



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 16 October 2019**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday, 16 October 2019**

**The Speaker (The Hon. Jonathan Richard O'Dea)** took the chair at 09:30.

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

## *Notices*

### PRESENTATION

*[During the giving of notices of motions]*

**The SPEAKER:** The motions of which the member for Murray and the member for Oatley gave notice were both long. I remind members to temper their motions.

## *Governor*

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

#### Presentation

*The House proceeded to Government House at 09:46, there to present to the Governor its Address-in-Reply to the Speech Her Excellency had been pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament on opening the session.*

*The House returned at 11:32.*

**The SPEAKER:** I report that the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech has been presented. I have obtained a copy of Her Excellency's answer, which I lay upon the table of the House and order that it be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*. Her Excellency has been pleased to give thereto the following answer:

Government House  
Sydney, 16 October 2019

The Honourable the Speaker  
and Honourable Members of the  
Legislative Assembly of New South Wales

Thank you for your Address-in-Reply following the Opening of the 57th Session of the New South Wales Parliament on 7 May 2019.

I affirm my commitment to maintaining the strong links of the office of Governor and the Parliament throughout the term of my Commission, and assure you of my utmost consideration of all matters which you may bring forward.

MARGARET BEAZLEY  
Governor

## *Bills*

### RIGHT TO FARM BILL 2019

#### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 25 September 2019.**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:32:22):** New South Wales has a long history of farming. It is a history that we have every right to be extremely proud of and one that has underpinned the growth and development of our State. We all know myriad challenges face agricultural producers in New South Wales and, of course, across the nation. But now we are seeing a new set of challenges emerge. The rise in on-farm trespass comes at a time when farmers are already battling the worst drought in the history of New South Wales. I note that the water Minister is in the Chamber this morning. She has been articulating those challenges to this Parliament at every opportunity.

Farmers have enough to deal with as it is without having to worry about trespassers on their properties or defending their legal practices to people who complain about them. This bill will hold trespassers accountable for the damage they cause when storming agricultural properties. It will also provide farmers with a legal defence against common law nuisance complaints that escalate into litigation. Survey results from Australian Pork Limited show the impact of farm trespassers on productivity. A change in sow behaviour and productivity was noted in 40 per cent of respondents who reported experiencing farm trespass. Trespass can interrupt feed times and stress the sows leading, in some cases, to piglet deaths, which needs to be avoided at all costs. My cousin is now a retired

pig farmer and I know the impact that trespass had on his property and, as I have outlined, the impact on some of his sows. They can get stressed very easily and interference from outsiders puts the lives of the piglets at risk.

Complaints about farming operations also have implications for productivity. Complaints that escalate can force farmers to operate outside best practice or limit a farmer's ability to innovate and grow their business. This is in addition to the lost farming time and the cost of hiring expensive lawyers to defend the farmers in court proceedings for such issues. For example, some poultry farmers in western Sydney are forced to operate under curfews which stop them from transporting hens at the hours recommended by industry, to protect the welfare of the hens.

Gas guns are also subject to noise complaints despite being an innovative tool which is used to protect the productivity of vineyards. Dairy farmers are told to keep their cows quiet and pig farmers are told to stop their pigs from smelling. This bill will protect farmers against legal action for common law nuisance and will require a court to consider its options before ordering farming activity cease. Trespass and nuisance complaints have real impacts on agriculture—agriculture is absolutely worth protecting—and it is one of the many reasons I support this bill. We have a very strong agricultural industry on the Central Coast around the plateau area. I note the member for Wyong is in the Chamber. We have visited many farms across the Central Coast—

**Mr David Harris:** Yarramalong.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Yarramalong was mentioned by the member for Wyong. These primary producers are responsible in the way they look after their animals. It is their livelihood and we need to ensure we protect them against invasion and illegal activities being conducted by protesters who trespass. New South Wales agriculture produced approximately \$13.4 billion in farm gate output in 2017-18 and around 23 per cent of the national farm gate output. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data for 2015-16, New South Wales produced 32 per cent of Australia's total egg production, 29 per cent of the total wool production, 40 per cent of lucerne production, 38 per cent of macadamia production, 29 per cent of poultry production, 51 per cent of cut turf, 48 per cent of maize and grain production and 24 per cent of mushroom production.

As we saw earlier this year, the tactics of protestors who trespass are becoming more aggressive and— even worse—more radical. This kind of unlawful entry creates a range of risks to production, particularly risks to biosecurity. Biosecurity is at the heart of a strong primary industry sector. Our world-class biosecurity system supports farmers in producing high-quality food and fibre, contributes to New South Wales' reputation in agriculture and helps to secure safe market access. This Government recognises the risk of trespass to biosecurity and ultimately to our economy. That is why this Government acted earlier this year and introduced the Biosecurity Amendment (Biosecurity Management Plans) Regulation 2019. This amendment introduced tough new penalties for individuals who enter farms and fail to comply with biosecurity management plans. With this bill we are taking strong and decisive action to deter people from illegally entering farming properties or from making trivial complaints against our very hardworking and passionate farmers.

We need to ensure that our farmers are able to feel safe in their own homes. We will achieve this by increasing the penalties for trespass and ensuring the legislation is able to respond to the various risks caused by farm trespass. The bill acknowledges that New South Wales needs a strong primary industries sector. We need to ensure that our farmers are able to do what they do best without fear of being reprimanded for their legitimate operations. The bill will support farmers to get on with the job by giving them a legal defence against litigated nuisance complaints. We will send a very clear message that the agricultural industry has a right to farm in this State and is not going anywhere. I commend the Minister and his staff for their work on this bill. The Minister's passion for this issue was clear in his second reading speech. I know that the speakers following me will reiterate what I have outlined. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:40:47):** It is a tremendous opportunity for me to speak very briefly on the Right to Farm Bill 2019 and make a couple of important points. One is that the electorate I represent contains a wide expanse of viticulture. My electorate also has some dairy farms, stock farms and a small number of crop farms—fundamentally, I have a diverse electorate which includes some farming. I note the comments from the member for Terrigal just a moment ago on people who complained about the sound of cows being too loud. I had the good fortune when I first built my house to live opposite a beef farm. There was nothing more beautiful than waking up in the morning to the sound of the cows. What an alarm clock, mooing across the road. I was very disappointed when that farmer sold his land and it was subdivided. Now I tend to wake up in the morning to the sound of Acca Dacca from a shift worker getting home in the morning. It is just not quite the same, let me tell you. Anyway, bring back the cow, I say, and quieten down the shift worker.

Of course all members in this House support the agriculture industry and the role that farmers play in our society producing food and fibre; putting food on our plates; making sure that we can have a wonderful, healthy existence here in New South Wales and Australia as long as we make the right decisions; creating products at a

reasonably cheap price that are available to all; and using safe and environmentally sound practices to make sure that we prosper this country with regard to our health and our opportunity.

The shadow Minister gave a wideranging speech in leading for the Opposition on the Right to Farm Bill 2019. I sat in this Chamber and listened to it. She covered the many aspects of the bill and noted, as do I, a few concerns about whether this bill will specifically target the intended consequence and only the intended consequence or whether the bill might—accidentally and unintentionally—have a wider impact than that. In that respect I note that the New South Wales Labor Opposition intends to move some amendments in consideration in detail at the end of the second reading debate.

I am aware that the Government will take on board some feedback that it has had and potentially seek to amend the bill as well. I appreciate that. I was in the other place yesterday listening to the valedictory speech of the Hon. Niall Blair, a man I have an enormous amount of respect for. He commented that some of the best things that had happened in the other place in his time were the exchange of ideas across the Chamber, sometimes finding the middle ground, and accepting that the first model of a bill might not have been perfect and there was some room for compromise. In this particular instance, given the significance of this bill and the potential for it to reach into places that it is not intended to reach, we need to work very carefully through the detail. I know that it will happen in this House and I suspect that it will happen in the other place. I am sure that at the end of that pipeline, we as parliamentarians will come up with a terrific bill that supports the agricultural industry and the rights of all other citizens of New South Wales.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (11:45:30):** Those of us who are observant will have seen in the foyer of Parliament House at the moment an art show of a magnificent artist from Dorriggo called Peter Mortimore. I mention this because the show includes magnificent photos of Friesian cows feasting on the lush grass of the Dorriggo Plateau. It is probably one of the most beautiful scenes you will see. I acknowledge what the member for Cessnock just said. There is nothing like the beautiful sound of a cow needing to be milked in the morning and it is probably much better than Acca Dacca.

Let me tell you of that tranquil scene and of a particular farmer, Julie Moore, her husband and her family. She is well-known to the Minister, Adam Marshall, and me, she is involved with NSW Farmers, she is a family farmer and she is a good hardworking woman. Her life was changed when she checked on her Facebook page and saw she was being accused of animal cruelty. It shocked her to the core and had a major personal effect on her. An animal welfare group had gone illegally onto her property, taken photos and accused the Moores of the most terrible things. She came across the listing by chance and discovered that she and hundreds of other good, decent, hardworking people like herself had had protestors enter their private spaces, their farms, without even thinking of the work health and safety issues involved. Farmers have big responsibilities in that respect. She felt violated.

These people suggested that the Moores had treated their stock unfairly and cruelly. It was a terrible allegation and had a big impact on her. It hurt. She and her husband are longstanding experienced professional agriculturists with all the good things that come from that occupation: caring for animals and the landscape, feeding our population, putting milk in our fridges and generating income for her family and our community. This was a gross, unwanted invasion of the farm and of the family's right to privacy.

We must never forget that a family farm is a family's place of business and its home. As such, they are inseparable. The invasion was trespass and a breach of the moral code of privacy we expect in our homes. After complaining through appropriate channels and urging that the Aussie Farms website be closed down, initially the website only removed the Moores' names and added a highlight that just said, "The details from this farm are under a suppression order from the Federal Government." This is not something that farmers should have to endure on top of everything else, especially during this drought.

In time, further restrictive actions were taken on the Aussie Farms website and the New South Wales Government responded to this animal welfare activist escalation with new laws and regulations to provide our farmers with an enhanced right to farm. This is why we are here today. I commend my colleague and neighbouring electorate member, Adam Marshall, the member for Northern Tablelands. He should be proud of himself for getting this done. He has done a great job.

We are proud of The Nationals and my colleagues in this place who have done an amazing job. This legislation will further deter trespassers and would-be vigilantes. Importantly, for the first time the legislation will recognise a farmer's inherent right to farm and will provide safeguards against nonsense or nuisance claims. The proposed legislation will introduce the toughest penalties in Australia for farm trespass, including three years' jail and up to \$22,000 in fines. I commend the Minister, I commend the bill, I commend my community and I commend my farmers, whether they are in Comboyne, Dorriggo, Macleay Valley, Hastings Valley, Nambucca Valley or Bellingen Valley. I am so proud of all that they do for our region, our State and our nation. We will

have half the world's population living to the north of us in about 40 years. The industriousness and decency of our farmers deserve to be recognised and protected. This bill does exactly that. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (11:50:13):** I contribute to debate on the Right to Farm Bill 2019 and acknowledge the contribution from the shadow Minister, the member for Maitland. I agree with all the points she made. I raise a couple of important points. I put on record that my wife's family are fifth-generation farmers from Hillston in the Riverina. They have been involved with grains, sheep and some cattle. In principle I think this bill is important to protect the rights of farmers to go about their business without extremist groups coming onto their property and trying to persecute farmers for doing what they do. As the shadow Minister has said, there is already a legal avenue to prosecute people who illegally enter properties. But if that needs to be strengthened in this specific case then I would certainly support that.

The Labor Party will seek to move some amendments to the bill and I acknowledge the Minister will put forward some amendments. In his reply I hope he will provide some certainty in relation to a couple of case studies to ensure this legislation is not too broad in capturing groups that it is not designed to capture, as has been suggested by the shadow Minister and other members. One case involves farmers between Narromine and Narrabri who have issues with the route that has been designed by the Federal Government for the Inland Rail project. They have obviously been involved in protests around how that will affect their land. It would be good if the Minister could clarify whether those farmers, who are protesting against outside action that may affect their farms, could be inadvertently captured under this legislation. I think that is a really important point.

We have already raised issues around the actions of union officials and others who may be inadvertently captured by this legislation. We will seek to improve the legislation to make sure that is not the case. But when it comes to farmers we have to make sure that not only their right to a livelihood is protected but also their right to protest. Another example I have is one that the member for Terrigal mentioned: Farmers in the Yarralong and Dooralong valleys who took action to ban a mining company from coming onto their property when mining had been proposed. That included physically locking gates to make sure that their properties were not trespassed. That could be interpreted as a protest against the actions of the mining company. I hope this legislation will not open a door for farmers to be prosecuted in that case as well. I seek clarification around those particular issues, which are slightly outside the issues that the shadow Minister raised in her contribution.

My second very important point is around an opportunity lost with this bill. Members know that right to farm bills elsewhere in the world, particularly in the United States, have a planning component that acknowledges the fact that certain areas should be designated for agriculture. That is very important. In areas like mine, which is a rural area on the fringe of a metropolitan area, we have a constant battle between providing more land for housing versus keeping land for agriculture. Some of this is prime land. It is very important that it is protected for agriculture into the future.

The allure of making money very quickly by selling land for residential development means that this prime land is being eaten up piece by piece. I have very strongly advocated against rezoning attempts west of the M1 Pacific Motorway for that reason. Whilst there is pressure for housing, there is also pressure to keep that land for agricultural purposes. Once that land is lost we cannot get it back again. We now see that through urban sprawl more and more agriculture has been pushed to the fringes and onto land that is less able to support it in difficult climate circumstances such as the current drought. There is an opportunity to add a component to this bill that protects agricultural land from urban development. I think that is very important. We are losing land close to the coast and the drought has demonstrated that other areas are not able to sustain agriculture effectively. The member for Ballina may have similar issues.

With population growth there is pressure to convert agricultural land for urban purposes. When we talk about the right to farm, we should look at the broader context. We should understand that this is not just about people trespassing on people's properties and protesting against farming practices, this is also about ensuring that agricultural land will be preserved for agriculture. We are losing it bit by bit. We have seen it right through the Sydney basin as suburbs have spread outwards. We have lost all of those market gardens. Agriculture keeps being pushed further and further to the fringes and then we find that those fringe areas are less able to support agriculture. On the coast we are not getting average rainfall, we are getting reasonable rainfall, but agriculture has disappeared. Members of Parliament have to look really carefully at this issue and think about when land should be set aside for particular purposes and when it should not be encroached upon.

I cannot talk about this issue without raising a matter that I am passionate about: the impact of mining on agricultural land. Unfortunately, the Wallarah 2 mine has been given a licence to operate in the Wyong valleys during a drought and underneath a water catchment. That is a major problem to start with. But this also has an effect on agricultural land and the ability to farm during a conflict with mining. One of the key features of that conflict is the acknowledgement that water will be lost. Those farmers have dams on their properties. In the licensing conditions it says that the mining company must replace the water in those dams. How does one calculate

that? How does one get a baseline for what is lost in those dams through mining? It is almost impossible. Those farmers have to prove that they have lost water and then seek compensation from the mining company.

When we talk about the right to farm there are a range of matters that should be considered. Unfortunately this bill focuses on one specific part when there are whole a lot of other areas that I think members of Parliament need to look at very carefully. Activists are a threat to farming, and that is not good. But the real threats to farming are the loss of agricultural land and the conflicts with other industries. They are a greater problem for our farmers in the longer term than activists coming onto their land. I know the Minister has worked very hard on the bill, and I acknowledge him for that. I am sure that in his spare time he will look at these broader issues and make sure that we come up with a comprehensive plan to protect farmers' rights to do business in agriculture and protect them from other activities that encroach upon them.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:59:34):** I make a short contribution in support of the Right to Farm Bill 2019 and in support of our farmers, our regional communities and agricultural workers across the State. At the outset, I acknowledge the Minister, who is at the table and who has worked tirelessly to bring the bill to the House. I know that the Minister has worked with the agricultural sector and talked to farming families across the State to ensure that the bill is right for our farmers. As we know, at the moment in New South Wales our farmers are doing it tough. They are battling the most horrific drought in history. On top of that, many are very fearful of their properties being attacked by virtue-signalling vegan vigilantes who are invading farms en masse in the name of animal rights.

I cannot imagine anything more terrifying than for a family to have their property and their privacy invaded in this way, knowing that the nearest help could be many miles away. The activists do not care about animals. They do not care about the risks that their actions pose to biosecurity or the stress that their actions could cause to farmers' stock. With the Right to Farm Bill 2019, the Liberal Party and The Nationals are drawing a line in the sand. If you invade a farm, if you invade a workplace, if you invade a home, the simple message is that you will do time. This is groundbreaking legislation that will create a clear deterrent to any would-be vigilantes considering unlawful trespass on farming properties in New South Wales.

The Right to Farm Bill 2019 will introduce the toughest penalties in Australia for farm trespass, including three years jail time and up to \$22,000 in fines. Currently there is no jail time for trespass. The bill will also introduce new offences and aggravating factors for activities such as trespassing as a group, damaging property and releasing livestock. It will give legal recognition to a farmer's right to farm, shielding them from nuisance claims. As I said, I congratulate the agriculture Minister on tackling this serious issue. I know that the farming community in my electorate is pleased that this bill has been introduced to the House. As someone who has grown up on the land and who has an affiliation with agricultural activities in my electorate—having uncles, brothers and sisters who still live on the land as their main form of making a living—the bill tackles a serious issue in this nation.

The Labor Party has criticised The Nationals for bringing this emotive, sensational and provocative bill to the House. You know what? This is an emotional issue. It is an emotional issue for the families who are fearful that vigilantes may set their sights on them next. There is nothing remotely sensational or provocative about wanting to protect farming families in New South Wales from unlawful trespassers and to protect their stock and their properties' biosecurity status. Nobody should be subjected to the kind of terrifying scenes that we saw at Millmerran in southern Queensland earlier this year, when up to 100 activists stormed a feedlot. There were 100 of them wearing masks and matching T-shirts. Can you imagine how that family would have felt to wake up and see 100 people on their property, invading their space? How would those children have felt seeing vigilantes trespassing in the area?

This is not acceptable. It should not be happening, and the Minister has introduced this bill to the House to address it. If Labor thinks our efforts to protect farming families with this bill are provocative, then it has clearly lost the plot. I note that the Leader of the Opposition has been out and about in the regions recently. I welcome her efforts to engage with the regions but I am sure she is also hearing the community's call and their concerns related directly to this bill. I hope it encourages Labor to get behind the bill and support it. The animal rights activists are entitled to their views, but they are not entitled to seek to further an agenda of terrorising our farming families. Farmers must have a right to farm. Farmers have a right to undertake lawful agricultural practices on their property without conflict and without interference. The time is right to enshrine that in law. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:05:22):** I add to the comments made by the agriculture spokesperson for The Greens, the member for Ballina, and highlight in particular some of the antidemocratic elements of the Right to Farm Bill 2019. The bill is bad news for the right to protest in this State. It amends the Inclosed Lands Protection Act to expand the definition of unlawful acts of trespass and to expand offences and penalties. For example, locking on to a farm gate in the company of others under the law has a maximum jail term

of three years and a fine of \$22,000. If we compare that with the penalty for other offences, such as breaking what used to be called an apprehended violence order—which is two years imprisonment—it shows the balance in the bill is lopsided and the level of punishment proposed is excessive.

Of major concern is the impact the bill will have on the rights of people in our community to peacefully protest on the premises of corporations and other businesses that are involved in environmental destruction—such as the logging of forests or coal seam gas exploration and mining—that we are all too familiar with around our State, particularly on the North Coast. Those draconian aspects of the bill, along with other steps taken by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government, have curtailed citizens' right to take political action and peacefully protest. We have seen a very disturbing picture emerge, with the first step being the creation of an aggravated trespassing offence for trespassing where a business is interfered with by protest activity. The second step was the new regulations under the Crown Land Management Act that mean police can move on any assembly or gathering on Crown or public land in New South Wales. The third is the changes under this bill that up the ante with huge fines and jail terms for peaceful protest on private and inclosed lands.

The bill also shields farmers—and my colleague the member for Ballina focused on these matters in her contribution—from being sued under nuisance common law if their agricultural practices unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of another person's land. The rationale is that working farms may emit odours or noise that disrupt the neighbour but the purpose of agricultural activity should trump those other property rights. We believe there is opportunity to see some strengthening in this area, particularly when it comes to ensuring that people are informed and know exactly what is being proposed or undertaken on their land. It is very similar to the situation in cities where people move in next to a music venue or function centre and then complain about the operation of that business. There are other steps that can and should be taken, rather than diminishing the rights of other property holders and elevating the rights of agricultural businesses above those of all other businesses.

The United States has experienced problems like this, where land has been taken up by large-scale agribusiness. Neighbours who did not necessarily have a problem with the farming activity next-door found that, when it became industrialised and large scale, they had a reduced right to protect their own property against imposition under nuisance common law. For us, that is concerning. Elevating the rights of one particular industry or property holder over another is not at the heart of liberalism and it should not be what we do in this Parliament. The rhetoric around the bill has demonised people in our community who trespass on farms to highlight farm activities or animal abuse. Of major concern is the law's impact on the right of animal welfare organisations to gain information about specific farms. The Greens agree that where these actions are unlawful there should be punishments but our view is that the level of imposition on the right of people to protest, and the scale of punishments in these laws, are well in excess of what could be reasonably expected.

It is important to recognise that concern about animal welfare comes not just from what some people call "vegan vigilantes" or "latte-sipping hipsters". The introduction of this legislation misses an opportunity for the farming community to promote transparency and openness, and to improve animal welfare standards. A recent national report, *Australia's Shifting Mindset on Farm Animal Welfare*, showed that 95 per cent of Australians are concerned about the welfare of farm animals and that 56 per cent of those surveyed believed cattle, sheep, goats and pigs are sentient. Only 10 per cent of respondents think current Government regulation is inadequate.

It is clear that protecting activities on farms and keeping them under wraps should not be the objective of this Parliament. We should be working with the farming community to improve transparency around animal welfare and food production to make sure that people in our communities are satisfied and confident that activities are being undertaken in a humane and appropriate way. I refer to some comments from the RSPCA on this matter. The RSPCA has said that it does not support any kind of illegal activity in pursuit of animal welfare objectives. It states:

The RSPCA chooses to promote animal welfare through formal government and democratic processes and occupies a position of trust within the community for doing so. The RSPCA believes that livestock industries should pro-actively engage with consumers to address these concerns. Improving animal welfare on farm, during transport and at slaughter requires on-going commitment from all participants along the supply chain. Acknowledging the need for improvements, setting targets for achieving them, and keeping the community informed about progress will go a long way to building trust and confidence to ensure the long-term future of livestock production.

The RSPCA believes the interests of livestock industries are far better served by strategies aimed at building consumer confidence through greater community engagement and a more open and transparent operating environment, than through the introduction of Ag-gag laws.

That goes to the heart of The Greens' approach. Members of the public are concerned because they simply do not believe animals are being treated respectfully—that animals are not being treated cruelly. When the Government introduces laws that crack down on people who seek to expose farm practices it builds mistrust between consumers and the farming community. We should be encouraging farmers to be more open and transparent to show people exactly how animals are treated and to improve the welfare of animals wherever possible. That is the solution.

If people on the opposite side of the House want to undermine animal welfare activists they should encourage farmers to throw open their doors and show people how farming practices work. But many people are horrified when they see what takes place on farms. The solution is not to shield consumers from what happens on farms but to improve openness and transparency. The Greens want the farming sector to grow and prosper. The Greens want the farming sector to respect the views of consumers. Consumers are using their wallets to change the way that farming is carried out. They are demanding more free-range farming and whole range of different options to ensure that animal welfare is protected. This Parliament should be driving that change. The Government should be supporting farmers to take the lead in adopting better farm management practices rather than being dragged towards them, as they are at the moment.

The poultry industry has been dragged towards producing eggs from free-range chickens. The industry has been dragged towards accepting changes in the laws. The industry should be stepping forward to say, "We want to have world's best practice; we want to lead the world in what we are doing for animal welfare." That would give people confidence that the agriculture sector is doing the right thing. My concern is that this matter is not being approached from the right direction. Having clear animal welfare guidelines, an independent regulatory body that monitors and has the power to act against incidents of animal cruelty on farms, and farmers embracing transparency around animal welfare practices could exponentially increase the economic value of food production in New South Wales and Australia.

The other huge opportunity cost of this law is that it protects agricultural practices but does nothing to protect agricultural land and our intergenerational resources, soil and water. The hitherto unheard of abrogation of the ancient common law right of the public to meet together on public land and the massive restrictions on the right of the public to express political views on private and public land throughout the State represent lost opportunities galore. It is very disappointing that we have come to this. The Greens will continue to work with the agriculture sector—and the livestock sector, in particular—to show people what respect means in farm production. The Greens want to show people what a caring industry can do—not only for consumers but also for farmers and for animal welfare.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (12:15:14):** The Right to Farm Bill 2019 was referred to the Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 4—Industry on 24 September. A large number of submissions—217—were received about the legislation, which demonstrates to the Parliament that there is a lot of interest in it. Many of those submissions raised a lot of concerns. I think the parliamentary process of referring bills to committees is beneficial in ensuring that our legislative process delivers better outcomes. Fifteen witnesses representing eight different organisations gave evidence at that hearing. I thank the committee for its work. However, it is disappointing that the Parliament has not received the final report from the upper House inquiry, which is due on 21 October—next week. It would have been prudent for the Government to bring this legislation to the House after we had received that review.

In fact, it is very unsatisfactory that the Government did not give the people who made submissions and the witnesses who gave evidence to the committee the respect of taking their views into account. The Government wants to ram the bill through the House without using that vital information, which demonstrates to us that the legislation is not being brought to this Parliament in good faith. That kind of action never delivers good outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Whilst the Government has made some minor adjustments to the original iteration of this bill that was presented to Parliament, the Opposition believes those adjustments do not go far enough. In fact, the legislation does not genuinely protect farmers from trespassing on their farms.

It is still the case that workers can be prosecuted—and, in fact, jailed—just for going about their work in some industries, which I will mention in a moment. The bill also restricts people from peacefully protesting. Australia is a country where people can peacefully protest, which can result in very good outcomes. Australians have the right to stand up for what they believe in. The Opposition has no problem with action being taken against those who do the wrong thing—that can be addressed through the correct channels—but the provisions of this bill are too burdensome for protesters. They can be sent to jail, which is just not right. I put on record that I stand by people in the trade union movement because I believe this bill places workers at risk of prosecution and goes too far in restricting their right to express their views.

I have particularly grave concerns about schedule 2 to the bill, which introduces penalties including imprisonment. The bill does not genuinely protect farmers from trespassers on their own farms. In fact, the farmers themselves could be imprisoned. I understand that at the eleventh hour the Government has made some minor changes to the bill, but it has not got the balance right. That is because it has rushed this legislation into the House. So many workers—meatworkers, shearers, timber mill workers, saleyard workers and the list goes on—will fear their ability to genuinely protest, agitate and stand up for their rights in the workplace. During the upper House inquiry a witness from Unions NSW stated:

We believe that [the bill] seriously undermines the right to protest in this State. The expansion of the aggravated unlawful entry offence ... captures a broad range of protest and advocacy actions.

This Government—and particularly the Deputy Premier—has indicated that it wants to privatise our forestry sector. I am therefore concerned that those workers will be adversely affected by this legislation. When they want to stand up for their jobs and the work they do in our State's forests they could be captured by this legislation and jailed. But the bill will affect not only forestry workers but also conservationists. I say to them: Look out. With the bill's provisions in place, authorities will be able to quickly lock away any protester who tries to stall the Government on any agenda it has—including privatisation.

Schedule 2 will be a disaster and will seriously undermine the ability for people to participate in genuine protest. Unions NSW knows it, the Nature Conservation Council knows it and the Environmental Defenders Office NSW knows it. It is a disgrace that anyone could stand up for their job and their livelihood and risk going to jail. It is a disgrace that the Government thinks it is appropriate to imprison people for between 12 months and three years for engaging in those activities. I say it again: This legislation is being dealt with today in bad faith. The Government tried to cover up its mistakes, but instead it has made further mistakes. I urge the Government to consider the Opposition's amendment to remove schedule 2 to the bill. We want to work in good faith, but every step of the way the Government is ignoring our genuine concerns—no doubt so it can seriously undermine the rights of workers in regional areas. I strongly urge the Government to support Labor's amendments.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:23:13):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Right to Farm Bill 2019. I note that the Government has foreshadowed some amendments to its bill at very, very short notice today. The amendments do go some way to addressing the enormous concerns that the community has about the attack on the right to protest that is presented in the bill. As most members in this Chamber know, I grew up on a farm. My family lived there for the first 31 years of my life. Incursions onto farms are not new. They have not started to occur in the past few years with animal rights activists. The biggest danger of trespass onto farms comes from shooters.

People also come onto farms to fish. My dad was always very annoyed when people would take all our yabbies from the dam close to the road. Finding people wandering around with guns on your property is alarming. If you are the only man in the family and consider yourself their protector, it is particularly alarming if for some reason you have to go away overnight and think there might be drunk idiots with guns running around your farm. That is, and remains, a far graver danger than animal rights activists.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** They're captured, too.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** They are both captured. However, this is not a new threat. It is not a threat that needs to be taken so seriously that we wipe out the right of citizens to protest in this State. The bill has restrictions that would prevent farmers from being able to protest against things happening on their own land—protesting against coal seam gas exploration in the north of New South Wales, for example. Until the amendments were introduced this morning, the bill posed a very broad threat to protest activities across New South Wales. There is a need to prevent some unlawful protest activities and unauthorised entry onto farms by shooters. However, the bill goes too far. It has not been drafted carefully. The amendments have not been given due consideration by this House.

The bill should not have come before us again until the upper House report was completed, which will not be for another few weeks. The Government is just stirring up a section of the community and trying to create alarm while at the same time undermining peaceful protests. As the member for Swansea mentioned in her contribution to the debate, the bill will affect any Forestry Corporation workers wanting to protest against the loss of their jobs. This will be problematic for a huge number of people across the State. The legislation needs much more consideration and should be deferred for a lot longer—at least until we get the report from the upper House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Upper Hunter will come to order.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** In protecting people from disturbing and sometimes frightening incursions onto their private property and very close to their homes, we need to make sure that we do not undermine the democratic rights of people in New South Wales—democratic rights that we should be defending at every opportunity.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:27:33):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Right to Farm Bill 2019. I put on record the concerns that I heard expressed up and down the coast in the past two weeks by groups who are deeply distressed about the bill and its impacts on their right to protest. If the Government were genuine in its desire only to protect the rights of farmers to do what they can on their own land, the bill would look very different from the one that has been presented to the House—and which will now be amended. The changes that the Minister is now proposing to his bill do not excise parts that ought to be excised if it was intended only to address the impacts on farmers who have protesters coming onto their land. No-one in this House wants to see that happen. We on this side of the House believe deeply in the right to protest lawfully.

In the past two weeks I have met with many environment groups up and down the coast who, by their activities, could be easily captured under the bill if it is passed and the amendments proposed by the shadow Minister are not supported. Groups such as the Knitting Nannas Against Gas, Lock the Gate, environmental groups across the State that protest because they are genuinely concerned about the activities this Government is prosecuting in some areas. They have every right to participate in lawful activities and that right ought to remain. I met with the Knitting Nannas in Lismore. They told me they accept that they are likely to go to jail for trying to protect water and land. Their right to protest will be significantly undermined if the Opposition amendments are not supported by the Government. This legislation is a kneejerk reaction to try to beat the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to this place. The Nationals once again are trying to pretend that they are looking after the areas that they purport to represent.

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

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** Instead, they comes to this place with ill-thought-out legislation. That was evident from the community responses received in a very short period by the committee that inquired into the bill. This bill does not address what the Government intended. We want farmers to be able to conduct their farming activities in the protection of their own homes in safety and comfort. This so-called Right to Farm Bill goes way beyond that remit. It has entirely overstepped the mark. The balance is not right.

I commend the shadow Minister for the enormous amount of work and consultation that she has undertaken in providing a sensible response to the bill. She has tried to navigate a path that would result in the outcome the Government wants. Instead, the Government is not willing to work with us and her efforts have been hindered every step of the way. We would much prefer a bipartisan approach to achieve the outcome that we all want. In its current form the impact on people's right to protest goes way beyond its remit. I urge the Government once again to support the proposed amendments—to support the removal of schedule 2 so that the remit of the bill achieves the outcome it seeks. I repeat, the Government is overstepping the mark. The balance is not right.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (12:34:00):** In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Maitland, Coffs Harbour, The Entrance, Tweed, Ballina, Clarence, Orange, Myall Lakes, Blue Mountains, Wollondilly, Summer Hill, Goulburn, Murray, Lismore, Upper Hunter, Campbelltown, Dubbo, Gosford, Cootamundra, Barwon, Castle Hill, Hawkesbury, Lake Macquarie, Albury, Sydney, Tamworth, Terrigal, Cessnock, Oxley, Wyong, Bathurst, Balmain, Swansea, Granville and Port Stephens for their contributions to this bill.

The number of members who felt moved to speak on the bill indicates that the House is deeply interested in matters concerning farmers across our State. That is very pleasing. I advise the House that the Government will be moving an amendment in the Committee stage to remove any ambiguity about the intent and the scope of the bill—namely, the bill is concerned with punishing those who engage in on-farm trespass on agricultural land only, nothing more. The Right to Farm Bill has always been about providing better protections for farmers and those operating agricultural enterprises across the State. They grow the food and fibre to feed and clothe us and, increasingly, other people around the globe.

I turn now to address some of the points raised in the debate. I will start with the very worthy contribution by the member for Wyong, who always thinks very carefully about his contributions to bills. He raised an issue about farmers possibly being caught by the provisions of the bill when protesting on their own land about the potential route of the Inland Rail proposed by the Commonwealth Government-owned Australian Rail Track Corporation. As is quite clear in the bill, no farmer can be captured by the bill or any of the subsequent amendments to the bill if they are either undertaking activities on their own land—protesting or whatever—or undertaking the same activities on someone else's land with the consent of the landowner.

To take the example used by the member for Wyong a step further, if it were his property or my property in the west of the State and I was holding a protest on my property about a potential route; no problem. If the member for Wyong decided to join me on my property at my invitation or with my consent to protest; again, no problem. If he decided to bring 30 or 40 or 50 of his mates onto my property at my invitation; no problem whatsoever.

A number of members opposite spoke about the new offences created by the bill in the Inclosed Lands Protection Act. To trigger any of those offences an individual or a group must first be committing an offence of trespass that already exists under the Inclosed Lands Protection Act. Anyone who is undertaking an activity that is lawful today, even if the bill passes the Parliament, will still be lawful tomorrow because to trigger any of the aggravating offences—the only new components introduced in amending the Inclosed Lands Protection Act—someone must first be committing an act of trespass.

The member for Wyong also gave the example of a farmer who owns a property and puts a padlock on their gate to prevent people from entering the property. That farmer is not committing an offence, and certainly not an offence under this legislation. Depending on what type of operation the farmer is undertaking, particularly if it is intensive aquaculture or horticultural development, to maintain good biosecurity it is probably good practice that a lock is put on the gate to ensure the proper control of people who enter. The member for Wyong can rest easy, to use his words, because both of the examples that he queried are not in any way captured by anything in this bill.

The member for Swansea raised concerns that farm workers and unions having access to property may somehow be impeded by this bill. Again I assure the member for Swansea that that is not the case. This bill does not in any way infringe or impose anything on individuals who already have a lawful right to be on farm—whether they are the landowner, employees of that particular farmer or enterprise, people who have been given consent or permission by the landowner to come on to the property or people who under other pieces of Federal or State legislation have a lawful right to be on farm.

Unions, union officials and their employees are all covered and are not impacted or affected by anything proposed by the bill or Government amendments. Essential Energy meter readers going on farm to read meters, inspectors authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act from the RSPCA or the Animal Welfare League, police officers, Local Land Services officers and biosecurity officers from the Department of Primary Industries—the list goes on and on. These people are not infringed at all by any provisions in the bill because they have already a lawful right to be on those properties under certain circumstances prescribed by other legislation passed by this Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliament.

The Right to Farm Bill has always been about providing better protections for our farmers and those operating agricultural enterprises—those who work hard, by the sweat of their own brow, to battle drought, run a business, raise their families and grow food and fibre for our State. I turn to the planning and land use conflict issue raised in the debate. The members for the electorates of Maitland, The Entrance, Ballina, Blue Mountains, Summer Hill, Sydney, Port Stephens, Swansea and Wyong made the excellent point that the bill does not address changes in the planning space, the threat of urbanisation or other encroachment on agricultural land. They are correct: the bill does not do that, and it does not because it was never designed for that purpose. Farmers face real and complex issues and I assure the House that the Government is addressing those issues. They have just not reached the stage to be considered by the House.

Planning matters in any form are not simple—I am certainly very familiar with, and sympathetic of, those around safeguarding highly productive agricultural land and stopping urban encroachment onto those lands—and they will be addressed by the Government in accordance with its election commitment. Indeed, as the agriculture Minister, I am determined to tackle them but they cannot be solved in one fell swoop or with one silver bullet. The bill was never designed to do that, but the Government is working on the matter.

From the outset the bill has been about addressing the two foremost concerns of farmers—the increasing occurrence in recent years of farm trespass and the need for stronger protections to shield them from these trespasses, whether they be illegal hunters, animal rights advocates or common law nuisance actions that undermine their right to continue their lawful operations. The bill is not the end of the Government's commitment to protecting the right to farm; it is just the beginning.

The bill is one element of a broader comprehensive package of measures that the Government is developing to protect the right to farm. The broader package will address specific concerns around land use conflict and the appointment later this year of the inaugural Agriculture Commissioner will be key to driving that agenda over the next 12 months. I deal now with key concerns, starting with the nuisance shield provision. I address first the confusion by some regarding how the Right to Farm Act works and how it will operate in practice.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Committees*

### **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

#### **Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Debate on *Sydney's Night Time Economy* called on and postponed in accordance with Standing Order 306 (6).**

**LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:46:31):** I make a contribution in the take note debate on the *Legislative Review Digest No. 6* of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament, dated 15 October. When the committee met yesterday it considered two bills and commented on both. The committee considered also seven regulations subject to a disallowance motion by either House of the Parliament and commented on all seven. The committee noted that the Road Transport Amendment (Mobile Detection) Bill 2019 amends the Road Transport Act 2013 so that an object held by the driver that is captured in a photograph by a traffic enforcement device approved for mobile phone use offences is presumed to be a mobile phone.

This presumption may be rebutted if the defendant can establish on the balance of probabilities that it was not a mobile phone. This has the effect of reversing the onus of proof, which intrudes on the common law principle that a person has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. It is ordinarily for the prosecution to establish all elements of an offence. The committee acknowledged that the reversed onus of proof in this instance may relate to a matter which is particularly within the knowledge of the accused.

Further, it noted the community safety objects of the bill and that the offence does not attract a custodial sentence. Nevertheless, an accused may experience difficulty producing the information to the standard necessary to avoid conviction and may thereby attract a significant maximum monetary penalty and potential loss of licence. For those reasons the committee referred the matter to Parliament to consider whether the reversed onus of proof is reasonable in all the circumstances. The committee also determined that it will display for public consumption all correspondence sent to Ministers and members who originate bills, advising them of the committee's comments. It will also publish for public consumption all responses received from Ministers or members. That is a great way of improving the accountability mechanisms around the committee's work. It allows the public to understand that the committee is advising members and the Government of its comments on bills and whether the Government, and members who originate bills, respond appropriately to the concerns of the committee.

I also note the committee has not, as yet, received a response from the Premier to the committee's suggestion that the inquiry conducted in the last Parliament, and its recommendations, be carried over to this Parliament for consideration and implementation by the Government as a better way to scrutinise bills before the Parliament. The digest is an important document and I encourage all members to use it. I thank the secretariat who have done a fantastic job—as usual. I thank also my colleagues on the committee. I commend the digest to the House.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:50:31):** As Chair: I address the House concerning the committee's sixth digest of this Parliament, tabled on 15 October. In this digest the committee examined the two bills introduced in the last sitting week, and identified issues in seven regulations. I draw to the attention of the House some of the issues raised. The Road Transport Amendment (Mobile Phone Detection) Bill 2019 seeks to amend the Road Transport Act 2013 to establish a presumption that an object held by a driver in a photo taken by a traffic enforcement device is a mobile phone for the purposes of a mobile phone use offence. To rebut this presumption the defendant must establish, on the balance of probabilities, that the object was not a mobile phone.

The bill thereby reverses the onus of proof, contrary to the common law principle that a person has a right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. The committee acknowledged the community safety objectives of the bill and noted that the offence does not attract a custodial sentence. However, given that the defendant may experience difficulty producing information to the standard necessary to avoid conviction, the maximum penalty of \$2,200 and potential loss of licence, the committee referred the matter to Parliament for consideration.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Restrictions on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019 seeks to introduce a new offence applying to persons who perform a Mules operation—a surgical operation on sheep. The maximum penalty would be a \$5,500 fine or six months imprisonment, or both. The committee noted that the offence is designed to deter people from performing a procedure that may cause animal suffering and that has been banned or limited in certain other jurisdictions. However, the committee noted also that the creation of a new offence impacts on individual rights and liberties as previously lawful conduct becomes unlawful. In addition, it noted that the Mules operation is designed to prevent flystrike infections in sheep. Given the various considerations, the committee referred the question of whether the new offence is reasonable to Parliament.

I note two of the regulations the committee reported. The Criminal Records Regulation 2019 places certain limits on the Spent Convictions Scheme. It provides that a person may be required to disclose spent convictions when making certain job applications such as applying to practise as a lawyer or a Crown prosecutor.

It lists also certain sexual offences for which convictions cannot be spent. Further, the regulation allows spent convictions to be used by the police commissioner when making an application for a criminal organisation declaration under the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012. The committee noted that matters such as these may have significant impacts on individuals, particularly around their employment prospects. It therefore found that they would be more appropriately included in primary rather than subordinate legislation. This would provide a greater opportunity for parliamentary scrutiny. The committee referred this matter to Parliament for consideration.

The Health Records and Information Privacy Amendment (Health Records) Regulation 2019 exempts certain health records linkage systems administered by the Health Administration Corporation from the health privacy principles contained in the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002. Information about a person could be included in one of these systems without the need for the person's consent. This may impact on the privacy rights of affected individuals. The committee acknowledged that the purpose of such systems is to allow NSW Health healthcare providers to share health information about patients to optimise their care. However, given the potential sensitivity of such information, the committee referred the privacy exemption to Parliament to consider if it is reasonable in the circumstances. That concludes my remarks on the sixth digest. I thank the committee secretariat and their staff for their work. I encourage all members to read the full digest. I commend the digest to the House.

#### **Report noted.**

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

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to members of the family of the late the Hon. Tim Fischer, AC, including his wife, Judy Brewer, and son Dominic. I welcome his sister, Vicky Baudry, his brother-in-law, Yves Baudry, and his niece, Cynthia Coghill. I acknowledge Tim's close friends Clive Powell, Robert Linsdell and Claire Linsdell. They are all guests of the Government Whip and member for Terrigal. A condolence motion for Tim Fischer will follow question time later this afternoon.

I welcome to the Chamber also my guest John MacGregor, who used to work in the New South Wales press gallery, along with his colleagues Annabelle MacGregor and Rachel Sutherland from MacGregor Public Relations [MPR]. I acknowledge St Ambrose Catholic Primary School students and teachers, guests of the member for Tweed. I acknowledge also student leaders and teachers from Holsworthy Public School, guests of the member for Holsworthy. Finally, I acknowledge the guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I had the pleasure of meeting them earlier this morning.

#### *Bills*

#### **RACING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019**

#### **TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (RMS DISSOLUTION) BILL 2019**

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the Racing Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 without amendment.

I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019 with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments to the Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019 be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Rulings*

#### **POINTS OF ORDER**

**The SPEAKER:** I want to focus on keeping things flowing today. Order! Government members will come to order. As I have said, I endeavour to respect every member's right to take points of order, but on occasion members take points of order to deliberately interfere with the flow of responses to questions. I will start to be a little bit tougher on that because I want to see things flow. If members want to take legitimate points of order I will listen to them, but if I think members are being frivolous or deliberately interrupting the flow then I will put them on one or more calls to order.

*Question Time***RESTART NSW FUND**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:21:51):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. I refer to his answer yesterday. The Government is required to redirect at least 30 per cent of Restart NSW's infrastructure funds to regional New South Wales, but has delivered less than 19 per cent. Given we are in a shocking drought, why has the Minister short-changed the bush by hundreds of millions of dollars?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:22:16):** I thank the member for her question, for the fake confidence that she brings into this place and the concern that she has shown in question time when the entire political operation of those opposite has been exposed in public as a criminal cartel. We should amend standing orders. Forget question time; we should have apology time.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer is not being relevant at all to the question that was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer has barely opened his mouth. There is no point of order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We on this side of the House have invested more in regional New South Wales than anyone in the history of this State. The Restart NSW Fund, which the Leader of the Opposition so confidently referred to, where did it come from? Where has the capital come from that has allowed us to invest record amounts right across our State in the cities and in regional New South Wales?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Where has it come from? It has come from our asset recycling program, which was opposed every step of the way by those opposite.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Yet, they come in here and question our Government. This is a party that thought at the last election—and I am looking over at the former shadow Treasurer there—that it was a great idea to tax farmers in the middle of a drought.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is being relevant.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The question related to 30 per cent of the Restart NSW funding. The Government is only giving 19 per cent to country New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer has talked to the drought. He will continue. The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Where is the rest of the money for the bush?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. I have asked that she not continue to speak at the table. If she continues to do that, I will put her on further calls to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Everywhere you look in regional New South Wales you see infrastructure investment, which never occurred under the Labor Party. Whether it is record health infrastructure investment—I remember visiting a hospital in the Tweed with the health Minister which the Opposition opposed. I remember when the health Minister and I discussed regional investment for health infrastructure in the budget. We looked at the State's finances that we had turned around from the Labor Party's budget deficit and its \$30 billion infrastructure backlog. Due to the strong financial position we were in, because of decisions we had made, such as the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2012, which was opposed by members opposite, we were able to not just upgrade Tweed Hospital, which doctors had been asking for, but we were able to rebuild the entire hospital from the ground up.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. My question relates to Restart NSW and the Government short-changing the bush.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is talking about funding in regional bush areas.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** There was 30 per cent promised and 19 per cent has been delivered. I ask that the Minister answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will continue.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us look right across the board. Never before have we seen more jobs being created in regional New South Wales. It is very true that we are in the middle of a drought, yet jobs growth in regional New South Wales is so strong that more jobs have been created than in any other region right across Australia combined. Where is that job creation coming from? It is coming from the Liberal-Nationals Government's public investment in infrastructure. Let us talk about the drought.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us talk about the \$1.8 billion investment over the past couple of budgets because of our strong financial position. Everywhere you look you will see record amounts: \$810 million, including 60 bores across 23 communities in our regions; 14 pipelines, including the \$500 million Broken Hill pipeline, which members opposite opposed. I thank The Nationals today for exposing on its Facebook page the member for Cessnock, who came out to oppose the construction of dams.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I promise that this will be the last point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. Do not speak again. Please sit down.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You can't tell me to not speak again.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is being relevant.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** I just want to know what they are doing for the bush in regard to Restart NSW.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Then we look at schools infrastructure right across regional New South Wales. Whether it is schools, whether it is hospitals, whether it is road and rail, whether it is our water infrastructure or whether it is our drought package, we have invested more in regional New South Wales than ever before. There is only one reason why members on this side of the House can do it and members on that side of the House cannot, that is that the Liberal-Nationals Government manages money well.

#### MUSIC FESTIVALS

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (14:28:02):** I address my question to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on how the Government will ensure festival-goers are safe at music festivals over the summer?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:28:15):** I thank the member for East Hills. I know that community safety, especially in relation to young people, is an issue that is important to her, as it is to all members in this place. There is no doubt that music festivals form an important part of our culture. Over a 12-month period about 90 music festivals occur across New South Wales. But what happened last summer was tragic. We saw five young lives lost in New South Wales, we saw 40 people evacuated from those festivals and we saw 20 people admitted to intensive care units. No-one wants to see this continued loss of life. No-one wants to see the continued number of injuries incurred by people attending these music festivals.

Unfortunately in September 2018 we experienced a further two deaths and again a number of young people were taken to hospital. After this point the State Government made the important decision to set up an expert panel comprising NSW Commissioner of Police Mick Fuller, New South Wales Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant, and chair of the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority, Philip Crawford. We asked this expert panel to consult and to make recommendations to the Government on how we can make music festivals safer. That expert panel came back to the Government with a number of recommendations. One of them was to identify high-risk festivals and introduce a licensing regime for them. That is what our Government did.

I stress that the extra things we have asked the high-risk festivals to do only applies to 11 out of the 90 music festivals that occur across the State. We know that these music festivals are important to many regional and suburban communities. Young people enjoy attending them, but that does not mean festival operators do not have a responsibility to make them safe. If a music festival is deemed to be high risk we ask that they develop a safety management plan, they ensure that there are a number of health experts onsite, that there is enough security

onsite and that there are enough basic amenities, especially given the extremely hot temperatures we experience over summer.

I understand the expert panel consulted widely when it came to us with this decision. It was in consultation with music festival organisers, private onsite medical providers, venue managers, peer-based harm reduction services, medical colleges, NSW Ambulance, local health districts, the NSW Poisons Information Centre, other government agencies and many other experts. The expert panel consulted widely. It came back to the Government with recommendations. After this process it deemed that 11 of the 90 festivals were high risk. Those festivals needed to do a bit more to put together safety management plans, get expert health advice, get security and other additional factors. We introduced these regulations. The last time members of the upper House sat in Parliament, the Labor Party, The Greens and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party overturned the Government's regulations. The result is that unless the Opposition supports the legislation we have introduced today—

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Given we are about to enter a high-volume phase for these music festivals the responsible thing to do is to introduce legislation to ensure that regulations for those high-risk festivals are reinstated. All of us have an interest in saving lives. All of us have an obligation to put community first. I call on the Labor Party and all minor parties in this place and in the other place to support the Government's legislation. We want young people to go home safely.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It concerns me that as the Premier of this State I cannot even finish a sentence on this issue without being interrupted by members opposite. We are talking about putting aside politics to save lives. We are saying, "Put aside—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Deputy Coroner has yet to put forward her report. [*Extension of time*]

When she does put forward her report the Government will consider it, but that would not give us enough time to go through this summer and not have young people exposed to what could occur. I urge every member in this place and in the other place to support this important legislation. Whilst this legislation does not include pill testing, I do want to make some comments about that. The Government has been firm because it knows that, regrettably, a pure substance of MDMA or ecstasy can kill. No illicit substance is safe to take. We cannot give a green light to that. It is not only our Government that feels strongly about this.

In January 2018 Victorian Premier Dan Andrews said, "We are not having pill testing in this State, not under a Government I lead ... There is no safe level at which these substances can be taken." The Victorian Premier and I do not agree on everything, but we do agree on this. I finish my comments by quoting the words of Tony Wood, who lost his daughter to MDMA. I am sure he will not mind me quoting his words, which were on the public record. He said, "The MDMA tablet that our Annie took on that fateful night when she died after consuming an ecstasy tablet at a party in 1995 was pure MDMA. It was not contaminated; it was a reaction to the drug itself that did the damage. The fact is that no amount of pill testing would have saved her." This is important legislation. I urge those opposite to put aside the politics and focus with us on saving lives over summer.

#### WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:35:38):** My question is directed to Minister for Local Government. In 2006 the Minister spoke in Parliament against the Tillegra Dam proposal. Does she stand by her statement that dams are "outdated, antiquated schemes" that "must be considered to be twentieth century technology"?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will be silent so that the Minister can respond.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (14:36:17):** I thank the member for Campbelltown and shadow Minister for Local Government for his question. I was waiting for a question about local government—something in relation to his media release today saying that he did not agree with forced amalgamations or something like that. That would have given me the opportunity to talk about the 27 councils that Labor amalgamated between 2000 and 2004—by facsimile!

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

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

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** You amalgamated 27 councils. Ask me a question about local government.

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

*[Government members interjected.]*

**Mr Greg Warren:** They are rowdy over there, Mr Speaker. They have no respect for you. I will wait until they settle down.

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

**Mr Greg Warren:** It is under Standing Order 130. If the Minister wants a debate, I would bring to her attention that dams are a council asset.

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

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I am waiting for members to be silent before I hear the point of order. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I thank you for stopping the clock, because this is a serious issue that deserves some regard.

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

**Mr Clayton Barr:** It is under Standing Order 250. Yesterday and over recent months I have noticed an increasing trend for Ministers—

**The SPEAKER:** What is the member's point of order? Standing Order 250 relates to a member being named.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I am speaking of the Ministers who are at the lectern making their contributions. When a point of order is taken, they continue to ignore your instruction for them to sit down and cease talking so that the point of order can be heard. Standing Order 250 is the only way you can deal with the misbehaviour of that lot over there.

**Mr John Barilaro:** That is not Standing Order 250.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. I do not need the Deputy Premier's assistance, but he is correct. The member will resume his seat.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** I will get back to the subject matter of the question. I really wanted to remind the House about the 27 councils that Labor amalgamated, contrary to its press release today. I have to get back to the question; I am sure that the member will request that by taking a point of order. In relation to the Tillegra Dam, I am getting old and I do not recall speaking against the Tillegra Dam. What I do recall is that your—

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

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** I do recall your leader—I do not know if the member was here at that time—Kristina Keneally, was the one who actually stopped that dam. That is what I do recall. But I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume her seat.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** We do not care what she said; it is what you said.

**The SPEAKER:** I place the member for Swansea on two calls to order for that interjection.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** What was that? Was that a point of order? It was "He said, she said"—I did not understand what she said.

**The SPEAKER:** There was no point of order.

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** To complete my answer, I am disappointed that the member for Campbelltown did not ask me a question on local government. I appreciate his question. I appreciate his

commitment to local government, actually. He and I have enjoyed each other's company over the past two days. He should not ask me a question about the Tillegra Dam because it is embarrassing for his side of politics, since they stopped it.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Has the Minister completed her answer?

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK:** Yes.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

### REGIONAL ECONOMIES

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:40:48):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government is helping to boost regional economies battling drought and fires?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:41:05):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. As all members know, in regional and rural New South Wales we are doing it tough: first the drought and now the fires. Parts of the State have been battling fires for the past three or four months. It was great to see the Minister for Police and Emergency Services again, along with the Premier, me, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister—local members—visit some of the fire fronts over the weekend and visit communities that have been devastated by fires. What is happening is that great Australian spirit: 1,000-plus firefighters on fire fronts across the State, working hard to protect life and property. Of course, in these recent fires we have seen some assets and homes lost—something like 20 homes lost in the recent fires up at Busbys Flat and Drake, and 15 at Rappville. When you think about a community of about 250 people, losing the town hall and some other buildings has a great impact on those communities.

I also want to talk about the 52 homes our firefighters saved. Often we talk about the devastation of fires and the losses. The losses are hard, but I have to point to the 52 homes that were saved. The other part of these particular fires was the tragedy that we lost two lives: Bob Lindsey, 77, and his wife, Gwen Hyde, 68. The Premier, Prime Minister and I had the opportunity to talk to some family members. It is tough for that family. It is tough for the community, but it was great to see the community out and about. This is what we are dealing with in regional and rural New South Wales: the impact of the drought and the loss of jobs. That is why it is important that we build some diversity in regional and rural New South Wales. Of course, we have some fantastic industries, from resources for forestry. A big one that we share across regional and rural New South Wales is tourism, which still underpins a significant part of a diverse economy. If you have a diverse economy in regional and rural New South Wales, you have a strong economy. That is why it is very important that we continue to see investments right across regional and rural New South Wales. That is why we continue to talk about the campaign to visit Bathurst, not Bali.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** What's wrong with Bali?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Nothing is wrong with the member for Blacktown, but I would rather city folk come and visit us in Bathurst or Orange, in Wagga Wagga or Walgett. If you are considering buying Christmas gifts this year, why not consider jumping online and supporting a small business located in regional and rural New South Wales? Or go one better: spend a weekend out in the bush, in the regions. Support local businesses—the cafes, the hotels—because tourism is so important.

We have seen some recent statistics in relation to domestic visitors across regional and rural New South Wales in the year ending March 2019. I am told that there were 25 million domestic visitors across the State, which is fantastic, and that in excess of \$12.5 billion was spent in the local economy. That is so important in creating jobs. The Treasurer earlier touched on the fact that even through the devastation of droughts and the losses in agriculture and primary industry and in the supply chain, we have also seen an increase of about 40,000 jobs in 12 months in regional and rural New South Wales. When we compare that to the rest of regional and rural Australia we see that those areas have had an increase of only 5,000 jobs.

That shows the importance of Government investment leading the charge, driving different industries and making sure that there is job creation. That is why the Regional Growth: Environment and Tourism Fund, which comes out of the Restart NSW fund—\$300 million that the Government has been investing to diversify the tourism product in regional and rural New South Wales—has recently announced that \$62 million will be going out to important projects. I was recently with the local member in Armidale, where there was investment of \$6 million to turn the University of New England's old boiler house into a revolutionary children's learning

space—in other words, the Questacon of the bush. It will give young people an opportunity to visit Armidale and to experience and learn. At the same time it will be a great tourist attraction.

On my recent trip to Dubbo, along with the member for Dubbo I announced a grant of \$10 million to help make Dubbo international tourism-ready. The funds will be invested in three key projects. One is the new plaza at the old Dubbo jail to reactivate the CBD. The Dubbo jail is already an attraction but the Government is going to improve that. The second is a new Wiradjuri cultural tourism centre at the heart of tourism in western New South Wales, especially in Dubbo. The third is an outdoor event space at Ollie Robbins Oval to attract events. Events drive tourism. People love going out to regional and rural New South Wales. We want to give them a reason to come out to the regions. The Elvis Presley Festival at Parkes is significant as is the Deni Ute Muster at Deniliquin. [*Extension of time*]

For the member for Port Macquarie there will be the koala hospital facelift, a \$5 million investment to redevelop and transform Port Macquarie Koala Hospital. Port Macquarie will have a hospital the likes of which people have never seen before. More importantly, it will attract tourists. It will be world class and it will continue to drive tourism in that region. It is important that we continue to create tourist products in the regions. The ability to get to the regions is also important. That is why this Government backed-in the opening up of the new airlines to Cobar, Bourke, Walgett and Lightning Ridge—a new network, the "milk run".

Now, for the first time tourists will be able to get from Sydney to Cobar and also go from Cobar to Lightning Ridge and from Lightning Ridge to Bourke. It is what I call the milk run loop and it will mean that people can now travel to the Far West and western New South Wales like they have never done before. If we want people to visit the regions we have to invest in connectivity. Connectivity means the upgrade of regional airports. In this term of government—under our watch—over the past eight years in excess of \$100 million has gone into upgrades for regional airports. The Government is proud of that investment because if we want people to come to the regions we have to make it easier for them to do so. The Government has also invested in local roads like the Pacific Highway.

Connectivity, in the old language, means roads and rail. But let us not forget the investment by this Government of in excess of \$2.3 billion to upgrade the whole country train fleet. Tenders were awarded and signed off, and those trains are being delivered or being manufactured. To add to that, to create more jobs in the bush, the service and maintenance centre for those new trains will be in Dubbo—otherwise known as Dub Vegas, the capital of the Central West. It is clear that this Government is focused on growing diversity in local economies in regional and rural New South Wales so that they can deal with the impacts of drought or downturns in mining. Tourism is a fantastic way to showcase the regions. I welcome you out to the bush.

### WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:48:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Last week she reportedly told her bureaucrats in a meeting that if they did not support building dams they should get out of the room. Does that include the Minister for Local Government, Shelley Hancock?

**The SPEAKER:** May I see the question?

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: Standing Order 128 is very clear. I encourage all members to study that standing order quite closely because it clearly spells out that that last question from the member for Cessnock demonstrates his intellectual capacity. I ask that the question be ruled out of order.

**Mr Ryan Park:** To the point of order: That point of order came from the Leader of the House who is answering—

**The SPEAKER:** Please speak to the point of order.

**Mr Ryan Park:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 128. The previous point of order came from the Leader of the House, who has been answering questions in this place that have nothing to do with his portfolio—questions about political donations that have nothing to do with anything that he is in charge of and nothing to do with his administration as a Minister of the Crown.

**The SPEAKER:** Is the Minister happy to answer the question?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (14:50:07):** Yes. I am delighted to answer that question because I know that the member for South Coast will stand beside me and deliver a record billion dollars' worth of work to councils around regional New South Wales. If the member wants to refer to a dam that Labor cancelled at a cost to the taxpayer of \$100 million and turn it into an attack on the Government he is not worthy to be the shadow water Minister.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I cannot believe that the Leader of the Opposition would allow this type of question to get through the morning strategy meeting. There is no strategy or thinking in this question. It is a joke. The State is in a serious drought—31 months of record low rainfall across New South Wales—

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** —but we get these pathetic types of questions from the members of the Opposition. Labor cancelled that dam in 2010. It cost the taxpayers of this State \$100 million. Those on the other side of the Chamber are not worthy even to be in Opposition.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I have finished my answer.

#### STATE ECONOMY

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:51:37):** My question is addressed to—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Camden will be heard in silence. I call the member for Baulkham Hills to order for the first time.

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES:** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Can he update the House on how the Government is delivering a strong economic and financial position for New South Wales in compliance with the relevant legislation?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:52:19):** I thank the good member for his question. I was in the nation's capital on Thursday and Friday last week with all the State Treasurers, both Liberal and Labor. There are some very good Labor Treasurers—Tim Pallas in Victoria, Jackie Trad in Queensland and Ben Wyatt from Western Australia, a great young Labor Treasurer. As I was sitting in this meeting of Treasurers a question dawned on me: Why here in New South Wales did we get the dregs of the Australian Labor Party? What did we do to deserve this? In the other States they are intelligent and forward thinking. They are looking at reforms. The father of Kim Beazley once said, "The Labor Party was once the cream of the working class; they are now the dregs of the middle class." Here we have the dregs of the dregs.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Treasurer, please resume your seat.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** I have two points of order. One relates to Standing Order 129. These comments have nothing to do with the question the Treasurer was asked. He has had more than adequate leeway.

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

**Mr Paul Lynch:** The other is under Standing Order 91—his failure to sit down when a point of order was taken.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask that the Treasurer resume his seat when asked to do so. The Treasurer will continue.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** The member for Camden knows only too well the significant differences between the policies of the Liberals and Nationals and those of Labor and what those policies have delivered here in New South Wales: A strong economy leading the way, more jobs created than ever before, record amounts of infrastructure, support for working families, support for small businesses and budget surpluses. Even though we have global headwinds coming our way, the New South Wales economy continues to lead the way. Annual dwelling completions in New South Wales have reached record highs—over 75,000 in the quarter—and remain the highest in the nation.

As the tourism Minister knows only too well, we continue to be the preferred tourist destination in Australia, accounting for 37 per cent of all visitors to this country over the last 12 months. Business conditions improved again in September, rising above the decade average and putting New South Wales in first place amongst the States. This did not happen by accident. It happened because we on this side of the House create conditions for economic success. During the election campaign we announced cuts to payroll tax for small business. Under our tax cuts we have many businesses not just paying less tax—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —but some small businesses are not paying any tax at all as they fall out of those brackets. This is important. It enables small businesses to invest more in their business, to bring on new staff and to increase wages. We know that the Labor Party opposed those tax cuts at the last election. Members opposite went around and spoke about the need for further revenue. Last week we revised the 2018-2019 budget position. We forecast in this year's budget—that great budget—a surplus of \$800 million. I am pleased to inform the House that figure has been revised up to a surplus of \$1.2 billion. That is important, because that is the buffer that enables us to deal with situations like the drought—unforeseen events that come our way. That is why the Liberal-Nationals governments can provide that support and Labor governments cannot.

One of the things that helped boost that budget bottom line was an increase in payroll tax collections. We cut the tax and we actually increased tax revenue and payroll tax revenue at the same time. Members opposite do not understand that, because they do not believe in the Laffer curve—that cutting rates can actually increase tax revenue. That is exactly what has happened here. It is supply-side economics backed in by the member for Liverpool, pioneered by the great Ronald Reagan, and backed in by the great Gladys Berejiklian. Forget Reaganomics, we have got Gladynamics. We are leading the way. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** One of the reasons we can continue to invest record amounts is that we are the only State in the country to have legislated a Fiscal Responsibility Act 2012. When we introduced that Act back in 2011 it was opposed by those opposite. However, there is another Act that is also important in New South Wales and that is the Electoral Act 2017. Every political party needs to comply with this Act and they must have a registered officer. I downloaded the list today. Next to the Australian Labor Party is none other than the suspended Kaila Leah Murnain. Members on that side of the House are running an illegitimate operation.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order. The Treasurer will resume his seat.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This has absolutely nothing to do with the question that he was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer has been highly relevant in his answer. I am happy to give a bit of latitude, as I usually do.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Today we learnt that the Leader of the Opposition and the former Federal Attorney-General are facilitating a \$700,000 payout to Kaila Murnain.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Point of order—

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They will not understand that. In Labor currency, that is seven Aldi bags.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Treasurer will resume his seat.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129 and relevance. The Treasurer—

**The SPEAKER:** I have just ruled on that. The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. That is deliberately—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** The Treasurer was doing very well, telling us about payroll tax—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury will sit down.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Continue talking about payroll tax.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time, which is three calls straightaway.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have converted it. I am going to do the budget next year and I will have a Labor edition in Aldi bags. This is a party that is meant to be representing the workers of the State—

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order—

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** —and is handing out \$700,000 for someone—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Treasurer will resume his seat.

**Mr Chris Minns:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** I have just ruled on Standing Order 129.

**Mr Chris Minns:** There may be information you are not aware of.

**The SPEAKER:** I am going to put you on another call to order for that one. Please resume your seat. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the second time. Resume your seat.

**Mr Chris Minns:** There may be information you are not aware of.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kogarah will resume his seat.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Far be it from me to defend Kaila Murnain—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kogarah will resume his seat.

**Mr Chris Minns:** —but the Treasurer is way off base here.

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

**Mr Chris Minns:** He should come back to the economy.

**The SPEAKER:** You are about to go out.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** You obviously support the \$700,000.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Why the protection racket?

**The SPEAKER:** The clock will remain stopped. I will hear the point of order from the member for Campbelltown, but the points of order are becoming disruptive.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Further to your ruling, with all respect—

**The SPEAKER:** I have ruled on that already. Do you have a new point of order?

**Mr Greg Warren:** You put the member for Kogarah on three calls. Those opposite have been doing it all day. The Leader of the House and others keep on talking—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown will sit down.

**Mr Greg Warren:** They are never pulled up.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** What do those opposite say to the teachers and the nurses? That amount is eight times the average salary for workers in this State in a \$700,000 payout for someone who is collecting illegal donations, breaking the law, lying to ICAC and covering it up. They are running this sham investigation and have appointed a new general secretary—

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Point of order—

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** No, this is a very important issue. I call on—

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

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** I have ruled on that point of order three times.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** So do I get three calls?

**The SPEAKER:** No, you get one call to order because you have been well behaved today. I call the member for Gosford to order for the first time. The Treasurer will continue.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Consistency, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not place other members directly on three calls to order. The member for Kogarah was already on one call to order. The Treasurer will resume his seat. I will make it really clear: When members are being deliberately disruptive I will call them to order. Order! When members continue to speak at the table

when I have asked them to stop, they will be put on at least another call to order. That is why members have been called to order on multiple occasions. When I have just ruled on a particular point of order I do not want another member taking the same point of order. The Treasurer will continue.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order: You just said that if members continued to speak after you called them to order then you would put them on a call. On multiple occasions the Treasurer has continued to speak after you have asked him to cease speaking. Why are members on this side of the House getting called to order and the Treasurer is not?

**The SPEAKER:** That is a legitimate concern. I will not call the Treasurer to order, but I will ask him to sit when I ask him to do so. He is being deliberately disrupted—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Provocative.

**The SPEAKER:** No. He is being deliberately interrupted to interfere with the flow. I ask Opposition members to listen to what the Treasurer is actually saying. The Treasurer will continue.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** These are union dues and taxpayer dollars—some \$700,000 worth. The police Minister says, "Crime doesn't pay," but it certainly pays if you are in the New South Wales Labor Party. Today I call on the Leader of the Opposition, if she has any authority, to stop the \$700,000 payout. If the former Attorney-General is going to have any credibility when it comes to this review, he will step in today and stop the \$700,000 payment. Kaila Murnain does not deserve a golden handshake; she deserves golden handcuffs.

#### WESTERN SYDNEY ELECTIVE SURGERY

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:03:17):** My question is directed to the health Minister. Today he has been accused by a respected surgeon at Mount Druitt Hospital of consistent abuse of this disadvantaged community. Why is the Minister cutting elective surgery at Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (15:03:36):** Thank you.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury is on her final warning.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The member for Mount Druitt knows better than most that a huge amount has been done by this Government that was not done under the Labor Government to rebuild Mt Druitt and Blacktown hospitals.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Why are you cutting elective surgery waiting lists?

**The SPEAKER:** Members will remain silent.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Both hospitals are having nearly three quarters of a billion dollars spent on them. Blacktown hospital is looking fantastic, so is Mount Druitt.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Why are you consistently abusing this elective surgery?

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** You are very noisy but there is not a lot of substance. The bottom line here is that not only did the one doctor write—he has written to the member for Mt Druitt before who has passed it to me, and I recognise he has concerns about a range of issues; I will not mention the doctor by name—but I have had three or four letters on this issue. They all come from a meeting that occurred—as I discovered only about two hours ago—with the general manager of the hospital. He is obviously talking to various members at the public hospital, trying to manage public health dollars as best he can. Do I agree with what he is doing? It is not my position at this point to agree or disagree.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You are the health Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I say to the Leader of the Opposition, the higher pitched you get, the more irrelevant you get, so do not worry about it.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. They are final warnings.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I have given no instructions to the general manager of the hospital other than to spend the additional \$88 million that went into the budget this year. I repeat, the second highest increase in the budget in any local health department went to Western Sydney, because the Liberal-Nationals Government is very

much committed to ensuring that the community in Western Sydney gets absolutely first class public health services.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** No, you're not.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** South-west Sydney got the biggest increase in budget this year.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Why are you cutting elective surgery?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** You are very noisy, and nothing comes of it.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You could answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** If you could say something of substance you would probably have a go at being Premier, but the way you are going right now you are showing you will not even last the distance. You will not be there at the next election.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Oh, yes I will.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** You won't.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Canterbury from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

*[The member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 15:06 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: You talked in your opening address about—

**The SPEAKER:** Please do not lecture me. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Ryan Park:** You talked in your opening address about—

**The SPEAKER:** What is the member's point of order? I called the member for Canterbury to order three times. I then gave her an additional warning. I am now ejecting her from the Chamber. She has had more than fair warning.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** How long, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** For the day. The Minister has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Health has had the biggest increase in its budget of all time.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is about why the Government is cutting elective surgery waiting lists. They have been accused of consistent abuse of this community and I think it is a question the Minister should be made to answer.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** Minister, tell them about the new hospital, which they never built.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I just did.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. It is not a laughing matter. I think the Minister should answer this question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the third time. That is her final warning for today.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You throw me out and we all walk.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the Leader of the Opposition to remove herself from the Chamber for one hour. You do not threaten me, and if you walk out it is an indictment on your side. The Clerk will stop the clock.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Strathfield left the Chamber at 15:08.]*

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the crossbench for playing the responsible role of Opposition. I make it very clear: I do not take personal insult, but representing the Parliament in the chair I will not take that type of disrespect from anybody in this Chamber. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to reflect on that. The Minister has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I am bitterly disappointed that the entire Labor Party has walked out when a substantive answer is being given on health. Let me make this very clear: the New South Wales Government is

spending more on health than Labor ever did in its history. Secondly, we are rebuilding Blacktown and Mt Druitt hospitals with three quarters of a billion dollars. Thirdly, the number of elective surgeries at both Blacktown and Mt Druitt hospitals is up by over 15 per cent and fully funded, and 100 per cent of elective surgery patients had their surgery on time. If the members of the Opposition had stayed and listened, or even come and discussed privately what the management was trying to do, then I would also have discussed that with them. I have made it clear to the management that they will continue to deliver services as best they possibly can, and if more money is needed the Government will provide it.

### BALMAIN ELECTORATE FERRY SERVICES

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:10:29):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Following the Minister's announcement of a trial of on-demand ferry services to Blackwattle Bay will the Government commit to making this service more affordable for commuters and extend the service to Annandale and Balmain West?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:10:48):** I thank my favourite member for Balmain and my favourite greenie for his question. I have to say, he is someone who should be the leader of The Greens in New South Wales. We would all welcome that. We are not particular fans of Mr David Shoebridge, but we are fans of the member for Balmain. He is not leading some sort of extinction rebellion, although I thank him for his input in relation to that. I thank him for his question about on-demand. It is a concept which is very important. I am happy to consider those locations, but let us run the trial first. That is very important. The notion and concept of the six-month trial with a minicat servicing the bays precinct is very important. At around \$7.60 it is an affordable fair. It has been running since Monday and already 60 patrons have used the on-demand smart phone application and taken up the service that runs every day. We will evaluate it very closely.

In terms of the notion and concept of first mile-last mile transport, in New South Wales we have taken a leading step forward with buses and now with Australia's first on-demand ferry trial. It is servicing important wharves, which do not necessarily have a contracted service, in particular the fish market, which I think from memory has around two million to three million visitors a year. It is an important service and we will see how we go. The notion and concept of "on demand" is not lost on me, particularly when it comes to the shadow transport Minister, who has a big belief in on-demand donations. A member of The Greens has come into this place and responsibly asked a question about transport.

We have seen from those opposite an ongoing effort to disrupt the House, not ask questions about matters to do with transport, and then what happened this afternoon. The House is being treated with utter contempt by those opposite, and in particular by the man who has been named 78 times in the ICAC, the member for Kogarah and the shadow Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Those opposite have walked out in the middle of a question relating to a health issue. We have had a question in relation to transport from a member for The Greens, and I suspect there might be another question which may potentially relate to water. The contempt that has been shown by the Leader of the Opposition this afternoon, both to the Speaker and members, and the Opposition's response to the issues that matter to the community, are a clear demonstration that the Labor Party simply does not care.

I am appalled at what has happened. I have seen, for instance, issues this week which have played out in the public domain; in particular an interview that happened on Ray Hadley's program, again involving issues around on-demand payments, in this case involving the Secretary of the Labor Party in New South Wales, who is still in her role. The argument there was that it was for \$700,000. I was intrigued to see Ray Hadley ask the Opposition leader in this State this question in relation to Kaila Murnain: "Is it difficult for you, given that she was openly supporting you in your battle with Chris Minns"—the shadow Minister for transport—"for the leadership?" Do members know what the Leader of the Opposition said? She said that she was not openly supportive; she had a vote, one vote, like everyone else. That is just a bare-faced untruth. There is no doubt that certainly in terms of the actions of the Leader of the Opposition in this place this afternoon and her ongoing behaviour in the public domain, when there has been a cover-up in relation to the shadow Minister for Transport, who has constantly lied about his donations from Mr Yee, Mr Huang, Mr Wong and Mr Lin, and it is all exposure—

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will take that point of order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Oh, you are back.

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

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** My point of order is Standing Order 73.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Minister to refrain from using that type of language in relation to a member in this House.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** They are the names of the donors.

**The SPEAKER:** Do not refer to lying.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I said untruth. I am happy to use the word "mendacious" but the reality is that we have had a leadership spill and it is good to see the member for Auburn taking on the leadership role.

**The SPEAKER:** So as not to prejudice in any way the special guests here today representing the late Hon. Tim Fischer, I make it clear that the suspension of the Leader of the Opposition is until the end of the regular part of question time so she can contribute to the condolence motion.

#### WATER SECURITY

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:16:45):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is continuing to deliver water security across New South Wales?

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (15:17:02):** I thank the member for Goulburn for her question and ongoing interest on behalf her constituents, who will also benefit. However, some residents will be impacted by the Wyangala Dam expansion. She and the member for Cootamundra are great champions for those in that part of the world, who are very lucky to have them as their members, doing an incredible job as part of a government that is delivering for regional New South Wales. This is the worst drought on record. While some people want to blame farmers for the drought, it is important to note that in 2016 the State was awash with water. The Newell Highway was cut for six weeks because in that low-lying area of New South Wales water was blocking the ability for heavy transport to be able to take freight down to Melbourne and up to Brisbane via the Newell Highway, the spine of trade in western New South Wales. Our dams were full.

Burrundong Dam, I think, got to 120 per cent and we had to spill, while the Lachlan was full. We were in the amazing situation of plentiful water but 31 months later we have had record low inflows into regional New South Wales. That is why we are in drought. If it was not for the dams we have, those rivers would have stopped running maybe 18 months ago or even two years ago in some cases. It is the management of water by the most civilised nations, even before the Babylonians—being able to irrigate, store, harvest and harness water—and its ability to grow product that lets people live their full and most wonderful lives, as well as the natural habitat. Our plan across regional New South Wales is about putting in more storage to give farmers greater security. Farmers in the Lachlan Valley, which the member for Goulburn represents, only get 40 per cent of their general security allocation, so only 40 per cent of the time are they able to access category 1 general security allocations.

By doubling the size of Wyangala, by improving the capacity there, we give certainty to our farmers and communities across New South Wales, and with the announcement in relation to Dungowan Dam near Tamworth, which is one of the biggest manufacturing centres in New South Wales. Food manufacturing is what New South Wales does best and Tamworth is central to that. The challenges that town faces with respect to water supply are being met by the Government; the Government is meeting those demands to extend water supply into that town.

Instead of running out maybe next June, the Government will extend it out to 2021 with that pipeline from Chaffey Dam down to Dungowan. This is the type of work the Government is planning on doing. It is also important to remember that the Government has already delivered 2.3 billion litres of storage to communities across the State since it was elected—communities such as Glen Innes, Lake Wallace Dam in Nimmitabel, the Kyogle water supply, Cobar, Nyngan and in my community of Nambucca working in partnership with local councils, supporting them with dollars to ensure the viability of their town water supplies.

In addition to these water storage projects that the Government has already delivered, it is investing in further town storage projects in very important communities like Wilcannia and Walgett. I know the member for Barwon is very appreciative of the work and consultation the Government is going through at this time. Walgett is one of the towns facing the brunt of the drought. The Government is carting water to ensure Walgett does not run out of water. To prepare Walgett for future droughts the Government has invested 100 per cent of funding to raise the Walgett weir by one metre, adding over 1.1 billion litres of storage for the town.

This is what we on this side are doing. What we are planning into the future is about getting us through this drought and ensuring we have better harvesting and better storage capacity with the three dams that we have announced through our emergency water supply bill that will go through proper environmental processes through our critical State infrastructure pathway. This is what it is about—ensuring we get through this drought with emergency provisions, in concurrence with the environment Minister, as well as building these new storages. There will also be the capacity, with the support of the Federal Government coming in to co-locate investment with us— [*Extension of time*]

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I thank the Minister for Health for his support and his encouragement because it is important that we get the water out to the dialysis machines through our communities.

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides of the House will come to order so that the Minister can continue.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** Through the leadership of the Premier and the Deputy Premier we have \$1.4 billion set aside in the Snowy Hydro fund so we will be able to explore other opportunities across New South Wales, as I have told the House before—projects such as underground dams, a perfect solution to stop unnecessary evaporation. We are going to be working on some very exciting projects as well as supporting and helping councils to be strategic through the extra investment they will be able to make with our support into town water and sewerage supplies to ensure the State gets through this drought. We are also then able to ensure that we are in a better position, because of the change and the variability we have in climate, so that when we have the big events we can store more water to ensure the future prosperity of this great State.

### CORRECTIVE SERVICES CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMS

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:23:32):** My question is addressed to Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections. Can the Minister please update the House about the creative arts programs within Corrective Services NSW and how they assist to reduce reoffending and keep our communities safe?

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (15:24:02):** I thank the honourable member for Dubbo for his question and also for accompanying me on my recent visit to the great electorate of Dubbo. It is even greater now with a fantastic local member who is so committed to serving what is an incredibly large and broad community. It is rather awkward, considering most of my response was geared to belt up Labor and they do not appear to have turned up to the fight—so I will do what I can. I pay tribute to what is probably the best Government in the history of New South Wales and indeed probably of the world in its entire history. I dare anyone opposite, from the other side, to contradict that. Silence—thank you, I will take that as unanimous out of this House. We have the best Premier that this State has ever seen. Again there does not seem to be any opposition to that. We have the best leader of The Nationals we have ever seen.

**Mr John Barilaro:** We are thinking about going on that side.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Okay. You've been thinking about that for a while. We have the best Treasurer and indeed we have the best Cabinet, probably in the entire world. Again, I hear no dissenting voices from those opposite.

**Ms Gladys Berejiklian:** The backbenchers.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** The backbench—ah, yes. But that again goes without saying. I must say we have the most intelligent and good-looking backbench that this Parliament has ever seen. Again, there is no dissent from that in this House today. Let those comments I have made today go down in history. Mr Speaker, let it be carved in stone that this House unanimously agreed with our position at the start of this question. Dare I say as well, now that I have mentioned the member, Shelley Hancock is a fantastic and good-looking Minister. We also probably have someone to take on Speaker Bercow in the wonderful House of Commons at Westminster, someone who brings to this Chamber a great level of intelligence, style, commitment, professionalism and reform.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** What a good day he had today. But that's a Labor guy—corrupt.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** They all agree. I dare any of the Labor Party, who are always—

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** Do they agree or do they oppose they're corrupt?

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** And can I say one of the awful things we have to discuss today is the corruption of the Labor Party. Unfortunately we do not seem to hear any objection or opposition to it in this House either.

**Mr Greg Piper:** Point of order—

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Back to my point, it gives me great pleasure to inform the House of some great programs the hardworking staff within Corrective Services have implemented. A key driver to these programs is to ensure inmates are better prepared for employment on their release. As a government we on this side are committed to the Premier's Priority announced in June of this year to reduce adult reoffending following release from prison by 5 per cent by 2023. Stable employment is an important factor in reducing the likelihood of reoffending and returning to prison. Corrective Services is committed to education and training opportunities for inmates. I note that 99 per cent of inmates with a sentence of more than six months have completed a core skills assessment.

As the Minister for corrections I am fortunate to be able to visit the various correctional centres across this great State and to see firsthand the important work that our amazing Corrective Services NSW staff do. I thank them for keeping our community safe. They do a very difficult and important job. In early October I attended the Bathurst Correctional Centre to provide a prison expansion update with Minister Paul Toole—another fantastic and great Minister. Bathurst prison expansion is a good news story, especially for the Treasurer. Construction is running ahead of time and under budget—and we would like to keep the money. An additional 65 jobs will be created at the centre and the construction work has seen the engagement of some 150 contractors.

More recently, as I mentioned, I was in the electorate of the member for Dubbo, visiting the Macquarie Correctional Centre, one of two highly successful rapid-build prisons across the State. I acknowledge the police Minister here today and the fantastic work that he did in laying the foundations for those centres. Macquarie Correctional Centre inmates learn art, music, woodwork and other practical skills through an innovative program where inmates lead the classroom. These initiatives will eventually allow inmate teachers to gain training and assessment qualifications. We know that having inmates engaged in education and work opportunities inside prison drastically decreases their chances of reoffending post release. [*Extension of time*]

Learning new skills is not only a prosocial activity but it is a step towards rehabilitation. Labor attack piece, Labor slamming piece, Labor belting—go back to smash and then belt. Can I say generally I look forward to updating the House on many, many things I could not update the House on here today. But there is an upcoming custodial portrait artist of the year competition and exhibition. Speaking of art, it would be remiss of me not to mention that exhibition. There have been over 90 entries submitted by inmates and staff and the competition will be judged by two previous Archibald winners and one previous Archibald finalist.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** How many Labor submissions?

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Currently we have Eddie and Macca. No, Macca is gone so the branch is now 50/50, which is great for Eddie. You have to understand that while Macca was in prison, it was the only place that Labor's Left had the numbers. Again I say that prison is a place for rehabilitation and not punishment, but I place on record that putting Edward Obeid in prison, where the Left had the numbers between Macca and Milton, was an incredible punishment that he probably did not deserve. We will continue to work on rehabilitation. I look forward to addressing the House and filling in members on some further items I was not able to fill them in on today.

#### *Business of the House*

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to provide for the postponement of the Public Interest Debate until after the condolence motion and the conclusion of Government business.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Petitions*

#### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

#### **The Star Casino**

Petition opposing construction of a proposed residential and hotel tower on The Star casino site, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

#### **Low-cost Housing and Homelessness**

Petition requesting increased funding for low-cost housing and homelessness services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Inner-city Ferry Services**

Petition calling on the Government to fast-track project work for ferry wharves and services at Glebe Point; Johnstons Bay, Pyrmont; Woolloomooloo; and Elizabeth Bay, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Pet Shops**

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Intensive Duck Factories**

Petition requesting the banning of the operation of intensive duck factories without easily accessible swimming water for ducks, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Powerhouse Museum Ultimo**

Petition requesting the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the expansion of museum services to other parts of New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Companion Animals on Public Transport**

Petition requesting that companion animals be allowed to travel with their owners on all public transport, including trains, buses, light rail and ferries, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Owners Corporations and Short-term Letting**

Petition requesting that owners corporations be given the authority to control short-term letting in their buildings, including to place limits beyond State controls or to ban the practice outright, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### *Condolences*

#### **TIMOTHY ANDREW FISCHER, AC, FORMER MEMBER FOR STURT AND FORMER MEMBER FOR MURRAY, AND FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (15:32:06):** I move:

That this House extends to the family the deep sympathy of the members of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained by the death, on 22 August 2019, of the Honourable Timothy Andrew Fischer, a former member of the Legislative Assembly and a former Deputy Prime Minister.

Many have spoken about the remarkable life and legacy of Timothy Andrew Fischer, AC, since he sadly passed away on 22 August this year. It is fitting that we acknowledge the life of this remarkable man in this place, as Tim was a very proud son of regional New South Wales and, of course, a member of this place, but also as a giant of the National Party in this, our centenary year. I take a moment to welcome Tim's wife, Judy, and their sons, Harrison and Dominic, to the Legislative Assembly today. I also mention Tim's sister Vicki Baudry, Tim's brother-in-law Yves Baudry, Tim's niece Cynthia Coghill and his close friends Clive Powell and Robert and Claire Linsdell. As a farmer, a soldier, a veteran, a State and Federal member of Parliament, trade Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, an ambassador, an author, a train enthusiastic but most importantly a loving husband and father, the legacy left by Tim Fischer extends well into the hearts of regional Australia and indeed throughout the world.

Long before Tim became a household name across Australia and around the world, he was a member of this House. When elected for Sturt in 1971, Tim made history by being the youngest member of the State Parliament at that time and the first Vietnam veteran elected to any Parliament in Australia. The 1970 preselection meeting at Lockhart saw him defeat four older candidates at just 23 years of age. The story goes that at the time Tim possessed a number of traits, some in his favour and some that worked against him. He was very young and gangly, had a noticeable stutter, was a bachelor and a Catholic and had a German surname.

But on the positive side and overwhelmingly in Tim's favour, he had been in the Xavier College debating team and knew how to marshal his points; he had written about politics for the school newspaper; his relationship with the media was well documented—he often took the press gallery on the road with him; he had a cogent presentation of policies; and he was a returned serviceman, Vietnam conscript, officer and platoon leader and had an RSL badge. It is these positive traits that led to Tim being successfully preselected and eventually elected into what became a prominent and illustrious career in politics.

Tim was a genuine statesman and a role model to me and to many other people in this place. The work he did on gun control with then former Prime Minister John Howard has been well documented. However, I believe it would be remiss of me to not touch on it briefly as it sums up Tim as a man of conviction. Fischer and Howard toured the length of Australia doing town halls and listening to the people and had to make some very

tough decisions. Despite much opposition, particularly from the bush, and a powerful campaign from the gun lobby, Fischer and Howard made a tough decision, showing a level of conviction that should be admired by all of us here today.

Tim was highly respected by those who served with him in the army and he spoke affectionately about his life as a soldier, always paying the highest regard to those who had served. Tim was held in the highest regard by ex-service members, who will sadly miss his sense of humour and forthright representations on behalf of the community. This respect was often displayed through Tim's aptitude for remembering names, a skill which is necessary in this industry but which I am sure we can all agree can be very difficult. Tim could pass someone in an airport terminal or on a street and remember his or her name and what they did. He would mentally note the colour of someone's tie or something else about their attire and connect it to that person's name. Then, if asked a question by that person, he would be able to respond by referring to them by name. He could recall the person's name and where they came from many years down the track, even if he had had no connection with them for a while.

Many of the tributes on his passing have referred to Tim's humility. That virtue was on display right there on the day of his preselection. The story goes that each of the five contenders could deliver a 10-minute speech to the 180 delegates at the Sturt State Electorate Council. Halfway through, the general secretary and returning officer, Colonel Bill Ford, was distracted and rang the bell. Tim's time was up. Tim said, "Your watch is different from mine. I'm sorry. I thought I had 10 minutes. I thank you, delegates. I have made my submission and I leave the matter in your hands." As Tim went to sit down, Colonel Ford acknowledged his mistake and called him back so he could finish his address. It was a classic Tim Fischer moment. He politely made his point—that he thought he had 10 minutes—accepted the chief's ruling, and sat down.

In 1973 Tim won his second election on primaries for the seat of Sturt. He was humble in victory, saying that the Country Party was strongly supported, though he conceded that the 18-year-old vote favoured the Country Party and himself as a result of progressive policies and a commitment to regional youth. On 23 Jan 1971 in Tim's first election campaign he placed "Meet Tim Fischer" ads outlining his itinerary for the next week and his availability in various towns across the electorate. Sturt included places like Lockhart, Urana, Corowa, Howlong and Narrandera as well as his hometown, Boree Creek, which was in the centre of the electorate. Tim's weekly campaign itinerary ads were routinely replicated when he was a State and Federal parliamentarian and candidate. He would often designate the local post office as a meeting point. That was how he earned the moniker Two-Minute Tim. He would stick to the packed itinerary but you had to turn up on time or he would be gone to the next post office.

In that first four-week campaign he made 58 stops, including very small towns like Grong Grong, Matong and Brocklesby. This practice of embracing a heavy itinerary became a habit long before he became Deputy Prime Minister. Tim's days, whether they were parliamentary sitting days or not, would be broken down into small segments. At a luncheon meeting he would produce a business card-sized agenda crammed with dot points to be covered in the next hour or so. There was no such thing as a relaxing catch-up with Tim. It is these traits that led to him being one of this nation's greatest grassroots parliamentarians. He built a special relationship and bond with residents and community groups in every town and village in his electorate and indeed right across Australia, especially regional Australia. This was best exemplified when farmers lined the railway line and waved their akubra hats as Tim's funeral train travelled from The Rock to Albury.

Tim had a strong affection for the flat, red-loam country around Boree Creek and he also had a strong affiliation with the Snowy Mountains region, an area close to my heart as the member for Monaro. The former member for Monaro Peter Cochran had a deep respect for Tim Fischer as a member of Parliament for his deep understanding of the unspoken bond between Vietnam veterans, for his willingness to accept a joke on himself and for his fantastic sense of humour. Tim's passion for the bush and The Nationals extended far and wide throughout this great nation and he was passionate about making sure those in the bush got their fair share. One of Tim's political mantras was, "The Country Party is not a farmer's party but a country people's party," which rings true to this very day.

One January in a State election year, Tim noticed that at least one Liberal frontbencher in the New South Wales Parliament had been in Melbourne at the Australian Open tennis. Tim's public comments and his deep sense of connection with communities made it clear he thought those New South Wales Liberals at the time had their priorities wrong. Labor won that election. Tim was no stranger to the Monaro region, as I said. He celebrated his tenth anniversary of election to the Federal Parliament at the Queanbeyan Bicentennial Hall. Tim's dinner even attracted a "crazy call" from Marty Haynes of FM104.7, a local Canberra radio station.

Marty phoned Gaye White, a New South Wales Nationals life member who was organising the event. He convinced Gaye he was from the catering company and that they had made dramatic and low-quality changes to the anniversary dinner menu, just two days out from the event. Gaye became very flustered and agitated while

on air and was not impressed when she was told it was a crazy call set up by the local Nationals branch member. Gaye was just settling down when Tim phoned her to say he had heard the crazy call on the radio and wanted it played at the anniversary dinner.

Tim founded the legendary Tumbatrek to promote summer tourism in the Snowy Mountains and hosted the event for 22 years. As Acting Prime Minister, Tim often ran the nation from the slopes of Kosciuszko or from his farm, Peppers, at Boree Creek, dragging the Canberra press gallery out of their comfort zone of Canberra. I am sure the Canberra press gallery breathed a big sigh of relief when Tim stepped down as Deputy Prime Minister. Tim also left a big impression on the world stage. His service in Vietnam impacted on him and he developed close ties with South-East Asia, especially Thailand. Reflecting the true Aussie hospitality he was known for, Tim often encouraged people he met during his trips to drop in for a cuppa at Boree Creek.

When a busload of Thai tourists turned up unannounced at Peppers one hot afternoon, Tim was not taken aback—he was not home at the time. But Judy certainly was home and she provided afternoon tea to a busload of Thai strangers, with traditional country hospitality. Tim's commitment to the world stage was exemplified when he was appointed Ambassador to the Holy See in 2010, taking his country charm and charisma to the Vatican. I would like to recount some excerpts from a story by the President of The Nationals and former parliamentarian, Larry Anthony, who visited Tim in Rome in 2010:

I was met by Tim Fischer waiving his familiar Akubra hat at the Termini Station in Rome. His hat was a little more stylish than his hat of trade in Australia. It was black with a sharp trim brim.

He was in good humour, jocular, positive and a man on a mission. We traversed the cobbled streets past a basilica or two as the rapid gun fire of Tim's tongue took me on a tour of late-night Rome. ... The next day we awoke to a big day at the Vatican. Tim said in his nonchalant style he had a few duties at the Vatican that he had to attend and why don't I come along for a while ... Few duties indeed! He emerged from his apartment in coat and tails with the clatter of medals adorning his chest. Medals from his own career in Australia, through to Argentina, Chile and his much-earned military medals from another era, Vietnam. He certainly was not weighed down by these precious metals but invigorated by the Holy gathering that was about to unfold.

"You better get a tie and jacket just in case I can show you around the Holy See," said the Hat.

"Roger that Tim" as we took off in his car navigating the maze of roads designed by the Romans many thousands of years ago.

Formula 1 driver Mark Webber would have been proud as Tim navigated his chauffeur driven car (no chauffeur in sight) like a laser guided missile through the narrow streets, destination the Vatican. It must have been his former military training as he had engraved on his subconscious every entry point to the Holy See and the labyrinth of roads that lie behind the ancient walls of this small independent State.

Crowds were starting to amass in St Peters square for a very special occasion that happens once every four years in the Catholic calendar. The elevation of 24 Archbishops from around the globe to Cardinals! One could say this is the most exclusive club on the planet. Our own Cardinal Pell was in attendance along with about 200 other Cardinals who are summoned to Rome to witness this important event.

As we drove through the check points, Tim waved his hat and diplomatic passport which seemed to give us total immunity from the Swiss guards that have sworn their allegiance to protecting the Pope and his property. It was quite surreal that many of the guards and indeed the assembled guests knew the Australian ambassador as if he was part of the furniture.

Tim took me on the back roads that wind behind St Peters Basilica until we found a park above the Popes Railway Station. A mandatory history lesson and inspection of the rail line and Station followed with a photo as the Hat led me into the edge of the tunnel. I soon learnt that this was built by Mussolini as compensation for confiscating numerous papal properties during WIL.

The more I think about Tim's life, the more impressive he becomes. I commend the Lockhart RSL Sub-Branch for its very dignified ceremony for Tim at the Albury railway station. Well done to the Federation Council for renaming the Boree Creek Community Park in honour of Tim. I understand that there are plans to erect a statue of him at Lockhart railway station. Also, more recently Judy unveiled a commemorative plaque at the Henty Machinery Field Days, where Tim was made a patron. In his early days as the member for Sturt he helped the field days cooperative to gain freehold title to operate on the current site. At the plaque unveiling Judy spoke of the importance of the event to Tim, promising to only speak for two minutes!

Tim Fischer, the Boy from Boree Creek, who became our Deputy Prime Minister and a much-endearing international statesman, will be sadly missed. But his legacy and his spirit will live on through Judy, his sons, Harrison and Dominic, and everyone else who loved and respected him. I acknowledge contributions to today's address by Jenny Gardiner, George Lemon and Larry Anthony. Rest in peace, Tim Fischer.

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:46:40):** The Deputy Premier's speech was lovely; the affection he held for Tim was clear. The bush has lost one of its finest sons. Tim Fischer will be forever remembered as a once-in-a-generation politician who radiated kindness and empathy for the people he served. I join the Premier, and indeed all members in this place, by extending my condolences to his friends, family and loved ones. As a former State and Federal parliamentarian, former Federal Leader of the National Party and Deputy Prime Minister from 1996 to 1999, Tim Fischer was respected by both sides of Parliament. He will always be known as a man of decency and compassion who, above all else, prided himself on his service to his community and his nation.

Despite the illustrious titles he held throughout his 40 years in public life, he was first and foremost a country boy. He was known as the "Boy from Boree Creek" and became permanently identified with the Akubra he donned later in life. By any measure, it was an incredible life. Tim Fischer was raised in the small town of Lockhart in the Riverina. At the age of 18 he served Australia in the military. He was conscripted into the army and served as a second lieutenant in the Vietnam War. Upon returning from the war, he returned to Boree Creek in the Riverina and served New South Wales in this place for some 14 years, representing the electorates of Sturt and Murray. Later, he served his nation in the Federal Parliament as the member for Farrer and ultimately as Leader of the National Party and Deputy Prime Minister.

During his time in public life Tim Fischer was known by both sides of politics as a man of incredible conviction who stuck by his principles even when it was very difficult to do so. He will forever be known for his steadfast advocacy for stricter gun control regulations in the wake of the Port Arthur massacre. We should never underestimate how difficult and courageous this stand was. It occurred despite fierce opposition from some of his constituents and from other conservatives. But he stood his ground because he knew that despite the political backlash it was ultimately the right and moral thing to do. Now, more than 20 years later, Australia is a more peaceful nation that is largely free of that terrible gun crime and the mass shootings that we see in the United States. All Australians owe him a debt of gratitude for that.

Tim Fischer also demonstrated great courage and conviction by standing up to the divisive and racist sentiments expressed by Pauline Hanson and One Nation in the late 1990s. Tim was known as a straight talker. He did not hold back when he rightly labelled Hanson's politics, "Divisive, dumb and wrong". He opposed Hanson's politics from not only a moral but also an economic standpoint. He knew that regional and rural Australia would succeed and thrive by engaging with international markets, particularly in Asia. This came from his strong belief that coming from the bush should not limit what you are able to achieve—a belief that I also hold strongly. I recently corresponded with a group of students from Gloucester High School, my old high school, and I told them that coming from country New South Wales should never stop them achieving great things.

Tim Fischer stands as an example for all kids in the bush that you have the potential to achieve anything that you strive for. Tim Fischer held the title of "the Boy from Boree", but he also rose to become Deputy Prime Minister and Australia's first resident Ambassador to the Holy See in the Vatican. Yet when all was said and done the most important aspect of life for Tim Fischer was his family. Indeed, he retired from politics in 1999, putting his family's needs before his own political ambitions. Following the announcement of Tim's retirement from politics, Kim Beazley summed up the respect and reverence shown towards Tim by members of both sides of the Parliament. He said:

You are one of the very genuinely loved people in this place. You are going to be very much missed by us.

Following his passing, this sentiment now holds new meaning. It is a feeling that is shared across New South Wales and Australia. I extend my condolences to Tim's family, friends and, importantly, his wife, Judy, and sons Harrison and Dominic.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:51:49):** On behalf of the New South Wales Parliament, I extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of the Hon. Tim Fischer. I welcome everybody to Parliament today to celebrate and also commemorate a wonderful life of incredible service to the people of both this State and also our nation. Mr Tim Fischer's career was as wideranging as it was fascinating. He was truly a political giant and will be remembered as one of the great leaders of our time. There are many themes that we could talk about today about the Boy from Boree Creek but what stands out for me over and above everything else was his love and belief in the future of our nation and its people. His life was dedicated to protecting and supporting this noble objective.

As we know, in 1966 at the age of 20 the Boy from Boree Creek was conscripted into the Australian Army as a nasho and served with the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment until March 1969. During this time he served with distinction in Vietnam as a second lieutenant. His unit was awarded the Unit Citation for Gallantry for their actions in the Battle of Coral-Balmoral in 1968. I did not know this until recently but in that same battle Mr Fischer was badly wounded by rocket shrapnel and was evacuated soon after. Though he rarely spoke about his time at war, in later years he would remark that he was happy to do his service. After this time in the army Mr Fischer returned to Boree Creek, where he took up farming. This was where his involvement in the Country Party began and also his journey towards a career in representative politics.

Mr Fischer was a proud member of this place from 1971 until 1984. He was elected at a very young age and held a number of roles, which I like to think held him in good stead for the wonderful work he did for our nation in later years. During his time in this place Mr Fischer held the shadow ministries of Conservation and Water Resources, Transport—we all know his love of transport—Water Resources and Forests, and Corrective Services. No doubt his time here allowed him to gain experience before he turned his attention to national politics,

which he did from 1984. We know, of course, that in addition to being our nation's Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party, he served with distinction as our Minister for Trade. Prior to being in government, he served in a number of portfolio areas from Opposition, including Veterans' Affairs, Immigration, Energy and Resources, and Indigenous Affairs.

After his retirement from politics, while Mr Fischer returned to his farm at Boree Creek, he continued his other career as a rail enthusiast. He also became involved in so much charity work, which says a lot about him. A number of organisations benefited from his patronage, including the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Fred Hollows Foundation and Autism NSW. He also took up multiple board positions, including chairman of Tourism Australia, chairman of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia—something that I know was close to his heart—and patron of Australia for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR]. It is not surprising to hear that, remarkably, Mr Fischer was a director or patron of more than 200 not-for-profit and community organisations—an outstanding contribution. His was truly a life dedicated to public service.

We also know that in 2008 Mr Fischer was appointed Australia's first resident Ambassador to the Holy See. During that time I gained a personal insight into the way he worked. In August 2011, when I was the newly minted transport Minister, I received a letter from the then Ambassador to the Holy See. He was congratulating me on establishing Transport for NSW but also outlining, in his words, a win-win proposal to open the Boree Creek branch line to special charter passenger services for charity causes. He obviously had a campaign going, because that letter was promptly followed by a letter supporting the proposal from the then member for Murray-Darling, John Williams—so they were all on the case.

I can think of no interaction I had with Mr Fischer that more clearly demonstrated his passion for regional Australia and his passion for, and unending interest in, trains and tourism. He still had another six months to go in his ambassadorial posting to the Holy See, and yet from within the walls of the Vatican he was orchestrating from the other side of the world a proposal to remove a previously banned rail tourism opportunity in his backyard here in New South Wales. My time as transport Minister also coincided with Mr Fischer's role as patron of Rail Trails For NSW. We spoke on many occasions as part of his campaign to turn disused railway lines into rail trails for walkers. I am very proud that the first rail trail pilot to be funded by our Government is due for completion in April next year and will run approximately 22 kilometres from Rosewood to Tumbarumba.

I know the member for Albury is also very pleased about that. It is a fitting location for the first pilot, given that the Tumbatrek in the Tumbarumba shire was launched by Mr Fischer in 1985 to bring the national spotlight to the region. It continues as an annual event to this day. In 2015 I did the Tumbatrek myself and I encourage all members to experience that beautiful part of New South Wales. I can safely say that every time Mr Fischer and I were at the same event, even though I had moved on from my job in Transport and he had moved on from his job, he would always get in my ear about fast rail or inland rail or anything else that was on his mind.

It is very rare in the rough-and-tumble of political life to have someone so highly respected and admired by people from all walks of life and all political persuasions. Mr Fischer will be remembered as a giant of public life, a trailblazer for The Nationals and, most importantly, a patriot and a friend to all. To the Fischer family and all his loved ones, especially those who are here today, we extend our heartfelt condolences and pride. For generations to come, he will be remembered for his contribution to making New South Wales and Australia stronger and for being a true man of the people. May he rest in peace.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:58:20):** Today I speak about the extraordinary life of Tim Fischer, who passed away earlier this year. He was a country boy, and his formative years spent in the bush would shape his deep appreciation for regional and rural Australia. Indeed, in the Parliament and beyond he fought with great passion for Australians outside our cities. In several anecdotes, journalists tell tales of being taken for alpine bushwalks in his electorate. He loved regional and rural areas. From Fischer's birth in 1946 in Lockhart—a town in New South Wales' Riverina district, with a current population of just 800—to Melbourne for his schooling and then on to Vietnam shortly after, he certainly saw much of the world in his younger years. At just 20, he was conscripted into the Australian Army and found himself fighting in the jungles of Vietnam. It was a far cry from his final job—a posting as Australia's resident ambassador to the Vatican from 2009 to 2012.

His zest for understanding the world around him was evident through his extensive travel while in office. I have heard that many around the traps called him "two-minute Tim" for his verve and impatience to get out and about. During his time as trade Minister he visited many countries, including China and India and even far-flung destinations such as Iran. I sometimes wonder whether, coming from such a small regional town, he felt like a fish out of water in the Vatican, in Iran or China, or indeed in our Parliament and in the Federal Parliament. Of course, he took it all in his stride. If he did, it showed through his statesmanlike but somewhat quirky approach to politics as the member for Sturt and for Murray in the State Parliament and for Farrer in the Federal Parliament.

Tim Fischer will be remembered for many reasons. But if I were to speculate, his stance against racism and discrimination may have been one of the proudest achievements of his life in Parliament. Who can forget how he spoke up against racist politics, rejecting the ideas of Pauline Hanson on her election to the Parliament as an Independent after being disendorsed by the Liberal Party? He also played an integral role in the Howard Government's gun control response to the Port Arthur massacre. He faced intense pressure from his own party on that very issue, yet he never let himself be swayed. He knew that it was important and nation changing. He knew that it was the right policy to prosecute. As Deputy Prime Minister, he stood firm alongside John Howard to endorse those policies for which we will be forever grateful.

Many have called him a once-in-a-generation politician and I know that today many in this House are recognising him as such. That is only right. I feel saddened that I did not know Tim personally, but I would like to share with the House something that happened to me recently. I was driving home from Parliament and listening to a conversation on the ABC. Sure enough, it was Tim, talking about his great love—rail journeys. I have to say that Tim took me almost all the way home, and I wanted more. He was a great storyteller and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I can only imagine the lovely life that his family had with him, because I—a stranger—felt like I wanted to know him more and listen more to his wonderful stories about his great love of rail.

But Tim Fischer had a life beyond politics. Indeed, his decision to leave political life was based on his desire to spend more time with his family. His children were still in school at the time. He made the right choice—one that I think will be close to the hearts of many members in this place, particularly regional members with families at home. No doubt his wife and sons, who are with us today and are most welcome, will sorely miss him. I offer his family, friends and former colleagues our condolences and commend the service and life of Tim Fischer to this House.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (16:03:25):** As the Minister for trains, I thought I might stand up and thank Judy for being here with family and friends. It is always good to start a speech with a quote, and I thought I would go to this one: My thoughts that morning were fully engaged by the brilliant colour, action and movement of the big black steam locomotive hauling some rust red carriages with gold trimmings. There is no doubt that Tim was a train spotter from the age of 10 and he never gave up on that. I had known Tim before I became Minister but when I first met him I was quite scared to have a discussion with him about trains because there was no way that I could match his understanding—

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** Or intellect.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I agree with the member for Oxley on that score, because Tim was in front. To his credit, Tim knew everything that this Government was doing in terms of freight rail and procurement. I hope that he was proud and pleased with the work the Liberals and The Nationals were doing for rail in this State, because there has been a transformation. Tim Fischer had a lifelong passion that resulted in his becoming, without doubt, Australia's leading policy advocate and leader on rail development. He was loved by so many on both sides of politics, and especially by those involved in the rail sector. That can be seen in the incredible testimonies that people have given. They hold Tim dearly because of the work that he achieved for them; it is truly remarkable.

Coming from the country, I have no doubt that rail is the heartbeat and the connection not just between the city and bush but also across country areas. Rail also provides an ability to move freight. There was no greater champion for the cause of inland rail than Tim Fischer. He championed the connection between Adelaide and Darwin. He saw the importance of small railway stations for country people and he thought it was important to protect their heritage. Tim headed one of the most important organisations involved in rail safety—the TrackSAFE Foundation. Members may not know about the TrackSAFE Foundation. As patron, Tim was well aware of the importance of safety around rail corridors.

He led this organisation, which has to deal with some of the most challenging issues in society. It deals with very troubled people who find themselves in rail corridors and with the impact that that has on train drivers and others. Tim knew about those issues and that is why he was passionate to lead that organisation as its patron. I recognise that role here today. Tim was director of FreightLink. He loved that role because rail plays an important part in the economic uplift of communities and industries—from miners through to farmers. The work that Tim did saw freight connections change in this country. Australia should be a train country. Tim knew that, and he was right. There is no doubt that his passion led governments to respond post his time in politics. No-one should forget that.

As a youngster, Tim was interested in the Tin Hare, the locomotive that was so special throughout the entire course of his life. How fitting it was that it played a role in his send-off. He made lifelong friendships as a result of his passion for trains. The Deputy Premier touched on Tim's ability to remember people's names and where they came from. I do not think there was a train in the world—not just here in Australia but everywhere—

that he did not know. That was something that I experienced the first time I met with him early on in my time as Minister. It was something to remember and I will always hold that conversation dear. I thank Judy, her friends and family for being here. It is very special for our Parliament to be able to recognise the life of the late Tim Fischer.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:09:31):** I am honoured to stand here today to talk about someone who could be described in no other way than as a decent and courteous gentleman. Tim married Judy and they had two sons, Dom and Harrison. I acknowledge them and all the other loved ones in the gallery today. As we have heard, Tim was conscripted into the Australian Army in 1966 and served until 1969. He was an infantryman. Many of you will know that I was an infantryman as well. He also served with the 1st Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, where I also spent some time. Tim was acknowledged and well respected in military ranks. As a young infantry soldier, I remember that. Tim then served as second lieutenant and in the Vietnam War.

In recognition of his three years in the Australian Army he received a number of honours, including the Vietnam Medal, the Australian Active Service Medal and the Australian Defence Medal along with many international awards and the fighting 1st Battalion citation that we are all so privileged and honoured to wear. After Tim left the army he served the people of New South Wales in this place before going into Federal politics. There, as the member for Bega said, he shared the respect of members right across the political spectrum. He deserved that respect because he was a man of integrity and conviction. He knew what was right and he dug in his heels and refused to walk backwards. For an example one has only to look to the time of the Port Arthur massacre, when Tim made a very courageous, bold decision to disarm so many people in this country for the safety of all.

Tim's actions with respect to gun control legislation have to be looked at in perspective. He was a country boy, a former soldier and a member of the National Party. The people who were affected by the legislation were largely country people. As many members will know, I grew up in Dubbo and I was formerly a marksman—an infantry soldier. So, like many others, I probably would not have been too happy about those controls at the time. Tim made a conscious decision about what he thought was right and he had the courage of his convictions to follow his decision through. He fronted the crowds and made his position very clear, and he did not move. Communities are craving that kind of courage; they miss that in our political processes today.

During his time as the Federal member for Farrer, Tim Fischer served in a number of portfolios, including as shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs. He was a key figure during the Howard Government years. Whilst we never all agree on everything, I am very certain that we would all agree that Tim did whatever he did because he felt that it was the right thing to do. Shortly before the expiry of his last parliamentary term, Fischer made public his support for an Australian republic in the future. That was another bold move for a conservative politician. Again, Tim stood by what he felt was right.

After his retirement, he returned to farming at Boree Creek and became involved in charity work, assisting organisations such as the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Fred Hollows Foundation and Autism NSW—something that was particularly close to his heart. Fischer was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia in the 2005 Australia Day Honours List in recognition of his contributions to Australian politics, trade liberalisation, rail transport development, support of humanitarian aid and fostering community acceptance of cultural differences. That list of achievements is an indication of the truly progressive nature of a true gentleman and a great man.

Sadly, in October 2018 Tim was diagnosed with leukaemia. He passed on 22 August this year at the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre at age 73. Tim himself attributed the illness to exposure to Agent Orange during his service in South Vietnam, something that many Vietnam veterans had struggled with and continue to struggle with. Even at a time when Tim was fighting his own battles he was an advocate for them. There is no greater element of humanity than someone who can stand in the face of adversity, in their own storm, and consider the adversity of another. That is precisely what Tim did. He never forgot about his mates. He looked after them. There are a couple of favourite quotes of mine that I think are a good reflection. Former United States President George Washington stated:

I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles) the character of an honest man.

What a fine description and correlation to Tim. The English orator and writer George Orwell made a fair and reasonable comment that I also think reflects Tim's character. He wrote:

... the high sentiments always win in the end, leaders who offer blood, toil, tears and sweat always get more out of their followers than those who offer safety and a good time. When it comes to the pinch, human beings are heroic.

Tim was heroic. He was a father, soldier and a friend of so many. He was loved and adored by countless people. He stood by the courage of his convictions. He never took any steps backwards. Members may be aware that the Royal Australian Regiment badge is nicknamed the "Skippy" badge because it has a kangaroo in the middle. The reason being that kangaroos do not go backwards. They take no hops or steps backwards. How fitting for Tim. I cannot help but reflect on—as I am sure he probably remembered all his days—the ode of the infantry, which is:

... to seek out and close with the enemy, to kill or capture him, to seize and hold ground and to repel attack by day or night, regardless of season, weather or terrain.

It is about duty first. Tim put duty first. I offer my serious condolences, again, to his family but also to the National Party of Australia. We know what it is like to lose one of our fathers—we lost our dear Bob earlier this year. No doubt Tim was a similar character to the National Party. In politics these people are mentors and our guides. Tim loved the National Party and the National Party loved Tim. I thank the House.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:18:13):** It is my honour and privilege to speak to this condolence motion and pay tribute to the late Tim Fischer. I acknowledge his wife, Judy, his family and friends who are here today. There is no doubt that Tim was a giant of a man. He was a giant of Australian politics and, of course, a giant of the National Party. Every member in this place and every person across this nation and the globe will miss this man. The mark of the man is seen through the outpouring of emotion from people across this country that we saw after his death. These were people who he had helped quietly and compassionately with no fanfare. These were people he had taken the time to listen to when they had been fobbed off by others as people whose problems were just too hard to be fixed. Tim was someone who was there to make sure that he would listen to them and to ensure that sometimes the little guy was the person he supported.

Tim will also be remembered not for the positions that he actually held but for what he did when he was there. He was a man who had a genuine care for people, for the bush and for country people. The Deputy Premier and other members have already acknowledged that he served in the army. However, he gave a lifetime of service to people in the bush, both in State and Federal parliaments as an MP and well beyond that. I first had the opportunity to meet him when my father, Trevor Toole, was running for the seat of Calare in 1996. Tim was the leader of The Nationals and was working very hard to see the Coalition returned to power. I spoke to my dad about his memories of Tim Fischer. Like me, my dad is not very tall. He was struck by this giant of a man. He was struck by the way in which he spoke and the way in which he listened to everyone that he met—as though he had known them for ages, not just minutes.

My dad would be in a roaring hurry to get to the next appointment during that election campaign period. However, Tim would pull out a chair, sit down with members of the public and listen to someone's story. They all had his attention and his hat was always in his hand. When he finally left Bathurst—it was by train, of course—he left behind a lasting impression. I know that my dad treasured the friendship he built with Tim through that campaign. It is notable that the only thing my dad has kept from memories of that campaign is photos of Tim and himself. I also acknowledge that the Deputy Premier, the Deputy Prime Minister and members of the National Party celebrated an important milestone on the weekend. Our party is 100 years old. There was an amazing opening to the event that evening with a tribute given to Tim Fischer. It was powerful. You could hear a pin drop. That is the mark of the man. He is just so widely respected not only in the National Party but also across all spheres of politics and all communities across this nation.

As the Leader of the House noted, Tim was a great rail man. It is fitting that it was by train that he made his final journey from The Rock, not far from Boree Creek, to Albury. Those who lined the route were not there to say goodbye because he was a former Deputy Prime Minister. They were there because he set a shining example. He set a shining example for all of us in this House about what we should seek to do during our time in politics: to listen more than we speak, to take up the fight for those in the community who have almost given up, to be courageous, to be compassionate and to be kind. May we all learn from him. May he rest in peace.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:23:18):** In my contribution to this condolence motion I recognise a great Australian and extend my deepest sympathy to Tim Fischer's family. Tim Fischer was a decorated Vietnam War veteran. He was a member of this House from 1978 to 1984. He was a member of the Federal Parliament in the newly created seat of Farrer from 1984 until his retirement in 1999. He was the leader of the National Party from 1990 to 1999. He was the Deputy Prime Minister from 1996 to 1999. He was the first Ambassador to the Holy See from 2008 to 2012 and he was the first Catholic elected as an MP by the New South Wales Nationals. That may describe some of this great Australian's outstanding service.

At a very young age I had the opportunity of meeting Tim Fischer. When I first met him though, I cannot say it was an honour. It was 1976. He was then the member for the State electorate of Sturt and I was a 20-year-old,

21-year-old clerk of petty sessions appointed to the Lockhart courthouse. My service at Lockhart required my attendance one day a week on a Friday, and once a month for the court sittings on a Wednesday. On the other four days I was required to serve at the Wagga Wagga courthouse. The then Department of Attorney General and Justice was grossly understaffed—not like it is now—and there was a mountain of work at Wagga. Once a week I would travel the 42.5 miles from Wagga Wagga to Lockhart. Nobody would come into the court office. So on my first day, at about 12.30 p.m., I thought I would return to Wagga court where I could actually do some productive work.

Unfortunately, Parliament was sitting at the time and the question from the member for Sturt to the Minister for Justice on the Tuesday was why the clerk of petty sessions had left Lockhart court at 12.30 p.m. Unbeknown to me the member for Sturt had been fighting a battle to maintain a court at Lockhart. The justice department had demolished the old Lockhart court and the court was operating out of an office at Lockhart council chambers—the court actually sat in the council chambers. As a 21-year-old person, relatively new to the public service, I was also the coroner, the registrar of the District Court and the agent for the Public Trustee. I was pretty proud of that promotion, until the petty sessions branch of the justice department sent an inspector to interview me on the following Friday. I was a bit troubled by that.

I then found out from the local police that every Friday for at least twelve months Tim Fischer had sat in his parked car to determine whether or not the clerk of petty sessions had actually opened the office at 9.30 a.m., as he was required. I had been caught. I then devised a scheme where I parked at the back of the police station, walked up the back lane and came through the back of the council chambers so that Tim could not see what time I did or did not arrive. After several weeks of this, Tim decided to come to the door at 9.30 a.m. and introduce himself to me. Even at that stage the passion he had in fighting for services that were easily taken away from a place like Lockhart—a town of about a thousand people—had a rather profound effect. Lockhart was an interesting town. Many of the people came from German heritage, as did Tim and his family.

They say in modern day politics, surprisingly—a notion that I reject; that is probably why I am on the backbench—that success in politics is to be risk-averse. This great Australian, by any standard, irrespective of one's political philosophy, was anything but risk-averse. In 1973 in his campaign to become the member for Sturt he proposed to establish a Boeing 747 test facility in his electorate. An interesting suggestion. Just imagine the most modern jet aircraft in the world at that stage landing on a runway adjacent to the Lockhart Road. For that he received national attention—anything but being risk-averse. The absolute classic was him joining the farmers' protest about lions being put into the Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo where the farmers were beside themselves that the lions would escape, feed on the livestock and hide in the hills. That too received statewide attention in terms of support.

He ran another campaign in Canberra about the fountain in Lake Burley Griffin—it was interesting, maybe the Deputy Premier might get on to this—complaining that it should be turned off because it was sending the wrong message to people in drought-affected parts of the State. He was pilloried by the media because Lake Burley Griffin operates on recycled water. That did not matter; it received national media attention. His ability to do that was quite remarkable. Interestingly, Tim had such a profound impact on me and my career at such a young age that I followed him and observed him relatively closely. His demeanour, or the way in which he spoke, was really a great device for people to underestimate his enormous ability and, ultimately, his ability to make such an important contribution to Australia.

Tim did not have a university education. He said in one interview that he chose not to go to university—even though he never claimed to be a brilliant student—because he was not going to avoid the draft and national service. So many people ran to tertiary education to avoid the draft; not Tim Fischer. He specifically did not want that education so that he could serve. He went to officer training school, served in Vietnam as an officer and was wounded in battle in the service of this nation. Subsequently he and the rest of his battalion were awarded for gallantry. Members will recall how those national servicemen, who risked their lives, were treated when they returned to Australia from Vietnam. They were treated like that for some decades. It has only been in recent years that we have honoured their service. That is what happens when politics over an issue gets in the way of the service of people like Tim Fischer and the many other thousands of people who served.

As I said, Tim demonstrated—as did Ben Chifley on our side of politics—that you do not need to have a formal tertiary education to be a great Australian and to serve this nation at the highest level. He became the Leader of the National Party in 1990, taking over from Charles Blunt at a time when the National Party was in considerable difficulty—even more difficulty than the Deputy Premier finds himself in now. This was at the national level with the party being unsuccessful in Queensland and in crisis. He was selected to lead the party unexpectedly. However, he was able to reform the National Party and develop relationships across the party, particularly in Queensland. Pauline Hanson's One Nation put him under considerable pressure but Tim achieved

the remarkable feat, as junior Coalition partner, of holding out against those sorts of attacks when John Howard was elected as Prime Minister in a Coalition Government.

I remember pretty clearly those three years. I paid attention during his service as trade Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. As trade Minister he was enormously successful and Australia was enormously successful. John Howard was fortunate to take over from a restructured economy inherited from the Hawke-Keating Government. The economy continued to do well with Australia's economy being predicated upon the success of the national Government in organising its trade and successful exports. One of our most successful exports, particularly then, was primary production and Tim really understood that. Most Australians will remember Tim Fischer for his actions after the Port Arthur massacre whereas junior Coalition partner he delivered the national gun reform laws that John Howard wanted to implement. The Nationals members of this House would realise, but I doubt Labor or even Liberal Party members would understand, how difficult that task must have been for the Leader of the National Party.

I can remember seeing television coverage of the virtual hatred directed to someone like Tim Fischer, who was probably the most vocal advocate for rural communities in Australia. If ever there was a person who demonstrated that he was not risk-averse and was prepared to risk his leadership and the success of the party that he had been able to cobble together to maintain the very successful Coalition Government led by John Howard, it was Tim Fischer. He took that risk. It was the most remarkable thing for a National Party leader to do—contrary to just about every single member of his caucus and every single farmer in the country. It needed to be done.

We look across the Pacific and see that the world's largest and most powerful democracy cannot in any way control its distribution of firearms, with the National Rifle Association being able to remove members of Congress at will if they oppose any sort of gun control, yet the Federal National Party leader was able not only to deliver that policy but also to ensure that a successful Coalition Government continued, and continued for many years after his retirement from Parliament. Few people in our lifetime touch us with the contribution they have made to this nation. Many of us come and go in political life like a candle in the wind; not Tim Fischer, whom everyone remembers as a great Australian. He is a role model for what politics should be about, irrespective of one's philosophy or party membership. He was a remarkable Australian, who has left a significant mark on this place, the Federal Parliament and the nation. Vale, Tim Fischer.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:40:19):** The Hon. Timothy Andrew Fischer, AC, was a soldier, farmer, parliamentarian in the New South Wales and Australian parliaments, Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of The Nationals, Australian Ambassador to the Vatican, community leader and family man. The New South Wales Nationals recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. I congratulate the party, my colleagues and indeed Tim Fischer on the contributions they have all made to our community. There is no doubt that Tim was a huge figure in the history—and continues to be—of the party as a great Australian through politics but also through so much more.

Tim served as an officer and platoon commander in the Australian Army during the Vietnam War. He then served in this place from 1971 to 1984—first as the member for Sturt and then as the member for Murray. I want to share an interesting and somewhat amusing story from his time in the New South Wales Parliament because, in a real sense, he was involved in the removal of a former Liberal Premier of this State. In 1978 former Premier Tom Lewis resigned from State Parliament after a long career in this place. He tendered his resignation to the then Speaker Kelly. I am privileged to hold the position of the Speaker now.

Former Premier Lewis, having tendered his resignation, then decided to visit this Chamber one last time. A young New South Wales MP by the name of Tim Fischer drew then Speaker Kelly's attention to the inadvertent trespass. Somewhat controversially, but appropriately, he asked, "Stranger in the House?" Former Premier Lewis was accordingly asked to leave the Chamber having been apparently unaware that his resignation had been accepted by the Speaker effective immediately—rather than at the end of the day, which is what former Premier Lewis had thought. That is an interesting story.

In 1984 Tim Fischer went on to join the Federal House of Representatives as the member for Farrer and in 1990 became the Leader of the National Party. As we have heard, Tim was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade from 1996 to 1999 under the Hon. John Howard as Prime Minister. During that time he visited over 60 countries in three years, strengthening Australia's trade and diplomatic connections all over the world. He notably supported also the strengthening of gun regulation in the wake of the Port Arthur massacre in 1996, which has been suitably acknowledged in this place.

Tim made an enormous contribution to politics and left our country a better place in which to live. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Museum of Australian Democracy in the Old Parliament House in Canberra. I noticed that he is very well acknowledged and honoured in various displays, including via a

condolence book that I am sure will be relayed to the family in due course. Those displays included a collection of his ties, which were numerous and historic. His trademark hat is also on display.

Tim established a family a little later in life. Indeed a recent media report appropriately acknowledged, "Fischer actually did leave politics to spend more time with his family." He did exit politics at a time of his own choice with dignity rather than as a result of the one of the Ds of defeat—disgrace or death. No, he had dignity. I express my personal condolences to his wife, Judy Brewer, his sons Harrison and Dominic, and his family and friends. I only personally communicated with Tim Fischer a few times, but his authenticity and decency stood out. One occasion was when he spoke about his book on Sir John Monash at Carroll & O'Dea—a family-connected law firm, also with strong Catholic roots. The case that he made for increased public recognition of one of Australia's great military leaders was substantial and significant.

We communicated on another occasion when he wrote to me to offer congratulations and some salient words of advice on my election to Speaker of this House and I appreciated that. A survey of recent tributes across social media showcased Tim's exemplary character. Some of the words used to describe him were uncommon decency, good guy, loved life, loved Australia, humble, one of a kind, lived life as an example, generous with his time, loyal, courageous. There is no doubt that Tim Fischer was, and continues to be, an inspirational example to all of us in this place. He leaves a unique and valuable legacy in Australian political life and a great legacy also through his family.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:46:29):** It is with great honour that I speak today, in this place, as the member for Cootamundra and as the New South Wales Nationals Whip to recognise the Hon. Tim Fischer, AC. I acknowledge his wife, Judy, his son Dominic and members of the Fischer family, and friends who are here today. Passionate, meticulous in detail, honest, brave and most humble, Tim Fischer was and will remain a shining example of the best of Australian politics. In fact beyond that, I believe Tim Fischer represents the very best of Australians. For despite his political achievements, his contributions and his title, he always remained Tim: A boy from Boree Creek, a Vietnam War veteran, a husband, father, family man and a mate. The public response to his passing, the widespread love that poured from my electorate and across the nation demonstrates just how far integrity can take you in life.

Tim's political legacy as the leader of the National Party for nearly a decade, as Minister for Trade, as Australia's tenth Deputy Prime Minister and as our nation's Ambassador to the Vatican is profound. Some are born to lead. Beginning his career in politics at just 24 years of age, we should all be grateful that we had the guidance and the vision of this man within our Government for as long as we did. I believe the gun control laws are his biggest legacy. He faced a huge backlash during this period, but he stood firm and statistics now show he was right to do what he did and support the Coalition through these changes. As America wakes up to tragedy after world-shaking tragedy, Australia stands proud as a global symbol of gun policy done right. Despite the vicious backlash, which regrettably we still see to this day among some in the country, Tim did what he knew was right. We will never truly be able to quantify the immense gravity of that decisive action.

During my political career Mr Fischer has been a wonderful and kind mentor whose guidance has been invaluable. I have been honoured to know him, and receive his advice and opinions. He helped me during the 2017 Cootamundra by-election and he would call me regularly to advise me on rail infrastructure issues. I knew that what he told me was based on an unrivalled knowledge and passion for rail. Tim's honesty was unfiltered and unquestionable. Mr Fischer possessed a directness and a strength of character that we could do with more of in this place. He never shied away from calling out injustices or errors and he did so for our betterment, for the betterment of our towns and villages, and because he was not afraid to stir the pot to see things delivered. He held us to our promises on a local level right up until his passing.

In his absence we must all remember that Tim is watching over our actions, our representation and our direction. I believe doing so will make us all, on both sides of this place, better parliamentarians, better Ministers and better role models for the people of this great State. Mr Fischer was New South Wales Nationals Whip from 1981 to 1984 and his work in this position has already influenced me greatly. I am the custodian of his original party room minutes and I will guard them fiercely while ever I have the great privilege to hold this role. I could not ask for a better example nor bigger shoes to fill. I will always have fond memories of Tim Fischer. In his loss Australia has lost one of its finest community advocates.

My heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with Mr Fischer's wife, Judy, sons Harrison and Dominic, his family and friends. As his political colleagues, his community both local and national and parts of the world mourn his loss, we can only imagine how deeply that loss is felt by his family and friends. Thank you for loaning your beloved husband, father, brother, family member and friend to this State and country, for without him it would not be the same—we would be a poorer place and society.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:52:14):** I make a brief contribution to the condolence motion and I acknowledge the family and friends of Tim Fischer—Judy, Dominic, Vicki, Yves, Cynthia, Clive, Robert, Claire and Georgia who are here today. As the Government Whip, it is a pleasure to follow my colleague, The Nationals Party Whip and member for Cootamundra. Today we all speak in appreciation of Tim Fischer's long and meritorious public service to the people of New South Wales and of course to the great nation of Australia. Mr Fischer is synonymous with good, strong, stable government. He is also synonymous with Australia itself. If asked to name a quintessential Australian, I am sure "Tim Fischer" would quickly jump to mind for most people.

As we have heard today, Mr Fischer is famous for his love of trains and railways. He is famous for his love of Australia and famous for his service to all Australians. Mr Fischer served as Deputy Prime Minister for three years from 1996 to 1999. He was Leader of the National Party for nine years from 1990 to 1999 and member for Farrer for 17 years from 1984 to 2001. He also served in this place between 1971 and 1984. After politics, Mr Fischer supported a number of organisations including Tourism Australia and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. He was appointed as Ambassador to the Holy See from 2008 and 2012.

While serving as Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Fischer also served as Minister for Trade. As a result of his negotiating skills free trade agreements were signed, including with Singapore and Thailand. He fought for less protectionism and more openness between Australia and the world in trade and financial flows. He was also very focused on our immediate neighbours in the Asia region, which we know continues to be of vital importance to this nation today.

Many have said that Mr Fischer was motivated by being a man for others. He was educated by the Jesuits and has always been motivated by using his skills, talents and experience to help others. He is renowned for his honesty, transparency, integrity and for the way he dealt with others. Many have observed that all you needed was Mr Fischer's word—not a written agreement or anything else. Indeed, John Howard has called him the epitome of loyalty and decency. He is an example to all of us who serve in politics and public life. I used to sit on the backbench and I was there when Mr Fischer visited Parliament. I was a little starstruck because he was sitting in the gallery near the backbench, where Judy sits now. He stood up, hat in hand. It was a privilege and an honour to meet him, albeit for a brief moment. He said, "You are doing a good job," and, "Keep up the great work."

Hearing words like that from a great man like Tim Fischer inspired all of us to do more and to be better parliamentarians. Mr Fischer will be remembered with respect and will always have our country's deep gratitude. I will never forget the images of him during the gun lobby debate and his bravery and steadfastness as he stood side-by-side with the Prime Minister of the time. I was 24 when that happened. I do not think anybody will forget the image of those two great leaders who stood by their convictions for this country and made Australia a better and a safer place. I am privileged to make this small contribution to the condolence motion today. Vale, Tim Fischer.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (16:55:54):** Much has been said and written about the late Tim Fischer. Judy, Dom, forgive me, but all that rings through my ears at the moment is Tim's word at Boree Creek the other day—"Basta" or "Enough". On this occasion I, too, will not heed Tim's words. I will make a small contribution and acknowledge Tim in this House. I want to relate to this House a little of how much Tim means to the people of Albury and the Riverina. Not long after Tim's passing, Wally Kerr entered the Boree Creek Hotel. He asked for a piece of paper and on receiving it wrote, "13th July 1966. Tim Anthony Fischer plus Walter Kerr—thirteenth national service intake—applied to be army officers at Kapooka army base. Tim was successful, becoming an officer at Holsworthy army base. Then they went overseas to Vietnam—together." This gesture may not seem much, except that Wally is a man living with dementia in a nursing home. Deep down, bottled away inside is his memory of Tim. Each of us in turn has a kaleidoscope of memories of a man who himself had an amazing memory.

It has been my privilege to travel an electorate that made up a large part of Tim's electorate. Wherever I travelled in the days following Tim's passing—Mulwala, Walla, Corowa, Urana, Jerilderie—there was a special sharing of memories with Tim's people. How to distil all these memories into a few words? Phil Rouvray shared with Tim a passion for Sir John Monash. Phil's grandfather-in-law, Ned Webb, served at Amiens in August 2018 and was a stock agent of Lockhart who Tim knew in his younger years. Phil told me that he was privileged to see a side of Tim Fischer that few people saw. He said, "My in-laws lived on a farm next door to his sister, Carol, in between Boree Creek and Urana. Each Christmas the two families would meet, once the sting had gone out of the sun, alternating yearly between the two homesteads. Tim was a regular participant at these gatherings and you would see him at his most relaxed state, enjoying the company of his extended family, a few drinks, a few sets of tennis and the combined leftovers of the Christmas dinner on a usually hot Riverina evening."

Family, faith, the Riverina and Boree Creek. Tim had so many interests and so much to do. And yet, I dare say, at the heart of it is family. To Tony, Vicki and Carol, importantly to Judy, Harrison—who I know would be watching—and to Dominic, thank you for the sacrifices you have made in sharing Tim with us. Our

love and thoughts continue to be with you. Jenny from the Boree Creek Hotel told me, "Tim was a great supporter of the Boree Creek community. Every chance he got he always mentioned Boree Creek, he really loved this area. I believe the last place he visited was the Boree Creek Hotel, where he had his usual steak sandwich and soft drink for lunch. He made it to Wodonga that day and was put into hospital. It was truly an honour to know him." Tim was the undisputed master of the exit. When he got up to leave an assembly or function, people would nod in his direction and whisper, "Tim's off to his next thing. What a busy man he is." The last words that Linwood Alexander heard Tim say at the Boree Creek Hotel on 21 July 2019 as Tim pulled the door open were, "Last train leaving." And with a wave of the hat, he was out the door and on the road again.

Finally, I will share a few thoughts I had in the days leading up to today. I thought of Tim's service and the words of the plaque on wall of this Chamber. That plaque talks of service in this place and service of country. I wondered how many times Tim would have sat in this Chamber and read those words on the wall. Other members have spoken of Tumbatrek. At this year's Tumbatrek Mike Kelly, the member for Eden-Monaro, stood, raised Tim's walking staff, and said, "May this remind us of Tim's words, that there is much more that unites us than divides us. A lad from Urangeline East grew up watching the man from Boree Creek. There is much to learn from him—to be down to earth and to act with honesty and integrity.

The years have turned the rusted key, and time is on the jog;  
Still, spend this fleeting night with me around the boree log.

Vale, Tim.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (17:02:20):** It is certainly a great honour to contribute to this condolence motion for the wonderful Tim Fischer. It is lovely to see Judy, Dominic and Tim's other family members and friends in the gallery today. Much has been said about Tim and his public service, both in the military, in political life and right throughout life, and how Tim was with his fellow human beings. Tim was very much a human being—no doubt about that. I had the great privilege of attending Tim's funeral recently. I made sure I was there; I was never going to miss that opportunity. Tim had a big impact on me, and on my personal and political life. I joined The Nationals in 1990. In the next couple of years I started up the Upper Hunter Young Nationals. Tim was very encouraging and made sure that I and a whole range of young people had every possible opportunity to get out there and learn about what it was like to give public service, in this case through a political party, and what it meant to serve your local community through politics.

In 1993 I stood for preselection in the Federal election. I did not win that, but our candidate Bruce Crossing did and I became his campaign director. Tim came and campaigned with Bruce Crossing in the electorate of Hunter. I have a couple of funny stories about Tim. In the 1993 campaign we had a campaign office in Cessnock. People would know that this is not traditionally National Party heartland. We had Tim and Bruce Crossing in the studios at ABC Newcastle doing talkback. Things were very, very quiet. They were ridiculously quiet. I could not believe how quiet they were. I thought they were going to give Tim and our candidate a hard time. There was hardly anyone ringing up, so I could not help myself.

I rang up and I said, "How're you going? It's Mick here from Cessnock." Tim said, "G'day, Mick. How're you going?" No-one knew I was doing this. I said, "Look, you seem like a nice bloke, your candidate seems like a nice bloke, but the Fitzgibbons are kind of entrenched in the Cessnock area. They don't do anything, but you can have a beer with them. What makes you think that your bloke is any different and how are you going to be any better?" Off he went. He had that opportunity. He could not have got a better dixer on ABC Newcastle that day. Anyway, he finished up with, "Thanks, Mick from Cessnock." "No problem." A couple of hours later we were up campaigning in Singleton and I was walking down the street to our campaign office when I hear, "Mick! Mick from Cessnock!" He had no idea that I was going to do it, but he knew exactly what I did and so did Singleton at that particular moment.

Over the years I interacted with Tim and he became a very strong mentor. One of the reasons was that he was very much a self-effacing person. He had the ability to have a wonderful laugh at himself. He was serious in his convictions, his integrity, his statesmanship and his gentlemanly ways, but he could still take the micky out of himself and he loved it when other people did too. Members might remember that show on the radio that used to come on every morning called *How Green Was My Cactus*. One time we were at a cafe in Muswellbrook with Tim with the Young Nats and he was being very encouraging. One of the Young Nats said, "Mr Fischer, do you get offended by *How Green Was My Cactus*?" "Absolutely not," he said. "Absolutely not. I can't wait for it to come on every morning because I want to know what they are saying about me and what I am about to say next." He absolutely loved political satire taking the micky out of him and everyone else in the political game.

As time went on I stood in the 1996 Federal election for the seat of Hunter. Tim came up and helped me campaign there as well. Then I left the campaigning for a while, up until I was ultimately elected to this place in 2015. I was involved in the 2010 and 2013 Federal elections as the candidate as well, but every time I ever had anything to do with Tim he always said to me, "You know, Michael, Mark Twain caught a train to Scone and he

stayed in the Willow Tree Hotel one night." I go through the Historical Society records in Scone and, sure enough, Mark Twain caught a train to Scone. Mark Twain had a night in Scone and the township came to listen to what he had to say at the Willow Tree Hotel.

Tim knew everything about everyone, even Mark Twain and how he caught a train to Scone. I was just absolutely amazed. I was always amazed at how he could do this. It has been said that he remembers everyone and every conversation he ever had. I have experienced that myself. Any time he ever came across anyone, it could be 10 or 15 years down the track, he would come along to Joe and say, "G'day, Joe. I met you 15 years ago and we spoke about A, B and C." Joe would say, "How did he remember that?" Not only was it important for Tim that he knew people, it was important for people that they felt that Tim actually knew them. As a result they did feel that they knew Tim. Hence that deep connection.

In an extraordinarily positive way Tim was able to connect with just about every Australian that he ever came in contact with. So much so, people tell me that even if you had not met him and only ever heard him on radio or saw him on TV, you still had that connection with Tim. He was an absolutely wonderful man. He had a major impact and will continue to have a major impact on my political life, as I said before. I will miss him dearly. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:10:41):** Judy, Dominic, Vicki and family, I promise to be quick. We have a little party to go to. I just cannot say how much I admired Tim Fischer. If we keep on going like this he will be back at the Vatican as a saint. I have been sitting here thinking he had five years here on the Government side at the back of the House and then he had eight years over on the Opposition side of the House, so it was only for five years that he got to see that plaque on the wall that the member for Albury referred to. Eight years over there on the Opposition side of the House is really, really hard. What a decision for him to go to Canberra to follow his love of trade, Asia and everything else! He was so canny; he just made the right decision. I worked for Wal Murray. Tim and Wal made up, although there was a tough period. But he just knew: He followed his instincts and he did good.

George Paciullo quite rightly gets a lot of recognition for bringing in the first drink-driving laws in Australia. I did not know this, but one of our clerks, Les Gönye, informed me just a moment ago that it was Tim Fischer's idea to create Staysafe, supported by Ian Armstrong, as the Opposition transport spokesperson—wow! In evidence to parliamentary history teachings here, Tim suggests probably 2,000 Australians are alive today because of those laws. Who is ever going to argue with Tim when it comes to stats? I also had the honour and privilege of being roads Minister. Road safety was my paramount focus and our party is now delivering the dual carriageway on the Pacific Highway.

The Government is going to do the Princes Highway and the Great Western Highway because two-thirds of deaths occur in regional New South Wales. We are overrepresented. We are one-third of the population, yet two-thirds of the road toll. Tim's legacy continues. We made some amazing commitments at the election to reinvest in local roads in our communities to save our lives. To think that Tim, along with so many other things—yes, the gun laws. It was leadership but, God, it hurt our tribe. You all know that. But it was the right thing to do; that is leadership. We thank him as a nation for that. My dad was pretty cranky about it a few times, but that is the battle that we all have within.

On the day of Tim's passing, George Lemon made a beautiful remark, "Dance with the one that brings you." He talked about the 1996 election night as Prime Minister-in-waiting when Tim could have had anyone at that party and he had his Young Nats, his supporters and his people who stood with him all the way through that journey. For that he should be very, very proud.

Following the most magnificently organised and perfect funeral or State service I think I have ever been to, I got to travel back with Kevin Rudd in the plane. I said to Kevin, "It was just an honour that you were here," and he said, "It was an honour to be here." I said, "Kevin, that decision to appoint Tim to the Vatican came at a pretty troubling time for you, as it turned out. A job like that—why give it to one of us?" That showed leadership from Kevin Rudd. Kevin said, "Melinda, I didn't regret it for a moment." I thought Tim's family would enjoy that. He was telling me about meeting Harrison—hello, Harrison!—and the great times he had with him in Rome.

I know we have been here a long time, but I just wanted to say Bill Baxter is my friend too. Do not tell anyone, but I was born in Victoria, on a dairy farm not far from Lockhart. Bill Baxter is a great bloke. He was Tim's best mate and best man. I laughed to myself during the funeral service because one of the conversations I had had with Tim was him saying to me, "What are you up to?" I said, "I'm just about to go to Europe on my first overseas trip." Tim berated me and said, "You should be going to Asia." But at the funeral, it turned out that Tim's first overseas trip was to Europe and he had a great time with Bill Baxter. Can you imagine those two young bachelors heading over there during a parliamentary recess in the 1970s, without mobile phones? I thought that

was humorous. But I am proud to report to the House that I have since visited 14 Asian nations. I love it, and my son is learning Indonesian.

Along with the member for Lane Cove and the member for Seven Hills, and as the mother of a soldier serving under very different circumstances—my boy is not conscripted and I hope and pray with all my heart and being that he never has to do what Tim did and do war service—I promise that we will continue to fight to have General John Monash promoted from four-star general to five-star field marshal. Be assured we will do that. I hope that my son serves his nation with the same dignity and distinction after he leaves Duntroon.

On behalf of the people of Kempsey, Stephen Keir and the Keir family, and the best hat factory in the world, Akubra, we thank Tim for wearing that hat with great dignity, distinction and pride. I thank Vicki, your parents and your brother, the professor, for his incredible final words on that day. I acknowledge your parents because that story got my heart. They left Melbourne in the middle of the Depression and went to Lockhart. They worked hard. They did what this nation gives us all the opportunity to do: Work hard. The best part for me was that Vicki's parents made a bit of money because of the Korean War and the whole wool price thing, and they did not just send the boys to boarding school; they sent the two girls too. Vale, Tim Fischer. You are a mighty human being. I am very proud to be part of your tribe and my tribe, The Nationals. Tim was a sensational Australian and we loved him.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:18:10):** I make a very brief contribution to this debate on behalf of the residents of Lockhart and the surrounding region, as well as myself. Lockhart is part of my electorate and I know it was very close to Tim's heart. Much has been said today in praise of Tim, and rightly so. He made a great contribution to Australian society. As the Independent member for Wagga Wagga, it is very humbling to meet so many people who loved him. Members get acknowledged and many get respected, but I think few members of this place are loved in the way Tim was loved. That is a very humbling experience. I think he was loved because of many of his qualities. I will recount the two times that I met Tim which I think showed a lot about why he was loved.

The first time was when he came into the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital after an accident. I was the acting director of medical services at the time; I was in shorts, really, when it came to medical administration. Of course, it garnered a lot of national media attention at the time and the hospital administration thought that I should be the person who fronted the press conference. I went up to the intensive care unit to speak to Mr Fisher, explain what I was doing and get his agreement. He was lying there, tubes everywhere, in considerable pain. He had many fractured ribs, from memory, and a collapsed lung. But he looked at me and he was genuinely interested in me—not because he was afraid of what I was going to say, but because he was concerned that I was going to front the media pack downstairs. I never forgot the look in his eyes. I remember that when I walked into the media room, the room was full and it was indeed a pack. I remember exactly what he was getting at when he was trying to warn me. At a time of such considerable pain, he was able to be concerned about me.

Just recently at Lockhart I had the privilege of meeting Tim again, at the launch of the special display dedicated to him. That was after a recent election where I had stood as an Independent. I was invited, but you can imagine that in the heartland of The Nationals it was a little tense, one could say—but all good, all professional. Tim made a point of coming up to me and speaking to me professionally, courteously and warmly. At the time he was very unwell and battling his illness with great courage, but he took time out to come and speak to me. I thought that was amazing. I think he was loved because he loved others. I think that was a product of his faith. As a result, he gave much to the country, as we have heard. On behalf of the people in my electorate and myself, I share our condolences with his family. Vale, Tim Fischer.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:21:20):** I propose to make only a short contribution to debate on this motion because I do not wish to stand in the way of a good party. I never met the Hon. Tim Fischer, AC. I never heard him give a speech live at a political or community event and I was not an MP while he was in public life. But I felt compelled to speak to this condolence motion because Tim Fischer deserves someone to speak about him from the perspective of an ordinary citizen. As an ordinary member of the public, the words and images that I associate with Tim Fischer are, firstly, Boree Creek. I know the name of his home town, although I would be hard pressed to find it on a map, because he frequently spoke of his home; secondly, a train station where he would frequently give interviews and communicate his love of rail transport; and thirdly, his Akubra hat. I recall images of him speaking of his family, especially his wife and children, including his son Harrison, and the awareness he gave to autism.

Tim Fischer seemed to embody public service, honesty, integrity, sincerity and humility. He was genuine, hardworking, a little quirky, and courageous. These impressions are from seeing Mr Fischer speak on television in his capacity as a member of our national Parliament, where he was a member from 1984 to 2001, after his service in this Parliament from 1971 to 1984, an amazing combined total of 30 years of public parliamentary service in two parliaments. We should never underestimate Mr Fischer's contribution to the wellbeing of our

nation which has endured until today. He left a legacy which has lasted well after he left politics in 2001. From a Liberal perspective, every good Coalition Government needs a strong Nationals partner with a good leader—and I see the Deputy Premier agreeing with that proposition. Without Tim Fischer, the Coalition would never have come into Federal Government in 1996. Without Tim Fischer, our country would never have enjoyed that Coalition Government—the best Federal Government of my lifetime—which has ensured that Australia has had the longest period without a recession of any nation in the world.

The material prosperity of our nation today is directly attributable to the Coalition Government of 1996 to 2007, and the contribution that Tim Fischer made to that Government was immense. Tim Fischer was Deputy Prime Minister in that Government through its most reforming and difficult period in its first term, when it embarked on great reforms to our tax system, our wharves and gun control, to name but a few. It was a hard time when he was Deputy Prime Minister because the union movement and the media never gave that new Government any legitimacy and did everything they could to get rid of it. When the needs of Mr Fischer's family required his paramount attention, he departed the political stage without fanfare or hesitation. After he left Parliament he continued quietly to serve the public in many ways, including as a diplomat.

The other great contribution that I wish to note is something he did as much for urban Australia as for the bush. That was the support of the Coalition Government's gun control laws in 1996, which the Deputy Premier and others have already spoken about. Tim Fischer realised that if you do the right thing in public life, and act with courage and integrity, the electorate will reward you, not punish you. Many Australians are certainly alive today because of those gun control laws, which could never have happened without Tim Fischer. We can contrast the decisive leadership of Tim Fischer and John Howard with the void of political leadership in the United States of America, which has led to so many of the citizens of that country being killed unnecessarily as a direct consequence of people having ready access to weapons which can kill or injure large numbers of people.

I should also briefly but importantly acknowledge the bravery of Mr Fischer as a young man in his military service in Vietnam. We are always grateful to those who serve in our military. My condolences go to the family of Tim Fischer, who must cherish the opportunity to have known such a great man at close quarters. I am sure they miss him greatly. A man like Tim Fischer does not come around very often in our lives. Vale, Tim Fischer, and thank you for your great public service to the State of New South Wales and Australia.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (17:26:10):** I pay tribute to the Hon. Tim Fischer. As the member for Tamworth I got to know Tim briefly when he came to Tamworth to launch his book in Werris Creek. I had the pleasure of driving Tim down to Werris Creek. He launched the book then he jumped on the train and away he went. For the 35 minutes that it took to get to Werris Creek it was a pleasure to listen to the man. His enthusiasm and love for everything to do with railways was quite extraordinary.

Much has been said this afternoon about Tim. A few years ago I was watching ABC television just before the start of the *Q&A* program. Unbeknownst to me Tim was going to appear on *Q&A*. While I was watching, my phone rang. It was Tim. He said, "Kevin, quickly refresh my memory. You were the first member to be preselected by community preselection—is that right?" I said that it was right. He said, "Good, thanks. That's all I need to know. God bless you," and hung up. I thought, "That's interesting!" Then I saw him on *Q&A* talking about the community preselection. He mentioned my name, which I was delighted and humbled by. He spoke freely about The Nationals and what they have done in regional New South Wales and in Australia.

My contribution has been brief but my memories of Tim Fischer are strong and fond. It was a sad day when he passed away but it was a much sadder experience for his family. We thank them for sharing him with us—with The Nationals and Australia. He was a great man; he was the hat. Our thoughts and prayers are still with his family, and we look forward to sharing a beverage with them later on this afternoon. We thank them for the Hon. Tim Fischer.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Tamworth, the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation and other members who have spoken on the condolence motion for the Hon. Tim Fischer. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

*Bills***MUSIC FESTIVALS BILL 2019****First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by the Hon. Victor Dominello, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (17:30:35):** I move:

That this be now read a second time.

Today I introduce the Music Festivals Bill 2019 as part of the Government's commitment to supporting a vibrant and safe music festival industry. As we enter the summer festival season, the Government wants to ensure it fulfils its commitment to the people of New South Wales to do everything it can to keep people safe at music festivals. The Government is passionate about music festivals. More than 90 are run in New South Wales every year and they are enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people from New South Wales, other States and overseas who come to see a wide variety of acts and performers. As well as enhancing the New South Wales cultural and social scene, music festivals make a significant economic contribution, especially in regional areas, through direct employment benefitting local caterers, accommodation providers and other small businesses and services across the State.

While the majority of festivals run with no significant drug or alcohol issues, there have unfortunately been a number of critical incidents which give rise to the need for a stronger legislative approach. Last summer we lost five young people to drug overdoses at music festivals. A further 40 were evacuated from festivals, with 20 being admitted to intensive care. In response to this, the Government introduced a regulatory scheme under the Liquor Act 2007 that was intended to support the Government's engagement with operators of higher-risk music festivals that the community considered should be held to a higher standard to ensure they were taking all necessary steps to deal with alcohol and drug-related issues at their events.

Unfortunately for festival patrons and the broader community, the other place made the irresponsible decision to disallow this regulation scheme and leave absolutely nothing in its place. Today the Government stands committed to do what is necessary to ensure that people are safe and that festivals can operate with the appropriate levels of support to minimise harm. The Music Festivals Bill delivers on this commitment by remedying the reckless decision by the Opposition to remove a regulatory framework to support good event and medical management at higher-risk music festivals.

The bill reinstates the policy intent of the Liquor Amendment (Music Festivals) Regulation 2019 to require all high-risk music festivals to put in place approved safety management plans to manage the risks associated with their events. Under the proposed scheme, a music festival is an event, other than a concert, that:

- (a) is music-focused or dance-focused, and
- (b) has performances by a series of persons or groups that are engaged to play or perform to live or pre-recorded music, or to provide another form of musical or live entertainment, and
- (c) is held within a defined area, and
- (d) is attended by 2,000 or more people, and
- (e) is a ticketed event.

A high-risk music festival is a music festival that the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority decides would be more appropriately delivered with an approved safety management plan. To be clear, the new scheme is limited to high-risk music festivals that the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority has directed to prepare a safety management plan. For the coming season, the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority identified 11 festivals as high risk. That is just 11 out of a total of more than 90 festivals. In exercising this discretion to direct a festival operator to prepare a plan, the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority may have regard to:

- (a) any advice from the Health Secretary or the Commissioner of Police;
- (b) whether a death has occurred in the State on a previous occasion at the music festival or in connection with the music festival in the last 3 years;
- (c) whether a death or prescribed event occurred at a music festival, or an event related to a music festival, for which the music festival organiser was the organiser, in the 3 years immediately preceding the date on which the proposed music festival is to start;
- (d) any submission made to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority by the music festival organiser about the reasons the proposed music festival is not a high-risk festival.

Where the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority has issued a direction to an operator of a high-risk music festival, the operator must prepare a safety management plan that includes the information prescribed under clause 6 (1) of the bill. This information includes how the operator's health services and harm reduction initiatives will comply with the NSW Health music festival guidelines, the layout of the festival site and its points of ingress and egress for emergency vehicles and where its medical assistance and supervised relaxation spaces will be located.

The Government is incredibly proud of these NSW Health guidelines, which are world's best practice for the provision of clinical and harm reduction services at music festivals. NSW Health has undertaken extensive consultation with clinicians, public health experts, private medical providers and festival operators to put together a how-to guide for running a safe music festival. The guidelines provide useful recommendations to festival operators on how to ensure they have adequate medical personnel and medical equipment on site to deal with risks such as drug overdoses. Compliance with these guidelines will be critical to a safety management plan being approved. The Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority will work with NSW Health and NSW Ambulance to ensure that they are satisfied that the operator's plans are appropriate for the event.

Once the authority is satisfied that the risks associated with the high-risk festival are suitably addressed by the plan, an operator of a high-risk festival must comply with that safety management plan, as well as keep a copy of that plan on the festival site. Clause 10 provides that an operator of a high-risk music festival must, if requested, arrange for pre- and post-event briefings with relevant agencies. Pre-event briefings ensure that any outstanding issues are addressed before the event, as well as allowing operators and government experts to identify ways that plans can be improved. Changes to a safety management plan can be approved under clause 9 of the bill. Post-event briefings allow operators and agencies to consider lessons learned from the event, including any incidents and the responses to them that are required to be recorded under clause 11.

The bill provides that the enforcement powers of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority under the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007 will apply for enforcement action under the new regulatory scheme with clause 13 creating a regulation-making power to support the proposed Act. Part 5 of the bill provides that those festival operators required by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority to apply for a music festival licence under the liquor regulation prior to disallowance will be required to have their safety management plan approved by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. If a festival has been directed to have its plans approved it does not mean that the organisers have not been trying to do the right thing. It does not mean that the festival operator is not a responsible operator.

This new scheme is not about targeting certain festivals or trying to shut them down—far from it. It is about ensuring that the New South Wales music festival scene is known not only for its wide range of offerings, exciting acts and vibrant experiences but for having a well-coordinated approach when planning these important events. The proposed scheme gives operators access to world's best practice advice from clinical and public safety experts at no cost. The scheme ensures that the Government is able to allocate public resources effectively and without having to divert emergency services away from their normal duties because of under planning by individual operators. It holds festival operators accountable for running safer events. It makes sure that there are adequate medical personnel on site so that we can avoid the tragedies experienced at some festivals last summer. The bill gives festival patrons and their families the comfort that there are adequate measures in place to deal with possible risks associated with these events and that we as a Government have done all that is necessary to ensure people get home safely. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **WATER SUPPLY (CRITICAL NEEDS) BILL 2019**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Melinda Pavey, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:41:47):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

New South Wales is currently experiencing unprecedented drought conditions. Around 98 per cent of the State is affected and forecasts indicate that hot and dry conditions are expected to extend through summer. Major regional centres such as Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange and Bathurst have less than 12 months of town water supply remaining. An increasing number of regional towns are facing even greater difficulties with indications that Cobar, Tenterfield, Nyngan and Bourke have less than six months of town water supply. In these cases, the time required

for the assessment and approval of additional infrastructure that would secure the water supply of these towns and surrounding localities, plus the time to then construct that infrastructure, is longer than the remaining supplies.

The Government stands ready, as it always has, to act in the interests of our regional centres and surrounding localities. Since 2015 the New South Wales Government has committed more than \$1.8 billion in drought assistance for primary producers and regional communities. In August of this year the Government announced an additional \$78.03 million for the delivery of emergency water projects to prolong water supply and protect over 180,000 residents of regional towns. But funding alone is not enough. Legislative action is required to accelerate the assessment and approval times for these emergency projects so that water can be delivered to these areas before town water supplies are exhausted. This is an urgent imperative for the residents of Tamworth, Orange and Dubbo and their localities.

The Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019 is this legislative action. The bill will declare certain regional towns and localities that are in critical need of water and specify the development required to bring an ongoing supply of water to these areas. Action is also required to support the historic partnership with the Commonwealth Government to co-fund construction of a \$650 million upgrade of Wyangala Dam in the State's Central West and a \$480 million new Dungowan Dam near Tamworth. New South Wales is also making an initial co-investment in a proposed new dam on the Mole River. In partnership with the Commonwealth, we will build the first new dam in New South Wales for more than 30 years. The bill ensures that we honour the Premier's and the Government's commitment to work in lockstep with the Commonwealth to make certain these dams get built to enhance future water supply and security. The bill will do this by declaring these three dam projects to be critical State significant infrastructure for the purposes of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

I now turn to the substantive elements of the bill. Part 1 sets out the preliminary matters, including the name and definitions of terms used throughout the bill. Clause 2 provides that the bill commences on the date of assent. Part 1 also deals with the application of the bill. The focus of the bill is regional New South Wales. Importantly, clause 4 provides that the bill does not apply to land within the special areas of the Sydney catchment area as defined in the Water NSW Act 2014 or land within the Sydney metropolitan area. Part 2 of the bill declares certain towns and localities in regional New South Wales suffering from extremely low water supply levels to be critical town or locality water supplies. Paragraph 1 (a) of proposed section 5 lists these towns and localities to be: The locality that includes the towns of Dubbo, Wellington, Warren, Nyngan and Cobar; the locality that includes the towns of Tamworth, Moonbi and Kootingal; and the locality that includes the towns of Orange, Spring Hill, Lucknow, Molong and the area serviced by the Central Tablelands Water County Council water supply system.

Paragraph (2) of clause 5 allows regulations to be made by the Governor to declare additional towns or localities in schedule 1 as critical town or locality water supplies. This is needed to ensure that other towns or localities in regional New South Wales can have the benefit of this legislation if the drought worsens and water supply levels in other areas of the State reach critical levels. The concurrence of the Minister administering the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 is required before a regulation can be made to declare additional towns or localities. Part 3 of the bill deals with the development of the urgent infrastructure that is needed to bring water to the towns and localities that are declared as having critical supply levels. Clause 7 provides that this development will be described in schedule 2 and must only be carried out by or on behalf of a public authority, such as a council or WaterNSW.

Schedule 2 lists the following three emergency water development projects, and the towns and localities they will service: Burrendong Dam access point relocation project, for the locality that includes Dubbo, Wellington, Warren, Nyngan and Cobar; Chaffey Dam to Dungowan Village pipeline, for the locality that includes Tamworth, Moonbi and Kootingal; and Macquarie River to Orange pipeline, for the locality that includes Orange, Spring Hill, Lucknow, Molong and the area serviced by the Central Tablelands Water County Council water supply system. Other development can be included in schedule 2 by regulation or existing development can be altered or omitted. Importantly, before a regulation can be made to add or amend critical town or locality water supply development in schedule 2, the concurrence of the Ministers administering the Biodiversity Conversation Act 2016 is required, and consultation with the Ministers responsible for the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the Fisheries Management Act 1994 and the Heritage Act 1977 must be undertaken.

Clause 7 also provides that any development listed in schedule 2 will be exempt from development control legislation. Development control legislation is defined in clause 6 to mean the provisions of or made under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 or any other Act that would prohibit the carrying out of the development, or that would require the approval of any person or body before the development is carried out. An exception to this is the Water Management Act 2000, which is expressly excluded from the definition of development control legislation as the application of this legislation to critical town or locality water supply development is addressed independently in part 4 of the bill.

The exemption of development control legislation is an essential aspect of the bill that is needed to accelerate the assessment and approval time frames of these emergency projects. Look at the case of Dubbo and the other surrounding towns that rely on the Macquarie River and Burrendong Dam. As at the end of September, Burrendong Dam storages were at 4 per cent. In response, Dubbo Shire Council will implement level 4 restrictions from 1 November. Once the Macquarie ceases to flow—as anticipated by January 2020—if current inflow levels continue the remaining surface water for towns in this locality, including Dubbo, Warren, Wellington, Cobar and Nyngan, will be 21.5 gigalitres of water at the bottom of Burrendong Dam. This water is currently inaccessible without new works—the Burrendong Dam access point relocation project.

Without this bill, to access this storage WaterNSW needs to first obtain environment and planning and water approvals to increase the power supply, to install pumps and to take the water, given its potential impacts on aquatic fauna. Then WaterNSW needs to undertake the necessary construction and commissioning activities. The grim reality is that, based on current advice, Dubbo may need access to this deep water of Burrendong Dam as early as January 2020 and there is not enough time for a business-as-usual approach. There is a lot of water in 21.5 gigalitres. It is enough to give the Dubbo Regional Council, with the support of the Government, additional time in which to implement additional groundwater bores, increase its water savings program and explore additional water recycling to offset potable water usage. This bill's streamlined approval processes will reduce the planning and assessment process for the Burrendong Dam access point relocation and other projects listed in schedule 2 by an estimated six to nine months. The bill is an urgent priority for this Parliament.

While development described in schedule 2 is exempt from development control legislation as a starting point, it can only be carried out if the public authority responsible for it has applied for and received an authorisation to do this work. Clause 8 sets out the authorisation process. Paragraph (2) of clause 8 requires the public authority proposing to carry out the development, or a person on their behalf, to apply to the planning secretary for an authorisation. Paragraph (3) of clause 8 requires this application to be in writing and to include: a description of the proposed development; a description of the land on which the proposed development is to be carried out; the date when any construction for the proposed development is to be commenced and the anticipated date of completion; the measures proposed to be taken to avoid, minimise or offset the environmental or other impacts of the proposed development; and any other information that either the regulations or the planning secretary require to be provided.

Paragraph (4) of clause 8 requires the planning secretary to consult with any other relevant public authorities regarding the proposed development once an application has been received and have regard to any issues raised during this consultation. After this process has been completed, the planning authority must forward the application to the Minister along with a report on the consultation undertaken. Only once these steps have been undertaken can the Minister authorise under paragraph (5) of clause 8 a public authority to carry out the development, subject to any conditions set out or referred to in the authorisation. The type of conditions that can be attached to an authorisation is not limited and could vary depending on the proposed development.

Paragraph (6) of clause 8 sets out some common conditions that could be included, such as the time within which the development must be completed by; the environmental assessment to be undertaken before the development is permitted to be carried out; hours and other conditions of operation; reporting requirements; and public notification requirements. Paragraph (7) of clause 8 allows the Minister to amend or revoke the conditions of an authorisation before it has been carried out. Part 2 contains some other provisions to help clarify the operation of development control legislation and the planning system generally to critical town or locality water supply development. Proposed section 9 makes it clear that an environmental planning instrument made under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 cannot prohibit, require development consent for or otherwise restrict the carrying out of this development.

Similarly, paragraphs (3) and (4) of clause 9 confirm that division 5.2 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 regarding State significant infrastructure does not apply to the proposed development and neither does a development control order to the extent that it would prevent or interfere with the proposed development. Proposed section 10 provides that the Minister may give a copy of an authorisation to the council of the area where the proposed development will be carried out and, in that case, any planning certificate issued by the council is to include advice about the authorisation. Part 4 of the bill deals with the application of the Water Management Act 2000 to critical town or locality water supplies.

Proposed section 11 allows regulations to be made to disapply or modify the Water Management Act 2000 or any regulations and other instruments made under that Act, including water sharing plans with respect to those towns or localities that are declared to have critical water supplies. Such regulations can only be made with the concurrence of the Minister administering the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. For example, this enables regulations to be made to modify rules in a water sharing plan and the Water Management Act 2000 to enable and

streamline the granting of any necessary water supply work approval or water licence. This will accelerate implementation of developments listed in schedule 2 where needed in the context of extreme drought.

The Government recognises that there are times when temporarily changing from normal water-sharing arrangements to reallocate water in favour of a town over other users or end-of-system flow requirements must occur if we are to secure water supply to a regional town. In extreme conditions, human health and town water supplies need to be the Government's priority. In these instances, the regulation may also temporarily modify the water-sharing principles set out in sections 5 and 9 of the Water Management Act 2000 to give priority to town water supply over the other users, including the environment, where critical. Part 5 of the bill sets out the obligations that a public authority has in respect of critical town or locality water supply development.

Proposed section 12 requires a public authority to cooperate with the public authority responsible for critical town or locality water supply development in the exercise of its functions such as by complying with any reasonable request for information to enable the responsible public authority to exercise its functions, or notify the responsible public authority of actions that may impact adversely on the exercise of its functions. Proposed section 13 further empowers a public authority to comply with the directions and requests of other public authorities and to enter into agreements, where necessary, for these purposes. Proposed section 14 enables the Minister, by notice in writing, to direct a public authority to comply with a request direction or decision of a public authority responsible for critical town or locality water supply development, provided that public authority is prescribed by regulation after the concurrence of the responsible Minister is obtained.

Proposed section 15 provides for the resolution of disputes between public authorities concerning the operation of any provision of the bill. Part 6 of the bill contains miscellaneous provisions. Proposed section 16 allows the Minister or Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to delegate the exercise of any function to any person employed in the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, or any person or class of persons authorised by the regulations. The planning secretary may also sub-delegate any function delegated by the Minister if authorised to do so by the Minister in writing. Proposed section 17 provides that compensation is not payable by or on behalf of the State, a public authority or a local council for an act or omission carried out in good faith that is a critical water supply related matter, either directly or indirectly.

Proposed section 18 provides that anything done or omitted to be done by a person in the exercise of functions under the bill or regulations does not constitute a nuisance. Proposed section 19 protects persons acting under the direction of the Minister or planning secretary from any personal liability if the matter or thing was done or omitted to be done in good faith. That liability instead attaches to the Crown. Proposed section 20 allows the Governor to make regulations, including to restore the operation of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and any other Act in relation to development that would otherwise be exempt from those Acts. This means that regulations can be made at any stage to specify how the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 should apply to development on a case-by-case basis, including how it should be transitioned back into the planning system once built or when the bill expires.

This bill has a temporary life. Proposed section 21 ensures that the substantive provisions—being parts 2, 3, 4 and 5 and schedules 1 and 2—expire on the date that is two years after the date of assent. It can only be extended for a further period of 12 months if the Minister is satisfied that risks to declared towns or localities continue or new risks exist. This extension can only be done by regulation. The bill will also declare certain development relating to dams to be critical State significant infrastructure. Schedule 3 to the bill will do this work and list the following three projects that this Government will undertake in partnership with the Commonwealth Government: Wyangala Dam wall raising project, a new dam on Mole River and a new Dungowan Dam located at Ogunbil.

Regulations can be made to insert or alter a description of development that relates to the construction of a new dam on the increase in the storage capacity of an existing dam with the concurrence of the Minister administering the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. Finally, schedule 4 to the bill provides for the regulations to contain provisions of a savings or transitional nature. The prospect of day zero water supply is a reality for too many regional towns across New South Wales. Some of our most significant regional centres—icons of Australian culture, tourism and quality food production, such as Tamworth, Dubbo and Orange—are quickly approaching dire situations.

This is an extraordinary drought—31 months of record low rain—with potentially devastating impacts on lives, communities and on both regional and State economies. This Parliament cannot in good conscience ignore this issue when the welfare of more than 180,000 regional town residents is at stake. The Parliament must take immediate action to ensure that regional towns do not run out of water by supporting this bill to allow urgently required infrastructure to be assessed and approved through streamlined processes so that it can be built in time to save these towns. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **RIGHT TO FARM BILL 2019**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:00:25):** In reply: Picking up from where I left off before question time, I will address the confusion regarding the proposed new Right to Farm Act and how it will operate in practice. The proposed new Right to Farm Act 2019 will contain the nuisance shield element of the bill before the Parliament. First, the nuisance shield established by the proposed new Right to Farm Act will not stop people from making complaints or escalating complaints to litigation. It will not take away anyone's rights, whether they be the rights of farmers or the rights of neighbours. Rather, the shield will help to keep nuisance matters out of the legal system. It will ensure that primary producers are not unnecessarily dragged through the process of litigation by creating uncertainty about where and when nuisance can be found and, if a court happens to find a valid nuisance, it will set out what the court must consider to mitigate or manage the nuisance so that it does not significantly disturb neighbours.

It seems incredible to me, and to many others in this Parliament who grew up and live in country New South Wales, that some people find it difficult to understand and believe living next to a farm might come with some associated realities—in the same way that living near a train station, in a metropolitan context, comes with some attendant realities. This shield simply seeks to establish in law that this reality indeed exists. The bill does not privilege farmers over neighbours, or provide them with legal leverage over adjacent landholders. The nuisance shield is proactive legislation that applies only to established commercial agricultural activities where the producer is operating lawfully and not negligently.

It does not stop neighbours complaining to the council and the Environment Protection Authority [EPA]. It does not even stop someone bringing a nuisance claim. However, if they do and the farmer they seek to legally challenge meets the elements of the defence, then that farmer will be protected. In this way, it strikes a balance between the right to farm and the rights of other landholders. It is acknowledged that few nuisance complaints have gone as far as litigation. But this does not diminish the need for the nuisance shield, given the high cost this litigation places on established producers who are operating lawfully on land used for agriculture.

As proactive legislation, this bill achieves something that governments are often criticised for not doing—looking to future issues based on information currently available to them. The bill helps to protect primary producers if confronted with a nuisance lawsuit by allowing them to continue their operations when they are doing the right thing. The member for Summer Hill, in her contribution, alleged that the Government was paving over the food bowl. However, this bill prevents new neighbours from using the legal system to stall and impede and ultimately drive away agriculture.

I now turn to the detail of operating lawfully. In the debate some members were confused about what is meant in the bill by "operating lawfully". Put simply, a lawful agricultural operation is one that complies with all legislative requirements—those requirements of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997, which regulate noise, dust and odour arising from commercial agricultural activities. Similarly, to avail themselves of the shield, primary producers will need to comply with any requirements under the Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and comply with any consent conditions set out during the development application process, if that process is applied to their particular operations.

If a farmer is not compliant with the relevant requirements, or if the activity resulting in the nuisance action was undertaken negligently, they are not protected by the nuisance shield. Similarly, the bill does not privilege larger producers over smaller ones. It treats them all equally, which is different from what the member for Ballina asserted in her contribution. The Right to Farm Bill 2019 applies to both large and small operations as long as they fit within the definition of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 and they are operating lawfully. Questions were raised regarding nuisance shields only applying to primary producers who have been operating for at least 12 months. This provision is about striking the right balance between the rights of lawfully operating producers to go about their business unimpeded by legal challenges and the rights of neighbours to enjoy their property free from unreasonable disruption.

New agricultural operations that were highlighted in the debate, including the intensive horticultural operations located around urban areas in the Coffs Harbour electorate, worked closely with local councils and communities to address and manage issues throughout the planning and the development application process. From the outset, those producers worked to establish best practice in their operations. But, as we know, even farming operations operating under best-practice management can have residual noise, light, dust and other

impacts that might affect their neighbours. Yes, producers will not have the protection of the nuisance shield in their first year of operation, but in that first year the normal operations that suit that farm in that area will be established. After that year, the protection comes into force.

A concern was raised in the debate that the defence applies even when farmers change their primary production operations—for example, when an intensive grazing enterprise is converted to an intensive poultry farm or some other intensive agricultural operation. In short, any agricultural activity, including any new or changed agricultural practice, must be consistent with the planning laws. Producers can only establish and continue operations that are permissible on that land. The previous example would represent the most significant change in agricultural production. As such, this requires a development application and planning consideration that accounts for all the potential disturbances that may impact neighbours and addresses them through relevant consent conditions.

Intensive operations must continue to comply with other legislative requirements. However, most changes in agricultural production are rarely extreme. For example, a farmer may choose to respond to market demands and change from growing zucchinis to a cereal crop or they might change from mainly cattle production to sheep or vice versa. They may also try to innovate by using netting to protect their crops from pests and other weather elements. Removing protections offered by the Right to Farm Bill 2019 for any change of a type of primary production would create an unintended consequence of stifling innovation and resilience in the farming sector. It is essential that farmers have sufficient flexibility to be able to adapt to changing market conditions.

I refer to the amendments to the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 contained within the bill. I start almost where I began this contribution: with what this bill does not do. That is important to clarify because some members who contributed to the debate appear confused about this issue. The bill does not change in any way the definition of "inclosed lands" under that Act. Nor does it touch at all or amend sections 4, 4AA or 4A. I will refer to those sections as trespass or simple trespass offences. In short, trespass is trespass and the same penalties apply. If you are not doing something that is currently not considered simple trespass under the Inclosed Lands Act, it will still not be considered simple trespass after this bill is passed.

In simple terms, no activity that is currently lawful under the Inclosed Lands Act will be triggered by any of the amendments that this bill applies to the Inclosed Lands Act. To be affected by any of the new aggravated offences that this bill introduces an individual must commit an offence under the Inclosed Lands Act. They must already be committing an act of trespass—committing a crime—to be held up or caught by any of these changes. It does not matter why you are trespassing, as some members who spoke in the debate would have you believe. The law is clear and says that trespass, regardless of the motive, is illegal. This bill does nothing to change that.

There has been much conjecture about the bill infringing on the rights of unions to conduct industrial protests. Again, nothing in this bill impacts on the rights of unions—nothing. If the bill is passed, union officials will have exactly the same rights they have today. Accessing workplaces and legally entering premises to speak to workers or investigate breaches of work health and safety legislation or workplace laws is prescribed by Commonwealth law. Further, the offence will not apply to persons who have a lawful reason to be on that inclosed land, which would extend to union officials acting lawfully in their official capacities.

However, I acknowledge that legitimate concerns were raised by some members and stakeholders, particularly during the hearing of the parliamentary committee in the other place. Accordingly, as I have already made clear, the Government will introduce amendments to address those concerns to make it crystal clear what this bill is about—agricultural lands—and certainly what it is not. A number of members raised the concern that the bill will unintentionally capture lawful, peaceful protests. First and foremost, I remind the members opposite that simple trespass is a criminal offence. It has been for more than 100 years. This fact is not altered in any way by the bill.

The Right to Farm Bill 2019 does not prevent protesters from lawfully protesting or whistleblowers from raising animal welfare concerns or union officials from accessing workplaces in line with existing statutory requirements and laws. As I said in my second reading speech, the Government recognises and supports the right to protest and the implied freedom of political communication. The right to protest and implied freedom of political communication do not, however, permit the commission of any offence. Protesting on public land that is not inclosed agricultural land is not captured by this bill. Likewise, protesting with authorisation is not captured by this bill. Those are two important points to remember.

I will touch briefly on the constitutionality of the bill. The member for Maitland raised the *Brown v Tasmania* case, stemming from a law introduced in Tasmania in 2014 that sought to prevent protesters from taking steps that would prevent, hinder or obstruct business activity. The High Court ruled that the law was invalid because it stopped members of the public protesting on publicly owned forestry land, breaching the implied freedom of speech in the Constitution. The New South Wales Inclosed Lands Protection Act does not stop

protesting on public lands that are not inclosed. In the case cited by the member, Justice Nettle referenced the New South Wales Inclosed Lands Protection Act and expressly stated in her judgement that that New South Wales Act does not target protesters or protest activities. Furthermore, the High Court found that the aims of the laws to protect businesses from a disruptive process were, in fact, legitimate. The bill does not criminalise lawful protest.

The members for Maitland and for Orange expressed concern that the bill does not contain provisions regarding unauthorised surveillance. I remind the House that the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 already includes offences for using an optical device to record images in the process of an unauthorised access to land. This offence attracts a penalty of up to \$11,000, five years imprisonment or both. However, the Government will continue to consider the adequacies of penalties for unauthorised filming and barriers to effective enforcement and prosecution as part of the Government working group to review the Surveillance Devices Act. The member for Orange also identified that this bill is silent on drones. Drones are regulated by the Commonwealth Government through the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. The New South Wales Government is currently engaged in discussions with the Commonwealth Government about how best to approach the challenges posed by drone use.

The members for Ballina, for Sydney and for Summer Hill raised animal welfare issues. The Government is committed to protecting the welfare of all animals across New South Wales, including farm animals. Under the Animal Welfare Action Plan released in May 2018, the Government committed to modernising the animal welfare legislative framework. With respect to the comments of the member for Lake Macquarie regarding animal welfare legislation enforcement arrangements, the Legislative Council is currently undertaking an inquiry in this area. The Government will consider the findings of that inquiry in due course. It bears repeating that the Government encourages citizens to report concerns about animal cruelty to the enforcement agencies that are charged under legislation and funded to enforce that legislation and investigate such cases.

Concern was also raised that the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 allows land that is not inclosed to become inclosed in accordance with the definition in the Act "by the erection of temporary fencing". The implication is that it would then be subject to an offence under the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901. That is currently the case and the bill before the House does not change it in any way. This bill is only concerned with illegal trespass on farms, and the amendments I will move shortly will certainly clarify the issue. The member for Maitland also raised concerns about the requirement for the savings and transitional provisions in the Inclosed Lands Protection Act. First, the bill makes no change to the existing regulation-making power under the Act and it will be included in the Right to Farm Bill 2019.

Secondly, it is common in New South Wales legislation to provide for regulation-making powers. The regulation-making power only allows the Governor to make regulations that are consistent with the purpose of the legislation—that is, to provide for matters relating to farm trespass and the defence of agricultural enterprises. Thirdly, the transitional regulation-making power is further limited in its scope and can be only used to modify the operation of the bill to address any unintended consequences of what is proposed. Those types of provisions are included in principal Acts as a matter of drafting practice by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office.

Some members have queried why this bill is being introduced before the completion of a statutory review of the amendments introduced to the Inclosed Lands, Crimes and Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Interference) Act 2016. This bill is a response to the immediate need to improve protection for farmers and deliver on a key election commitment and priority of this Government. In regard to concerns about the lack of consultation, I note the Government did consult on these changes with a range of stakeholders, including NSW Farmers, National Farmers' Federation, Intensive Agriculture Consultative Committee, Law Society of New South Wales, New South Wales Bar Association, Legal Aid New South Wales, and the Supreme, District and Local courts. These were the identifiable groups most likely to be impacted by this bill.

Consultation was a key election commitment of this Government. The election was in March, we were returned and we now have an obligation to introduce this bill because we promised it to the people of New South Wales. We are committed to protecting the rights of farmers. As I said in my second reading speech, the Government will further, in extension of this bill—if it is passed by this Parliament—establish the position of Agriculture Commissioner before the end of this year. The commissioner will work to identify current and future issues that face the agricultural sector, including the issues around planning that have been mentioned by multiple members in this debate.

The Right to Farm Bill is a key element of the Government's commitment to supporting and protecting our farmers. It addresses the increasing and newly emerging risks that our farmers face. It protects them from trespass and it also protects lawful operators from nuisance litigation. This bill was introduced as a direct response to the feedback that my colleagues and I have heard from farmers right across the State. Importantly, it is also a direct response to growing community concern about the increasing intensity of farm trespass in New South Wales. The bill is part of a broader commitment of this Government.

I thank the Attorney General and his office for their support in developing this bill. The Attorney General immediately understood the very real risks that these kinds of trespass can cause and the damage they do to our farming communities. I also thank the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of Justice, my staff—particularly Alex Hall—for their tireless work on this matter. I commend the bill to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Ms Jenny Aitchison and Mr Adam Marshall.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** By leave: I will deal with the bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 6 and schedules 1 and 2 be agreed to.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:17:15):** I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-161:

No. 1 **Review of Act**

Page 3. Insert after line 5—

7 Review of Act

- (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 2 years from the commencement of this Act.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament by 30 June 2022.

The reason for moving this amendment was alluded to in the Minister's second reading speech. We are concerned that there has not been adequate consultation on this bill and that it is so half-baked that the Government has to amend it. We are concerned also about the drafting of the nuisance aspects of the bill and how they will work in practice. Numerous members have spoken about the defence issues—whether it is a nuisance defence or a nuisance shield, and whether a legislator would need to be involved to see if that was the case. That is definitely an issue for us but we also have broader concerns. This bill is really a signalling of the Government's intention to continue its attack on places like native forests. The Government's amendment includes forests in agricultural land. I do not know any farmers who live in forests. The bill is so badly drafted that we believe the only way to ensure it achieves its intended purpose is if a statutory review is drafted into the bill.

The Minister mentioned our concern as to whether or not the legislation has been reviewed since being updated in 2016. That has not been the case. In 2016 there was widespread community outrage about the scope of the changes to the Inclosed Lands Protection Act. It is of great concern to the Opposition that the Government has now come in here with more changes that it still has not been able to confine to an appropriate level. I cannot take on trust what the Minister says because he has put up a bill and now has to amend it. He has done this without the report from the upper House inquiry that is due on 21 October. The inquiry received 217 submissions and heard from 15 witnesses from eight organisations who gave extensive feedback to the Minister.

The Minister has responded to some of the issues raised. I note that the word "hinder" has been removed following a lot of discussion about possible confusion. I have asked the Minister to assist us in helping him to pass legislation that will protect farmers in their homes from trespass. At every turn the Minister has delayed any conversation or dialogue. I have asked for the amendments. I got them an hour before the opening of Parliament this morning. I do not have time to go through those amendments and get the advice we need. The Minister talked about consultation with the Bar Association of New South Wales. They did not agree on the disproportionate nature of the punishments in this bill. The Minister can say that he has consulted with people, but he has not addressed the concerns.

If the Minister is so clear about the surveillance aspect being covered by other legislation, why are farmers still articulating that concern to me? I am not talking about drones; I am talking about the other aspects of that issue. The Minister could have used other mechanisms to achieve his purpose, rather than the Inclosed Lands Protection Act. Last year legislation was passed in this place stating that we do not agree protest is appropriate within 150 metres of a reproductive health facility. We said, "Okay, fair cop. No matter how strong your views are there are some places that you just cannot protest."

The Victorian version of that legislation was challenged in the High Court, and it was upheld. That was an opportunity for the Government to clearly carve out exactly what it was trying to do. It could have then put through exactly the issues it wanted. It could have exempted industrial actions. I do not agree that because the Minister says this is all covered in the Fair Work Act that it is hunky-dory. We still have not heard from the Attorney General in this debate. In my second reading contribution I invited him to tell us why he is letting this Minister fiddle with the legislation in such a way that, even before it gets to the end of its first passage through this House, the Minister with his tail between his legs has to amend it. On behalf of every member of the New South Wales population I am not going to take on faith that this Government and this Minister have got this right.

The Minister has got it wrong before. He has rushed in and not consulted with us. What is the Right to Farm Bill all about? If one goes to the website of the Department of Primary Industries what does one find? It is about planning legislation; not trespass. This legislation does not go anywhere near planning, except to set up farmers in a defensive posture so that they are seen by some members of the community as beyond reproach. Likewise, what happens if it passes and somebody has been in a new agricultural pursuit for eight months? When will the clock start? There is a lot of potential confusion. The Minister said that we are confused; he is confused. He has not been clear in what he is trying to do.

The Deputy Premier is running around the State threatening to get rid of national parks and the environment Minister is pretty much in all-out war because he cannot get the plastic bags legislation up. He has also said that he will gazette more national parks et cetera. This is going to be a key issue in this term, we know that, yet the Minister suddenly thinks that timber and forestry is an agricultural pursuit that needs to be addressed by this. Some farmers are conservationists. They may not want to have their farms sitting next to forests that have been completely denuded of trees under this Government. They might want to join protests on that site but under this legislation it would not be possible because they would not be able to get permission from the Government to go and do a protest on the site of the forest.

We must also be very clear about all the other sorts of farms. The Minister has been talking with such hubris and hysteria about vegan vigilantes. We know there are serious issues with people not feeling safe in their houses. I understand this enormously. I made that very clear in my second reading contribution. I am just not sure if the vegan vigilantes are really worried about turf farms. I do not think they are worried about mushrooms. I do not think they are worried about vineyards. If there is a right to farm issue for vineyards I have not heard of it and I live in the Hunter Valley! I am just not quite sure why all these bits are included.

In regards to orchards, are we upset about apples now? Are people suddenly going onto apple farms and releasing the apples from the trees? "Give us your apples!" This is ridiculous. This goes way beyond what the Minister said in his speech. We have spoken to many farmers. I credit the shadow Minister for the Environment and Heritage who has been up and down the coast over the last couple of weeks consulting with rural communities. People up there are very concerned about the impact of coal seam gas mining. The Bentley blockade occurred on private agricultural land. The Minister can say, "The farmer who owns the private agricultural land where those 800 people camped may give his or her permission for that protest to take place." That is a lovely scenario, but the situation is that there could be changes to that. The farmers could suddenly decide halfway through, "No, I do not give you permission to do that." Now we have 800 people sitting there. Where is that covered? This is not right.

The Government should do a statutory review of this. This lazy Minister brings half-baked legislation to the House. He will not meet with the Opposition. This legislation was referred to an upper House committee and he will not even wait for its report. He cannot deliver on his promise because he just will not do the work. That is the problem. I can just imagine the conversation that went around the shadow Cabinet with the vigilantes Minister over here attacking the Minister's legislation. The worst thing is that this Government is using our farmers as a Trojan Horse to do what it really wants to do: stifle protests. We saw it in 2016 with the previous Premier. We know that this is what they want to do.

The Government knows it has a lot of things planned for this State that it does not want the citizens of our community to be able to have a say on. We are concerned that they are going to include forests in this. I do not take the Minister's advice about the Fair Work Act 2009. That is something that needs to be reviewed. We still have the inclusion of the incitement provisions, which would potentially capture union organising off these lands and does not even involve trespass. We really have concerns about this. If the Government cannot subject this bill to a statutory review then it just goes to the heart of the bad faith it has brought to the table at every point. I have reached across the table. On 28 August I went to the Minister moments before he brought this bill to the House and I said to him, "There are some things we need to talk about. There are some issues that you have and some issues that we have. We want to work together."

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: The member for Maitland knows full well that she should be talking within the leave of the amendment.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I am.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** I am not hearing that and I have been listening. Come back to the amendment and we will have a debate.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland has the call.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I sought to have a good discussion with the Minister about these issues. There was no notification that he was going down to the Chamber to drop in this bill that he had not spoken to me about.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: The previous point of order was upheld. I ask again that you instruct the member to come back to the leave of the amendment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House. I ask the member for Maitland to focus on the subject of the amendment that she put forward, which is about the statutory review.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The amendment is about the statutory review. My point is that I have no faith in this Minister to review his own legislation. The fact is that he has not put that capacity in the bill, that he has had to go to an upper House inquiry and he has had to return to this Chamber with his tail between his legs to change the laws because he knows they are wrong and they are not the right way to do this. I cannot take that on trust and neither should the people of New South Wales. There should be a clear delineation of a statutory review on this. We have to put this in the context that the Government has not done the required statutory review it was supposed to do. It has not done the one it is supposed to do but it submits this bill, saying it is still not going to do one. This is outrageous. We need the Government to do the work it is supposed to do, which is look at legislation, develop it, ensure that there are no unintended consequences and provide the capacity for such unintended consequences to be captured.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:30:52):** The Government will not be supporting this amendment. The Right to Farm Bill is based on similar Tasmanian legislation called the Primary Industry Activities Protection Act 1995, which has sat on their statute books for 24 years without issue. The Tasmanian Act upon which the Right to Farm Bill was based was reviewed in 2014 by the Tasmanian Parliament. The report found that the Act had been effective in meeting its purpose, which is to protect people engaged in primary industry by limiting the operation of common law nuisance in respect to certain activities that are incidental to efficient and commercially viable primary production. Therefore the Government will not support the amendment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-161 be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....35  
Noes .....48  
Majority.....13

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Finn, Ms J  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Minns, Mr C  
Parker, Mr J  
Scully, Mr P  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N  
McKay, Ms J  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Piper, Mr G  
Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Dib, Mr J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D (teller)  
Park, Mr R  
Saffin, Ms J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

## NOES

Anderson, Mr K	Ayres, Mr S	Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G	Bromhead, Mr S	Butler, Mr R
Clancy, Mr J	Conolly, Mr K	Constance, Mr A
Cooke, Ms S (teller)	Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Dalton, Mrs H	Davies, Mrs T	Dominello, Mr V
Donato, Mr P	Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L.J.
Gibbons, Ms M	Griffin, Mr J	Gulaptis, Mr C
Hancock, Mrs S	Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M	Lee, Dr G
Lindsay, Ms W	Marshall, Mr A	McGirr, Dr J
Pavey, Mrs M	Perrottet, Mr D	Petinos, Ms E
Preston, Ms R	Provest, Mr G	Roberts, Mr A
Saunders, Mr D	Sidgreaves, Mr P	Sidoti, Mr J
Singh, Mr G	Smith, Mr N	Speakman, Mr M
Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M	Tuckerman, Mrs W
Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R	Wilson, Ms F

## PAIRS

Daley, Mr M	O'Dea, Mr J
Doyle, Ms T	Toole, Mr P
Mihailuk, Ms T	Upton, Ms G

**Amendment negatived.**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:38:59):** I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-182:

No. 1 **Removal of amendments to Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901**

Pages 5 and 6, Schedule 2, line 1 on page 5 to line 12 on page 6. Omit all words on those lines.

There are a number of reasons why we need to support this amendment. The first is that so many members on the other side of the Chamber do not think that a statutory review should take place when a bill with such far-reaching consequences is introduced or that when such a big mistake is made that the Government has to amend a bill before it is passed. There is a bit of arrogance on the other side of the Chamber.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members will remain silent or leave the Chamber.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I reiterate that Labor supports the rights of farmers in this State to live in peace and to not have to deal with protests on their private land. They should not have to worry about biosecurity of their farms. That is not Labor's objection to schedule 2 to the bill. Our objection, as my colleague the Hon. Mick Veitch said in the Legislative Council, is that this is what happens when the Government tries to legislate hubris. Our issue is that we are not convinced that this Government has got it right. It is not the right mechanism to be doing it this way. Earlier we talked about the planning regulation but we have seen that schedule 2 is really poor. The Government should support this amendment because it has had to amend the bill. The Government knows it made a mistake and did not define "agricultural land". The member for Lismore, who is in the Chamber, said in her contribution:

I can see no definition of "agriculture". There are definitions in other Acts, particularly with respect to legislation dealing with local government, the Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act and other areas.

She also said:

When I say that this is a bad bill I am talking about giving broad definitions and making the bill coexist with existing legislation.

I remember Government members told us that a definition of "agricultural land" is in the bill. If so, why has the Government had to move an amendment to insert a definition? I do not understand it. The definition of "agricultural land" is very broad and encompasses a wide range of activities. I am still to be convinced about what turf farmers in this State have to fear from vegan vigilantes. Are they worried that they will rip up the turf and run away with it? Why are vineyards included in the bill? I live in the Hunter, as does the member for Cessnock and the member for Upper Hunter. Where is the concern for vegan vigilantes on those vineyards? I have never seen it reported. I usually try to stick to the *Maitland Mercury*. I think it would report it, but I have not seen it.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** Point of order: As reluctant as I am to interrupt the member for Maitland, I think she is actually speaking about the next amendment, which is a Government amendment. We are discussing her amendment that would remove schedule 2 from the bill. Schedule 2 has nothing to do with vineyards or turf farms. That is the next Government amendment.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I will not be lectured by this Minister on how to read legislation. This Minister is the one who runs in here with the Inclosed Lands Act when his Attorney General has not done the statutory review on it. He refuses to put a statutory review in the bill but then runs in here with new definitions. I am saying that if the Government makes a bad mistake with such poor consequences and does not listen to the review or wait for the report, then it does not have the right to lecture us on how it is going to make it right. That is what the Minister is seeking to do. I would prefer if members opposite left the Chamber because it is quite clear that they do not want to listen to people about anything.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members are making just as much noise as Government members. All members in the Chamber will come to order.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I am very concerned about schedule 2 as it has been proposed in this legislation. The Minister has massively overreached. There were 217 submissions and we heard from 15 witnesses from eight organisations. The Minister supposedly wants us to trust him when he says "Don't worry about this. Industrial relations will be covered in the Fair Work Act." That is just not on.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for The Entrance to order for the first time. His behaviour was unparliamentary.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The Opposition will not accept the word of this Minister, who has had to amend his own legislation. He has no credibility in interpreting legislation. The Opposition knows that there was a mechanism used last year—not very long ago at all—to put safe access zones around reproductive health centres. The Parliament agreed that there are some places in New South Wales where people probably should not protest, regardless of how strongly they feel about a matter.

Maybe the Minister should have talked to his colleague from the National Party Trevor Khan as well as to the Hon. Penny Sharpe and to the Deputy Speaker who put together that bill, which was targeted. That bill made exclusion zones around particular areas and it mentioned capturing videos. The Minister has told us previously not to worry about surveillance because it has been covered in other legislation. The farmers do not agree. They are not feeling the love and they do not feel protected. The Minister has ignored that matter in this bill. The Government is really legislating to suit its own purpose, which is to stifle debate and protest in this State.

The Opposition does not agree with the idea that the Government can just keep chipping away at the right to protest in New South Wales under the guise of protecting our farmers. Farmers are suffering in the deep, dark recesses of drought. They are trying to get through the drought but the Government is trying to use them. The Government is using the farming community as a Trojan Horse in order to pursue its agenda of stopping debate in this State. That is a disgrace. In her contribution this morning Minister Pavey spoke about Julie Moore. She said that the issue was illegal trespass.

**Mr Michael Johnsen:** Point of order: I would like the member for Maitland to come back to the leave of the amendment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Upper Hunter. The amendment relates to inclosed land. I draw the member back to the subject of the amendment.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The member for Upper Hunter does not realise that because he has not read the bill. Sorry, he did read the bill—but it was while he was giving his speech in the second reading debate. For the first half of his speech he read the explanatory notes. The member for Upper Hunter is the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture unless he is at a dairy farmers conference, when he is the parliamentary secretary for dairy and if he is with chicken farmers he is the parliamentary secretary for chicken farmers. He is whatever you want—the cut-and-come-again parliamentary secretary. He will be whatever you want on the day but he will not actually do his job. The Parliamentary Secretary has no credibility. He announced the diary commissioner before the Government had made the appointment—before the contract was signed.

**Mr Michael Johnsen:** You're making a strong argument. You might win this.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** This is really ridiculous. The member for Upper Hunter heckles members of the Opposition—particularly women—like a little baying dog. He thinks he is really funny. He thinks he is hilarious, but I am sick of it. He had a little crack and lots of commentary about every one of our female speakers today. He does it every time. He has, on a previous occasion, come around to the Opposition side of the Chamber

to harass me while I was speaking. He is absolutely intimidating and ridiculous, and I will not listen to him. I do not think the Deputy Speaker should take points of order from him on this.

I return to the leave of the amendment. Schedule 2 is a disgrace because it is so broad. The Government admits it. Government members know it and they should reject it. The amendment recognises that the Government has mucked the bill up. Government members know that and they should be embarrassed to come into this Chamber and say what they have said over the past couple of days. The Opposition's concerns with schedule 2 are really simple. I care about farmers. I care about people who live in our farming communities. I want them to be safe in their homes and on their farms, but the proposed schedule 2 is so draconian and so broad that it could be challenged in the High Court. It could be seen to greatly impinge—

**Mr Adam Marshall:** No, it can't.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Minister, please don't give us your opinion. We saw your legal credentials completely shattered at the inquiry that you would not listen to. But I listen. That is the difference between the Minister and me—I listen and try to work in a bipartisan fashion for the good of our farmers; he does not. So this is the problem: Farmers could end up in a worse situation than they are in now. They could end up in a situation where they are not protected if the High Court of Australia strikes down the legislation. That is one option. The other option is that they are actually caught up in these provisions—people who attended the Bentley blockade, people who have been on protests in any of the places that are so broadly referred to. In fact, today I heard from a lawyer—one of those; you would not know about that—that, under schedule 2 to the bill, if a person leaves a door open at a shopping centre, it could be three years because that person is leaving open the gate of inclosed lands.

That is how pathetic the Minister's approach is to this legislation. The hide of him! It is shameful and disgraceful to use farmers as an excuse to limit the right of protest in our State. Back in 2016 we saw farmers outside this place when the Government tried this on with the inclosed lands legislation. Remember that? Remember those dangerous knitting nannas? They terrify us, don't they? I am terrified of knitting nannas. Terrified. It is absolutely disgraceful. Schedule 2 captures knitting nannas. It captures people who just want to leave a good place for future generations. That is the kind of government we have. All those grandmas and grandads living on farms? Do not worry about it. It is wrong.

I have seen the failure of this Government to address farmers' concerns about schedule 2 and on-farm incursions. I have seen the Government go to an inquiry, listen to half of it, not wait for the report and still come back with a bodgy bill. So we want to strike out schedule 2. I make this commitment to the farmers of New South Wales: I will put up a private member's bill that addresses it, that specifically defines farming activities and agricultural food processing facilities in much the same way as reproductive health clinics are now defined in the Public Health Act 2010 as a result of the safe access zones legislation. I am going to try to allay our farmers' concerns by using some of the language in section 98E of the Public Health Act regarding the capture and distribution of visual data. I will utilise some exemptions similar to those under section 98F of that Act to specifically carve out activities that are undertaken as part of an industrial action or peaceful protest where that is not on people's farms.

This is a real problem and the Government needs to be aware that it has failed. The Minister is saying that he has rushed this legislation because of an election commitment. The Government introduced the bill into this place on 20 August 2019. The Minister had from 23 March 2019. In fact, a government of any quality would hope to have some of its policies in mind when going to an election after making promises to people. That is not happening here. This Government is out of touch and arrogant. The last time the Government tried to get any action on right to farm was 14 years ago with the Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Don Page. It failed then and it has failed now because the Government cannot help but overreach across ordinary citizens' rights at every point.

**Mr David Harris:** It is a smokescreen for order.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** It is a smokescreen for stifling debate in our community. I totally understand farmers' concerns that they will not get the opportunity to have this bill enacted. They want the protections that the Government promised, but I say to every farmer in this State that the Government's promises are hollow, empty and false. The inquiry showed that. Farmers know it in their hearts and they cannot support this bill. I urge every member in this House to stand with us to remove schedule 2 and to get a proper right to farm bill; not this shambolic, sneaky, divisive bill put up by the Government.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (18:53:41):** The Government will not support the amendment. The effect of the amendment guts the Right to Farm Bill 2019. In fact, removing schedule 2 removes all of the aggravating offences and all of the penalties. If this amendment were to be passed the bill would not be the Right to Farm Bill 2019; it would be

Labor's "The Farmers Have No Rights Bill" because if amended with all of those aggravated offences it would send a very strong message to people out there that farmers are absolutely free game. In fact, this is the sort of amendment a shadow Minister moves when they do not have the ticker to vote against the bill. Everything the shadow Minister has said in her contribution to the second reading debate, as well as in moving this amendment, has been against the bill. If you are against the bill, just vote against the bill. The Government will not support this amendment because it stands by our farmers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** We not only want the strongest possible laws and protections for them in Australia.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Upper Hunter he is already one call to order.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** But we want to send a very strong message to people who would illegally trespass on a farm, whether they are animal activists or whether they are illegal hunters—whomever they are—that they are not allowed to trespass on a farmer's property and interfere with their agricultural enterprises. Therefore, the Government will most definitely not support this amendment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2019-182 be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....48  
Majority..... 14

AYES

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

NOES

Ayres, Mr S	Barilaro, Mr J	Berejiklian, Ms G
Bromhead, Mr S	Butler, Mr R	Clancy, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K	Constance, Mr A	Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A (teller)	Dalton, Mrs H
Davies, Mrs T	Dominello, Mr V	Donato, Mr P
Evans, Mr L.J.	Gibbons, Ms M	Griffin, Mr J
Gulaptis, Mr C	Hancock, Mrs S	Hazzard, Mr B
Henskens, Mr A	Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M
Lee, Dr G	Lindsay, Ms W	Marshall, Mr A
McGirr, Dr J	O'Dea, Mr J	Pavey, Mrs M
Perrottet, Mr D	Petinos, Ms E	Preston, Ms R
Provest, Mr G	Roberts, Mr A	Saunders, Mr D
Sidgreaves, Mr P	Sidoti, Mr J	Singh, Mr G
Smith, Mr N	Speakman, Mr M	Stokes, Mr R
Taylor, Mr M	Tuckerman, Mrs W	Upton, Ms G
Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R	Wilson, Ms F

## PAIRS

Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T  
Mihailuk, Ms T

Anderson, Mr K  
Elliott, Mr D  
Toole, Mr P

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (19:02:12):** By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 to 5 on sheet c2019-883C in globo:

No. 1 **Meaning of agricultural land**

Page 5, Schedule 2. Insert after line 2—

**[1] Section 3 Definitions**

Insert in alphabetical order in section 3(1)—

*agricultural land* means inclosed lands on which any of the following businesses or undertakings are carried on—

- (a) a farm, being any business or undertaking for agricultural purposes (including an orchard, market garden, mushroom farm, vineyard, plant nursery or turf farm),
- (b) any other business or undertaking in which cattle, poultry, pigs, goats, horses, sheep or other livestock are kept or bred for commercial purposes (for example, a dairy, saleyard or feedlot),
- (c) a business or undertaking for the commercial production of products derived from the slaughter of animals (including poultry) or the processing of skins or wool of animals, including abattoirs, knackereries, tanneries, woollscours and rendering plants,
- (d) a business or undertaking for forestry (including timber mills) or aquaculture.

No. 2 **Hindering conduct of business or undertaking**

Page 5, Schedule 2[1] and [2], lines 3–6. Omit all words on those lines.

No. 3 **Offences on agricultural land**

Page 5, Schedule 2[3], proposed section 4B(1)(h), line 10. Insert "on agricultural land" after "property".

No. 4 **Offences on agricultural land**

Page 5, Schedule 2[4], lines 15–20. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (a) for an offence that occurs on agricultural land—
  - (i) 120 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both, or
  - (ii) 200 penalty units or imprisonment for 3 years, or both if—
    - (A) the offender was accompanied by 2 or more persons when the offence occurred, or
    - (B) the aggravating circumstances were those set out in subsection (1)(b), or
- (b) for an offence that occurs on land other than agricultural land—50 penalty units.

No. 5 **Offences on agricultural land**

Page 5, Schedule 2[5], proposed section 4C, line 24. Insert, "on agricultural land" after "commission".

Right from the beginning this bill has been about providing better protections for farmers and those operating agricultural enterprises. This amendment will clarify and ensure the provisions included in the bill to amend the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 will apply to inclosed agricultural lands only. This reflects the clear additional risks posed by unlawful entry on inclosed lands that are used for primary production and other agricultural production purposes. For the purposes of this section, inclosed agricultural lands are defined as set out in amendment No. 1.

This amendment restricts the changes made to penalties for breaches under the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 to inclosed agricultural lands only in response to the concerns raised by members during the debate on the bill. The amendment seeks to remove any ambiguity whatsoever about the intent and, importantly, the scope

of the bill. The amendment means that all of the aggravated offences, including all of the penalties, only apply to activities undertaken on agricultural land. As I made clear in my second reading speech, the bill delivers on the Government's priority to protect our farmers from illegal activity. By restricting the amendments made to the bill to agricultural enterprises only, the bill will achieve this commitment.

Finally, to make this absolutely clear, people who trespass on inclosed land relating to banks, supermarkets, schools or universities will not be captured by any of the higher penalties, aggravating offences or amendments to the bill. We must keep in mind that simply trespassing on inclosed agricultural lands is not sufficient to result in an increased penalty. The aggravating offences are triggered only if people commit an offence that exists already under the Inclosed Lands Protection Act. I reiterate, the aggravated offences are only triggered if a crime is committed under existing legislation. It does not suddenly criminalise something that is not already a crime. These amendments are to clarify without any doubt whatsoever the scope and implications of the bill and to make sure our farmers get the protections they not only need and require but also thoroughly deserve. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (19:05:47):** I am very concerned about this amendment. The Minister stated that everything I said in my speech in debate was against the bill. I asked my friend, the shadow Minister and member for Cessnock, what he thought of my speech. I like to get a bit of feedback on these things. This is the first big bill I have had in my portfolio. He said to me, "Right to the end, Jenny, I wasn't quite sure which way you were going to go because I could see you were really going through all the issues that are applying to farmers in this situation but you are also outlining the pitfalls of the legislation."

I am thinking that the Minister did not hear half of my speech. If that is the Minister's listening skills, I am a bit worried because before 21 October we still had not received the report. He does not have all of the deliberation from the committee to inform his view on the bill. We know he is not a good listener because he did not work that out. Whatever the witnesses have said, he would only have heard half of it. The other part that concerns me is that he does not read it either. As I said before, when the member for Lismore was asking the Minister to elucidate what the definition of agricultural land was when he was making his second reading speech, he said, "It's in there, it's in there."

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** He did.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** He did, didn't he? Miraculously that little bit has disappeared from *Hansard*. I remember very vividly there were interjections. Yet, we have this amendment where it is all defined. What was missing? It seems to me that, just like the Parliamentary Secretary, he had not read the bill properly. That is my concern. The Minister's definition of agricultural land states:

- (a) a farm, being any business or undertaking for agricultural purposes—

that sort of sounds like a farm—

- (including an orchard, market garden, mushroom farm, vineyard, plant nursery or turf farm),

I am still really confused about what the vegan vigilantes want from turf farms. What do they want from mushroom farms—magic mushrooms? Maybe they think if they eat the grapes from the vineyards they will get drunk. I do not know. I have not ever heard that there is a big movement out there to liberate the grapes and the apples from the trees. I have not heard of people going along with their baskets. My husband used to take tours to the Young cherry festival and they gave you a gobble and go pass. You could eat as you went along. That was a business decision. I did not see that as an act of vegan vigilantism. I am very concerned about this amendment. It continues:

- (b) any other businesses or undertaking in which cattle, poultry, pigs, goats, horses, sheep or other livestock are kept or bred for commercial purposes ... That is great. I am not sure what that has to do with seahorse farms or other things like that. I suppose that might come under aquaculture further down. Paragraph (c) of Government amendment No. 1 states, in part:

... a business or undertaking for the commercial production of products derived from the slaughter of animals (including poultry) or the processing of skins or wool of animals ...

I admit I am really new to this portfolio but I pretty much think they do not start tanning the skin until they take it off the animal. I do not think the vegan vigilantes will be there at the wool scours and tanneries, removing the skins. I think by then they would have worked out that it is too late. Maybe the Government has not, I am not sure. Paragraph (d) of the amendment refers to "a business or undertaking for forestry". That is the nub of the problem. There have been rumours that the Government is going to privatise forestry. It is not my shadow portfolio; it is the shadow portfolio of the member for Wollongong—he would be more across it. Governments like the O'Farrell, Baird and Berejiklian governments do not like people protesting the decisions that they make. What do you do when you know that there is big legislation on the horizon? You cut the right of people to protest. That is what the Government did in 2016. We talked about it and about all those protesters on Macquarie Street—those dangerous knitting nannas and all those terribly awful people, including farmers.

Recently on the news I saw farmers throwing effigies of a Federal Minister into the river because they thought he was not doing enough about the drought. The Government does not like that sort of protest. If that is the case, would it not try to stop people from protesting? I think it would. The Government thinks, "What happened in 2016 when we tried this? We had rioting in the streets. We know the upper House is a little bit more complicated than it was in the last Parliament. What are we going to do? Maybe we will use the farmers as a little Trojan Horse and we will say 'Those poor farmers.'" I agree that it is terrible when you live in fear in your house. But farmers are not living in forests. I have not found any farmers living in the middle of the forest. I do not know where the Minister goes to find the farmers in the forest. Maybe he finds them with the fairies in the garden, I am not sure. But farmers should not be part of what the bill is designed to do. It continues to be an overreach by the Government.

The Minister said, "Without any doubt, absolutely." I do not believe him. I cannot believe him. He brought a half-baked, half-cooked bill into this House, asked us to take it on trust and believe him, and it was a failure. He has had to amend the bill to try to get it passed. He will not take notice of the report of the upper House inquiry. He thinks he will hoodwink us into doing it. He thinks he will wedge us. I am pretty sure the Government is writing now about how Labor is not being supportive of him and the right to farm. In every public statement, I have reiterated my support for the farming movement. I lived in a farming community before I moved to Maitland. My grandparents lived on farms. My husband's grandparents and parents and even he grew up on farms. How disrespectful to use those people as a Trojan Horse to cut back the rights of our citizens. It is an absolute disgrace.

We know that the Government cannot be trusted when it comes to protecting the rights of people expressing a political opinion. We know that the Minister is lazy, that he does not consult with the community and that he did not put out an exposure draft for the bill. But no consultation on this bill about right to farm ever included the Inclosed Lands Protection Act. Look at the website—it is all about planning. The bill is a lie; it is a falsehood that the Minister has perpetrated on our farming communities. He will try to undermine them in their own communities. He is lazy. That is not the way in which legislation in this place should be undertaken.

I am very concerned because there were 217 submissions on this piece of legislation. The last thing that our farmers need in a time of drought, when they are struggling to make ends meet every single day, is to be at war with the community, at war with conservationists. That is what this Government and members of The Nationals are doing with this bill. They are sowing the seeds of division and anxiety. They are whipping up a divisive debate, so that they can find some kind of connection with the farmers they think they know. I tell the Minister that he does not know the farmers. He needs to talk to all of them, not just the few farmers who are his mates and he goes drinking with on a Saturday night. He has to speak to farmers about his draft legislation.

The reason that we are not going to vote against these amendments is that this is a terrible bill. Personally, I do not think that you make something that is bad good by passing amendments to improve it. It is still a terrible bill, although these amendments will make it not quite so terrible. The threshold issue is around the difference between "interfere" and "hinder". In consultations with farmers, time and again those farmers who took time out of their working day to consult with this Government about this bill said, "We can't be clear on the difference between hinder and interfere. You are providing a lower bar and we are not sure that we will be able to get over that bar." That is not right. We will support an amendment that removes the word "hinder", because that is an important amendment. But we will not accept this Minister's reassurances that he has a good enough understanding of the Fair Work Act to allay the concerns of our brothers and sisters in the trade union movement. It is obvious that the Minister does not understand his own legislation that is before us tonight, so how on earth would he be able to understand Federal legislation? How can we support him?

If those opposite had shared our concerns, they would have committed to having a statutory review. They would have said, "Yes, we have completely mucked it up by not having the statutory review that was required of us, but we are going to fix it. We will have a statutory review because we don't want this bill to have unintended consequences." But they are not doing that and that is the problem with this Government. In this State they are failing farmers every single day. I will not allow farmers to be used like that. We will not vote against these amendments because the amendments represent a small movement towards making this legislation palatable. But this legislation is still wrong.

Arrogant members of this Government sit in the upper House and carp on as if they can say whatever they like because they have the numbers in this Chamber. Members in the upper House had the opportunity to get the support of Labor, The Nationals and the Liberals for the passage of this bill through this Chamber and for this bill then to be passed through the upper House. But they failed. I wanted to support this bill. Since this legislation was first proposed two months ago, I have been speaking to farmers on speed dial and I have been trying to work out how we can support this legislation, but those opposite just do not know how to bring forward legislation that we can support. I cannot understand how those opposite can be so arrogant. It is not 2015 and those opposite do

not hold the balance of power in the upper House. They should be looking after people in farming communities, not playing wedge politics, because they will lose every single time.

This Government has promised to deliver this Right to Farm Bill, but it has not provided planning protections for continuing issues concerning regulation of planning and zoning in our regional and peri-urban communities. This Government has proposed a stupid nuisance shield that probably will not work in any case. The nuisance shield is likely to create more division than it addresses. The Government has not even got to the finish line on schedule 2 of the bill, which is so poorly drafted. Where are members of The Nationals during this debate? Where is the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Melinda Pavey? Where is the Deputy Premier, John Barilaro? Remember that he was going to bring in this legislation or die. They are all having a glass of wine because they think that is more important than our farmers. They are an absolute disgrace. We will support this amendment because it makes a terrible bill a little bit less terrible. We will be drafting our own right to farm bill which will actually protect farmers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 to 5 on sheet c2019-183C be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 to 6, and schedules 1 and 2 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 to 6, and schedules 1 and 2 as amended agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47  
Noes .....34  
Majority.....13

#### AYES

Anderson, Mr K  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Conolly, Mr K  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
McGirr, Dr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Preston, Ms R  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S  
Butler, Mr R  
Constance, Mr A  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Donato, Mr P  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Lindsay, Ms W  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Wilson, Ms F

Barilaro, Mr J  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Davies, Mrs T  
Elliott, Mr D  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Piper, Mr G  
Saunders, Mr D  
Smith, Mr N  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G

#### NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Finn, Ms J  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Minns, Mr C  
Parker, Mr J

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N  
McKay, Ms J  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Saffin, Ms J

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Dib, Mr J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D (teller)  
Park, Mr R  
Scully, Mr P

## NOES

Smith, Ms T.F.  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

## PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G  
Coure, Mr M  
Provest, Mr G  
Singh, Mr G

Doyle, Ms T  
Daley, Mr M  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Cotsis, Ms S

**Motion agreed to.***Public Interest Debate***WESTERN SYDNEY ELECTIVE SURGERY**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (19:30:09):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes a senior general surgeon servicing Western Sydney hospitals has written to the Premier and Minister for Health regarding a reduction in frontline clinical services in Sydney.
- (2) Acknowledges in the surgeon's letter, he writes that the direction to reduce elective surgeries at Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals represents a consistent abuse of a disadvantaged community.
- (3) Notes that the latest Bureau of Health Information report reveals that there are nearly 7,000 patients across the Western Sydney Local Health District waiting for elective surgeries.
- (4) Calls on the Government to immediately guarantee funding to these hospitals to ensure patients have timely access to medical care.

Today, as I was driving into Parliament House thinking to myself that this day will be just another typical parliamentary sitting day, I received a heart-wrenching telephone call from a senior surgeon advising of the local health district's direction for proposed cuts to elective surgery at Mount Druitt Hospital. It is absolutely disgusting that Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals are being targeted once again by these cuts when we already have some of the most overstretched health resources servicing some of the most disadvantaged communities in our State.

Bureau of Health Information data released earlier this year revealed that nine out of 10 hospitals with the lowest patient satisfaction were located in western and south-western Sydney, and at Blacktown and Westmead hospitals 59 per cent of patients presenting with urgent, life-threatening conditions were not being treated within the required time frame. Patients waiting for joint replacements in central Sydney currently wait only three months, while western Sydney patients have to wait 14 months for the very same surgery. The Minister should try to explain to a patient who is already on a lengthy waiting list and whose life is severely disrupted by suffering that they will have to wait even longer for their much-needed surgery purely because of their postcode. It is not good enough that western Sydney patients have longer waiting periods than their central Sydney counterparts.

We will not accept being subjected to substandard health care because this Government thinks it is easier to cut services to the most vulnerable in our society. What justification can the Minister possibly give for such a cruel and inhumane decision? I am sure my constituents would also like to know how and why this decision was made. The people of western Sydney are already treated like second-class citizens by this Government, and the Minister thinks he can come and take more from us. With high cost-of-living expenses, the majority of western Sydney families simply cannot afford private health insurance and they rely on our public system to provide their health care—a system that should not be failing them by making them wait longer and longer for their needed surgery.

To make matters worse, the local health district does not seem to know what it is doing. Breast cancer surgeons at Westmead are being told that their services will relocate to Mount Druitt, while at the same time deep cuts are being made to those services at Blacktown and Mount Druitt. This is a detestable move when, factually, a breast cancer sufferer has a better chance of surviving if the cancer is detected and treated in the early stages. Once again, this Government is showing a blatant disregard for those sufferers and is willing to gamble with their lives. I note that those opposite are more than happy to wear pink ribbons every year, but, sadly, their actions speak louder than their words. Today's revelations have made me feel absolutely sick to my stomach. Throughout

my time as the member for Mount Druitt I have fought hard for every little improvement we have seen at Mount Druitt Hospital—things like access to emergency surgery, an MRI machine and a dialysis unit that most areas take for granted.

With a fast-growing population in western Sydney, hospitals such as those at Mount Druitt and Blacktown should be expanding their services to accommodate this growth. The decision to cut elective surgery at these hospitals will push waiting times to severely unviable limits, potentially leading to more people suffering and more people left with permanent impairment or, more importantly, loss of life. This situation must be addressed and corrected as a matter of urgency. If this Government has overspent on its budget, the very last area that should ever be affected is our people's health and wellbeing. The Government was elected to manage the State of New South Wales. This reeks of mismanagement, and the people of western Sydney should not be expected to carry the burden of the Government's negligence.

Today this House needs to send a clear message to the community of western Sydney that the disadvantaged members of our community should not be the first to suffer from these Government cuts. It is time for the Government to show that it values the people of western Sydney, and not just those who can afford to live in central Sydney. The Government has an obligation to all the people of New South Wales. A postcode should not dictate the level of health care a person will receive. I encourage the Government to take this opportunity to implement a fair and balanced health service across the State. We will not take this lying down: My community and I will fight the Government every step of the way. If those opposite think our health, wellbeing and lives can be taken for granted, it is very much mistaken.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (19:36:28):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his contribution. I point out to him that most of what he said is completely misleading—and quite disturbingly so in terms of creating concern for patients where there should be no concern. The New South Wales Government has increased the health budget in this State beyond anything that anybody could have dreamed of under the Labor Government some years ago. The last budget for the Western Sydney Local Health District saw a massive increase of \$88 million. Contrary to what has been said, it was an \$88 million increase—the second largest increase in the State. The largest increase was in south-west Sydney.

Contrary to everything those opposite have said, the Liberal-Nationals Government has not only recognised the urgent need for adequate and appropriate funding, but also gone well beyond what the previous Labor Government would have ever dreamed of. That \$88 million takes the budget just in western Sydney to \$1.8 billion. The budget for south-west Sydney is now \$2 billion. The best part of \$4 billion is going into the current budget of those two health districts. In addition to that, I heard the member for Mount Druitt say that we were reducing moneys and reducing the number of elective surgeries. In fact, just in the past year both Blacktown Hospital and Mount Druitt Hospital have seen increases of more than 15 per cent in elective surgery procedures. It has been a massive increase.

The member for Mount Druitt also knows that he was being disingenuous—telling porkies might be a simpler way of saying it—when he talked about the movement of patients from one hospital to another for surgery. He has been briefed and knows—or should know—that Blacktown Hospital and Mount Druitt Hospital operate as part of a network within the Western Sydney Local Health District. Much work has gone on and approximately three quarters of a billion dollars has been put into rebuilding Blacktown Hospital and redeveloping Mount Druitt Hospital. This has seen the local health district identify certain things in consultation not only with local community members but also with the member for Mount Druitt. You, sir, are aware that it is a network. In fact, I have spoken to you about the fact that there was elective surgeries—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Comments through the Chair.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** You have already got yourself into enough of a pickle today, just listen. The network is there. The network that has been arranged by the local health district, in consultation with the member for Mount Druitt, recognises that elective surgery should occur more at Mount Druitt. That is why there has been an increase. In fact, the numbers there are that 99 per cent of all surgery performed at Mount Druitt is elective surgery. The elective surgery has gone up considerably. It is disappointing that you have blamed the Government when you know it is plainly not true.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Whose fault is it?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** It is actually your fault because you are lying. You are telling porkies. You stood up here today knowing full well that if you had asked me or if you had checked the budget you would have seen it went up by \$88 million. Are you hearing? I said an \$88 million increase.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The doctor is lying?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** No, the doctor is not lying.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The health Minister will continue.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** That is a silly comment to make too. The doctors and the nurses in our hospitals do an incredible job and they are not lying. The doctors are saying exactly what you guys opposite presided over as well. You gave a budget to your local health district and then the local health district gave it to the hospitals. That is what we do. Then the hospitals sit down with the staff and work out how they will work within that budget. That is what has gone on. I propose to amend the motion. I move:

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

- (1) Notes that the Western Sydney Local Health District has received the second-largest increase in recurrent funding across the State this financial year, increasing the budget by over \$88 million to more than \$1.8 billion.
- (2) Acknowledges the consistent work of the local health district and the NSW Ministry of Health in providing high-quality care to all in the Blacktown and Mt Druitt communities.
- (3) Congratulates the New South Wales Government on its unprecedented investment in healthcare across New South Wales, including the commitment for an additional 8,300 frontline health staff and over \$10 billion for infrastructure over the next four years.

The managers of the hospitals are working with the doctors. This is a pre-emptive and deceptive lie by those opposite. I thank the doctors and I thank the nurses, but they need to sit down with the management as a group to work on how they will deliver the services to the patients that we want to see get those services. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:41:41):** I wish to acknowledge the great work of all hospital staff, doctors, nurses, allied health workers, administrators, support workers, cleaners, counsellors, wards people, food people and the volunteers who raise so much money. Mount Druitt and Blacktown are joint hospitals, but more importantly they are part of a community. Many people there work, live and play in the area; they are part of one community. The Blacktown City community is consistently one of the fastest growing populations in Australia. As the member for Mount Druitt stated, we need to fight for anything: Any resource, anything extra we get, we will hold on to and fight to the death if need be. To quote a couple of aspects from the letter that is being circulated:

Increasing pressure has been placed across the entire local health district for resource constraint ... Surgical services are a huge consumer of these resources.

It is the primary role of a hospital to deal with emergency patients as well as to do surgery. Does the Minister wish to have a hospital system with minimised surgery? He can win the Florence Nightingale award for the most throughput ex-surgeries. This letter was saying—we understand the Minister's point about the 15 per cent increase and the extra budget—that this year's budget was overspent so, therefore, this year we have to pay it back. They are saying that there will be 400 less surgeries—

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** That is not true. That is a complete and utter lie. It is completely wrong.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** It is part of the letter. They are saying that they have to identify which ones. We are part of a growing community—

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** It is a pre-emptive position from the doctors.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** It might be a pre-emptive decision, but there is a huge and growing need in western Sydney, particularly in the Blacktown-Mount Druitt area. When we look at the types of elective surgery are we going to be identifying which woman has to wait for her breast cancer or support operations? Which person, who is already waiting 11 months longer than the eastern and northern Sydney hospitals, has to wait another six months or so before they can walk without any pain? We have one of the highest rates of diabetes in the area. Are we going to say to a person with diabetes who is waiting for a digit to be amputated that they will have to wait a little bit longer? We have the highest rates of cancers in the area. Are we going to say to women that they have to wait a little bit longer for the early cancer detection colposcopy examination?

Whether we are talking about cataracts or ligament repairs, there are a whole range of elective surgeries that need to take place even though they are not emergencies. The letter actually states that it may not be an emergency. It may be elective surgery one moment but the next moment it will become an emergency if a patient is kept waiting. Instead of having a digit amputated because of diabetes, a patient may have a whole limb amputated because we did not have the required services. This is a growing area, we are very multiculturally diverse. We have a large Aboriginal population, lots of single parents and lots of larger families. The reduction that doctors have talked about is only a symptom of a bigger problem. There is a lack of bus services.

Patients at Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital are often moved across to Westmead Hospital to have their surgeries and their families cannot visit them. We have been waiting for years for the Davis Overpass out in front of the hospital to be upgraded. Hospital and ambulance services cannot cross the road in peak hour. They have to go through Doonside or the other side of Mount Druitt to access the south side of the tracks if someone is in trouble. There are a whole range of issues. There is no use having a shiny new building without additional services. The quality of the service is not about sitting in a more comfortable location, it is about delivering better services to the area. Our area is expanding, with something like 10,000 extra people moving into the city of Blacktown. The member for Seven Hills made a promise in his inaugural speech, stating:

... I make a simple pledge: I promise you I will never forget you in your time of need.

The community needs him. The member for Riverstone talked about the expansion of Blacktown Hospital and about additional beds. There is not one additional bed in emergency. You have to bid to get an extra two beds in maybe two or three years. It is no good the member for Riverstone and the member for Seven Hills being wobble heads. They need to stand up for their communities. We need more resources for the area.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (19:46:56):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt for the opportunity to remind the House that this Government delivered the brand new \$700 million hospital to Blacktown and Mount Druitt. This Government did that. The previous member for Blacktown, Paul Gibson, was so frustrated under the previous Labor Government that he stood up and criticised his own party for not doing anything for Blacktown Hospital. They would not: They simply refused.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** It was Labor's promise to build stage one.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** Labor did indeed promise to do something. I remember the Labor candidate at the time saying, "The document was on the Minister's desk when the election was called. It just did not get signed."

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I call the member for Blacktown to order for the first time. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** After 16 years the Minister did not get around to signing it. As we have heard, the Government has a responsibility to provide the funding to deliver health services to the community. I point out a few simple facts. Since this Government came to power, every single health budget has increased well in excess of the consumer price index. It has never gone backwards. It has gone up every year. As we heard from the health Minister, funding for the Western Sydney Local Health District, in which the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital sits, increased by \$88 million in the latest year to a total of \$1.8 billion.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** That was south-western Sydney. He wasn't even talking about western Sydney.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** Great. South-western Sydney increased by even more. We are putting the resources in those areas of growing need precisely because they are areas of growing need. As a member of this Government I am proud that we have invested \$700 million in areas in western Sydney and similar sums in south-western Sydney at Campbelltown Hospital, Nepean Hospital and Westmead Hospital, because there is need there.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Tweed to order for the third time. I remind members that they will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the debate if they exceed three calls to order and allowed to return only for a division.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** In the seven year period from mid-2012 to mid-2019 the Western NSW Local Health District has increased its workforce by an additional 1,358 full-time equivalent staff—325 more doctors, 693 more nurses and midwives and 16 more allied health staff.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The member for Blacktown is skating on thin ice.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** A good proportion of those staff are based in the newly rebuilt Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. Hundreds more people work there today than when I was elected in 2011.

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

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** This Government can be very proud. We did what the previous Government would not do and what Paul Gibson could not get his side to do. The brand-new hospital facilities include improved medical imaging, an expanded haemodialysis unit and sterilising and non-clinical support services.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I call the member for Blacktown to order for the second time.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** New birth suites have been introduced and the redesigned newborn intensive care ward supports kangaroo care because it allows families to stay with their young children. The intensive care unit features larger rooms that are easily adjusted for patient needs and more integrated isolation rooms to manage highly infectious diseases without compromising patient wellbeing. Patio fittings allow patients to receive oxygen and other lifesaving medication outdoors while sunlight energises their infection-fighting T-cells.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. A number of members, including the member for Tweed, are on three calls to order. Members will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** Those new facilities would not have been built if the Opposition was in government. Opposition policies would not have provided the money to invest in Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. The Minister for Health and Medical Research, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, and his predecessor, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, as well as the treasurers and the premiers who have invested in areas of need in western and south-western Sydney have made it a priority and delivered, not just talked about it. Real outcomes are in place and extra staff work there today. As I said, hundreds more people work there today than when I was elected in 2011. This Government can be immensely proud of the outcome. It is a good-news story. We are continuing to increase funds year-on-year. We have not cut funding. We have provided extra resources to the people of western Sydney, just as they deserve.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:52:13):** This is a shameful day for the Government. Government members think that is funny. I am being heckled about the fact that people in my local community have had services cut at the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital and the Westmead Hospital. On that side of the House there are no heroes. The heroes are those doctors and surgeons who stood up today and said they have had enough of the funding cuts from this Government. They have had enough of being treated like second-class citizens because they live in western Sydney. It is as simple as that.

I want a commitment from the Government and the health Minister that these whistleblowers will not be victimised. Time and again I have seen doctors, surgeons, nurses and health professionals tell the Opposition about the problems within the health service—about the cuts and the services taken from their local patients. They are in fear that this Government will not renew their contracts and that they will be sacked by the local administrators. Let us have that as the first commitment from the Government. The next is a letter included in an email from the health Minister carbon copied to the member for Mount Druitt, the shadow Minister for Health and the Premier. I quote from that letter:

Public patients waiting for joint replacements in Central Sydney wait three months, in Western Sydney they wait fourteen months. Orthopaedic surgeons in Western Sydney now restrict clinic appointments for public patients, on the basis that they cannot offer them timely surgery. If there is a commitment to equitable distribution of public health resources in NSW Health, and frontline service provision is to be reduced by LHD General Managers as reportedly described ... why are the services to be reduced where the community is already the most disadvantaged?

I invite members opposite to answer that question for me. The letter continues:

Why are joint replacement procedures not being moved from Central Sydney to Western Sydney, instead of being cut from Western Sydney patients?

Another question. I do not hear any answers. I certainly did not hear any in question time today. The letter continues:

Why are front line clinical services to be removed from the indigenous community—

That is really funny. An Indigenous community gets disadvantaged and members opposite laugh. They are showing their true colours. We know what they are like.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Tweed that he is on three calls to order.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** We know what is deep inside their souls, and there is not much to it. The letter asks:

Why are front line clinical services to be removed from the indigenous community if the NSW Ministry of Health is serious about "Closing the Gap"?

I invite those opposite to answer that question. Finally, why are breast surgical services being cut from Mount Druitt Hospital? The letter asks:

Is this a deliberate plan to reduce breast cancer services to NSW women?

I see no answers from this Government. I see no answers from the health Minister—just laughter at the people of western Sydney. That is all it is.

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

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** One has to laugh at the fact that the member for Mulgoa, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Riverstone and the member for Parramatta are not standing up for their local communities. What is going on? They know the services that are being cut. They know what is going on in their areas. They also know the figures that the Minister threw at us in the debate are simply figures for infrastructure. Infrastructure! The Government can build its big wards but unless they have the services and things that matter, people are not being looked after. All we have to do is look at the figures.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Heathcote that he is on a call to order.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** Hip replacements, 268 days waiting time; and knee replacements, 269 days. Compare that to the Royal North Shore Hospital where hip replacements have a waiting time of 76 days—one-third of the time. What has happened? There are 6,915 patients on the waiting list—an increase of more than 500 in the past year. This is appalling. It is time this Government stopped laughing at the citizens in western Sydney and started looking after people. Unless members opposite step up, I cannot wait for when we remove them from government in three years.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (19:57:39):** It is a pleasure to contribute to this public interest debate, and particularly in support of the amendment moved by the good health Minister earlier in the debate. As the member for Seven Hills, it is a privilege to talk about Blacktown hospital. Members on the other side of the House have mentioned the community's strong feeling about Blacktown hospital. That certainly is beyond debate. Blacktown hospital, established in 1965, was a sparkling new hospital brought about by great community demand. Unfortunately, during the subsequent 40 or 50 years it deteriorated until recently, when the Liberal-Nationals Government put over \$700 million into Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. That is not lost on the community of Blacktown and Mount Druitt and the community right across western Sydney.

First and foremost, I place on record my thanks for the hard work of the incredible nurses, doctors, paramedics and other health professionals at Blacktown Hospital who do that difficult job day in and day out—and not only those at Blacktown Hospital, but those in hospitals right across western Sydney, such as Westmead Hospital, Westmead children's hospital, Mount Druitt and Nepean hospitals. All of their great work is supported by members on this side of the House.

Blacktown Hospital is the local health facility for the constituents of Seven Hills, particularly those in the Kings Langley, Lalor Park and Seven Hills areas. Those constituents often come to my electorate office and praise the outstanding service they receive from those who work in Blacktown Hospital. Most importantly, the facilities in Blacktown are second to none in greater western Sydney—fantastic stuff. It was only last year that the member for Riverstone, the Minister and I were at Blacktown Hospital announcing a \$2 million patient services trial for its emergency department. At the time Associate Professor Reza Ali was the Director of Emergency Medicine there. As we toured the emergency department he spoke of the great work he is doing there—his research and trialling of different systems and practice techniques.

He is trialling a change to the current system of evaluating patients' status and directing their needs in conjunction with other doctors, departments and specialist nursing staff. The trial is testing and transforming practices in emergency medicine, which will increase efficiency and the way that emergency patients are dealt with. Efficiency within the system goes a long way to unlocking valuable time to put towards things like elective surgery. That trial will take place amongst Blacktown Hospital's world-class infrastructure. The massive infrastructure investment by the State Government for Blacktown and Mount Druitt is almost complete. Each time one goes past Blacktown Hospital one is amazed by the site and the structure being built in that great place.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. I cannot hear the contribution of the member for Seven Hills.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR:** The infrastructure aids in service delivery to patients and creates great benefits—not only to staff and patients but also to all the medical professionals at the hospital. Stage two is underway and includes new emergency department short-stay beds, intensive care units, operating theatres, purpose-built wards for newborn and women's health care, paediatric services and medical imaging—contemporary activity-based workplaces to support the staff to enable that efficiency to take place to drive the funding further. With \$700 million being put into Blacktown and Mount Druitt through their expansion projects, they are providing world-class facilities and medical care to the people across western Sydney. This Government is committed to ensuring that patient care will continue to be outstanding and continue to meet growing needs.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** As no crossbench member wishes to speak, I call the member for Mount Druitt with the right of reply.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: Due to the nature of this debate, the crossbench members have decided not to speak.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** What is the standing order?

**Mr Ryan Park:** The Opposition is requesting that it gets one more member to speak to take the spot of the crossbench—a member from western Sydney who is affected by the issue we are debating today so it is not just someone filling time.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I think the member for Keira is trying to seek leave.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Yes. I seek leave for the Opposition to have an additional speaker in this debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (20:03:28):** In reply: I thank those who contributed to the debate: the health Minister, the member for Blacktown, the member for Riverstone, the member for Prospect and the member for Seven Hills. The health Minister in his contribution claimed that I was misleading the House in alleging that elective surgery services will be cut at Mount Druitt Hospital. I am not misleading the House because not only has the senior surgeon in the Mount Druitt area advised of this directive but also an email from the head of surgery at Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital was sent to all surgeons in that hospital advising them of the directive of the general manager in cutting down services. This is a letter from the head of the department. This is not a perception by one senior surgeon in the Mount Druitt area who is trying to alarm others. This letter came from the hospital itself. This particular departmental head says to all of the surgeons:

We do not support any reduction in elective surgical services at all. What was explained to us was that if we did not sort out how to do this as a department, it would be done for us by hospital administration.

The head of the department is saying that if surgeons cannot decide which patients to cut, the hospital administration will decide for them. So I do not know what is misleading about this allegation about services that are going to be cut. What is even more alarming is the Minister's response in question time. He said, "I only learnt about this two hours ago." There is a dramatic system breakdown if hospitals are cutting services and the person who is in charge of the health system does not know about it. There is a fundamental system breakdown and the Minister is either not across what is happening in the health system or he is being kept in the dark. Either way, that is a system breakdown and the health Minister should get across what is happening in his own area.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his contribution. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....45  
Noes .....35  
Majority.....10

**AYES**

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  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Roberts, Mr A  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Williams, Mr R

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  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D  
Singh, Mr G  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Bromhead, Mr S  
Constance, Mr A  
Davies, Mrs T  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
McGirr, Dr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidgreaves, Mr P  
Smith, Mr N  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

**NOES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dib, Mr J

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Finn, Ms J

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Harris, Mr D

## NOES

Harrison, Ms J	Haylen, Ms J	Hoenig, Mr R
Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S	Lalich, Mr N
Lynch, Mr P	McDermott, Dr H	McKay, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D (teller)	Minns, Mr C	O'Neill, Dr M
Park, Mr R	Parker, Mr J	Piper, Mr G
Saffin, Ms J	Scully, Mr P	Tesch, Ms L
Voltz, Ms L	Warren, Mr G	Washington, Ms K
Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G	

## PAIRS

Anderson, Mr K	Daley, Mr M
Berejiklian, Ms G	Doyle, Ms T
Stokes, Mr R	Mihailuk, Ms T

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**Motion as amended agreed to.***Private Members' Statements***SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE BUSINESSES**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:14:48):** This month I had the pleasure of hosting the Minister for Finance and Small Business, the Hon. Damien Tudehope, MLC, in the Seven Hills electorate for a visit to growing local businesses. Our first stop was Convoluted Technologies Pty Ltd on the Prospect Highway in Seven Hills, run by Siem Veltstra. The business primarily manufactures flexible metal hoses and has built a reputation for innovation in the creation of new types of hoses to meet the specific needs of clients. Siem founded Convoluted Technologies after arriving from Holland in 2001. Since then he has grown the business, which sells its products nationally. This year it has added a Victorian service centre in addition to its Western Australia and Seven Hills locations.

Our next stop with the Minister was BSS LED Australia, which is run by Stephen Pearce out of the business hub on Powers Road in Seven Hills. BSS specialises in the manufacturing of LED lights for commercial and industrial clients. Most recently BSS created the lighting solution for an upgrade to the State Library next door to Parliament House. Last year it built the lights for a very modern Victorian State Basketball Centre upgrade. Stephen founded BSS in 2015. Since then he has expanded the business from purely a lighting manufacturer to a leading national energy efficiency consultancy firm.

The purpose of the visit was twofold. Firstly, it was an opportunity for the Minister for Finance and Small Business to engage with growing enterprises in the Seven Hills electorate. It gave him an opportunity to ask people who have given up so much and risked so much on the success of their businesses what roadblocks stand in the way of future growth. I think the Minister will not mind me saying that the responses he received from Siem and Stephen were both articulate and informative of the business conditions experienced in the connected and growing part of western Sydney that is the Seven Hills area. It would be very easy for a finance and small business Minister to sit in his office in the city and only take policy prescriptions from economists and those in the public sector. However, this is a Minister who is willing to get out there where the rubber meets the road. From my perspective, there is no better place to do that than the Seven Hills electorate.

The second purpose of the visit was for small- to medium-sized enterprises such as Convoluted and BSS LED to know that the New South Wales Government has their backs and wants to ensure that it is even easier to start and to grow a business and get the right people with the right skills into the job. The New South Wales economy will not stay strong just from us sitting here and saying it is strong. It will only get strong if businesses like those run by Siem and Stephen are continuing to grow and expand their operations. The best thing a government can do when it comes to helping small- and medium-sized enterprises to grow is to just get out of the way and let them get on with it.

I thank the Minister for all of the work he is doing in government. It makes it easy to grow small businesses and start-ups like Convoluted and BSS not only in my electorate of Seven Hills but also right across the State. I know that on Monday in this very building the Minister hosted the first ever NSW New Business

Shower to celebrate those who have recently taken the entrepreneurial leap of starting their own small business. I am sure that all members will join me in wishing all of those mum-and-dad entrepreneurs the very best with their new business ideas and ventures. I thank the respective teams at Convoluted Technologies and BSS LED for taking the time to host the Minister and me for what was an extremely informative and successful visit.

### WYEE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (20:18:23):** I always enjoy catching up with firefighters in the Lake Macquarie area, particularly at significant events such as the recent official opening of the brigade's new station, where I had the privilege of representing the emergency services Minister. I know many of the men and women in the Wye brigade very well. However, I only recently learned about a fascinating part of the brigade's history that deserves to be not only told again but also preserved in the parliamentary records forever.

The story began with a bit of a throwaway line, but eventually led to the women of Wye featuring in a short film and media reports around the world. The Wye Bushfire Brigade, as it was then known, was first formed in 1960, so it will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary next year. At the time most of the men worked at the nearby power stations at Munmorah and Vales Point or at Morisset Hospital. One day in 1967 the women discussed who would fight the fires while the men were at work. There was a reply of, "We'll put it out." That seemingly throwaway line got things moving. At that moment eight women formed the Wye Ladies Brigade. The men did not take them too seriously until the ladies headed out to fight their first bushfire, which had broken out at the nearby Bethshan Mission.

In those days the Wye phone exchange was a manual one so the postmistress was the first to get the call out about a fire. As most of the ladies lived near the post office, the postmistress would run outside and yell, "Fire!" The ladies turned up in whatever they were wearing at the time—dresses, shorts, sandals, gumboots and even stockings. They would drive the ex-Army AR160 truck to the fire. It would take two of them to pull start the pumps on the tanker. But they did it and held firm against the fire fronts until their husbands and sons arrived at the scene from work to assist. By this stage the blokes realised the women were not only serious but also very capable so they began including them in a number of training exercises.

Collectively, they invested time and money into the town's fire truck and later built a shed to house it. It was an extraordinary effort from an extraordinary community. The late Ron Channels, then brigade captain, was so proud of the women's efforts that he convinced *The Newcastle Herald* to send a reporter down to Wye to tell their story. That story attracted other media attention from as far away as Canberra and then beyond. It was believed the crew had become the first all-woman firefighting team in Australia and a short film was soon made about them. And here is the punchline: It was sensationally called *The fire-eating Amazons of the Antipodes* and was shown in almost every English-speaking country around the world.

I am hopeful of finding it in the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia. I am very pleased to say that a number of those women are still around and are still involved with the Wye brigade in some way. For the record, the original ladies crew comprised captain Gwen Deaves, Bette White, Gladys Bateup, Ivy Hawkins, Rita Farmer, Nancy Baker, Daphne Deaves and Pat Coulthart. Gwen Deaves, I might add, is married to Russell Deaves, who was a foundation member of the brigade. Both remain involved with the organisation, although not so much on the front line any more. Between them they have more than 110 years of service, which is absolutely extraordinary. I am proud to consider them friends. The camaraderie in this crew reflects the friendships and spirit that continues to thrive in the Wye community.

I was privileged to represent Minister David Elliott at the recent opening of the new Wye brigade station. The State provided more than \$750,000 for the project, with the remaining \$40,000 coming from the brigade's fundraisers, the support of Lake Macquarie City Council and local sponsors. It has been open and operational for some months, but only recently has been properly fitted out. Given the worsening drought conditions and what looks like a very severe fire season ahead, I acknowledge all of the other volunteer firefighters throughout my electorate. We are very fortunate to have RFS crews in the Lake Macquarie electorate at Killingworth, Awaba, Wakefield, Cooranbong, Martinsville, Mandalong, Morisset Peninsula, Dora Creek and Wye Point. The Wye Point brigade will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary next month. I am looking forward to celebrating that milestone with them. I thank all of our RFS volunteers for their commitment and extend to them the appreciation of the entire Lake Macquarie community.

### COFFS HARBOUR FISHERMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE

### WOOLGOOLGA AND DISTRICT MEALS ON WHEELS

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:23:08):** I refer to some very talented and hardworking people in the service industry in the great electorate of Coffs Harbour. The Coffs Harbour Fishermen's Co-operative is a firm favourite with the many locals and visitors who file through its doors for fabulous seafood.

The co-op was also a favourite with the judges at the 2019 Sydney Fish Market Seafood Excellence Awards. It was a trifecta haul for our celebrated co-op, winning Best Supplier (NSW), Best Seafood Business, and Young Achiever Award for fishmonger and seafood chef Joshua Cook, better known as "Cookie" to his friends. It is an outstanding achievement for this Coffs Harbour icon, which has been operating on our foreshores since the early 1950s. The co-op is owned by more than 40 local fishermen and has about 40 staff. Its mission is to provide premium seafood that is locally produced in a sustainable manner. I commend everyone involved at the Coffs Harbour Fishermen's Co-operative for their dedication as they strive for excellence every day. They include general manager Bob St John, executive officer Deanne Hamilton, seafood operations manager Joshua Cook, retail operations and marketing manager Rebecca Wilson, floor manager Andrew Brown and the board of directors.

The sweet taste of success is also being savoured by two chefs who call the Coffs Coast home. Siobhan McCowat and Owen Cootes have achieved national recognition in a long-running culinary competition for young chefs. They cooked up bronze medals for their entree, main and dessert courses at the finals of the 2019 Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award at Fine Food Australia. Siobhan and Owen—who work at Velvets Restaurant at Two Tails Wines in Nana Glen—particularly impressed the judging panel with their entree course of roasted root vegetable salad with tomato coulis and mixed herb cream cheese. They were a little nervous to start with, but once they got cooking they were fine. They said:

It's been such a great experience and we've really enjoyed the atmosphere. Cooking in the public arena is a real adrenalin rush.

Siobhan and Owen are fine food ambassadors for the Coffs Coast and beyond. I also congratulate Two Tails Wines owner Madonna Bannerman and her head chef, Jodie Thornber, on their continued pursuit of excellence. A few weeks ago I was warmly greeted at the Woolgoolga and District Meals on Wheels for afternoon tea to celebrate the completion of their project funded by a New South Wales Government Community Building Partnership grant. This is a community organisation with good humour, great care and dedicated service. Meals on Wheels was allocated over \$19,000 for the removal and replacement of refrigeration equipment. The new gear is up and running so that Meals on Wheels can continue its vital work from its Boundary Street base. At the heart of the Meals on Wheels charter is helping frail older people and younger people with disabilities and their carers stay in their homes where they are happiest.

I applaud the dedication of the Woolgoolga Meals on Wheels management committee: president Greg Breen, treasurer Camilla Croft, secretary Lori Jeffrey, Ross Crawford, Michael Lane, and Gary Fuller, and the hardworking staff and volunteers who bring joy to the lives of so many. The Coffs Harbour electorate is blessed with many talented and hardworking individuals who are achieving great things for themselves and for our community. I am tremendously proud and humbled to represent them in this place.

#### FESTIVAL OF FOAM AND LIGHT

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (20:26:38):** I have big concerns on behalf of my community broadly, and a number of small businesses specifically. Over the past few days it has been revealed that the proposed Festival of Foam and Light, as promoted by the organiser, Ms Riya Deniau, was never actually going to take place in the Illawarra. It was a scam; a scam that has cost many small businesses within the Illawarra and broader region thousands of dollars. My colleague the member for Shellharbour is a proud resident of our region, like me. We share many great festivals that are a strong part of where we live because it is a very attractive place for people to visit and celebrate life living on the coast and all the joy that it brings.

What has happened with this festival is simply appalling. The organiser promised the world at this festival with 20,000-odd people expected to turn up for a foam and light festival the like we have never seen. Ms Deniau promoted the festival as very good for small businesses to be involved in. Country distillery owner Brian Hollingworth paid nearly \$2,000 to run a bar at the supposed festival. Minnamurra General Store owner Elyse Fanner paid \$300 for a cake stall. Batemans Bay pizza van operators Riccardo and Kate Patrizi paid \$665 for a stall fee. According to Ms Deniau's website the festival would be like no other for kids and adults to revel in foam pits, enjoy fire eaters, free rides, the festival bar and daredevil light shows with electric fireworks. The small problem with all of this was that her development application approval was for something a lot less: It was for 700 attendees and a non-alcohol event.

We are representatives of residents and small business owners within the communities and regions that we serve. Tonight I say clearly to Ms Deniau that she has an opportunity to pay back the thousands of dollars that she has scammed from the small business owners. She has an opportunity to right a wrong—do the right thing and pay back those hardworking men and women who fell into her evil trap. Otherwise I will continue to pursue the operator. I have already written to the Commissioner for Fair Trading, demanding an investigation and that the full weight of any law be brought upon her. I have also contacted the Minister responsible for Fair Trading, Kevin Anderson. I acknowledge his office for speaking with me about the issue, which must be resolved.

I do not want to see another community or small business owner taken for a ride as has occurred in the community and region that the member for Shellharbour, the member for Wollongong and I are fortunate to represent. It is not right. It is not the New South Wales that any of us want. Fair Trading has an opportunity to pursue this woman. I want it to pursue her as hard as it possibly can because I want to send a clear signal that this type of behaviour is not on. It is predatory, deceitful and all of those things that we do not want to see when it comes to promoting our regions and supporting small business. It is not right.

These are not men and women with deep pockets. They cannot pursue large legal cases but they are out hundreds or, in some cases, thousands of dollars. It might seem small but it is not to a small business owner. Tonight I say to them that we will support them as they pursue this issue. I ask the operator to do the right thing and pay the money by the end of the week. Otherwise we will continue to pursue the issue. I expect the Government to continue to pursue it so that no other community or small business suffers the way people have in this case over the past week or so.

### VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE SPORTING CLUBS

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (20:31:38):** My Eastern Suburbs community loves its sport and we have so many amazing sporting clubs and organisations to prove it. Whether it is sailing, soccer, rugby, netball, lawn bowls or golf, we are proud to be a part of a team. Women's and girls' participation in sport is also important. Sport builds fitness, good mental health and a sense of community. I will support it whenever I can. I highlight two local clubs that are making great strides in supporting women.

Last Friday, 11 October, I visited the Eastern Suburbs Cricket Club at its Waverley Oval home ground as it hosted a warm-up match between the Sydney Sixers and the Sydney Thunder ahead of the start of the Women's Big Bash League. I welcomed both the amazing teams to my local area and I was proud to announce that Easts Cricket Club was successful in securing a \$12,100 grant from the NSW ICC T20 World Cup 2020 Cricket Legacy Fund. As the number of women and girls participating in cricket across New South Wales surges, the Eastern Suburbs are a big part of it. The funding will support regular programs for girls during the cricket season and provide pathways to encourage them to transition into senior teams. It was a pleasure to make the presentation to club president and legendary sports commentator, Jim Maxwell, AM, and Sydney Sixers players Lauren Cheatle and Maddie Darke, who is a local.

I thank the club management committee, including vice-president Peter Lovitt, vice-president David Smyth, secretary Marcus van Vugt, treasurer Tim Brown, and committee members Councillor Sally Betts, Matt Coles, Paul Frampton, Michael Furlong, Tom Gallop, Matt Lawrance, Michael Quinn, Andrew Taucher and Adrian Tham for their great work. I also thank the 2018-19 captains Greg Clarence, Nathan Rowe, Mark Morley, Steve Lewis, Naveed Chowdhury, Will Lawrance, Jack Preddey and Jack Remond. I make a special mention of the Cricket NSW leadership, including Chairman John Knox, Chief Operating Officer Michael Dalton and Public Policy and Government Relations Manager Justin De Domenico, who joined us on the day.

Easts Cricket Club is not the only sports club championing women in sport in my local area. On 28 and 29 September Double Bay Sailing Club held its second annual Women's Laser Regatta, which I opened. The club was established in 1958 and welcomes anyone who is willing to have a go in the water. The Women's Laser Regatta, held for the first time last year, was supported by a \$5,000 New South Wales Local Sports Grant. The laser regatta is run by women, coached by women and competed in by women of all ages and skill levels. This year dozens of female sailors from sailing clubs across Australia came to my electorate to be a part of the regatta. Over the two days they engaged in tough competition, but there was also yoga on the deck before they sailed and a cocktail dinner where inspirational stories were shared.

I acknowledge this year's organisers—Clare Alexander, Christine Patton and Christine Linhart—who made this nation-first event a reality last year. I commend the great efforts of club members Emily Ball, Phillipa Batchelor, Sara Brooks, Diana Chen, Mina Ferguson, Kim Ketelbey, Kate McHugh, Evie Saunders, Olga Skatkova, Sylvia Stannage, Victoria Whitby, Isabelle Wilkins and Brooke Wilson and Rayshele Martin from the local Cruising Yacht Club of Australia and Kate Moriarty from the local Royal Australian Naval [RAN] Sailing Association. Well done to the club's leadership for their support of women on the water and in lasers, particularly Commodore Andrew Cox, Vice Commodore Mark Crowhurst, Rear Commodore Pat Levy, secretary Emily Ball, treasurer Justin Dave, canteen captain Paul Adam, yacht rep Jonathan Stone, laser rep Ian Alexander, social secretary Peter Collie, handicapper Daryl Lawrence, learn to race officer Martin White, newsletter editor Kirk Marcolina, chief technology officer Nick Pellow and race management officer Matt Knight.

Initiatives like those I highlighted in the Chamber tonight at Easts Cricket Club and the Double Bay Sailing Club strongly support girls and women in sport; not only women and girls in my local electorate but, because they are exemplar events, women and girls across the State. As a former New South Wales sports

Minister, I really know what a difference equal sporting opportunities can make. I commend my statement to the House.

### LAKEMBA ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (20:36:45):** In my electorate we have numerous organisations that, despite being chronically underfunded, punch above their weight in facilitating opportunities for community engagement by supporting those struggling with financial distress and disability, suffering from mental health issues and battling displacement, domestic violence and substance abuse amongst many other things. Al-Hasanat Deccan Welfare Association of Australia is one of the many organisations in Lakemba making a difference for our community. Last Sunday I had the honour to attend the Lakemba Community Information Forum at Remembrance Hall in Lakemba. There were representatives from Canterbury-Bankstown council, Surf Life Saving Australia, Road Safety New South Wales, local police stations and Lighthouse Community Support.

There was a wide variety of people in attendance including international students, newly arrived migrants, refugees and local citizens who wanted to learn more about their community and ways to engage with the community. It was a great event that welcomed new community members to Australia and informed them of the great resources that Australia can provide. With 31.5 per cent of residents of Lakemba born overseas, facilitating such opportunities highlights significant safety issues and ways to engage with the community. A representative from Canterbury-Bankstown council spoke about the role of council and how members of the community can access council services. He also was able to inform the community of how they can contribute to the community through volunteering at local events and community programs.

I was exceptionally impressed by the representative of Surf Life Saving Australia, a local who volunteers at Wanda Surf Life Saving Club. He gave attendees tips on how to use the beach safely and safe ways to swim. He covered topics from basic skincare through to what the flags on a beach mean. These topics may seem insignificant, but to people born overseas these are important tips, bearing in mind a 10-year national study from Royal Life Saving Australia reports that a large proportion of all drowning deaths over the past 10 years involved people who were born overseas. The study showed that over 27 per cent of drowning deaths in Australia in the past 10 years were people who were born overseas. We know that Australia's surf conditions are unique. Our waterways can become very challenging for residents who are not familiar with Australian surf conditions. I congratulate Surf Life Saving Australia and the presenter, who I thought was excellent.

A group from the Road Safety NSW awards who also attended the session spoke about road rules and the importance of adhering to them, which was a coincidence, given we had been talking about the use of mobile phones in cars and safety and how to be sensible with them. A gentleman who was a guest speaker told us his story of an injury he copped while riding a scooter. We asked him to be there to talk about what is safe, what is unsafe and what the rules are because we see a lot more scooters in our local area and there are a number of residents who are working in delivery, with the rising popularity of food delivery services. They are attracted to the job's low barriers for entry. People struggling with their English or international students or those on working holiday visas have a higher risk profile so we are trying to give them information.

Lighthouse Community Support, which I have spoken about before in this place, was fantastic with its grassroots activism and work on the local project. A couple of the representatives spoke about their youth projects and the ways they try to keep people off the streets and engage with young people. They also spoke about the big thing in Lakemba, which is our No Excuse for Abuse march, scheduled in late November. When we get closer I will move a motion to encourage people to come along because it is fantastic. It was part of the old White Ribbon process and is one of the biggest marches in Sydney. It is a beautiful march that the Lighthouse Community Support holds in conjunction with the local police and SES, the local member of Parliament and the local schools. He spoke to them about all these opportunities.

I spoke about the different types of engagement people can have with political representation and levels of government—local, State and Federal. Many of the people there had come from places where engagement with government is not as positive as it can be in Australia. I made it clear to them they can come out anytime. I also talked about one of my pet topics—social media—and making sure that parents are able to access their children's social media. I did not say that we should not let our children have social media, but rather that parents should keep an eye on it and engage with their kids. There is a bit of a dark world out there that we need to be careful of, but social media can also be a good thing. I thank the Al-Hasanat Deccan Welfare Association for hosting an excellent event and all the volunteers who contributed their time. These are the important things we do in our communities.

## NARRANDERA FISHERIES CENTRE

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:41:55):** I am extremely proud of many things in the Cootamundra electorate. We are blessed with a community that works hard and knows that working as a team brings the best outcome, not only for themselves but for others. This attribute is proudly on display at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre. Fish are a critical part of our ecosystem and can give us so much information about the health of our river systems. Thousands would argue that they are the reason for a great deal of leisure time well spent. It was with great delight that the agriculture Minister, the Hon. Adam Marshall, and I recently visited Martin Asmus and his team at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre to announce a \$4 million expansion of the facility and to learn more about the vital work being carried out in the Cootamundra electorate to help fish across New South Wales.

We are all familiar with the Menindee fish kills of last summer, in which millions of fish perished. The team from the Narrandera Fisheries Centre rescued surviving fish and took them to their ponds to nurse back to health. Hatchery Manager Matthew McLellan ensured that the Murray cod in his team's care were expertly looked after so they can play their role in the centre's plans to restore fish populations when more normal conditions return. At a second visit in as many months, the Minister and I saw firsthand the modern day Noah's ark in full swing, with the State's largest ever fish breeding program well underway. More than 100,000 Murray cod have been bred this season from the 20 rescued at Menindee. The Narrandera Fisheries Centre expansion is part of a \$10 million plan to prepare for what the Minister has aptly described as a "potential fish Armageddon".

As dramatic as that may sound, the Minister is not overstating the situation that New South Wales is facing. We are enduring the worst drought on record. Rainfall is at an all-time low and our rivers illustrate this. Against this backdrop we are expecting a horror summer of fish kills. The work being done at the Narrandera Fisheries Centre is therefore all the more crucial. The staff at the centre will be working hard to conserve our native fish through their breeding and restocking program so that when conditions improve we can reintroduce our conserved fish and restore populations. As summer approaches the work performed by the team at Narrandera will be complemented by the installation of artificial aeration, oxygenation and chemical treatments to support water quality and thus fish survival across the State's river system.

There will also be additional dedicated fish teams conducting rescue operations during fish kill events, no doubt bringing much of their precious cargo to Narrandera. I commend the New South Wales Government for having the foresight to make a critical investment in this State's native fish at a time when decisive action has to be taken. I also congratulate the centre manager, Martin Asmus; the hatchery manager, Matthew McLellan; and the NSW Department of Primary Industries Senior Fisheries Manager Inland, Cameron Westaway for leading the team and ensuring that, despite what is shaping up to be a bleak summer on our rivers, our precious native fish populations will not only survive but also will return stronger than ever before.

## ALBURY ELECTORATE PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:45:41):** At some stage we will all come face to face with the reality of our own mortality. We can only hope that when that time comes we will feel as comfortable, safe and cared for as is humanly possible. Palliative care is a way to help those who are in the final stages of life. Palliative care includes a range of services that support people with advanced disease when cure is no longer possible. At this important stage of life we ought to aim for each person to experience the best quality of life possible; physically, personally, socially and spiritually. This involves the sense that palliative care is not just clinical but a holistic approach to assist persons who have a terminal illness.

Health care on the State border is very much about collaboration between services. This is certainly evident in palliative care with services such as Mercy Health—under the auspices of Murrumbidgee Local Health District—Albury Wodonga Health, the Albury Wodonga Cancer Foundation and the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre. Mercy Health Albury is a recognised leader in its practices and care. Led by Chris Arnold, the Mercy Care Centre (Palliative Care) provides a community palliative program supporting people to remain in their homes; a 10-bed inpatient unit, including a family stay unit; a creative living centre which offers social and emotional support through friendship and activities and clinical leadership, support and education about palliative care within the region. Mercy Health also plays an important role in our community with subacute health services provided by this publicly funded institution also including geriatric evaluation management, transitional aged care, aged care assessment, community therapy and inpatient rehabilitation programs.

The Albury Wodonga Cancer Foundation has been in existence for 32 years. During this time people such as Jenny Jensen, Geoff Smith and Peter Tobin have demonstrated their passionate advocacy for cancer care. They have worked hard to ensure that a region previously lacking many basic cancer services has become a leader in regional Australia. The Albury Wodonga Cancer Foundation, in this advocacy, is committed to working to increase levels of understanding and ensuring the best palliative care in our region. Through the foundation Albury

has more than 80 active trained palliative care volunteers supporting cancer patients and their families. I thank them for their commitment and I encourage more people to volunteer to share with those on the palliative care journey, whether at the cancer centre or Mercy Health. What is sometimes forgotten in this area of health is that many people in palliative care are older persons. It is also useful to be mindful of the need to keep these people safe and the role of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, newly appointed by our State Government, will be highly relevant in this context.

Across the electorate we have three multipurpose service hospitals; Tumbarumba, Holbrook and Culcairn. They each offer palliative care services with referral to Mercy Health in Albury. I thank the Hon. Brad Hazzard, Minister for Health and Medical Research, for advocating for funds to redevelop these multipurpose service buildings. The redevelopment has increased our ability to offer healthcare services in the region and particularly for aged care. Importantly Albury Wodonga Health has been able to recruit a specialist palliative care physician and we welcome Dr Chi Li to the region. We are fortunate to have Chi who is passionate about quality care and working with all involved in palliative care in our region.

We need to promote advance care directives. An advance care directive is a way to say what healthcare treatments you would like to have or refuse should you be in a position where you are seriously ill or injured and unable to make or communicate decisions about your care and treatment. In New South Wales an advance care directive can be spoken or written. Unlike in other States, in New South Wales there is not a specific form to use for an advance care directive. An advance care directive can simply be written on a piece of paper, not witnessed, and still be legally enforceable. I encourage people to take the time to explore websites such as [dyingtotalk.org.au](http://dyingtotalk.org.au) and [planningaheadtools.com.au](http://planningaheadtools.com.au).

We need to promote conversations within our communities around palliative care. We recognise that this is a vital area of public health, a type of help that is now more widely understood and appreciated than ever before. I will continue to work for our services to expand, to reflect the fact that more people are moving to the region and that palliative care has a growing role. I commend the work of Albury-Wodonga Health, Murrumbidgee Local Health District, Mercy Health Albury and the Albury Wodonga Cancer Foundation and Cancer Centre for the great work they do. It is through this collaboration that we will continue to advance the important issue of palliative care in our region.

#### **SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE SCHOOL MAINTENANCE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:50:37):** This week students across New South Wales and in my electorate of Shellharbour went back to school for the final term of 2019. Over the next 10 weeks students will sit exams, submit assignments and receive their final grade. I think it is timely that the New South Wales Government receive a report from the students and families of New South Wales on its mismanagement of the Education portfolio.

If the New South Wales Government was one of our State's students I think its report would read as follows: When it comes to the school maintenance backlog in the Illawarra the New South Wales Government's efforts are disappointing and misleading. When it comes to the management of asbestos in our schools the New South Wales Government displays a lack of care and is taking risks with the safety of our State's children. When it comes to the Cooler Classrooms initiative the New South Wales Government is trailing behind and missing deadlines. To put it simply, when it comes to education the New South Wales Government is failing—failing its report and failing our State's citizens.

Earlier this month the New South Wales Government announced that it would be undertaking a "maintenance blitz" over the school holidays. How many of the 21 public schools in the Shellharbour electorate would get a cent or see a bit of action in this maintenance blitz? Zero. Not one. In fact, in the whole of the Illawarra there were just three schools that had some maintenance done over the last school holidays—and two of those were in the Kiama electorate. The disappointment does not end there. In September, during budget estimates, it was revealed that over 2,000 State schools across New South Wales have asbestos on their grounds. Nearly half of those schools have damaged asbestos on site and 109 of those schools contain the most deadly form of asbestos: friable asbestos.

In Shellharbour there are three schools that have friable or damaged asbestos on site. Right now there are children sitting in classrooms at Barrack Heights Public School, Lake Illawarra High School and Oak Flats Public School who are at risk. Children have a habit of breaking things and parents helping out at working bees might be unknowingly putting themselves in danger. The safety of our community is paramount and it should be the priority of this Government without compromise.

We have a basic expectation that our Government will keep our kids safe. Parents across the State are worried and they have every right to be. Their children are at risk of exposure to asbestos and all the health

problems that come with it. The number of schools in our State that are currently plagued with asbestos is scary but the New South Wales Government's response to this issue is more frightening. The New South Wales Government is dragging its feet on an issue that is affecting the health and safety of our State's children. In the last financial year five times fewer asbestos checks were conducted in New South Wales public schools compared with the year before. Alarmingly there were only 158 asbestos inspections in the 2018-19 financial year, when in 2017-18 there were 843 conducted. This figure is totally unacceptable given that there are currently 2,185 schools on the NSW Department of Education's asbestos register.

Finally, when it comes to the Cooler Classrooms program the New South Wales Government is trailing behind at an embarrassing and alarming rate. Over 1,300 schools applied to the \$500 million program and 900 have had their applications approved in the first round. But how many of these schools have actually received air conditioning? Only 27 and just 23 others are underway. I understand this is a five-year project but at the rate this program is moving it will take decades to deliver. I remind the Government that it is time to get to work, sort out its grades and sort out the state of our schools—or risk expulsion in just a few short years.

### MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (20:54:51):** October is Mental Health Month. It is a reminder that friends, loved ones, work colleagues or even ourselves might need help. It is also an opportunity to encourage awareness of mental health as well as social and emotional wellbeing in our respective communities. Yesterday I was delighted to visit Baulkham Hills High School for an inspirational morning discussion about mental health and wellbeing with cricket legend and Gotcha4Life ambassador Steve Smith and Gotcha4Life founder Gus Worland. The crux of the public awareness campaign is that if you notice changes in behaviour from those around you or in yourself you should seek help, reach out and talk to your family and friends about available support services. No-one should believe that mental health, mental illness and suicide prevention are dirty words.

The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] National Health Survey estimated that 20 per cent of Australians had a mental or behavioural condition in 2017-18. This is an increase of 2.6 per cent from 2014-15, primarily as a result of more people reporting anxiety-related conditions, depression or feelings of depression. A previous ABS survey conducted in 2007 estimated that 45 per cent of Australians had experienced a mental disorder in their lifetime, with 20 per cent experiencing a mental disorder in the previous year. That is to say that one in five Australians will be affected by mental health issues every year and those who do not experience mental health challenges themselves are likely to know somebody who will.

Mental Health Month provides members of the community with the opportunity to connect with each other and play an active role in meaningful and transparent conversations about mental illness. This awareness month is about creating a sense of security and providing a safe place to decrease the isolation people feel when things are not going their way. The communities that put on different events which openly address mental health and wellbeing are helping to create more accepting and safe spaces for people to start having these conversations and breaking down the stigma around mental health. We know that stigma and discrimination are still a significant issue and can be a barrier for many people in accessing support or even talking about mental health. However, suicide prevention is everybody's business and our vision is that everyone in New South Wales lives with hope, wellbeing and good health, with far fewer lives lost to suicide.

I was glad to hear that as part of the 2019-20 New South Wales budget this Government has committed a \$19.7 million investment in the first stage of its record three-year \$90 million commitment to improve mental health services. The funding comes on top of a record \$2.1 billion investment in mental health services and infrastructure funding in the 2018 budget and is in addition to the announcement of a \$700 million statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program. We expect this investment to have the most significant impact on suicide prevention that New South Wales has ever seen and that it will ensure that mental health receives appropriate attention, funding and resources and the right structure to assist people who not only live with mental illness but also want to recover.

I encourage constituents in Baulkham Hills to share the journey by getting involved in Mental Health Month this October. The Government has called for people to come along with family, friends and colleagues who are living with mental illness or having mental health issues and share a cuppa, a stroll, a hug, a meal or a memory. If you or someone you know needs crisis support contact Lifeline. They are the most qualified people to talk to, as well as mental health services and the New South Wales Mental Health Line at 1800 011 511. As a former Minister for Veterans Affairs, I know the devastating effect that poor mental health has had on our veterans. I congratulate the Government on embracing this initiative as one of the many ways that we can assist not only our veterans but also all those who suffer from this ailment.

## PACIFIC HIGHWAY

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (20:58:50):** There are two major roads in Port Stephens that the New South Wales Government is responsible for: Nelson Bay Road and the Pacific Highway. Members in this place will have heard me speak often about Nelson Bay Road, particularly about Mike Baird's 2015 commitment of full duplication by 2019 and then about the freedom of information documents showing that no work was scheduled to start until 2021. Then I spoke about Premier Gladys Berejiklian's commitment from March this year, which she then voted against just last month. But tonight I will speak about the other major road in Port Stephens: the Pacific Highway. All members will be familiar with the importance of this highway. Goodness knows, people outside this place are familiar with it—they will have sat in queued traffic if they tried to head north of Newcastle.

This coastal route between Sydney and Brisbane began construction in the 1920s, and every government since then has continued the work to improve this major road. For the Port Stephens area, the proposed extension of the M1 motorway to connect to the Pacific Highway near Raymond Terrace will remove a major bottleneck and relieve the frequent and serious congestion at this vital interchange. This upgrade has been described by Infrastructure Australia as a "priority initiative". This week the NRMA implored the State and Federal governments to get on with it. NRMA spokesman Peter Khoury described the project as a "vital missing link" and the final piece of the puzzle that will deliver a trifecta in value: improved congestion and safety, more efficient freight movements, and easier access to regional areas for tourism and trade.

I was surprised to see that Treasurer Dominic Perrottet has now listed the M1 to Raymond Terrace extension as one of four infrastructure projects the State Government would like to fast-track. I was surprised because, as everyone in Port Stephens knows, the Government has delayed this project for years. Despite committing \$200 million towards the project, only a fraction of the promised money has been spent. That amount of money was promised two elections ago—not two years, two elections ago—and the project should be shovel ready by now. However, because of the Government's delays we still do not even know where the road will go. It is no wonder the Treasurer is begging the Federal Government to fast-track the project: He is trying to cover up the fact that the State Government has been asleep at the wheel. He is only now realising that this section of road is soon to be the only pinch point left on the Pacific Highway.

It will be the only outstanding section on the entire Sydney to Brisbane route, and local residents, regional commuters, tourists and freight-reliant industry will continue to suffer as a result. During the recent Federal election campaign both sides of politics committed to making a very sizable contribution towards construction of \$1.6 billion. However, we have since found out that Scott Morrison and the Liberal Party's commitment had a few conditions attached—namely, that the money will not be available until after the next election. It seems that the Federal Government has seen the State Government's delays and thinks it can do the same thing.

This is an issue that the Federal member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson, has been fighting for over a long period. Right now she is fighting for the Morrison Government to bring forward its funding so that this vital piece of infrastructure can get underway. I wholeheartedly support Meryl Swanson and her campaign to bring forward this Federal funding, but if the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government had spent what it promised two elections ago this project would be shovel ready right now and the Federal Government would have no reason or excuse to delay it even further. Shamefully, this is what my community has become used to.

Time after time, whether it is Mike Baird, Gladys Berejiklian or our local Liberal candidates, the promises made never come to fruition. We have seen it with Nelson Bay Road, we have seen it with Medowie High School, we have seen it with our local police stations, we are seeing it with the fake Fingal Bay link road promise and we have seen it with the M1 extension. That is the legacy of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government in Port Stephens. That is the legacy of local candidates who not only made fake promises but also had fake Facebook profiles. The Liberals cannot be trusted in Port Stephens. I do not say that gratuitously; I say that based on their track record and on their litany of broken promises. As I have mentioned, only a fraction of the Government's promised \$200 million for the M1 extension has been spent. After two State elections, only 15 per cent of the promised funds have been delivered.

Considering the complexity of this road, that wasted time has real consequences. People are sick of sitting in traffic instead of enjoying their holidays, and locals are sick of getting caught in holiday traffic when they are not on holidays. Industry across the State is losing money. Goods are sitting in freight trucks on the highway because the Government has sat on its hands and failed to do what it said it would do. I urge the Premier and the Treasurer to take their own advice and start prioritising this project.

## OMNI TANKER

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (21:04:09):** Along with the Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, I recently visited a fantastic company located in Smeaton Grange in the heart of Camden, western Sydney. Omni Tanker has been kicking goals on a global stage, improving the weight, versatility, durability, safety and efficiency of corrosive chemical transport worldwide. Assisted by a \$100,000 grant from the New South Wales Government, Omni Tanker has continued to improve its technology and competitiveness on the global scale. The Omni ISO tank has been designed to safely transport aggressive class 8 corrosive chemicals and ultra-high purity class 5 oxidising chemicals like sulphuric acid.

Omni Tankers are designed to work over road, rail or sea and are 40 per cent lighter than traditional steel tanks. They are highly resistant to the corrosive materials they transport. The products produced at this great western Sydney company not only have dramatically increased the safety of moving aggressive chemicals around the world but also have made it more efficient to do so by allowing operators to transport more product within their weight limits. The idea for these tanks came from Omni Tanker managing director Daniel Rodgers and his team of skilled engineers and technicians. They used the plans developed by his father, Bill Rodgers, to create a highly resistant tank made from lightweight and structural composite material.

Bill Rodgers, a brilliant inventor and engineer, heard about the health problems suffered by Royal Australian Air Force servicemen who worked on the F-11 fighter jet fuel tanks and sought to change that. The New South Wales Government's Building Partnerships grant assisted Omni Tanker to design, engineer and manufacture two prototype tanks in preparation for testing in Germany. Omni Tanker has now finalised the design and has secured regulatory approvals to sell tanks in Australia, Europe, the United States, Canada, Asia and parts of Africa. With the Western Sydney Aerotropolis right on its doorstep, Omni Tanker is another company that has been able to develop in our region thanks to the good governance and backing of the New South Wales Coalition Government.

Beginning as a small start-up in 2006, Omni Tanker now has over 60 staff and holds intellectual property patents for its manufacturing process in 28 countries. Development of these technologies has come about because of the skill and dedication of Bill and Daniel Rodgers, the Omni Tanker team and the State's ability to develop world-leading advanced manufacturing solutions. The future is bright for this great company, which looks to create up to 75 new jobs over the next five years as it continues to expand throughout the global market. I thank Daniel Rodgers, technical officer Luke Djukic and the great staff at Omni Tanker for inviting me and the Minister to their factory. It was a fantastic opportunity to see a thriving company in western Sydney with roots in the Camden electorate. I look forward to seeing their global success in the future.

## AUBURN ELECTORATE HOMELESSNESS

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (21:07:47):** This week is Anti-Poverty Week. While members in this place rush between the buffets at functions of the well heeled, tonight we should consider those people who are less well off. Tonight in my electorate members of the Salvation Army will hit the streets to provide support and Barnardos will ensure that women and children can find a place out of harm's way to bed down. Nearly every time I visit a local private or public school I receive a request to help a family in dire need. When I recently attended a local Catholic school the principal noted that he was astounded at the grinding poverty he encountered when he arrived. Nelson Mandela once said:

Poverty is not an accident. Like apartheid and slavery it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings.

Some problems can be explained. Between 2011 and 2016 the number of homeless in the electorate of Auburn increased by an extraordinary 1,219—a 163 per cent increase. People may assume that a government looking at those figures would recognise a crisis in the making. There is boot leather on the ground, and an empathetic government would contact the NGOs that provide the emergency response to see what they could do. Again those people may be disappointed. Barnardos and the Salvation Army have been swamped. Barnardos, who actually provide State government crisis services, have not received a funding increase in five years. While the State Government is selling off assets, including local Housing NSW properties, Barnardos is picking up the slack, alongside other local charities.

The population of Auburn is second only to that of my colleague the member for Heffron. In 2017 Auburn electorate's population was 112,842, an additional 30,000 from 2007. That is a 36 per cent increase in the population. There are another 5,500 dwellings at the Carter Street precinct and an additional 2,300 dwellings at the Wentworth Point precinct. In comparison, the increase in population in Penrith over the same period was a mere 8,500, bringing it from 73,000 to 82,000. In Camden the population increased from 61,00 to 97,000. That is an increase of 36,000 residents but with a significantly lower density and still 16,000 less residents than the Auburn electorate. So when I sit in this Chamber and listen to Ministers say—after they have finished using superlatives to describe themselves—that they have increased funding, usually by the consumer price index,

forgive me if I am not particularly excited. The rhetoric hardly marries up with the figures of no increase in funding for the additional 30,000 residents.

Unemployment in my electorate is the second highest in the State. There is not a figure from this electorate where the grinding poverty is not so obvious that any reasonable government would be looking at the issue. Unemployment in Auburn is 7 per cent with youth unemployment sitting at 12 per cent. This is despite the fact that Auburn has a workforce with education levels above the State average. Poverty can be fixed. Rather than a piecemeal approach where this State Government behaves more and more like NSW Inc. undertaking business as usual, it should harness the strengths and achievements of diverse communities such as Auburn.

There is a significant underlying structure in these suburbs that the Government seems determined to bypass. I have not heard the Minister with responsibility for homelessness once mention Auburn in this Chamber, despite the alarming increase in homeless numbers. When I wrote to him urging him to visit in order to see for himself, it appears from his response that a visit will have to wait until mid-January—but that is not confirmed. Whilst the Government cuts express train services, does not build the schools it promised and fails to make any commitments regarding Auburn Hospital—which was rebuilt by the previous Labor Government—members will be disappointed but not surprised to learn of the only new spending in the previous budget for the electorate. Guess what it was: We got an additional 400 beds at Silverwater jail. When the Premier said, "You can have it all" I did not realise she meant prison beds and stadiums.

### CLARENCE ELECTORATE BUSHFIRES

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (21:12:34):** Tonight I will update the House on the impact that bushfires have had on communities in my electorate of Clarence, in particular the Busbys Flat fire, which impacted the village of Rappville, and the Long Gully Road fire, which impacted Ewingar, Drake and Tabulam. These two wildfires joined up late last week and burnt out about 120,000 hectares with a 100-kilometre fire front. The fires were so ferocious it was like a scene out of a disaster movie. I expected Bruce Willis or Dwayne Johnson to jump out of an Rural Fire Service [RFS] chopper with an axe in hand and lead the charge to extinguish the fires.

When I attended the Rural Fire Service headquarters at Casino I saw Bruce Willis and Dwayne Johnson everywhere I looked—and they all wore RFS, Fire and Rescue NSW or NSW Police Force uniforms or they had a Richmond Valley Council badge on their shirt or hat. Our first responders are the real heroes who helped those fire-ravaged communities. They did an incredible job. Sadly there were two fatalities at Coongbar. There were 64 houses lost across the fire front and many more were damaged. About a dozen of those houses and countless sheds were lost in the little village of Rappville. I mentioned that this was a raging, catastrophic fire; it came on the back of the worst drought in our history. The vegetation was tinder dry. It was hot and there were strong winds. Embers would fly kilometres in front of the fire and because it was so dry, nearly every ember started a new fire. I heard a report of an 800-hectare property being burnt out in six minutes, such was the ferocity of the fire.

The community of Rappville sheltered in the brick schoolhouse for five or six hours while the fire raged around them. There were heroes who came to the rescue of their friends and neighbours—heroes like Richard Rose and his son-in-law Mitch, who helped an elderly couple out of a tin shed where they had been sheltering. On one side, the fire was burning their house; on the other side, another shed was also on fire. I heard how Mitch carried the elderly gentleman over his shoulder to the school, and shortly afterward the tin shed the couple had sought shelter in burst into flames. In this community, like in many others impacted by bushfires, friends and neighbours helped each other. It is one of the great things about living in a small rural community: We care about each other.

It was pleasing for me, as the local member, to see a horde of the country's leading politicians descend on Rappville on Sunday. We had Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack, Minister David Littleproud and Federal member Kevin Hogan. In addition, Premier Gladys Berejiklian, Deputy Premier John Barilaro and emergency services Minister David Elliott came to visit the community. Of course, we had the Mayor of Richmond Valley Council, Robert Mustow, and council general manager Vaughan Macdonald, as well as a host of council staff. All were there to reassure the community that they were not alone and that we will help to rebuild their lives and their community. It was wonderful to see the community come out, tell their story in tears and be comforted by the Prime Minister and the Premier. It was wonderful to hear the mayor tell the community that the hall they had lost in the fire would be rebuilt.

Can I say how caring the mayor has been. He visited every house in Rappville, dropped off a slab of drinking water and asked how they were doing and if there was anything he or the council could do to help. This is a great community and it will recover, but it needs our help. I am grateful to see the announcement today by the Federal Government, which has activated Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payments that provide a non-means-tested payment of \$1,000 for eligible adults and \$400 for eligible children. Eligible people include

those who have lost their home or have been badly injured. That payment is on top of the jointly funded Disaster Recovery Allowance. Anyone who has been severely affected should contact the Department of Human Services to check their eligibility. As I said, this is a very resilient community and with our help they will rebuild their lives and their community.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I acknowledge the private member's statement of the member for Clarence on behalf of his community, who have had amazing circumstances and tragedy brought upon them. I think all members' hearts would go out to his community. I thank him for his contribution.

### MY COMMUNITY PROJECTS GRANTS

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (21:18:07):** This year the My Community Projects grants were an overwhelming success for the New South Wales Government, not only by providing our communities with fantastic new community-focused infrastructure, but also by setting a precedent for large-scale and easy customer service through Service NSW—truly a culmination of all the Government's efforts. The program has engaged the grassroots level of democracy and consultation for all within the community. The success of the program being rolled out through Service NSW allows for an easy, engaging and quick customer service program that lets people focus on what matters: the future of Ryde and our community, and how we can shape it together. Ryde received funding for four different projects that will update and bring new character to our community.

Ermington Public School will receive a new playground. We all know the benefits: a richer, more engaging recreational experience for our treasured next generation. A focus on improving the health and wellbeing of our kids is important and we can all agree that these designs will benefit the community immensely. Principal Jennifer Riley is to be commended for her efforts in ensuring the best possible environment for her students and community. Another worthy recipient is St John's Anglican Church. This cherished institution in Ryde will also receive a new community playground for its services to our community through its pre-schooling, community, church and kids club services. The important work of Kathy Cole-Clark and Joan McKittrick, director and administrator of the preschool, wardens Peter Bliss and Chris Aspland, as well as treasurer Bruce Duncan and the church's Minister, John Chappell, are to be thanked for their vision and contribution.

Marsfield will also be receiving a revitalised community kitchen to help the charitable efforts of the Mahboba's Promis group. The foundation undergoes important work helping the Afghani community in every respect, contributing to Ryde and Australia as a whole as well as giving help to those who desperately need it. The kitchen will revitalise the Eastwood Town Hall and extend the important aid work of Mahboba's Promise to provide food for those in need, train locals in important trade skills and contribute to the cultural landscape of Ryde. The tireless community-based efforts of Mahboba Rawi have helped so many thus far. Claire Bowyer, Turla Serna, Emily Mays and Nawid Cina deserve recognition for their role in volunteering and helping Mahboba's cause.

Ryde will be home to one of the world's largest bed and breakfasts in the world for some of our smallest members who have had it tough over the past few years—the pollinators. The B&B Highway astounded me with its innovation and unique approach to improving our area. Gardens rich with pollen and built environments for bees, birds and butterflies to enjoy are spaced throughout Ryde to facilitate a wider, healthy network for the pollinators. This project is built in partnership with local schools and community groups thereby acting as an important ecological initiative, as well as aiming to educate the community about the importance and beauty of sustainability. The wild honey is just an added bonus.

I thank Judy Friedlander for organising such an original and important idea, along with local champions Jenny O'Neill and Donna Lonergan. Their partnership with education and community groups ensures our pollinators get a full taste of Ryde: Truscott Street Public School, Ryde East Public School, The Children's House Montessori School, North Ryde Community Preschool, Ryde Public School, Banksia Cottage, Mia Mia Early Learning Centre Macquarie University, St Dunstan's Pre-School Macquarie University and Holy Spirit Primary School, all deserve praise and recognition for offering to be a part of this community ecological program and the education benefits it will bring.

### LOCAL SPORT GRANT PROGRAM

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (21:23:00):** Figtree is not 1960s Berlin but it is a suburb that is becoming more divided than ever before. It is not a concrete wall or a Cold War economic, social or physical divide that is causing it, rather the division is based on sport. I do not mean that some are still upset that the Steelers are no longer part of the National Rugby League or that Ford and not Holden took the checked flag at Bathurst last weekend; it is more fundamental. It appears that—in a decision that is befitting of its own episode of *Yes Minister*—sporting groups on the eastern side of the Princes Highway will have access to less sporting

funds under the Local Sport Grant program than sporting groups on the western side of the Princess Highway that runs through Figtree. The same will apply for Fairy Meadow, a suburb that will also suffer a sporting divide because of arbitrary decisions based on electorate boundaries.

I will do my best to try to outline what has happened. However, I think those listening and those who read the *Hansard* later will agree that this decision simply makes no sense. When reading Monday's email from the New South Wales Office of Sport I noted a change to the Local Sport Grant Program, which previously had provided \$50,000 a year to each of the 93 electorates across State. Upon further reading, it was clear that the State was now to be split into two.

**Mr Mark Coure:** A written explanation is in the email.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Wait, member for Oatley, there is a cracker in this one. It is clear that 65 electorates will have a decrease of \$15,000 in funding, while 28 electorates will have an increase of \$35,000. As members opposite have noted, in their welcome interjections, the reason cited by the Government was the drought. Naturally, drought-affected areas should receive some additional funding given the pressures that sporting groups in those areas are facing. I do not begrudge that for a minute. In fact, the drought was one of the reasons that on Sunday I called on the Deputy Premier to allocate, in full, the \$50 million committed to this year's Resources for Regions program.

In another betrayal of regional New South Wales, it seems that the Government has been unable to allocate the full \$24 million remaining in this fund. Given the funding cut was related to the drought I assumed that Wollongong would be one of the 65 electorates with reduced funding. Naturally this would be a disappointing outcome. If the Berejiklian Government wanted to give \$35,000 in additional funding to each of the 28 severely drought-affected electorates it could have done so. The Government has not done that. However, under the guise of the drought the Government is sneaking in a cut in funding to some areas. Again, while this has been disappointing, it has achieved the Government's aim of making more funds available to some electorates. But when I started to dig deeper I saw the *Yes Minister* plot start to develop. Electorates have been divided into two zones.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Come on!

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Just wait, there is a real cracker in this one.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I would call for members to cease interjecting, but the member seems to be enjoying them. Please proceed.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Those interjecting will be embarrassed soon enough because this is inexplicable. Zone 1 electorates are those rated as severely affected by the drought and zone 2 electorates make up the rest of the State. If we turn to the appendix of the program guidelines—which contains the detail of which electorates are in which zone—we discover that the division is clearly illogical. The Illawarra consists of five state electorates—Heathcote, Keira, Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama. That is a pretty standard definition of the region. While those electorates straddle three local government areas they clearly form an economic, social and environmental region with much in common.

There is not terribly much difference between the northern and southern parts of the Illawarra. Certainly there have been no reports that the drought is impacting some parts of the Illawarra more severely than other parts. That is why it was surprising to see that the electorates of Keira, Shellharbour and Kiama have been listed as the zone 1 electorates, which have been determined to be severely affected by the drought, while Wollongong and Heathcote are considered not to be. That is a divide that will most certainly raise an eyebrow in the Illawarra. It certainly has today.

I drive to a lot of events throughout the Illawarra. So I struggle to reconcile what I see on the ground with the Government's conclusion that some parts of the Illawarra have been more severely impacted by the drought than others. I have not seen more of a drought impact in Corrimal, Warilla or Kiama than in Wollongong. I have most certainly not seen a greater drought impact on the eastern side of the Princes Highway than on the western side of the highway at Figtree or Fairy Meadow. This is a staggering decision. It is also a disgusting decision. It is disgusting to hide behind the drought—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** This speech is staggering.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is not staggering. It is a comparison between one side of the Princes Highway and the other. It is where I live. I know that there is no difference in the effects of the drought throughout the Illawarra. Those on the other side of the Chamber are kidding themselves if they think that in the Illawarra one side of the road is more affected than the other side.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** You are inciting debate.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I am not inciting debate. [*Time expired.*]

#### AGRIBUSINESS

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (21:28:04):** The electorate of Wollondilly is on the fringe of the city. As housing grows into areas that were formerly agricultural—the food bowl for Sydney—pressure will be on agricultural production in my electorate to help fill that void. Already in both the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shires there is extensive activity, strategic planning and excitement about agribusiness development. This is not only for Sydney's food production but also to tap into the extensive overseas markets that will become available once the airport at Badgerys Creek is operational.

Central to the further development of that industry is a reliable and consistent supply of water. In these drought times it is incumbent on Government at all levels to seek and develop further, more innovative ways of harvesting and using water. This will enable the business to develop and expand with certainty. Recently, together with my parliamentary colleague, the member for Camden, Peter Sidgreaves, I received representations from a group of constituents who propose a simple innovation to reuse water to enable their businesses to develop and thrive. They were farmers who could use additional water on their properties in Cawdor. The proposal is not new but with some tweaking and the assistance of Sydney Water it will have a significant impact on the further development of agribusiness not only in my electorate but across the State. For nearly 10 years diverting tertiary treated effluent away from the Nepean River onto agricultural land at Camden has provided multiple benefits.

One of the main irrigators on the Nepean is the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute, known as the EMAI. The institute is able to substitute treated effluent for most of the water it extracts from the river. West Camden sewage treatment plant used to discharge the treated effluent into the river but now a simple pipeline diverts enough water to fill a 63-megalitre storage dam nearby the EMAI. The EMAI is able to draw up to four million litres of high-quality treated wastewater a day from the dam instead of fresh water from the river. Reduced effluent discharges into the Nepean River will help to improve the health of the river's ecosystem and contribute to environmental flows. The water is also used to irrigate many of the sporting fields in the city of Camden.

A number of other schemes in the State use similar processes. Shoalhaven Water's Reclaimed Water Management Scheme reuses water and supplies it to local dairy farmers. I mention the scheme at Camden because a number of farmers can tap into the same pipelines that provide water to the EMAI. The catch is that connecting to that water has required an inordinate amount of paperwork. One constituent who came to see me brought seven lever arch files that weighed over four kilograms and the connection process cost them over \$100,000. Recently Minister Pavey and Deputy Premier Barilaro have said that we need to cut through both red and green tape to make this happen. Recently I visited Top Forty Orchard in Oakdale to view firsthand the struggles that farmers have in the current drought. The visit was organised and supported by the community initiative of the Wollondilly Shire called the Dilly Drought Drive, coordinated by Sharon Robertson. Those farmers and others are willing to do their part. The Government should assist them by being bold and innovative in providing certainty to their businesses, which is vital to ensure the long-term future of dairy farming and agribusiness on the fringes of metropolitan Sydney.

#### WASTE MANAGEMENT

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:32:38):** It gives me great pleasure to thank the people of Gosford who continue to work alongside me to protect our local environment against the growing threat of Sydney's waste and to let them know that I am right beside them when we say the Central Coast cannot become a dumping ground for Sydney's waste. It is becoming very clear that the opening of NorthConnex will make it much cheaper to recycle Sydney's waste at the beautiful gateway to the Central Coast that is Gosford and the Gosford electorate. Our community is justifiably fearful of the potential environmental impact of increased waste processing on our natural environment, water quality, air quality, biodiversity and Aboriginal heritage. That fear is not unfounded. It is not just an argument to try to stop development.

The public is all too aware of the reality and the sheer number of proposals that have been put forward for the Somersby Industrial Park. That park is supposed to be the hub of our manufacturing and industrial jobs on the Central Coast but it risks becoming a dumping ground, with impacts on neighbouring businesses, local families and our local correctional centres. In the past decade 10 development applications have been submitted for waste or resource recovery operations at Somersby. Some have been rejected by council or by the State Government, some have been withdrawn under scrutiny and some have been approved but sit dormant, which is even more troubling for the community as the uncertainty creates unknown stresses. A number are still going through State

significant development assessment. While this does require public exhibition, it does not give our community any say in the final approval.

When the Liberal Government takes these decisions away from an elected local council, our government voice only exists in submissions. When these State significant development applications are so obnoxious that they receive more than 1,000 opposing submissions—good on you, community members—it is clear that our community does not want the health or environmental impacts of these developments that are obviously not good enough. This is especially so when the scrutiny of the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] has historically let our community down. In light of the EPA's management of waste across New South Wales—the supposedly "normal" number of breaches that occur and the environmental vandalism that has occurred at Mangrove Mountain golf course and at Spencer—alongside the closure of the Asian market to Australian recycling we are at a dire time in waste management and recycling in New South Wales.

This evening on behalf of the people of Gosford I inform members that every time I have a meeting with someone from the EPA or someone who has previously worked for the EPA I let them know loud and clear that our community does not trust the New South Wales Government's Environment Protection Authority to manage waste oversight in our community. We need serious State Government leadership and investment in planning for waste management and in our Environment Protection Authority now. The environment Minister has announced a 20-year plan. Minister, this is not good enough. This Government's short-term goal of boosting recycling rates and reducing plastics and other waste ending up in landfill is currently not meeting its targets. The Government comes in here and brags about that recycling—and good on that for happening—but it is not good enough. In fact, on two key indicators—reducing waste and increasing recycling—the Government is going backwards.

I say to the Minister, "This 20-year plan is too late. You only have 3½ years in government." To the environment Minister and planning Minister I am putting it on the record once again that there are currently three State significant development waste disposal development applications [DAs] in the Somersby Industrial Park in the Gosford electorate lodged with the Berejiklian Government for planning assessment. This is alongside seven other DAs in various stages of progression with the Central Coast Council. If we get these right, we create good jobs and good businesses in New South Wales. We want that. Our community particularly needs supportive planning oversight and scrutiny that will protect it against the risks associated with building waste, not a conglomeration of Sydney's building waste recycling at the long-term health cost of the people of the Central Coast.

We also need State Government investment in the Environment Protection Authority so that any developments that are approved in our community are not allowed unsupervised polluting of our waterways—which we have already seen—or to adversely impact the air quality of the Somersby and Kariang communities. We currently only have one air quality testing facility on the Central Coast, at Wyong racecourse. We need more. It should not be the member for Gosford calling on this Government to speed up the 20-year waste strategy. This should be led in the short term by the planning Minister and the environment Minister. This evening I call on the New South Wales Government to reveal what action New South Wales planning and the EPA will take to ensure that Sydney's waste is being processed and recycled in the greater Sydney Basin and not in the Gosford electorate.

### OATLEY ELECTORATE SPORTING CLUBS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:37:44):** September was a month of sporting presentations, starting with the Connells Point Netball Club presentation evening which I attended recently, at which the club celebrated its recent successful season. The evening was held at Club Central Hurstville. The Connells Point Netball Club has been active within the community for over 60 years and has members between the ages of five and 70 years. The club provides its members with the opportunity to compete at all levels of sport, from beginners to professional competitive levels.

The club has done a fantastic job yet again of being inclusive and welcoming all members of the community. It has a wonderful, diverse membership base. It was great to attend the presentation and commend all those involved in the club for their success. I thank the club's president, Julian Finch—who I went to school with at Marist College Kogarah—as well as the players, parents, coaches, volunteers and guardians for all the work and dedication that is committed to the club each year. I look forward to continuing to support the club in the years ahead. In September—the month of many sport presentations—I had the privilege of attending on the 28th the Lugarno Football Club presentation night at Club Grandviews in Peakhurst. The Lugarno Football Club plays a significant role in the St George Football Association, with 42 female and male teams of all ages and more than 500 registered players.

The club is volunteer run and fosters a deep sense of community spirit and family, accepting all players who abide by the club's values and conduct themselves with a spirit of fairness. This approach allows young players to build their self-esteem and confidence levels because they can compete in a welcoming environment.

It was great to attend the presentation night and hear about the fantastic achievements of the players over the past season. It was also great to see family, friends and other supporters gather to congratulate the players and all the volunteers who contribute their time to the club. I thank club president Hagop Tchamkertenian, as well as the executive committee for its efforts.

The next day I attended the Peakhurst United Football Club junior presentation at Peakhurst Park. In a garage in Peakhurst in 1964, Peakhurst United was formed by three St George residents. Since then, the club has grown to form teams across all ages, catering to both male and female players. The club is tirelessly run by volunteers and through community support, providing a fantastic environment for players to thrive. An interesting fact about the club is that it is the lowest recipient of yellow and red cards. I never got any of those cards when I played for Oatley Football Club. That truly demonstrates the club's high regard for sportsmanship. On the night I was pleased to present some awards alongside club president Sharon Whyte to some very deserving players as well as to those who have given longstanding service to the club. I thank Peakhurst United Football Club for its continued excellence in providing sporting opportunities for residents in the St George area. I look forward to supporting Peakhurst United Football Club, Lugarno Football Club and, of course, Connells Point Netball Club next season.

### PORT MACQUARIE KOALA HOSPITAL

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (21:41:27):** As a member of Parliament who has served my electorate for over eight years and delivered some essential infrastructure and community-based projects, I can assure the House that nothing has given me more pleasure than when I announced last week a \$5 million redevelopment for Port Macquarie's most treasured and loved Koala Hospital. It was a day of jubilation for president Sue Ashton and her hardworking committee at the Koala Hospital when I attended their general meeting to reveal a multimillion dollar expansion that will transform the iconic attraction into a world-class facility.

Thanks to the New South Wales Government, the Koala Hospital will see a revitalisation like never before, with \$5 million allocated from the Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund towards the \$6.25 million project. That investment will contribute significantly to the care and treatment of sick and injured koalas while enhancing the tourism opportunities for Port Macquarie's \$6 billion economy, a win-win for everybody concerned. Following the redevelopment, locals and visitors will enjoy an enriched tourism experience with a raised walkway through the trees, new rehabilitation and permanent resident koala yards, training, research and education spaces, a retail shop, koala museum and a theatrette.

The funding will keep on giving with installation of interpretive signage and construction of a new clinic and administration area, an Indigenous storytelling space and educational nature walks. Once completed, visitor numbers at the Koala Hospital will continue to grow as one of the premier tourism attractions in the Hastings area, putting our region front and centre for tourists planning their next trip to the mid North Coast. Already the first of its kind in Australia, the Koala Hospital is a licensed wildlife rehabilitation facility specialising in onsite procedures and treatment for sick and injured koalas. Additional support is provided by the Port Macquarie Veterinary Hospital for major surgeries and X-rays.

It was two local business owners, Jean and Max Starr, who first had the idea for a koala hospital after witnessing the decline of our native marsupial due to urbanisation. In 1973 the idea of a koala hospital came to fruition with the Starrs opening the first Koala Preservation Society, a not-for-profit association, to run the Koala Hospital. A lot has been achieved by the members since then not only through rehabilitation of koalas but also through conservation of our local habitats, public awareness campaigns, advocacy, and promotional outreach not just locally but on a national and international scale to ensure our much-adored threatened species is protected into the future. Port Macquarie's Koala Hospital was also featured in documentaries and wildlife programs throughout the world with the first National Koala Conference held locally in Port Macquarie in 2013.

Today the Koala Hospital is supervised by four paid staff including a clinical director, an assistant clinical director, an administration manager. There are also leaf collectors and about 140 volunteers. President Sue Ashton, secretary Tristan Murray, treasurer Glenn Broomham, adoption coordinator Jan Campbell, shop coordinator Lynne Booth, education coordinator Elizabeth Casey, habitat coordinator Steve Withnall, hospital coordinator Rita Saunders and membership-human resources coordinator Vicki Moule oversee the operational side of the business and they all work to ensure that the hospital is operating at world-class standards. A tour of the Koala Hospital would truly open members' eyes to a most unique and remarkable facility.

Consisting of eight intensive care units and 33 rehabilitation yards, the hospital partners with the University of Sydney, the Queensland University of Technology and the Australian Museum to look into koala diseases to ensure that the very best care and treatment options are available to the 200 to 250 koalas that are admitted to the hospital on an annual basis. Koalas are often treated for chlamydia and injuries sustained from motor vehicles and in dog attacks. It is simply incredible that 140 active volunteers support this world-renowned

organisation each month. Without them the Koala Hospital would not be what it is today. The \$5 million grant from the New South Wales Government will ensure the health and viability of this outstanding organisation in Port Macquarie for many decades to come. I thank the Government for supporting a wonderful and iconic project in the Port Macquarie-Hastings area.

*Community Recognition Statements*

**AUSTRALIAN AIR LEAGUE RIVERWOOD SQUADRON**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:46:18):** I commend the Australian Air League Riverwood Squadron for being named as Best Squadron in Field at the Australian Air League's State championships in September. The Riverwood squadron has been preparing tirelessly in the lead-up to the competition and placed first in numerous events such as Junior Section Drill, Flight Drill, Squadron Drill, Best Band and Best Drum Major. The Riverwood squadron offers its cadets the opportunity to undertake leadership development, learn teamwork and collaboration skills and take part in other community service activities. Squadron membership continues to grow and it provides a great chance for young people to make new friends while developing vital skills. I extend my congratulations to all members of the Riverwood squadron. The squadron has a fantastic presence in the local area and gets behind a lot of community events like Anzac Day ceremonies. I recognise in particular the commanding officer, Mr Chris Bailey, for his continued dedication to the squadron.

**GOSFORD HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:47:21):** I congratulate an excellent school in my electorate, Gosford High School, on its ninetieth anniversary. I had the privilege of attending the school's celebration of the milestone. It was incredible to see former students returning for the occasion and to hear their fond memories of Gosford High. I thank and applaud the dedicated students, staff and parents who ensured that the momentous occasion was a great event. Much like the Central Coast itself, Gosford High School has changed and grown enormously over the decades. It was great to hear former local member Chris Holstein's story of falling in love with his wonderful wife, Mary, over the fence at the school. I suspect there are still ghosts in the tunnels under the school and the young students will let me know. It is excellent to see that it remains a great place for some of our region's brightest to learn and that there is a thriving community of students, teachers and parents past and present. I congratulate Gosford High School on its ninetieth anniversary and wish it all the best for another 90 years. I particularly wish all the best for every student across the Gosford electorate who is starting their Higher School Certificate examinations this Thursday.

**GEORGIA RYAN**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (21:48:31):** I recognise passionate advocate for dyslexia awareness 13-year-old Georgia Ryan for her efforts to increase understanding of learning differences. Recently I was privileged to meet with Georgia to discuss her campaign to revolutionise teaching degrees in New South Wales so that educators are trained to recognise learning differences in young children. Diagnosed in year 6 with dyslexia and dysgraphia, Georgia believes that early intervention is the key to ensuring that students have equal opportunity in the learning environment. To further strengthen her campaign, Georgia has decided to write to the vice-chancellors of New South Wales universities to begin a conversation about what she considers to be a gap in teaching degrees across the State.

Accompanying her letter will be a 4,000 strong petition designed to engage community support to include a compulsory module on learning differences with explicit and systematic phonics instruction as part of the five essential elements of a teaching degree. Georgia would like to be confident that no student is left behind at school as a result of learning differences and she hopes that her petition can spark real change. I applaud Georgia for her enthusiasm and determination to help other young school students with a similar diagnosis to herself to have access to a quality education.

**NAOMI ARROWSMITH**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (21:49:41):** Last Wednesday night I was pleased to attend the Labor Party's McKell Awards where Naomi Arrowsmith of the Port Kembla branch received an award for her long-term dedication to the Labor Party and the union movement. Naomi was nominated by Alison Byrnes, secretary of the Cunningham federal electoral council [FEC] and was strongly supported by Sharon Bird, the Federal member for Cunningham, and by me. Throughout many years Naomi has served in a number of capacities at the branch, State electoral council and FEC levels within the party and was recently awarded life membership of the Australian Services Union.

She has been a fantastic mentor for many people within the Labor Party and the union movement, including me. Through her mentorship she has transferred her own passion for achieving better outcomes for

working men and women. It is a passion that she retains today. Naomi is also involved in a number of community activities around her suburb of Port Kembla. She has always worked hard to elect Labor members and hold them to account. In wrapping up the night, Senator Tim Ayres described Naomi as a "treasure" and he was absolutely right.

#### **JANNALI PRESCHOOL KINDERGARTEN**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (21:50:47):** I acknowledge the wonderful team at Jannali Preschool Kindergarten, which I visited recently to celebrate the opening of its brand-new mud kitchen. Led by president Kris Dempsey and directors Lisa Rowan and Simone Taylor, the team creates a place where the children thrive, have fun and learn the many vital skills that they need to transition to school and beyond. The community-based, not-for-profit centre should be proud of having been awarded the rating of "Exceeding" in all seven areas of the National Quality Standard, reflecting the nurturing and inspiring experience that the entire team provides.

I am delighted that Jannali Preschool Kindergarten was successful in its application for \$9,880 through the New South Wales Government's Quality Learning Environments program. Through the grant, Jannali Preschool Kindergarten has further enhanced its outdoor learning environment with the installation of a pergola and water pump to complete the mud kitchen. During my visit it was fantastic to see so many children jumping feet first into the new installation, which expands on the welcoming and exciting playground that the children love and enjoy. I thank the amazing team at Jannali Preschool Kindergarten for their hospitality and tireless commitment to enriching young lives.

#### **RAYMOND TERRACE AND MEDOWIE LIONS CLUBS**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (21:51:50):** I draw the attention of the House to the often unsung work of service club members. Specifically, I thank Raymond Terrace Lions Club and Medowie Lions Club for their efforts in serving countless cups of teas and coffees to the masses traveling up and down the Pacific Highway this past long weekend. The Driver Reviver program supports safe travels for holiday-makers, reminding us to stop, revive and survive. Both clubs served up to 1,500 people over the October long weekend and 3,500 during last year's Christmas and New Year period. I pay special tribute to the volunteers of Raymond Terrace and Medowie Lions and thank them for giving their time to save people's lives. I make special mention of Raymond Terrace Lions Club member Bob Findley, who has been serving at the Driver Reviver and volunteering his time for the past 33 years. Whilst it is impossible to count how many lives Bob, or indeed any Lions volunteers, have saved, their quiet, preventative actions are worthy of recognition and the gratitude of this House. I encourage everyone to consider joining their local Lions club.

#### **KRYSTIN METCALF**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (21:52:44):** I highlight the work of Narrandera High School intervention teacher Krystin Metcalf in bringing together opposite ends of the Narrandera community. Krystin has organised for students aged 12 to 16 to visit residents at two aged-care facilities, Teloca House and Opal Narrandera, and allow the senior citizens and students to share their stories and games. The senior citizens take great delight in telling their wonderful life stories while the students are learning to develop self-confidence, communication skills and the art of giving. Some students have taken a keen interest in aged care as a career while others have volunteered to enjoy more visits in their own time. While the focus is firmly on fun, Krystin's work is bearing a lot of fruit for the young and old in Narrandera.

#### **DENNY FOUNDATION**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (21:53:50):** The DENNY Foundation, based in Warilla, is starting preparations for yet another year of its 12 Weeks of Christmas Giving appeal. Every year the DENNY Foundation prepares Christmas hampers for local families who are doing it tough and are at risk of missing out on Christmas. Over the next 12 weeks local businesses will donate food items and gifts, which are then collected by the DENNY Foundation and turned into Christmas hampers. Last year the foundation helped out 12 families. This year it is helping out 16 local families who have been chosen by eight principals at local schools. On behalf of the entire Illawarra community, I say a huge thank you to the team at the DENNY Foundation and wish the foundation all the best for this year's appeal. This is an incredible initiative and we are all very grateful for the work it does, creating memorable Christmases for those in our community who need it the most.

#### **CENTRAL COAST GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:54:40):** I congratulate the year 11 students and teachers from Central Coast Grammar School who took part in a mission trip to Cambodia a few weeks ago. This is an annual initiative from Central Coast Grammar School and I congratulate the school on making a difference to those who

need help and support. As part of the mission trip, the students built 15 houses and wells in rural and often isolated sections of Cambodia. Throughout the trip support was provided to local teachers. I believe many members of the school community made financial donations to help make this mission trip happen. I thank them for their generosity in being able to provide financial help and support to those in need in Cambodia. Finally I acknowledge school principal Bill Low and the school staff involved in providing these opportunities for our students at Central Coast Grammar School to experience what is happening in countries less fortunate than ours including Cambodia.

#### **WYONG LIONS CLUB**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (21:55:40):** The Wyong Lions Club will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary on 27 October. The club is making preparations for a celebratory luncheon at Wyong Golf Club. Over the past five decades the club has been involved in many projects that have helped shape the face of the community of Wyong into what it is today, and during that time the club has raised in excess of \$1 million. The club counts its role in the construction of the Don Small Wyong Lions Tuggerawang Retirement Village and its continued support of local families with special needs children amongst its highest achievements.

The club also assisted local schools and Wyong Public Hospital, worked with the Central Coast Volunteer Rescue Squad to provide much-needed equipment and farmers in need of their time, and purchased a vehicle for Shirley's Shuttle to transport cancer patients to their treatments. The club is also involved with the provision of equipment for the cancer care unit at Wyong and Gosford hospitals, the rehab garden at Wyong, as well as the dialysis units at Lake Haven and Long Jetty. Well done to the members and volunteers who have been involved in the Lions Club of Wyong.

#### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE HSC STUDENTS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (21:56:40):** This week, across our State, bright young year 12 students will be heading off to do their HSC exams. It can be a stressful time for students, teachers and parents, but I trust they are well prepared for whatever challenge an exam paper may throw their way. It can be easy for us older folk to forget what it is like to be in high school, staring down a milestone that in many ways marks the beginning of young adulthood. Whether it is entry into university, TAFE, the workforce or some other passion, I know that our year 12 students can excel in whatever they put their minds to.

I acknowledge also the parents of HSC students, who have supported and nurtured their children through schooling, and I thank all the teachers, from preschool to year 12, who have educated and inspired a hunger for learning in their students. I wish all my local year 12 students the best of luck in their coming exams, particularly those from St Aloysius College, Wenona, Sydney Church of England Grammar School, Redlands, Queenwood, North Sydney Girls High School, Mosman High School, Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, Loreto Kirribilli, Cammeraygal High School and Marist College North Shore.

#### **LIONS DISTRICT 201 N4 CONVENTION**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (21:57:50):** I am delighted to be welcoming delegates to the Lions District 201 N4 Convention this weekend in Wagga Wagga. This event coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the Wagga Wagga South Lions Club, and commemorates the many community projects and programs supported across the city, including the establishment of the cancer centre in Wagga Wagga. Members built an entire house from scratch and it was the main prize in a raffle that raised close to \$250,000. In addition, the club has contributed to schools, disability services and other not-for-profit organisations, helping individuals and families for 50 years. It is my belief that volunteers are the backbone of our communities, with members of Lions contributing to one of the largest service clubs in the country. I think it is fair to say the work volunteers do, assisting those in need or less fortunate, is fundamentally important to our society. I commend each and every member for their dedication, compassion and years of service. As long as there is a need, I hope there will always be a Lion.

#### **NORTHERN HIA-CSR HOUSING & KITCHEN AND BATHROOM AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (21:58:45):** I recognise Warialda's Ben and Lisa Meader, of Ben Meader Constructions, on receiving multiple awards at the 2019 Northern HIA-CSR NSW Housing & Kitchen and Bathroom Awards in Coffs Harbour recently. Ben Meader Constructions was named runner-up for Small Bathroom of the Year, winner of Large Bathroom of the Year and winner of Bathroom of the Year, with the awards recognising excellence in construction, quality of workmanship, installation and design. I congratulate Ben and Lisa Meader, all the way from the small community of Warialda, on this fantastic recognition and wish them all the best for the upcoming NSW Bathroom of the Year competition in Sydney.

### BRISBANE WATER SECONDARY COLLEGE UMINA

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:59:27):** I congratulate Brisbane Water Secondary College Umina Campus on hosting its annual community connections project evening in September. This fabulous project-based learning encourages year 7 students to work collaboratively with a group of peers to investigate a local, national or international problem and recommend solutions to overcome those problems. This year's students investigated problems ranging from the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef through coral bleaching, youth drug use and strategies that the Government may like to consider to fix the problem, traffic congestion on West Street in Umina Beach and policies that will curb congestion. Those are only a few of the hot-button issues tackled this year.

The year 7 students presented logical and coherent investigations and recommendations, which impressed parents, caregivers and other members of the community during the evening. I thank the students for their exceptional work and dedication to their studies and commend the teachers at Brisbane Water Secondary College Umina. Finally, I give a special congratulations to head English teacher Jessie Heighington for her successful coordination of the project and the evening.

### WHEELCHAIR SPORTS NSW

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (22:00:30):** I acknowledge the fantastic work of Wheelchair Sports NSW, which I have had a lot to do with over many years, and commend their ongoing commitment to athletes with a disability. Wheelchair Sports NSW was established in 1961 and believes that everyone in New South Wales can enjoy the benefits of sport alongside each other and works to enrich the lives of people with a disability through participation in sport. Wheelchair Sports NSW designs its programs to cater to disabilities such as spinal cord injury, spina bifida, amputation, paraplegia and quadriplegia. As well as coaching and sporting sessions, Wheelchair Sports NSW runs multi-sport trial opportunities across New South Wales where people can try new para-sports. Wheelchair Sports NSW also hosts local, national and international competitions each year. Recently I visited Wheelchair Sports NSW and met with the Director Brendon Talbott, who is also a local resident of my electorate. It was great to hear about the work it does with organisations across New South Wales, including schools and what they do to promote para-sports.

### AUSTRALIAN UNDERGROUND MINES RESCUE COMPETITION

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (22:01:37):** This week the 2019 Australian Underground Mines Rescue Competition will take place near Mudgee. Appin Pink is representing the southern region of New South Wales and I am sure they will do the region proud as they go through a series of realistic and high-pressure rescue scenarios, which are part and parcel of the competition. The dedication of the underground mine rescue teams is what keeps our miners safe when they go to work. Recently my colleagues the Hon. Sharon Bird, the member for Keira and I had the opportunity to visit the Southern Mines Rescue Station at Woonona. Using the latest technology, including virtual reality, it does an incredible job of training and preparing miners for when they go underground for the first time and updating and improving their skills over time. I congratulate and thank Lucy Flemming and her team at Coal Services, who look after the mine rescue stations, for taking us through a realistic set of scenarios. I wish Appin Pink well this week.

### BEER FOR THE BUSH INITIATIVE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (22:02:43):** I recognise the incredible efforts of Club North Haven in my electorate for partnering with Iron Jack to pledge one million litres of water to our drought-affected farmers in the regions. The drought in New South Wales is by far the worst we have seen in living memory with country towns on the verge of running out of water. Sadly, for many of our primary producers in the State, this has already become a reality, with farmers regularly trucking in water to support their livestock. Recognising the urgent need to support our local farmers, the local community club in North Haven has partnered with the brewery company Iron Jack to donate \$1 for every Lion Beer and Iron Jack sold to the Beer for the Bush initiative.

Passionate advocates for drought support and managers of Club North Haven Peter Negus and Shane Globits and Chairman Gary McLoughlin understand what a difference a truck of water will make to a farmer. Already 40,000 litres have been delivered to the Benmar Farm at Hannam Vale in my electorate to support their dairy herd. Joining the campaign, First National Real Estate North Haven and the Camden Haven Chamber of Commerce have thrown their support behind this tremendous cause which will no doubt bring relief to our local farmers.

### HUNTER RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (22:03:48):** Recently I had the absolute privilege of attending Hunter River High School's graduation assembly for year 12. Well done to Principal Deb Dibley for

leading this great school and for guiding students from their young teenage years to becoming young adults. Special congratulations go to year adviser Mrs Leza Wheeler, aka Big Wheels. It was impressive to see and beautiful to watch Mrs Wheeler's connection to each one of those graduating students that she supported throughout their high school years.

I congratulate each one of the Hunter River High School year 12 students. They have almost made it. I wish them good luck in their year 12 exams. I wish all year 12 students who are about to start their written examinations tomorrow good luck. They should breathe and try not to stress too much, and remember that this is the beginning of the rest of their life.

**ALISON BUCKLEY**

**JENNY MCDONALD**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (22:04:48):** I congratulate Alison Buckley of Cowra High School on being awarded a Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching at the recent NSW Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence. Alison was one of 35 teachers across the State to receive this prestigious award. She is a dance teacher at Cowra High School and recently led a section at the Schools Spectacular. I also congratulate Jenny McDonald of Gooloogong Public School on being awarded the Public School Parent of the Year Award. I am very proud of Alison and Jenny and very appreciative of their contributions to their respective school communities to create a wonderful learning environment.

**R U OK? DAY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (22:05:32):** RU OK? Day is a national day dedicated to remind everyone to ask "Are you okay?" to support people who may be struggling with the ups and downs in life. A conversation can change a life. We do not need to be experts to reach out, just a good friend and a good listener. Neami, based at Tuggerah, organised on the 12 November RU OK? Day for everyone in the area to come together to enjoy a free sausage sizzle from Wyong Lions Club and to ask "Are you okay?" I was glad to attend the day and to talk to the organisation Neami about its services and what it does in the Wyong shire. Neami provides services for people to stay connected with their community while improving their mental health and wellbeing, housing and homelessness, suicide prevention, intake assessment and service navigation, and NDIS services. It is great to see many people getting together in our local community supporting RU OK? Day.

**OLIVIA MAYHEW**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (22:06:24):** I congratulate Olivia Mayhew, a past student of Terrigal High School, on having her artwork displayed in this year's Art Express exhibition. Olivia graduated from Terrigal High School in 2018 and one of the subjects she completed was visual arts. Her body of work is called Genesis. It explores the connection between people and the natural environment and the way these two entities interact. The Art Express exhibition is being displayed this year at the Armory Gallery at Sydney Olympic Park and also at the Art Gallery in Wagga Wagga.

The purpose of Art Express is to celebrate student achievements and to showcase high-quality works. It is also used as an opportunity for students who have not yet completed their HSC to observe other works and gain insights for their own. Being displayed as part of Art Express is a rare honour that only a very limited number of HSC students can achieve. I congratulate Olivia on representing herself and her school so well in achieving this. Keep up the wonderful work.

**GREENS GUNYAH MUSEUM**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (22:07:24):** I was delighted to recently attend the opening of the Lockhart Greens Gunyah Museum extension. What began as a simple idea to purchase the former Billabong motors building at Lockhart has turned the almost 50-year-old museum into an outstanding tourist destination. A combination of State Government grants, fundraisers, donations, the museum's own contributions and Lockhart Shire Council support led to the purchase of the plot, the renovation and rejuvenation four years after the project began.

Countless volunteer hours, local support and donations have resulted in a great tourism attraction and a wonderful testament to the town's vivacity and sense of community. In less than a year visitor numbers through the museum have risen close to 40 per cent and the attached Visitor Information Centre this year received a Level 2 accreditation. On 9 October this year it was great to celebrate the hard work and dedication of the committee, the local Progress Association, council, volunteers and the community at large alongside the arts Minister, Don Harwin. I especially congratulate the four committee executives—Paul Creek, David Read, John Trevaskis and President Heather Trevaskis—and the working committee, who became the driving force behind this success.

### BASHIR PEACE AWARDS

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (22:08:35):** A commitment to social justice and peace is at the heart of a great leader. Recognising and commending this commitment are the annual Dame Marie Bashir Peace Awards, run by the National Council of Women of New South Wales. I was pleased to see so many strong young women nominated this year when I hosted them in this place for the third year running. I note that I follow the member for Port Macquarie in supporting these peace awards. This award recognises exceptional young women who are working to promote harmonious, peaceful relationships in their schools and communities. Named after inspiring leader Professor, the Hon. Dame Marie Bashir, AD, CVO—a long-time resident of North Shore—the award commends young women who, like Dame Marie Bashir, have a demonstrated passion for social justice.

I congratulate year 12 student Tamarangi Keerthipala from North Sydney Girls High School, who received a highly commended certificate during the ceremony after being nominated by Principal Megan Connors for her positive contribution to her school's community. I also acknowledge the President of the National Council of Women of New South Wales, Anne Kiefer, and the Honorary Treasurer and Public Officer, Nola Barkl, AM, and Sally Fennel for their devotion to women's rights advocacy.

### JOCELYN MAUGHAN

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (22:09:39):** I congratulate local Patonga-based artist, Jocelyn Maughan, who has this year won the 2019 Gosford Art Prize for her oil on paper artwork titled *Ken in Grisaille*. The Gosford Art Prize is in its forty-ninth year and attracted 500 entrants from across Australia to compete in three different sections. Jocelyn has participated in previous competitions and won a number of awards for her artworks, and this is the first time she has secured the Central Coast's most coveted art prize. Jocelyn used a special technique, inspired by artists Rubens and van Dyck, to create this painting in which she coated a light-coloured surface with dark grey paint and then rubbed the paint away to form the image. This technique was clearly appreciated by the judging panellists and I commend Jocelyn on her painting and success at claiming this year's top prize. Jocelyn also operates Patonga Bakehouse, a free art gallery, where she exhibits a number of her other paintings to the public. I recommend any art-loving individuals pay a visit and see some of these gorgeous artworks. Congratulations, Jocelyn, and hello Patonga.

### ZARA BLACKMORE

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (22:10:45):** I recognise New England Girls School student Zara Blackmore on being presented with The Order of Australia Association's New South Wales Youth Community Service Award for outstanding service engagement with her local community. While preparing for the Higher School Certificate examinations, which she will begin tomorrow, Zara has chaired the Armidale Regional Youth Advisory Committee and has served on the headspace Tamworth Youth Reference Group. Zara also co-founded an adolescent engagement and activist group, Female and Fierce, a registered not-for-profit organisation that promotes youth engagement and supports women. I congratulate Zara on this wonderful recognition of her community service and wish her all the best for her HSC examinations and an incredibly bright future.

### BRISBANE WATER SECONDARY COLLEGE STUDENTS

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (22:11:35):** Tonight in the people's Parliament I celebrate the 11 students from Brisbane Water Secondary College who participated in a four-week barista course organised by Jasmine Greens Park Kiosk and proudly funded by Central Coast Council. The initiative aimed to give students valuable insight into the hospitality industry and vocational skills that will assist them to gain local employment. Jasmine Greens owner Gabby Greyem has run a number of free barista courses over the years and with the additional help from Central Coast Council she has been able to expand this great initiative. Over the four-week period, the Brisbane Water Secondary College students used more than six kilograms of organic coffee beans and over 40 litres of milk and made more than 350 cups of coffee. I commend Gabby Greyem for opening up her great local business and accommodating this initiative which gives so much to our local youth population. I also thank Central Coast Council for coming to the table and funding educational programs that have a long-term benefit for students in our community.

### ALL TOGETHER THERAPY

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (22:12:36):** I recognise the outstanding team at All Together Therapy for coordinating a silent dinner at the Blue Whale Asian Eatery in Port Macquarie on 19 September to raise money for the OIC Cambodia charity. Identifying a need to support speech pathology in the south-east Asian country, board member Katia Ringbauer and team members Madison Olsen and Jessika Hender from All Together Therapy organised a sit-down dinner with attendees which focused on the challenges of communicating with a speech impairment using only gestures, writing and apps. The event aimed to create an

atmosphere where interaction was limited to non-verbal communication for an hour, with discussions that reflected on the constraints that some members of our community face and that people face broadly in underprivileged countries worldwide.

The Managing Director of All Together Therapy, Pip Cullen, praised the attendees for supporting the event, which raised nearly \$400 towards a program supported by the Cambodian government to introduce university courses in speech therapy by 2030. I commend the team at All Together Therapy for shining a spotlight on the difficulties encountered by people with speech impairments in our community and for compassionately supporting Cambodia's education facilities.

#### **JOPUKA PRODUCTIONS**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (22:13:44):** I congratulate Jopuka Productions on presenting, in partnership with Pedestrian Ingredients, *Under the Blue Blood Moon*. A fantastic young cast explored gender politics in response to the Me Too movement. It was a confronting and thoughtful exploration of a complex issue and included a survey as part of a University of New England project. The young people involved in the production went through gender politics over a number of generations and created an atmosphere that was thoughtful and confronting and that explored how males and females have interacted through the decades. Jopuka Productions is located at Tuggerah. It is an innovative youth theatre where young people write and direct many of the shows. I congratulate Jopuka Productions once again on a fantastic production, *Under the Blue Blood Moon*.

#### **UNGARIE MAGPIES NETBALL TEAM**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (22:14:50):** I congratulate the Ungarie Magpies 16s netball team for winning their first premiership in 35 years. I understand that the last time an Ungarie Magpies 16s netball team won a premiership was in 1984. The win is a testimony to the skill, determination and teamwork shown by the team. I acknowledge the hours of training that goes into a win like this and commend them for their effort and commitment. They have made the Ungarie community very proud. I congratulate Tess Henley on being awarded Best on Court. I also congratulate Tess and fellow Ungarie players Ruby Henley and Abby Watson on being awarded Better Players awards. Congratulations to all who played.

#### **OPERATION RIMAU ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (22:15:40):** Last Saturday I had the honour of joining members of Erina Rotary and Central Coast RSL clubs for the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Operation Rimau. It was particularly special as the ceremony was held at the new Jaywick memorial. Its first stage involved the installation of the sandstone memorial, storyboard and river stone. The second stage was very proudly funded by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government through the Stronger Country Communities Fund and included landscaping works and a sponsors board. It is a very fitting tribute to our service personnel. I thank the Rotary club for making this memorial happen.

Saturday was an occasion to reflect on and be thankful for the service and sacrifice of Australian defence personnel. I acknowledge the personnel involved in Operation Rimau, some of whom came from the Central Coast. There are 23 personnel listed on the honour role, all of whom were killed in action or were executed, drowned or died as prisoners of war. It is because of their service and sacrifice that we are able to enjoy this beautiful part of the world in freedom. Lest we forget.

#### **FINLEY HIGH RECOGNITION AT 2019 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise two members of the Finley High School community for their contribution and dedication to the students of Finley High. Jodi Brown and David Marsden this month received the Secretary of Education's Award for Excellent Service and Public School Parent of the Year Award, respectively. Jodi, the student support officer at Finley High, was recognised for her program to raise awareness on wellbeing and mental health concerns which has led to student engagement through promoting available supports. David, the father of a Finley High School student, was acknowledge for his fourteen year contribution to the school's Agriculture Department and show team as well as extensive volunteer work. Congratulations to Jodi and David, the students and community of Finley are lucky to have such dedicated teachers and parents.

#### **TRIBUTE FOR MS TERRY HARE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I rise to acknowledge the sad passing of Ms Terry Hare of Dulwich Hill, a respected and deeply valued member of the Inner West community and former alderman of Marrickville council during the 1980s. When she wasn't in the council chambers, you could often find Terry, sleeves rolled up, planting mangroves along the banks of the Cook's River. She was a passionate and transformative

environmentalist, working to restore greenspaces across the inner west. She worked to rehabilitate playing fields and parks for community use.

Terry oversaw the planting of countless native trees along footpaths in the inner west, providing greater habitat for our native wildlife. Her advocacy for the environment saw Terry establish the Cook's River Festival, an annual event increasing awareness of pollution in the Cooks River. In so many ways, Terry laid the groundwork for the incredible environmental work of the Marrickville and now Inner west Councils. I offer my deepest condolences to Ms Hare's family and express my deepest thanks and recognition for her visionary work, both for our local community and local environment.

#### **ANGELA ST BAKER - YMCA YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I congratulate Angela St Baker of Woollooware on being selected to participate in the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament Program for the second year in a row. At age 16, Angela represents the younger generation of Cronulla and the future leadership our country needs. The annual program gives high school students an opportunity to learn about parliamentary process and extend their leadership skills. A key part of the program is about encouraging young people to have a say in issues affecting their community.

Angela won an award in 2018 for the best speaker in the Legislative Assembly, and was the Youth Regional Minister for South Sydney and Illawarra. This year, Angela's committee, Family, Disability and Social Services, presented a bill entitled Reducing Youth Homelessness in NSW Bill 2019 (NSW). The Bill aims to reduce youth homelessness in New South Wales by advancing the quality of life for children in New South Wales' Out-of-Home Care. I wish Angela all the best in her future work.

#### **BOB COX**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)**—It was my pleasure to attend the retirement dinner held at Casino recently for Deputy Captain Bob Cox. Bob has dedicated 40 years to the Casino Fire Brigade and has enjoyed the camaraderie between not only his own Brigade but also amongst other crews they have come up against in competitions. I would also like to mention Bob's wife Sue and his children who have supported Bob throughout his career. The community of Casino owes a huge debt of gratitude to Bob and I wish him and Sue a long and relaxed retirement and hope they enjoy their travels in their caravan and the extra time they will have to spend with their grandchildren.

#### **CREATIVE ARTISAN WORKSHOPS**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—Creative Artisan Workshops is a valuable organisation that operates in my electorate of Davidson at Belrose. It is dedicated to promoting wellbeing in the community and encouraging young people to make new connections. I appreciate that they conducted several workshops aimed at children in October. The Kids Fluid Art Workshop ran on Wednesday 8 October at the Belrose Super Centre. It encouraged children to learn fluid art and guided them through various paint pouring techniques. Importantly, Creative Artisans Workshops promotes wellbeing in the community by encouraging the youth to disconnect their devices, learn a new art form, and meet new people in real time. They also donate part of every paid booking to Dementia Australia. I commend Creative Artisan Workshops for encouraging youth to put down their phones and providing an opportunity for them to make new connections.

#### **CHILEAN COMMUNITY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I recognise two Chilean Community organisations, the Salvador Allende Monument in Sydney Inc and the Pablo Neruda Association Sydney. These two organisations jointly conducted an event on September 8 this year at Fairfield Park. This was held at the monument to Salvador Allende located in the Park. Companero Allende was President of Chile from his election at the head of a Unidad Popular Government in 1970 until his overthrow and murder in a fascist coup by Augusto Pinochet on September 11, 1973. The commemoration at Fairfield Park has been held annually for quite a number of years around the date of 11 September.

Allende and his Unidad Popular Government have remained an inspiration not just for the Chilean diaspora but for progressive movements throughout the world. Also present at the event was Chilean Consul General Humberto Molina. Can I acknowledge those community members who made the event successful led by Elizabeth Rivera. There were many people at the event that I knew including Patricia Saavedra; Rafael Rodriguez; and Adriana Navarro.

### MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CAMPBELLTOWN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SEMINAR

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)**—We can never tolerate domestic violence in our society. The physical, emotional, mental and financial toll that domestic violence can take on its victims cannot be underestimated. But neither should our commitment to stamping out these insidious crimes. I had the privilege of attending the recent Creating Harmony in Life seminar hosted by the Multicultural Society of Campbelltown Incorporated. The seminar was devoted to standing up and speaking out to end the cycle of domestic violence.

The speaking panel was insightful and provided valuable information on family violence to community members in the audience. I want to pay tribute to organiser Asma Alan and everyone from the Multicultural Society of Campbelltown for facilitating such a worthwhile seminar. To every organiser, speaker, helper and attendee on the day – I commend your commitment to stamping out domestic violence. Events such as the Creating Harmony in Life seminar help provide education, share information on support services and create awareness of family violence. I am proud to say my local community continually proves to be a formidable force against domestic violence.

### DO IT FOR OUR FARMERS CAMPAIGN

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise the generosity and kindness of two Port Macquarie locals, Robyn Rawson and Luis Baker who are coordinating a drop-off centre for donations to support our drought-affected farmers in western NSW. It was only in August this year that Robyn and Luis decided to spend their hard-earned dollars on a holiday in rural NSW to support our farming communities doing it tough, when it really hit home the utter devastation caused by the lack of rain. Touring through the rural communities of Inverell, Glenn Innes and Tenterfield completely changed Robyn and Luis's perspective and understanding of the severity of the drought and the impact it was having on farming communities.

Determined to do more for these families, the couple decided to take action by partnering with Farmers Pantry Tamworth to create the Doing It For Our Farmers campaign, designed to collect non-perishable groceries, pet food and items for distribution to our primary producers in need. Jumping on board to assist with the efforts, the Stihl Shop Port Macquarie has decided to use their business as a collection point to deliver donations on the 14<sup>th</sup> December in time for Christmas. I thank Robyn and Luis for taking up the cause to help our farmers as we approach the Christmas season.

### NORTH COAST NATIONAL EXHIBITION

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—LISMORE'S North Coast National Exhibition this week celebrates 134 years of the tradition of bringing the best of the country to town and strengthening these links in the modern era. I congratulate Show Society President John Gibson, his committee, hard-working Secretary Mark Bailey and all sponsors on staging what is sure to be another highly successful event I wish all exhibitors, competitors, trade stallholders, sideshow alley operators and showgoers a most enjoyable and rewarding time at the show. I recently attended the 100th Nimbin Show and the 110th Kyogle Show, and despite the twin challenges of drought and bushfires, the resilience of our farming sector was on full display. I know the same country spirit will be to the fore in Lismore.

I have long advocated for a showgrounds infrastructure fund so I was delighted to see the Prime Minister's announcement of the Australian Government's \$20-million Regional Agricultural Show Development Grants Program (AgShows). I have contacted all show societies in my State electorate of Lismore to encourage them to check their eligibility and have offered to support their projects should they proceed with applications. These include Lismore, Nimbin, Kyogle, Woodenbong, Bonalbo, Urbenville, Tenterfield and Murwillumbah.

### NEW CITIZENS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—Cultural diversity is a wonderful aspect of living in Australia - we have one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world so it was a pleasure to welcome over 35 new citizens to the Charlestown Electorate at the Lake Macquarie City Council's citizenship ceremony held on September 17. The new citizens came from across the globe from as close as New Zealand to parts of Asia including Thailand, the Philippines, China and Pakistan. New citizens also came from across Africa from places as diverse as Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Egypt; to Europe including Spain, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom and in South America, new citizens from Brazil. This wonderful diversity adds to the ever-growing multicultural community of Charlestown and makes our community a wonderful place to live. I welcome all new citizens to the Charlestown community and wish them all the very best for the future.

### MAMA PAL

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Sophal Sou, known to many as "Mama Pal", has worked at the Jesmond Early Education Centre for 34 years. She immigrated to Australia almost 40 years ago. When the Centre first opened, Sophal was a warm friendly face, who gave her whole heart to the children she cared for. To this day, nothing has changed. She has been there, happy and smiling as children are dropped off, knowing that when you leave, they children will be loved, safe and learning everything they need to with Sophal. Her relationships transcends generations, caring for over three generations of children in her time at the Centre.

Children gravitate towards Mama Pal, who isn't afraid to be a little silly. She has the best songs and has the most enviable playdough recipe ever. All the educators at Jesmond Early Education Centre have learnt from one of the best. Her work ethic and can do attitude is one of the reasons she has been so successful in childcare. The legacy Mama Pal leaves behind will be cherished forever. Enjoy your retirement and well done on an amazing career.

### DEAN WILLIAMS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I recognise Dean Williams of Black Mountain on being awarded a gold medal at the Sydney Royal Fine Food Show for his rainbow trout fillets last month. Dean is the owner of Deano's Spring Water Smoked Trout and produces 1,500 fish a year and processes them in his shed – in a pond to plate fashion. Dean previously was awarded bronze and silver medals at the Show for his rainbow trout. I congratulate Dean Williams on his success and hard work and his flourishing local business. He is an example for many people looking to establish a business in our region and achieve national recognition.

### BEAUTIFUL MINDS ANNUAL WARATAH DAY FUNDRAISER

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I was pleased to recently support the Beautiful Minds annual Waratah Day Fundraiser at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital on Friday, 11th October 2019, where members of the community had the opportunity to purchase beautiful fresh waratahs for \$5 each for a great cause. This annual fundraiser is held in October each year, which is Mental Health Month, to raise much-needed funds for mental health recovery and aims to increase public awareness of this important health issue, in order to support mental health patients, as well as their carers, loved ones and health professionals.

I commend Beautiful Minds Bankstown President Ms Kathryn Bain, Vice President Ms Ethel Daniels and the rest of the executive, as well as the many volunteers, for generously donating their time to support this important community fundraising initiative and for their tremendous contribution to our local community. Beautiful Minds Bankstown provide valuable advocacy and support for mental health recovery and play a vital role in bringing mental health issues to light and encouraging community involvement to break down barriers to mental health treatment.

### HANNAH PETRELLA

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Congratulations to 13 year old Abbotsbury resident, Hannah Petrella, who started her own business, Honey & Olives two years ago selling handmade soy wax candles and diffusers online and at markets. After she saw a video of a 14-year old girl who bought her first home, Hannah was inspired to start her own business to begin saving up for her own dream home. This year at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, Hannah sold an astounding 800 handmade candles which each take up to two days to make. Her business savvy saw her and several other inspiring young people recognised at the Fairfield City' Mayor's Youth Achievement Awards with the Entrepreneurial Spirit Award in July! I wish Hannah all the best with her future endeavours and look forward to hearing of her business' next great achievement. Congratulations Hannah!

### TORONTO COMMUNITY KITCHEN

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—Every night in Lake Macquarie, an estimated 400 people are experiencing homelessness and do not have access to a proper meal. I am very grateful to organisations such as the Development and Relief Agency which are working towards eliminating homelessness and poverty in our local community. The agency was recently rewarded with \$34,000 in funding by the State Government's My Community Project scheme for a community kitchen at Toronto. The project received the highest number of public votes in the Lake Macquarie electorate.

Once established, the volunteer-run kitchen will offer a free meal once a week to those in need. As we know, finding solutions to homelessness requires much more than just meals. By offering a free meal and food bank in the local area, the community kitchen will be able to reduce the financial stress being felt by some families, as well as the elderly and homeless. It will also become a community gathering point for volunteers and serve as

a referral point for those in need. I wish to acknowledge all the volunteers and thank them for the work they are doing in the Lake Macquarie community.

#### **CHURCH@THEPEAK**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to welcome the funding provided by the State Government to Church@thepeak in my electorate of Oatley. Church@thepeak is a growing congregation, and meets at Peakhurst South Public School. As a result of the increasing amount of young families in the area, the Church has recently started a playgroup for parents and toddlers for both church members and those in the broader community in order to promote social interaction amongst families. I am pleased that the State Government was able to provide \$3,000 of funding to the Church to support this newly established playgroup. This grant will go towards the purchasing of toys and storage equipment. I would like to thank Reverend Stuart Maze for his advocacy in arranging this grant. Initiatives such as church playgroups are a fantastic way for community members to mingle and bond, and I look forward to seeing the success of this new project.

#### **NSW POLICE LEGACY BALL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—The New South Wales Police Legacy Blue Ribbon Ball began with a small celebration dinner in 2003 to honour fallen NSW Police officer Constable Glenn McEnallay. It has grown every year since. It is now the biggest NSW Police Legacy fundraising event of the year, and helps fund the important support NSW Police Legacy provides for officers and their families. The 2019 Ball was a fantastic night of dancing, catching up with new and old mates and remembering fallen NSW Police Force colleagues.

NSW Police Legacy does a commendable job and is an important part of the NSW Police community. They provide financial assistance, counselling and support to the families of police officers who have lost their lives. They also assist police officers making the transition into the civilian workforce. Thank you to NSW Police Legacy's Chair, Detective Superintendent Gary Merryweather and the entire Police Legacy team for all the wonderful work you do, and for a great event. My wife Bettina and I had a fantastic night!

#### **SCARBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL NEW PLAYGROUND OPENING**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—Recently I had the privilege to attend the official opening of Scarborough Public School's new adventure playground. The P&C worked tirelessly to fundraise for this project, with a grant from the Community Building Partnership program to assist with the remaining funding. I appreciated the Principal Chris Hopkins, P&C President Leigh Healey and school leaders providing me with a personal tour of their new playground before the official ceremony to cut the ribbon.

Scarborough PS students have a well-rounded education being in touch with the environment along with all the positives that a small school community has to offer. Principal Chris Hopkins is a fantastic role model and is always creating more opportunities for his students to embrace their education. After a decade of fundraising it was great to witness the students enjoying their new playground which encourages students to enjoy the outside environment. I congratulate the P&C and entire school community for their hard work and dedication to deliver this fantastic playground for current and future students to enjoy.

#### **WESTERN SYDNEY CENTRE OF FOOTBALL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—It was great to recently celebrate the completion of Stage 1 of the Western Sydney Wanderers' new Centre of Football in Blacktown. Once completed, the Centre of Football will be one of the biggest club sport facilities in Australia, with a new academy facility, community offices and six more pitches still to be built. The new Centre of Football includes three elite training pitches housing the club's A-League and W-League teams as well as their academy teams. It also features designated change rooms, physiotherapy rooms, a state-of-the-art gym, offices and media centre. The facility will house the Club's broader community programs, which include but are not limited to:

- Male and female elite pathway development;
- Female participation;
- Programs for seniors and the elderly;
- Indigenous community engagement; as well as
- The hosting of international teams and youth tournaments.

It will be great to see many young Seven Hills electorate football champions use this quality facility in the future. I am sure all Members will join me in congratulating the Club for investing in junior football in the Western Sydney region.

### **BEECROFT P&C 'MY COMMUNITY PROJECT'**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)**—Recently I announced the successful 'My Community Project' in Epping. Thanks to huge local community support, Beecroft Public School P&C has been awarded a grant of \$180,000 for an all-weather covered outdoor learning area. I visited Beecroft Public School recently to see for myself how this project will benefit the school and I was happy to meet some very excited students and equally excited parents. The all-weather cover will be built over the existing multi-purpose court, giving students a place to play and keep dry when raining, and protection from the sun in warmer months.

The 'My Community Project' program was made possible by the NSW Generations Fund, a sovereign wealth fund that helps keep debt at sustainable levels whilst sharing returns with local communities. Well done to the Beecroft P&C for mustering terrific support for this great project, particularly President Ben McSweeney, Vice-Presidents Lisa Yen and Adam Fusca and P&C Secretary Melanie Hogan. Congratulations also to School Principal Tanya Rose. I'd like to thank all the applicants and sponsors that participated in the 'My Community Project' in Epping and especially the voters – Epping having the highest number of voters of any electorate in NSW.

### **GRAND OPENING OF THE BIKE TRACK AND DUAL COURTS**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Monday 23rd September 2019 Guildford West Public School unveiled their brand new Bike Track and Dual Courts. Road safety skills have always been important to Guildford West Public School and with this in mind, students can now use the Bike Track to learn skills and build confidence when riding their bikes. The basketball and netball courts also provide students with a wider choice for outdoor activities where they can learn and practise their game skills.

Outdoor participation in sport has been proven to be beneficial for the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of children. It is wonderful to see that Guildford West Public School students being provided with the opportunity to widen their potential for participation in this area. Congratulations to Guildford West Public School on their outstanding commitment to the students' well-being in these three key areas and for creating a great play space for all to enjoy.

### **TIM LLOYD, PRINCIPAL PLUMPTON HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I would like to bring to the attention of the Parliament, the inspirational work of School Principal, Tim Lloyd of Plumpton High School. Tim Lloyd was recently named public school principal of the year at the Australian Education Awards in August this year. Tim has successfully implemented an education experiment assisted by big businesses such as financial corporations to tech giants, whose top executives sit down with Year 10 students to help identify what skills they need to work on and what subjects the student should take to achieve their goals after leaving school. This program has significantly improved student attendance, behaviour and grades. Youth unemployment in Sydney's West is high, yet 99% of students who graduated from Plumpton High School are in jobs or studying at university or TAFE. I congratulate Tim on receiving the much deserved Public School Principal of the Year Award and thank him for his tireless efforts on behalf of his students and the school community.

### **MEN'S SHED**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—In 2012, Graham Lester initiated the idea of a Men's Shed for Bawley Point/Kioloa villages. After a site next to the Bawley Waste Recycling Centre was identified, John Nelson led the development of a DA, and obtained environmental, acoustic, flora and fauna surveys. Allan Baptist OAM commenced lobbying government and Council for funds and support. Meanwhile others were busy fundraising and cooking the many thousands of sausages at Bunnings, markets and the local winery.

The 100 Club was initiated and Terry Snow AM came to the group's aid by donating \$30,000. Other generous grants came from many places; \$40,000 from the NSW Government; \$30,000 from the Veolia Trust, \$20,000 loan from the Shoalhaven City Council and \$18,500 from the Commonwealth. The shed was erected in February 2016. Brian Brown led a construction team inside while Geoff Reynolds began landscaping the grounds. Thousands of hours were volunteered, which goes to show how generous our community really is. Thanks to the leadership of President Colin Mason, Vice Presidents Keith Willis and Russ Clifton and Secretary Roger Lucas and all the tireless support of the community I was pleased to join them on September 28 for the opening of this wonderful Men's Shed.

### **GRENFELL LIONS CLUB**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise the efforts of the Grenfell Lions Club. The Grenfell Lions Club is a very busy club and is to be congratulated on their achievements in

supporting not only the Grenfell community and surrounding villages, but also communities and causes across Australia and the world. Long-term members Kevin Munck and Terry Carroll were recently presented with respective 40 and 41 year Monarch Pins during a recent visit from Second Vice District Governor Ron Parry and his wife Barbara. I recognise the tireless efforts of Kevin and Terry and the longstanding service that they have provided as Lions members. The dedication and support of volunteers such as Kevin and Terry are integral to the framework of small rural communities such as Weddin. Congratulations Kevin and Terry.

#### **FOURTH ANNUAL BOWRAL CLASSIC**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—This coming weekend of 19th and 20th October Wollondilly prepares for yet another premier event. 3200 riders have registered for what is now recognised as one of Australia's premier Gran Fondo cycling events. The Bowral Classic this year is its biggest yet, a weekend festival of cycling and entertainment. Over the past 4 years the hard working participants have helped generate more than \$350,000 for the various charity groups, via the Choose your Charity option, aligned with the successful and growing series. The course has 4 levels of participation from the 175km Maxi Classic to the 35km Social Classic. It caters for all riders and spectators. I wish participants and organisers all the best for this 4th year of the event.

#### **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN AWARDS – TARA HERCZ**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—Today I congratulate the National Council of Women on their work in supporting young women across the country achieve great things in service to their communities. The National Council of Women of NSW has always looked to reward and encourage a sense of resilience and compassion in young women and I was lucky enough to recently attend their Dame Marie Bashir Peace Awards. Once again this year, we were fortunate to be joined by Dame Marie herself, to present the awards named in her honour. There are few better role models for our young women than Dame Marie, a former and the second longest-serving Governor of New South Wales.

These awards look to recognise young women driven by a sense of social justice, who have shown skill in organizing and facilitating community activities, and have shown a keen desire to engender peace and harmony in their communities. I would like to congratulate all of the awardees and make a special mention of Tara Hercz, an awardee from St Catherine's School, Waverley, in my electorate of Coogee. Congratulations to Tara - a thoroughly deserving winner.

#### **PCYC COPS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I rise today to thank two of Dubbo's finest for the outstanding work they do helping the young people in our community. Senior Constables Craig Skene and Sally Treacey work at the Dubbo PCYC, delivering the Fit for Life and Fit for Work programs. Fit for Life is a breakfast program aimed at helping kids between 8 and 17 get the most out of their education. No one performs well on an empty stomach, so the PCYC bus picks the kids up, delivers them to the PCYC and breakfast is prepared while they engage in some physical activity. After the most important meal of the day, the kids are dropped to school.

Fit for Work operates 3 days a week, with the aim of getting young adults who may be disengaged from school ready for the workforce. Dubbo PCYC manager Mark Nuttall, trainer Corrie Taylor and youth worker Sam Matthews also help deliver the program which is really kicking goals. Thomas Hoppe completed the program earlier this year and is now volunteering at PCYC, helping other young adults through Fit for Work! Well done to all involved in these amazing programs!

#### **ST JAMES' CHURCH BICENTENARY**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate, I wish to record congratulations to St James' Church King Street on 200 years of contribution to Sydney's religious, cultural and artistic life in October 2019. With Governor Lachlan Macquarie laying the foundation stone in October 1819, St James' is the oldest church building in Sydney, and has been in continuous use from its consecration in 1824 to today. With modifications and renovations over the years, the building remains an important historical and architectural site.

St James' hosts important civic events and provides programs for the local community, including people who are homeless. St James' takes great pride in its musical tradition, with a professional choir, public performances and music at regular services. As part of the bicentenary, they aim to replace the significant pipe organ that is now at the end of its performing life – a huge project that is vital for this tradition and for which I wish them the best. St James' is an inclusive church, welcoming all people 'regardless of age, race, sexual orientation or religion'. I commend all those involved with the church and its community.

**KARRA-LEE NOLAN WNRL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to take this opportunity to pass along my sincere congratulations to Ms Karra-Lee Nolan on her recent role in the Women's NRL grand final. Ms Nolan is a PE teacher at Warilla High School and after eight years of hard work, she was selected to officiate the 2019 Women's NRL grand final. Last year she became the first ever female to referee a country first grade grand final, at the age of just 24. While these achievements are a dream come true for Ms Nolan, her ultimate goal is to referee in the NRL. With the commitment, enthusiasm and energy Ms Nolan is dedicating to this sport and to refereeing, it's a goal that I believe is absolutely within reach. On behalf of my community, and the students of Warilla High School I would like to say thank you and congratulations to Ms Nolan. I'm incredibly grateful to have passionate, hard-working teachers such as yourself working with students in the Shellharbour electorate and I wish you all the best for your very bright future.

**SYDNEY YOUTH DRAGON AND LION DANCE TROUPE**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education)**—Parramatta hosted the Australia Taoist Kung Fu Association's (ATKA) amazingly talented Sydney Youth Dragon and Lion Dance Troupe for their Moon Festival Lion Dance on Church Street. Comprised of, and performed by, trained martial artists, the Lion dance is an important tradition in Chinese culture and folklore, and is said to bring protection, good fortune, and prosperity for all those lucky enough to cross its path.

Based in Parramatta, the ATKA's aims and objectives are to develop and promote various Australian and Chinese cultural activities within the Parramatta and Western Sydney areas. The group routinely operates Tai Chi classes in Sydney, and can frequently be found conducting classes for participants of all skill levels most mornings in Parramatta's Centenary Square, directly opposite the Town Hall. The ATKA is a non-profit community organisation and its membership base consists of a dedicated core group of skilled volunteers. I'd like to thank the ATKA's Sydney Youth Dragon and Lion Dance Troupe, Master William Ho and all the volunteers, for creating a memorable performance of expertly arranged choreography, and for bringing an icon of Chinese culture to Parramatta.

**NATE BROWNING**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—At just 12 years old, Narrabri West Public School student Nate Browning is kicking goals in Rugby League. Nate recently returned from the School Sports Australia Rugby League Championships where he competed as a member of the NSW 12 years Rugby League team, bringing home a bronze medal after his team placed third at the event. Nate was named in the 34-man NSW Development Squad and attended an intensive training camp at the Sydney Academy of Sport in Narrabeen during the July school holidays. At the conclusion of the camp, Nate was named at front row, number 10, for NSW – a massive achievement for a kid from the bush. Nate is not only a talented Rugby League player, but a great role model to the younger players in his local club. His attitude and sportsmanship are a credit to his parents Luke and Christy.

**WESTERN SYDNEY ACADEMY OF SPORT**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)**—I would like to congratulate the Penrith local athletes who were award recipients at the recent Western Sydney Academy of Sports 15th Annual Athlete Dinner and Awards evening held at St Mary Leagues Club.

Olivia Fawns – Triathlon Athlete of the Year

Sophie Wilson – Canoe Slalom Athlete of the Year.

Blake Murray – Golf Athlete of the Year

Jonah Pares – Basketball Athlete of the Year

Annelise Isaacs – Female Rowing Athlete of the Year

Bridie Murphy - Team Athlete of the Year.

I wish all these exceptional athletes who are excelling in their chosen sport all the very best and look forward to hearing of their future achievements.

**CASTLE HILL ART SOCIETY**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—The Castle Hill Art Society (CHAS) was established in 1967, with the idea of promoting, encouraging and facilitating the practice of the visual arts in the Hills District of Sydney, and over those 52 years – they have done that and more! With Classes, workshops, demonstrations and exhibitions, the Castle Hill Art Society is one of the most active community groups in The Hills Shire. Each

September, the Society runs the Annual Art Awards as a part of the Orange Blossom Festival, which includes beautiful works from both members and the wider community.

The show was run over two weekends and the intervening week. Awards were presented in a number of categories and I would like to congratulate the following artists who took out the major prizes this year. Yvonne Tanous, Nicole Midroni, Maxine Collins, David El-Melky, Craig Renneberg, Susheela Giri, Graeme Gould, Caroline Pullinger, Madeleine Symanski and Colina Grant who won Best in Show – for her painting "An Old Friend". Congratulations to the Castle Hill Art Society and their Committee, Jill Bluzmanis (President), Julie Bhatia (Secretary), and Betina Martin (Treasurer) for another successful event, and congratulations again to all the winners and commended artists in this year's awards.

#### **THE COTTAGE RESTAURANT IN SCONE**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)**—I would like to congratulate Colin Selwood and team of The Cottage restaurant in Scone on their major success in being awarded the prestigious NSW Regional Restaurant of the Year at the 2019 NSW Savour Australia Restaurant & Catering HOSTPLUS Awards for Excellence. The Cottage also was awarded Best Regional Steak restaurant for the fourth consecutive year and they also were received the NSW Regional Consumer Vote. Due to their success The Cottage is now competing against other state finalists at the National Savour Australia Awards for Excellence in Brisbane on October 28th 2019. I again congratulate Colin and the team at The Cottage on their outstanding achievement and wish them every success for their future endeavours in promoting fine dining in the Upper Hunter and the State.

#### **AGE IS NO BARRIER FOR NORTH TURRAMURRA SWIMMER**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai)**—I congratulate Mr Tony Goodwin who at 82 years of age has snagged 6 gold medals and one silver at the 18th FINA World Masters Championships in South Korea. It is evident to say, age is no barrier for this breaststroke champion who trains 6 days a week at the Ku-ring-gai Fitness and Aquatic Centre. Out of his 7 meets, Tony claimed gold in the 80 to 84 age division in the 50m, 100m and 200m breaststroke, 50m butterfly, 50 by 4 freestyle and the 50 by 4 medley. His most challenging meet was the 100m butterfly where he claimed silver, only missing the top podium by a mere 0.66 seconds to a swimmer from Great Britain. The dedicated swimmer from North Turramurra says his success in the pool comes down to a healthy diet, keeping the mind and body active and good genes. Your success demonstrates that it is still possible not only to be active but also to compete at the highest level. Congratulations Tony, I am in full admiration of your efforts.

#### **NEWCASTLE COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—I rise to acknowledge Newcastle Compassionate Community, who foster a whole of community approach to end of life care and support people and their families through the process. Formed in 2018, the Newcastle chapter is part of a global movement that promotes caring for one another during times of need, particularly during loss or crisis, as the task and responsibility of everyone. The community involves locals who are knowledgeable about death, dying, loss and care who adapt their own practices and behaviour to meet the needs of those seeking assistance. With the support of Birdy's café in Tighes Hill, Newcastle Compassionate Community hosts a weekly meet-up. This is an informal event where those who have experienced grief and loss can have a coffee and chat with someone who understands what they are experiencing. It also creates an opportunity to meet others who have been bereaved and form a supportive network. Grief and loss are not easy topics to talk about, but the work of Newcastle Compassionate Community to create a safe environment for these important conversations is to be commended.

#### **EMILY HOLDEN**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to recognise the achievements of Emily Holden of Wingham who was recently awarded Female Player of the Year at the Football Mid North Coast held its annual Zone Presentation Awards. Emily started playing soccer at five years of age with Wingham FC Warriors, Always small in stature big in heart and was never intimidated when playing against the boys. Now 23, Emily is playing in the ladies team and this year was made captain. Emily always plays at 100% and in the spirit of the game. She always shows great sportsmanship, and is described by her peers as the ultimate player's player. Emily was selected as the outstanding recipient from a pool of 31 clubs and 6,748 registered players. I must also give a shout-out to Wingham FC Coach and Emily's Dad Rick for his commitment to the club and his daughter's success.

#### **BENDIGO BANK**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—There are some very special businesses in my Hornsby electorate, none more so than the Berowra Bendigo Bank. The end of September

marked their 13th birthday and to date they have given back a huge \$300,000 to the local community. They have supported local schools, sporting teams, the local Rural Fire Service, Seniors Shopping Day and landscaping at Warrina Street Oval. This is just a few of the wonderful community groups who have benefitted from the generosity of the Bendigo Bank. Thank you Bendigo Bank for your support and assistance to so many local community groups. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Chairman Roman Tarnawsky, Directors Lewis Williams, Ian Greentree, Greg Steptoe, Elisabeth Goh, Bhatnagar Saurabh and Tom Collins. Also Branch Manager Josie Fonti and her team Danielle Knight, Ruth Maher, Lisa Palmer, Wendy Rayner. Well done Bendigo Bank on being a shining example of how businesses can give back to the community who support them.

#### **KATE SNASHALL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge Kate Snashall, a budding young filmmaker in my electorate, whose award-winning short film 718 Thousand Hours is motivating her peers to experience life outside of their screens. Exploring the idea that the average lifespan is 718,000 hours, Kate's film shows a self-awareness far beyond the expectations of her youth. I am pleased to see Kate's talent being recognised, having won the 2019 Best Kids Director and Best Screenplay awards at the SmartFone Flick Fest, an event showcasing films which, like Kate's, are made entirely with smartphones.

While 718 Thousand Hours itself in many ways challenges young people to look up from their devices, Kate believes that a smartphone's true value lies in the tools it provides us to do what we're passionate about, in her case, filmmaking. After winning the People's Choice Award at the REELise film festival in Sydney, 718 Thousand Hours is now an interstate hit, having been screened at the 2019 Adelaide International Youth Film Festival. I'm sure Kate's parents are extremely proud and I know Queenwood Girls School, where she's a student, will continue to encourage her creativity in the years to come. Congratulations to Kate Snashall.

#### **SEAFORTH RAIDERS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to recognise another great year for the mighty Seaforth-Balgowlah Raiders, who this Sunday will be holding their Annual General Meeting at another fine local sporting institution, the Seaforth Bowling Club. I am proud to have been a Raider growing up, and I know the community spirit that exists within the Club. This Sunday, the Annual General Meeting will be followed by Barefoot Bowls and a Family BBQ, alongside the Rugby World Cup third Quarter Final on the big screen. I give my sincerest thanks to the 2019 Raiders Committee, including President Michael Clark, Secretary David Peach, Registrar David Lennon, Alexandra Tucker, Jo Matthews, Derville Peach, Karen Clark, Gemma Van Hamburg, Will Tuckfield, James Forsyth, Gillian Hopkins and Luke Hannan, and wish them all the best for the 2020 season. Go Raiders!

#### **CEDAR OF LEBANON FOLKLORIC GROUP**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)**—On Sunday 13 October, I was honoured to join my colleagues the Member for Strathfield and the Leader of the Opposition, Member for East Hills, Member for Oatley and the Member for Granville to the Lebanon Carnival 2019. This year's Lebanon Carnival marked the 42nd anniversary of the Cedars of Lebanon Folkloric group. An annual event in Darling Harbour, Carnival brings together a host of Lebanese performers to share the vibrant Lebanese culture with Sydneysiders featuring belly dance and Lebanese folk dance performances. The Cedars of Lebanon Folkloric Group was established in 1977 by Elie Akouri, a teacher and choreographer of the Lebanese Dabki dance in Australia to support migrants adjust to their new lives in Australia as well as to share the rich Lebanese folklore with Australians of all backgrounds.

The Cedars of Lebanon folkloric group will also be showcasing the cultural history and modern day influences through traditional Lebanese performance at the State Library of New South Wales on Saturday 26 October. I encourage Members of this House to see the delightful performances with their family and friends. I congratulate founding member, Mr Elie Akouri for his dedication in enhancing the rich multicultural fabric of Australia over many years.

#### **LOCKHART GREEN'S GUNYAH MUSEUM**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I was delighted to recently attend the opening of the Green's Gunyah Museum extension. What began as a simple idea to purchase the former Billabong motors building at Lockhart has turned the almost 50-year-old museum into an outstanding tourist destination. A combination of state government grants, fundraisers, donations, the museum's own contributions and Lockhart Shire Council support lead to the purchase of the plot, the renovation and rejuvenation four years later. Countless volunteer hours, local support and donations have resulted in a great tourism attraction and a wonderful testament to the town's vivacity and sense of community.

In less than a year visitor numbers through the museum have risen close to 40 per cent and the attached Visitor Information Centre this year received a Level 2 accreditation. It was great to celebrate the hard work and dedication of the committee, the local progress association, council, volunteers and the community at large, alongside Minister for Arts Don Harwin on October 9. I would like to especially congratulate the four committee executives Paul Creek, David Read, John Trevaskis and president Heather Trevaskis and the small working committee who became the driving force behind this success.

#### **PORT HACKING LITTLE ATHLETICS CENTRE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre which recently commenced its 42nd season of competition. Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre is a fantastic organisation which embodies the spirit of family, fun and fitness and has been encouraging Miranda kids to get active for many years. It is an organisation which facilitates local children engaging in sport, improving their skills across a range of activities, and indeed even pushing themselves to achieve personal bests as they did at Centre's Official Opening of their 2019/2020 season, which I was delighted to attend. Of course none of this is possible without the support of family and loved ones, nor the hard-working volunteers behind the Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre who contribute their time and efforts to ensure the smooth running of the competition and events throughout the season.

Particularly I acknowledge the dedicated Executive of Port Hacking LAC, including President Mark Laverance, Vice President Abe Yavala, Secretary Rachelle Harrington, Treasurer Cameron Burne, Registrar Liz Wever, Sharon Potts, Heather Mitchell, Jenny Blanch, Ray Russell, David Chernich, Ron Impey and Darren Bauer. I thank the team at Port Hacking LAC for their hospitality and extend my best wishes for the 2019/2020 season.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:17 until  
Thursday 17 October at 09:30.**