1 [c2019-107C]**
Page 4, proposed section 7, line 2. Omit "or 6".
- No. 9 **No. 2 [c2019-107C]**
Page 4, proposed section 7. Insert after line 9—
(2) Before performing a termination on a person under section 6, a specialist medical practitioner must provide all necessary information to the person about access to counselling, including publicly-funded counselling.
- No. 10 **No. 3 [c2019-107C]**
Page 4, proposed section 7, line 11. Insert "or (2)" after "subsection (1)".
- No. 11 **No. 1 [c2019-103D]**
Page 5, proposed section 9. Insert after line 4—
(4) For the purposes of subsection (3)(a), the first practitioner is taken to have complied with the practitioner's obligations under that paragraph if the practitioner gives the person information approved by the Secretary of the Ministry of Health for the purposes of that paragraph.
Note. The information to be approved by the Secretary is to consist of contact details for a NSW Government service that provides information about a range of health services and resources, including information about medical practitioners who do not have a conscientious objection to the performance of terminations.
- No. 12 **No. 1 [c2019-155]**
Page 5. Insert after line 21—
11 Care of person born after termination
(1) This section applies if a termination results in a person being born.
(2) Nothing in this Act prevents the medical practitioner who performed the termination, or any other registered health practitioner present at the time the person is born, from exercising any duty to provide the person with medical care and treatment that is—
(a) clinically safe, and
(b) appropriate to the person's medical condition.
Note. See section 10 (3), which provides that this Act does not limit a duty a registered health practitioner has to comply with professional standards or guidelines. See also section 13, which provides that the Secretary of the Ministry of Health may issue guidelines about the performance of terminations at approved health facilities and requires registered health practitioners performing terminations, or assisting in the performance of terminations, to act in accordance with the guidelines.
(3) To avoid doubt, the duty owed by a registered health practitioner to provide medical care and treatment to a person born as a result of a termination is no different than the duty owed to provide medical care and treatment to a person born other than as a result of a termination.
- No. 13 **No. 1 [c2019-159]**
Page 7, proposed section 13, line 6. Omit "at approved health facilities".
- No. 14 **No. 2 [c2019-159]**
Page 7, proposed section 13, line 8. Omit "at approved health facilities".
- No. 15 **No. 5 [c2019-175B]**
Page 7, proposed section 13. Insert after line 8—
(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the guidelines may include information about matters relevant to the role of multi-disciplinary teams and hospital advisory committees in relation to the performance of terminations, including the following—
(a) the operation of multi-disciplinary teams or hospital advisory committees,

- (b) the assistance a multi-disciplinary team or hospital advisory committee may provide about a termination to a medical practitioner.

No. 16 **No. 1 [c2019-123]**

Page 7. Insert after line 11—

14 Medical practitioners to provide information about terminations

- (1) A medical practitioner who performs a termination must, within 28 days after performing the termination, give the Secretary of the Ministry of Health the information about the termination decided by the Secretary.
- (2) The information must be given in the way decided by the Secretary including, for example, by using a form approved by the Secretary for the purposes of subsection (1).
- (3) Information provided by a medical practitioner to the Secretary under this section must not include any particulars which would allow a person on whom a termination was performed to be identified.

No. 17 **No. 3 [c2019-159]**

Page 7, proposed section 14, line 12. Omit "**Review in relation to gender selection**". Insert instead "**Terminations for sex selection**".

No. 18 **No. 4 [c2019-159]**

Page 7, proposed section 14. Insert before line 13—

- (1) This Parliament opposes the performance of terminations for the purpose of sex selection.

No. 19 **No. 5 [c2019-159]**

Page 7, proposed section 14, line 16. Omit "purposes of gender". Insert instead "purpose of sex".

No. 20 **No. 6 [c2019-159]**

Page 7, proposed section 14. Insert before line 18—

- (2) The report must include recommendations about how to prevent terminations being performed for the purpose of sex selection.

No. 21 **No. 7 [c2019-159]**

Page 7, proposed section 14. Insert after line 22—

- (4) To avoid any doubt, the guidelines that may be issued under section 13 may include guidelines, about the performance of terminations, that prevent terminations being performed for the purpose of sex selection.

No. 22 **No. 8 [c2019-159]**

Page 7, proposed section 15, lines 23–25. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 23 **No. 6 [c2019-175B]**

Page 8, proposed Schedule 1. Insert before line 7—

hospital advisory committee means a committee established by—

- (a) a statutory health organisation, within the meaning of the *Health Services Act 1997*, or
- (b) an approved health facility.

No. 24 **No. 7 [c2019-175B]**

Page 8, proposed Schedule 1. Insert before line 16—

multi-disciplinary team means a group of registered health practitioners and other health professionals, from diverse fields of practice, who work together in a coordinated way to deliver comprehensive care to a patient in a way that addresses as many of the patient's needs as practicable.

No. 25 **No. 1 [c2019-147]**

Page 10, proposed Schedule 2.1. Insert after line 2—

[4] Section 545B Intimidation or annoyance by violence or otherwise

Insert after section 545B(1)—

- (1A) To avoid any doubt, for the purposes of subsection (1)—
 - (a) a person who uses intimidation to coerce a person to have a termination performed, including for the purposes of sex

selection, is taken to have used intimidation to compel the person to have the termination, and

- (b) a person who uses intimidation to coerce a person to not have a termination performed is taken to have used intimidation to prevent the person having the termination.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (09:49): I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

The Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill, as amended in the other place, represents collaborations, compromises and negotiations by all members of both Houses of the New South Wales Parliament working to establish the abortion law reform that New South Wales needs. I thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe for introducing the bill in the other place and for leading what was a respectful, robust and very long debate—some 72 hours, all up, in both Houses. Penny's consistent, determined leadership has ensured the bill is in good shape and that abortion will be decriminalised in New South Wales.

The amendments added by the Legislative Council will: change the name of the Act to Abortion Law Reform Act; clarify informed consent provisions to ensure authorised persons can make decisions about terminations on a patient's behalf; mandate medical care for a child born alive; require doctors to provide information about counselling services after 22 weeks; and allow doctors with a conscientious objection to comply with requirements by providing a pamphlet approved by NSW Health. In short, the amendments will: put in place a review into sex selection, resulting in new professional standards; require that non-identifying data be collected about abortions performed in New South Wales; ensure the domestic violence offence of intimidation captures coercing a person to receive or not receive an abortion, with a maximum penalty of two years in prison; recognise that doctors performing abortions after 22 weeks can seek advice from a multidisciplinary team or hospital advisory committee.

After consultation, the health Minister, without whom this legislation would not have been possible, and the co-sponsors of the bill, believe that these amendments do not create any new barriers for women seeking access to safe and legal abortions in New South Wales. I note that a number of amendments that would have created new barriers were consistently voted down. I will save further remarks for my contribution in reply, including responding to any clarifications members may request.

I pay separate tribute, though, to the role of the National Party during this process in ensuring that the bill has safeguards that will put community concerns about this important reform to rest and in ensuring that the voices of women in rural and regional communities were heard when decisions were made about this bill. Working with Trevor Khan, most of the amendments to this bill come from National Party members—either from the member for Port Macquarie or the Hon. Niall Blair—and I am grateful for the constructive and thoughtful way they have sought to improve this bill. The Parliament has had a long journey that has involved teamwork and partnerships between members from all political persuasions and different parts of the State. The bill is now in a state that represents the wants and needs of the majority of this Parliament, and I propose that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa) (09:53): I thank the House for providing me the opportunity to make a small contribution in relation to this significant reform that is moving through the New South Wales Parliament. I think the majority of our community accept that the overall objective of the bill, which is to decriminalise abortion, is necessary. But many of us within the Parliament and in the outside community had concerns about the format and the content of the original bill.

After an extensive period of consultation and debate in this House, and negotiations across party political divides, concessions, amendments and changes to the original bill were moved through both Houses of Parliament. That is a good thing. I believe we have moved this bill to a better place. I honestly believe that the content of the amendments that are before the House this morning creates more safeguards for women, for doctors and particularly for babies born alive.

I particularly want to thank the members of the upper House. They had a particularly extensive—at times gruelling and challenging—debate. It was conducted largely with good faith and high levels of respect. I thank upper House members for the incredible time they have given to look in detail at a range of amendments, including 26 divisions on 102 amendments. I thank the Chair during that debate, the Hon. Shayne Mallard, for the way he conducted that process. I also thank Parliamentary Counsel, who worked so speedily and professionally with every member of Parliament who wished to prepare amendments. Parliamentary Counsel deserve incredible admiration from every member of this House. The clerks and Hansard were with us for every word along the way and I thank those officers for what they have done.

I commend this House for taking a bill that I thought was defective in a number of areas, addressing a range of concerns and getting it to where it is today. There are now safeguards around informed consent, and provisions around counselling services, multi-disciplinary teams and hospital advisory committees are reflected in the bill. The common law is also reflected in this bill; that was a key factor. The provisions around sex-selection abortions and coercion of a woman to have or not to have an abortion, have been strengthened. These changes have all improved the bill and I thank everyone involved. I understand what members have been through; I have worked hard through the process with them to get the bill to a better place.

Could the bill have been better? We do not know. The process that the bill went through did not occur as it should have, but it is what it is and we are now at a better place. For that reason I am grateful to everyone involved. I support the amendments.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (09:56): I support the motion moved by the member for Sydney and the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill—to be known as the Abortion Law Reform Act—as amended. We have heard a lot in the course of this very long debate and I know that women across New South Wales are waiting. After 25 hours of debate in this place, and more than 47 hours in the Legislative Council we are finally on the verge of overturning an 119-year-old law that criminalised women's bodies and curtailed their reproductive rights. With the passing of this bill our Parliament will affirm that we trust women to make decisions about their own lives and about their own bodies. We acknowledge the pain and trauma caused by over a century of stigma and misinformation.

For feminists across New South Wales we have finally achieved a historic milestone for this State. At times it has been a bruising and frustrating debate, but it has been a very necessary one. We have heard misinformation from those opposed to abortion, and I think the debate on this bill has been a reminder of how loud a small minority can be. But this bill is not about that small minority; it has always been about the generations of women who have had abortions under the spectre of persecution. They are brave women. Many of them have shared their stories with this, the oldest Parliament in Australia.

This bill has also been about women in regional areas—women who have struggled to find the medical care that they require. They have had to go from doctor to doctor, and some have been forced to go interstate. That will no longer happen. We have heard their voices, and this bill is about them. Women in New South Wales will no longer fear prosecution or imprisonment when they make decisions about their lives and their bodies. This bill means that we are closer to abortion being safe, legal and free. We did not get everything we hoped for in the bill, but I know in my heart that we are making things better today. We are making things better for women. I give them my commitment that as long as I am in this place I will fight for our right to continue to choose.

I briefly acknowledge some of the women whose shoulders we are standing on today. I pay tribute to one of my feminist mentors, the late Ann Symonds. I acknowledge former President of the other place and feminist powerhouse Meredith Burgmann. I acknowledge also some pretty powerful women from my electorate who have been here for the hours of debate: Mary O'Sullivan, Josefa, Claire and Chloe, amongst many others. I thank them for their passion, their persistence and their patience.

I have been very proud to have been part of the cross-party working group that has driven this legislation and one of the record number of 15 co-sponsors of this bill from across the political spectrum. I thank my colleagues the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Hon. Trevor Khan and the member for Sydney. Alex, you have made us all very proud and you have made your grandmother proud. I thank the collaborators on the bill from across the Parliament. In particular, I thank the health Minister, the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House for their leadership. This would not have been possible without that leadership. But, enough. This is 119 years overdue. I commend the bill to the House.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Senator Mehreen Faruqi from The Greens. I acknowledge also Steve Gourley and Ann Leonard, guests of the member for Coffs Harbour.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:00): I speak on behalf of The Greens, a party that is proudly 100 per cent pro-choice. All of our representatives in this Chamber and the other Chamber are 100 per cent supportive of decriminalising abortion in New South Wales. What an historic moment in this Parliament to see members realise the reproductive rights of all people in this State. I cannot believe we are here, but at the same time I cannot believe it took so long. On behalf of all the feminists and pro-choice activists I do not know whether to express our outrage, our disgust, our hurt and our disappointment about all the things that have gone past or whether to express our overwhelming joy, happiness and sense of celebration that we are on the cusp of something huge.

Neither of those extremes really captures where we have landed. Unlike how most of this debate has been framed, we are all human and life is complex. Nothing about the decisions or processes that we have attempted to

put on the pages of this bill capture what is the most personal and private of decisions that any person will make. That is why we must pass the bill today—so that people in New South Wales can make those personal and private decisions for themselves. I acknowledge all of those who have done the emotional and professional heavy lifting to get us to this point. There is not enough time to do the thank-yous now, but I promise I will put them on record at a future date. Today what is crucial is that with this bill passes, we finally get abortion out of the Crimes Act in New South Wales and we shout it loud and clear that it is time to get your laws and your rosaries off our ovaries.

I think it needs to be mentioned that the bill has returned to this place with amendments. My colleague and feminist powerhouse Abigail Boyd said in the third reading debate in the other place last night that The Greens opposed every amendment to the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 not because they were put forward by a particular side of the debate but because every amendment took us further away from our firm pro-choice stance. While The Greens did not support any amendments moved in the other place, we made our position on this very clear from the start. It has always been our approach and our position to work towards the ultimate goal, which is to remove abortion from the Crimes Act and decriminalise abortion in New South Wales. We stand strong with that commitment in seeing the bill pass today.

That said, it is crucial to put one very important thing on the record in relation to the potential for barriers and obstacles that may have been put in place as unintended consequences of the bill. I say to the women in regional and rural areas, to the migrant women and to the women who are socially and economically disadvantaged that we have always known that decriminalisation is only the first step in ensuring real access to free, legal and safe abortion in New South Wales. I know that very good heads, very wise heads, very expert heads and very committed pro-choice legal and medical professionals will ensure that nothing in the bill in any way limits people's access to reproductive choices in this State.

A lot has been said about sex selection. As one of the only people in this place who has a perspective on this, I feel it is important to raise it. It is important for us to talk about the fact that there are risks now, having put things around sex selection in the bill that in some ways validates it as a real problem. Someone who has provided much-needed guidance and wisdom on the issue is Vijay Roach, President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. He said that the specific inclusion of sex selection is at best superfluous, at worst mischievous, and a disingenuous attempt to make sex selection a valid issue in this bill.

Let us be really clear that there is no evidence for the practice of sex-selective abortions in New South Wales or Australia. There will be consequences for women seeking an abortion because of this, but we need to stand strong and make sure that we do not allow racial profiling to be legislated as part of a reform to achieve equality. We live with sexism every day. We live with the threat of harassment and assault. We bleed, we labour, we miscarry. We endure the patriarchy and we survive and we are strong. Today we have moved closer to the idea of realising gender equality for all in this State. I say thank you and well done.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (10:06): I speak briefly as the shadow Minister for women on this her-storic occasion. It is a momentous time. I am a very proud co-sponsor of the bill, as I know others in this place are. I thank the cross-party working group and the member for Sydney. I thank all the determined women activists across New South Wales, especially Claire Pullen and Penny Sharpe—it was a long time waiting in the other place. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:07): In reply: I thank all members for the role they have played in this historic reform. Every member of this Parliament can feel proud that part of our legacy will be the decriminalisation of abortion in New South Wales. I will address a concern raised by the member for Newtown. I acknowledge her work and leadership. I also acknowledge the consistent commitment of Senator Mehreen Faruqi, who is here, and Abigail Boyd from The Greens in the upper House. I acknowledge that at stages throughout this debate the member for Newtown has understandably been extremely frustrated by the process. However, I am greatly appreciative of the leadership role she has played in the bill coming to the Parliament.

Regarding the amendments around sex selection, the requirements for NSW Health to provide recommendations about how to prevent the practice of performing terminations for the purpose of sex selection recognise that the New South Wales Parliament does not support the practice. We have no evidence that terminations are occurring for the purpose of sex selection. The review will be able to inform us on the matter. The new provision sets up a framework for New South Wales to provide guidelines on preventing the practice. The provision should not be seen in any way to be about reducing women's autonomy and choices, or mandating questions or suspicion in the doctor-patient relationship. We heard very clearly about the perverse impacts of that. That is why some amendments on this were voted down.

I also acknowledge and thank the member for Summer Hill for her contribution and the role she has played as part of the working group in getting this legislation to the Parliament. The member for Summer Hill is a wonderful person to work with and we would not have this reform without her. I also acknowledge all of the co-

sponsors who have brought this bill to the Parliament. They represent all parts of the State and all political viewpoints. It is because of the work of those 15 co-sponsors and the working group of the member for Summer Hill, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Hon. Trevor Khan and me, with indeed the wonderful oversight of health Minister Brad Hazzard, that we are here today.

Of course, our role is simply to facilitate the passage of this legislation. It follows decades of work from women's rights campaigners, activists and people in the Parliament. I particularly pay tribute to someone who is not here with us today but who I know is watching in the United Kingdom, Wendy McCarthy. Wendy has sat patiently throughout most of the debate. She unfortunately could not be here for this moment but we feel her here in this room.

I thank all organisations who were tireless in working with us to get the bill here, including the NSW Pro-Choice Alliance—and I shout out to and acknowledge the patience of Sinead Canning throughout this process—and the Human Rights Law Centre. I partnered with that organisation to achieve marriage equality and on this reform. I am grateful for their work. Family Planning NSW has been fantastic throughout this. We have had the support of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Australian Medical Association at all times. I promise Fiona Davies I will stop bothering her on the phone early in the morning and late at night. Of course, I thank Our Bodies Our Choices and, as the member for Blue Mountains has said, we have had the fearless Claire Pullen supporting us throughout this process.

I say a big thank you to Parliamentary Counsel. They have worked overtime to support all members on all sides of this debate through various iterations of various amendments. I am sure they will be quite relaxed as the bill finally passes. I thank all of our staff and all of the staff of the Parliament. This process has been trying for everyone, from the Special Constables to all of the people in all parts of this building. When I introduced the bill I acknowledged that it was my grandmother's birthday that day. She was a great woman. I now acknowledge another great woman whose birthday is today, Tammie Nardone. This bill would not be possible without Tammie. She has worked tirelessly to get us to this point. In conclusion, I ask that we all finally come together, move forward, accept the amendments from the upper House and acknowledge that abortion will now be decriminalised in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Legislative Council amendments Nos 1 to 25 be agreed to.

Legislative Council amendments agreed to.

The SPEAKER: I thank all members for the way in which they have dealt with what undoubtedly has been a difficult matter. They have conducted themselves in a professional and dignified way in this place and the other place. I thank all members for their contributions, which have demonstrated how members of this House can work in a positive and productive way.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

Mr JAMIE PARKER: In accordance with Standing Order 101, I postpone general business notice of motion (for bills) No. 2 [Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Protections for Disclosure of Information) Bill 2019].

Bills

NON-PROFIT BODIES (FREEDOM TO ADVOCATE) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 17 September 2019.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (10:16): The Government does not support the Non-profit Bodies (Freedom to Advocate) Bill 2019. The bill purports to prohibit the Government from "gagging" non-profit bodies from engaging in advocacy or commenting on government policy, law or practice. It is unnecessary legislation, designed for a problem which does not and will not exist. The Government actively encourages the non-profit sector to engage in advocacy and policy development. The Government relies heavily on the advice of the non-profit sector. Their boots-on-the-ground experience and expertise means they are often best placed to comment on the issues and problems which affect the most vulnerable people in our society.

Good policy can never be developed in a vacuum. It is the input of non-government organisations, including Community Legal Centres NSW, social service organisations and support groups, that we turn to time and time again to provide advice, direction and engagement with the Government on how best to address the

needs of the community. The standard agreements which are used for non-government services procured by New South Wales government agencies include terms which explicitly provide that nothing in the agreements restricts the ability of non-government bodies from entering into public debate or advocacy activities, subject to them complying with obligations relating to confidentiality, privacy and conflict of interest. This term is included in the standard agreement for grants administered by NSW Health and in the standard human services agreement that is used for all human services procured from a non-government organisation via a tender process.

In fact, the New South Wales Government funds non-profit bodies that are required to perform advocacy work. The Department of Communities and Justice funds a range of organisations from the community, child and family, and housing and homelessness sectors to deliver a range of advocacy activities and policy advice to the Government. For example, Victims Services funds two organisations, Enough is Enough and the Victims of Crime Assistance League, which have key performance indicators and service specifications that include the requirement to provide support and advocacy for victims of crime and to promote the rights of victims of crime.

In his second reading speech the member for Liverpool noted that the Government's Cameron review of community legal centre services recommended that the Government should continue to provide funding to CLCs that engage in strategic advocacy that seeks to identify and remedy systemic issues. We agree. The Government has announced that it supports this recommendation. Not only that, we have put our money where our mouth is, allocating record funding of more than \$40 million over the next three years to support CLCs to provide free legal help to some of the most disadvantaged members of our community and also for these CLCs to engage in law reform and legal policy work.

It has been more than four years since the Opposition introduced a bill nearly identical to the one we are debating today. In that time there has been no evidence that legislation is required to protect the rights of not-for-profit bodies to engage in advocacy work. The shadow Attorney General has not been able to point to a single example of the Government attempting to silence non-profit bodies or making funding contingent on non-profit bodies agreeing not to engage in advocacy work. The bill is not necessary. While the Government is getting on with the job of investing in NGOs and frontline workers, both to support vulnerable people and to advocate on behalf of the community, this bill is an attempt to engage in lazy political pointscoreing, regurgitating a bill that was unnecessary more than four years ago and continues to be demonstrably unnecessary.

In his second reading speech, the member for Liverpool posed the question, "If you say you are not going to gag non-profit bodies, why not put that in legislation?" He suggested that there would be no adverse consequences in doing so. In fact, there can be. The bill is not only unnecessary but may also have unintended consequences. The bill provides an exemption to the use of "prohibited terms", if the agreement restricts the disclosure of confidential or personal information. However, "confidential information" is defined narrowly, and it appears to be focused on information which would disclose trade secrets or which has commercial value. This may lead to clauses which legitimately restrict the disclosure of sensitive information being automatically deemed to be void, which could cause a range of complications.

The Government often relies on contractual provisions with non-profit bodies which restrict the disclosure of sensitive information that would not be in the public interest to disclose. Information held by government may be sensitive for reasons unrelated to trade or commerce. For example, information may be sensitive because revealing it would prejudice responsible or effective government processes, or create other operational risks. For example, contracts may require the department's written agreement to be obtained before commissioned data analysis or research can be released. This is important to allow research and sensitive data to be thoroughly checked before it is made public. These clauses, which are entirely appropriate and necessary, could be automatically voided by this bill as they could be taken to restrict or prevent a non-profit body from commenting on, advocating support for or opposing change to a matter established by the State.

Finally, it should also be open for agreements between government agencies and non-profit bodies to include provisions which direct taxpayer funds toward activities which are demonstrably for a public purpose and against activities which might be partisan. In his second reading speech, the member for Liverpool noted that the principles for funding of legal assistance services in New South Wales impose restrictions so that New South Wales government funding must be spent on frontline services rather than on broader advocacy work. However, although the principles state that New South Wales government funds for legal assistance services are to be directed towards frontline services rather than political advocacy, the member for Liverpool failed to acknowledge that CLCs are specifically authorised under the funding agreements between Legal Aid NSW and CLCs to undertake law reform and legal policy work. This includes activities such as making submissions to government bodies or parliamentary inquiries on areas of potential reform.

The principles are not a gag on advocacy work. They simply ensure that CLCs use government money for the important core legal policy work that they are funded to provide. This is crucial for public accountability. It ensures that taxpayer money is used for those in need of legal assistance. It ensures that public money is used

effectively and responsibly to help vulnerable members of the community get the legal help they need. CLCs can, of course, use funding from other sources to engage in political activities if they so choose. For all of these reasons, the Government does not support the bill.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (10:23): I support the Non-profit Bodies (Freedom to Advocate) Bill 2019. This legislation regarding advocacy replicates legislation that was introduced into the Federal Parliament. I am surprised at the response from the Attorney General, because he should be aware that in the Federal Parliament the Liberal Party supported the legislation. It is difficult to come into this Parliament and advocate that there is no need for legislation that the Attorney's own Federal colleagues have seen fit to support. The reality is that advocacy is a very difficult area for NGOs.

Some of us have been in this Parliament long enough to remember the O'Farrell Government's attacks on the Environmental Defenders Office, which in 2013 had its funding cut after a sustained attack upon the office from the likes of the Minerals Council of Australia in regard to its protections of the environment. The reality is that, in a robust liberal democracy, advocacy is one of our best measures for having a stable government and a robust legislative process. Without the means to fund the tools to oversee and review what government is doing—particularly in the area of the environment and things such as disability services that have also faced cuts to their funding for advocacy—the community is left without the tools to defend itself against changes that it thinks are unfair.

Once we implement something that changes the environment, those changes cannot be unpicked. Once we start destroying things, we cannot go back and fix them up. That is why organisations such as the Environmental Defenders Office are so fundamentally important to making sure that our natural heritage and our biodiversity are protected for the long term and for future generations. This is an essential part of a liberal democracy. That the Attorney General does not accept that and for some reason sees this legislation as unnecessary is extraordinary. I would have thought that the Attorney General would be the first person to defend the rights of NGOs, particularly the legal NGOs, not just to attend parliamentary inquiries and not just to be involved in the Attorney's legislative reform process but also to advocate for better laws and better protections for our community.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:26): It is going to be a long four years of this parliamentary term if the best that the Labor Party and the shadow Attorney General can do is to regurgitate a bill that was presented to the last Parliament and rejected then for good reason. I expect that the Non-profit Bodies (Freedom to Advocate) Bill 2019 will now be rejected for equally good reasons. This is classic virtue signalling to NGOs by the Labor Party pretending that it is their friend and somehow the Coalition Government is not. Of course, as with so many things that come from the Labor Opposition, that is complete and utter piffle. Many members on our side of the House have volunteered in their communities, as I have at the Marrickville Legal Centre and have given many hours of pro bono work to the community. In the 27 years that I practised as a lawyer, I certainly did so. The suggestion that the Coalition is not friendly towards the needy in the community and non-government organisations is a nonsense.

As the Attorney General and the leader of the New South Wales Bar has already said in respect of this bill, it is entirely appropriate for the Government of New South Wales to respect taxpayer dollars and, when it gives those dollars to organisations, it is entirely appropriate for the Government to give an instruction as to how that money is to be spent. Taxpayers would expect nothing less.

Of course it is very important for taxpayer dollars to be used for non-partisan political purposes. Rather than regurgitate a bill from the previous Parliament, as put forward by the member for Liverpool, would it not have been better for him to come to this House with some new ideas? Maybe a good idea would have been legislation to stop \$100,000 bags of cash coming to the most senior officials of the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party. Maybe that would have been a good idea—a new idea—and something that would be beneficial to the body politic.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Ku-ring-gai will not be surprised that a point of order has been taken. The member for Ku-ring-gai will resume his seat.

Mr Paul Lynch: I assume that what has been said by the member for Ku-ring-gai was designed to elicit a point of order. My point of order is that the comments made by the member for Ku-ring-gai are irrelevant to the debate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I tend to agree with the member for Liverpool. I think the member for Ku-ring-gai, deep in his heart, understands that position. I ask the member for Ku-ring-gai to be more judicious in the way he makes his point. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: As always, I respect the ruling of the Chair. However, I would say in my defence that this is a debate. I was merely saying that rather than regurgitate a bill—and this bill is a regurgitation of a bill from the previous Parliament—it may be beneficial to come up with new legislation more directed to some of the really critical issues that are impacting upon the body politic, such as the influence of foreign governments on our political process. These are all very important issues of government and public policy—matters that are far relevant to taxpayers and the citizens of this State than are the issues in the bill. The pernicious and insidious corruption of our political process by cash donations from foreign powers is a very significant and important issue. I was merely wishing to make that point.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: Actually I have two points of order. The first is that the most recent comments are equally irrelevant to the debate. The second, Mr Temporary Speaker, is that the member for Ku-ring-gai clearly is cavilling with your ruling.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I appreciate the points of order. I note that I did not rule on the previous point of order, but rather called on the judgement and goodwill of the member for Ku-ring-gai to self-regulate.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I will move on.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: It is important to know that, although during his contribution to the second reading debate, the member for Liverpool placed a great deal of emphasis on the context of community legal centres, that is an issue that the New South Wales Government recognises as a matter of importance for the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in our community. I previously said that I volunteered in one of the community legal centres. They provide very important assistance for people who, frankly, are bamboozled by the legal system and by legal process. They support more than 55,000 people across the State each year with free legal advice to facilitate people receiving the help they need. For that reason the Government is spending a record \$40 million on the community legal sector over the next three years. Mr Temporary Speaker, no doubt you would know that is an important matter because in the electorate you represent there are people ranging from those who are very well off and have lakeside real estate to others less fortunate.

The \$40 million I mentioned includes \$15.6 million in additional funding over the next three years, which is a boost of more than 85 per cent since 2015-16. Obviously that is an important way in which taxpayer money is being spent. It is important that that money is directed in the right way—to help disadvantaged people who need legal assistance—and not used in some way that is other than for the intended purpose. As the learned Attorney General already informed the House, NGOs are not permitted to conduct important advocacy work in the context of advising government and informing in regard to matters of which those NGOs have on-the-ground knowledge. Currently that is permitted, but it is not right that taxpayer funds would be used for purposes extraneous to the Government's purpose in providing them.

If I may say so, this is an important difference between the Government and the Opposition. Coalition governments always exhibit far greater fiscal discipline than do Labor governments. We have seen examples of that, such as the profligate expenditure of the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Government, which gave thousand-dollar cheques to dead people and thousand-dollar cheques to people who really did not need the money. That type of financial waste and ill-discipline is not something that this Government is about. We look after taxpayers' money and taxpayers largely vote in Coalition governments because the taxpayers understand and respect that. Rather than recycling a bill that was rejected by the previous Parliament, I encourage the Labor Opposition to come up with bills that recognise financial rectitude, financial probity and the non-corrupt use of money in our political system. I encourage the Labor Party to dispense with the \$100,000 bags of cash and to try to look after the people of New South Wales instead of themselves.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for his contribution to the debate and for his acceding to my imploring him to confine his remarks to the leave of the bill, or at least to self-regulate.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (10:38): I am in favour of the Non-profit Bodies (Freedom to Advocate) Bill 2019. I congratulate member for Liverpool, Paul Lynch, who will be the next Attorney General of this State. The member for Liverpool is a fine learned person who is well known for his very considered views. This bill is very important. The Government should support it because of our experience with this Government over the past eight years. I will inform the House of some examples of my experience with this Government over the past eight years in the Opposition. Let us not forget that this Government closed down all purpose-built refuges for women who were escaping domestic violence. Non-government organisations that were at the point of receiving funding were threatened by the Government with withdrawal of those funds. Some of those

organisations had their funding withdrawn. This bill is very considered and sensible. I say to the member for Ku-ring-gai, who preceded me in this debate: You have not seen anything yet until you have seen the ideas that will come from Labor's Attorney General.

Mr Alister Henskens: Just deal with the Aldi bag of cash.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I urge the member for Canterbury to not bait the member for Ku-ring-gai because it is not necessary. The member for Canterbury will direct her remarks through the Chair.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I am directing my comments through the Chair. In the electorate of the member for Ku-ring-gai, many not-for-profit organisations do very important work, as do all not-for-profit organisations. This bill is very important because it will ensure that there are no-gap clauses in agreements. Non-government organisations know how to turn \$1 into \$100 by managing their funds prudently and they are very resourceful in carrying out their important work.

The purpose of this bill is to prevent the New South Wales Government or any government, whether it is our government if we win the next election, from imposing restrictions on the ability of non-government organisations to engage in advocacy. These restrictions are often included in funding agreements that the Government uses when non-government organisations are contracted to provide community services. These gap clauses prevent non-government organisations from publicly campaigning to change government policies. On that point, the Government should listen to what some of the gaps or the deficiencies are, particularly from not-for-profits. The first thing that I want to know when I talk to not-for-profits is what the gaps are. I want to know where policy is failing.

If the Labor Party in government had put forward a policy that was not working it would want to make sure that the resources and any funding going into that organisation for particular programs was actually working. It would want to know the truth. This is what this bill is about. It is making sure that those people who work on the front line for not-for-profits can say to the Minister or to the Government without fear or favour, "These are the problems, these are the gaps and this is what we need to do." In the past this Government has regretted at times the way it has gone about doing business with an iron fist, saying, "We know how to do this better."

When I was the shadow Minister for disability there was a lot of fear amongst the group. As everybody knows, the disability community fears no-one and its members are the strongest advocates. But there have been times over the last Parliament when there were concerns about funding cuts because they were raising issues about advocacy and about gaps in the NDIS—gaps for people with disabilities in rural and regional communities. We need to know that and we need to hear that so that then we can resolve the issues. This is such an important bill. It is a no-brainer. It really should be supported. If the Government has nothing to fear and as it has continued to tell us that it is open, it is transparent and it is open for business, it should not be worried about criticism. This is not even criticism.

People want to know if there is a problem in their area. There are many non-government organisations and not-for-profits across our State that have invaluable insights. As a shadow Minister and a member of Parliament, in particular a member in the lower House, I thank our not-for-profits for the work they do. They do not get a lot of money. Last Friday the Federal member for Watson, Tony Burke, and I were in Campsie together with not-for-profits. We organised a community expo day and we invited our community members to come along to talk to our community organisations and government departments as well. We had people from housing, from Centrelink and from the NDIS, and we also had not-for-profits Metro Assist and Asian Women At Work.

We were all working together for one purpose: To help people in our community, to advance their interests, and also to help them in times of need. I thank all our organisations, including our faith-based non-government organisations. I thank them for their work. A lot of their work goes unnoticed because many volunteers come along to help and because of the very strong advocacy of our faith-based organisations. I thank our organisations for seniors and our community legal centres, which do an amazing job. I thank them all. If we value our freedom and democracy, if we value our openness and the transparent way that the Government operates, we should not be afraid. The first thing we should do is to find out what is and is not working and then apply that.

Of course, taxpayer funds are limited. We have to be resourceful and we have to look at what works. But this bill will strengthen our democracy. I do not understand why the Government does not support it. I urge members to support it. This is a really good bill: It makes sense. I commend the bill to the House and I acknowledge our shadow Attorney General. Thank you.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (10:44): I support the Non-profit Bodies (Freedom to Advocate) Bill 2019, brought forward by my colleague the shadow Attorney General. I know that a very similar bill was brought to Parliament a bit earlier. Again, unfortunately, at that time the Government decided to vote against it. But I hope that over the past four years it has had a change of mind and it has decided that it actually does want to support

quality bills. Members have to get past this idea that they do not support bills simply because they come from the Opposition. My good Greek friends tell me they invented democracy. They tell me all about democracy and how they have a patent on it.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Heracles, one of my favourites.

Mr JIHAD DIB: He is. Democracy provides the opportunity to speak what you need to speak, to have the chance to have your say, to vote the way you want to vote and to speak your mind without fear of persecution or of having a difficult time. Members on both sides of the House would agree that the value of the work that NGOs do in our society is enormous. You cannot just simply say that one side supports them and one does not. One of my learned colleagues from the other side mentioned earlier in his contribution that this was virtue signalling. This is not virtue signalling, this is actually about doing what is right. This is about making sure that we put protections in place for people who advocate for people who need it most, whether they are disadvantaged people or people in need.

This is also for the experts in the field. As a result of that, every single member in this place has enormous respect for NGOs and works with them, whether it is the legal services, whether it is the community centres or whether it is organisations that just try to do good things around their community. I do not think it is something that is just limited to Lakemba, Ku-ring-gai or Liverpool, it is everywhere, including Lake Macquarie, of course. NGOs add value to communities, because more often than not they do it on the smell of an oily rag and they rely enormously on government funding. They try to raise funds, whether they do their Bunnings barbecues, whether they do their chocolate raffles or whatever it is they can do.

They work not to build an empire but because they actually want to help people out. They want to make their local community better. At the very heart of every single community is an NGO, in particular the community centres that focus on strengthening communities. We can come in here, we can use all of the nice words that we want—and I am sure that all members would agree with them—but fundamentally these people are either working on very low salaries or they are working in a voluntary capacity. I think the value of NGOs is really important and we need to acknowledge that. I do not believe for a moment that any member in this place does not acknowledge or value the work of their local NGOs. I put that on record.

I understand the Attorney General referred to this bill as one that is trying to solve a problem that does not exist. Well, that is not necessarily true. This is a potential problem. Why is there a clause that does not allow for somebody to be able to speak their mind? My colleague the member for Canterbury recently spoke about some of our local communities—obviously we share some boundaries so we share some NGOs. We want people to be able to tell you what their problems are. They are not coming to me because I am a member of the Opposition and they want to have a crack at the Government. They are coming to me because saying, "These are the issues; these are things that we are facing. How can we fix that?"

But when you offer NGOs some money as the carrot, but then there is a big stick and you say, "You can have the money, but you are not allowed to tell anybody if there are any problems or if you have any concerns," then you are going about it the wrong way. What we are doing is saying, "Here, we are going to give you the money, but we will hold that over you." In other words, "You can have it, but you are not allowed to speak up on something about which you disagree." When I talk about our local community centres I think about one of my favourites, which does outstanding work, the Riverwood Community Centre. I give a special shout-out to Michelle Newman, the CEO, and to the entire board of the Riverwood Community Centre. That place, which sits in the heart of a social housing estate, has been going for over 40 years.

They work it does is absolutely phenomenal. A lady who spoke at one of the centre's events—this story shows what community centres do—said that when she arrived in Australia she did not have any friends, her English was limited and she had just lost some of her family members, and the community centre became her home. That is the value of community centres. At the moment that centre is not being funded because of some funding changes. It is being funded as a proxy to one of the major organisations. That is wrong. We are taking funding away from local communities to be managed by major organisations that, ironically, then have to work with those same local organisations because they do not have an in with the community.

Under the current situation that community centre cannot argue the decision or go out to advocate that it is wrong because it is fearful that the rest of its government funding could be withheld. That is the problem. It is not about whether the problem exists or not and it is not about whether this is a solution to a problem that does not exist. The fact of the matter is that all members know of NGOs that are having problems and difficulties, but are not allowed to speak up. Members are often given information and then they are told, "Look, I cannot make it public and no-one can know that it was me who told you." Those people are not working at the grassroots. They are the experts and they know what is working and what is not. We need to acknowledge that by not only continuing to support them but also giving them safeguards and protections.

I want NGOs to receive government funding. The more government funding we give them the better. But I also want them to know that they are safe to give criticism and say, "This is not working", or, "This particular funding pool is not appropriate. Let's move it to somewhere else." It is not a linear path. Community centres might be funded for one particular activity, but a centre is not going to turn away someone who walks through the door and wants help because it does not have the funding for it. The centre will help them no matter what. But those organisations need to be able to advocate when there is a problem. That is why I strongly support this bill.

It beggars belief that anyone would want to silence not-for-profit bodies. It is not about them being critical of the Government; it is about them being able to say what is working and what is not. I keep reinforcing that point to make it clear. The best example I can give is the NGOs in my electorate that I work with, including the Riverwood Community Centre and the Canterbury Community Centre, which is based in Lakemba. That centre does unbelievable work with extremely marginalised communities, particularly women. On Fridays those women often do not have anywhere else to go. The centre brings them together. People might look at that centre and say, "It is not doing much." But those women are learning to knit, are learning computer skills and are learning to speak English. That is fundamentally important because those women are engaging in the community. It gives them the abilities to move forward in life and gives them a sense of belonging. But where do those services fit in the funding pool?

They fit in a particular way, but the fact of the matter is that when someone says, "I have a problem and I don't understand how to fill in this form," they go to their local community centre or the local NGO because they trust them and they understand how they work. I want the director of that NGO to be able to say to me, "Jihad, we have funding for this activity, but the Government will not allow us to do something else." I want them to feel comfortable to say that so that we can make a change. If they can pass that information on then maybe we can make things better. The reason we are all here is to make things better, easier and more open.

Putting gag orders on people achieves the exact opposite of what we want. It is not about saying, "This is the Government's fault," or "This is the Opposition's fault." These things have to be agreed to as good ideas. This is a good idea. There is a gap in the system that we need to close. Earlier my colleague referred to the Bring Your Bills Day that we put on a couple of years ago. It was an outstanding event that brought the community together. I have a funny story about that day. Some people thought that if they brought their bills in I would pay them! I had to correct them and say, "I'm not actually paying your bills today." Some of the details were lost in communication. We brought in government agencies, non-government organisations, the local police and the local school educators.

It was a great way to bring the community together to say, "This is what is available to you." At the event a number of people discovered that they could get a discount on electricity, the council offered discounts to pensioners and offered people assistance with their solar rebates. The point is that when we bring the community together and work with NGOs, government agencies, the local MPs, the local authorities, the police and others, we create building blocks for our society. When we gag those organisations we stop those opportunities. I strongly support this bill and everything it stands for.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (10:55): I support the Non-profit Bodies (Freedom to Advocate) Bill 2019. If we support freedom of speech then we should support this bill. The current practice nobbles the community and should be freed up. The not-for-profit sector generally has a good grip on the needs of those in our society and it needs to be able to give those people a voice. Non-government organisations [NGOs] generally know when a law, policy or practice is not working, no matter how well intentioned the policy might be. If certain laws and policies are not working for the benefit of those they are meant to serve then we need someone to call them out. Members of Parliament do that regularly. We do it in this place, we do it in the media and we do it in our communications. But it should not be left only to us.

If we value freedom of speech and freedom of communication then we need to ensure that it is available to everyone. Sometimes governments might feel uncomfortable being criticised—no government is immune to that. But we have an obligation to provide that voice across society. We all know how bureaucracies can interpret government laws and policies, and codify them into sets of practices that do not reflect the intentions of lawmakers and policy makers. That needs to be called out as well. For example, when I was a member of the Federal Social Security Appeals Tribunal a law went passed Federal Parliament that meant that people on unemployment benefits who moved to an area where they were less likely to get a job had their benefits suspended for a certain amount of time.

The bureaucracy interpreted that to mean that if someone moved to an area that had a higher unemployment rate than the area they had come from their benefits would be cut off. It was not intended to work like that. For example, a person with some experience in meatworks who lived in North Sydney might move to Casino up near me, where there is a meatworks. That person would not be moving to an area where they were less likely to be employed. The Social Security Appeals Tribunal kept overturning those decisions until eventually the

law was changed. We called it out. Sometimes laws and policy settings are not right and they do need to be called out. It does happen. Governments do not get it right all the time.

The organisations that provide services for our society and communities need to be able to call out issues in the best interests of the people they serve. That is what it is about. I have witnessed the pernicious practice of nobbling the non-government sector and, I have to say, it has always taken place under Coalition governments. I was lucky enough to be a member of the Federal Parliament when we changed the law to say that the not-for-profit sector and those who are in receipt of government funding to provide services would no longer be gagged. They were gagged under former Prime Minister Howard's administration.

But for the non-profit sector and the NGOs, a lot of services would not be delivered. We expect a lot of the NGOs and the non-profit sector to deliver services, and sometimes to deliver difficult services to challenging clients, as they say, or people. We hand a lot of that over and we need to be able to give those NGOs a voice as well. Democracy in some quarters is under attack and we have to be mindful of that. We can think we have a great democratic system but we have to nurture it. We have to guard it and we have to ensure that our laws do that as well. That is what this bill does. It is a modest bill and well crafted, but if it is passed it will be of significant importance to our democratic system. I commend the bill to the House and I also commend the shadow Attorney General for bringing the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:00): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions of the Attorney General and the members representing the electorates of Auburn, Ku-ring-gai, Canterbury, Lakemba and Lismore. As I suggested in my second reading speech, the Government has followed the iron law of politics in New South Wales and will not support an Opposition bill, no matter what its merits may be. Two Government members spoke in the second reading debate to oppose the bill. The first I can deal with reasonably quickly, and that is the member for Ku-ring-gai, because he spent very little time talking about the bill. He seemed personally offended that I, to use his term, "regurgitated" the bill.

I make two comments about that. Firstly, the use of the word "regurgitated" displays an enormous contempt for NGOs and for what the bill is trying to do. Secondly, it says something very interesting about the member's political and advocacy skills. Maybe when he has a good idea and he does not get it up the first time, he just gives up. Some of us have greater staying power than that. If I think something is a good idea, I am inclined to stick to it. Perhaps the member for Ku-ring-gai might learn that lesson. The other point I make is that he spent very little time talking about the substance of the bill and a lot of time talking about fiscal discipline. That sends a clear message about where his priorities are: He has very little interest in NGOs. I must say, I am tempted to distribute a copy of his speech to every NGO in his electorate.

The other Government member to speak against the bill had a little more substance, and that was the Attorney General. The core of his argument was that it is unnecessary: We do not need the bill because we are not breaching the prohibition in the bill at present. If it is true that the Government is not breaching that prohibition, why on earth would it not support the bill? There is no substantive reason not to support it. As to unintended consequences, I was profoundly unpersuaded by those comments from the Attorney General. I note, as have other speakers and as I did in my second reading speech, that identical legislation was supported enthusiastically by a conservative Opposition in Canberra. As I understand it, that legislation is still on the books. Likewise, a similar bill was introduced in the South Australian Parliament; it remains on the books even though a conservative Government has now taken over there. So I am entitled to be slightly sceptical about the so-called unintended consequences.

The other reason to support the bill relates to something that the member for Canterbury said and that I touched on in my second reading speech, and that is the fear that is in the collective mind of NGOs at the moment. They are terrified that they will lose funding; that they will be punished for saying things that governments do not like. This bill is part of a way of dealing with that. Anyone who knows anything about the NGO sector knows that there is a genuine fear out there. It has a chilling effect on how enthusiastic and willing NGOs are to put forward views that they think may conflict with the attitude of government.

I note that one of the other comments made by a Government speaker was that the only point of the bill is to prove that Labor is a friend to NGOs and the Government is not. I did not set out to establish that, and there is a very easy way for the Government to avoid that happening: It can support the bill. If it does not support the bill then probably people will conclude it is not a friend to NGOs. But that is the Government's doing. If it cannot bring itself to support a bill that has had similar versions supported by its counterparts in other parliaments then it seems to me that if the Government is perceived as being not a friend to NGOs it is entirely the Government's own fault and nobody else's. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes35
 Noes42
 Majority.....7

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dalton, Mrs H
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Haylen, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Minns, Mr C
 Saffin, Ms J
 Voltz, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Dib, Mr J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N
 McGirr, Dr J
 Park, Mr R
 Scully, Mr P
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Butler, Mr R
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harrison, Ms J
 Hornery, Ms S
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Parker, Mr J
 Tesch, Ms L (teller)
 Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Constance, Mr A
 Crouch, Mr A (teller)
 Elliott, Mr D
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Henskens, Mr A
 Lindsay, Ms W
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Provest, Mr G
 Sidgreaves, Mr P
 Smith, Mr N
 Taylor, Mr M
 Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
 Clancy, Mr J
 Cooke, Ms S (teller)
 Davies, Mrs T
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Speakman, Mr M
 Tuckerman, Mrs W
 Williams, Mrs L

Barilaro, Mr J
 Conolly, Mr K
 Coure, Mr M
 Dominello, Mr V
 Griffin, Mr J
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Lee, Dr G
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Preston, Ms R
 Saunders, Mr D
 Singh, Mr G
 Stokes, Mr R
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Bali, Mr S
 Barr, Mr C
 Finn, Ms J
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mehan, Mr D
 Mihailuk, Ms T

Bromhead, Mr S
 Evans, Mr L.J.
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Petinos, Ms E
 Toole, Mr P
 Upton, Ms G

Motion negatived.*Motions***DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:14): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 16 in the order of precedence for today of which I have given notice by omitting paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting instead:

- (2) Condemns the Government for failing to meet the Premier's Priority on Preventing Domestic Violence Reducing Recidivism.
- (3) Calls on the Government to implement age-appropriate professionally delivered respectful relationships education to all students from kindergarten.

Leave granted.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Accordingly, I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that in the past eight years the Government has failed to make significant inroads toward reducing domestic and family violence.
- (2) Condemns the Government for failing to meet the Premier's Priority on Preventing Domestic Violence Reducing Recidivism.
- (3) Calls on the Government to implement age-appropriate professionally delivered respectful relationships education to all students from kindergarten.
- (4) Calls on the Government to join Our Watch immediately.

When I first came to this place in 2015 I brought with me a strong commitment to social justice and a concern about the increasing rates of domestic violence. I was horrified in September of that year to hear of a case in my own electorate where a 12-year-old girl was sexually assaulted and then killed by her father after a very long period of abuse. As a result of that case I started to take a very strong interest in this issue and how the Government was addressing it. I remember seeking meetings with the then Minister for Health, the then Minister for Family and Community Services and the then Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. What became clear to me is that when we look at domestic violence across government, under this Government there is no central coordinating approach that is going to save the lives of people who are living every day in domestic violence.

I have been very fortunate over the last three years up until the last election to be the shadow Minister charged with reducing domestic violence and preventing domestic violence and sexual assault. I acknowledge the presence of the shadow Minister in the Chamber, my good friend the member for Blue Mountains, who has now taken on that role. I have to say that of all the women in our caucus I am so pleased that she is the one who has taken it on. But it does not change the fact that this Government has failed miserably in addressing domestic and family violence. We have seen three Premiers' Priorities on the prevention of domestic violence in just the last five years.

In 2015 then Premier Mike Baird said that he wanted to reduce recidivism in domestic violence by 5 per cent in 12 months. What was the result of that? Fail. In 2016 he made a revision of that, that there would be a 25 per cent reduction by 2019. What was the result of that? Fail. Now this Premier has again pushed out the target to be 25 per cent by 2023. Will the Government achieve this? No. Why not? Because it has the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. This Government does not do the work required to change the perception around women and equality in our community. It has done nothing to change that.

On this Government's watch, the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research results that came out in June showed that from March two years ago domestic assaults had increased by 6 per cent, indecent assault and other sexual offences had increased by 5.8 per cent and stalking was up by 3.5 per cent. Why are we okay with this from this Government? When we look at breaches of apprehended violence orders in this State, under this Government, under this Premier and her failing Ministers, they have increased by 9.6 per cent—nearly 10 per cent. At the same time the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has made it very clear that it is not just about the killings or the women who go to the police; there has been a 23 per cent increase in the hospitalisation of women in this State from domestic violence.

There has been a failure of this Government in its attempt to address recidivism—the only thing the Government has applied any priority to. It is so bad that there are women in this State who are giving up. In fact, Giselle Wakatama and Liz Farquhar from the ABC in Newcastle wrote just yesterday about a woman in the Hunter, where I am from. There have been many apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVOs] issued against her ex-partner and she has moved house six times to get away from him. He ran her and her children off the road. She still cannot get away from him. She is still waiting for the police to respond to a breach of an ADVO that she says occurred three years ago. There are just not enough resources being applied to situations like this.

Molly Goodbun from my electorate died in 2016. Her husband, who shot and killed her, had been issued with an ADVO. This Government puts all its efforts into looking at the back end of the issue—the really hard part with respect to recidivism. The Government needs to be looking at multi-generational approaches and respectful relationships training. The Government is happy to provide stranger danger programs for little kids—to tell little kids not to get in the white van with that guy. The Government is happy to warn kids about being taken from their families—but that only protects children from 30 per cent of sex offenders. It does nothing to prepare them for the violence that occurs in their homes.

If that 12-year-old girl in my electorate had had access to respectful relationships education in primary school, which is where she was, maybe she could have told someone that when she got home every night her father was beating and sexually assaulting her. Maybe she would have believed that somebody cared. But this

Government sends the message that it does not care about what happens to kids in their homes. The Government is not protecting kids from offenders, whether it is a squash coach, ballet teacher, swim coach, parish priest, uncle or father. The Government is not saying to those children, "You deserve to be respected by anyone who comes to you." I know that we do not want to talk about sex with young kids but we can talk about stranger danger and make them understand that. I urge everyone in this House to do something concrete today to stop the killing of women and children in this State.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (11:22): I welcome this opportunity to update the House on the New South Wales Government's achievements in the area of domestic and family violence. I thank the member for her motion because it gives us another opportunity to stress how committed the New South Wales Government is to helping reduce the prevalence of domestic and family violence within our society. Unfortunately, one woman is killed every week, on average, through domestic violence in Australia. This, I believe, is one of the reasons the Premier has made it one of her Premier's Priorities to reduce the number of domestic violence reoffenders by 25 per cent by 2023.

It is important to note that the New South Wales Government joined Our Watch on 1 July 2019. Before she sought to amend it, the motion by the member for Maitland had included that the Government should join Our Watch. The Government has done what the member wanted it to do. Rather than note that and thank the Government or refrain from moving her motion, the member has decided to look for further faults by amending her notice of motion. The member for Maitland has raised concerns about things that do not exist and is running a fear campaign.

The way she was talking will raise fears for people who are vulnerable and need to know support is there for them—and support is there for them. The Government has joined Our Watch, a national organisation, which will build on the Government's existing commitment to end domestic violence before it begins. I am confident this membership will be a valuable investment in helping to address the behaviours, attitudes and power imbalances at the core of the prevalence of domestic, family and sexual violence, and that ultimately it will save lives and make stronger, safer communities.

The New South Wales Government has already invested more than \$431 million over four years to support survivors, while holding perpetrators to account. Joining Our Watch will continue that work, and bring New South Wales to the national table in efforts to tackle domestic and family violence. Prevention and early intervention are two key components under the New South Wales Government's Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform. Working with Our Watch will significantly bolster the work already underway by heightening awareness, strengthening education and focusing on prevention across the State, while contributing to a more cohesive, national, all-of-government approach that addresses domestic violence and its causes head on.

It is an undeniable fact that women are overwhelmingly more likely than men to experience domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, and to be victims of domestic homicide. Joining forces with Our Watch will help educate our communities and ignite the important conversations that shift attitudes and save lives. We need to work together to address systemic and cultural attitudes and behaviours before they begin. Together, we will reinforce the message that there is never an excuse for violence. I am pleased to be able to share with the House that the chair of Our Watch, Natasha Stott Despoja, AM, and the former chief executive officer of Domestic Violence NSW, Ms Moo Baulch, both warmly welcomed our decision to join Our Watch. It could not have been said better than when Ms Stott Despoja declared that the "primary prevention of violence requires a collaborative and multi-layered effort, with all jurisdictions on board and all hands on deck".

New South Wales has been working to address the causes and prevalence of domestic violence for a long time, but its membership of and contribution to the aims of Our Watch truly recognises the importance of the collective, national mission to eliminate domestic violence against women and children. Membership of Our Watch adds to the New South Wales Government's already considerable list of achievements in its battle against domestic and family violence. Our investments under the 2019-20 budget are wide ranging and address more than just support for those experiencing domestic and family violence; they also recognise the full spectrum of needs such as housing stability, advocacy services and crisis responses.

As I said, the Government has committed \$431 million over four years for specialist initiatives, including \$31.8 million in 2019-20 for Start Safely, to help people escaping violence move into stable housing through the private rental market; \$17.5 million for Safer Pathway in 2019-20, which is a coordinated response that provides victims with the support they need; \$14.7 million to reduce reoffending in 2019-20 and to support the reduction of re-offending and re-victimisation; \$11 million in the same budget for the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services to support victims at 29 locations, supporting 117 courts across New South Wales; \$8.1 million for Staying Home Leaving Violence to support women and their children to remain safely at home; and \$5.4 million for the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund for projects in innovative prevention, early intervention and crisis responses.

The New South Wales Government's investment is truly having an impact and it can continue to build on this to keep reducing domestic and family violence in New South Wales. The prevalence of domestic violence is measured by an independent body, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR]. In 2018 BOCSAR released a brief which showed a decline in domestic violence assault in New South Wales from 2010 to 2016. The same BOCSAR report also reveals there was a drop in the rate of domestic assault incidents of 15.5 per cent from 2008-09 to 2015-16. The New South Wales Government is dedicated to seeing these rates drop further. I thank everyone involved for getting them to drop this far already.

Working collaboratively with Our Watch and other governments across Australia is the first step to creating an Australia where women and their children live safely and free from violence. I would also like to take this time to thank New South Wales's first and now former Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Hon. Pru Goward, and the current Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Hon. Mark Speakman, SC, MP, for the passion they have brought to addressing this issue. It is incredibly important and they both have their hearts in absolutely in the right places in their work to fulfil the Premier's Priorities. The Government is definitely on the way to achieving those priorities. I again thank the member for bringing this motion to the House, and I thank the New South Wales Government for its strong and absolutely genuine commitment to preventing this issue from occurring in our society.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:29): In the past eight years the Government has failed to make significant inroads in reducing domestic and family violence. That is a fact. Following a review of one of the Government's signature domestic violence programs, the Premier abandoned one of her key Premier's Priorities to lower domestic violence reoffending rates by 25 per cent, instead pushing that target back another two years. We cannot allow another 12 or 18 months to pass and allow this Government to keep revising its target dates off into the never-never. Those who work at the coalface in this State are telling us what we need to do to address this important issue. The Women's Safety NSW Chief Executive, Hayley Foster, has said that more funding is needed for case management for women once they have left a violent situation. She rightly states:

How can we reduce rates of reoffending if women and children remain trapped in violent and abusive situations?

I say to the Government and the Minister to listen to Hayley Foster and her recommendations. She knows what she is talking about. The retiring Domestic Violence NSW Chief Executive, Moo Baulch, says the emphasis on reoffending should not displace the focus on services that help victims and tackle prevention. Any prevention measure, she says, "ultimately ... has to be about funding services". Whilst of course we have to hold perpetrators accountable, we need to make sure that we do not lose focus on victims, particularly women and children. I draw the attention of the House to some very useful suggestions made by the former executive director of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research Don Weatherburn. Again I ask that the Government take note of these important suggestions. Don Weatherburn states:

If the Government really wants to know whether its programs to change the behaviour of convicted domestic violence offenders are working, it should properly evaluate them and see if the percentage reoffending has fallen.

...

What we need is an annual crime victim survey that measures the prevalence and frequency of domestic violence amongst the general population. That way we could capture the experience of domestic violence victims who report the violence as well as those who can't or won't contact police.

A survey would provide some insight. Again I recommend that the Government looks at those suggestions. In terms of addressing this issue, it is the frontline services we need to focus on. One of the most fantastic services I have seen in a while, the Illawarra domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre, has put a lot of work into a funding proposal. I strongly recommend the Government has a look at that proposal. Jenny's Place domestic violence and resource centre is a frontline service in the Newcastle community that helps women and children who are victims. It will run out of money this week and the Government has not responded. Respectful Relationships in both Victoria and Queensland operates an education program that could be replicated here. I thank my colleague the member for Maitland for bringing this important motion to the House.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (11:33): I remind the House that we are here, I would have thought, in a bipartisan way to address an issue that is a scourge of our local, State and national communities. The motion before the House forces the Government to take an approach that, frankly, it would rather not take, that is, contest a motion that just does not stack up based on the facts. We are here in a bipartisan way. What has been put forward by the members opposite is simply not correct. The prevention of domestic violence is a top priority for the Government. The fact that the Government appointed the first Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence is proof that this matter has been a priority for the Government throughout its term of office in this State.

Not only that, the Government has a blueprint that sets out the direction of all the Government's work for the period 2016 to 2021. Just last month the Government signed up to the COAG Fourth Action Plan, a national

action plan. In addition to the Government appointing the first Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, this issue is part of the Premier's Priority. That again shows the high level of importance the Government, indeed the Premier, assigns to this very important issue. The Government has set a target that it is striving to meet. If the members opposite looked at the website—we know they do not do their homework particularly well—they would see that since the baseline statistics in 2015 the Government has reduced the number of domestic violence reoffenders. Our target is to reduce this number by 25 per cent by 2023. We have started to meet that target by a reduction over the past two years from the baseline of 1,814 offenders in 2015 to below 1,700 reoffenders more recently. All of that information is on the Government's website. Although there has been a reduction, the Government will not rest.

The only thing on which we all agree is that this is a top priority for the Government. We do not just come into this Chamber and throw out facts that are incorrect. We are actually doing the work. We have a strategy. We have given this issue importance as part of the Premier's Priority. We are taking action on the ground to reduce the number of reoffenders of domestic violence in our State. This issue is close to my heart. When I was the Family and Community Services Minister and the Attorney General, the Government introduced important innovative measures. These measures included providing police with body-worn video cameras, so that when women come before the court it can be demonstrated that an offence has been committed, and increased protections under the apprehended domestic violence order scheme. In April 2017, again when I was Attorney General, New South Wales was the first State in Australia to introduce laws allowing the sharing of information regarding apprehended violence orders across States and Territories. This Government embraced that initiative and it was the first cab off the rank to implement it. I am very proud of our Government's record. The Opposition should get its facts straight.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:37): I contribute to this motion relating to the prevention of domestic violence. I respect the commitment of the member for Maitland and the member for Blue Mountains who have spoken to this motion. I know it has been a passion of theirs for a long time. I am sure it is a passion shared by other members in the Chamber, whether it is the member for Lakemba, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Goulburn, the member for Castle Hill, the member for Vacluse or the member for Holsworthy. We all stand together in our opposition to domestic violence and our intent for the Government to do whatever it can to prevent it. That is a bipartisan stance and I do not know any member in this Chamber who would not share it.

It is most unfortunate to move a motion in such a way as to politicise an issue when all members are on the same side and want the same outcome. From time to time our measures and policy initiatives may have different nuances and we might have a slightly different way of going about it. However, we should not be casting aspersions on people's intent and suggesting that any member of this House or any Minister does not care about children and women or their safety. I just do not think that is true. I want to put on record the goodwill of all members in this House to do their best to find a way to prevent domestic violence. I am sure the previous Minister and the current Minister are doing what they can, just as Ministers across the States and Territories of Australia and other jurisdictions are doing what they can to address this issue and just as previous governments of another political persuasion in this place attempted to do to tackle domestic violence. There is no division between us on those issues. Let us not make this a pointscore exercise.

The original motion, which has been amended by the member for Maitland, called on the Government to join Our Watch, a program that operates across Australia. Since 1 July that has occurred. I note the comments made by the member for Vacluse that the statistics show progress being made in New South Wales and that our progress outstrips that in other States and Territories. As frustratingly slow and difficult as this is, New South Wales has been doing better than other States. To help bring us together, I move:

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

- (1) Congratulates the Government on continuing its efforts to reduce the rates of domestic violence reoffending.
- (2) Commends the Government for joining Our Watch to ensure a national and collaborative approach to reducing domestic violence and primary prevention.
- (3) Congratulates the Government on the 2019-2020 budget, committing \$431 million over four years to specialist domestic violence initiatives.

My amendment focuses on the positive—what is being achieved and what is being done. Of course the Government wants to continue its efforts. Of course there is further to go and the Government will not be satisfied until this scourge is solved. I do not know when that will be and I do not know how but the willingness and commitment of all members in this place should not be cast into doubt. There should not be improper motives or attitudes asserted when everybody is on the same team in an attempt to protect victims of domestic violence right across New South Wales. The Government will take action in any way it can. It will continue to support those frontline services and government agencies that have responsibility in this area. As the member for Vacluse

pointed out, by providing our police with body-worn video cameras we have spared people the difficulty and challenge of giving evidence against a partner. The evidence is there to see in black and white. I commend the amendment to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:41): In reply: I thank the members for their contributions to this motion: the shadow Minister and member for Blue Mountains, the member for Holsworthy, the member for Vaucluse and the member for Riverstone. I apologise to the Government for not moving one of those sanctimonious, self-congratulatory, inane motions that they so love. For them it is about: We have done something nice. Unfortunately women are still dying but that is not on us. We have now done what the Opposition has asked us to do for four years. It is not enough to join Our Watch. The Government actually has to do the work, if it knew what that work was. The former Minister for Family and Community Services implemented Going Home Staying Home, which was one of the worst attacks on refugees in this State's history. It gutted the sector. Government members do not like us to look for fault. They think it should all be about bipartisanship, kumbaya, hearts and nice feelings and words.

The Opposition is not an accessory after the fact when it comes to violence against women. We will not come in here and congratulate everybody on a job well done when there are women in this State dying nearly every week. It is a disgrace. For those on the other side, it is like the conversion on the road to Damascus. Suddenly they have joined Our Watch, after four years of hard-headed rejection. Previously they would not have anything to do with a joint State and Commonwealth approach to this wicked problem of domestic violence. Now they want to be patted on the back for suddenly deciding to do what the Opposition has been telling them to do for four years. I will not come in here and accept that the Opposition should move motions that congratulate the Government on work that we told them to do and which they have done at the last minute and that we should not push them to take the next step.

Paragraph (2) of my amended motion condemns the Government for failing to meet the only Premier's Priority on preventing domestic violence and reducing recidivism. If the Government failed just once, maybe that paragraph would be a bit tough. If it was just twice that it failed, maybe it would be a little harsh. Three times this Government has failed to meet its own targets. Paragraph (3) of my motion calls on the Government to implement age-appropriate, professionally delivered, respectful relationships education to all students from kindergarten. That initiative would make a difference.

I heard a story of a woman in her seventies turning up at a refuge—finally, after a lifetime of domestic violence—because her young granddaughter had been to a respectful relationships education program at school which was delivered by someone who had expertise and offered a referral pathway. This Government's approach to domestic violence is to pat itself on the back—just hope that you do not get that call from the police. Those on the other side are living in fantasy land. They disregard the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] statistics. They disregard the wonderful suggestions of Don Weatherburn, the former head of BOCSAR, about asking the victims. The Opposition will not support the amendment of the member for Riverstone. It is just another pat on the back by this lazy Government.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The question is that the amendment of the member for Riverstone be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes44

Noes35

Majority.....9

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Greenwich, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Hancock, Mrs S
Lee, Dr G
McGirr, Dr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Preston, Ms R
Saunders, Mr D
Singh, Mr G
Stokes, Mr R

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M
Henskens, Mr A
Lindsay, Ms W
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Smith, Mr N
Taylor, Mr M

AYES

Tuckerman, Mrs W
Williams, Mr R

Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Ward, Mr G

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dalton, Mrs H
Doyle, Ms T
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Voltz, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N
McKay, Ms J
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T.F.
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Butler, Mr R
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Donato, Mr P
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Saffin, Ms J
Tesch, Ms L (teller)
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Coure, Mr M
Griffin, Mr J
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Toole, Mr P

Bali, Mr S
Barr, Mr C
Finn, Ms J
McDermott, Dr H
Mehan, Mr D
Mihailuk, Ms T

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes44
Noes35
Majority.....9

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Greenwich, Mr A
Hazzard, Mr B
Lindsay, Ms W
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tuckerman, Mrs W
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Evans, Mr L.J.
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G
Saunders, Mr D
Singh, Mr G
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S
Kean, Mr M
McGirr, Dr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Preston, Ms R
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J

Atalla, Mr E

Butler, Mr R

NOES

Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dalton, Mrs H
 Doyle, Ms T
 Haylen, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Park, Mr R
 Scully, Mr P
 Voltz, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Dib, Mr J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N
 McKay, Ms J
 Parker, Mr J
 Smith, Ms T.F.
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Donato, Mr P
 Harrison, Ms J
 Hornery, Ms S
 Leong, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Saffin, Ms J
 Tesch, Ms L (teller)
 Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Dominello, Mr V
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Lee, Dr G
 Provest, Mr G
 Smith, Mr N

Bali, Mr S
 Barr, Mr C
 Finn, Ms J
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mehan, Mr D
 Mihailuk, Ms T

Motion as amended agreed to.

NELSON BAY ROAD

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:01): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 18 in the order of precedence for today of which I gave notice by omitting "Anna Bay" in paragraph (1) and replacing it with "Williamtown".

Leave granted.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Accordingly, I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes on Tuesday 15 January 2019 the Government committed to duplicating Nelson Bay Road from Bobs Farm to Williamtown.
- (2) Notes the Premier committed \$275 million towards the project, promising that construction would begin in 2019 and revealing that the project was expected to be completed within two years.
- (3) Calls on the Government to honour its commitment to upgrade this vital road.

Members of this House should be very familiar with Nelson Bay Road in my electorate of Port Stephens. Even before I was first elected to this House in 2015 I spoke many times about this road. Nelson Bay Road is the major road in my electorate. Around half of Port Stephens residents use the road and for many of us that is every day. For the residents of Tomaree and Tilligerry peninsulas it is the only road to and from their homes. The road supports our vibrant and growing tourism industry and yet year after year it experiences awful congestion during holiday periods.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): I ask the Leader of the House to continue his conversation outside the Chamber.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Local residents and holiday-makers alike consistently spend hours stuck on this road as they try to go about their business. It deters local people from leaving their homes, it deters holiday-makers who support our local economy and, most dangerously, when it is congested or when there is an accident, it completely shuts down the only road in and out for 35,000 permanent residents. I have seen ambulances caught in the congestion and unable to get anywhere. Apart from PFAS contamination in Williamtown, Nelson Bay Road is the highest priority issue in Port Stephens and it has been a high priority issue for nearly 20 years. As members of this House are well aware, my community was misled by this Liberal Government in 2015—and that is putting it nicely. In March 2015, former Liberal Premier Mike Baird stood alongside Nelson Bay Road and promised full duplication for \$70 million.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The Clerk will stop the clock. I apologise to the member for Port Stephens and ask her to bear with me. I ask all members and staff to continue their conversations outside the Chamber. There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I would like to hear the member for Port Stephens in silence. The member for Port Stephens has the call.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker. I will repeat something that I really want members to hear: In March 2015, former Liberal Premier Mike Baird stood alongside Nelson Bay Road and promised full duplication for \$70 million. The Government's own election commitment document stated that the project would be fully funded and fully constructed before 2019. But that turned out to be a lie. Freedom of information documents—which I had to fight for—reveal that the Government had no plans whatsoever to start work on the road before 2021. So, to recap, the Government's promise was to fully duplicate Nelson Bay Road before 2019 but it did not plan on starting the work until 2021. That was a blatant lie.

When the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] documents that were obtained under freedom of information were reported in the *Newcastle Herald*, the Government simply refused to admit it had broken its promise. Instead Government members used weasel words and said that they had fought hard to bring forward funding so that construction could commence before the election in March. The then Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter, Scot MacDonald, said those words. On top of that, the Liberal candidate, Jaimie Abbott, repeatedly told my community that the full \$70 million already had been delivered. She said that the Government had promised \$70 million and had delivered \$70 million. But that too was a lie. We know it was a lie because this year's budget papers clearly show that only \$7.5 million has been spent on Nelson Bay Road and that was to upgrade a single roundabout.

I do not know the advice the candidate was given before the election—maybe the Hon. Catherine Cusack misled her in the same way she consistently misled my community throughout that election—but the fact is that \$70 million had never been delivered. All my electorate got was a \$7.5 million roundabout upgrade. It was obvious to everyone in Port Stephens that the \$70 million had not been delivered because they drive on that road. They can see that the \$70 million has not been spent and that the road has not been duplicated. It is pretty obvious so I do not understand why the Government has maintained the lie. But that was not the most shocking case of dishonesty I heard during the election campaign. Even now, according to the Government's own documents, the Government expects to spend only half of the original \$70 million commitment before the next budget in 2020-21. In 12 months from now, the Government still will not have delivered the \$70 million that the Government promised in 2015.

When the Government says that \$70 million has been delivered that is just not true and it will not be true even at the end of 2021. The people of New South Wales cannot trust the Government to deliver on its promises. Some people may say that everyone lies, apparently, during the election campaign and when it is over they just move on and pretend it did not happen. But that is not what my community expects and it is not how I operate. A campaign is not a morality-free zone. It ought not to be a time to tell lies and not keep promises after the campaign.

Mr Mark Coure: You did at every other election.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: My community rightly expects people to tell the truth and they expect governments—the member for Oatley's Government—to deliver on their promises. I take my job very seriously. I take the community's trust very seriously. Unless the Coalition starts taking the community's trust seriously and respecting them, it will have no chance of ever winning back the Port Stephens seat. The Liberal Government and its candidate are accountable for the things they said and the promises they made. It is my job to make sure that the Government is held to account for both. The purpose of this motion is to do just that. It spells out the Government's commitment to my community and calls on the Government to deliver the project as promised.

As members opposite will see in the motion, during the most recent election the commitment from the Government grew from \$70 million to \$275 million. You did not deliver the \$70 million but you came and promised \$275 million. When the Premier made the announcement in January, she said the upgrade would be started this year and completed in two years' time, well before the next election. That is what my community expects to see happen. This is what the motion calls for. I ask Government members to make sure they read the motion before the House. I know there is a tendency to just vote against anything the Opposition puts up, but this motion simply notes the facts of the Government's commitment and calls on members of the Government to deliver that commitment.

If members amend or vote against the motion today they will be amending or voting against the clear commitment the Premier made to my community before the election. If members vote against it I do not think it will be taken very well—just a heads-up. This is a vital piece of infrastructure for the people of Port Stephens. On numerous occasions during the last term of Parliament the Premier stood in this place and crowed about her

Government's record and said that we could have it all, but apparently that is not the case in Port Stephens. I hope that will change soon. The Premier was wrong about one thing: She said I would not be back, but I am back. I ask the Government to back my community for once, back its own commitments and support this motion.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:10): I am advised that the Hunter region's road network is vital for connecting people, freight and goods within the region and across New South Wales. As the region and New South Wales continue to grow, so do the number of motorists using our roads. That is why the New South Wales Government is delivering major road upgrades and improvements to make it easier, faster and safer for people to get around. Nelson Bay Road is a major connection between Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, the Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] base and Nelson Bay. The road is used by around 25,000 motorists each day and this increases during holiday periods. The 43-kilometre corridor stretches from Stockton Bridge to the Church Street intersection in Nelson Bay.

We are delivering upgrades and planning for future improvements to provide better connectivity for residents, businesses and the community to access Newcastle Airport and Williamtown RAAF base; improve traffic flow, journey times and safety for motorists on Nelson Bay Road; improve pedestrian and bicycle safety by providing enhanced facilities; promote freight efficiency by ensuring future freight demands are met; encourage the use of higher productivity vehicles; and support tourism and rural industries as a major economic driver in the Port Stephens area. A number of sections of Nelson Bay Road have already been duplicated, including Bobs Farm to Anna Bay, Richardson Road to Lemon Tree Passage Road and Stockton Bridge to Fern Bay.

The 6.8-kilometre section of road between Bobs Farm and Anna Bay was upgraded in three stages. The \$45-million stage three upgrade was opened by the then Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Duncan Gay, and the Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter and Central Coast, Scot MacDonald, on 18 May 2015. This 4.2-kilometre section of Nelson Bay Road between Cromarty Lane, Bobs Farm and the Port Stephens Drive roundabout at Anna Bay is an example of the New South Wales Government delivering on its commitment to improve key infrastructure routes in the Hunter. This part of the upgrade between Bobs Farm and Anna Bay involved reconstructing the existing carriageway and building a second carriageway.

The upgrade was funded through the New South Wales Government's Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund to improve road safety and provide more reliable travel times for the 7,000 motorists who use this road each day between Newcastle and Port Stephens. The project included five new pedestrian refuges, five U-turn facilities, 10 bus bays, new street lighting and widened road shoulders to improve safety and access. The 10 new bus bays will provide a safer sealed area for buses to pull off the road and a concrete area where passengers can wait and access buses. Protecting native flora and fauna in the area was also a priority, with two fauna underpasses and 2.5 kilometres of fauna fencing for koalas and other species.

The New South Wales Government is continuing to invest in Nelson Bay Road with a further \$275 million to improve safety and travel times. This includes duplicating the road from Williamtown to Bobs Farm and early work to upgrade the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Tree Passage Road intersection as well as the Nelson Bay Road and Medowie Road intersection. This is in addition to the \$70 million already allocated to fund planning, development and initial works. Roads and Maritime Services is currently working to improve road safety and reduce congestion by upgrading the Nelson Bay Road and Medowie Road intersection and by planning improvements at the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Passage Road intersection. Work was completed on stage one minor improvements to the Nelson Bay Road and Medowie Road intersection at Williamtown in August 2018.

Construction on the larger scale stage two improvements started in February 2019. Stage one of the work involved changes to line marking to provide a second right-hand turning lane from Medowie Road towards Newcastle. Stage two improvements include providing a left-turn lane on the western leg of the roundabout towards Medowie; improving the alignment of the roundabout westbound to improve the safety of vehicle movements; extending the length of the right-turn lane on Medowie Road on the approach to the northern leg of the roundabout; extending the length of the left-hand lane on the departure of the eastern leg of the roundabout towards Nelson Bay; providing off-road cycle paths around the roundabout to allow cyclists to traverse the intersection safely; providing footpath and kerb ramps to improve safety for pedestrians; and extending the existing culvert to allow for road widening on Medowie Road.

Members can see that the State Government is committed to upgrading roads throughout the Hunter, particularly Nelson Bay Road and the intersections along it. Funding has been allocated but that does not mean you spend it straight away. It is used for planning and preparation. The problem with this motion is that the member for Port Stephens is trying to scaremonger. She is trying to build a narrative for the people of Port Stephens that somehow the Government is not delivering, when it is obvious that we are delivering. Stage one is delivered, stage two is in planning and that is what is happening.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: It is interesting that as soon as I start saying something that does not accord with the Opposition's narrative, members start yelling and carrying on. Members of the Government listened carefully, considerably and courteously and showed manners, unlike members of the Opposition. As soon as they do not like something they hear, they start to interject and yell. We then know that they know that what I am saying is true. The only way that Opposition members can counteract that is by yelling, screaming and carrying on. It is a terrible shame. I feel sorry for the people of Port Stephens that their member cannot tell them the truth. She cannot achieve what the people there need. Really, if those people want the best roads, the best schools, the best hospitals and the best services, they need to vote for the Coalition, which has the only members who can deliver for regional New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): Before I call the member for Kogarah, I remind the House, including members who have just entered the Chamber, that I expect silence while other members deliver their speeches on this motion. I expect members to respect me in the chair. The member for Kogarah has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (12:18): I too hope that you are respected and that my contribution is heard in complete silence, unless I tell a funny joke—then members may feel free to laugh. We are talking about Nelson Bay Road so I think it is probably appropriate to quote Horatio Nelson. I am not sure whether Nelson Bay was named after Horatio Nelson but he said:

Gentlemen, when the enemy is committed to a mistake we must not interrupt him too soon.

I think that is fair enough when you consider the Government's road-funding projects in Nelson Bay over the last eight years. They have been typified by ineptitude. There has been a gross attempt from members of the New South Wales Government to fool the people of Port Stephens by pretending that major infrastructure and road projects will be built in this electorate when they simply have not been. Members should look at the record. Former Premier Mike Baird announced \$70 million for Nelson Bay Road—no doubt at a glossy campaign stop in Nelson Bay—during the 2015 New South Wales election. That was not long after the conclusion of Operation Spicer. I imagine the former Premier said: You know what, \$70 million will get us over the line in Port Stephens. But it did not work, did it?

Ms Kate Washington: No, there was a 20 per cent swing against him.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): If the member for Kogarah would like members to remain silent he should not seek interjections.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: One would assume that after that 20 per cent swing the New South Wales Government members would say: We committed \$70 million so we should provide the infrastructure. However, six years after that announcement was made in 2014 no money has been spent on that important tourism and transport intersection. But it gets worse. Four years after the \$70 million was proposed Government members said: Let's have another go. In 2015 we promised \$70 million and we didn't provide the infrastructure, but let's see if we can hoodwink them again. The Government said it would provide \$270 million in infrastructure for Port Stephens and that it would all be done in two years.

The member for Port Stephens has moved a sensible motion that the New South Wales Government can support to show a commitment to the electorate of Port Stephens. Every member of this Parliament should support the motion, which simply and only provides for the Parliament to honour the promises that were made by the New South Wales Government. The bottom line is that it is just not good enough for the Government to say to the voters of this State that if they elect Labor Party members it will not follow through on what it has committed to in the election campaign. That is no excuse for not going ahead with much-needed infrastructure projects. But it seems that that is what the former roads Minister did in the lead up to the 2019 election. An article in the *Port Stephens Examiner* states that former roads Minister Pavey went up to Nelson Bay and made some over-the-top comments. The article states:

But now it seems that the Fingal Bay link road is a significant step closer with the Liberals announcing that they will pledge \$188 million to its creation ...

The member for Port Stephens has taken the Government at its word and said, "You didn't deliver on your \$70 million commitment at the last election, but you promised nearly \$200 million at this election so support my motion." Incredibly, the Government has said it will not support this motion. For that reason members are entitled to believe that the Government will not fulfil its commitments. This is a disgraceful turn of events from the New South Wales Government. [*Time expired.*]

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:22): Roads are a big topic across the State, whether it is the WestConnex here in Sydney; the Pacific Highway upgrade in my part of the world; or the 140-kilometre upgrade between Woolgoolga and Ballina, which is due to be opened next year.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Rockdale will remain silent. Government members remained silent during the contribution of the member for Kogarah. I allowed the member for Rockdale to continue interjecting throughout the contribution by a member of his own party, but he should show the member for Coffs Harbour some courtesy. If the member for Rockdale cannot remain silent he should leave the Chamber.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I respect the member for Port Stephens's contribution and her wish to get some answers on what is happening with a project in her electorate. Outside the Chamber earlier I had a conversation with the member for Clarence about the Grafton Bridge, which is well on the way to delivery. In 2003 the Grafton Bridge project was first promised by Bob Carr. Later that year that promise was reneged. In 2018 construction began.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: Construction has started after about four years of planning.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: That is right. There have been four years of planning for this very big bridge, which is one of the main tourist attractions in Grafton. The New South Wales Government has committed \$275 million to improve road safety and congestion in the Nelson Bay Road corridor, including a duplication from Williamtown to Bobs Farm and early work on the Nelson Bay Road and Medowie Road intersection and the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Tree Passage intersection. Transport for NSW is planning to upgrade the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Tree Passage intersection to improve traffic flow, travel times and safety for road users. In March 2019 the community was invited to comment on the proposed intersection upgrade. At the moment in Coffs Harbour we are going through a similar process with a community consultation on our bypass. I thank everyone who has provided their input to that project. The feedback that is received will be considered in the final project design.

The proposed improvements at the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Tree Passage intersection include: providing an additional left-turn lane into Lemon Tree Passage; extending the eastbound merge lane on Nelson Bay Road, which includes the adjustment of driveways and associated drainage on the eastern side of the roundabout to accommodate road widening for the extra lane; extending the two-lane approach to the roundabout on Lemon Tree Passage Road; providing an additional westbound lane on Nelson Bay Road on approach to the roundabout; providing an off-road cycle path around the roundabout to improve safety for cyclists; providing footpaths and curb ramps to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists; removing and replacing concrete medians; and road resurfacing and new line markings. At the moment planning for this project is continuing and Transport for NSW expects work to start late this year, weather permitting.

Transport for NSW is also carrying out preliminary planning and investigation work on the project to duplicate Nelson Bay Road from Williamtown to Bobs Farm. The investigation work includes site investigations by environmental and Aboriginal heritage specialists. Transport for NSW will also monitor traffic movement and survey the road corridor property boundaries, driveways and footpaths. The preliminary planning and investigation work will be ongoing over the coming months. The New South Wales Government is delivering major road upgrades and improvements on Nelson Bay Road to make it easier, faster and safer for people to get around. The improvements will support tourism and local industries—I look forward to hopefully visiting Nelson Bay with my family in the Christmas break—and add to the major economic drivers in the area. We are delivering quite a lot of big projects in regional New South Wales.

Ms Kate Washington: I'm glad you are.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: We are. The list of projects includes the Coffs Harbour bypass. The Liberal-Nationals Government is the only government that committed to building the bypass with tunnels. Now we are delivering on that promise. We have committed \$275 million to this project. I look forward to hearing the member for Port Stephens congratulate the Government on the completion of this project in the future.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (12:26): I assure the member for Port Stephens that this Government has allocated record funding to fix roads in New South Wales. The electorate of Port Stephens will reap the benefits of that. As the member for Myall Lakes said, the allocation of funding one year does not mean that the project will be completed that year or the following year. As the member for Coffs Harbour rightly pointed out, the Grafton Bridge project was announced by the then Leader of The Nationals, Andrew Stoner, in the lead up to the 2011 election. That \$240 million project will be completed this year—eight years after it was announced. These projects do take time. We are talking about a \$275 million upgrade of Nelson Bay Road. It is not a simple project. It is not like building a \$500,000 house that you can expect will be completed in a year.

The New South Wales Government is absolutely focused on meeting the traffic needs of the communities in the Hunter region, improving road safety, improving traffic flows, ensuring better connectivity for residents, improving pedestrian and bike safety and promoting freight efficiency. On 15 January 2019 the Premier

announced that a re-elected Liberal-Nationals Government would commit a further \$205 million to the Nelson Bay Road duplication project from Williamstown to Bobs Farm. That is in addition to the \$70 million already allocated, which has funded planning, development and initial works. Roads and Maritime Services is currently working to improve road safety and reduce congestion with the upgrade of the Nelson Bay Road and Medowie Road intersection and with planning for improvements at the Nelson Bay Road and Lemon Tree Passage intersection.

In August 2018 work was completed on the stage one minor improvements to the intersection of Nelson Bay Road and Medowie Road at Williamstown. Construction on the larger-scale stage two improvements started in February 2019. Stage one of the works involved changes to line marking to provide a second right-hand turning lane from Medowie Road towards Newcastle. Stage two improvements include providing a left turn on the western leg of the roundabout towards Medowie, improving the alignment of the roundabout westbound to improve safety of vehicle movements and extending the length of the right turn lane on Medowie Road on the approach to the northern leg of the roundabout. Other improvements include extending the length of the left-hand lane on the departure of the eastern leg of the roundabout towards Nelson Bay, providing off-road cycle paths around the roundabout to allow cyclists to traverse the intersection safely, providing footpaths and kerb ramps to improve safety for pedestrians, and extending the existing culvert to allow road widening on Medowie Road.

Port Stephens Council will carry out the works on behalf of Roads and Maritime Services. Work is expected to commence later in 2019 and will take place between 8.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Monday to Friday and between 7.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting. To minimise disruption to motorists work will not be carried out during peak traffic times, which I am sure the member for Port Stephens would agree with. Some night work will also be required and Roads and Maritime Services will let the community and motorists know in advance. As I said, the New South Wales Government is committed to meeting the traffic needs of the communities of the Hunter region.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:31): In reply: I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Myall Lakes. I thank the members representing the electorates of Kogarah, Coffs Harbour and Clarence for their contributions as well. At this point in time I am not sure whether to laugh or cry. I have been very impressed by the history lesson provided by members opposite about the minutiae of the tiny amount of work that has been done on Nelson Bay Road, in contrast to the Government's commitment about what it would actually do on that road. I do not think I have heard longer descriptions of roundabout upgrades, which were repeated three times by three members who had nothing else to talk about because no other work has been undertaken on Nelson Bay Road.

In 2015 then Liberal Premier Mike Baird stood on the side of Nelson Bay Road and said there would be full duplication of the road; \$70 million. Nothing happened, apart from some additional lanes added to a roundabout on the eve of an election. Later the current Premier stood on Nelson Bay Road, in the same spot as Mike Baird, and committed to \$275 million. You might think that people were a little concerned about whether that would be delivered, given that even \$70 million was not delivered and then suddenly, and very conveniently, a \$275 million commitment was made on the eve of an election in an attempt to hoodwink the community yet again into believing that this Government would actually do what it said it would do.

The Premier also said that the goal was for that construction to be completed in two years. The member for Clarence has just talked about a large \$240 million project in his electorate that has taken eight years. I am now a bit concerned about the Premier's commitment that duplication of the next section of Nelson Bay Road will be completed within two years. The member for Clarence says, "Just be patient; these things don't happen overnight." We have been waiting since 2015 for the Government to do what it said it would do, which is to duplicate Nelson Bay Road. Now we are hoping that this time the Government will do what it said it would do, because it did not do so last time.

I hope to goodness that we will not be waiting eight years for completion of the next section, because it is only one of a number of sections that were meant to be duplicated before 2019 and have not been duplicated. I am hopeful, because the contributions of Government members suggested that the Government might actually back its own commitment. The test will be when question on this motion is put to the House. Will the Government support it? Will the Government support its Premier's commitment that the \$275 million upgrade of Nelson Bay Road from Bobs Farm to Williamstown will happen and that it will happen in the next two years? I would hope that we could believe what the Government says this time. If members opposite support this motion they will be supporting the Premier, and hopefully my community will get the outcome that it deserves.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes37

Noes42

Majority.....5

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dalton, Mrs H
 Doyle, Ms T
 Haylen, Ms J
 Lalich, Mr N
 McGirr, Dr J
 O'Neill, Dr M
 Piper, Mr G
 Smith, Ms T.F.
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Dib, Mr J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Park, Mr R
 Saffin, Ms J
 Tesch, Ms L (teller)
 Washington, Ms K

Butler, Mr R
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Donato, Mr P
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Minns, Mr C
 Parker, Mr J
 Scully, Mr P
 Voltz, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Constance, Mr A
 Davies, Mrs T
 Evans, Mr L.J.
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Henskens, Mr A
 Lee, Dr G
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Petinos, Ms E
 Saunders, Mr D
 Speakman, Mr M
 Tuckerman, Mrs W
 Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
 Clancy, Mr J
 Cooke, Ms S (teller)
 Dominello, Mr V
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Lindsay, Ms W
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Preston, Ms R
 Sidgreaves, Mr P
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Barilaro, Mr J
 Conolly, Mr K
 Crouch, Mr A (teller)
 Elliott, Mr D
 Griffin, Mr J
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Bali, Mr S
 Barr, Mr C
 Finn, Ms J
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mehan, Mr D
 Mihailuk, Ms T

Bromhead, Mr S
 Coure, Mr M
 Provest, Mr G
 Singh, Mr G
 Smith, Mr N
 Stokes, Mr R

Motion negatived.

FARMING COMMUNITIES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (12:44): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the hard work and dedication shown in farming communities across regional New South Wales during the drought.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government's ongoing commitment to supporting primary producers with both financial and wellbeing assistance.
- (3) Notes this commitment will continue through the wetter winter months to ensure farmers continue to demonstrate they are the best in the world.

If only the winter months were wetter, but they were not—particularly in my part of the world, the electorate of Cootamundra, where I am extremely proud of our farmers. They are doing it tough, but they are battling on. In the west of the Cootamundra electorate many farmers are looking at a total crop failure, without enough crop above the ground even to cut for hay. Instead they are making the most out of it by grazing their stock. In other areas they are hard at work cutting silage and making hay with failed crops. There are a good number who are hoping for some grain, but with extremely low rainfall over the normally wetter winter months there is unlikely to be much to harvest.

The hard work and dedication shown in farming communities under the current drought conditions is something that all farmers, and the small businesses that support them, should be very proud of. This Government has committed \$1.8 billion so far to support drought-hit communities. We have been listening to our farmers and delivering assistance where it is needed. The Farm Innovation Fund makes \$1 billion available for farmers through the form of low interest loans to improve farm infrastructure. Likewise, the Drought Assistance Fund provides \$100 million worth of low interest loans across the State to cover expenses such as the transport of livestock and the banking of herd genetics. We are supporting farmers to transport stock and fodder with a pool of \$156 million available for transport subsidies, and we are providing rebates to farmers to install emergency water infrastructure.

It has been heartening to see the broader Australian community come on board to support farmers and the New South Wales Government is working with community organisations to provide subsidies for the transport of donated fodder. In addition to financial support, we are supporting the wellbeing of farmers through increased funding for mental health services. At last count, since the Government introduced the first emergency drought assistance package in July last year, over 1,400 families across the Cootamundra electorate have accessed more than \$90 million of Government support. For example, Ben Langtry is a farmer from Coolamon in my electorate who has accessed \$40,000 through the Farm Innovation Fund to build a storage shed on his property to store feed pellets and supplements for his sheep operation. It is a great example of how the Government is working together with farmers to help them build up resilience during times of drought.

In June this year I was extremely proud and honoured to welcome leaders of the Coalition—the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer, and the agriculture Minister—to Coolamon to deliver the heart of the 2019-2020 budget, an additional \$335 million in drought assistance. The \$170 million drought infrastructure stimulus package that was announced during the Coolamon visit recognises that it is not just primary producers who are suffering but entire communities. The package provides funding up to \$120 million to fast-track identified major infrastructure projects in drought-hit communities. That includes \$30 million towards a new groundwater supply for Dubbo, \$8 million for the construction of a second water storage at Nyngan, \$2.2 million to augment bore water supply at Coonabarabran, \$2 million towards a Narromine water security and water quality project, \$2 million for critical maintenance of the Albert Priest Channel between Nyngan and Cobar, and \$1.97 million towards the Coolamon industrial estate development.

I am very proud of the drought infrastructure stimulus package, which will deliver utilities such as water, sewerage, drainage, electricity, telecommunications and gas in order to activate industrial land in Coolamon. In doing so, it will create 59 full-time jobs and 25 construction jobs over the build, which will be fantastic for concreters, plumbers, electricians, builders and other tradies across our electorates. They can do with a boost during these tough times. The New South Wales Government is working with our local communities to provide ongoing support.

More recently I had the pleasure of making yet another announcement under the drought stimulus package. The Glenella quarry between Boorowa and Cowra in my electorate is one of the most diverse mining operations in New South Wales and sells high-grade quartz, silica, pebble and other raw materials to the Sydney landscaping market. With a \$1 million upgrade to Battery Road, B-doubles will be able to access the mine, boosting its output and therefore boosting jobs for tradies and suppliers. Drought affects not just the adults in our community but also our littlest learners, particularly those children attending preschool. That is why I am very pleased that this Government has committed \$5.2 million in funding through the New South Wales Government Drought Relief program for preschools. In the Cootamundra electorate alone, 15 community preschools have received over \$160,000 in round one and more than \$170,000 in round two. That means that the preschools can keep their doors open and that families can get fee relief, ensuring that their children can continue to attend preschool.

This Government is absolutely committed to continuing support for farmers through this drought. I am very proud of the drought package that the Government has delivered to date—\$1.8 billion—and I am pleased that there will continue to be ongoing planning in this space because farmers will need to be supported until this drought breaks, however long that takes. This Government is certainly committed to that. I acknowledge the numerous community organisations that are also making an invaluable contribution to supporting families in the farming sector during this difficult time. I am proud of the way that communities in my electorate and right across

New South Wales have really pulled together. New South Wales is an agricultural powerhouse, and the Government is absolutely committed to supporting our primary producers to continue to thrive and succeed even in these tough times.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:51): I move:

That the motion be amended by replacing "Government's" with "Parliament's" in paragraph (2).

I congratulate the member for Cootamundra on moving this motion. It is nice to see a motion that recognises the people in farming communities instead of a standard Thursday morning self-congratulatory motion. This State has been in drought for a long time and our hardworking farmers are at the end of their tethers. In the short time that I have been the shadow Minister with responsibility for primary industries many farmers have called me. One fellow from Collarenebri calls me fairly regularly to express his extreme concern—not for himself and his family, but for people who live around him. He is concerned for his friends, who he sees are struggling without any assistance for the real issues that they face.

I know that it is difficult to give assistance in a way that will be effective. Sometimes blunt instruments such as subsidies have unintended consequences. For example, the fodder subsidy has increased the price of fodder. I have also heard that the fodder subsidy may have increased the exposure of some farms to unusual kinds of weeds that have not previously been encountered in those areas. As the drought ends—hopefully very soon—we need to keep on top of those kinds of issues.

The Government has been very quick to talk about the value of its commitments but I am aware that a lot of those commitments are being rolled out very slowly. A mental health group came to see me. The group had been tendering for work on mental health services for communities. In particular it was engaging drought-affected communities to run mental health festivals, which will result in local people being engaged in paid work to put the festivals together. The festivals are designed to engage the whole community in a sense of hope and looking towards the future in what is a dark, terrible time for so many people. The tender was worth about \$6 million and was supposed to start on 1 July but by the end of August it had not been announced. A couple of months have gone by and the money is still sitting in government coffers; it has not reached the community. This means that when the organisation does spend the money it will not have the capacity to engage the community in the way it wanted to.

Towns are really struggling and some are running out of water. This is a drought that is affecting not just farmers but also small businesses. In my former capacity as shadow Minister for Small Business, I learnt that small businesses were suffering real losses and many were closing. I travelled to Inverell, where businesses were closing every day of every week. That is not good enough. The Government needs to give more support that is better targeted. I would like the Government to focus on that. Earlier today the Parliamentary Secretary for the dairy industry spoke in the second reading debate on the Right to Farm Bill. It is a very short bill but he had not read it. He just read the explanatory notes into *Hansard*. I felt that it was disrespectful because the dairy industry is under such pressure and the person who is supposed to be in the farmers' corner had not got himself across one of the big issues.

The monopsony that is inherent in the agricultural industry is a real issue. A small number of retailers are causing market failure. In one sense it does not matter if it rains or not because these people are being done over on pricing and they are not able to recoup the amount of money that they need to produce the goods that have been sustaining their families, sometimes for generations. NSW Farmers has been advocating on this issue. Before the election Labor brought out a policy on a fresh food and dairy pricing advocate. The Government followed suit, to an extent, talking about just fresh milk and dairy producers. The Government announced, just before budget estimates, that it had put in place a dairy advocate, before that person had even signed a contract. The Government could not tell us what he was supposed to do or who had chosen him. The Government could not tell us about any of the key things even though it was six months after the election, when it had promised it would act for the dairy industry.

I attended a poultry meat farmers meeting with NSW Farmers last Friday night in Beresfield. I noticed when the member who was the Parliamentary Secretary for dairy talks to the poultry industry he becomes the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture. I guess he does not want to change his title for every single group he talks to. The people at the meeting were asking him where the person was who would be standing up for them in this Parliament and in this Government and getting money out of the Treasurer's very tight pockets to assist the people who are growing the food that we need to survive. I pay tribute to Belinda-Jane Davis, a Walkley Award-winning journalist from the Maitland area. She won another award recently for her coverage of the big dry. She initiated a petition that members on the other side of the Chamber were not very supportive of. We need voices like hers to be raised, and I congratulate her on bringing it to this Government's attention.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:59): I thank the member for Cootamundra for moving this motion to essentially recognise the hard work and dedication of our farming communities and recognise the Government's commitment to ensuring that farming families have as much support as possible. I note the good member for Maitland acknowledging some of the realities around fodder and subsidies, and the problems that can cause. That is a very real problem that many have been facing.

Paragraph (1) of the motion recognises the hard work and dedication shown in farming communities across our State. I say to the House that the resilience of our farming communities is nothing short of amazing. When there is drought, like now, they suffer. When it pours with rain and we get floods, they suffer. But they turn up day after day, year after year and get on with the job of putting food on our tables and clothes on our backs. Unfortunately, the hard work they do is sometimes taken for granted by some of the population. We need to stop that. Farmers are constantly at the mercy of so many factors that are essentially out of their control. The old saying "Thank a farmer for your feed" is something that really has some merit.

I spoke yesterday, as did many other members, about the right to farm. It is worth noting that our farmers are world leaders in the way that they approach new ideas and opportunities—whether it is by looking for more water efficiencies or advancing drought-resistant varieties of wheat—they get on and they do the job. We have communities that work together to achieve the seemingly unachievable. When times are tough, we always see the best of people. That is the case right now. Support for farming families has been incredible. I have been part of many different days, including "hay days", where communities and local Lions Clubs get together to support each other. In many ways, that is what this motion is about: support.

Regarding paragraphs (2) and (3) of the motion moved by the member for Cootamundra, when the Coalition Government was returned in March this year the Premier and the Deputy Premier each vowed to listen to the needs of people in the bush. That promise relates not only to getting our farmers and graziers through the drought but also to ensuring that our regional communities are set up with the infrastructure that ensures that we can continue to develop at a rate that we deserve. That promise is being lived up to. One of the first tasks of the Premier and Deputy Premier when they put together their Cabinet was to appoint the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, MLC, to the role of Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. These are three things that are often overlooked when it comes to our rural communities, and drought and disaster but they are really closely linked.

The strain of drought on families is very real. It is important to remember that, when it comes to those who live on the land, everyone plays their role—including the wife and children. Having a Minister whose charter is specifically to look after areas like rural youth, women and mental health, and tying that all together is a massive step in the right direction. Just last week and again yesterday members spoke to the Right to Farm Bill 2019 introduced by agriculture Minister Adam Marshall. The bill gives farmers some peace of mind when it comes to doing what they do best—that is, farming. Keeping vigilantes off properties is at the forefront of the bill. I know that farming families across my electorate are extremely happy it has been introduced.

Millions of dollars are being spent on drought infrastructure—we heard about some of that from the member for Cootamundra. In my electorate alone \$30 million was allocated for Dubbo Regional Council to explore further groundwater options as well as water recycling options, in an attempt to stretch our water resources as far as possible. That is now starting to happen. There is \$2 million for Narromine to go deeper with its current bore—that is happening now. The long and sensible campaign by the Deputy Premier for more dams to increase water storage across the State is also gaining some traction. While things are bad, we do know it will rain again. By preparing now we can be ready to take advantage when good times come. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (13:03): I acknowledge the member for Cootamundra for moving this very important motion. Whenever there is an opportunity to speak about regional New South Wales, which is doing it extremely tough at the moment, it is certainly appreciated, and I certainly thank her for moving this important motion. No doubt all members in this House are aware of how difficult people in regional and rural New South Wales are doing—not just our farmers but also our local small businesses and communities. In the electorate of Orange, which encompasses the areas of Parkes, Forbes and Cabonne, many towns are doing it extremely tough. I was in Peak Hill the other day. Many businesses in towns such as Peak Hill close down, which is absolutely devastating. The further west you go the worse it gets—or north or south, in fact. Any opportunity to speak about regional New South Wales, drought and the impact it is having on our communities and our farmers is very important.

I note the member indicated recognition for our hardworking communities. As previous members have said, community groups are doing some fantastic things in delivering water and fodder to our struggling farmers and farming communities. They have really rolled up their sleeves. Often when the times are tough it brings out the best in communities. However, we need to do more to support our regional communities—not only our farmers but our local tradies, our local small businesses, our local schools and everyone involved who is impacted by

drought. It does not affect just farmers; it affects everybody in those communities. It is concerning that we have seen a number of suicides in regional New South Wales—not just farmers but local tradies as well.

Not that long ago I was at a function at Yeoval where I was told that seven young tradies, predominantly men in and around Dubbo, had committed suicide during this drought. That is tragic. They are sometimes the silent people whose voices are not being heard in these debates. It is important that is acknowledged. We need to demonstrate a bias for the bush—I have been saying that; the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has been saying that—in terms of the delivery of projects to regional New South Wales. Recently I met with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and was alarmed to learn that the Newell Highway overtaking lane upgrades along that road—I note that the water Minister who would be well aware of the Newell Highway from her previous portfolio—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: How many are there? How many are going to be delivered?

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Thirty.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Isn't that an incredible thing?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order!

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Thirty overtaking lanes, but guess what? Instead of the local councils being given the opportunity to tender for those projects—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Local companies are being given the opportunity.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Forbes and Gilgandra local councils—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Local companies.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Minister will cease interjecting.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: No, it was awarded to BMD Group, a Queensland-based company, to do these works.

Mr Dugald Saunders: With agreement with the local people.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Employing local people.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Government members will come to order.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: So where is the bias for the bush? I had the mayor of Forbes and the mayor of Gilgandra come to this place a couple of days ago to meet with the Minister to express their concerns because that would be money that would be reinvested into those local economies and communities—not the dribs and drabs, and the crumbs that they get from people buying a few coffees or staying a few nights. We need to ensure that local—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Be honest, Phil.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: —communities, local councils and local organisations are awarded these projects.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: What about the half a billion dollar local road money that is coming?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Minister will come to order.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: There needs to be a bias for the bush.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Be decent.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: There needs to be a bias for the bush.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Be honest.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: These major infrastructure projects that bring an incredible—

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Be decent.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: —amount of money into those communities—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Minister will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: —that upskill the local apprentices who need the ongoing training need this work.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Be honest.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: But instead it was awarded to an interstate company. The money is going to Queensland. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will always push for the bush.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Be honest, Phil.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: I commend the motion of the member for Cootamundra.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (13:07): I will quickly address the concerns raised by the member for Orange in his contribution. BMD was successful in that tender because it was about having the flexibility and the ability to deliver 30 overtaking lanes with local staff, local companies and local apprentices—

Mr Philip Donato: Sending money into Queensland.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Used as much as possible.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order!

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Be honest. Be decent, and be honest.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! The member for Orange will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: If you are going to be a member of Parliament, be honest and be decent. You forgot to mention the extra half a billion dollars that is going to go into regional councils supporting local road development.

Mr Philip Donato: When?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: It is more than what was ever achieved under any other Government.

Mr Philip Donato: Tell us, Melinda, when?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Clerk will stop the clock. Members will stop conducting conversations across the Chamber. Let us be pleasant to one another. All members will get their chance to contribute to the debate.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Honesty and decency are a very important acknowledgement of the support to regional New South Wales. Our farmers, our communities have never done it tougher. They do not want to be told lies and mistruths through this. They want us to stand right beside them and support them. Farmers, shops in the main streets, the industrial precincts where people are employed and the engineering firms are doing it tough. They are not building the trailers because the farmers cannot afford the trailers—there is nothing to put in those trailers at the moment. We understand that. That is nobody's fault: It has not rained.

I acknowledge the work of the member for Cootamundra in bringing this motion before the House. She is right beside me, right beside the Government and right beside the Deputy Premier as we undertake the pre-planning to rebuild Wyangala Dam. Why do we want to rebuild Wyangala Dam and build other dams across the State? Because we want to ensure greater security, not just for our towns but for our farmers to deliver more than 40 per cent water security to the Lachlan Valley, which is what we have now.

The stories are heartfelt. They are terrible. We are working hard right now to support our communities through this drought, whether it is with the member for Dubbo providing \$30 million in emergency funding to ensure the town does not run out of water, or supporting Nyngan, Cobar, Tamworth and Tenterfield, where finally we were able to activate a bore. Today the member for Northern Tablelands told me the new pipeline from Armidale to Guyra has a capacity of 2.1 megalitres per day. We are there beside our communities. Do not play cheap politics through this drought. Our communities do not want that, they want us to be there for them, they want us to support them, they want the farm contributions that we are giving. We are supporting them every step of the way.

There have been some good contributions today from members on the other side acknowledging the challenges with mental health. We know farmers are at breaking point. I know farmers along the Murray River are at breaking point because that river is raging like a torrent right down to South Australia when we do not have general security allocations. We have been trying to have conversations with the Commonwealth environmental holder because we agree that seeing that water rage down to South Australia is creating mental health problems for our farmers. I am working with the Victorian Labor Minister to ensure that we get accountability. These are all issues that are having an impact on mental health during this drought.

Communities are divided because they can see a lack of accountability. They cannot understand how a river can be raging like a torrent down to South Australia when New South Wales is experiencing a drought. They are saying to themselves: Why is our river not being managed in a way that is reflective of what nature is doing to us? The member for Cootamundra is a fantastic member. She is out there everywhere supporting her community and farmers. There are a lot of dryland farmers in her electorate as well. It was a privilege to be with the member at the opening of the Goldenfields Water supply. I thank her for bringing this motion to the House.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:11): I congratulate the member for Cootamundra on bringing this motion before the House. It is important that we recognise the hard work and dedication of our farmers and our farming communities, particularly in this time of drought. My electorate perhaps has not been as badly affected by the drought to this point as other parts of the State have been, and I recognise that. There is a genuine concern in my electorate that as summer approaches people will be facing some difficult circumstances. Last week in Batlow I was where the rainfall this winter has been almost nothing compared to what it is normally. People are worried about how that will affect them. They require more water in that part of the world for orchards and crops. The lack of water will impact on them and they have a real concern. That is an issue for sure.

I make some comments about the importance of innovation in tackling the issues and encourage the Government to look at these areas. There are three areas I will talk about. First of all the dairy industry, which is a small part in my electorate but it is really struggling with the drought. I note that the Government has appointed a dairy advocate. Today I met Mr Ian Zandstra and I am happy to see his appointment. He faces some real challenges. Farmers in my electorate tell me that it is a minute to midnight for the dairy industry. The drought has meant that prices and return on investment are at an all-time low. I wish them all the best. I congratulate the Government on that appointment, but innovation and hard work will be necessary to tackle those challenges.

I also recognise the importance of research and the Charles Sturt University AgriPark development in Wagga Wagga. I encourage the Government to get behind that, because it is only with the technology and innovation that we get out of hard times that we will make the developments that we need. I believe we will be facing further changes from climate change and we will need to adapt as the century goes by, and we can adapt. Farmers are good at adapting. Finally, I encourage the Government to look at regenerative agriculture—new approaches to improve the sustainability of our landscape, especially in times of drought—which, also results in a win for our community by reducing emissions. Diversity and innovation are critical for our farmers and farming communities to survive the drought. I commend the motion to the House.

Debate interrupted.

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

Members

MEMBER FOR FAIRFIELD

MEMBER FOR GOULBURN

The SPEAKER: I wish the members for Fairfield and Goulburn all the best for their upcoming birthdays next week. I hope they have some wonderful celebrations planned.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very welcome to James Newbury, the member for Brighton in the Parliament of Victoria. I also welcome the Berowra Probus group to the Chamber, guests of the Minister for Energy and Environment, and member for Hornsby. I welcome Robert and Carmel Clark, guests of the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, and member for Tamworth. I acknowledge Josh Evans in the gallery, who is a guest of the Government Whip, and member for Terrigal. I acknowledge Romain Andries, a staff member of the European Parliament in Brussels, guest of the member for Balmain. Welcome to the Chamber. Finally, I acknowledge Gail Dawkins, Bill McArthur, Ann Morris, Terry Peters, Paul Muncaster and Vince and Beverly Murphy, constituents of the member for Lake Macquarie.

Governor

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that I have ascertained it to be the wish of Her Excellency the Governor to receive the address-in-reply at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday 16 October 2019.

*Announcements***CATHERINE WATSON, CLERK-ASSISTANT, COMMITTEES AND CORPORATE**

The SPEAKER: In acknowledgement of her 31 years' service to the Parliament, I take this opportunity to thank and farewell Catherine Watson, Clerk-Assistant, Committees and Corporate. Catherine's career began in June 1988 when she was appointed to the staff of the Parliamentary Library. Her initial appointment was followed by promotion to the library. Wanting to extend her horizons to take advantage of the opportunities that arose during the hung fiftieth Parliament, Catherine was seconded to the Legislative Assembly in 1991. Initially she served as Acting Clerk to the Regulation Review Committee and, subsequently, she served with a number of select committees. Catherine was permanently appointed as Committees Project Officer in 1993. While working for committees, Catherine completed a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Technology Sydney and then a Master of Environmental Law from the University of Sydney.

Catherine brought her legal skills to her appointments as the director to many committees including the Public Accounts Committee, the Public Works Committee, the victims compensation, health care complaints and legislation review committees. Catherine's commitment to the institution of the New South Wales Parliament is rare in the current wider workplace environment, and attests to the dedication and drive with which she has pursued her career. Following the 2011 implementation of the Legislative Assembly's staffing restructure, Catherine was appointed Director of Corporate Services, which incorporated electorate office services. As members would attest, this is a role she undertook with the interests of members and the Assembly always paramount. This culminated in her promotion to Clerk-Assistant, Committees and Corporate, a position she has occupied since January 2015. Catherine, on behalf of all members and staff, we wish you all the best for the future. Thank you very much, Catherine.

Members and officers of the House applauded.

*Members***MEMBER FOR MONARO OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE**

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I would like to put on the record of the House and reiterate that I am sorry for any offence caused by the comments that I made publicly last night during a heated debate in the House, when I used an inappropriate expression that I should not have used.

*Question Time***WORKPLACE SAFETY**

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:22): My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. There have been too many tragic workplace deaths this year including four this month, the latest just yesterday. Under this Government, work safety prosecutions have fallen by 46 per cent compared to 2011 and this Government has gone soft on penalties and fines. When will he, as Minister, properly enforce the laws that keep people safe at work?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:23): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. Any death in the workplace is a tragedy and one is one too many. SafeWork NSW continues to work proactively and responsibly to ensure worker safety right across New South Wales. When a fatality or a serious injury occurs, SafeWork NSW responds quickly, with significant resources, to make sure the workplace is made safe and investigation commences immediately. Investigations determine the appropriate compliance response, ranging from advice and issuing notices to entering an enforceable undertaking, licence cancellations and possible prosecution against businesses and/or individuals who have failed to meet their work health and safety obligations.

In 2018-2019 there were 59 successful work health and safety prosecutions, resulting in \$3.6 million in fines, 43,201 workplace interactions and a total of 12,697 inspector-issued notices. In 2018-19, 134 prosecutions commenced and are ongoing. What we need to do is double-down on safety in the workplace. We need to ensure that every workplace in New South Wales is as safe as possible. Every worker in New South Wales has a right to a safe workplace, a right to go to work in a safe workplace and to go home to their loved ones.

New South Wales currently is exceeding the national targets set out in the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022. In response, this Government has set its own targets for New South Wales of a 30 per cent reduction in worker fatalities and a 50 per cent reduction in serious injuries and illnesses. Those targets have been set for New South Wales in advance of 2022. SafeWork NSW is on track to meet those targets. Is there more we can do? Yes, there is. There is also the issue of work safe culture on a worksite. Workers need to be able to speak up without fear of being victimised. If they see something, it is everyone's responsibility. If someone sees

something that they think is not quite safe, if it does not look right and does not feel right, that person has a right to speak up and say that it is not safe and make that safe place even safer. Currently the New South Wales Government is considering the recommendations of the national review of workplace health and safety laws. This Government takes that very seriously. What is crystal clear to me is that our laws need to be stronger, not just in relation to workplace fatalities but also in targeting unsafe practices before someone dies.

[Interruption from gallery]

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. The person in the public in the gallery who is standing up and calling out has been warned. Sir, you will leave the Chamber. You were warned earlier. The Clerk will stop the clock. I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to escort the man from the Chamber. Sir, please leave calmly or you will be removed forcefully. The microphones are turned off. I ask the Special Constable to remove that man from the Chamber. Sir, I ask you to leave the Chamber. You can write to the Premier, if you wish.

I thank members. I anticipated there might be some disruption, but I did not expect it from the public gallery. Obviously we want to maintain standards in this place and that means in all parts of the Chamber. I note that already there have been a number of interjections by members. I have not placed any member on a call to order. If any further interjections occur I will not necessarily stop the flow of the Minister's answer, but I warn members that at the conclusion of question time I will place all members who have interjected on a call to order. The Minister has the call.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: As I was saying, what is crystal clear to me is that our laws need to be stronger, not just to reduce workplace fatalities but to target unsafe practices before someone dies. I have just spoken about workplace culture. What we need to do is to be right at the forefront. When someone gets injured or when someone dies it is too late. We must focus on the very start. People who work on a worksite need to feel safe, they need to be safe and they need to be able to go home to their family at the end of the day. The Government has been looking closely at changes that have been made in other jurisdictions. To be frank, it is one thing to have laws that sound strong but if a prosecution does not result from the laws they are little more than words on a page. I am not able to discuss any details yet but what is clear is that we need real leadership in this space. The New South Wales Government has the opportunity to set the standard for workplace health and safety across the nation.

JOBS GROWTH

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:29): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the recent jobs numbers and public safety in New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:29): I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question because we know that the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals are the parties for the workers. We support jobs, we support a strong economy and we support our workers. Only a few days ago I was very pleased to get the most recent unemployment figures, which confirm that New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in the land—4.3 per cent. The gap between New South Wales and other States as well as the nation is actually growing, which demonstrates this State's capacity to buck the trends and ensure that New South Wales is by far the leading economy in the nation.

Just a few hours ago I was very pleased to receive figures for regional New South Wales and for regions in Greater Sydney. I am very pleased to say that notwithstanding the deep and devastating drought in New South Wales, in the last 12 months regional New South Wales recorded 40,000 new jobs. That is in just 12 months. I say this with a heavy heart because while that is good news we know that many families, many businesses and many communities are suffering in regional New South Wales because of the drought. Notwithstanding that, through activities of the Government and its infrastructure pipeline and also through the resilience of our small business community, our farming communities and our townships, the New South Wales Government has been able to ensure that jobs have kept growing in those areas.

Members of this Government know that when we build a road, a school or a hospital, that creates jobs and builds confidence in a town. That also means that businesses invest. I am incredibly proud of our activities because were it not for this Government's strong budget position and our infrastructure spend, we would not be able to create 40,000 jobs in regional New South Wales in one year alone. Just to show how well New South Wales is doing compared to the rest of the nation, when all the regional jobs created in the same period are added together it totals only 5,200. In the rest of regional Australia, excluding New South Wales, 5,200 jobs were created but in regional New South Wales 40,000 jobs were created. That happened notwithstanding the devastating impact of the drought.

This Government knows that many people on the land have had to make the devastating decision to have at least one member of the household go off the farm and get a job in town. But at least the jobs are there and at least the jobs creation is there to support our communities during this very devastating and distraught time for many people in regional New South Wales. It is not just rural and regional New South Wales that has had such a great record when it comes to jobs creation. The member for Holsworthy asked this question. I am incredibly proud of the record of western Sydney. I acknowledge that many members representing western Sydney electorates have contributed to this record. In the last 12 months alone 75,700 jobs were created in western Sydney.

If we add all the jobs, city and country, created in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, that adds up to approximately 65,000. Western Sydney alone has created more jobs than has any other State combined, but for Victoria. That is because the construction of major infrastructure projects creates jobs and encourages business investment. I thank the business community. Last night in the New South Wales Parliament we celebrated the commencement of Friends of Small Business.

Mr Ryan Park: Well done, Scully.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I commend the Hon. Damien Tudehope in the other place and the member for Wollongong.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I also make the point that the way to create jobs is by investing in public infrastructure, giving businesses the confidence to invest and supporting individuals who have the courage and the guts to get up and work for themselves and employ other people. The Coalition is incredibly proud to be the party of the workers, the party for small business, the party for the regions and the party for jobs. Those job numbers speak for themselves but the member for Holsworthy also appropriately asked me a question about public safety. I raise two issues here today that threaten public safety. I was concerned to learn early in the day—and I do not blame lower House members because they cannot instruct their upper House colleagues—but the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, The Greens and Labor members today voted not to have any regulations around music festivals. Members of the Labor Party, the Shooters and The Greens in the upper House combined to get rid of all regulations around music festivals. [*Extension of time*]

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Government made the important decision that of the 90 music festivals to be held, 12 were deemed high risk. We want parents to know that their children are safe when they go to these music festivals. We want adults to know when they go to these music festivals that they are safe. What members of the Labor Party, the Shooters and The Greens did in the upper House is completely irresponsible. I also place on record—

Ms Kate Washington: You voted against your own commitment today.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Members are very sensitive because they have done the wrong thing.

Ms Kate Washington: You didn't back your own commitment today.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Members of the Labor Party are interjecting in the lower House. I say this to them: what their party has done today means there is no regulation around music festivals. Where does this leave police, our medical staff and our emergency services personnel who have no—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —regulations around keeping people safe. In fact, this will hurt the industry because people will lose confidence in the safety of music festivals. I raise another issue around public safety and integrity. This week the Leader of the Opposition and other members have spoken about erosion at Stockton Beach, which is a serious issue. But it was brought to my attention that Newcastle City Council only met this morning, where it was revealed to councillors that it had only submitted an application late yesterday for coastal and estuary management funding. The Government has said to council— [*Time expired.*]

SILICOSIS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:37): I direct my question to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation. The number of silicosis cases in New South Wales is exploding. As the Parliament heard on Friday:

If you breathe the stuff in you will die.

Why will the Minister not urgently follow Queensland's lead and establish a mandatory notifiable dust disease register?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (14:37): I thank the member for her question. She raises a very interesting issue. The re-emergence of silicosis has alarmed Australian health professionals and has prompted various national calls for action. Research indicates that if proper protections are utilised appropriately by workplaces and workers, such as wet cutting, ventilation and masks, silicosis is entirely preventable. Importantly, manufactured stone products that contain silica are not produced in Australia. All 246 manufactured stone fabrication sites in New South Wales have received a visit from SafeWork NSW inspectors, who are doing their job, and inspectors will continue to have a strong presence at these sites to ensure compliance in the manufactured stone industry.

The dry cutting of manufactured stone is prohibited in New South Wales. If a business is found to be in breach of the rules and regulations relating to silica dust levels as a result of dry cutting, SafeWork NSW immediately issues a prohibition notice to ensure work stops. A business cannot recommence until the appropriate safety measures have been put in place to protect workers and to minimise dust production. Further, SafeWork NSW will continue to run education and information programs in order to draw employers—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member must be brief.

Ms Yasmin Catley: The question was in relation to the disease register.

The SPEAKER: What is the standing order to which the member is referring?

Ms Yasmin Catley: The point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was specifically in relation to a register.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant.

Ms Yasmin Catley: The Minister is not being relevant.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: Further, SafeWork NSW will continue to run education and information programs to draw employers and employees' attention to the potential dangers of silica exposure. In fact, I presented at a silica roadshow workshop in Tamworth recently where about 30 to 40 employers and employees were very keen to learn more about how to address the issue of silica.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will remain silent.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: New South Wales is currently considering a number of options that have been put forward by health safety professionals working in this space and will provide a considered response to SafeWork Australia that will allow for practical measures to protect workers from silica exposure, which is our number one priority.

COFFS HARBOUR BYPASS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:40): I address my question to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on the Coffs Harbour Bypass and the Government's delivery of the Pacific Highway upgrade?

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:41): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. He understands the importance of the upgrade to the Pacific Highway for the community of Coffs Harbour, for the people of New South Wales and for the wider economy of the State. He also knows this is a multi-generational project. I commend the member for Coffs Harbour. For the time that he has been in this place he has been a consistent and persistent advocate on behalf of his community. This project will benefit not only the communities of the north coast but the whole of New South Wales, especially for people who travel between Hexham and the Queensland border.

The Coffs Harbour Bypass is the final link in that journey. The Coffs Harbour Bypass is the final link to an upgrade of the Pacific Highway which we have been working on for two decades. Only three weeks ago I joined the member for Coffs Harbour, the Deputy Prime Minister, the council and members of the public to announce the refined environmental impact statement [EIS]. We listened to the community's concerns and we are delivering a refined EIS that will accommodate their needs. We have listened to the feedback about noise impacts and we are delivering low-noise pavement along the entire route of the Coffs Harbour Bypass.

We have also listened to feedback about the visual aesthetics of such a beautiful part of New South Wales. We are delivering a lower, less visible route design, which means that on average we will see the gradient of the road lowered by about 10 metres along its entire length. We heard the community calls for tunnels, which is why we are delivering three tunnels. There will be one at Shephards Lane, one at Roberts Hill and one at Gatelys Road. We have now put that revised design out for further feedback. With projects like this, there is only one chance to get it right. This is a significant project that will make a significant difference to the people in that area. The Government is determined to get it right.

The bypass will deliver significant benefits to the people of this State. I want to talk about the significant benefits it will bring. The Coffs Harbour Bypass will be about 14 kilometres in length. In time it will save about 11 or 12 minutes of travel time. It will bypass 12 sets of traffic lights, it will deliver 12,000 direct and indirect jobs to the Coffs Harbour region and it will take about 12,000 vehicles out of the Coffs Harbour CBD. The Opposition should take note of the number 12 because when we finish the Coffs Harbour Bypass Labor would have been in opposition for 12 years. Labor members may as well settle in for another 12 years because the public do not trust them. Labor's only contribution to the State has been the payback of the dodgy donations that it takes.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We hope to have shovels in the ground for the Coffs Harbour Bypass by the end of next year and the project is to be completed by 2024-25. With the final link in the journey underway, this multi-generational project on the Pacific Highway will be completed, including the full duplication and upgrade of the Pacific Highway from Hexham to the Queensland border. That means a journey that is 2½ hours shorter and that means a safer journey. We have already halved the number of fatalities on the Pacific Highway. These changes will benefit not only those travelling on the Pacific Highway but also the local communities who will see fewer trucks on their main roads and less congestion. It also means huge efficiency gains for our freight and logistics industries, which will in turn help our businesses grow and thrive. *[Extension of time]*

The Coffs Harbour Bypass is a huge project with huge benefits during construction. It will create jobs in the regions and money in the local economies as workers move their families to the area to complete these multi-year projects. This Government is committed to growing jobs in the regions. Today the Premier announced that in the past year the Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered 40,000 jobs to regional New South Wales. Those jobs were created by the Government's investment in building the roads, building the hospitals and building the bridges. People are in work. We are creating new jobs and driving local economies. People are staying in regional towns for projects that may take months to complete. This is important and this is how we are continually helping the people of regional New South Wales.

When I was in Coffs Harbour with the local member for the announcement, we spoke to a local resident and business owner. Matthew runs a hydrology project and has been doing work on the Woolgoolga to Ballina section of the highway. He said that he was happy with the revised designs and even happier about the fact that he now has opportunities to be involved in the work and employ more staff. That is what it is all about. It is about continually investing in our regions. The Liberal-Nationals Government truly cares about the people of regional New South Wales.

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:47): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Last week the North Coast and New England grappled with serious fires. Today the permanent crew from the Tweed Heads Fire Station was sent to Ballina for community outreach without being backfilled, leaving their community unprotected. Why did the Deputy Premier allow a Liberal Minister to cut \$12.9 million from the operational budget of Fire and Rescue NSW, forcing rural and regional stations offline in the middle of the bushfire season?

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to remain silent.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:48): I struggle to deal with that question this afternoon because as I speak there are volunteers on the ground fighting in excess of 40 to 50 fires across the State. They are protecting homes, families and regional communities. So many of our firefighters are volunteers. We are the envy of the world when we talk about the Rural Fire Service [RFS], which includes 70,000-plus volunteers. During a recent trip to California the Californian Department of Forestry and Fire Protection was surprised by our model, which includes volunteers risking their own lives to protect the lives of others and the community. In relation to the investment the Government has made in the RFS, it has nothing to do with whether it is a Liberal Minister or a Nationals Minister. We are all Government Ministers.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time. The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Recently I was lucky enough to take a trip to Glen Innes and Drake with the Premier and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I have never been on a trip with a Minister who understands the issues as well as Minister Elliot. He received real respect from the volunteers, the commissioner and the Rural Fire Service. He is a Minister who cares about his portfolio and about the people. Most importantly, he understands his ministerial responsibility to protect communities. It was fantastic to be there with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services because we were able to talk to the volunteers and understand the issues. We were also able to make a number of announcements supporting local stations.

The SPEAKER: I warn the Leader of the Opposition that I will call her to order if she continues to interject.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Government will continue that support. The State has great assets to fight fires, including our new 15,000 litre tanker. We are the only State that has such a significant asset as part of its arsenal. On the brink of what will be a hot and dry summer—

Ms Trish Doyle: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Ms Trish Doyle: It is Fire and Rescue. He's getting his fire agencies mixed up.

The SPEAKER: The member for Blue Mountains will resume her seat. I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Over the past 8½ years this Government has made significant investments to ensure that our volunteers, those fighting fires and those running the operations can do their jobs. In real terms, we are the envy of other States. This Government takes this issue seriously. We are facing a hot and dry summer. We know there is fuel on the ground.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We know there is fuel on the ground. We know it is going to be a dry and hot summer. The fires that started in September set off alarm bells that we need to be ready. We are ready. We are supporting the personnel and we will continue to support them. I take my hat off to the volunteers who come out of those communities.

Ms Prue Car: We're trying to help you. You're talking about the wrong agency.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: They are showing total disrespect to those volunteers.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: It's Fire and Rescue, not the RFS.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the third time. This is my final warning to the member for Blue Mountains.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Opposition needs to think about the RFS volunteers.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Blue Mountains from the Chamber under Standing Order 249. The member may return to the Chamber at the end of question time.

[The member for Blue Mountains left the Chamber at 14:52 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Many of those volunteers are farmers who are doing it tough and who have no income. They are struggling on the land and trying to hold it all together. The anxiety of this drought continues. Despite all that, they are prepared to put all their personal issues aside to help the community. Fire and Rescue NSW is well equipped to deal with fires. Unlike those opposite, I will not use this House to play politics. I am here to talk up the fantastic work our emergency services do in New South Wales.

NEW SOUTH WALES CREDIT RATING

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (14:54:0): Will the Treasurer update the House on the State's credit rating and on any emerging financial risks?

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Swansea that she is on two calls to order. I remind the member for Keira that he also is on two calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:54): I thank the member for East Hills for her question and for her interest in the finances of our State. She knows the difference between the two parties, and that the most fundamental difference is in our approach to financial and economic management. She knows that Coalition governments consistently deliver stronger economies—as we saw today from the Premier—and create more jobs and deliver strong budget surpluses, while Labor leaves us with debt and deficits. But you do not have to take my word for it.

Mr Ryan Park: We don't.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Great, but you should.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They did not take your word for it at the last election, mate. Who would put a tax on farmers in the middle of a drought? His biggest achievement in eight years in this place.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I ask you to direct the Treasurer to address his comments through the chair.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer should occasionally turn around and have a look at me.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Breaking news—you will get it on your phones right now: Following Moody's announcement last week of our triple-A credit rating, today Standard & Poor's has once again reaffirmed New South Wales's triple-A credit rating. That is a triple-A credit rating for a triple-A Government.

[A Government member interjected.]

There will be a lot more of that coming. In their assessment, Standard & Poor's specifically called out our wealthy and diversified economy, solid economic growth, balance sheet reforms and large infrastructure pipeline. But the very first headline says it all, Mr Speaker: "Excellent financial management supports NSW's triple-A rating". There you have it: a pure, objective, unbiased factual assessment of just how well New South Wales is going under the Coalition. While Labor finds every opportunity to talk our State down, the independent view talks our State up. This is a special achievement and I want to put it in perspective. With our triple-A credit rating reaffirmed twice in the past two weeks, ours is the leading economy in the nation. We have record investment in schools, hospitals and public transport. We have more nurses, teachers and police than ever before. We are building more than ever before in our State's history.

Our budget is solidly in surplus and we have the lowest unemployment rate in the nation by a country mile. What has occurred in New South Wales under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is nothing short of an economic miracle, Mr Speaker—a legacy that will be studied in economic textbooks for generations to come. That is why world leaders from both sides of politics all around the world are coming to New South Wales to learn from the very best. How many world leaders came to New South Wales to learn from Bob Carr or Kristina Keneally? Zero, Mr Speaker. In fact, the era of that last Labor Government is now regarded in academic circles as the worst period of public administration in our nation's history. You know it. It hurts and you know it.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It hurts, I know. But what is worse than your record is the way you sit here after you have watched this great success story, after we have taken our State from a basket case under you to the very best. You travel on our roads. You ride our public transport.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: You see all the jobs being created and you sit there and you whinge and you complain and you attack our record—the record that leads the nation and the world. And then you—you pathetic individual—came into this place yesterday—*[Extension of time]*

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Again I ask that the Treasurer be directed to make his comments through the chair.

The SPEAKER: When a member is referring to "Mr Speaker", in addition to looking at me—

Ms Jodi McKay: No, it is when he says, "You pathetic individual. You, you, you."

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat. When comments are addressed to "Mr Speaker", they are being made through the Chair. I ask the Treasurer to be wary of not pointing to people or directing comments across the table.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Premier just made the point, Mr Speaker, that while I was demonstrating how they were the worst Government in the history of the nation, they did not take any points of order.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Lynda Voltz: My point of order relates to Standing Order 74 and your own previous ruling that eliciting responses from the other side of the Chamber is disorderly and quarrelsome.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It's low-energy Lynda. How is your last name Voltz? You need a recharge.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: The Treasurer should direct his comments through the chair.

The SPEAKER: Is that the member's point of order?

Ms Lynda Voltz: No, that is not my only point of order.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Lynda Voltz: It is Standing Order 74. For the Treasurer to direct comments at a person on the other side of the Chamber to elicit a response when a member is sitting there—

The SPEAKER: That is the same point of order. The member will resume her seat or she will be called to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: What we have seen this week—talk about poor administration. You have got a situation at the moment in this State where Eddie Obeid's trial still has not even begun and ICAC is dealing with the next round of Labor corruption.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Treasurer will resume his seat. Government members will come to order.

Mr Ryan Park: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Given what occurred yesterday, and given that you have removed a member from this side of the Chamber already today, despite the fact that yesterday a member swore three times and referred to people on this side of the Chamber offensively—

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

Mr Ryan Park: It is 129: relevance. Bring him back to the question.

The SPEAKER: The member referred to the removal of the member for Blue Mountains under Standing Order 249. I have received a note; there are extenuating circumstances. I will commute that ruling to a 249A ruling, removing her from the Chamber until the end of question time. I ask Opposition members to show some reciprocal restraint.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We are about intergenerational equity; they are about intergenerational crime. This most recent inquiry circles around this one guy, Ernest Wong. I came across a quote about Ernest Wong: "You know this amazing man Ernest Wong ... everybody knows our Ernest. Our dear, dear friend Ernest." Who said that? The member for Strathfield. They are all concerned about the importance of being earnest, but they are not interested in the importance of being honest.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: I take two points of order. The first relates to Standing Order 129. This is clearly well away from the question asked of the Treasurer. The second is that the Treasurer continues to refuse to adhere to standing orders when points of order are taken; he will not sit down.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer has completed his answer.

REGIONAL SENIORS TRANSPORT CARD

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:03): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Given that his Government's funding for the Regional Seniors Transport Card only provides for uptake by 40 per cent of

eligible seniors, will the Deputy Premier and Treasury spend the next three years hoping that the remaining 60 per cent of seniors in regional New South Wales do not collect their \$250?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:03): This is another question that I find difficult.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Summer Hill has the luxury, when she steps out of her home, of being able probably to jump on a bus or a train. She probably takes that for granted but that is subsidised to the tune of \$1 billion by the New South Wales taxpayers. But those who live in regional or rural New South Wales do not have the luxury of the option of public transport.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time. I call the member for Coogee to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In the 2019 election the New South Wales Nationals, along with our Liberal Coalition partners, announced a \$250 seniors travel card to support our seniors who need to travel. Of course, that comes at an expense. We want seniors to be able to connect with family and to be able to make medical appointments. We know that the tyranny of distance and isolation plays an important part. Our commitment of a \$250 travel card for seniors in regional and rural New South Wales was ridiculed by those opposite. It was dismissed by those opposite. It was not matched by those opposite, yet the member for Summer Hill has the hide to come into this House today and try to play politics with the seniors of regional and rural New South Wales.

Ms Jo Haylen: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Rockdale to order for the third time. I remind the member for Rockdale that he was called to order three times yesterday. This is his final warning.

Ms Jo Haylen: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was very specific about the funding black hole in relation to the regional travel card.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is being generally relevant.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: There is no budget black hole or funding black hole. The program starts in January 2020—a few months away. That was the commitment. The Government has not even started the program yet but those opposite are talking about a black hole.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I can assure the member. She has seen the fight that I can put up—the fire in my belly. I can assure those opposite—

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I can assure those opposite that The Nationals are delivering for regional and rural New South Wales. Those opposite ridiculed this announcement. They did not support the announcement, which means they do not support seniors in regional and rural New South Wales staying connected with their families or making their appointments. It took a unique solution to address a difficult issue that we are facing in regional and rural New South Wales. Why? Because members of The Nationals and members of the Liberal Party live, work and play in our communities in regional and rural New South Wales. The question that I have today is: Why did this question come from the member for Summer Hill rather than the shadow transport Minister? The member for Summer Hill has the luxury of public transport each and every day, yet she wants to deprive the seniors of regional and rural New South Wales of that opportunity.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Summer Hill to order for the third time.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: It relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Deputy Premier will continue. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Isn't the member for Summer Hill the shadow Minister with responsibility for seniors? My question is: Why wouldn't the question come from the shadow Minister for the regions or the shadow Minister for transport?

The SPEAKER: I am not going to take a point of order from the member for Campbelltown if he simply walks to the table and expects me to recognise him. Members should stand in their places and seek the call to take a point of order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The shadow Minister for bike riding has come into this House to deprive the seniors of regional and rural New South Wales. The Nationals were proud to announce such a policy. The Nationals are delivering on this policy, one repudiated by those opposite.

REGIONAL HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER: Government and Opposition members will listen to the question from the member for Cootamundra in silence.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:09): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is delivering high-quality healthcare facilities across this State, particularly for regional New South Wales?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:09): I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question. The member has seen the benefit of this Government's putting money into health across this State, particularly in her electorate. I will come back to that in a moment, but I want to say that doctors, nurses and allied health staff are amazing people who are looking after people across this State. In addition to that we have incredible job and economic opportunities as a result of all the infrastructure that this Government is delivering across New South Wales.

The total budget this year for health is \$26.7 billion, just shy of a third of the State budget. Over the next four years there will be another \$10.1 billion of capital expenditure—infrastructure across our State including hospitals, multi-purpose services [MPSs] and ambulance stations. That comes on the back of \$10 billion that was spent in just the first few years of our Government. It is more money than has ever been spent in health in this State in anybody's lifetime. There is more to come and more to do. Before I talk a bit about infrastructure I want to say that we are also employing more health staff as well as those that are being employed in construction. There will be \$2.8 billion for 8,300 new frontline staff over the next four years. Five thousand nurses and midwives will be employed in the next four years, 1,060 doctors, 880 allied health staff—pharmacists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, physiotherapists and so on—and 1,360 hospital support staff.

I make the point that the member for Cootamundra is a proud member from a region in this State. She and other members in this place have made sure that this Government is very aware of the challenges of health in the regions. As a result, 45 per cent of all the new staff that we will employ in the next four years are going into the regions. The Government has been building projects all over the State. The Government will work with members, irrespective of political background, provided those members work with us. The member for Orange, Phil Donato, got a \$261 million redevelopment at Orange Hospital. The fantastic member for Bega has got a magnificent new hospital—a \$187 million investment. Kevin Anderson is the amazing, hardworking member for Tamworth—\$211 million redevelopment of Tamworth Hospital. Roy Butler got \$30 million—and hopefully more to come—for the hospital and facilities at Broken Hill. I say, on the record, that working with Roy Butler is an absolute pleasure.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I have heard a call for some sort of grading for him. I will give him a constructive triple-A. The member for Orange is looking as if he is thinking, "What about me?" I have some minor issues with the people he hangs around with but I can probably give him a constructive double-A—just a little bit below. That is as opposed to the member for Murray, who leaves a little bit to be desired. I was trying to find something constructive she said about the Government, the council or any of the workers in the Murrumbidgee Local Health District—there was zip!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I think I have to give her the grading "conflict-plus, plus, plus". I will return to the topic at hand—I have been distracted. [*Extension of time*]

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I got distracted. It has been a great day. We all got excited—it is a good day. The impact of regional infrastructure is massive. As we build hospitals we are bringing jobs into communities. At a pretty tough time in the regions, with the worst drought on record and the hardship that comes with that, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is investing in these smaller communities and large regional centres as well. Wherever we go, we are doing more work. I promise on behalf of the Government that we are

going to do more work, because we want to boost jobs and boost the economy of our fantastic regional New South Wales.

I mention a few of these investments. In June I had the pleasure of being at the Inverell main works with the member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall. There is lots of work going on there. In July there was a sod-turning for the new Tweed Valley Hospital with the local MP, Geoff Provest. We also attended the Pottsville ambulance station. I want to quickly put on record the fact that—I will be serious for a second—a gentleman called James Tate passed away. His wife, Rebecca, was there. I note how much sympathy we have for her. She is also a cardiac nurse at Tweed hospital. The new building is a wonderful memorial.

I marked construction recently at Wagga Wagga with the local member, Dr Joe McGirr. Work is going ahead there. Tumut is going ahead, which is fantastic. However, Griffith is where we are doing a lot more work, despite the member for Murray. Despite the fact that she may not have worked with us, we will work with the community. I also compliment the mayor down there, John Dal Broi. He works very well with us. I have here the new schematic design for that hospital. I announce today that the concept design is now available. We will be looking for community consultation over the next few weeks. We are full-on making sure that this new three-storey hospital, which will feature rehabilitation, surgical and medical inpatient units, will certainly be underway as soon as we can possibly deliver it. [*Time expired.*]

WATER LICENCES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (15:17): I direct my question for the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Given the New South Wales Government has broken its own embargo on the granting of any new water licences, will the Minister guarantee that the new high priority water licence on the Murray River will not further cost already desperate dairy farmers and other irrigators and put them into a negative allocation?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:18): Many of our communities, whether they are in the north or the south of the State, are in unprecedented, uncharted territory. As I have explained to the House, it has been 31 months of record low rainfall across New South Wales. Because of that, we are having to suspend water-sharing plans across the State as we prioritise towns, stock and domestic consumption. We need to do that and we will continue to do that. We need to ensure that our towns have water and that industry in those towns has water. Whilst high security allocations are still at 97 per cent along the Murray system, the general security allocations are just simply not there because we have had to prioritise our communities and our towns. That is not to say those communities along the Murray are not unhappy with what they see. They see a very full Murray River racing towards the South Australian border, in a way that it should not, in fact, because it does not reflect the climatic and drought conditions that our State is facing.

That is causing great concern and great frustration. I am working with the Victorian Labor Minister to ensure that the future goals that have been put in place in the Murray Darling Basin Plan are appropriate. The extra allocations of 450 gegalitres and 605 gegalitres put New South Wales farmers and communities at risk. We have got some guarantees that we are not going to take that water if it does have social implications. However, we also need to ensure we are not working towards a goal that cannot be achieved. There is no evidence that we can get 80,000 gegalitres of water across the Victorian-South Australian border. I am doing that work with those communities. This is a very challenging time for everybody. Now is not the time for conflict. Now is not the time for controversy. Now is not the time to whip up communities into a frenzy for the sake of politics. We are doing the work behind the scenes. We are working with irrigators. We are working with everybody that we need to work with. I understand those frustrations, particularly with the amount of water that is going down the Murray and the psychological impact that has on those communities every day to witness that.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order—

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: However, I am doing the work with the communities to ensure—

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order—

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: —that we get through this drought until it rains. I have finished my answer.

The SPEAKER: The answer has been completed.

Mrs Helen Dalton: There is no relevance to the question in this answer. It is standing order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has concluded her answer.

ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:21): My question is addressed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Will the Minister update the House on conservation and fundraising efforts to protect threatened and endangered species?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:21): I thank the member for her question. I also thank her for hosting me in her electorate this morning to welcome the newest members of the Taronga Park Zoo family, five capybaras all the way from South America. I am happy to update the House that Pedro, Sanchez, Carlos, Guillermo and Rodney—that very traditional South American name—are settling into their new environment very well. Mr Speaker, you would know that the capybara is the world's largest guinea pig. Unlike members opposite they are cute, they are cuddly and they are very charismatic.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Mr MATT KEAN: What do they eat? You will have to read the press release, but they are very efficient. With the weather hotting up and the school holidays upon us, I encourage everyone to get down to Taronga Zoo and check out the capybara enclosure that has just opened. There is so much more happening at the zoo these school holidays. I am happy to update the House about the school holiday adventure program. That is open for kids from 5 to 10 years. I encourage everyone who has kids of that age to get in early and register before the Perrottet family takes up all the spots.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Where's my zoo pass?

Mr MATT KEAN: We are working on that. For budding zoologists—I know there are a few in the House—we have got the Zookeeper for a Day program. That gives you an opportunity to shadow a zookeeper around Taronga Zoo just for the day. It is a unique experience. I know the member for Hawkesbury is very excited about this opportunity. That is not all that is happening at the zoo these school holidays. If one day at the zoo is not enough, you can stay overnight as part of the Roar and Snore program. I know the wife of the member for Baulkham Hills gets to experience that every night of the week. However, you can go to the zoo, stay overnight, and wake up and hear the beautiful sounds of lions, tigers and, now, capybaras. There is so much going on these school holidays at Taronga Zoo—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: It is too expensive.

Mr MATT KEAN: I will organise you a pass. The zoo is more than a place just to have a good time. In fact, it is leading the way when it comes to protecting our biodiversity and our environment. The zoo is doing amazing work in partnership with the Government. I take this opportunity to talk about the Saving Our Species program. It is the biggest single investment in protecting our threatened and endangered species in the nation. It is a \$100 million investment. Without this program in partnership with Taronga Zoo, we would not have saved the Bellingen River snapping turtle or the southern corroboree frog. This program is making a huge difference in New South Wales, ensuring that we leave our planet in a better state for our kids than we found it.

We are doing great work in protecting the southern corroboree frog. We are also doing some amazing things with the rewilding program. That is creating feral predator-free areas in our national parks. We are reintroducing native animals that have not been seen in their natural environment in some cases for over a century. We are getting rid of the ferals and introducing native animals back into their natural environment. I look forward to going to western New South Wales. I will invite the member for Barwon when we go to Sturt National Park to release 10 bilbies that have been bred at Taronga Zoo. We are putting them back into the Sturt National Park, which has not seen that beautiful animal for at least 100 years.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: He'll shoot them.

Mr MATT KEAN: They are a protected species, I will let the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party know. The work at the zoo is important. It is not just about protecting our threatened species and coming along and having a great time. I urge all members to invite their constituents along to visit. The most important work the zoo does is its education program to inspire every citizen in the State to care about our environment and protect it into the future. We are doing some amazing work at Taronga Zoo and I encourage everyone to get along.

Ms Janelle Saffin: What about the koalas in Braemar Forest?

Mr MATT KEAN: The koalas are such important iconic animals. This is why we have the Koala Strategy. *[Extension of time]*

The SPEAKER: It is the last question on a Thursday. We admire the Minister for being entertaining and for his oratory skills, but the general level of noise makes it difficult to hear him. It is primarily coming from Government members. I ask that the level of noise be reduced.

Mr MATT KEAN: That is an excellent ruling. The zoo does incredibly important work but it does not do it alone. It does it with the support of many great donors. Over the past five years more than \$70 million worth of donations have been made by private citizens to the zoo. They do not come in Aldi bags. It is important to remember that not all people who care about protecting threatened species donate to the zoo. In fact, some donations to protect threatened species actually do more harm than good—just ask Jonathan Yee. Never before has a donation made a species more threatened than Mr Yee's donation. That brings me to the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: It is relevance under Standing Order 129. We want to hear about protected species.

The SPEAKER: I am happy for the Minister to continue. The last question on a Thursday has a certain licence. The Minister has been highly relevant to the question up to this point.

Mr MATT KEAN: Never before has a single donation made a species more threatened. That brings me to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

Mr MATT KEAN: I have a picture of her here in her natural environment, the Emperor's Garden.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Greg Warren: It is under Standing Order 73 .

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat. The Minister has the call.

Mr MATT KEAN: It is important to remind members and those in the galleries that not all threatened species live in zoos. That is exactly the case with those opposite, because no-one is more threatened in this State than the Leader of the Opposition. She may be earnest, but she is not honest.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I am happy to stop the clock, but if the point of order is under Standing Order 73 I will ask the Minister to resist from making comments of that nature.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Inquiry

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development has resolved to conduct an inquiry into responding to the effects of drought in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 38E of the Public finance and audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Audit office Report entitled *Ensuring teaching quality in NSW public schools*, dated 26 September 2019, received on 26 September 2019.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Aboriginal Flag on Sydney Harbour Bridge

Petition requesting that the Aboriginal flag fly from the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge alongside the Australian and New South Wales flags, received from **Mr David Harris**.

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

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

Beekeeping Industry

Petition calling on the Government to support amateur beekeepers by abandoning hive registration fees and allocating more resources to assist amateur and commercial apiarists to maintain a disease-free and sustainable hive network, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Yasmar Estate—lodged 22 August 2019 (Ms Jo Haylen)

Private Members' Statements

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE SOCIAL HOUSING

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:31): I speak about the appalling response to maintenance issues for social housing tenants in my electorate of Charlestown. I acknowledge that a new CEO has recently been appointed to the Land and Housing Corporation [LAHC] and I am looking forward to meeting with him to discuss how to fix the issues I am about to raise. These are only a couple of the examples of what are clearly inappropriate responses to public housing maintenance in this State. Week after week I am inundated with complaints from constituents battling with the Land and Housing Corporation to have their maintenance issues dealt with satisfactorily. Some of the matters have been outstanding for months with little or in some cases no action from the Land and Housing Corporation. My office receives phone calls and emails from people who have requested maintenance on their property and have been waiting for months, sometimes even years, for the Government and its agencies to act.

In fact, only last week my office received over 10 calls from constituents needing assistance with maintenance that had not been dealt with properly by the department up until then. Out of the many inquiries I receive, maintenance issues are the most frequent reason for people contacting my office. Recently, an elderly resident contacted my office because she needed new carpet in her property. She has had more than four subcontractors attend her home, each determining the carpet to be a trip hazard. Despite this, she is still waiting for something to be done. It has been 14 months since this was first raised with the LAHC maintenance team. The standard line she receives from LAHC staff is that they are negotiating with the contractor and that they need to do the costings. How long does LAHC need to get some costings for a carpet?

Another elderly resident who contacted my office had requested urgent attention to her bathroom. She had recently had a fall and had been given a letter from her GP to give to LAHC outlining the circumstances of her fall. My constituent explained that the light switch in her bathroom is behind the door. In order to turn her light on she has to enter the bathroom, close the door, then switch the light on. Obviously, this creates a very dangerous situation for her, especially at night when she cannot see where the light switch is. My constituent called the maintenance team a number of weeks after submitting her GP's letter, only to be told there was no record of the correspondence and that she now had to wait another 28 days before anyone would even attend the property to work out the scope of works—for a light switch behind a door. Due to the seriousness of the matter she called my office for assistance. Upon our inquiries we were told by LAHC that this matter was considered only minor. It is appalling to think that someone who is at risk of a fall in their own home would need to wait 28 days before anyone from LAHC would even attend the property to have a look at the problem.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Hear, hear!

Ms JODIE HARRISON: I thank the Minister for his interjection. Another of my constituents, Suzanne, first contacted my office in April 2017 about outstanding maintenance work needed on her property. Following intervention and representations from my office, Suzanne was given a target completion date of 30 June 2017. LAHC told us the works were eventually completed by the end of July 2017, three months after contacting my office. Unfortunately, Suzanne contacted my office again in August 2018 to tell us that a number of the maintenance issues were not, in fact, completed in 2017 when LAHC told us they had been and, despite further intervention from my office, the issues still remain unresolved more than a year later.

How can this Government remain silent and allow residents of social housing to wait for over a year without any action from LAHC? My office has spoken to hundreds of constituents in similar circumstances. Mould, sewer overflows, bird lice, no security screens, no ramp access for people in wheelchairs, no bathroom

modifications for people with disabilities so they can bathe in dignity—these are common issues facing the social housing tenants of Charlestown. I am disgusted by how some of the most vulnerable people in our society are being treated by a government agency and it is outrageous that this is being allowed to happen. It is clear that the Minister and the Government, through their rampant outsourcing and privatisation agenda, are happy to wipe their hands of any responsibility. It is absolutely shameful. We should be supporting these people, not treating them as second-class citizens. People who access housing support from the Government should not be forgotten about and left without answers when they report issues to the department responsible for maintenance.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:36): The issues raised by the member for Charlestown on behalf of her constituents are serious. I am aware that the Minister has tried very hard to get them addressed. I remind the member for Charlestown that I was the Minister for Housing two or three years ago and addressing such issues was one of my major sources of frustration. I think there has been a long culture of neglect, sadly going back to the days when the Labor Government was in power. We have tried very hard to get a different model of public housing maintenance. In fact, I asked the Land and Housing Corporation to effectively establish a transparent report back system when there are delays so that constituents could report when there are these sorts of delays. I encourage the member to write to the Minister and I will personally undertake to discuss it with him. These issues should have been addressed by the Land and Housing Corporation. It has had many years to sort it out and it should have sorted it out.

MANLY WARRINGAH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:37): I acknowledge the outstanding work of the Manly Warringah Football Association. It is an incredible association, which covers my electorate of Wakehurst and also the electorates of Manly, Davidson and Pittwater. It is now the largest football association in New South Wales. I remember when I started playing for the Dee Why Robins when I was about nine years old, which is a long time ago. I then went on to play for Manly Vale for many years. The Manly Warringah Football Association has grown over the years. It was formed in 1947 and since that time has been the focal point for the promotion, organisation and development of football on the northern beaches. Its mission statement is to be:

A progressive community based Football organisation dedicated to providing a safe, integrated pathway for all participants by developing, encouraging and supporting their Football aspirations.

This year has been great for the association with 18,559 registered players, which is an increase of 500 in just one year. Its players are spread across 17 clubs of varying sizes, from Saint Augustine's, with 526 players, through to Seaforth, with 1,540 players. Clubs situated in the Wakehurst electorate include Beacon Hill, CC Strikers, Dee Why and Manly Allambie and Saint Augustine's. The age breakdowns are quite interesting. There are 6,200 players under the age of nine and 6,000 female players representing 30 per cent of the total number of participants. That is fantastic for women's sport. When I was playing soccer many years ago women did not really play, so to see this number of women playing soccer—or football as we call it today—is fantastic. There are 1,800 players in the men's over 35s and over 45s teams and the women's over 30s and over 40s teams.

I recently had the great honour of attending the women's football grand final day, the culmination of a lot of hard work by players, team officials and club volunteers. There were 92 grand finals across three days in August at Cromer Park, the home of football on the northern beaches. I was delighted to attend for a number of hours on the Sunday to watch some of the football and to present medals to the winners and runners-up of the various competitions and finals matches. The member for Manly also attended on one of the days to support the clubs and to make sure that club members knew that we were there for them. We were impressed by the players and officials. I was also impressed with the efficiency with which the presentations were run, largely due to the work of the association president, Jeff Smit, and the CEO, David Mason. They were supported at various times by others. I acknowledge the association's remaining office bearers, many of whom I have known for many years: Duncan Kerr, Keith Pester, Linda Ward, Joseph Sorbara, Tony Davies, David Brennan, Terry Gatward, Roland Winter, Annette Burgoyne, Linda Beauregard and Peter Auld.

Fundraising is also important. For some years now the association has teamed up with a charity to enable the association to raise money across the finals days by collecting donations at the car park entrance and throughout the grounds. This year it was Gotcha4Life, a Brookvale-based foundation dedicated to combating men's mental health problems. These days all of us are very aware of mental health issues. It is said that one in four of us at any one time has a mental health issue. I suspect that all of us at some point in our lives will have mental health issues, so it is great that the Manly Warringah Football Association is actively supporting the Gotcha4Life group at Brookvale.

I also acknowledge the Manly Warringah Football Referees Association. I was a referee for a while; maybe I should have brought my whistle into Parliament to try to make proceedings more peaceful. You cannot

have a football match without a ball and it also helps to have a referee. I note that one of my much trusted electorate officers—in fact, the person in charge of my electorate office—Toby Williams, is widely known in the community as one of the referees and I acknowledge him. I also acknowledge Wayne Plant, Jack Morales, Richard Socratous and Nick Beauregard from the executive committee for their efforts during the year. I specifically acknowledge Toby and the others who take part as referees.

I say well done to the referees, well done to the assistant referees, well done to the officials and well done to absolutely everybody in the Manly Warringah Football Association. It was wonderful to see so many people out there enjoying a day of fitness and camaraderie. It was wonderful to see so many young women participating on Sunday when I presented the awards. They are heavily involved in supporting each other and that is fabulous. The association is already as strong as we could have dreamed it would be, but hopefully it will get even stronger.

POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:42): Bidding family or friends a cheerful farewell in the morning before we go to work is something that we all take for granted. Once we finish work, we all expect to be able to head home, enjoy something to eat with our families or social circles, spend some leisure time and then go to bed. For members of the NSW Police Force there is a constant risk that any day they leave home to start a shift, it could be their last. Thankfully, the risk is slight, but it is a risk nonetheless. At its most dramatic, the risk comes from an armed and dangerous individual during a confrontation. But risk is present in many circumstances where an officer is required to protect and serve our community. Often, what may begin as an innocuous situation can develop into a potentially dangerous one.

Police Remembrance Day commemorates those officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. This Friday, 27 September, police officers and the communities they dutifully serve across not only New South Wales but also throughout Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands will pause to honour officers who signed on and never came home. We will reflect on their willingness to serve in dangerous situations in order to protect the public. We will give our thanks to those who gave their lives so that we can remain safe. But it is not only the lives lost in sudden tragedy. We will pause to remember those who have lost their lives through illness or unforeseen circumstances.

On Friday I shall be attending a Police Remembrance Day ceremony in the community of Murringo. With fewer than 400 residents, this village east of Young in the Cootamundra electorate will remember the loss of a police officer in the line of duty in 1882. On that day Senior Constable Francis Drum was riding his horse, collecting electoral lists. This was a routine duty which not only ensured population records were kept up to date but also enabled police officers to get to know their communities and listen to any information that may have been of use to them.

On 12 January Senior Constable Drum, an officer of 20 years' service, with a wife and six children, was carrying out this ostensibly routine task at a time when a storm was rising. Senior Constable Drum's horse, spooked by the deteriorating weather, rose up suddenly in fright and became unmanageable. The horse took off with Senior Constable Drum struggling to regain control of his mount. In its panic the horse ran directly into a wire fence and fell, landing on Senior Constable Drum and killing him instantly. Senior Constable Drum's name has now been added to the NSW Police Force Honour Roll and this Friday we will remember him. Representatives of the NSW Police Force will join the Murringo community at the village cemetery to remember his sacrifice and reflect on the loss of a police officer, husband and father.

Times have changed a great deal since 1882. Our police officers perform very different roles, technology has eliminated some risk and training techniques have made great strides in preparing police officers on the front line. What has not changed, however, is the unpredictable. No amount of training and technology can ever fully eliminate the danger that seemingly comes from nowhere; nor can it contain the actions of a person intent on causing harm. As a government we will do all we can to ensure the safety of our police officers but we will also do all we can to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. I encourage all of us, as a society, to pause for reflection this Friday and remember those police officers who have lost their lives while serving our communities.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:46): I am sure that the sentiments expressed by the member for Cootamundra are shared by all members of this House. We all know how loyally and diligently police officers serve the communities of this State at all hours, in all contexts, in all weathers and facing unknown challenges each time they step out on duty. To those who have made that sacrifice, who have been called upon to meet that challenge in the course of duty, we pay them all of our respects.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I also acknowledge the importance of Police Remembrance Day. I thank the member for Cootamundra for raising it in the House and reminding us all to pause tomorrow to remember those who have fallen in the line of duty.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE TEACHERS

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:47): Today I congratulate teachers and speak on education in my electorate. In recent months there have been numerous achievements and milestones attained by many schools in my electorate but they would not have been possible without the hardworking teachers behind them. I start off by acknowledging the tremendous work that the teachers at Cabramatta High School do for all the international students coming to Cabramatta to study. They do a fantastic job in preparing the students for life in Sydney and are the backbone in connecting the international community of students and Cabramatta. It is indeed the reason why many know Cabramatta as a community which is rich in diversity. Teachers across the various high schools and intensive English faculties within these schools have also contributed towards maintaining the strong relationship that Cabramatta has with international students and for that I thank them.

I cannot forget about our hardworking community support centres and the work they do for students who are in need of that extra bit of support. I often hear about the fantastic work they do in helping local schools that do not have the necessary means to further help support their students. They indeed do a fantastic job in going that extra mile. The primary school teachers and early childhood educators in my electorate also deserve a shout-out. Year in and year out these primary schools and preschools are growing in size, and these teachers always deliver. The early stages of a child's life are the most crucial stage in their education. The parents in my electorate know that they can always count on our great teachers.

In saying this, these great achievements can only continue with the support of governments at both State and Federal levels. We need more permanent buildings constructed to cater for the growing population, more funding to train new teachers and a strong commitment to providing quality learning spaces. The quality of our learning spaces and leaders of tomorrow are only as good as the effort we invest in them, which is why it is imperative that we give teachers the necessary means and resources to ensure that the leaders of tomorrow have the best possible education. I again congratulate all of the teachers and community support staff on the tremendous work that they do in my community. I vow to continue to fight for a greater level of investment and funding for as long as I remain a member of this place.

GINKO WRITING PROJECT

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (15:50): Last month I had the pleasure of attending the Ginko Writing Project celebration to congratulate students on their achievements. I recognise Cumberland High School Principal Mechel Pikoulis, who was the driving force behind the three schools' Ginko Writing Project. I thank Australian novelist Dr Bernard Cohen, director of The Writing Workshop, for all his time and effort. The writing project includes students from three schools: Carlingford West Public School, Cumberland High School and James Ruse Agricultural High School. The excellent quality of the final student creative works highlights the benefits of such educational experiences.

The Ginko Writing Project is in its third year, with the students developing creative writing skills important for enhancing communication and greater awareness of and appreciation for the local community. In June 2019 Dr Cohen guided students on an observational walk through the wildlife sanctuary of Hunts Creek, Carlingford. The walk included time at a waterfall that was once a popular deep swimming hole. Back in the classroom Dr Cohen conducted workshops to help students from years 5, 6, 7 and 8 to refine their writing. The poetry and stories were then submitted to their teachers. Finalists were chosen based on originality, creativity, clarity of language, structural balance and creative use of the observational work. These were published in a book, the editing, designing and printing of which were coordinated by James Ruse Agricultural High School English teacher Catherine Fleming. The book looked amazing. I congratulate Catherine Fleming on all her hard work.

I also congratulate the student finalists on all their hard work. The finalists from Carlingford West Public School were Bella Ma, Mia Zhao, Adrita Saha, Gaeun Park, Bonnie Zhu, Maxwell Chen, Mark Su, Hannah Li, Anagha Renduchintala, Zoya Sajid, Jonathan Zhu and Safiya Enait. The finalists from Cumberland High School were Dylan Ek, Abel Ellis, Daniel Parr, Muskan Nazare, Zainab Hussain and James Auld. The finalists from James Ruse Agricultural High School were Jenny Liu, Emily Xia, Jerry Li, Ingrid Kim, Alana Zhou and Jimmy Liang. The entire process reflects the dedication of the principals and staff from Carlingford West Public School, Cumberland High School and James Ruse Agricultural High School. Such a large project requires exceptional organisation.

I congratulate Head Teacher English Melissa Schultz from James Ruse Agricultural High School, on coordinating the walks, along with supporting staff: from James Ruse Agricultural High School, Principal Rachel

Powell; from Carlingford West Public School, Principal Andrew Williamson and Deputy Principal Saral Somaiya, assistant principals Lisa Roberts and Evelyn Seebacher, and teachers Clarinda Brown and Johanna Ashton; and from Cumberland High School, Head Teacher English Sharon Bower and Teacher Librarian Karen Alexander. The main emphasis of the Ginko Writing Project is on the process of learning rather than the final project. However, I was impressed with the high level of student achievement, including the high standard of writing and the quality of the publication. I congratulate all of the students and teachers involved.

BATHURST ELECTORATE PROJECTS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:54): It is a pleasure to talk about a number of significant projects that are making a big difference to the lives of the people who live in my community. These are much-needed projects whereby the investments ensure that we support local community organisations, sporting organisations, and community and cultural groups. Today I will talk about a number of them. The first is the improvements to, and a brand-new clubhouse for, the Bathurst Tennis Centre in the John Matthews Sporting Complex, which is named after John Matthews.

The New South Wales Government, in partnership with local council and the local tennis club, is investing \$800,000 into this state-of-the-art, modern facility, which will provide the opportunity to host major carnivals and major tournaments into the future. Players from right across this State and other States will travel to Bathurst to compete in competitions; they will stay overnight in our hotels and our motels; they will help to drive the local economy; and, importantly, the new facility will give our locals an opportunity to be involved in the sport of tennis.

We are building projects for the youth of our community. The current skate park, which has been in existence for a number of years and only caters for intermediate to experienced skateboarders, will be extended. It is estimated that the project will cost \$529,000. The State Government will contribute \$500,000 towards that project, which will deliver a number of different bowls and rails that will enable beginner to intermediate riders to utilise the skate park. The project is more than an investment: It will give our young people something to do after school and during the school holiday periods. Obviously with school holidays starting tomorrow I know that the community of Oberon and its young people will capitalise on the extension to the skate park and use it. The project was designed by the youth of the community. The community had a say in how the skate park should be developed. It is in close proximity to the adventure playground. I look forward to going out to Oberon on the weekend to see the skate park and officially open it.

The Government is making a number of investments in roads across the local area. Recently \$2.1 million was announced for a section of road around Meadow Flat. Significant investments are being made into all of the roads around the Bathurst electorate. Very soon \$2.1 million will be invested in the Great Western Highway around Meadow Flat, which will make it safer for those who turn off onto Range Road—there have been some near misses at that section, as well as a number of crashes recorded over the years. The \$2.1 million investment from the Government will make that section of the Great Western Highway safer for motorists travelling to and from the Central West.

As part of Saving Lives on Country Roads an investment of \$1.7 million has resulted in the completion of some work around Mount Lambie, which covers a 1.7-kilometre section of road. This investment will ensure that that section of road is safer for people who use it each and every day, or even for visitors to our region. Wire barriers have been installed in the middle of the road, guardrails have been installed on the side of the road, the road has been widened and it has a new seal on top of the road, making it safer for people who are travelling to and from the west. Recently over \$1 million has been spent on the Mitchell Highway around Garveys Lane, which is another investment to improve the roads in our local area. These are only some of the projects that I want to draw to the attention of the House, which show the Government's strong and continued investment into the Bathurst electorate.

Business interrupted.

Petitions

TAXI LICENCES

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I welcome members of the public to the gallery as well members of the public who are listening in the theatrette, where the debate is being broadcast. Before we commence the debate, and for the benefit of those in the public gallery and in the theatrette, I will explain the process and rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to bring their concerns directly to the attention of the House. The debate will start with a speech from a member, this time the member for Manly, which in most cases will be the member—as in this case—who lodged the petition, followed by up to four other members, followed by a Minister in response. To conclude the debate the first speaker will speak in reply. After all members

have spoken, the House will vote on the question "That the House take note of the petition". In most cases this question will be determined on the voices and be passed. However, if this is challenged by a member it may proceed to a division, at which time the bells are rung and members vote on the motion to take note of the petition by sitting on the appropriate side of the House.

The question is that the House take note of the petition.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:01): I thank members for the opportunity to bring this petition to their attention and to speak to it. I also thank the more than 100 members of the public who are in the gallery. For nearly 100 years the taxi industry has been a vital part of the transport and employment landscape across Australia, and particularly in New South Wales. The industry has a long and proud history rooted in providing work opportunities for former service men and women after World War II. In 1945 the taxi industry worked proudly side by side with the New South Wales Government to reserve a proportion of new taxi licences to get World War II veterans into work.

Today that relationship still stands strong. I know this because the relationship between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the taxi industry means that my dad, an army veteran of nearly 30 years, regularly catches a cab to get his medical check-ups. He is about six foot four and his name is Mick, in case any of you have driven him. Today, however, we face challenges like never before. No part of our society has been immune to the steady march of technology. It has upended industries across the spectrum. At the same time technology has presented as many wonderful opportunities as it has massive disruptions. To effectively manage this the New South Wales Government leads the way. It was one of the first States in Australia to put a legal framework around the point to point transport industry, recognising the arrival of rideshare.

We all know the point to point transport industry has faced a number of challenges in recent years, largely due to overseas entities introducing new business models and disruptive technology. To respond to these challenges, in 2015 the New South Wales Government established an independent task force to review the future sustainability of point to point transport across New South Wales. After receiving the task force recommendations the Government introduced a new safety-focused system of regulation for the whole industry. The Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016 and its associated regulation have given point to point transport businesses more freedom to innovate and improve services whilst maintaining strict safety standards.

Research conducted for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal indicates that the market liberalisation has led to greater competition between service providers, keeping prices lower for customers. But what I have heard from drivers and owners is that they feel more work is needed to deliver a fair marketplace. An important element of these reforms was that the supply of taxi licences continues to be regulated, with Transport for NSW making annual determinations on the number of taxi licences to be issued. At the same time there exists thousands of pre-reform taxi licences that are held by operators and drivers around the State, many of whom are here today.

The licences are tradeable on the private market but the challenge is that the loss of value of the plates has been significant and has hurt the plate owners. The Government acknowledges that the point to point transport reforms have not been easy for many in the taxi industry. Along with the Minister and the Government, I recognise the personal hardships and challenges that the past few years have brought to those in the industry. This petition provides an important recognition of those challenges and acknowledges the views of those affected on fair and just support for an industry experiencing massive change.

Yes, the Government set up the industry assistance package to help people to adjust to the changes in the industry. Yes, the transitional assistance payment ensured that every eligible taxi licence holder received a payment of \$20,000 per licence up to a maximum of two licences. And yes, the Additional Assistance Payment Scheme was designed to assist those who have suffered financial hardship as a result of these reforms. However, we recognise that there are many proud drivers and owners who have made careers as professional drivers, including gentlemen like Paul Fletcher and Jim Dowd, who I had the opportunity to meet this week.

Paul and Jim, along with many other drivers, represent the proud history of the taxi industry in New South Wales, which was forged supporting our returned service men and women. It has played a central role in transportation and is not afraid to meet the next chapter of its evolution head on by innovating and investing. I thank all drivers and owners for presenting this petition, which will help the Government continue discussions with the NSW Taxi Council and other key stakeholders. I commend the petition to the House.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:05): Whilst I am sure the people in the public gallery appreciate the Government's thoughts and recognition of their service, they need a hell of a lot more than that. I commend the member for Manly for bringing this petition to the attention of the House because his predecessor more than likely would not have. But the simple fact of the matter is that the architecture of this disastrous economic

arrangement has resulted in the rack and ruin of the livelihoods of thousands of cab owners across the State. There is no question that in many cases men and women have plunged their entire life savings into an asset that has been destroyed by the Government without appropriate compensation. As members are aware, section 160 of the Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016 required the Government to implement a review of the Act. The section reads:

- (1) The Minister is to review this Act to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of 5 years from the date of assent to this Act.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of 5 years.

The Opposition unambiguously believes that the objectives of the Act have not been met. The review should be brought forward to the end of this year to fast-track options for compensation for this crippled industry and the people who have been financially crippled by the Government's actions. That is the bottom line. I have met with scores of constituents throughout my electorate who believe that the compensation package was a laughable joke and was nearly meaningless for thousands of taxi plate owners. Members should think about what it will mean if the Government refuses to bring the review forward. It will mean that the first opportunity to change the compensation arrangements will be in July 2022.

The Government will not be able to even consider a new compensation arrangement before that time. That is far too long and it is about time that this Government recognised that and this Parliament recognised that. How many families have to be left destitute as a result of this Government's compensation scheme before this Parliament takes decisive and necessary action to save people who have plunged their life savings into a taxicab? They decided that it was a good way to invest their hard-earned capital and to ensure that they had a future. The Government has left them high and dry. Members of the Government know that. In 2009 during a debate in this Parliament on another piece of taxi legislation former Premier Mike Baird said:

It is incredible that the Government is attempting reform without having done the hard work of negotiating such a fundamental change with the industry.

Former Premier Baird said that negotiations had not taken place with the industry and he opposed the legislation. But exactly the same thing has happened with the point to point transport legislation. No-one in the public gallery would say that the Government has honestly engaged with them on this legislation, the compensation package, their taxi licences or what will happen to the transport industry as a result of the ride sharing arrangements that were brought in by the New South Wales Government. Is it any wonder that we are in this situation when the Minister for Transport and Roads swans around town in a limousine driven by a chauffeur? He would not know how to hail a taxi. He parades around the city like the Idi Amin of the New South Wales Parliament. He would not know a cab if it hit him. That is the problem.

The compensation scheme implemented by the Government has resulted in proud, hardworking people having their livelihoods smashed by the Minister for Transport and Roads. Now they have to beg him for some compensation. That is the arrangement the Minister for Transport and Roads has implemented through this legislation. It is disgraceful. There is a mechanism in the bill to review this atrocious legislation and it is about time the Government did that. Members of the Liberal Party who say to their constituents that they are the party of small business are right: They want to make businesses as small as possible. It is a disgrace.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (16:10): I acknowledge the people in the public gallery, including Geoff Ferris and Martin Rogers from the NSW Taxi Council, whom I have met with on a regular basis for the past couple of years. I will ignore what was just said and instead talk to all those in the public gallery through the Chair. I have a couple of things to say. First, I thank all the drivers and owners for tabling the petition. I am aware of their anger. Despite what the member opposite said, I do rely on the odd cab to get home at night. I am also the member for Bega and take regional cabs—which the Minister speaking from the Government's perspective will touch on.

I remind the House, particularly the member for Kogarah, that when ride share companies—Uber—hit the streets of Sydney against the provisions of the passenger transport legislation, all sorts of problems started to arise for the industry. We all know that. However, no other jurisdiction in the world has a hardship assistance payment scheme to the tune of a quarter of a billion dollars. When those changes happened I asked the Taxi Council to sit alongside Treasury and Transport for NSW to work out the best way to support plate owners in particular. As a result \$96 million was paid out and a hardship process was put in place. One of the most disgraceful elements of the hardship process was that the Commonwealth, in its treatment of the Additional Assistance Payment Scheme, wanted to apply a test that affected the compensation that was paid to plate owners.

I think that was shameful of the Commonwealth. I say that publicly. We have written to the Commonwealth and the Taxi Council is aware of the matter.

I note that Lee Furlong is also present in the public gallery. Where to from here? I know the member for Kogarah had a lot to say but the industry itself is saying, "We have seen an enshrined property right into the plates and we are seeing all this change in terms of technology and customer impacts." I pay tribute to the industry because over the past few years it has driven customer satisfaction up by 6 per cent. That is worth noting. The industry has not just said, "We just have to continue to adhere to government regulations." The industry is trying to innovate. That is why we needed to lift some of the red tape in the first place by deregulating the booking market, protecting the rank and hail market and trying to give everyone every opportunity to survive given the obvious disruptions with technology and organisations such as Uber.

What we do need very clearly as a result—and this is what the NSW Taxi Council is saying, and we indicated this to the taxi council very clearly in writing—is to put in place long-term arrangements to restructure the industry. That is tough. It is tough going to restructure an industry that has been overregulated to within an inch of its life by governments over many, many generations. In terms of that restructure, I know that the industry wants all of the plates bought out, changing the asset class. We cannot ignore the plight of regional operators particularly, because there are a lot of business owners in regional areas who are well past retirement age. In some circumstances they have lost their superannuation and their livelihood because of the drop in value of the plates, which the industry asked me to restrict when this reform started. I did, so we did not see a flooding of plates, which has previously happened in the industry, and so we could give those operators in the bush some chance. We have to work through that and we are working through that.

In terms of the review, it is constantly being monitored. We need to continue that work together. I am very keen to make sure every member of the Government understands that it has to be a whole-of-government approach, particularly engaging and involving Treasury and the like. If we fast-forward our look at the industry we will see that the new volatile situation is going to impact everything from car ownership to the way in which plates are regulated, and we need to address that. That is what we will do and that is what I have made clear to Martin Rogers and the team at the NSW Taxi Council. I know people hurt through this type of reform. I come from a farming family.

I make this point to everyone in the public gallery: Firstly, thank you for being here. We are going to continue this very difficult reform and help people who are doing it very tough. We need to look at how the levy is being applied. I want the Commonwealth to back away from its treatment of the additional assistance package so people get the dollars and do not hand it back to the Commonwealth. That was not the intention. We are talking about \$148 million. We continue to support you. Thank you for signing the petition. We will continue to work with your industry and with the NSW Taxi Council through this difficult time for you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:16): I speak in support of my embattled friends, the petitioners: the many thousands of mum-and-dad investors across this State who have been sold up the river by this Government. They do not deserve the way they have been treated; no-one deserves that. Let us make that clear, after all of those empty words. Several years ago, when I began speaking on this issue, taxi plate investments were worth hundreds of thousands of dollars more than they are today. That destruction of capital and, with it, the obliteration of retirement incomes of those who depend upon taxi plates has happened on this Government's watch.

When the State of New South Wales sold those plates, when it so heavily regulated the industry, it made a promise to investors that it would treat them fairly. In March 2016, when I first spoke in this place on the need for fair compensation, I raised the hypocritical statements made by many members opposite in 2009 in response to a far smaller reform that Labor introduced into the industry. Incidentally, those reforms did not see taxi plates drop in value by one cent. I will not rehash all the crocodile tears of members opposite, but I think it is worth repeating what Premier Berejiklian said at the time, when she was shadow transport Minister. She said:

Some people have put their entire life savings into a taxi plate—it is their main investment in life—but their world will be turned upside down if the bill is passed in its current form.

...

We want reform, but we want to ensure the reform is fair and that people who, as recently as last month, purchased a plate valued at \$400,000 will not see that investment diminished overnight because the State Government should have worked harder in consulting with the industry.

That is what our current Premier said back then. I ask the Premier today: How is that belief system going for her? The Premier saw a great threat to taxi plate investments over a reform that saw no real loss in value to taxi plate owners. But as Minister, Treasurer and Premier, she has overseen the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars to those same people without pausing for thought. There is a reason that taxi plate owners are angry. Those opposite have said one thing and done another, and they know it. What absolute hypocrisy.

When the Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Bill 2016 came before this House, I said that \$20,000 per plate was a grossly inadequate amount of compensation for losses that had already run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars and were only getting worse as time goes on. I also raised the fundamentally unfair nature of the discretionary hardship payments scheme and the thousands who did not receive a fair hearing or adequate compensation under that scheme, many of whom have signed this petition to prove just how ridiculous that proposal was.

In February 2017 I raised a matter that has affected nearly all of those who received the Government's paltry compensation payments: the failure of our State Government to coordinate with the Commonwealth to exclude those payments from income taxation. Those opposite failed to address those concerns with the initial \$20,000 compensation payments and disgracefully failed again a few years later, when hardship payments were distributed. Worse still for those receiving Centrelink benefits, the State Government failed to pre-approve those first payments as Centrelink-exempt. Then the Government somehow managed to fail again with hardship payments, leaving thousands with their pension or welfare payments slashed.

There is a pattern here: a pattern of stuff-ups and failure. I spoke to Minister Constance countless times about the need to classify those payments as capital adjustments, but it is in one ear and out the other with that guy. Either he does not care or he is incompetent, or maybe both. Today once again I ask this Government to show some compassion to the hardworking taxi plate investors who trusted this great State of New South Wales. The Act calls for a review after five years; the Government should do it now. The evidence will show that these people deserve fair compensation, fair treatment and a fair buyback.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (16:22): It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of this petition. I acknowledge James Griffin, the member for Manly, for bringing the petition to the House. I acknowledge the many hardworking taxi owners, drivers and families who are in the public gallery today. I acknowledge that we were the first Government to regulate point to point transport services in this State. Many people would know—certainly many people in the public gallery would know—that prior to my election to this place 12 years ago, I spent 22 years in the very heavily regulated private bus industry in the north-western areas of metropolitan Sydney. I understood the requirements of that particular industry and I understood the benefits of that industry, but I also clearly understood the protections that were retained within that regulation that did not allow other people to come in and operate services within our contracted regions, which exist today.

I also understood that every five years we would go back to public tender, and providing we could prove that we were a bus company fit and able to operate those particular services, we perhaps would get another contract—and that is exactly the situation today. When point to point services came into this State just five years ago, I raised with many friends and many colleagues in the Liberal Party my concern about what that had done to people who had done nothing more than invest in a regulated industry and purchase a business. Unfortunately, the response that I received was, "This is market forces at play. This is a disruptive industry. This is competition and perhaps the taxi industry needs to adjust." I thought about that for a moment and my response was this: As a heavy vehicle driver who worked within the private bus industry, I could go out tomorrow and pay \$10,000 to \$12,000 to purchase a perfectly adequate bus.

Every time I come to Parliament House in the city I would travel along the T-Way and down the M2. I would stop at every bus stop and offer passengers a cut price on what they were paying for private bus services. For tickets that they were paying roughly \$5 I would offer them a trip for \$3. What a great little earner. I could propose this to many of my colleagues. I could come in every day and pick them up of an afternoon and take them home. That would mean a couple of thousand dollars a day. I could park down at Darling Harbour in the coach parking areas for nothing. There would be no overheads—what a lovely little earner! I wonder how long a scheme like that would last before the Passenger Transport Act was enforced. I wonder how long it would take before I was arrested and put off the road.

My question is: What happened to the regulated taxi industry? We had to go through the process of seeing an illegal operation before the regulating of that industry. It continues to this day. I admire the technology. We are a people who love social media and technology. The ability to pick up a phone and order an Uber or one of the other point to point services that are offered is very attractive. It is certainly very attractive to the younger generation. That still does not account for the hardworking people who did nothing more than invest hundreds of thousands of dollars into a business and, as small business operators, run those businesses. Those hardworking people, when they had operated that business for many years, could sit back, release the licence and realise the profits in retirement, or, ultimately, see the increase in investment, as happens with any other investment. Those people could retire happily. Look what those people are doing for the economy of this State. Look at the burden that they are removing—the burden of having to be paid pensions—by taking that action, which they had done, just quietly, for 100 years.

I acknowledge the passenger service levy that was put in place. I think it is a good system. The levy is a dollar from every fare, and that system will stay in place until there is a quarter of a billion dollars to provide compensation. I acknowledge the \$20,000 compensation for up to two taxi plates for many people facing hardship. But I believe that this Government had to regulate and we had a responsibility to respond to the hardship that has been caused to people. I do not think that that burden should be faced completely by the taxpayers of New South Wales. I do believe that the payment service levy could be expanded or increased. I also acknowledge the many initiatives from the taxi industry that I think the Government can embrace. I will continue to work together with my Government and a good transport Minister until we get an outcome for these people.

Mr Philip Donato: I seek leave to make a contribution.

Leave not granted.

Mr Chris Minns: I seek leave to make a contribution.

Leave not granted.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (16:27): As Leader of the House I wish to say something for the benefit of those in the gallery. Those on the other side of the Chamber know full well the standing orders governing this procedure. There are country members of this House who are booked on flights and who want to go home. There are many other forms of the House that members can use, including notices of motion, tabling more petitions and other things. In fairness to every single member, we have a structured petition debate, and they know it.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: For the benefit of those in the gallery, it is a regular practice of this House, during debates, to seek leave to contribute to the parliamentary debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will resume his seat. I put the question and leave was not granted.

Ms Anna Watson: To the point of order: In respect to those people in the gallery who have travelled a long way to hear this debate—

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

Ms Anna Watson: Those opposite should show some respect to those people who have travelled from all across New South Wales.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat or she will be asked to leave the Chamber. Members on both sides of the Chamber should know that there are standing orders in place, as the Leader of the House explained. Leave was asked for. It was not granted. We will proceed with the debate on the petition in silence.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: It may assist the House if the Opposition gives the commitment not to call any divisions this afternoon so that country members can go and then people can contribute to this debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leave has not been granted. The member will resume his seat. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. There will be no more points of order. The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat. I call the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, who will be heard in silence.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:30): I speak on this petition as someone who recognises the critical role that taxi drivers play in regional communities. I thank the individuals who have submitted this petition and those who are in the gallery today. I also acknowledge the NSW Taxi Council Chief Executive Officer Martin Rogers and Director Geoff Ferris. I point out that both the Minister and I have regular meetings with both of these gentlemen who represent the taxi industry. We will continue to do so. I acknowledge that there was an impassioned plea from some of those opposite, but I make the point that no representations have been made to me as the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. I make the point that those opposite have had no meetings with me on this issue.

[Opposition members interjected.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. If members on the Opposition benches do not want to listen to the debate in silence they can leave the Chamber. The Minister will resume. The Clerk will restart the clock.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: There is no doubt that taxis provide a vital link; they are a vital cog in local communities. Taxi drivers work all hours—all day and all night—to help locals and visitors to get around town.

They are a part of our regional communities. They have raised their families in the regions for generations. Small towns often lack an established bus network, which makes the work of taxi drivers even more important. There is no doubt that many drivers in our regions are doing it tough. They face a situation that is quite different to the situation faced by drivers in the city.

There is certainly competition from a number of new market entrants, which has constricted the market and made it harder to earn a living, especially in daylight hours. Like all regional businesses they have been impacted by the historic drought that we are now facing. Household budgets have tightened, and nights out at restaurants and pubs are becoming more infrequent. To the drivers that are here today and to those around New South Wales I can say that the New South Wales Government is listening and will continue to do so. We will work with drivers to address those issues. In regional towns we simply cannot allow drivers to discontinue their services.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Point to Point Transport Commissioner Mr Anthony Wing has been travelling through regional New South Wales. He has attended a number of the recent annual general meetings across the State. Last weekend he was in Inverell; this weekend he will be at Batemans Bay. He has been listening to concerns and feeding them directly back to the Minister and me, and to Transport for NSW. I encourage all regional operators to continue to talk to Anthony. I also make the point that the Minister for Transport and Roads and I have also written to the Federal Government seeking its support to ensure that people receive assistance payments. Yes, we are disappointed by the response that we have received from the Federal Government in relation to this matter, but we will continue to raise this issue and fight for taxi drivers. Innovation is a big thing, and I congratulate taxi operators who are embracing technology. I thank all those who have signed the petition, and especially the member for Manly for bringing it to this place.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the House take note of the petition.

Mr Jihad Dib: Madam Deputy Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the member for Lakemba taking a point of order?

Mr Jihad Dib: I seek leave to make a contribution.

Leave not granted.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leave is not granted. Resume your seat.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Madam Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The Leader of the House has the call. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr Andrew Constance: Again, I make the observation to those opposite: There are other forms of the House to further debate this issue. The reason that we have an order of the day, which all those members opposite sat through the committee to support, is that we have a number of set speakers. We also have a number of country MPs tonight who are sitting up in their offices waiting for the conclusion of this day.

Mr Stephen Kamper: We won't have a division.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Andrew Constance: I say to the industry and say to all members that there are other forms—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Gosford that she is on two calls to order.

Mr Andrew Constance: There are other forms of the House that I would like those opposite to proceed with and we can have some further debate in relation to this. Let us observe the standing orders around the petition debate as voted and agreed to by those opposite.

Mr Jihad Dib: To the point of order: Whilst I appreciate what the Minister has spoken about, we do not get these opportunities—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call Opposition members to order. An Opposition member is speaking.

Mr Jihad Dib: We do not often get these opportunities to debate. It is obviously a very important public interest debate, as seen not only by the attendance in the gallery but the number of members in the Chamber. It is a longstanding tradition that members can seek leave. There has been a commitment from this side of the House that rather than have us being gagged we will not seek a division because there are people here—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for Lakemba to resume his seat. I have heard the member's point of order. The member will resume his seat. I refer members on the Opposition benches to Standing Order 85.

Mr Jihad Dib: Can I just add a little—?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I heard your point of order. Resume your seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: There is one last bit.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seat. I refer members on the Opposition benches to Standing Order 85. The times—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member should read the standing orders if that is the case. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The time limits are very clear in the standing orders. This is not the time to debate them; we agreed to them previously. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The member for Manly has the call.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Madam Deputy Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seat. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time.

Mr Philip Donato: Madam Deputy Speaker—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seat. I have given the call to the member for Manly. I am happy to have a discussion afterwards. Resume your seat. The member for Manly has the call and will be heard in silence.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:37): In reply: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: What a joke.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: No, it is not a joke. I would like to—

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: You are a joke.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I do not know how many times those on the Opposition benches need to have this explained to them. There are standing orders in place. I just said that if you want to discuss them with the Leader of the House and me after this session, I am more than happy to do so. The member for Manly has the call. He will be heard in silence. Let us have some respect for those in the public gallery who are here to listen to this debate. Do not speak again.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: I thank all members in this place who have made a contribution to debate on the petition this afternoon: the member for Kogarah, the Minister and member for Bega, the member for Rockdale, the member for Castle Hill, the Minister and member for Bathurst. I thank those in the gallery, as I am sure all members in this place do, for taking the time to be here this afternoon. What you have seen is a large amount of respect for you from all members in this place, as evidenced by the number of members in the House. It is clear that this is a complex issue. However, to cut through it, today you have heard that both the transport Minister and the regional roads Minister are more than willing, ready and want to continue working with your industry to bring about a good outcome. They believe in you, your skills and your resilience as an industry, and they believe in your industry leadership. What they want to do and what I want to do in bringing this petition to the House is to work collaboratively with you. I know it is easy to get angry—that is what those opposite want you to do. However, the best outcome that we can all—

Mr Stephen Kamper: They have been decimated, mate! What are you talking about?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Rockdale from the Chamber.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 16:40 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: That is just grandstanding, but what you actually have here is a genuine desire and an outcome.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Canterbury from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 16:40 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: It is a genuine commitment to bring about a positive change for your industry. I thank you for bringing the petition to the House and I thank all members in this place.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

TAXI LICENCES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:41): I speak on taxis and taxi licences. Some 21 taxidriv­ers have written me a letter asking me to do that in the Chamber.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle will resume his seat.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I am happy to do it, because they have been gutted by the Government's abandonment of taxidriv­ers, the majority of whom are small business operators. Like a lot of small business operators, particularly in my electorate of Lismore and in regional and rural New South Wales, they make wages. They do not make big money. The best way to describe the taxi business is that it operates under managed competition. We cannot then just say, "Okay, it is going to be open slather and there is going to be competition with no rules or regulations" and abandon them and devalue their licences. Basically, that is what has happened.

The Government will tell you that it did not walk away and it provided a \$20,000 assistance package—we heard about that today. However, it went nowhere. In fact, we also heard that there were some terrible losses associated with the \$20,000 package. For some, the consequences were that they got a big tax bill. For others, their GST payments were increased, which prevails over the year, but they got no extra income from their taxi business. Some on pensions have lost out too. I heard the Minister say that that was disgraceful on the part of the Commonwealth—and it was. I was going to ask what was done and then I heard that in reply. However, we should do a lot more than give out those assistance packages to get ticked off by the Commonwealth to ensure it is not going to eat it all up. I know that is hard to do, but it can be done.

I have a few drivers—two, in fact—who are in their 70s. I think one is 72 and the other is 75. They would like to retire but they cannot, because they are trapped. They are in debt. They have devalued licences and little ability to sell their licences. It means that they are missing out on their superannuation. Many had envisaged that the sale of the licence would be their superannuation, or would top up their superannuation if they had it. I do not understand why the licences cannot be bought out. The \$20,000 assistance package, as I understand it, is made up by the customers paying \$1—10¢ will go to GST, of course, because the Feds do not miss out. We pay for that assistance package anyway.

If that continues, and it should continue, we can contribute to buy them out. I know that some in my area have bought licences—one for \$320,000 and another one for \$220,00—and they would be lucky to get \$100,000 for them now. With taxi plates, how we could devalue them through government regulation, no regulation, managed competition and then not say we are going to buy them out, I do not know. The taxi industry has put up the following solutions: The New South Wales Government buys back all New South Wales taxi licences for a fair and just value in line with pre-reform licences, leases the licences back to the industry for a price reflective of the market they have exclusive access to, and maintains a rank-and-hail proposition that can reduce entry costs for taxi operators and allow taxi networks to develop competitive business models.

Combined with the leasing raised and the contribution from the passenger service levy that I and others talked about in the petition debate, the annual collection figure will be over \$100 million annually and growing. That can be used well to offset the cost of the buyback, and this is what the taxidriv­ers are asking for. The end result would be no net cost to the New South Wales Government, but there would be a great benefit to those small business operators, to all of us and to the economy. They have also said to review and monitor the number of vehicles required to provide an efficient and effective point to point transport market that focuses on vehicle utilisation to reduce congestion, and allow drivers and operators to make an adequate living. The plea from my drivers is to compensate them duly and fairly.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:46): On Sunday 8 September it was my pleasure to host the New South Wales emergency services fleet launch and family fun day at the International Peace Park at Seven Hills. New South Wales SES volunteers, along with Minister for Police and Emergency Services Mr David Elliott, launched the new emergency fleet. Locals were able to see the tools, skills and equipment that our New South Wales SES volunteers use to save lives and protect our communities. The day included vehicle displays of rescue trucks, command vehicles, boats and storm response vehicles, flood rescue activities, learning how to prepare for floods and storms, and a virtual reality stand. The Minister and I took part in a training seminar involving rescuing the occupants of a crashed motor vehicle. The New South Wales SES also had many fun activities for the kids and families, not only from the Seven Hills electorate but also from far and wide in western Sydney. It was great to see many locals at the event engaging with SES volunteers about the incredible work they do helping communities across New South Wales in times of desperate need.

The Seven Hills electorate community is lucky to have the aid and support of the Blacktown, The Hills and Parramatta SES units. Local SES units are vigorously active throughout the community all year round as extreme events can occur at any time. I know that Blacktown, The Hills, and Parramatta SES units are constantly updating my local community on weather conditions and precautions that should be taken in case of an emergency. In particular, local SES units are involved in precautions due to flood zones in the Seven Hills electorate. Waterways traverse the electorate, with Blacktown Creek in Seven Hills, Finlayson Creek in Wentworthville, Pendle Hill Creek in Pendle Hill and Quarry Branch Creek at Northmead, which flows through North Rocks into the Toongabbie Creek and further into the Parramatta River system.

I note the work of the City of Parramatta Council and the NSW SES in monitoring high-, medium- and low-risk flood-prone areas at Northmead, North Rocks, Old Toongabbie, Toongabbie, Wentworthville, Westmead and Winston Hills. In particular, I note the efforts of the New South Wales SES in helping parts of my local Toongabbie community that a few years ago were submerged after a severe storm event. I recall in December last year the work of local SES units aiding properties and families affected by the intense hailstorms. My local electorate office was called numerous times to personally note the great efforts of local SES volunteers who battle the harsh conditions to ensure the local community remains safe.

The Blacktown SES unit is led by commander Barry Wademan and has 137 volunteers. The unit was formed in 1963 and has been based in Prospect since 1992. I commend the Blacktown SES unit for its support and efforts across the electorate of Seven Hills. The Hills SES unit was formed in 1968; its first headquarters were in a tin shed next to the previous Hills Shire Council chambers. Currently the unit works out of its own building in Balcombe Heights Estate in Baulkham Hills. The unit currently has 207 dedicated volunteers, who have attended 631 responses for assistance in 2019 alone. Deputy commander Malcolm Liston is currently serving as acting commander due to the recent retirement of Evelyn Lester. I pay tribute to Evelyn and her many years of service to The Hills community and across the State for her assistance as an SES commander.

The Parramatta SES unit was established in 1961. Its headquarters have been based near the Parramatta Gaol since the late 1970s. Commander Timothy Dykes leads the 146 volunteers, who have assisted with 809 incidents throughout the current year so far. I thank the Parramatta SES unit for its tireless efforts in my local community. It was great to launch the new emergency fleet of the SES in Seven Hills recently. I thank the Blacktown, The Hills and the Parramatta SES units for their support and dedication in looking after communities in the Seven Hills electorate.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE COASTAL EROSION

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:50): I update the House on an issue of significance facing my electorate of Port Stephens and that is the longstanding erosion and dredging issues impacting several coastal communities across Port Stephens. This week all members of the House have become well aware of the catastrophe facing Stockton in the electorate of Newcastle. For years this community has seen its beach wash away into the ocean. The coastline is shrinking, a childcare service is closed and the building is soon to be demolished, and its surf club is teetering on the edge. Unless urgent action is taken, family homes will be next. Sadly, all of this comes as no surprise to local residents. The problems have been obvious and worsening for some time. The member for Newcastle, Tim Crakanthorp, the local council and residents have been crying out for a long-term solution for years. Yet the Government and its agencies have not acted.

We have seen all this before in Port Stephens, and we know we will see it again, because bureaucratic hurdles and years of delays are caused by the multitude of State agencies that are involved in the process of finding solutions. These agencies play an important role but the cumbersome, complex and opaque network of approvals are neither efficient nor effective. There is no ability to create long-term management plans, and instead we are left with a constant cycle of emergency work in response to emergencies that were entirely predictable and often

preventable. This cycle of ad hoc, piecemeal work has played out over many years in my electorate, in beautiful Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest. It has seen a road almost entirely washed away at Winda Woppa. Behind the road sit houses that have come far too close to the smashing waves produced during east coast lows.

Thankfully, MidCoast Council has undertaken a lot of work to put in place a unique sand transfer system, which will hopefully see Jimmy's Beach replenished with sand regularly, creating an all-important buffer between the water and homes. A critical element to the sand transfer system is a stockpile of sand, which has largely been depleted. The stockpile was the product of dredging the nearby natural channel of the Myall River. Dredging took place in 2015 only after years and years of advocacy and hard work by my community. I thank the Myall River Action Group, particularly its president, Gordon Grainger, for its advocacy.

I report to the House today the frustration of the community at being trapped in the same cycle of bureaucracy it faced before, which is why I bring this issue to the House today. Right now, the natural mouth of the river that this community relies on is closing up and dredging is required to ensure the gains achieved from the last dredging are maintained. When the channel was dredged dolphins returned to the river for the first time in many years, salinity levels increased and oyster farming is returning. There were no more reports of fish disease, and water clarity improved markedly. If the natural channel is allowed to close entirely again there are serious concerns about the health of the river, and its marine life and the local economy.

Already a dolphin has beached itself on the rising sandbank in the middle of the channel and recreational boaters face risks, particularly visitors who are unaware of the hidden dangers of navigating the channel. Here is the trick: The multimillion-dollar sand transfer system, which has been installed to protect Jimmys Beach and the houses on Winda Woppa, depends on a stockpile of sand. That sand should be retrieved by a dredge from the natural channel but there is no dredging approval and no dredging funding. To embark on that process again has drawn ire and frustration from my community. In order to progress dredging and maintenance, I understand that approval is required from the following agencies: Environment, Primary Industries, Crown Lands, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, marine parks, Fisheries, the Environment Protection Authority, Roads and Maritime Services, the Commonwealth Government, including the Office of Environment and Heritage, and the local Aboriginal land council. To make matters worse, there are even two councils involved.

In practice, each agency operates in a silo and it takes months or years for each agency to sign off on its particular part. Members will quickly realise that these processes take half a decade or longer to progress. In the meantime, sand builds in a river system that is now flourishing, risking once again becoming prone to blue-green algae, fish disease and turbidity. The Myall River is the lifeblood of this community and the river's health is critical to the ongoing prosperity of this beautiful region. For the next 10 years the area is anticipated to grow by 55 per cent, with 1,000 new home sites planned and 2,000 new residents expected. The new residents will want a healthy river system, as do the current residents. My community members seek something that ought to be simple: They want a single authority to manage coastal dredging and erosion issues. The current system is broken, inefficient and ineffective. The community should not have to go to battle every time there is a need for action, when all they want is a healthy river and a beautiful beach.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:56): I respond to one matter that was raised by the member for Port Stephens, which relates to the current problem with erosion at Stockton Beach. I know the area very well. In fact, I played for the Port Hunter basketball club for many years. I have many friends who live in Stockton and who went to school with me. Stockton Beach is truly one of the most beautiful beaches in New South Wales, if not the world. I am a little disappointed that the Labor and Greens dominated Newcastle council, which is responsible for the primary care of that beach, has been so delinquent and so poor in its prioritising—

Ms Kate Washington: You've spent \$5 million on emergency work—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens has had an opportunity to make a contribution to the debate.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: —expenditure that it has prioritised other projects, rather than properly looking after Stockton Beach.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: That's incorrect; total rubbish.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle has been warned time and time again today. If the member wants to be kicked out, I will kick him out.

KU-RING-GAI CHASE NATIONAL PARK

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:57): In keeping with the environmental theme, my community of Pittwater is shaped by beaches and by bush. Its relative isolation and strong sense of place are a product of its geography and land use. The single largest land use in the electorate is

designated by an E1 zoning—that is, national parks and nature reserves. The biggest national park in Pittwater is Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, which covers around 150 square kilometres and includes the hamlets of Cottage Point, Elvina Bay, Lovett Bay, Coasters Retreat and Great Mackerel Beach. Founded in 1894, owing to the vision of an amazing man, Eccleston Du Faur, it is the second oldest national park in New South Wales. Together with the Royal National Park to the south and the Blue Mountains National Park to the west, it forms part of the crucial green belt that defines the geographic limits of Sydney.

Being such a large part of Pittwater's land and water area, it follows that any proposed changes to the management of land in the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park will have a determinative impact on the future social, economic and environmental development and wellbeing of the entire Pittwater community. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service recently announced plans to prepare, for the first time in 17 years, a new plan of management for Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, providing a powerful opportunity for my entire community to participate in planning for the future of our park. I encourage community members to do so because plan of management opportunities generally are taken only by narrow sectional interests and not by broader interests in the community. We must remember these parks belong to all of us. It is important that everyone has their say on the uses that ought to be focused on as we look for ways in which to sustain, restore and best use these incredibly important and beautiful parts of our communities.

As the local member, I take this opportunity to offer some ideas about how a plan of management can best ensure that the park is protected, sustained and restored in the interests of current generations and also future generations. My first observation is that the park is a chase—a name selected deliberately to denote that it was unfenced, inclusive of people rather than seeking to exclude them. Being so accessible to visitors from around the globe, it is important to acknowledge that any plan of management should consider how the park can be a park for the people, making it more accessible for young and old, the agile and infirm. Of course, we need to be careful to protect and restore the biodiversity and landscape of the park, which includes features like the astonishing tessellated sandstone pavement on the Lambert Peninsula above Elvina Bay and the more than 800 rock engravings, grinding grooves and cave art left by the Guringgai people. But we must also find ways to provide more opportunities for people to walk, ride, swim and camp and simply to learn about this incredible place.

It is worth noting that for many years the National Parks and Wildlife Service operated under something of an ideology promoted by the Labor Government of the day to focus on the interesting human settlements in the park as incursions to be deleted rather than as opportunities to engage with the park and to show real interest and delight in the intersection between the park and the people who used it and called it home. I am talking about places like the McGore cottage at Flint and Steel Beach, which was not restored after a fire, and State House, which was supposedly used by the Petrovs after the Petrov Affair. Again, that house was left to fall to rack and ruin and is now a sad, derelict place, when it could have been used effectively to provide more opportunities for people to enjoy the park.

I have a couple of ideas for including people, rather than excluding them. Currently we have ferries that provide access from the eastern foreshores to the hamlets along the western foreshores of the park but we have no established tracks to link those hamlets. A series of loop tracks would enhance opportunities for visitations and spread the parking load away from Church Point and Pittwater Park at Palm Beach. It would provide more opportunities for local tourism, just to name one example. There are endless opportunities. I thank all those who have been involved in looking after the park in the past—people like Phil Gough, David Tribe and Rowan Walter. I also thank the great people of Palm Beach and the Wild Beach Association. We all love our park and we want the best future for it.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:02): I thank the member for Pittwater for his contribution. Not only is he an outstanding Minister for Planning and Public Spaces but also he is a great member for Pittwater. My electorate of Ku-ring-gai shares the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park with the good Minister's electorate. It was very important to hear his contribution about the plan of management for the park. He made some excellent observations on how that plan of management should be undertaken. I note that the Minister mentioned the E1 zoning of the national park. I thank him for facilitating an E zoning in North Turramurra, which abuts the national park. The zoning has been very popular in my community and it exhibits the Minister's strong sensitivity for nature and our national parks system.

ARMENIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (17:03): We live in a wonderfully diverse and multicultural society that provides us with the privilege of experiencing different tastes, sights, sounds and ideas from people of numerous backgrounds, all of whom call Australia home. We often pride ourselves on being a melting pot of many different nations. In Ryde we are proud of our commonalities as well as the differences that make us so culturally rich. The Armenian Film Festival celebrates one of our key cultural groups in Ryde and is a treasured event. The festival is in its fourth year at Top Ryde and the 19 pieces featured

at this year's festival are remarkably diverse, with films, documentaries and shorter pieces. The festival invites and challenges all to see the world from a new angle and provides us with grounds for a more global perspective. The Premier of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian, MP, attended the event's opening night gala, and I was proud to represent Ryde at the event alongside the Premier. Jonathan O'Dea, MP, was represented at the event and our local Ryde councillor Sarkis Yedelian, OAM, was also there. It is truly an event not to be missed.

Margaret Chater and Hourie Demirjian deserve recognition for organising the event. Their efforts in promoting and facilitating such a cause are astounding and they should be congratulated. The success of this festival is renowned and proven in its renewed presence in our community. The live music for the event provided by the immensely talented Masha Mnjoyan, paired with artistically decadent catering, encapsulated the Armenian culture of celebration, strength and unity that has transcended history and borders. I thank Event Cinemas Top Ryde City for its hard work in hosting the festival. The opening gala I attended was welcomed in the fantastically decorated bar foyer, which was a credit to the organisers and hospitality of the venue.

The general manager, Rachna Padali, and the assistant general manager, Michael Ezzy, at Event Top Ryde both deserve a lot of praise for their efforts in maintaining a consistent high quality. Service from the staff I was able to meet—Isabel and Olivia Viant, Luca Vignando, Robert Smith, Cameron Siou and Gui Qi Xiong—all deserve the utmost commendation as well. One of the staff, Christopher Kissoglou, who is of Armenian descent, commented on the community of the night, noting he saw many friends from throughout his life. That speaks to the tightness of the community. Alina Tadevosyan and her sister Tamara were volunteers at the event. Alina expertly summarised the event's significance to the Armenian community when she said:

It was such a pleasure to be a part of this year's Armenian Film Festival Australia. It is an important event celebrating Armenian creativity, culture, history, past, present and future. It is an opportunity for the community and the public at large to come together and experience a slice of Armenia through visual storytelling.

Ryde is the heart of the Armenian community and as a Ryde resident, it was especially great to share our culture with both Armenians and non-Armenians where I live. We were very proud and thankful to all the patrons who came out to support the festival this year and we hope that it continues to grow and spread our culture in Australia.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:07): Today I speak about the staggering rise in homelessness across New South Wales. This is an issue that is not contained to our State's cities; it is in our regions and our suburbs. I see it in Sydney and I see it in Shellharbour. It is everywhere. I believe this Government needs to do more. Approximately 11,400 women will be sleeping homeless tonight. It is time this Government took real steps to help the most vulnerable in our communities. Australia is a developed, industrialised nation. Any homelessness at all is indicative of failure—failure of policy, failure of will and failure of compassion. A profound shortage of affordable and available rental housing, domestic and family violence, poverty and unemployment are all contributing to homelessness in New South Wales.

According to the Census of Population and Housing, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of homeless people in Australia increased by 13.7 per cent between 2011 and 2016, from 102,439 to 116,427. Unfortunately, when we compare this figure with the figures within New South Wales, it seems undeniable that this Government is failing the great people of our State. For example, approximately 37,715 people are experiencing homelessness in our State on any given night. This figure has increased by 37 per cent since 2011, when those opposite came to power. This figure is miles ahead of the national increase of 14 per cent over the same period. The scale of this problem is daunting and at this rate it is only going to get worse.

We have more homeless youth than any other Australian State or Territory and we are the only State or Territory that has actually seen our rate of youth homelessness increase over the past five years. Every other State in Australia is putting in the work to protect their most vulnerable citizens and they are seeing results. We are trailing behind. The young people of New South Wales deserve so much better. Also disturbing is the sharp increase in the number of women sleeping rough, with this figuring increasing by 56 per cent between 2011 and 2016. One of the main reasons for homelessness in New South Wales is domestic and family violence. In fact, one-third of all Specialist Homelessness Services clients are escaping domestic and family violence. Further, women aged over 55 are currently experiencing one of the largest increases in homelessness due to economic disadvantage, family breakdown, lower workforce participation and a range of other factors. Homelessness is complex and it is impacting people from every corner of our community. The time to act is now.

I remind members that homelessness is not always visible or obvious. People living in their cars, couch surfing or in temporary accommodation are also homeless. The statistics I have explored in this contribution offer a damning assessment of the lack of progress being made for the most vulnerable people in New South Wales. Premier Gladys Berejiklian recently vowed to halve the number of people sleeping on the State's streets by 2025 but the subsequent New South Wales Government's budget for this financial year contained no additional funding to address homelessness. Likewise, the Government's Communities Plus building program is committed to

providing 2,350 extra properties per year for the next 10 years but New South Wales needs more than 300,000 affordable rentals and social housing properties by 2036 to meet the current shortfall as well as projected demand. That equates to about 18,500 properties per year every year. Those opposite are short 16,150 properties per year. Unfortunately, the numbers and the response from those opposite are not adding up.

Recently I wrote to the Premier to push for immediate action. I wanted to know exactly how the Berejiklian Government plans to tackle homelessness through political will. I am still eagerly awaiting her response. I will close by saying that every person in New South Wales, no matter how much they might be struggling, deserves a fair go. Right now those among us who are experiencing family violence, living in unaffordable rentals, suffering unemployment and living in poverty are not getting a fair go. It is time to finally get to work and start delivering a fair go for our State's most vulnerable. They deserve nothing less than that.

LT CREEK REMEDIATION

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:12): LT Creek is a relatively short but significant waterway that flows into Lake Macquarie via Fennell Bay in my electorate. It is an important and substantial local catchment that has been significantly impacted by sedimentation over time. It has been a matter of concern to locals for many years as well as to Lake Macquarie City Council. One of the most vocal in calling for remediation of the watercourse is local resident John Paul Young. John has been an active community campaigner for LT Creek and he has invested a significant amount of his time in trying to see the waterway restored to something resembling its original and natural condition.

Coalmining has been a significant activity in the LT Creek catchment since 1887. In fact, Newstan Colliery has operated in the area for 130 years and for most of that time it was owned and operated by the State Government. As a legacy of those historic mining operations, sediment deposits in the upper tidal reaches have resulted in poor aquatic health, which impacts on other areas downstream. The creek currently appears as a brown and murky waterway but it was not always that way. Long-time residents who live on the creek will tell you that as recently as the 1980s the water was clear, the creek bottom was sandy and the creek was filled with aquatic life. It was an important part of the lake's overall ecosystem.

As concern for the creek grew, some 10 years ago Lake Macquarie council commissioned the LT Creek Water Quality Management Plan. That study recognised that the creek suffers from high levels of suspended sediment and that sediment both clogs the creek and has impacts on the lake and bay further downstream. A lot of that sediment came from unsealed tracks around the creek's catchment and significant run-off from the Newstan Colliery, which is now owned by Centennial Coal. It should be noted that Centennial Coal has invested significantly in controlling that run-off in recent years. The company has installed water quality control dams and diversion structures on their land and has stabilised run-off areas and remediated habitat.

The possibility of dredging the creek was the subject of a subsequent report commissioned by the council in 2013. The report found that the high levels of silt and sediment in the creek were the main reason for the decline in aquatic vegetation and seagrasses and the poor water quality. While acknowledging that dredging carried some risk to the remaining aquatic fauna—namely to eels, mud crabs and mullet—the report found that dredging would vastly improve the overall ecosystem and water quality if it was combined with a sustained management plan. It would also promote the regeneration of aquatic life in the creek and reopen it for recreational use. The council, along with me and the local community, has long sought funding assistance from the State for the dredging project but has failed mainly because funding for dredging projects gives priority to waterways with navigation issues over addressing environmental impacts of mining and associated legacy issues.

About \$1.6 million is needed for the dredging project, with no ongoing costs. It has been calculated that this project would not only rectify the historic mining impacts but also provide significant benefits to the local environment, to boating and to recreational amenities as well as to maximising a return on previous investments in water quality, which has so far amounted to \$22 million. Most recently the council sought a \$1.5 million contribution from the Resources for Regions fund but was unsuccessful. This was disappointing because the Lake Macquarie region has contributed significantly to that fund through coal royalties drawn from the likes of the Newstan, Mandalong and Myuna coalmining operations, which are located in the Lake Macquarie electorate.

I first raised the issue of LT Creek in the Parliament five years ago. The community and I are disappointed that nothing has been done to rectify the problem. I am hopeful that raising the issue again will restart a conversation between the council and the State Government and a move towards a resolution. The groundwork has been done and a plan is in place but support from the State is needed, not just financially but through expertise from the Environment Protection Agency and the Department of Primary Industries. I thank Centennial, the Newstan-Awaba Community Consultative Committee, of which John Paul Young is a member, and its chairperson, Margaret MacDonald-Hill, for their ongoing advocacy for LT Creek. We have done amazingly well as a community to remediate the incredibly important estuary system that is Lake Macquarie. Taking part in the

process will be one of my proudest legacies when I am gone. Our treatment and management of LT Creek is clearly a failure. It needs to be fixed for local residents and for the environment.

POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:16): For the family and friends of those who serve in law and order around the country, 29 September holds a special significance as we pause for Police Remembrance Day and remember police officers who have been lost either in service or through illness and other circumstances. Throughout Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands, police forces will come together to remember those officers they have served alongside in the line of duty and pause to honour officers whose lives have been cut short. This important day is also a time to remember police officers who have lost their lives through illness or other circumstances. This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of Police Week and Police Remembrance Day. Members of the public will notice a special coloured \$2 coin in circulation that the Royal Australian Mint has released to commemorate this important milestone.

Over the past year New South Wales has sadly lost members of its Police Force. In February Probationary Constable Timothy Proctor from the Liverpool Police Area Command lost his life when another car travelling on Heathcote Road crossed to the wrong side and collided with his car. Sadly, Timothy passed away as a result of the injuries he received. It was a mark of how highly Timothy was thought of by other members of the NSW Police Force when he was posthumously awarded the National Police Service Medal by Commissioner Mick Fuller at his funeral. Although this medal is normally reserved as a 15-year service medal, the Governor-General consented to the honour being awarded to Timothy. The young officer was also confirmed as a constable whilst in hospital.

Senior Constable Nathan Deutschbein lost his life on November 29 while hiking on New Zealand's South Island. He and a friend were traversing Mount Cook when a small avalanche buried them within a crevasse. Nathan was a Blue Mountains Police Rescue officer. He was greatly admired for his skills, particularly as a mountaineer, which made him invaluable to the NSW Police Rescue when retrieving people stuck in canyons or on cliffs. I also congratulate the NSW Police Rugby Union Club, which brought the Bryson Anderson Memorial Match to Bathurst this year to honour Detective Inspector Bryson Anderson, who was murdered during a siege in north-west Sydney in 2012. It is a tremendous legacy to remember a fellow officer who died in the line of duty.

The NSW Police Force faces many challenges in its day-to-day operations. It is the first line of response to violence and this often places officers at risk. In an increasingly complicated world, where large-scale threats may be difficult to anticipate and where police are every day called on to provide a more complex range of skills, their work is invaluable and also dangerous. On Saturday night the annual police Blue Ribbon Ball will be held. It is the largest fundraiser established in remembrance of all deceased NSW Police Force officers. NSW Police Legacy provides not only important financial support but also emotional support in times of particular hardship for families who have lost someone who served in the NSW Police Force. It is important on Police Remembrance Day that we remember those who served and those who continue to support the families and friends who go on without them.

NOWRA COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (17:20): I give special mention to the Nowra Country Women's Association [CWA], which last weekend celebrated its ninety-fifth birthday. I was very pleased to attend. The South Coast is extremely fortunate to have such a group operating across our community, which for decades has supported the vulnerable and those in need. The Nowra branch uses its significant baking skills, amongst other skills, to raise funds to distribute to local not-for-profit organisations as well as provide a friendship group that engages women of all ages in discussion, activities and learnings.

The Nowra premises on Berry Street, which is open to other community groups at a discounted hire rate, has a wonderful history dating right back to the beginning of the Nowra CWA branch. In the 1920s Nowra was a growing town and, as with much of Australia, was a place where women and their best interests were often overlooked. The idea of an organisation for women appealed to Mrs Sarah Morton. She knew of the Country Women's Association, which was founded in 1922, and decided that Nowra needed a branch of its own. A meeting on 1 September 1924 sealed the deal. Twenty-two women joined on that day and another 14 joined at the second meeting. The committee moved swiftly to create a meeting place, purchasing a half-acre block of land on Berry Street for £400. Construction cost a further £85. Over the years the centre experienced significant growth, with a baby health centre opening in 1934 and continuing for 63 years.

During the Great Depression several families in need were given assistance. The May 1928 minutes reveal that two quarts of milk and two loaves of bread were given to families each day. In 1926 money was raised to build a new children's playground and in 1936 a fence was built around the playground so that a cow could be kept there at night to keep the grass down. The organisation has been instrumental in advocating for communities

across the South Coast and has lobbied government on health care, fixing roads, acquiring seatbelts for buses and environmental matters. The CWA lobbying efforts have resulted in significant wins for our region, particularly regarding seatbelts on school buses.

The Nowra branch of the CWA has a strong connection to the role of the member for South Coast. It handed over the first motorised ambulance to the then member for South Coast, Henry Bate, in 1932. Over the years the Nowra branch has supported the community with scholarships for local schools, Noah's Shoalhaven, the Rural Fire Service and Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets. Funds have also been raised for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Child Flight, Can Assist, medical research, the cancer centre and disaster relief. Despite the difficulty of getting to meetings in the early days, sometimes caused by husbands who did not want their wives to attend, friendships grew and the Nowra CWA had an unwavering passion to help the community.

The Country Women's Association aims to bring women and families together to form a network of support; to provide a forum for the voice of all women across New South Wales; to improve the conditions and welfare for all women and families, especially in country areas; to support schemes that enhance the value of country living, especially health and educational facilities; to encourage development in regional areas to increase the viability of rural communities; to provide a voice to government at all levels; and to promote international goodwill, friendship, understanding and tolerance between all people.

Like many regional communities across the State, people on the South Coast are feeling the effects of the drought. Again, the Country Women's Association is helping those in need. Assistance to help meet the household expenses of drought-affected families up to a maximum of \$3,000 per household is available to eligible applicants. Expenses can include current or outstanding costs related to grocery, vehicle maintenance, school, electricity, rates, telephone, dental and medical. This is another example of how the Country Women's Association often responds to the needs of our local community and assists those who need it most.

Today approximately 44,000 women—I am one of them—belong to one of over 1,855 local branches across Australia, working not only for the overall aims of the organisation but also often for very specific local issues. I am proud of our local Nowra branch, which continually punches above its weight, and this wonderful organisation. The organisation is self-funded, nonpartisan and nonsectarian. I sincerely thank branch president Julie Morris for her leadership, along with all the members for their work supporting our community. The CWA motto is:

Honour to God, Loyalty to the Throne, Service to the Country, Through Country Women, For Country Women, By Country Women.

Those words are still relevant today. I am sure all members will join with me in wishing the CWA Nowra branch a very happy ninety-fifth birthday.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:24): The bonds that hold nature together are threatening to break under the pressure humans have created. During the twentieth century the earth's average temperature increased by about two degrees Fahrenheit. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, in 2018 the national mean temperature in Australia was 1.14 degrees above average and nine of the 10 warmest years on record have occurred since 2005. This year the NSW Rural Fire Service declared 1 August as the start of the bushfire danger period in 12 local government areas in New South Wales. The danger period usually starts in October. More than 98 per cent of the State is now drought affected. Increased ocean temperatures are melting glaciers and ice caps all over the world, increasing the volume of water in our oceans. Warmer temperatures also result in the expansion of the water's mass, which causes sea levels to rise and threaten low-lying islands and coastal cities.

In May the United Nations released a landmark report that found that one million of the world's species are now under threat of extinction. Among a vast number of other alarming findings, the report indicated that since 1900 the average population size of native species for most land habitats has fallen by at least 20 per cent. More than 40 per cent of amphibian species, almost 33 per cent of reef-forming corals and more than a third of all marine mammals are now under threat. A nationwide study published earlier this year that examined 2.5 million Australian herbaria specimens found that 47 per cent of the country's native vegetation is potentially at risk from rising temperatures by 2070. Scientists studying flowering patterns found that many species are flowering earlier when compared with historic specimens. Severe early bushfires are already impacting vegetation in south-east Queensland and New South Wales. When bushfires occur out of the ordinary range only some plants are able to survive.

When nature is in trouble we are in trouble. Human pressure is pushing the ecosystems of the earth to their limits and it is impossible to deny that we are now in a climate crisis. Last week millions of people across the world gathered to recognise this crisis and call for action. The Global Climate Strike, inspired by Swedish

climate activist Greta Thunberg, may end up being the largest mass protest for action on global warming in history. More than 2,500 events were scheduled in more than 163 countries on all seven continents. Worldwide, more than four million people took part, including hundreds of thousands of people in Australia and more than 80,000 in Sydney. Every single person who walked out of their school or work in protest on Friday knows that this is not just a crisis but an emergency. More than 1,000 jurisdictions in 19 countries have now declared a climate emergency. It is time for this Government to do the same. Declaring a climate emergency is powerful. It forces governments to admit there is a problem so we can finally get on with the job of fixing it. It forces governments to start to consider climate change in all of their decisions.

Currently that is not the case in New South Wales. The Government has announced a goal to hit zero net carbon emissions by 2050 but it is just an aspiration, not a plan. The Government refuses to make a commitment not to open any new coalmines. A zero net emissions target will not be reached unless we deal with coal. Keeping coal in the ground is an essential step to reach that goal. We need a State-based renewable energy target and we need to formulate a strategy for a concrete transition away from the fossil fuel industry and to renewables. If we do not have targets and if changes are not measured they will not get done effectively and in a coordinated fashion.

Our climate is getting hotter and more extreme. Sea levels are rising and are already beginning to inundate coastlines. A hotter climate will undermine global food and water security and challenge how and where we live and work. We are out of time for a gradualist policy. In order to safeguard a healthy planet, society needs to shift away from the current sole focus on chasing economic growth. We need to start to base our economies on an understanding that without nature, clean air and water, we cannot live prosperously. We need to change what governments value and shift the sole focus on the GDP to a measure that considers the importance of nature, ecosystems, social equality and justice.

We also need to recognise the immense contribution of indigenous peoples across the world who have acted as caretakers for millions of years and have demonstrated a commitment to protect ecosystems. They have done a much better job than national or corporate institutions. Governments will continue to deny it, but climate change will not go away. It is time to declare a climate emergency. Councils, businesses, students, workers and young people from all walks of life are behind the change. Politicians are the only ones left. It is time for members of this House to start acting like the world depends on us taking action, because it does.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (17:29): The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an international youth development program that aims to inspire millions of young people between the ages of 14 and 24 to be motivated to achieve, regardless of their circumstances. To earn an award a young person must learn a new skill, improve their physical wellbeing, volunteer in the community and experience a team adventure in a new environment. More than 130 countries have adopted the award program and more than eight million young people have participated worldwide since the award was first set up in 1956 by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. In Australia more than 775,000 young people have participated, with an average of 40,000 participating each year for over 60 years.

On Friday 13 September events were held in Sydney to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the award in Australia. His Royal Highness Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, KG, GCVO, made a special visit to Australia to lead the celebrations in his capacity as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation. It was an absolute pleasure to welcome His Royal Highness to the Premier's reception on Thursday 12 September and to the Duke of Edinburgh board and supporters' lunch the next day. On Friday 13 September at the national gold award ceremony nearly 400 award recipients and more than 600 parents and guests travelled from across Australia to be presented with their gold awards by His Royal Highness. The gold award ceremony was the first of its kind in Australia and the largest such presentation outside the United Kingdom.

We should be so proud that there are hundreds of young people across Australia who are striving to better themselves through their participation in the program. It was particularly gratifying to see students from my local schools receiving awards, including 10 students from The Scots College in Bellevue Hill who received a gold award. They are: Charlie Adams, Hamish Carnegie, Jack Shakespeare, Joe Carrigan, Cooper Wray, Max Lissenden, Madison Weekes, William Lavender, Campbell Duff and Alexander St John, along with Diva Wilson from Ascham School in Edgecliff. I congratulate them all. They should all be very proud of themselves.

Celebrations for the sixtieth anniversary continued that evening with a gala dinner at the New South Wales Parliament, which was supported by the Crouch family. That evening I was humbled to receive an award of recognition from His Royal Highness for outstanding service in management and leadership contributing to the development of young Australians. It was such an honour to be recognised by His Royal Highness, alongside the Hon. John Pascoe, AC, CVO; Sue Walker; Anita Jacoby, AM; Professor the Hon. Dame Marie Bashir, AD,

CVO; and Peter Kaye, AM. Between 2005 and 2011 I served as the deputy chair of the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Australia and saw firsthand how the program helps young people reach their full potential.

The sixtieth celebrations were a wonderful opportunity to thank the many supporters and volunteers who have supported the award program over the years. I thank national CEO Peter Kaye, AM, and national chairman the Hon. Gary Nairn, AO, for the fantastic work they do with the award nationally. I thank also the other national board members, including deputy chair the Hon. Sandra Nori; secretary and treasurer Tom Mould, AO; Cameron Smart; Stephen Hauville; Elizabeth Gilchrist, AM; Gary Rowe; Nathan Godfrey; Bob Rutherford; David Sanders, CA; the Hon. Daryl Manzie, AM; the Hon. Joseph Francis; and Sue Lloyd-Williams, AO.

I acknowledge the members of the National Award Office management team, including executive manager Kathleen Hewitt, senior manager Tania Etuale, fundraising and ambassador manager Jo Bush, and national strategic projects manager Kelly Wood. I thank the members of the Friends of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award whom I have not already mentioned, including chairman the Hon. Larry Anthony; deputy chairman Andrew Murray, AM; and Charlie Buchanan. I congratulate the young people of my local area who received an award and thank the members of the national award team, the national board and the Friends of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, who have put in a longstanding and strong effort behind this great youth program. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

CAN TOO PORT MACQUARIE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:34): I recognise a group of people in my electorate whom I am very fond of: the Can Too Port Macquarie team. In February 2018 Port Macquarie became the first regional town to form a training pod for the Can Too Foundation. Can Too promotes healthy lifestyles and aims to reduce the risk of the one-third of cancers that are lifestyle related by offering professionally coached training programs for people of all ages and abilities to increase physical activity. In return, participants commit to fundraising for Australian cancer research.

Since its inception the Can Too Foundation has helped over 16,000 participants find their feet to achieve goals they never thought possible and has raised over \$22 million. In July the Can Too Port Macquarie team started its third training program in preparation for the 10-kilometre Sydney Harbour Bridge run at the Sydney Running Festival and, for a few of us, the half-marathon. The Sydney Running Festival is held each year in September. Anshul Deshmukh, Bennett Powell, Drew Wade, Hemant Deshmukh, Jane Evans, Ross Cargill, Sandra Hollins, Wil Barlow and I all participated in the run, with help and encouragement from our fabulous team captain, Michael Daley, and our very committed coach, Melinda Cockshutt.

With amazing support from the Port Macquarie, Hastings and Camden Haven communities, as well as outstanding contributions from local businesses, the Port Macquarie team raised over \$10,000 before race day. I say a huge thankyou to the Laurieton Plaza Theatre, which allowed Can Too to host the *Downton Abbey* movie premiere as our fundraiser. Cassegrain Wines generously donated the refreshments that flowed before the screening while guests enjoyed canapés. The event was a roaring success, with a nearly full house enjoying the film and each guest walking out utterly delighted at having been taken back to an elegant period in time.

Bills Fishhouse and Bar, Delizioso, Oasis by the River, The Stunned Mullet and Whalebone Wharf Seafood Restaurant generously donated dinner vouchers for the 100 club prizes. Can Too Foundation supporter Jody Nelson-Gleeson was thrilled to win the coveted prize; after purchasing many tickets, she was a deserving winner. Bunnings Port Macquarie very generously allowed us to have a barbecue in early June, which was also supported by Bakers Delight Settlement City. Bunnings has continued to champion the Can Too cause by allowing us to book another barbecue, which is being planned for the long weekend in October. Men At Work has donated all the supplies for our next fundraiser, which is very generous and much appreciated.

Thanks also go to the generous businesses that provided vouchers for our raffles and supported our events and fundraisers: Aqua Vitae Day Spa, Bakers Delight Port Macquarie, Bittersweet Cafe and Patisserie, Blue Cow Gelato, Book Face, The Brow Bar, Caramels at Cathie, Hair Artistry on Flynn, Hire Port, PETstock, Premium Coffee Roasters, Salty Crew, Soap By Delma, The Botanic Merchant, Tribal Hair, Urban Grain Bakery and Zambrero. It is thanks to their support that our movie night and other fundraisers have been such successes. In a continuation of our efforts—as if running was not enough—we are now planning our first ocean swim during the summer, which we will soon start training for. I thank all members of the team for the fun and commitment they have displayed in growing our Can Too community in Port Macquarie-Hastings. I congratulate each and every one of them on improving their health and fitness while, most importantly, raising money for cancer research.

WAGGA WAGGA POPULATION

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:38): Wagga Wagga's population is set to grow to 100,000 within 20 years and I am excited to share the incredible opportunities and potential challenges that will

come hand in hand with that boom. The New South Wales Government has earmarked Wagga Wagga as a potential 100,000 population regional centre, as was outlined in the Government's 20-year economic vision for regional New South Wales. Today the Deputy Premier reiterated that and indicated that, in fact, he thought it would be the first city in regional New South Wales to reach a population of 100,000. At the moment Wagga city is home to 64,000 people, so the target of 100,000 represents an exciting but significant challenge.

It is exciting because I remember a time when our region was only talking about decline. I believe this is the first time in 30 years that we are instead talking about substantial growth of our region in a serious way. But that growth must come with the right infrastructure and services, built in the right way at the right time to make residents feel safe and supported. It is clear that future local and State Government investment in infrastructure and services will be critical for reaching the target responsibly. In that respect, I note the development of the Special Activation Precinct at Bomen, which will aid the growth of industry and employment. I acknowledge the New South Wales Government's commitment to the expansion following last year's \$14.4 million investment in the Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics Hub. This project will result in a 5.8-kilometre rail siding to service the main terminal at the Bomen hub.

The opportunity for enhanced connectivity will attract further businesses and manufacturers, which will ensure the city's ongoing sustainability. A new school is planned for the Estella region and stage three of the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital redevelopment is well underway, with a much-needed car park to follow. Wagga city council has begun to create the housing zones needed to meet the residential target, with a fair percentage earmarked for higher-density developments. In addition, planning is underway for a health precinct in which public and private health services will be linked through planning to create a vibrant health service, education and research hub. We also have solar farm projects and, of course, Snowy 2.0, which will attract skilled technicians and tradies to the city.

But in order to meet demands, the city will need to grow by more than 2 per cent per year, which is more than double the rate in the 10 years to 2016. Migration will be a critical driver of that growth, but it will be a challenge. We need to make sure that we are attracting the right age demographics to balance our ageing population. In addition, we need to entice the right businesses to move to Wagga with training services that address our known skills gaps in the trades. In that respect, I note the work that TAFE NSW has done recently, which I have spoken about, in relation to its unique partnership with John Deere Australia and Case IH to train trade specialists in those areas. I also note the Murrumbidgee Local Health District's proposal to train generalist doctors based in the region. Again, I have spoken about that and I encourage the Government to support it.

The Committee 4 Wagga, in conjunction with the Housing Industry Association and the Wagga city council, is hosting a summit this Friday in Wagga that will address the key issues involved in growth. These issues will include making sure we have jobs and training for our population and businesses with the right support to allow our city to grow. These factors will span a range of industries and sectors—government and private. We need to work as a team to make this succeed, and we need to work with vision.

However, growth needs to come in a responsible way, and there are challenges in that. We need to make sure that our public transport needs are met and that housing is available to those in need, health services are meeting demands, training programs are addressing skills shortages—as I have said—and that gaps in the job market are filled. Our roads and urban environment must be capable of supporting the wonderful lifestyle we already have in Wagga Wagga. Above all, we need a sustainable city. I acknowledge every community member who has begun the journey to achieve the 100,000 population growth target to date. I look forward to working with all the community in the years ahead to ensure our region not only grows, but also thrives.

BOWRAL TULIP TIME FESTIVAL

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:43): This time of year is very special in my electorate as the signal for the start of spring comes to life in Bowral. Yes, Tulip Time is in the air. Each year many thousands of visitors come to Bowral and experience the colour that Tulip Time brings. There is a kaleidoscope of tulips carpeting public gardens, streetscapes and premier private gardens during Tulip Time in the Southern Highlands. The 90,000 mass-planted tulips nestled among blossoming mature trees in Corbett Gardens are the centrepiece of the Tulip Time Festival, where there is daily live musical entertainment, an array of market stalls and lots of photo opportunities. The colours need to be seen and appreciated.

This year the festival has a special theme. It is dedicated to Mary Poppins, as Bowral is where P. L. Travers had the idea of the character of Mary Poppins. She lived in Bowral during her teens. We are celebrating 85 years since the book was written. The magic of Mary Poppins will transform Corbett Gardens into a wonderland of colour, music and fun in 2019. It will be a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious adventure for all. Chim chiminey, chim chiminey, chim chim cher-ee! The Tulip Time Festival has been a winner of the prestigious World Tulip Award.

Members will recall the Pie Time event that was held in the Speaker's garden earlier this year. Visitors to my electorate can enjoy not only the wonderful pies and pastries, the wine and the equine events of the Southern Highlands, but also, at this time of the year, one of the great garden festivals of Australia. The festival is a culmination of hours of work by a dedicated team led by Isobel Lane, the Southern Highlands tourism coordinator. The idea to link this year's festival to Mary Poppins came from Lorna Bussell, the Tulip Time officer. Congratulations to her and all at Destination Southern Highlands on their great work.

Tulip Time officially began on Tuesday this week, with the first public turning of the Mary Poppins birthplace statue from east to west, marking the spring equinox, the change of the season and the official start of the Tulip Time Festival. Just like in the book, Mary Poppins moves with the wind. The official Mary Poppins statue is located in Glebe Park right next to the Bradman Museum. The Don and P. L. Travers are two iconic figures in Australian history, commemorated side by side in my electorate. After the turning of the statue, the colourful umbrella brigade begins with over 700 participants. This was held this week and was a memorable community event.

Tulip Time is in its fifty-ninth year of continuous operation. Tulips are the stars of spring and visitors can experience the colourful display all over the area. There are 19 premier private gardens open during Tulip Time. Tulip Time has many benefits for the community and businesses in the highlands and surrounding areas. The two-week festival runs from Tuesday 24 September until Monday 7 October. The first day of Tulip Time has seen record numbers of coaches booked into Corbett Gardens. Last year we saw a record number of visitors to Corbett Gardens—48,123—which equates to approximately 70,000 people visiting the Southern Highlands region during a two-week period. This gives an economic benefit to the region and injects around \$6.7 million into the visitor economy.

Each year Tulip Time supports a charity, and in 2019 it is supporting Variety, the children's charity. This is a wonderful cause. Visitors go shopping and dining and visit the 19 private gardens open for public inspection in the Southern Highlands during Tulip Time season. They travel to the Southern Highlands via Mittagong and Bowral and on to Moss Vale, Berrima and Robinson. Weekend accommodation occupancy is higher during Tulip Time. The Southern Highlands in my electorate is always a spectacular place to visit but at this time of the year it is just that little more colourful. And, yes, you can also feed the birds for tuppence a bag.

TAXI LICENCES

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:48): I make a private member's statement about some small business people in my community, the taxi plate owners. I had hoped to give this speech earlier during the petition debate, but unfortunately a number of us were gagged. I was very frustrated and upset because a majority of the people in the gallery were from my electorate. Many taxi plate owners live in my electorate. They have been coming in and out of my electorate office, lodging petitions with me. They are very upset and that is why I am upset and disappointed by the handling of this issue.

After the taxi plate owners and the people whom we represent left the gallery, they gathered outside. I acknowledge that the Minister for Transport and Roads did go outside to speak to a number of them, but I also want him to understand their frustration. These are working-class people. They are low-income workers, who are honest, hardworking and law abiding, and the reforms to the taxi industry have impacted their families. Many families invested their life savings in taxi licences. They made that investment in good faith because they believed it was a solid investment that was regulated and government underwritten.

I have talked to many community members. My parents are in the same age group as many of the people who were in the gallery. I understand them. They are really hardworking. A lot of taxi plate owners did not finish school. They did not get a formal education but this was one way of investing their money. For them, it was superannuation; they believed the scheme was backed by the Government and that it could provide a reliable nest egg for their retirement. It made me very upset to see that some of the 80-year-old and 90-year-old constituents who are coming into my electorate office were depressed. They should not be depressed at that time in their lives. They should be enjoying their families and their grandkids. They should not be distressed about what has happened to them.

I urge the Government to bring forward the review and listen to these people, who have lost a lot of money. A lot of them do not speak English and they have tried to express their pain and their anguish. It is not fair. I know that the Minister, along with my colleagues, was out there meeting those people who are affected by the reforms to the taxi industry. I hope that he will do the right thing and help these people because they are going through a really tough time. Some of these people have educated their kids and sacrificed everything, including their quality of life. They have worked hard—they are law-abiding citizens—so that their families can get an education and be self-reliant. These people do not want to be dependent on government benefits and that is why they have worked so hard.

I am very upset about this. Last week I held a community expo with the Federal member for Watson, Tony Burke. We had a number of services there and a lot of the people that we saw were taxi plate owners. They are depressed and upset. They want the Government to take action. I urge the Government to please do something to help these people. They need the Government's help. A lot of them are elderly and they just want a good quality of life until the end of their days.

TUMBARUMBA COMMUNITY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:53): Identity is important, whether it is the identity of a person, an organisation or a community. It speaks of who we are. The community of Tumbarumba has a strong identity—an identity that reflects its heritage and location. Hugged by the mountain ranges on the western edge of the Snowy Mountains, Tumbarumba has a strong sense of pride and independence, of self-sufficiency and an aversion to interference. It is through this prism of identity that we can explore the events of the past four years. In May 2016 Tumbarumba Shire was merged with Tumut shire to form Snowy Valleys Council. A number of communities have undergone changes to their local government status over many years—including the council area that I reside in—as part of the 2014 council mergers. Many of these communities, like Tumbarumba, have a rural identity that speaks of independence and a strong civic pride. Many of these communities have gone on to embrace the new local government.

However, for Tumbarumba the merger has created an ongoing sense of trauma and dislocation. There are those who have done their best to adapt and there are those who feel that the only thing to do is to de-merge. People on both sides of the issue—in particular, councils, council employees and their communities—have been hurt by the conflict that this has caused. We in the New South Wales Government need to recognise this hurt and trauma. Compounding this are concerns about the new council. I appreciate that these concerns are genuinely felt. They are magnified by the contract termination of three council directors. I also state that the councillors work hard for their community.

Prior to the merger, the Tumbarumba council was a strong council. It is the yardstick by which the community now measures the new merged council. However, the performance of prior Tumbarumba shire councils, even in the view of locals, was variable. When the shire came into the electorate of Albury as part of the State electoral boundaries adjustment, I understand that much needed to be done. The then member for Albury Greg Aplin took action and secured State funding for a number of critical infrastructure rebuilds, including Mannus Dam and the town's sewerage system. Many issues—such as the provision of general practitioners, the caravan park and, most recently, the closure of one of the town's two supermarkets—continue to concern the community. This has led to ongoing speculation and judgement of people and projects. This speculation is occasionally off the mark, incomplete or sometimes incorrect.

This narrative now has an unstoppable logic and life of its own that has veered well of course, to the detriment of all. Businesspeople and residents in the region are coming to me to express their concern over the impact, in their eyes, that this has on the gains to be made from successful projects that are happening in the town. These projects are designed to promote jobs growth and a desirable lifestyle. Many in the Tumbarumba community—including me—have been working to ensure that any alleged improprieties are identified and dealt with publicly. I have been meeting with the Minister for Local Government and with senior staff, seeking to advance matters raised. I have been advocating that the Government not allow process to stifle consideration of any boundary proposal. I have also been advocating for transparency and oversight of council performance.

While this has loomed large over the community of Tumbarumba, it is not the only aspect to the community. For a town that started with the gold rush of the 1850s, it has turned, first, to timber and now to wine, outdoor adventure and tourism. These are fast-rising industries. People are discovering this town and this region and choosing it as their new home—and who would not? Some 95 per cent of households there spend less than 30 per cent of their income on either rent or mortgage repayments. You can live well in Tumbarumba.

More than \$20 million has been delivered to modernise council processes and ensure that the merger in and of itself has been paid for. There is a new hospital, incorporating new aged-care facilities. Enrolments at Tumbarumba High School have increased. We are looking to boost tourism and economic growth by funding the State's first rail trail. Grants have helped fund development of several cycling initiatives. Then there is Snowy Hydro 2.0. We must see events through the identity of the people of Tumbarumba and recognise the dislocation of the past four years. However, the community continues to ensure that it is a great place to live and work and that it has a real sense of identity. I will continue to advocate for the people of Tumbarumba to deliver positive outcomes to the region.

COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE AGRICULTURAL SHOWS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:58): When maturing canola crops and roadside cherry blossoms make the drive through the Cootamundra electorate a breathtaking journey of brilliant pinks and yellows we know a certain season is upon us. Yes, it is spring but—more importantly—it is show season. Across the Cootamundra electorate this year there are 21 shows. Each of these has a dedicated, hardworking and inspirational show committee who make it all happen. Our shows are more than just dagwood dogs and the cha-cha. They are celebrations of our town's finest citizens, our best agricultural produce and our farming skill.

Life on the land can be isolating—even more so in these tough times. The role our shows play in maintaining social connection and the identities of our towns is priceless. The adversity of the present time makes celebrating our strengths and our skills in a fun day out all the more vital. Whether it is whip cracking, woodchopping, merino breeding, baking or sheepdog training, our shows rubbish the myth of the rural tall poppy syndrome. The great talent in our towns is to be applauded and celebrated with a shiny blue ribbon. In the past two weeks alone our towns have come alive with shows in Woodstock, Barellan, Grenfell, West Wyalong, Ungarie, Murrumburrah, Narrandera, Arian Park, Barmedman and Young.

At the start of the 146th Grenfell Show it was great to catch up with show president Courtney Taylor, Lisa Eastaway and many locals. This year a brand-new award was introduced in honour of the late Elaine Needham, whose contributions to the Grenfell PAH&I Association leave a lasting legacy. The new Most Valuable Contribution Award went to Marie Cotter, a longstanding volunteer and the head steward of the junior craft and Lego sections, as well as the school of art and handwriting. Like so many show society volunteers, Marie has put in countless hours to ensure that entries are received, managed, displayed and returned across the show period.

Tradition plays a large part at our shows, with cooking, craft, art, photography, animal training and rearing competitions displaying the great fruits of our labour by young and old for all to celebrate. While these are timeless parts of our annual events, shows have moved with the times and are in no way stuck in the past. The Woodstock show is an impressive one, with a great social media presence keeping the region informed of the latest attractions and updates right up until show day. The showgirl tradition lives on, but now many of our shows also celebrate with the best young beaus and junior stockmen.

The wind in Ungarie may have been strong enough to blow a dog off a chain, but it did not dampen spirits. That little show re-formed just last year. It was my absolute honour to judge the showgirls. I spent time with 2019 winner Katie Ridley, president Murray Wiley and his wife, Michelle, secretary Sonya Ward and my good old mate councillor Kerry Keatley, the wonderful Sherie Brown and 2018 Ungarie Showgirl Brydie Daly. I congratulate the show society committee and the many volunteers and sponsors who have breathed new life into the Ungarie Show and made it so much fun. I have never laughed so much during the official proceedings at a show.

Sadly, across regional New South Wales volunteer numbers and attendance at some country shows have been waning. Last year in Narrandera there was no show as not enough people put their hands up to form a committee and help with the organisation. However, out in the bush we never say die. I am absolutely stoked that this year the show society was able to form a committee and deliver a successful event for the town once again. I congratulate and thank President Tony Andracchio and all the committee members for putting on what looked like a cracker of an event—including live pro wrestling.

There are many more shows to come this year. I look forward to attending as many as humanly possible. In many of these towns these days out are the biggest event of the year. While the fairy floss alone is enough to get me there, they are really incredibly valuable days to tap into the successes and the sentiments of our great towns. The very best and brightest of our spirit is on display. My own blue ribbon today goes to the many unique and varied show committees of the Cootamundra electorate. I thank them for the laughs and the priceless contributions they make to our communities.

JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:03): I have stood in this place many times to talk about the great work being done by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation [JDRF]. Last Sunday I had the pleasure of attending the JDRF One Walk with my Federal counterpart Lucy Wicks, the member for Robertson. This is an annual event at Davistown in my electorate of Terrigal. The JDRF is a contributor to global research on type 1 diabetes. JDRF has been around for the past 40 years. It is responsible for significant transformations in the understanding of type 1 diabetes. While there is no cure, research is the key. JDRF drives innovation, demands action, and supports people living with type 1 diabetes and helping them face the added challenges of everyday life. The catchphrase "Turning Type One into Type None" really does encapsulate the purpose of JDRF.

We were first brought into the JDRF family through very close friends of ours, Jonathan and Lee-arne Salmon, whose son, Max, was diagnosed at 18 months with type 1 diabetes. Jonathan, Lee-arne, Max and his older sister, Kate, live with type 1 diabetes every day and the challenges that go with that. Their advocacy and the hundreds of families who take part and support JDRF help families to live and work together through the fears of having a child with type 1 diabetes. Insulin pumps are literally saving lives. This program has helped avoid 8.5 million needle pricks over the past decade alone, which makes life for families so much easier. That is how JDRF supports kids like Max and thousands of others across New South Wales.

Last Sunday at the JDRF One Walk I was proud to present \$5,000 to support its work. I was proud to make the donation on behalf of the New South Wales Liberal Government and Minister for Health and Medical Research. The extra funding boost will support JDRF's mission to prevent, treat and hopefully ultimately cure type 1 diabetes. I also bring to the attention of the House that our Government is working receptively and constructively in supporting JDRF. I was proud again to have CEO Mike Wilson and board member Jonathan Salmon meet with Premier Gladys Berejiklian last year. Through that invitation and understanding, Minister Hazzard is now looking at how we can work as a State with JDRF on frontline research at wonderful places like Westmead Hospital. I am proud that we were able to sit down with JDRF and work out how we could work together to help deliver better outcomes for the thousands of New South Wales families who live with type 1 diabetes every day.

There are around 1,400 kids on the coast living with type 1 diabetes. Around 300 of them are in my electorate of Terrigal. We know that research holds the key to a cure. That is why all funds received by JDRF go to one of three areas; research, advocacy and community support. Research does not happen overnight. It takes talented scientists and does not happen by magic. I am encouraged that so much effort goes towards providing better treatment and hopefully ultimately curing type 1 diabetes. I had the pleasure of representing the Government at the annual JDRF ball, where the Premier made another contribution of an additional \$5,000 to support JDRF. It is also good to be able to donate a dinner as a fundraising auction event. Somebody paid in excess of \$4,000 to have dinner with me in Parliament to provide additional funding for JDRF. Over \$400,000 was raised in one night in Sydney alone.

I acknowledge the contribution of the Federal Government. It is putting hundreds of millions of dollars towards medical research to assist young children and their families living with type 1 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes has no cure. JDRF is building a strong research network that brings together world-class researchers and patients, industry and international networks to answer the most critical research questions. As I said earlier, there is a strong focus on patient benefit throughout all of this work. To conclude, I thank the two ladies who did an incredible job making the One Walk event happen, Margaret Sheridan and Helen Quirk. I also thank all the people who volunteered at the JDRF One Walk.

Community Recognition Statements

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:09): I speak of the "Firefighter for a Day" training at the state-of-the-art Fire and Rescue NSW Emergency Services Academy. On Friday 20 September with colleagues from this place I had the pleasure to attend the new Emergency Services Academy in Orchard Hills to experience the range of our firefighter capabilities and learn firsthand what it is like to be a firefighter. The training involved putting out fires, fitting a breathing apparatus, vehicle rescue, and undertaking a search-and-rescue operation within a simulated building collapse. The training was an eye-opening look into just how diverse and challenging the job of a modern-day firefighter is. Our fireys do a fantastic job and do much more than fight fires. They are increasingly focused on fire prevention and education, rescue, hazardous materials, medical emergencies, natural disasters and humanitarian relief. Experiencing firsthand the type and variety of work our firefighters undertake on a daily basis makes me even more proud of the fireys living and working in the electorate of Seven Hills.

PORT STEPHENS RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:10): With the annual bushfire season starting earlier and earlier, I pay tribute to the volunteers of the Rural Fire Service units in Port Stephens. A dozen RFS units operate across Port Stephens to protect our community in times of need and educate locals on how to prevent fires or prepare for bushfires when they arise. The 12 Port Stephens units only exist due to the dedication and hard work of volunteers who give their time, and their families who support them. There are many ways people volunteer in our communities, but RFS volunteers are a special bunch who run towards danger when the rest of us flee. I commend the captains, deputy captains, management teams and members of Anna Bay RFS, Bowthorne-Hinton RFS, Fingal Bay RFS, Iona-Dunns Creek RFS, Karuah RFS, Medowie RFS, Pindimar-Tea Gardens RFS, Raymond Terrace RFS, Seaham RFS, Soldiers Point RFS, Tilligerry RFS and Williamtown-Salt

Ash RFS. I hope they please stay safe this season as they keep our community safe. We are all grateful for their service.

TURRAMURRA HIGH SCHOOL

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:11): I congratulate four young women from Turramurra High School who represented Australia and New Zealand at the International Handball Federation Oceania Cup in New Caledonia. School Principal David Arblaster said that the girls had a fantastic time and made a great contribution to their teams. Emma Taha and Rosalie Flokstra were in the under-18 Australian team that placed fourth, while Lucy Sherlock was selected to represent the New Zealand under-18 team that placed third. Annemijn Flokstra was one of seven members of the Australian under-20 team that came second, qualifying them for the world championships. One might ask how they started playing competitive handball. That goes to their teachers, Zeke Desiatnik and Samantha Vaz, who convinced the girls to join the New South Wales schools State competition, which motivated them to continue. I commend all four girls for representing their countries and I wish Annemijn all the best in the world championships.

CATHERINE COLE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:12): I congratulate the 2,000 volunteers across the Central Coast who have been recognised for their outstanding contribution to volunteering. The Centre for Volunteering program has increased, becoming one of the largest celebrations of volunteering across the country. On 12 September I was proud to attend the NSW Volunteer of the Year awards at Gosford Golf Club to congratulate Catherine Cole from Jilliby on being named 2019 NSW Adult Volunteer of the Year. Catherine is a veteran of 25 years volunteering at the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club and she has volunteered for beach patrol on 23 Christmas days. Catherine has helped others in her own time, making a real difference to the lives of people and has been an inspirational leader over the years. Catherine has helped to coordinate Duke of Edinburgh training, surf safety and rip awareness programs, and youth development. Catherine also created an event honouring past female lifesavers who had gained their qualifications but had not been formally recognised by the Surf Life Saving Association.

KU REVESBY PRESCHOOL

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:13): KU Revesby Preschool recently marked 50 years of providing high-quality early childhood education. Generations of local children have attended KU Revesby. Some people who attended there are now in their fifties but they share something in common with the three-year-olds who attend now. I was happy to go to the anniversary celebrations, catch up with local families and teachers, and watch the opening of a time capsule that held many interesting items from past students and teachers. As a mother of two girls, I understand how important child care is for little ones. Not only is it great for them to learn how to play and socialise with other children, but also it gives mums and dads a break, whether it is to get the shopping done uninterrupted or to get back to work, with the knowledge that their children are well looked after, learning with new friends and having a great time as well. I congratulate KU on reaching the remarkable milestone of providing quality care for 50 years to the children of our local area.

LISMORE WORKERS MASTERS GAMES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:14): I congratulate all who helped to organise the Lismore Workers Masters Games, which will officially get underway on 27 September 2019. More than 1,500 competitors will be in Lismore to play sport. I acknowledge the Lismore Workers Club, which sponsored the masters games when they started in 1999 and the club has been a faithful sponsor ever since. The opening event will take place at the Lismore Workers Club, which I will get to attend. The games attract a lot of people to the town. Lismore tourism and events manager Mitch Lowe said that the games are an important economic boost for the city as our motels are filled for the duration. It is a great event and I congratulate all the organisers.

COFFS HARBOUR GARDEN CLUB

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:15): Community spirit is in full bloom at the Coffs Harbour Garden Club. It has members of all ages and lifestyles who share in the enjoyment of the Coffs coast's unique local environment. The club's premier event is the ever popular Coffs Harbour Spring Garden competition, with judges this year visiting some 90 local gardens including at schools. This competition enjoys excellent support from our community and businesses. I thank club members for their warm welcome at the recent presentation night and I congratulate the main winners. The Judges' Special Mention went to Carolyn Cliff from Sawtell. The Encouragement Award went to Lucy Smith of Toormina. The Reserve Champion Garden went to Simon and Jeannine Young from North Sapphire Beach and the Champion Garden this year went to Judy Luckie of Coffs Harbour. The Coffs Harbour Garden Club's extraordinary patron, life member and spring garden competition administrator is Pat Roser, OAM. Pat has been a club stalwart for 28 years.

COASTAL TWIST

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:16): I send a massive shout-out to all those people who will be visiting the beautiful Gosford electorate to join in the celebrations at our inaugural Coastal Twist on the October long weekend. It is going to be a fabulous extended weekend of events, starting with the Outing Disabilities exhibition launch at Re:Publik Cafe on Wednesday night. On Friday 5 October we will be Bedazzled at Daze, hosted by Margarita Daze, which is a fabulous event on Ocean Beach, and entertained at The Love Club at Everglades. Both events promise a risqué, raunchy, glitter and rainbow inclusive extravaganza for all attending. On Saturday please join the Life's a Beach all-inclusive event on the golden sands of Umina Beach. Bring your yoga mat for the 9.00 a.m. stretch and breathe and a towel and picnic to enjoy a day of fun, including the world's first LBGITQ longboard competition, drag on the beach, music by Matt Vaughan, Lifesavers with Pride, beach volleyball and tonnes more frivolity. Saturday night is the Bauhaus Beach Ball Dance Party at Woy Woy Leagues Club, and Sunday is a fabulous fair day at Umina Beach. I say thanks so much to organisers Juan and Glitter and all the fab Twist volunteers. Wowee, I'm so excited!

OATLEY LIONS CLUB

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:17): On Tuesday 25 June I had the pleasure of attending the Oatley Lions Club changeover dinner, held at Olds Park Sports Club. On the night we were honoured with the presence of guest speaker Reverend Bill Crews, founder of the Exodus Foundation. Oatley Lions Club is one of the most important community groups in my electorate, and in the past year it has donated over \$94,000 to many great causes including Childhood Cancer Research, feeding the hungry, and sponsoring St Jude's School in Tanzania. I congratulate John Morgan and John Perkins on their appointments as president and secretary respectively for 2019-20. I also congratulate Bryan Pirie, who is responsible for coordinating some of the amazing events in my electorate including the upcoming Oatley Fair. I trust that in the coming year the Lions Club of Oatley will continue to promote good citizenship, foster community spirit, provide forums for open discussion and encourage service-minded people. I thank Oatley Lions Club for its outstanding service to the community.

HIS GRACE BISHOP TIMOTEJ

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:18): I recently had the pleasure of attending a mass on Friday 20 September 2019 where I got the opportunity to meet with His Grace Bishop Timotej. Bishop Timotej is from Macedonia and is visiting Sydney. The Macedonian congregation and I were blessed with his presence during an uplifting mass. I take this opportunity to thank Reverend Igor Mladenovski for giving me the opportunity to attend this mass and wish Bishop Timotej safe travels as he continues to bless many in the Macedonian community right across Australia with his presence and wisdom.

LESLEY WILCOX

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:19): I pay tribute to a recently retired giant of the Dubbo healthcare industry. Lesley Wilcox has been described as a "leading light" in health, having helped provide diabetes education across the region since the late 1980s. In July Lesley retired and, fittingly, in her final week of work she was named Diabetes Educator of the Year by the Australian Diabetes Educators Association. This is great recognition for her decades of service to others, with Lesley saying it was the "wonderful clients" and their families who inspired her to continue in the field of diabetes education. Upon her retirement, Lesley paid tribute to her husband, Rob, and girls, Keira and Morgan, for putting up with her long hours and the interruptions to their shopping expeditions for aisle consultations. I congratulate Lesley on this award and on a wonderful career. I thank her for all her work in this important area and wish her all the best for her retirement.

CANTERBURY EARLWOOD CARING COMMUNITY CENTRE

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:20): I thank the Canterbury Earlwood Caring Community Centre, which recently celebrated the launch of its new hall and kitchen extension, which I supported through a Community Building Partnership grant. I thank CEO Jacquie Cheetham and the volunteers, the staff and the board. I am eternally grateful for the work the centre does. On the day we had a vintage dress-up and bake-off. My son and my husband accompanied me and we enjoyed the morning with our local community. I was one of the judges of the scone bake-off, which was a tough job. I am very grateful to local community members for what they do for our seniors.

DAHLSFORD GROVE ARTS AND CRAFT FAIR

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:21): I recognise the outstanding charitable efforts of Dahlsford Grove Lifestyle Village residents for coordinating the annual Arts and Crafts Fair on 9 September, with money raised this year going towards the CareFlight service in Australia. Now in its third year, the annual fair has become Dahlsford Grove's premier fundraising event, which brings together the community to raise money for a

nominated charity. In the past, the Arts and Crafts Fair has raised \$3,900 for nurse education in Vanuatu and in 2018 the renal unit at the hospital received \$4,200 from the efforts of the organisers.

The targeted charity, CareFlight, an Australian life-saving aeromedical not-for-profit organisation, was established in 1986 to provide critical care professionals to injured patients in regional and remote communities. Supporting the fair were volunteers Dian Barns, John and Linette Reynolds, Rhonda Stone, Jean Dodd, Margaret Cunningham, Trish and Bob Sharpham, Pauline Grant, Geoff and Marianne Elliott, Kathy and Warwick Keillor, Lorraine Best, Brian Grant, Pip Turner, Brayden York, Barbara Smith, Alan Carthew and Kenn Brown. I thank everyone for getting involved and for their outstanding efforts.

CLANS ON THE COAST FESTIVAL

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:22): Last weekend in Port Stephens the glorious sounds of pipe bands were soaring, kilts were flapping, cabers were flying and swords were clashing at the annual Clans on the Coast Festival in Nelson Bay. It was a day of colour, dance, songs, pageantry and strongmen. I am pleased to report that there were smiles on faces everywhere. The amazing volunteers who brought those smiles to people's faces also brought many visitors to our area whilst facilitating and preserving the memory of Celtic traditions. I thank our chieftain for the weekend, Commissioner of Clan Sutherland Australia Graeme Sutherland, and his lovely lady, Suzanne. My congratulations and gratitude to the founder of Clans on the Coast and its president, Ron Swan, together with his hardworking committee members Diane Soper, Phillip Greentree and Adam Nicolas. I thank all of the clans who joined us this year and I look forward to seeing them all back again next year.

PATRICIA MCDONNELL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:23): I congratulate Mrs Patricia McDonnell on her long and compassionate career as a treasured nurse in the Gundagai community. Patricia recently retired after 33 years of nursing and I thank her for her more than three decades of dedicated, professional care. The community of Gundagai has been very lucky to have enjoyed Patricia's exemplary care for as long as they have. I thank Patricia and wish her all the best in her retirement. I know her eight children and 26 grandchildren will relish seeing even more of her in their lives.

YARRAMALONG VALLEY SPRING FESTIVAL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:23): The Yarramalong Valley Spring Festival was held between Saturday 31 August and Sunday 15 September. The festival has been active since 2008 and has proved to be very popular over the years, especially the scarecrow competition. The festival is structured to bring the community together and establish the hinterland of the Central Coast with the general public. The festival involves activities like the wife-carrying race, camel rides, the wood chop competition and the farm animal nursery, and community groups in the local area are offered an opportunity to raise funds for their cause. The scarecrow competition is shown throughout the area of Yarramalong, with visitors coming from far and wide to see the creativity and amusing scarecrows. Wyong Creek Public School won the People's Choice Award in the competition, with teachers Mrs Young and Miss Preston organising and putting together the display of Neil Armstraw. I wish them plenty more good years in the future. If members have the chance next year they should go and check out the scarecrows.

KYA STEWART

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:24): I congratulate Kya Stewart on her debut appearance in her first international film, *Risen*, a science fiction thriller. I note that Kya plays an American military official involved in an alien landing in the film. I commend Kya, who is currently in pre-production for her own film, *Cognition*, a psychological thriller that she co-wrote and in which she will also make an acting appearance. Finally, I wish Kya continued success in her filmmaking and acting career.

ALIVE PLANT BASED FESTIVAL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:25): It was absolutely wonderful to see so many people out and about on a gorgeous sunny day in Kibble Park, Gosford, to celebrate the Alive Plant Based Festival on the weekend. Vegans, vegetarians and omnivores came from far and wide beyond the coast to join in the fun. We all enjoyed delicious treats, environmentally sound products and fabulous entertainment amongst like-minded souls. The colour and joy that exuded from the very entertaining and circus-ly talented crew from our very own NadRad creatives The Crud Muffins' tent brought a celebration of collectivism and energy to our community. The Aroma Shack offered to heal the world with nature and love. There was rainbow gelato, local linen and candles and local cooked vego treats with global flavours. It was a gorgeous day for all. As always I thank Ricky, our local organiser,

whose passion, energy and creativity always make the coast a better place. Local, healthy, delicious—hope to see you at the Alive festival next year.

OAKVILLE PRESCHOOL LEARNING CENTRE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:26): I congratulate Elizabeth Sheridan and her staff at Oakville Preschool Learning Centre on winning the Australian Small Business Champion Award for Early Childhood Services earlier this year. The award is a reflection and reward for the dedication, integrity and commitment of Elizabeth and her team as they serve the families and children of our community. It is a remarkable achievement to receive such an award and is the pinnacle of success in the business world. This award is an addition to the long list of awards this business has received in the past. Small businesses such as the Oakville Preschool Learning Centre contribute a lot to the local community and generate employment for many. Starting and running a small business involves a lot of risk and we should therefore be grateful to those who take these risks for the benefit of the community and economy. I wish Elizabeth Sheridan and her team at Oakville Preschool Learning Centre all the best for continued success.

LISMORE CLIMATE STRIKE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:27): I acknowledge and thank the local students who were the key organisers of the Climate Strike in Lismore on 20 September. First, there were three people who acted as masters of ceremonies for the event: Ruth, Frewoini and Grace. They also made speeches. Others who made speeches were Alako Myles from Kyogle High School, Suhani Sheppard from Trinity Catholic College Lismore, Beth Cooper-Wares from Nimbin Central School and Ella O'Dwyer from St Carthage's Primary School. Part of Frewoini Baume's speech, which I heard on the day, was also reported in the local newspaper, *The Northern Star*. She said:

We have gathered today because we have chosen which path we want to take, and now we are waiting for others to follow our example.

...

So really we're just waiting, because eventually they will act; it will get so critical they'll have to.

BOOROWA IRISH WOOLFEST

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:28): Today I acknowledge the twenty-third Boorowa Irish Woolfest, held each year on the Sunday of the October long weekend—this year on 6 October. It is an event that attracts thousands of people every year. The Boorowa Irish Woolfest showcases Boorowa's Irish heritage and fine wool. Bands, performers and dancers foster the Irish spirit; a growers market showcases the Hilltops Region's country wares; and music, sheering and sheepdog demonstrations all contribute to the day's entertainment.

Boorowa Irish Woolfest is well known across Australia due to its iconic running of the sheep, likened to a cute and woolly version of Pamplona's running of the bulls. Boorowa's fine merino sheep are on show in all their glory for the entire weekend. A sheep is shorn and the fleece is thrown on the stage to receive a spiritual thanksgiving for the fine wool of the district, called the Blessing of the Fleece. Sheep shearing and competitions captivate visitors all day. The Boorowa Irish Woolfest is a unique, true country experience that shows that part of Boorowa's charm is in its continuing Irish connections.

WAGGA WAGGA COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:29): Applying for funding can be a daunting and time-consuming process but there are many organisations and individuals across the community that put pen to paper for projects close to their hearts. More than 20 businesses, organisations, sporting groups, schools and not-for-profits from across the Wagga Wagga electorate put forward exciting ideas they felt could make a big difference to their local communities. First, I acknowledge the time and effort that each organisation put into their application to the My Community Project initiative this year.

Secondly, I offer my congratulations to members of Wagga Wagga Country Club, North Wagga Progress Association, Carevan Wagga and The Rock Central School, whose projects were successful. Wagga Wagga Country Club received \$108,000 to redesign and upgrade the public road access; North Wagga Hall is set to be brought into the twenty-first century with a \$75,545 rejuvenation; more than \$48,000 will provide night-time meals to Wagga Wagga city's most vulnerable through Carevan Wagga's volunteer project; and The Rock Central School's plan to upgrade its multipurpose oval received an allocation of \$61,113. I am looking forward to the benefits each project will bring to the local communities they support.

RAISING OF THE FLAG CEREMONY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:30): This weekend is the official beginning of the 2019-2020 beach season. This will be greeted with much fanfare on the Central Coast at the annual raising of the flag ceremony. For the first time in my 4½ years as the member for Terrigal this ceremony is being held at Terrigal. I cannot wait to join Narelle Duggan, Stuart Harvey and hundreds of volunteer lifesavers for this event. Council lifeguards and volunteer lifesavers patrol our shores every day of the week over summer. They are no doubt responsible for saving countless lives each summer. Last summer we had zero drownings on Central Coast beaches, no doubt as a result of their dedication and effort. I take this opportunity to remind everyone to swim between the red-and-yellow flags this summer, swim at supervised beaches only and if you get into difficulty, stay calm, raise your arm and yell for assistance. Once again, I thank all surf lifesaving volunteers across the Central Coast. I look forward to joining them at the raising of the flag ceremony this Saturday at Terrigal.

PATRICIAN BROTHERS' COLLEGE, FAIRFIELD STUDENT MENTOR PROGRAM

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:31): I recognise students at Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield for their hard work and dedication in mentoring students at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School. Students from Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield have been working on a number of projects to educate and inspire the young students at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School on what science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] education looks like in high school. In particular, they were able to showcase their own powered aircraft made from balsa wood to the young students and teach them the fundamental principles behind how they constructed it. I also take this opportunity to thank all the teachers who were involved in this project. STEM education will be the future of our great State. It is great to see young students immerse themselves as well as inspire each other to pursue what STEM education has to offer.

WESTCARE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (18:32): I congratulate the team at WestCare Community Services, Penrith and their CEO Andrew Paech on raising more than \$200,000 at their recent charity dinner at The Coffee Club Nepean River. This is a fantastic effort and surpassed their former record, which was an impressive \$172,000. Since 1977, WestCare has been committed to assisting people in a compassionate and sensitive manner during times of suffering, misfortune and helplessness. The organisation has been able to run a number of programs around domestic violence, supporting young people across the community and providing food hampers as well. At the charity dinner, which has been held at The Coffee Club for the past seven years, it is inspiring to see the generosity of local businesses in supporting this event year in, year out. I give a particular shout-out to The Glenbrook Greengrocer, which has been involved for a long time, and Panthers, which supported with a significant donation this year. Once again, it was a fantastic effort by WestCare.

AUSTRALIAN AIR LEAGUE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:33): For more than 90 years Manly has been the proud home to an Australian Air League squadron. Established in Manly's Hinkler Park, the squadron struggled to recruit enough female members for a full squadron. That has changed as mixed squadrons can now exist thanks to a national body ruling. I acknowledge the inspirational 12-year-old Sara Spencer from Brookvale who has signed up as the first female member of the Australian Air League in Manly. I thank training associate Rick Chown and the team at Manly's Australian Air League for their wonderful work. What an exciting future the Australian Air League at Manly has.

BELMORE OVAL SLEEPOUT

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:34): A huge thanks to Youth Off The Streets, the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs and the Canterbury-Bankstown council for supporting the Belmore Oval Sleepout to raise awareness about youth homelessness. I am very proud of the many young people who participated last Friday. They sent a very strong message about the need for more youth homeless support services. Congratulations and thanks to all the young people who participated.

CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:34): On 8 September kids from the cancer treatment wards at the Children's Hospital at Westmead were taken to the Northmead Bowling and Community Sports Club for respite. The event was part of Cancer Awareness Month. There was karaoke, barefoot bowls, face painting and jumping castles for the children. The Kids with Cancer Foundation hosted the lunch and play events. Members of the NSW Police Force, NSW Police Dog Unit, and Fire and Rescue NSW entertained the many families who attended. From all accounts the event was a success. It is important that children and their families going through

such an arduous time are able to get away for family activities and community events. The Kids with Cancer Foundation has donated almost \$25 million worth of financial assistance to families across Australia since 1998. These donations assist with mortgage payments, rent, car repairs, insurance, groceries and other bills. Well done to everyone involved, particularly the Bowling and Community Sports Club.

JUBILEE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:35): I inform the House of the outstanding fundraising activities of Jubilee Community Services [JCS]. In May the team hosted high tea, which raised over \$3,400 for the Cancer Council. JCS topped up the amount to reach their \$4,000 goal. This is the highest amount that JCS has raised at any of its high tea events. Achievements like this cannot be reached without the volunteers and staff who did all the cooking, organising and manned a very successful stall on the day, which raised \$550 on its own and contributed to making it a huge success. The next morning tea on Tuesday 13 August was held for Guide Dogs NSW/ACT. I genuinely enjoyed attending and supporting the event. Jubilee Community Services offers a range of much-needed community services for people in the St George area, particularly the Georges River Council local government area. I thank Lance and the entire team for their outstanding work at Jubilee Community Services.

DUBBO REGIONAL THEATRE AND CONVENTION CENTRE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:36): I formally congratulate the Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre on its exceptional success in audience development and community engagement. Earlier this year the theatre was named Australian Performing Arts Centre of the Year at the 2019 Drovers Awards, pipping major metropolitan arts centres like the Sydney Opera House and Brisbane's Powerhouse—amazing. Now the theatre's community engagement initiative, the Friends and Buddies Club—or FAB Club—has been recognised with a community development award. The FAB Club is a free hospitality service designed to enhance the experience for people who want to go to the theatre but do not want to go alone. Huge congratulations to theatre manager Linda Christof and the whole team for their wonderful achievements. I thank them for everything that they do to enhance the cultural lives of people in Dubbo and the wider western region. Well done.

DR SABA NABI

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:37): I commend Wagga Wagga woman Dr Saba Nabi, who this month was named the overall Riverina NSW 2019 Volunteer of the Year. Since arriving in Wagga city from Dubai, Dr Nabi completed her degree and in 2017 received a PhD in biomedical sciences. Outside of Dr Nabi's academic pursuits, the Wagga mother has spent countless hours supporting various sporting, health and multicultural communities through a number of ventures and volunteer organisations. In addition to her involvement with Cancer Council NSW, Dr Nabi has also been named an AFL Community Ambassador. Sitting on the Riverina Regional Advisory Council, Dr Nabi is a Multicultural NSW member and a board member of Wagga Wagga council. Within these roles she has worked to break down cultural barriers both locally and nationally, speaking to a wide variety of audiences. Her tireless efforts have not only earned her this title but also numerous other awards and nominations, including one of *The Australian Financial Review's* 100 Women of Influence. Thank you.

LAURIETON MEN'S SHED

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:38): I recognise the hardworking volunteers of the Laurieton Men's Shed who received the NSW Volunteer of the Year Award for helping the residents of Queens Lake Retirement Village with access to the shopping facilities at Lakewood Shopping Centre. Accepting the State award at the Westport Club were Laurieton Men's Shed members Ray Napper, Jim Dyer and Karl Herb. They were instrumental in ensuring an operational bus service for the residents of Queens Lake Retirement Village. During the year the Laurieton Men's Shed offers a Monday pick-up service as regularly as possible. The driving team clock upwards of 120 journeys to and from the village.

The residents who often use the service lack access to affordable transportation and it is with a smile that the Laurieton Men's Shed have offered to drive or copilot the bus. Currently the village bus is generously supported by 12 men who volunteer their time and efforts to offer the service on Mondays. It is a tremendous outreach program that helps enable the elderly residents of the village to live independently. I thank the Laurieton Men's Shed members for offering this wonderful service and commend them for their support of the Camden Haven community.

SAM HEFFERNAN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:39): It is no surprise to those who know the hardworking spirit of Junee locals that New South Wales' top trainee comes from our patch. Congratulations to 19-year-old

Sam Heffernan for recently taking out the State's top accolade at the NSW Trainee Awards. Sam recently completed his traineeship with the Catholic Education Diocese of Wagga. Our trainee of the year has now been offered a full-time position as the region's sports coordinator, which encompasses 31 schools. We are lucky to have Sam travelling through the Riverina to run our sports carnivals. I am thrilled that such a young talent has decided to remain living and contributing to our great region.

MICHAEL BARRAT

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:40): I pay tribute to a great Hawkesbury man by the name of Michael Barratt for his work as a child and adolescent counsellor for St John of God Health Care. I congratulate him on obtaining the Jennifer Stratton Scholarship. People who have had the pleasure of meeting with Mr Barratt provide testament to the compassion and respect he shows to his clients and their families. His receipt of the Jennifer Stratton Scholarship is reward for his exemplification of the vision, mission and values of St John of God Health Care. The scholarship provides for Michael the opportunity to follow in the steps of St John of God and explore the organisation's history and heritage on the St John of God pilgrimage in Spain. I congratulate Michael on this wonderful achievement and have no doubt that he will use this pilgrimage to continue his service.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS CARRIAGE CLUB

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:41): I acknowledge the Southern Highlands Carriage Club, which is one of the biggest and most active carriage driving clubs in New South Wales, if not the nation. For members who do not know what carriage driving is, it is an equestrian sport in which one or more horses pull carriages, wagons, carts or sleighs. Described as "The most fun you can have sitting down," the carriage club encourages participation through education and is well known for hosting innovative events such as combined driving, dressage, cone competitions, novelty events, pleasure and orienteering drives.

The Southern Highlands Carriage Club often secures world-renowned champions to provide lessons for driver training days. These events attract all levels of drivers from far and wide to the village of Bundanoon. The passion of this club is demonstrated through its efforts. This group has cleared and established the grounds it operates from, and has fundraised for the construction of its clubhouse to hold events, new fencing, yards and facility upgrades. The Southern Highlands Carriage Club is working continuously on improvements to its grounds, club and community. I thank the club for its dedication.

TERRIGAL TROJANS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:42): Two weeks ago the Central Coast Rugby Union Grand Final was held at Woy Woy Oval. It was a game of huge excitement. Almost 100 points were scored between the two large teams on the coast, the rural giants Terrigal and Gosford. Terrigal scored an incredible 76 points against Gosford, which scored 21. The Terrigal Trojans are a truly phenomenal team. They are an unstoppable group of guys. I congratulate the entire club, including head coach Murray Cox and president John Stevens. John is also the owner and managing director of Stevens Group, which is a huge contributor to employment and economic activity in our region. I congratulate all the team members who trained for countless hours and played countless games to get to the grand final stage of the competition and then win. Well done to the Terrigal Trojans for their championship win last weekend.

CLARENCE VALLEY RIDE FOR YOUTH

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I had the privilege of attending the Clarence Valley Ride for Youth over the weekend and I offer my congratulations to Skye Sear of the New School of Arts and the many volunteers who made the Ride for Youth such a great success. I also want to thank Morgan Pilley for once again returning home to participate in this event which helps to raise funds for local youth mental health initiatives. This year saw the number of riders increase again with a total of 142 riders who were able to ride a total of 13,796 laps of the 800m track which equates to 11,036km - what a huge achievement raising funds for such a fantastic cause.

KARONGA SCHOOL MULTI-SPORTS COURT

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—Today I wish to pay tribute to one of the great schools in my electorate. Tucked away in the peaceful back streets of Epping is a unique and special school designed for unique and special students with intellectual disabilities. Today I want to acknowledge Karonga School. Recently Karonga opened their newly upgraded multi-sports court, which was made possible by the ClubGrants Program and especially through the great fundraising efforts of the Epping Club. I congratulate Club President David Taylor, CEO Peter Saez and the Epping Club board and management on making this happen.

Karonga believes that all students can learn. It provides exceptional personalised learning and support across the breadth of the Australian curriculum. Teachers work closely with parents to identify priority areas for

learning and tailor in class programs and extra-curricular activities to meet student need. I would like to acknowledge Koronga principal Mark Gosbell, and his excellent team of teachers, school learning support officers, support staff, grounds and administration staff. And I thank them for the difference they make in the lives of some very remarkable students.

MY COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Applying for funding can be a daunting and time-consuming process, but there are many organisations and individuals across the community that put pen to paper for projects close to their hearts. More than 20 businesses, organisations, sporting groups, schools and not-for-profits from across Wagga Wagga, put forward exciting ideas they felt could make a big difference to their local communities. I want to firstly acknowledge the time and effort each organisation put into their application to the My Community Project initiative this year.

Secondly, I wish to offer my congratulations to members of Wagga Wagga Country Club, North Wagga Progress Association, Carevan Wagga and The Rock Central School, whose projects were successful. Wagga Wagga Country Club received \$108,000 to redesign and upgrade the public road access; North Wagga Hall is set to be brought into the 21st century, with a \$75,545 rejuvenation; More than \$48,000 will provide night-time meals to Wagga City's most vulnerable through Carevan Wagga's volunteer project; and The Rock Central School's plan to upgrade its multi-purpose oval received a \$61,113 allocation. I'm looking forward to the benefits each project will bring to the local communities they support.

CONGRATULATIONS TO KELLY SHARWOOD

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I rise to congratulate Kelly Sharwood Assistant Principal at Tumbarumba Public School, who was awarded the highest level of accreditation at a ceremony in Sydney. Mrs Sharwood was recognised for her highly effective, innovative, exemplary teaching practice, and who now is part of the NSW Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) Network. She has dedicated her life to teaching, and a majority of her professional career has been spent in Tumbarumba. Only 23 teachers were recognised across NSW, and we are lucky enough to have one of these outstanding educators in our Electorate.

KOOTINGAL LIONS CLUB

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)—I recognise the Kootingal Lions Club who have been successful in receiving a grant for \$500 for a new public address system. Kootingal Lions Club is warming up to run their third annual Art Exhibition and Sale, an event which is a major fundraiser for this dedicated and passionate group of volunteers. Last year I had the honour of opening their exhibition and noted their PA system sounded like something from the 1920s. I would like to thank the Deputy Premier John Barilaro for helping me to find the money to buy a new PA. The opening night for the third exhibition is on Friday 11 October and so far there are more than 135 entries to be hung. Congratulations to the Kooti Lions and all of their selfless volunteers.

OUR LADY OF VICTORIES SHORTLAND AND ST PATRICK'S WALLSEND

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Students from eight local primary schools attended the year 6 sports day at St Pius X High School, including students from St Patrick's Wallsend and Our Lady of Victories at Shortland. Over the last ten years, the annual event has brought year 6 students to an event organised by year 10 students at St Pius. No scores or trophies are involved, and it's part of St Pius' year 7 orientation, a chance for students transitioning to high school to meet some of the new friends they'll make when they start at the school.

About 280 students were involved this year, and according to St Pius acting assistant principal John McLoughlin, "It's part of the coaching and sports event management unit. Students took on roles as team managers, coaches, in the catering crew, on the organising committee and in first aid." The kids involved picked a number of interesting and original games to play, including "disco dodgeball", yoga pose musical statues and "Saving Beatrice", a tactical tag game. My congratulations to the students involved, and school leaders from St Pius, St Patricks and Our Lady of Victories.

FIRST CHANCE FUNDRAISER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—In early September, I was invited to attend the First Chance Fundraiser Ball at Souths Leagues Club. This ball is their major fundraiser for the year. First Chance is a not for profit organisation that provides early intervention and school aged programs for children aged 0-9 years who have a disability or developmental delay. First Chance has developed a multidisciplinary approach with a team who have significant expertise in assisting children with a range of disabilities including developmental delay, autism, chromosomal disorders and genetic conditions. First Chance was established in Newcastle and has been serving the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens region for over 40 years.

The team of specialists work in a child's natural environment and work with whatever is available in the child's home, daycare, preschool, school or community group. This approach means that results are more sustainable as they are achieved in the 'real world' and not in a therapy clinic. The event was attended and supported by a great many local businesses, community members and supporters and staff of First Chance who believe that all children deserve to be supported to be the best person they were born to be.

M LEAGUE GALA DINNER

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—There is plethora of sporting talent in Campbelltown and the wider Macarthur. The elite sportspeople like long-serving player Wests Tigers Chris Lawrence and Matilda Alanna Kennedy often receive plaudits – but the efforts of those in local competitions are often unheralded. That is why I welcome any chance I have to get to a sporting dinner, presentation night or gala dinner. Recently I was invited to the M League Gala Night. The M League is made up of the best soccer players throughout the Macarthur region. The gala night provides an opportunity to shine a light on the players who performed outstandingly throughout the season.

I had the pleasure of presenting awards to some of those talented players. Congratulations to Gunners FC for taking out the division 1 title 3-2 against Camden Tigers. Not satisfied with the one championship, Gunners FC also claimed the division 2 title 4-1 over Mount Annan. Unfortunately the Bradbury Ambarvale Bears were also beaten by Mount Annan 2-0 in the division 3 final. Bring on the 2020 season.

POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Sunday the 29th of September is the 30th National Police Remembrance Day. Memorial services will be held around the country on Friday the 27th of September 2019 to commemorate the occasion. On this day we should all take the opportunity to pause and reflect on the sacrifices that our law enforcement officers make to keep our families safe. Sadly this year another NSW Police Officer was killed. Constable Timothy Proctor's name joins the NSW Police Honour Roll listing all those who make the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

The men and women of the NSW Police put their lives on the line every day so that we may live safely. They continuously confront dangerous and unpredictable situations in the line of duty while serving the families of NSW. I would like to give my heartfelt condolences to the families of all the NSW Police Officers who we have tragically died and my commitment to support in every way possible NSW Police Legacy. I would like to thank all NSW Police Officers who continue to bravely serve our community. Your service will always be honoured and remembered.

ADRA MACQUARIE FIELDS ZEN-SORY GARDEN

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—Gardens grow much more than plants and flowers. Gardens provide a place for relaxation, help improve people's fitness and well-being, foster social cohesion and are a constant source of inspiration. The new garden at Mallee Rose Cottage, located at ADRA Community Centre in Macquarie Fields, aims to grow the hearts and minds of our community too. The Mallee Rose Zen-sory Garden project has significantly enhanced the outdoor space to provide a tranquil and therapeutic space for local residents to connect or simply relax.

The accessible garden and children's play area is made possible through grant funding and is designed to strengthen community networks and foster a sense of belonging. I congratulate Melissa Baleilekutu, Community Centre Manager at ADRA Macquarie Fields, and her team of dedicated volunteers on their hard work and efforts in bringing the Zen-sory garden project to fruition. It is from little things that big things grow and I thank ADRA for its ongoing contributions and excellent work in the Macquarie Fields community.

STOVE SAFE AUSTRALIA

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to congratulate Wallacia residents, Alfredo and Amy-Louise Losi for their recent contribution to child safety in the home, by launching their product, Stove Safe Australia. After attempting to child-proof their home as best as possible, the stove top was a resounding issue that they could not find adequate protection for. Taking matters into their own hands, they created Stove Safe Australia to protect their four young children from harmful accidents.

Stove Safe Australia is a guard-like barrier around the stove top which prevents children from touching hot surfaces or pulling pots and pans onto themselves. It uses a heat sink technology that allows the stainless steel guard to only warm slightly. After much trial and error, they have now perfected the design and are thrilled to have finally launched their product to be accessible to the public. Thank you for your hard work Alfredo and Amy-Louise and congratulations on this great achievement!

BANGALOW COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—Today I acknowledge the exceptional contributions of the Bangalow CWA, whose members continue to work tirelessly for the good of their community, as they have for more than 70 years. These 85 selfless women are a uniting force in the regional town, providing practical and financial support to vulnerable people in Byron Shire and beyond. In the past year alone it has donated more than \$32,000 to causes such as Liberation Larder, the Byron Bay SHIFT program, Bangalow State School Education Scholarships, Tabulum Bush Fires, Winsome Hotel Soup Kitchen in Lismore, drought relief, the Nepal Australia Friendship Association and a domestic violence project in Papua New Guinea.

2019 MUGINDI SHOW

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I commend Mungindi Show President Stacey Garsed and the Show and Auxiliary Committees on a hugely successful 121st Mungindi Show, held on the 10 and 11 August 2019. This year the Mungindi Show had a jam packed schedule of events and activities including a NSW-first header and picker demolition derby, entertainment from The Crack Up Sisters, Lawnmower races, cook-offs, crocodile encounters and a variety of competitions. The Mungindi Show provided a wonderful and valuable opportunity for the local and broader community to come together and enjoy a weekend relatively free from the worries and difficulties of the drought.

The Show and Auxiliary Committees worked incredibly hard to put together the Show's events. It is testament to the community's resilience and generosity in tough financial times that the Show still had so many sponsors from local businesses and I know the hard work that would have gone in to ensuring every competition had prize money for its winners. Once again, I congratulate the Mungindi Show Society on a fantastic show for 2019 and I wish them all the best for a bigger and better event in 2020.

BRIAN FINLAY

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I wish to acknowledge a wonderful member of the Dora Creek community who caused quite a stir last week when he hung up his butcher's apron for a life in retirement. Brian Finlay has been a butcher for 50 years but has spent the past 30 years at Martin's Meats in Walmsley Street. In an age where the big supermarket chains have threatened the very existence of his trade as well as the local butcher's store, Brian has held firm with good old-fashioned service. He is a popular local who has formed many friendships with his army of customers over the years, but has decided to put his apron on the hook and take his wife away to her native Scotland for a well-earned break.

Brian did his apprenticeship 50 years ago in Newcastle but spent the final three decades of his career in Dora Creek working for Pat Martin. His local customers have told me they'll miss him and his much-loved banter, although his co-workers believe he'll find it hard to stay away from the place. I wish him well in his retirement.

COUNCILLOR BILL SARAVINOVSKI

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron)—Councillor Bill Saravinovski retired as Mayor of Bayside Council last night after completing his two year term. Cr Saravinovski was the inaugural mayor of this newly amalgamated council, and was the last mayor of the former Rockdale Council. After more than 30 years of local government he took on his greatest challenge; leading a newly merged council, with different demographics, different services levels and different local members; the latter who have different expectations of local government service to their electorates. It is no easy task to be on the receiving end of my advocacy on behalf of my constituents, whilst a new bureaucracy is trying to stabilise itself following a merger. Cr Saravinovski always responded positively, efficiently, with zeal and dedication. I pay tribute to him and the House should thank and acknowledge his outstanding service to the office of mayor.

BALMAIN ASSOCIATION AND FERGUS FRICKE

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I recognise a decade long heritage campaign that has recently been won in my electorate of Balmain. Over ten years ago, Fergus Fricke together with members of the Balmain Association hatched an idea to demolish the front portion of the ugly Telstra Exchange Building to reveal the heritage façade of the old Balmain Post Office. Since then they have been working to create a new public, open greenspace on Darling Street. Over 1,300 local residents signed onto a petition in support of the Balmain Public Square and following years of back-and-forth from the new Inner West Council, work finally began on this site a few weeks ago.

I want to acknowledge the drive of Fergus Fricke, the help and enthusiasm of Ross Mackenzie, Kathleen Hamey and other members of the Balmain Association, photographer David Liddle, cartoonist Bruce Petty, artist Ruth Downes, town planner Michael Ewings, and many other local residents who gave freely of their time and expertise. This win is the culmination of a decade long community campaign to protect heritage in Balmain and

create more public, open space. Congratulations to everyone who contributed. See you soon at the Balmain Public Square!

ST MERKORIOUS CHARITY INAUGURAL GALA DINNER

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On Friday 30th August 2019, St Merkorious Charity Association held its inaugural Gala Dinner at Doltone House - Darling Island Wharf. The St Merkorious Charity are no strangers to Fairfield as they attend to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community and assist through social inclusion programs as well as their weekly food program. Additionally, St Merkorious are leading the charge in tackling homelessness and working with various not-for-profits and religious groups to address this growing issue.

St Merkorious relies heavily on the good will of volunteers to support those I need, which ultimately cannot happen without funds. I am pleased to announce the evening was a tremendous success with more than 600 guests in attendance to show their support for such a remarkable association. I wish to congratulate the Founder & President, Mrs Paula Nicolas for her vision to help those in need and to the St Merkorious volunteers and committee members who are dedicated to serving and supporting others.

CONGRATULATIONS REBEKAH CHARNOCK

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Congratulations to Family Day Care educator Rebekah Charnock who has been recognised as one of Australia's finest early childhood educators. Rebekah was announced the as the Far West and Central North regional winner for the 2019 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards on 19 September. Australia's Excellence in Family Day Care Awards highlight the amazing work carried out by day-care workers like Rebekah every year, as well as recognising the bonds shared with family day care educators, the children they work with, and the importance of early childhood intervention. Rebekah is now in the running to be named as a national finalist for the National Family Day Care Educator of the year award, to be announced in November. I would like to thank Rebekah for her contribution and hard work in childhood care and wish her the best of luck in the National Awards.

MARIAN STREET THEATRE

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai)—An old company of young people best describes a much loved local institution, Marian Street Theatre for Young People which celebrated its 50th year at the Wildflower Gardens in St Ives. For three generations, MSTYP have been creating programs involving: acting, singing, puppetry, physical theatre and creative mentorship. During the event students showcased interactive performances including 'Nelly the very curious Elephant' which premieres these school holidays.

But I did not attend just as an MP but as a parent whose daughter went through the MSTYP program. It is an organisation that nurtures young people's growth through their most transformative years and is a place where lifelong friendships are made. 50 years is a huge feat for this theatre that brings together people from all walks of life. Happy Birthday MSTYP and congratulations to everyone who have made it the institution it is today. I look forward to seeing what the next year of theatre brings.

OATLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL'S JUMP ROPE FOR HEART FUNDRAISER

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the great work of Oatley Public School students in their fundraising efforts for the Heart Foundation's Jump Rope for Heart Initiative. Jump Rope for Heart is a physical activity program for schools, which aims to encourage a positive attitude towards exercise, healthy eating and heart health. Skipping is a great way to engage children in a non-competitive physical activity, and this is an important way to combat heart, stroke and blood vessel disease. Oatley Public School have been great supporters of Jump Rope for Heart, with students raising over \$2,000 so far for the National Heart Foundation. On Friday the 30th of August, the school held a 'Jump Off,' where all students had the opportunity to skip for half an hour – a great way to have some fun, and achieve their daily exercise. I would like to acknowledge Oatley Public School students and staff who have taken the time to participate in the initiative and raise funds for this fantastic cause.

LICIA HEATH

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I would like to recognise the inspiring work of Licia Health, awarded Public School Parent of the Year by the Public Education Foundation. This award acknowledges Licia's ongoing efforts to support public education across the inner city and inner east, particularly campaigning to for public high schools for all. I've worked with Licia and Community for Local Options for Secondary Education CLOSE on the successful campaign to get a new Inner City High School and she continues to campaign for public high school with CLOSEast. Licia is actively involved with the Women for Election Australia, helping empower and equip women from all backgrounds to take an active part in our democracy. This non party-political organisation is doing great work to achieve greater representation from

women in our parliaments. I was fortunate to be part of a panel session on diversity at the recent 'Women In The House Inspire' conference and can attest to their commitment to democracy. I thank Licia for her work to encourage women to get involved and to make our democratic institutions work for parents and for the community.

PCYC FUNDRAISING BALL

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—The PCYC Southern Highlands and Wollondilly Police Ball will take place on the 27th of September 2019. The Ball is held in honour of National Police Remembrance Day, and will help raise much needed funds to increase outreach programs for kids in the Southern Highlands. The Southern highlands PCYC was established in December 2015. The aim is to get young people active, developing their skills, character and leadership and ultimately reduce and prevent crime by and against young people.

The Southern Highlands PCYC offers not only outreach programs but also sports and recreation, to provide wholesome opportunities for young people to come together. Attendees of the fundraising ball will have the opportunity of hearing a success story from a guest speaker who is a former case management kid, who went through the program and is now gainfully employed. The Ball will also feature a gymnastic routine performed by students at Southern Highlands PCYC. The evening promises to be fun-filled and entertaining, and will hopefully raise a large amount for this worthy cause.

ABEL TASMAN VILLAGE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I would like to congratulate the Abel Tasman Village Association, who recently celebrated 25 years of the Abel Tasman Village at Chester Hill. This special occasion was marked with a celebration on Saturday, 21st September 2019, which I was pleased to attend, together with Mr Frank van Beuningen, The Consul General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as board members, residents and their families, HomeCare consumers, volunteers and staff. Originally created to care for people of Dutch descent, Abel Tasman Village now embraces people of many different nationalities and I acknowledge the Abel Tasman Village Association's strong commitment to caring and supportive home care and residential care.

I congratulate Abel Tasman Village Association Chairperson Ms Marian Acthen, Secretary Mr Paul Hilberding, Treasurer Ms Linda Gyzen, Board Members Mr John Baremans, Mr Ed Wolf, Mr Peter Hamer, Ms Lisa Lunney and Ms Helga ten Brummelaar, as well as General Manager Mr Glenn Kirkman, for their efforts and I once again congratulate the Abel Tasman Village Association on 25 years of improving the quality of life for many of our elderly.

DR GEOFF CAWLEY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I was deeply saddened to hear the passing of a great doctor and much-loved community member, Dr Geoff Cawley, 22 February 1935 - 27 July 2019. I knew Dr Cawley for many years, as we crossed path in health and community service areas. He was known for his dedication to the medical world, and also for his community, volunteer, fundraising, religious and personal endeavours. Dr Cawley was a dedicated Rotarian. He was an important member and figure of the Rotary Club of Lismore.

At his funeral, a full congregation at St Andrew's Anglican Church celebrated Dr Cawley's life and remembered him as a "generous man". He was involved in many charities, including Our Kids. His love of music, saw him perform in many events in the region. Dr Cawley was a dearly loved husband of Val, beloved father of Jock, Rob and Jen, father-in-law of Kerriane, Kylie and Geoff, dear Grandpa of Gabi, Matthew, Will, Nicholas, Ben, Natasha, Tom and Rowan and loved brother of Jill, Jan and Prue. I thank Dr Cawley for his service to the community in Lismore and beyond. You will be greatly missed. Vale Dr Geoff Cawley.

PYREE HALL

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—The South Coast is home to many small and villages, and none are more treasured than the community of Pyree. Home to many large working farms, the small town is well known for its historic Red Shed, formally known as the Pyree Literary Hall, which recently celebrated its 125th Birthday. I recently visited the Hall with the Premier, where Committee Members Adam Bowden, Malcolm Oke, Con Watts, Paul Anderson, and Laraine Brown greeted us. The Premier has long supported our local hall, having provided a grant in 2017 to fund upgrades to the hall, and another grant earlier this year for a perimeter fence which was completed in time for our visit and will service the hall for years to come. The Red Shed has served the local community well for 125 years, and I look forward to it remaining a cornerstone of Pyree for many years to come. I will always work to support our local facilities and look forward to the continuing to assist the hall's development well into the future. I thank the Pyree Literary Hall's committee for their work supporting our community, and congratulate them on their ongoing achievements.

STARTTS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors, known as STARTTS. A celebration of their thirtieth anniversary was held on 20 September in Fairfield. I have been aware of the very important and impressive work carried out by STARTTS over the three decades of their existence. I also had some involvement with them at a Ministerial level. The thirtieth anniversary celebration had representatives and leaders of the more than 80 refugee communities with whom STARTTS works together with many of the services that work with the organisation.

Since they were established they've seen over 70,000 clients, people who have survived the horrific consequences of war and organised violence. They are genuinely world leaders in healing the emotional and psychological scars caused by torture and trauma. The event saw speeches from a number of speakers including the STARTTS CEO Jorge Aroche and Deputy Chair Ezel Jupiter. There were also performances by the Sydney Children's Choir, Fairfield ensemble, by the Australian Uyghur Mugam Ensemble and by Joseph Tawadros.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW HARPER

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I recognise Andrew Harper of Miranda who has given a number of people with a disability the opportunity to reach their full potential. Andrew is the Executive Chef at Miranda RSL, which has had a joint venture with NOVA Employment Services since 2014. Through this relationship, Andrew provides training to aspiring chefs who strive towards a career in hospitality. He currently employs three people with a disability, including two apprentice chefs and a food and beverage attendant.

When reflecting on his own experience, Andrew has found that with the right support and training, people with a disability can overcome misconceptions surrounding their capabilities and indeed perform at the same level as those without a disability. This supportive and nurturing attitude is not lost on his apprentices, who have stated that their lives have improved tremendously as a result of his guidance and mentorship. I commend Andrew for his dedication to the young apprentices under his wing at Miranda RSL, and for the incomparable difference he is making in their lives.

ROTARY DONATES TO CAMDEN HAVEN COMMUNITY AT 3.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise the Rotary Club of Laurieton for the generous donation of barbecue equipment to the welfare organisation, Camden Haven Community at 3. The Community at 3 organisation hosts a barbecue each week on a Wednesday afternoon for people in need at the Laurieton United Services Club. The organisation is supported by local volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure the operation is funded and managed on a weekly basis with people readily available to offer advice and guidance if needed. Chairperson of Community at 3, Theo Hazelgrove and members Fran Burns, Glenn Maas and Alan Kilminster praised Rotary's contribution which will now ensure their food remains hot and cold for recipients.

Rotary Club President Jean Wyper and Rotarian Alan Anderson recognised the tremendous service Community at 3 provides to the Camden Haven community. Jean commented on Rotary's role in helping local organisations deliver essential services for our most marginalised and acknowledged the pleasure it gives Rotarians knowing that these donations will make a real difference. I would like to commend Rotary and Community at 3 for their generosity and kindness for people in need across the Camden Haven community.

2019 GLOUCESTER JUNIOR CATTLE SHOW

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Mr Speaker, I rise to inform the house that the 2019 Gloucester Junior Cattle Show was a successful trip for Chatham High School and Taree High School students. The schools competed with five other schools from across the district, and delivered some great results, Congratulations to;

Herdsperson encouragement award- Bibiannah Peattie

Junior judging (dairy and beef)

Under 15: Wyatt Goodwin- second

Over 17: Dom Wyse- first

Belicia Watson- second

Junior paraders

Kyle Carle- first

Under 14: Madison Gill- second

Under 15: Bibiannah Peattie- second
Under 16: Ryan McKay- second
Gypsy-Lee Marshall- first
Over 17: Dom Wyse- first
Grand champion paraders: Kyle Carle
Cattle
Heifer under six months: Quinny- second
Kundle Park Patty- second
Heifer over 15 months: Patti- first
Steer under six months: Qunu- second
Kundle Park Ping- second
PJ- first
Kundle Park Parker- first
Grand Champion steer: Kundle Park Parker
Store steer: Kayla Hills and Paddy- fourth
Heifer calf six to nine months: Jade Woods and Quest- first
Parader 15 years: Ibanez Lovell and Poppy- fourth
Parader 13 years: Marcus Smith and Phoenix-fourth
Beef section senior encouragement award: Huntah Hennessy

2019 NSW MINISTER'S AND SECRETARY'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I wish to congratulate Rooty Hill High School student, Amanda Fuiono on receiving the Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement. Amanda is a talented and remarkable young lady whose achievements extend from a strong academic program of study to an engagement in sport at an elite level. Amanda's leadership as the Principal's Representative for Rooty Hill High School and for her community services to the Pacific Island community is commended. Amanda has represented the Principal at Blacktown City Council and at high level community, educational and strategic partnering events. Amanda is an exemplary role model for over 200 students of Pacific Island background in the school and I congratulate her for this well-deserved award.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FELICITATIONS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—I extend my felicitations to Councillor Bob Dwyer who was elected Lord Mayor of the City of Parramatta on Monday, 23 September 2019, with Councillor Michelle Garrard re-elected as Deputy Lord Mayor. Bob will be succeeding former Parramatta Lord Mayor Andrew Wilson on the twentieth anniversary since he became a Parramatta councillor. I commend Andrew for his dedication and hard-work on delivering community benefits through improved infrastructure and job creation, while upholding and commemorating the City's history.

In addition to her High Commendation at the twelfth annual Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government in June this year, I congratulate Councillor Reena Jethi who was elected as the new Deputy Mayor of The Hills Shire on Wednesday, 11 September 2019. I have no doubt she will continue the outstanding leadership and positive impact across The Hills community displayed by former Deputy Mayor Councillor Alan Haselden. I look forward to continue working with the City of Parramatta and The Hills Shire to deliver the services, infrastructure, and investment our area needs to support residents now and into the future.

TEMORA GREYHOUNDS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—It was great to be back home in Temora with Donna Widdows, Bill Schwencke and the team at the Temora Greyhounds to celebrate the 80th birthday of the NSW Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers' Association (GBOTA) at the beginning of August. The occasion also marked 75 years since our Temora Greyhound Club joined the GBOTA. Racing in Temora was founded in 1957, with

today's racing on the same site. It's a beautifully maintained track and a vital part of Temora's social and economic fabric. Congratulations to you all.

MOSMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I acknowledge Mosman High School which continues to foster leadership skills and a focus on community service in its students. I particularly note their Duke of Edinburgh program which is providing important opportunities for personal development and growth through volunteering and physical activities. Led by social sciences teacher Alan Toner, students working towards their Duke of Edinburgh silver award recently undertook a three day camping adventure in the Glenworth Valley, where they participated in horse riding, kayaking, and a hike, challenging them to draw on their teamwork and leadership skills. I commend the eighteen students who took on this adventure and Alan Turner whose dedication to learning will undoubtedly have a formative impact on their education.

I would also like to congratulate Mosman High School students Georgia Warner and Elizabeth Elliot who recently achieved their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. As an outstanding school in my electorate, I am pleased to have supported numerous grant applications for Mosman High School in the past, and look forward to delivering our Government's planned school upgrade for its students. I thank Principal Susan Wyatt for her leadership which continues to spark a passion for learning in their students.

PINK UP PENRITH

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—For the month of October, Penrith will once again "turn the town pink" as part of the McGrath Foundation's Pink Up Your Town Campaign. The campaign encourages local businesses to host an event, turn their shopfronts pink or wear pink to fundraise for this cause. Thanks to Gai Hawthorn and her team at the Penrith CBD Corporation, Penrith was the first metropolitan town selected to be part of this campaign last year, raising over \$40,000. The benefits of these funds are already being seen with Nepean Hospital being appointed its very own breast care nurse this year. All funds raised this year will also go towards funding Breast Care Nurses. The official launch was recently held with the well patronized "Pink Up Penrith Sports Lunch" at Panthers and included guest speaker, Tracy Bevan from the McGrath Foundation. The lunch was an outstanding success and raised over \$6,500. To date, over 40 local businesses and groups have either registered to host events or donated to this very worthy cause.

LINDFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—In a world of digital connectedness it is so easy to forget the real people in our local area. A local community member from my Electorate of Davidson, Jill McLean, has seen the impact of people around her interacting with their devices rather than each other and has been working over the past few months to change that digital dependence. Jill first approached me about her ideas for more personal connectedness a few months ago. I helped her out by printing flyers to promote the first meeting of Lindfield neighbourhood connect. That first meeting at local café 'The Runaway Spoon' was a great success – I attended and was delighted by the enthusiasm of Jill and the other attendees.

We are all familiar with the idea of "It takes a village.." Jill and the others locals have embraced the idea fully and have now got a vibrant and growing group of like-minded locals. Lindfield neighbourhood connect now have a big list of activities and regular meetings. They are hoping to appeal to people of all ages and interests and I want to commend their efforts to "Make a Village" in Davidson – long may they connect!

CANTERBURY DISTRICT SOCCER FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—Canterbury District Soccer Football Association (CDSFA) was formed in 1922 and is the largest and most culturally diverse association in NSW. CDSFA's motto is "One game, many cultures." I am very familiar with the great work the CDSFA does and can attest to its significant contribution to our community, especially when it comes to irradiating bullying based on gender, culture, race, and religion. Unpleasant incidents occurred during the first 5 rounds of the competition, and the organisation stated that they would not tolerate violence or improper conduct by players, spectators, parents or Team Officials. CDSFA's vision is to "Enrich the community through Football" and seeing them take action on the incidents proves that they promote diversity and enrich our community. Recently I attended their volunteer's recognition dinner and again, experienced the excellent spirit of grassroots football. I want to commend the Chairman of the CDSFA, Armando Gardiman AM, and Chief Executive, Ian Holmes, and their team for their exceptional leadership as an organisation combating bullying on the basis of gender, culture, race, and religion. I also want to commend them on their annual dinner and acknowledgement of all volunteers.

The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:43

until Tuesday 15 October 2019 at 12:00.