



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 17 October 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 17 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.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I congratulate and extend a warm welcome to Patrick Wilson and Theresa Nori, who are recipients of the parliamentary twinning scholarship from the Solomon Islands. They are working this week with their research mentors in the Parliamentary Research Service and Human Services respectively. We welcome them to the Chamber. I look forward to meeting with them a little later this morning, I believe, and I thank Simon Johnston, one of the Clerks, for assisting in that process.

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not normally have to put people on calls to order at this time of the day, but I will do so if members continue their disruptive behaviour.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: Members should not give notices of motions that call other members liars, and that is what that motion did.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear that word. Was that the word used in the motion? The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Michael Johnsen: "False claims", he said.

Mr David Harris: Yes, and it came from the CEO on the radio.

The SPEAKER: Members will remain silent while I review the motion. The words used were "false claims", and they are acceptable.

Mr David Harris: It is still accusing someone of lying.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wyong will remain silent.

Bills

ROAD TRANSPORT AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2019

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 15 October 2019.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (09:51:56): I speak briefly in debate on the Road Transport Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2019. The purpose of the bill, as stated by the Minister in his second reading speech, is to give effect to a number of reforms to improve road safety. Road safety is very high on the agendas of many people who live in my electorate; being able to get from point A to point B without accident or impediment is frequently raised with me by locals and visitors alike. The bill proposes amendments to certain provisions of the driver licence disqualification reforms introduced by the Government in 2017, seeks to clarify the circumstances in which police are able to request blood and urine samples from drivers involved in fatal off-road accidents to enhance evidence-gathering capabilities, and includes amendments that will put beyond doubt the circumstances in which a motor vehicle assessor must notify the respective heavy or light written-off vehicles registers of a damaged vehicle.

The amendments are designed to properly express the intention of the original law, following some years of interpretation by the courts. It is right that we, as legislators, seek to improve the law if we know that it is not achieving what it aimed to do, which is improve road safety. There are myriad ways to improve road safety, which is such an issue to each of us in this place, and I welcome these changes. My electorate of Charlestown contains

a number of State roads, including the Pacific Highway, Hillsborough Road and Charlestown Road, along with some major arterial roads. My office has received hundreds of complaints about road safety on those roads and the dangers people face not only driving on them, but also crossing them as pedestrians.

Hillsborough Road is the road most often complained about in my electorate. It has numerous safety issues, which I have consistently raised in this Parliament. I have previously spoken in this place about the death of a 15-year-old girl, Jade, from injuries she received when she was hit by a car while crossing Hillsborough Road to get to swimming training. The loss of her young life resulted in a heartfelt outpouring of grief. This bill is aimed at improving road safety, which is certainly a worthwhile and absolutely necessary intention. But let us be clear: Hillsborough Road is one of the Hunter's busiest roads. It is a choke point for traffic and offers little access to safe pedestrian crossings.

One aspect of the bill relates to the circumstances in which blood and urine samples can be taken from drivers. In the case of that 15-year-old girl, samples were taken from the driver, who was traumatised, I must say, by the accident. The samples came back clear. The condition and layout of Hillsborough Road was the issue. The road has long been plagued with road safety issues and many people were angry that their predictions of a death were allowed to eventuate. In the past two decades, this long road joining Charlestown with Warners Bay has become an increasingly busy thoroughfare. There are major shopping and entertainment destinations on both sides of the road, which funnels into the equally busy King Street and Macquarie Road through an often congested roundabout. It is a stretch of suburban road that has struggled to keep pace with the area's growth, development and expansion and has become increasingly dangerous as the years have passed.

Immediately after the fatal accident, I wrote to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight requesting interim short-term safety measures be adopted. I acknowledge the work of the local staff and engineers at Roads and Maritime Services—now Transport for NSW—in pulling together some interim solutions aimed at improving safety along that stretch of road until proper funding for a full solution is finally provided by this Government. But despite Jade's tragic accident, there have been no significant commitments to funding the Hillsborough Road upgrade and the recommendations of the \$4 million traffic study in 2015. This Government, in its eight years in office, has failed to commit the necessary significant funding for construction to improve the safety of Hillsborough Road. I certainly hope that the amendments contained in the bill do, in fact, improve road safety. Unfortunately, they will not bring the improvements that are required along Hillsborough Road, but I truly hope that the funding needed to provide significant road safety upgrades on the main road headache in my electorate, Hillsborough Rd, comes soon. People's lives depend upon it.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (09:56:31): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Road Transport Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2019. I note that the Minister is in the Chamber. I have read his second reading speech, as well as the notes pertaining to the bill. The main issue I wish to speak to is the amendment that clarifies when police can arrest a driver for blood and urine testing in the event of a fatal or likely fatal motor vehicle accident occurring off-road. The objective is to clear up the ambiguity and potential confusion around the police powers of arrest of a driver for the purposes of conducting blood and urine testing, regardless of where the crash or incident occurred. It follows the tragic incident that occurred in my electorate of Orange, which was referred to in the Minister's second reading speech, and the recommendations of the Deputy State Coroner in 2015, I believe.

Two young people in the prime of life were tragically killed on a private property where they were sleeping in a swag and a vehicle reversed over them. Although I was not a member of Parliament at the time—I was a police prosecutor—I do recall that particular matter and the issues surrounding it. I support that amendment, which will clear up the confusion that police have about their powers of arrest for the purpose of taking a driver to a hospital for blood and urine testing. The amendment is in line with the recommendation of the Deputy State Coroner. I am of the view that where a collision or an accident with a fatality or likely fatality occurs off-road or, in this circumstance, on private property, then the overall public interest dictates that a driver be subject to blood and urine testing. For that reason I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (09:59:00): The Road Transport Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2019 amends three sections of the Roads Transport Act 2013. These sections relate to: the New South Wales Local Court's ability to remove a licence disqualification, and the administration of disqualifications involving never-eligible offences; the power of New South Wales police to arrest drivers involved in fatal or near-fatal crashes on private property for the provisions of alcohol and drug testing; and the language used in legislation describing the statutory write-off of motor vehicles that have been involved in collisions or are otherwise damaged.

Part 1 of the Road Transport Amendment (Driver Licence Disqualification) Bill 2017 allowed eligible drivers who have committed some driving offences to make an application to the New South Wales Local Court to have a licence disqualification removed after a period of two or four years. However, if a driver has committed a never-eligible offence at any time they are not able to make an application to the New South Wales Local Court

for the removal of a licence disqualification. Never-eligible offences are the most serious driving offences, which have harmed or endangered members of our community. They are: murder or manslaughter by the use of a motor vehicle; an offence against the Crimes Act 1900 that comprises or includes causing death, grievous bodily harm or wounding by the use of a motor vehicle; predatory driving offences; police pursuit offences; negligent driving causing death or grievous bodily harm; intentional menacing driving; and failing to stop and assist after a vehicle impact resulting in death or grievous bodily harm.

Issues have arisen where motorists have applied for, and have gained, the removal of a licence disqualification despite having committed a never-eligible offence. In April 2019 Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] took a series of cases to the Supreme Court of New South Wales to quash six orders by New South Wales Local Court magistrates to remove offenders' licence disqualifications. In these cases it was found that the New South Wales Local Court did not have the jurisdiction to remove these licence disqualifications as, under section 221D of the Road Transport Act 2013, these offences were deemed never eligible. The never-eligible provision is designed to ensure that drivers convicted of serious offences that imperil public safety do not drive again until they have fully served their disqualification. It is concerning that, due to a misunderstanding of the legislation, numerous drivers who have been disqualified, including for offences of causing grievous bodily harm and of reckless, dangerous or at-speed driving in a police pursuit, have been able to have their licence disqualification removed by a New South Wales Local Court.

Hundreds of people die on New South Wales roads every year. So far, 294 people have died on New South Wales roads this year. Allowing dangerous drivers to get their licences back early increases the risks on our roads and makes it harder to reduce road deaths and serious injuries. Flawed decisions by magistrates of the New South Wales Local Court currently have to be appealed to the Supreme Court to have them quashed—an expensive and time-consuming process for Roads and Maritime Services. This amendment will improve the process if a motorist has their licence disqualification removed in error when they have committed a never-eligible offence. The amendment sets out a new process, where the matter can be returned to the New South Wales Local Court rather than having to be sent to the Supreme Court. It will also enable the RMS to defer a licence application from a person who has had their disqualification removed by the New South Wales Local Court until the matter can be reheard.

These are sensible reforms, but it is concerning that the Parliament of New South Wales is having to amend legislation to ensure that erroneous judgements can be overturned more easily when a judicial officer has acted beyond their power. Mistakes are made; however, it is important that the New South Wales judicial system is able to carry out the intention of our laws. It would appear that judges were not made sufficiently aware of the reforms to relevant New South Wales legislation in 2017, and this has caused members of the bench to not act in line with the intention of the legislation. This bill also clarifies that when the New South Wales Local Court removes a licence disqualification after a two- or four-year period, the offence-free period starts from the date of the last offence, not from the date of conviction. This was not clear in the original legislation and clarification was sought by a number of magistrates.

Part 2 of the bill also clarifies amendments made to the Crimes Act 1900 and to the Road Transport Act 2013 to give the NSW Police Force the power to arrest drivers for the provision of alcohol and drug testing on private property after a fatal accident. The 2015 amendment used the term "fatal accident", which is elsewhere defined as having occurred on a road or road-related area. The bill clarifies that New South Wales police have the power to arrest a driver involved in a fatal accident on private property for the provision of testing to determine whether they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. New South Wales police must have the ability to conduct investigations into all fatal and near-fatal car crashes, regardless of the location. There have been cases where drivers have been involved in a fatal crashes on private property but those drivers were unable to be alcohol or drug tested, thus hindering the New South Wales police crash investigators' ability to determine the cause of a crash and making it difficult for the NSW Police Force and the Director of Public Prosecutions to prosecute alleged offenders.

The 2015 amendment to the Road Transport Act 2013 and Crimes Act 1900 followed a recommendation by the Deputy State Coroner, Magistrate Sharon Freund, after off-road accidents caused the deaths of Eliza Wannan and William Dalton-Brown in 2010 and of Matthew Lewis in 2013. Mr Lewis was killed when a Toyota LandCruiser in which he was a passenger rolled on private property. The driver of the vehicle admitted to having been under the influence of alcohol but was not tested as the accident occurred on private property. Subsequently no charges could be laid against the driver. Mr Lewis' mother supported the passing of these laws at the time of the original amendment in 2015 in the hope that they may reduce the chances of future accidents of this nature.

This amendment is important to ensure that New South Wales laws regarding alcohol and drug testing of drivers involved in fatal accidents are clear and allow thorough New South Wales police investigations that can

bring offenders to justice. Other Australian jurisdictions, including Queensland and Victoria, allow for drug and alcohol testing of all people operating motor vehicles, regardless of whether they are on private or public property. The New South Wales Government should investigate further reforms of the laws in our State so that police have the power to test for drug and alcohol impairment in all motorists, regardless of location, as this reform will improve public safety.

I turn now to part 3. The final section of the bill makes amendments relating to the statutory write-off of vehicles. It is important for the safety of all New South Wales motorists that unsafe cars are kept off our roads. The bill will improve legislation around how a vehicle is determined to be a write-off. Most of the changes included in the bill are designed to bring the language of the legislation into line with the language used by industry. I support efforts like this to make legislation more accessible to the public and those who rely upon it. The bill will also clarify that a vehicle is an economic write-off when the vehicle repairs plus the value of the damaged vehicle are greater than the market value of the car if it was undamaged.

The Road Transport Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2019 has several important provisions to ensure that the New South Wales Local Court is able to ensure that offenders' driver licence disqualifications are dealt with consistently in line with the intention of the legislation. I support the clarification that the bill provides to New South Wales police regarding their power to arrest drivers for the provision of drug and alcohol testing following accidents on private property. I would, however, like to see further reform of this legislation to give New South Wales police the power to drug and alcohol test drivers on private property, as is the case in other Australian States. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (10:08:21): The Opposition welcomes the introduction of the Road Transport Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2019. It is general in nature and makes amendments to the Road Transport Act and its regulations. The bill proposes amendments to certain provisions of the driver licence disqualification reforms introduced by the Government in 2017. It seeks to clarify the circumstances in which police are able to request blood and urine samples from drivers involved in fatal off-road accidents in order to enhance evidence-gathering capability.

The bill also includes amendments that will put beyond doubt the circumstances in which a motor vehicle assessor must notify a damaged vehicle to the respective heavy or light written-off vehicles register. The stated rationale of the bill is road safety, and Labor supports this. However, we urge the Government to look also at other safety measures. The road toll has increased. A number of concerned constituents in my community have raised this issue. I put on record that we need more safety reforms and also funding, particularly in local roads that lead to the major State roads. In its analysis of the second reading speech given by Minister Constance, the *Legislation Review Digest* stated that "the bill is ... to give effect to a number of reforms that will improve road safety". It also states that the Minister told Parliament:

In October 2017 the Government introduced a number of reforms to provide a path back to lawful driving for a person who had demonstrated they had behaved responsibly by complying with their disqualification, and remaining offence free for a minimum period of two or four years depending on their driving history.

It also states, as has been said by the Minister:

However, an issue was recently identified regarding the calculation of the offence-free period, with the current legislation not nominating the date that should be used to determine when a person becomes eligible to apply for the removal of disqualification by the Local Court.

The Minister stated:

Considerable discussion of this issue has occurred between the legal community, including Local Court magistrates. A working group ... was established to implement and monitor these reforms.

I hope that this continues. We are always going to find that changes and reforms are needed, particularly stronger safety measures for drivers. I commend the bill to the House. I place on record that those constituents who have raised this issue with me know that the bill is supported by both sides of the House.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (10:11:27): In reply: I start by thanking members opposite for recognising the importance of the Road Transport Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2019 and also for their support. I particularly thank the member for Orange for his contribution. I also recognise members representing the electorates of Prospect, Charlestown and Canterbury and the shadow transport Minister for their contributions. I make a couple of brief points. Ultimately, what we seek to achieve with this bill is to amend road transport legislation to enhance some of the reforms that have already been put in place, but at the same time recognise that on occasion anomalies will occur.

As to the point made by the member for Canterbury, this is an ongoing process. We cannot just stop today and say, "Right, we will see you in three or four or five years time". For instance, road behaviour is changing because of technology. That is why we are the first jurisdiction in the world to reduce the impact of mobile phone

technology on our road network by introducing mobile phone detection cameras. Ultimately, we are seeking to clarify, for example, the ability of police to collect blood and urine samples following a tragedy resulting from an off-road fatal accident. That is the type of thing the bill is about. We want to try to deal with these anomalies quickly through the Parliament so that there is absolute certainty.

On a number of occasions I have despaired at the rulings made by the court in relation to road offences—I think all members have. So much so, that we got to the point where we had to take low-range drink-driving offences out of the hands of the court. It is not a happy place. The community is saying enough is enough. The Centre for Road Safety is saying enough is enough. We are having to come back to the Parliament to try to deal with some of these issues—and I would prefer not to do so. As with all such legislation, we need to constantly push the boundaries to reduce the road toll. It is sad that it has increased this year. We will continue to work at this and continue to engage with the experts. I know there is undoubtedly bipartisanship in this area. That is important. I thank those members opposite for their bipartisanship in relation to the bill. 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.

Third Reading

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

FOOD AMENDMENT (SEAFOOD COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING) BILL 2019

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr David Mehan, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (10:15:37): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In introducing the Food Amendment (Seafood Country of Origin Labelling) Bill 2019, I note that most of the seafood we consume in this State is imported. I also note that tomorrow is National Barramundi Day, an initiative of the Australian Barramundi Farmers Association that aims to get people thinking about where their seafood comes from. Barramundi is a quintessentially Australian fish. So it will surprise most people to learn that most of the barramundi that we consume in this State and in this country is imported. Most of our seafood imports come from countries where labour costs and standards are lower than those that apply here and from countries with significant incidences of forced labour and child labour. When the "Seeing Slavery in Seafood Supply Chains" report was published in the journal *Science Advances* in 2018, Seafood Industry Australia CEO Jane Lovell stated:

... if consumers are concerned by the research and want to be 100 per cent sure their seafood has been caught in a sustainable way, free from forced-labour then they should seek out Australian seafood.

Country of origin labelling is now mandatory in Australia in retail shops but not in restaurants, clubs and takeaway food shops, where a large part of our seafood is consumed. The bill will plug this very big hole in the information supplied to consumers. The Food Amendment (Seafood Country of Origin Labelling) Bill 2019, if enacted by this Parliament, will ensure that when we order barramundi from a restaurant or at our local fish and chip shop we will do so knowing whether it is imported or sourced from Australian waters. In so doing, consumers will know whether they are supporting the professional fishing men and women of this State and this country.

The New South Wales commercial fishing industry is quite small but it has great potential. Having a vibrant local fishing industry is part of what it means to have a diverse economy that can support a range of jobs, particularly jobs in regional areas. The bill will also satisfy the recommendations of the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 inquiry into the Government's Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program. The inquiry recommended:

That the NSW Government:

1. complete its consultation on a country of origin labelling scheme for seafood sold for immediate consumption and commence implementation of a labelling scheme with any necessary funding by December 2017;
2. consider the creation of a New South Wales seafood label as part of the planned community awareness program. The then Deputy Premier Troy Grant promised action on labelling on 30 May 2016 in a media release headed, "Seafood labelling on the menu in NSW". However, nothing has changed since that time. The bill will fulfil that promise—I am happy to help the

Government in any way I can. The bill amends the Food Act 2003 by inserting a new section 20A that will require persons who sell seafood to the public for immediate consumption, including at restaurants and takeaway food shops, to display information about the country of origin of that seafood. Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act to be 1 July 2020. That date was chosen to allow a reasonable time for business and the regulator to adjust to the requirements of the new regulation.

New section 20A would be in three parts. Subsection (1) outlines the requirement for seafood sold for immediate consumption to be accompanied by a statement identifying the source of the seafood. Subsection (2) outlines how the statement is to be displayed, and subsection (3) provides for definition of the terms "seafood" and "sourced from Australia". In the case of seafood wholly sourced from Australia, the statement accompanying that seafood is required to read "this seafood is sourced from Australia" or similar words identifying Australia or a specified State or locality in Australia as the source of the seafood. This provision provides a great deal of flexibility to business in the way that Australian-sourced seafood is identified as such.

For example, Tasmanian salmon—which is a popular menu item—is often identified as such on menus at present and will continue to comply with the proposed Act, if passed by this Parliament. The term "Hawkesbury River school prawns", from my own region on the Central Coast, will also comply as the Australian source locality is provided and complies with the Act. In the case of seafood that is not sourced from Australia, the statement accompanying the seafood is required to read "this seafood is imported". The term "imported" was carefully chosen after much consultation with business and industry to provide a degree of flexibility to businesses that source their seafood from multiple countries. This is often the case with large clubs that will source frozen seafood from a number of, usually, overseas countries and sources and store that product for use as required. The provision under the proposed Act allows one menu statement to cover most, if not all, seafood sourced and used in that way by clubs and other businesses.

In the case of a product containing seafood sourced from both Australia and other countries, the statement accompanying the seafood is required to read "this seafood may include seafood sourced from Australia and imported seafood". It can also include other words identifying the countries from which the seafood is sourced. The definition provided under the proposed Act is flexible enough to allow for variations in the proportions of Australian and imported seafood in the menu item or product to change over time, ensuring that only one menu statement can cover products sourced from a variety of locations. The provisions of subsection (1) of new section 20A also allow the actual countries of origin of the imported product to be advertised or displayed if that is the preference of the business.

Under subsection (2), the statement must be displayed with the seafood where seafood is displayed for sale or on the menu or display used to describe the seafood for sale. The provision is wide enough to allow the information statement to be displayed in a number of ways, including the method adopted by this Parliament's catering service, which sources all food from this State. The definition of "seafood" contained in subsection (3) is based on the common definition but includes a provision that will allow the Government to prescribe certain seafood or a class of seafood and in doing so remove the labelling obligation for that seafood or seafood class by way of regulation. In this way, for example, so-called "kids meals", often served at clubs and hotels, can be prescribed by regulation where these contain seafood if the Government considers doing so will ease the regulatory burden on businesses in those circumstances. In terms of penalties, the bill provides for a small penalty for any breach of the new section 20A.

The Northern Territory is the only jurisdiction to enact seafood labelling at the point of immediate consumption. It is important for the purposes of this debate. In 2008 the Northern Territory Government introduced legislation requiring licensed fish retailers, including eating establishments such as restaurants and takeaway outlets, to label seafood as imported if it was not harvested in Australia. In 2011 a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation funded assessment of the impact of these laws was undertaken by industry consultants under the supervision of a steering committee comprising industry representatives and a Northern Territory Government representative. The assessment used face-to-face interviews with food service establishments and consumers in Darwin over a period of time to gauge the development of opinion and the impact of the laws on consumers and businesses in the Northern Territory.

The cost to food service businesses of implementing and complying with the labelling legislation was found to be "generally not significant". The survey indicated that consumers are willing to pay a premium for food labelled as local. Consumers indicated a strong preference to purchase Australian seafood, with a willingness to pay up to 25 per cent more for Australian product over imported. The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation report also found that fish wholesalers reduced imported product and began to source more local product. The report on the implementation of legislation in the Northern Territory indicates that there is robust evidence that the cost of labelling is "not significant".

In fact, the study found that the Northern Territory experience and changes to labelling were supported by fishers, seafood retailers and consumers alike, and that they were pleased with the result. The report also found

that labelling does influence consumer choice. Consumers are willing to pay a premium for local product, and businesses adjust quickly to the new regulations. It remains the only authoritative study on the impact of labelling in the food service industry. All other comments are only opinion; this is the authoritative statement on the topic. It works. We can do that in this State if we choose to.

I thank a number of people who assisted in the preparation of the bill. I thank the professional fishers in my local area on the Central Coast, in particular Allan Reed and his family—who have fished Tuggerah Lake for many generations—for their information on the industry. I thank executive officer and leader of the Professional Fishermen's Association Tricia Beatty for her support and advocacy. I also thank my Labor colleagues, shadow Minister Jenny Aitchison and her predecessor, the Hon. Mick Veitch, for their support of this private member's bill. Finally, I acknowledge and thank ClubsNSW and the Australian Hotels Association, which engaged in the drafting of this bill. I particularly thank Josh Landis and Chris Gatfield for their help. When we consume seafood at a restaurant, a takeaway shop or a fish and chip shop in this State we should do so knowing its origins; we should not have to ask. This bill achieves that aim with the least possible impost on business. Above all, it offers valuable support to the fishing men and women of this State. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

Ms ANNA WATSON: I have been authorised to postpone general business notice of motion (for bills) No. 5 [Professional Engineers Registration Bill 2019].

Bills

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC ACCESS) AMENDMENT (ELECTRONIC APPLICATIONS) BILL 2019

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Lynch, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:27:54): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the State Opposition to introduce the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019. The object of the bill is to amend the principal Act, the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, in two ways: to allow for access applications under the legislation to be made electronically and to allow for the electronic payment of fees and charges if an access application is made electronically. Allowing applications to be made electronically is a blindingly obvious step to take and, if you do that, then logically payment of fees needs to be able to occur electronically as well. Since the introduction of the principal Act, the use of electronic communication has steadily and markedly increased. For many citizens it is now their preferred way of communication—including communicating with government.

Government structures should encourage ease and convenience of communicating with citizens, and thus the change in the bill should be made. If a government is serious about accountability and openness, it should make it easier, not harder, for citizens to lodge access applications under the principal Act. Not accepting applications and payments electronically creates just one more barrier to prevent residents exercising their rights to obtain government information. It is also quicker and more efficient. The relevant section of the principal Act is section 41. Prior to the end of last year, section 41 (1) provided that access applications had to be lodged in writing. Section 41 (2) in effect allowed that agencies could accept applications electronically, subject to the approval of the Information Commissioner.

At the end of last year the Government introduced the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment Bill cognate with two other bills. That bill, inter alia, amended section 41 so that agencies had the discretion to accept access applications lodged electronically without needing permission from the Information Commissioner. The Opposition at the time moved an amendment so that all agencies would have to accept applications electronically if the applicant so chose. The Government, in accordance with the iron law of New South Wales politics that a government will not accept an opposition proposal or amendment, no matter how meritorious, opposed the Opposition proposal and the amendment was rejected.

That is in the context where this Government keeps talking up its commitment to digital government. It keeps saying how important it is to explore and utilise these opportunities. Treasurer Perrottet and Minister

Dominello are almost eloquent on the topic. Indeed, they talk about efforts to achieve a whole-of-government digital transformation. As opposed to electronic lodgement of development applications, to which the Government has expressed its opposition to making mandatory, the commitment to electronic communication by this Government, in other areas, is utterly inflexible. In those other areas its approach is utterly inconsistent with its approach to access applications here. Indeed, within the Attorney's own portfolio, significant changes have been made to the way the Government deals with justices of the peace [JPs].

The Government is so resolutely committed to digital government and the use of electronic communication that if JPs who had been doing their job satisfactorily for decades do not use email, they are effectively terminated as JPs. In addition, the government position is also at odds with the position adopted by the Information Commissioner, a government appointee. It is not just the Information Commissioner who is on my side of the debate, rather than the Government's. The report of the statutory review on the principal legislation recorded this:

Multiple submissions proposed that the GIPA Act should clearly state that access applications can be lodged electronically via a government agency's website.

I think the most honest explanation for the government position emerges from the commentary provided in the statutory review report. Paragraph 5.5 of the report states:

We appreciate that some agencies have concerns that allowing electronic lodgement may result in a substantial increase in the number of applications being made, the processing of which may result in adverse effects on agency resources.

So, it is too expensive. The Government is all for accountability and access, providing it does not cost too much. The issue was raised at the Attorney General's estimates committee hearings earlier this year. A question on the topic of making it mandatory for agencies to accept applications electronically was taken on notice. The quite remarkable answer provided in response said this:

Not all NSW government agencies currently have the ability to accept electronic applications, so it is appropriate that a discretion exist at this time.

The obvious question that arises in response to that nonsense is: Which government agencies do not have access to the internet? That is the implication of what that answers says. That answer, frankly, is far less frank than the reasons provided in the statutory review. I note that the statutory review does not seem to have recorded the answer or the explanation given in the answer provided to the question taken on notice. It is quite extraordinary, however, that the Government would argue that some agencies do not have the capacity to accept electronic applications and are not connected to the internet. The provisions of this bill will remedy that nonsense. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS (PROHIBITION ON SUPPLY BY RETAILERS) BILL 2019

Second Reading Speech

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (10:33:40): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I am pleased to introduce to this Chamber the Plastic Shopping Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2019 on behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, as the shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage and on behalf of the people of New South Wales, who know that it is time to ban the bag in New South Wales. I thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who first introduced this bill in 2016. Labor also introduced the bill in 2017 and 2018, but the Government has voted against it every single time. Given the bill has been introduced three times previously and given it recently passed the Legislative Council, I am not going to spend too much time going into the intricacies of the bill. It is a simple bill, and for that matter I refer members to the fulsome second reading speech by the Hon. Penny Sharpe and her previous second reading speech, in 2016.

I do not want to dwell on the multitude of reasons why this bill should pass this House today. Those reasons have been well and truly traversed in this place and in the community. We all know why it needs to happen. Today I want to address the excuse that the Minister has given to the media so far as to why he and his Government will not support the bill today. According to media reports—and I anticipate this view will be aired again today—Government members will not be supporting this bill because they do not have the guts to do the right thing, like every other State and Territory has done. Instead, they are going to prepare a plastics discussion paper. This is not just a disappointing response; it is pathetic, embarrassing and miserable. It is pathetic because it is now blindingly obvious that the Government has no plan for plastic pollution.

The Government is proposing to prepare a discussion paper. Why would the Government have to prepare a discussion paper at this point in time? Because the Government has no plan, no strategy and no clue after

8½ years in government. After this bill being introduced and debated four times since 2015, the Government is now getting out the butcher's paper and asking what the fuss is all about. It is embarrassing because we all know that many members on that side of the House support this bill. They have not only said it privately but they have said it publicly. The former Minister for the Environment and current Attorney General, Mark Speakman, publicly campaigned to ban the bag. It is on the public record, but today he is going to vote against his beliefs, against his own convictions, against his community and against the environment.

In 2014 the member for Heathcote, Lee Evans, campaigned to ban the bag but today he will be taking his orders from John Barilaro. Speaking of taking orders from John Barilaro, even the current environment Minister, Matt Kean, knows that this is the right thing to do. He knows, and we know, that the discussion paper will recommend banning single-use plastic bags. Every other State in the country has done so; it is not complicated, it is not hard. Frankly, it is low-hanging fruit and it has been proven to be effective everywhere else in Australia. Only New South Wales cannot bring itself to ban the bag under this Government.

A wise person once said, "Some 50 million plastic bags end up in our oceans and waterways every year, so we have to ban the bag". Who said that? Does anyone in the Chamber remember hearing that recently? It was said here in this Chamber by the environment Minister himself. That was two weeks ago in this place. Why are Government members going to vote against this bill today? There is only one reason. It is not rational, it is not reasonable and it has nothing to do with their roles as policymakers or local representatives. It is politics—petty politics in its purest form will be on display today, if Government members choose to vote against this bill. Simple maths shows that if only a fraction of the Government members who have publicly campaigned to ban the bag actually voted for this bill today, it would pass.

Finally, it is a miserable response because without this sensible action, even taking into account the big retailers acting on their own, more than 133,000 single-use plastic bags will pollute our environment each and every week. Every week of delay, every week that those opposite take to scribble on a piece of butcher's paper to decide if they need a plan, another 133,000 single-use plastic bags enter into landfill and our waterways. That is 7 million plastic bags every year in New South Wales. On average, those bags are only used for about 12 minutes each and then they take 1,000 years to break down, entering our waterways and our oceans, suffocating marine life, killing birdlife, polluting environments, causing real harm to humans.

Today I have a proposition for you, Minister: You can have the bill; it is all yours. You can call it what you like and you can run with it. This can be a Government bill, because we on this side of the House just want to see an outcome on this. We want bags banned in New South Wales. They are causing harm. That is why we have introduced bills now four times to this Parliament, but the past three times the Government has voted against it. I hope those opposite might look into their consciences and perhaps consider supporting the bill we have introduced today. Minister Kean can even rename the bill. It can be a Government bill and he can rename it what he likes. He can call it "This is not a Labor bill" or "Matt Kean for Premier if only John Barilaro will get out of the way bill". He can call it what he likes because we on this side of the House want an outcome—and we want it today.

We want it for the sake of the environment, for the sake of our kids and for the future generations. I ask everyone to think back to last year when a petition signed by more than 12,000 people was presented to this Parliament and debated. The signatures were obtained by a then 14-year-old girl from the Premier's electorate, Sophia Skarparis. When that bill was debated in this place and not supported by Government members, she cried. Sophia cried because of the hard work that she had put into getting the signatures handwritten on a petition that was then introduced and that she presented to the Premier. When the Premier did not even bother to show up during that debate, she cried. That is a shameful reflection on this Government. There have been other petitions, including another 12,000 signature petition in 2015 tabled by the former member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith—one of your own.

What has the Government done since then? It has done nothing. It has failed to act and failed to introduce its own legislation. Legislation was drafted in 2015 but it was not introduced because the Government was too scared of banning anything. The greyhound debacle was such a mess that those opposite decided that banning anything else would be political kryptonite. The Government has sat on this ever since, even though it knew back then that it was the right thing to do. It still has not acted. In New South Wales right now teenagers are doing more to clean up plastic bags from our environment than this entire Government. Over the past two weeks I have travelled up and down the east coast of New South Wales, from Batemans Bay to Tweed Heads, meeting with community groups who want to see plastic bags banned in New South Wales. I thank the many members of the Boomerang Bag movement who are sewing fabric bags from recycled fabrics in towns right across the State such as Bowraville, Tweed Heads, Tea Gardens, Dungog and Berry—just to name a few.

Mrs Melinda Pavey: Bowraville.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I mentioned Bowraville, Minister. You were not listening. You have your head down because it is a bit embarrassing for you to listen to the debate today.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I am glad to see goodwill amongst members, but comments will be directed through the Chair.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I thank the many people who participate in beach clean-ups in many of our communities and in many of the Government members' communities every week. I thank the groups advocating for change at a local level such as Plastic Free Port Stephens, Plastic Free Bronte and Plastic Free Kiama, all of whom I met recently. I thank the businesses and councils that are already on board and doing what they can. I say to the Government members, your communities get this. They want this. They want you to act and they know that you should have done this years ago. If Government members fail to back this bill today, they fail to back the communities that they support.

Community groups are working hard alongside local councils and businesses. They are doing all they can to reduce reliance on single-use plastic bags and to reduce plastic pollution. They cannot do it alone. They need the support of this Government. That is what they are saying to me and they are no doubt saying it to the Minister as well. The complete failure of leadership and cowardice of the Government, which has left it to private enterprise to do all the work and heavy lifting, has not only left our environment exposed to harm, but it has also left retail workers exposed to harm.

Without the support of government, without a community education campaign and without a strategy that people understand and get behind, thousands of retail workers—some of the lowest-paid workers in the State—have been left bearing the brunt of consumer confusion and frustration at the checkout. They have been at the frontline bearing the brunt of this because those opposite failed to act and give the community the awareness it needs to support retail workers in their jobs. I thank the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA] for supporting retail workers and for doing what the Government should have done: undertaking a community awareness campaign to stop the harassment and abuse of retail workers.

Some confused consumers have really taken it out on retail workers and obviously there is widespread community support, but that does not mean everybody understands the disproportionate damage being done to the environment. One of my own children, while working in a retail shop, was subject to abuse because of this confusion. They also witnessed an enormous amount of abuse towards other retail workers. It has been entirely unfair on them. This bill sensibly provides for a six-month community education campaign in a six-month transition period to improve awareness, reduce abuse and improve the understanding of consumers when they are at the checkout. On the assumption that the Minister will not support this bill today and that he will tread a similar path as he has in the past, I urge him to give retail workers a thought by allowing a decent community awareness campaign and also undertaking a long-term assessment of the impact on retail workers of customers in using different bags, which can be larger and heavier.

I acknowledge the work done by the National Retail Association, which supports banning single-use plastic bags. It represents the very retailers that would be affected by this legislation and it supports this ban. It is unfortunate that the Government is not listening to the National Retail Association and is also ignoring a host of other groups which have been for this change for years and asking the Government to act. I acknowledge the Boomerang Bag Alliance, World Wide Fund for Nature [WWF] and the many other environmental groups that have been urging the Government to move on this and ban the bag in New South Wales. Everyone knows this has to happen. We need to ban the bag in New South Wales. Every other State and Territory has banned the bag. We can do it here today—right here, right now.

For the benefit of the Minister, we do not need to create a discussion paper. We already know what the problems are and what the solutions are. The Government has already completed a discussion paper. The Environment Protection Authority [EPA] prepared one in 2015 entitled *Plastic shopping bags: Options paper. Practical actions for plastic shopping bags*. In 2015 a paper was prepared by the Government's own agency that clearly steps through options for dealing with plastic bags. It clearly states that the community and businesses want to see leadership from Government.

The Government has ignored that paper. To now propose a discussion paper is almost offensive to the many people who have been campaigning on this for so long. Those opposite have no excuse. There is already enough out there on this. I urge all Government members to support Labor's bill today. Show some courage and some leadership. Back the communities that you represent because they want you to back the environment. Come on, New South Wales. Today we can ban the bag!

Second Reading Debate

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (10:46:46): I thank the shadow Minister for her hard work on this very important topic. Our planet is suffocated by plastic. It permeates every aspect of our lives. Since the 1950s the world has produced 8,300 million tonnes of plastic and up to 12 million tonnes of plastic are discarded into our oceans annually—that is nearly a dump truck every minute. It is a disgrace. Last year, a whale was found dead with nearly six kilograms of plastic bags in its digestive tracts. Televisions and newspapers have image after image of oceans, marine life and coastlines suffocated with plastic. It is utterly unacceptable, especially for a State and a nation that thrives off its beach culture.

Shockingly, only 7 per cent of plastic produced has been recycled, while more than half has been discarded in landfill or leaked into the environment. We are facing a global plastic pollution crisis that will require a comprehensive response. Plastic is everywhere. It is in our clothes, utensils, food packaging and takeaway containers—and yes, it is in our bags. Because plastic is so pervasive, banning the bag alone will not solve this monumental problem. We need a fundamental paradigm shift in the way we produce, use and manage plastic. This is why, instead of just dealing with plastic bags in isolation, we need a comprehensive plastic strategy for New South Wales. My vision is to see New South Wales lead the nation when it comes to tackling the challenge of plastic waste and recycling. I want to ban the bag but that alone is not the silver bullet that Labor members would have us believe. It is part of a much bigger challenge. If Labor was serious it would withdraw this bill and work with me in a bipartisan manner to deliver not just a ban on single-use plastic bags but to deal with other single-use plastics such as cutlery, straws, coffee cups and takeaway containers.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Members who are interjecting will settle down. I understand this bill will elicit strong interjections, but it is a little early for that. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MATT KEAN: This debate is not just about plastic bags. It is about straws, cutlery, coffee cups and a whole range of issues that need to be tackled in a comprehensive manner. Our environment is not just being harmed by single-use plastics. We need to address other plastic litter that enters our environment and build on our nation-leading container deposit scheme. In addition, we need to deliver end markets for plastic products to encourage recycling and investment in industry in this State. This is not just about banning one product. This is about changing how our economy uses, re-uses and disposes plastic. Members cannot achieve that sort of reform with the one-off political stunt that Labor is trying today. My offer to members opposite and to every other political party in this Parliament is to provide a bipartisan approach to managing plastic in our economy, in our environment and in our food stream so that we can deliver not just a great headline—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Swansea, the member for Gosford and the member for Canterbury will come to order.

Mr MATT KEAN: I want to offer Labor members and every other member of Parliament an opportunity to work in a bipartisan way not just to get a great headline but to get a great result for our environment and for the people of New South Wales. I am asking members to work with me to deliver that objective. That is my focus. I want to work with anyone who is interested in protecting our environment. This Government has a proud track record when it comes to dealing with the issue of plastic waste. This Government delivered the container deposit scheme in New South Wales: the biggest litter-reduction program in this State's history. No-one has done more to reduce the volume of litter in this State than the Liberal-Nationals Government.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Gosford will settle down.

Mr MATT KEAN: We have a great track record when it comes to protecting our environment and reducing plastic litter in New South Wales. I want to build on that by delivering a comprehensive plastic strategy for the environment and for the people of this State. Our container deposit scheme has seen almost 2.5 billion containers returned. That has taken litter out of our parks, streams and oceans.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Maitland will come to order.

Mr MATT KEAN: That has engaged the community to clean up our environment. It has been a stunning success and we want to build on that. This is not an outlier for Liberal-Nationals governments; this is who we are. Our Prime Minister is leading the nation on the issue of tackling plastics in our environment. I congratulate him on that work. Liberal-Nationals governments are conservatives and they believe in serving our environment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): If the member for Heffron is going to interject, I suggest he do so from his seat.

Mr MATT KEAN: Liberal-Nationals governments both State and Federal—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I know that members are excited about this bill. If members interject one at a time at least we can understand them and determine whether or not they are witty. Members will respect the Minister and the Chair. The Minister may continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: The behaviour from Labor members shows what a stunt they are pulling here today. I have offered an opportunity to work in a bipartisan manner to deliver a comprehensive plastic strategy for New South Wales. Labor members interject, heckle, laugh and treat the environment with disdain. They are interested in a cheap headline, not a solution to deal with this very serious problem.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: I will clarify with the Minister that the Labor Party does not disdain the environment; this is its response to it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): There is no point of order. I have called on Opposition members to settle down. Unfortunately, the Minister immediately baited Opposition members. If that type of behaviour continues, it will be difficult to maintain decorum in the House. The Minister will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: Members on this side of the House paid the utmost respect to the shadow Minister when she put her case to support banning the plastic bag. The same level of respect to my genuine offer to deal with this problem is not being afforded by those opposite. The member for Gosford and other members have treated this as a complete joke. I think it is absolutely disgraceful that you are not taking the banning of plastics seriously.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Gosford will come to order.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Point of order: Will the Minister direct his comments through the Chair.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I have just asked the Minister to do that. I also ask that the member for Gosford respect the standing orders. There are two sides to this debate. The Minister has the call.

Mr MATT KEAN: Opposition members have treated my offer with disrespect. This stands in stark contrast to the way in which Government members treated the shadow Minister's pitch to ban the plastic bag in this House. I am committed to banning the plastic bag but we need to go further. We need a comprehensive plastic strategy to deal with a whole range of other plastics that are permeating our environment and damaging our oceans. Banning the bag alone will not solve this problem. We need recycling and end products to create value in plastics, to build industry and create jobs. We also need to change behaviour. There are a range of things that need to be done to tackle this issue and we are committed to doing that.

State and Federal Liberal-Nationals governments stood up to protect our environment. Liberal-Nationals governments saved the Great Barrier Reef from oil drilling. Liberal-Nationals governments ended whaling in Australia. Liberal-Nationals governments created the NSW Environment Protection Authority. The Liberal-Nationals Government led by Liberal Premier Tom Lewis set up the National Parks and Wildlife Service. We need to recapture that legacy and I intend to be the one to do it. I am offering the Opposition an opportunity. If they seriously care about our environment, take me up on this opportunity to work in a bipartisan manner to deliver a comprehensive response to dealing with the scourge of plastic in our natural environment.

I want to see this done. The challenge is whether Labor members will accept this opportunity and work with me not only to tackle plastic bags but also to tackle a whole range of plastics, develop end markets, develop recycling and deliver a better result for our environment and for the people of this State. Our Liberal tradition is grounded in Edmund Burke's philosophy that society is a covenant between past, present and future generations. That philosophy does not just apply to our economy, it applies to our environment. These two things are not mutually exclusive. If the Liberal-Nationals Government is being honest with itself it is incumbent on it to protect its natural environment and to reduce the impact of plastic. This is exactly what I intend to do as environment Minister. That is what I will take to Cabinet, that is what I will take to the party room and that is what I intend to deliver. Instead of members opposite grandstanding on one single issue it would be better if they would work with me to deliver a great result for the people of New South Wales and for the environment of this State.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:58:34): Before I talk more generally about the Plastic Shopping Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2019 it is important that the Minister puts on record that he took the bill to Cabinet and was rolled, which is why we are in this situation today where the Government opposes this bill.

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order: I make my point of order under Standing Order 129. The Leader of the Opposition is being completely irrelevant. I have not taken any such measure to Cabinet. She is deliberately misleading the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Ms JODI McKAY: I am sorry the Minister is so sensitive, but this is an incredibly important issue. I am very proud to speak in support of this bill today. Before I talk more generally about the bill I again thank Kate Washington, our shadow environment Minister, and I also acknowledge our previous shadow Minister, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who has done an incredible job over a long period in bringing this bill to the House. This is the third time that this bill has come before Parliament and it is, of course, from Labor in defence of our State's precious environment and waterways. I am so disappointed, as the shadow environment Minister said, that we are still debating this issue today. I am disappointed that we have had three attempts by the Labor Party to get this through. I am disappointed that we are the last State in Australia to be in this position. It seems extraordinary that even Queensland has passed this legislation and here is New South Wales as the environmental laggard on this issue.

South Australia was the first to implement this legislation some 10 years ago. Earlier today the shadow Minister and I were talking to the media about the importance of this bill. As we were moving toward the media conference we were approached by a couple of people who were visitors to this State from South Australia. I told them what we were doing and they could not believe that New South Wales is still in this situation. The woman said to me, "We have passed this. We passed this 10 years ago. I have my reusable bag in my purse." And I said to her, "Yes, we are still in this state because we have a Liberal-Nationals Government."

It is important to note that we have a government that talks about how far ahead New South Wales is on every other issue. We know that is not true but we know that particularly on this issue we are the environmental laggards. We are so far behind. Against all odds and after significant pressure from the Opposition, Labor's bill did pass the Legislative Council last month. What we know is that in the House today the Government cannot hide any longer. It passed on successful policies adopted by other States. We know that this works. Labor is not putting through the Parliament today a bill that has not been tried and tested—it has been and it works.

The bill also includes sensible exemptions for reusable plastic bags—bags used when shopping for fruit and vegetables, for instance, bin liners and even the bags to clean up after your dog. It also includes a two-year review and it has a transition period, which we think is important when you are introducing a new and important policy like this. But I think it is important to say to this House why this is so critical and why Labor believes in this. It is because a single-use plastic bag, on average, is used for just 12 minutes and of course we know that it takes 1,000 years in landfill for it to degrade. We also know that it is even longer when it ends up in our waterways. Of the six million tonnes of rubbish dumped into the world's oceans every year, 80 per cent is plastic bags. Because of this, 30 per cent of the world's turtles and 90 per cent of seabirds have now ingested plastic debris. The evidence is there and it is shocking evidence. Those of us on this side who care about the environment and who want to see significant policy change are aghast that members of the Government walk into this House today and oppose this.

Labor is not the only organisation supporting a ban on single-use plastic bags. Retailers want a ban. As we know, major supermarkets including Woolworths and Coles have already acted when this Government will not. They have put in place a national ban. But we must go further, and every State except New South Wales recognises that. We are seeing 12 million plastic bags being discarded into waterways and in the environment every year. I know this has an enormous impact on the MPs on this side, MPs in areas that include the Georges River and the Parramatta River. In my electorate and those of the member for Summer Hill, the member for Canterbury and the member for Heffron we are talking about the Cooks River. These are the same rivers that are drying up across our State. The Government refuses to act on any element of the crisis impacting on our waterways.

I also acknowledge the support of the crossbench members on this issue. We appreciate the support of the Greens and the Independents—including you, Mr Temporary Speaker—on this important issue. We also stand with community groups, activists, concerned citizens and the millions of people across New South Wales who are sick of their State's fundamental lack of action on this issue. This Government stands alone in its opposition to a policy so universally accepted that every stakeholder in the community, every other State and Territory government and even successive environment Ministers in this Liberal-National Government support it. The member for Pittwater, who was once the environment Minister, has previously said that plastic is a peril that threatens our environment and the wellbeing of our community. He talked about the dead seals and dolphins that wash up on our shores with bags stuck in their stomachs. That is incredibly graphic. The current Minister knows this but he refuses to act because some colleagues within his Cabinet will not support this because they do not believe in this.

Let me put on record what the cost of this Government's inaction is. It is so important to put in *Hansard*, to put on record in this Parliament, because with every decision we make in this Parliament there is a reaction, there is something that flows from it, and what flows from this is that for every single week that they refuse to

act, 234,000 additional plastic bags will enter our rivers and waterways. That is one million more plastic bags every month discarded into our streets and gutters, where they will sit for the next 1,000 years. Think about that when the Government says it needs even more time to come to some consensus that the rest of Australia came to a long time ago.

Today the Minister has said in this place he will oppose this bill and he has indicated that he wants to work in a bipartisan way. We will work with him on his plastics strategy—we believe in that—but why will he not work with us, when he knows that every week he delays there are more than 130,000 plastic bags entering the waterways and the environment in this State? It is an indictment on his Government that he refuses to support this legislation when he believes in it. I cannot believe that we are in this situation simply because he has been rolled in Cabinet. I cannot believe that he has not been brave enough, as he has on other issues, to stand up to those bullyboys in Cabinet and say, "No, this is the right thing to do." Let's do the right thing, Minister, and ban the bag. We urge the Government to finally do the right thing, on its third opportunity, after more than two terms of inaction on this front. Do the right thing today. This is the Minister's opportunity. I will work with him on his plastics strategy. We believe in that. What does he believe in?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11:07:35): The crocodile tears coming from the Leader of the Opposition have been absolutely appalling. If she were only as committed to cleaning up the pollution in Sussex Street as she is to cleaning up the pollution in New South Wales then this place would be sparkling. The crocodile tears coming from Labor today are appalling. I am one of a growing number of conservatives who believe that the environment is important and believe that we need to make the environment the cornerstone of all government action.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): There is too much noise in the Chamber. I ask that the general chatter be taken down a level.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am one of a growing number of conservatives who believe we must be good custodians of the earth. I am sick of the Left, the Labor Party, trying to make the environment its own political pet, because it is not. We all have children. We are all in favour of making sure that we leave this earth cleaner, better, more prosperous and more fertile than what we gained. The crocodile tears coming from those opposite and the blatant falsities dished up by the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister for the environment are breathtaking. The Minister for Energy and Environment is quite right: This is simply legislation for headlines. There is nothing more to it. The New South Wales Coalition Government is made up of some of the best environmentalists in the country—they are called farmers, ably represented here by The Nationals. The Coalition Government believes in a comprehensive, full strategy to address all of the plastics polluting our society.

I come from an electorate that is considered middle class. People do not vote Green in my electorate; in fact, they do not even vote Labor. They have a very strong conservative bent and I am very proud of that. But every person in my street has solar panelling. Every person in my street has four garbage bins—three for recyclables. Every person in my street is involved in Return and Earn programs to ensure not only that parklands, rivers and streams in north-western Sydney are clean but also that we get something positive out of it. That is why, when I came into this place as a backbencher alongside the member for Pittwater, I immediately advocated for the Return and Earn program. I am a great advocate of it. I can categorically say that the Minister for Energy and Environment has been taking the Cabinet and the party room with him every step of the way on these policies. For the Labor Party to claim that it has environmental credentials above and beyond those of the Government and the Minister is a disgrace. Its attempt to hijack environmental policy is a disgrace.

Ms Kate Washington: What?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I note the interjection from the shadow Minister and member for Port Stephens. Speaking of pollution, if we are going to clean up something in this place it would be her mouth and her language. I cannot believe that she thinks that she can stand up here. It is a matter of public record that she is the first person to use—

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: This is a Minister of the Crown speaking to a female member of Parliament in this way about cleaning up her mouth. He is a disgrace and he should withdraw that comment. Mr Temporary Speaker, I ask you to ask that the Minister withdraw that language to a female member of this place.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: What language?

Ms Anna Watson: Talking about her mouth. You are a disgusting Minister of the Crown.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The member for Shellharbour has made her point. She will resume her seat.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am not withdrawing it because it is in *Hansard*.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): Will the Minister withdraw his comment?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I will not withdraw my reference to her language used in *Hansard*.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The Minister has made his answer clear.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Of course we need to ban the bag. It needs to be part of a comprehensive plastics strategy. This, again, is cheap, lazy policy from the Labor Party because it believes that the only way it will get any credentials is by addressing one single issue. But it is not one single issue. I cannot believe that the Labor Party seems to think that we should promote this legislation, and yet in the same speech the Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that this is a bigger issue. She referred to the creatures of the sea and the environmental issues. But our side has the best environmental credentials in the place. As the Minister said, it was a Coalition government that introduced the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It was a Coalition government that introduced the Protection of the Environment Administration Act. Whilst we are, of course, a conservative government, it was Federal Labor who wanted to mine uranium in the Northern Territory.

Members opposite have the gall to stand up and tell us that we on this side are some sort of environmental vandals. We are not. We want a considered approach. We want an approach to this policy that will see a comprehensive attack on plastics because we believe the only way to tackle environmental degradation is through good policy. Not once in Labor's 16 years in government did it address any of these issues. Those opposite still cannot work out if they are in favour of coal or against coal. They still cannot work out if they are in favour of mining coal in the Hunter Valley or against it. They still cannot work out if they are in favour of the Return and Earn policy or against it. They still cannot work out whether they believe that the mining industry is their friend or their enemy. As far as I am concerned, that shows bipolarism of the worst degree. The Parliament has every right to reject this legislation and to go away with all parties, including the crossbench members and The Greens, and make sure that we have a comprehensive approach not only to the environment but also to plastics. I urge members to oppose this legislation.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (11:13:49): The Plastic Shopping Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2019 will end the shameful situation in which New South Wales remains the only State or Territory not to have banned single-use plastic bags. This is the second time the bill has been introduced and I will be proud to vote for it. I will be voting for the bill on behalf every child who has spoken to me about phasing out single-use plastic bags. I will be voting for the bill on behalf of the constituents in my electorate and the volunteers who tirelessly work to clean up the Cooks River, as well as waterways, beaches and parks across our State. I will be voting for the bill on behalf of consumers who have already taken action to change their behaviour but want to see leadership from the Premier and the environment Minister.

Plastic bags are choking our planet. The Boomerang Alliance estimates that 180 million bags are disposed of into our natural environment each year—an average of 5.8 bags per second. New South Wales residents alone use three billion single-use plastic bags, which is one-third of all plastic bags used across the country annually. It takes 85 times more energy to recycle a plastic bag than to create it, which means that 97 per cent of plastic bags are discarded rather than recycled. The average time for which a plastic bag is used is 12 minutes but that bag takes 1,000 years to break down. The problem is very, very clear but so too is the solution.

This is not the first time this Government has had the opportunity to legislate on the issue. Labor tried to pass this bill two years ago, only for the Government to vote it down. In 2018 young environmental activists secured a 10,000-signature petition to ban plastic bags in New South Wales. What was the Premier's response? It was, "Let the market manage itself." Well, the market has not managed itself. Coles has stopped 17 billion single-use plastic bags ending up in landfill. Woolworths has said that it has issued three billion fewer plastic bags. But that is a drop in the bucket considering five trillion plastic bags are produced every year.

Real action will take real leadership and once again with this bill Labor is showing how to deal with the issue. Local communities will not wait. In fact, many of them have taken matters into their own hands and introduced plastic bag bans at the local level: Kangaroo Valley in the electorate of Kiama, Mogo in the electorate of Bega, Oyster Bay in the electorate of Miranda and Huskisson in the electorate of the South Coast. Those communities are sick and tired of waiting for their State Liberal representatives to put the health of the planet before politics. Members opposite had another opportunity today to back those communities and their own communities, support the bill and ban single-use plastic bags. But they have signalled that they will not, and what is their excuse this time? It is, "We need a review of all plastic in New South Wales."

I want to be really clear: I absolutely support taking holistic action on plastic pollution. Every young person in my community and, I am sure, all of the communities represented in this place talks to us about this all the time—plastic straws, plastic bottles. They are passionate about it, and for good reason. But there is absolutely

no scenario in which we cannot review plastic pollution and also ban single-use plastic bags at the same time. It is not revolutionary. I reckon we can do it at the same time. The Minister's review will tell us exactly what we already know: We need to ban single-use plastic bags. This is nothing more than a veiled attempt by the Minister to give the appearance of environmental action whilst actually doing nothing at all.

Let me save the Minister some time. In June 2018, the Federal Government's Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications held an inquiry into waste and recycling. That inquiry told all Australian State and Territory Governments to phase out petroleum-based single-use plastics by 2023. It has already done the work, so why do we not just do that now? Every State and Territory government has looked at the problem in detail and resolved to ban single-use plastic bags—every one except New South Wales. Again I want to be very clear: Even the environment Minister agrees with himself. I will directly quote the Minister. He has said:

I'm certainly very concerned about single-use plastic bags, and plastics in general polluting our natural environment ... That's something I want to tackle head-on.

We do not need another inquiry. We can tackle the issue head-on right now. If the Minister wants to do that I invite him to support Labor's bill and ban single-use plastic bags now.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (11:19:30): I emphatically support the environment Minister, his statements and his actions. I support him on the need to end the use of single-use plastic bags. I support him emphatically on the need for a holistic approach. Plastic pollution is a grave threat to our planet. It threatens food safety and quality, human health and coastal tourism, and contributes to climate change. Marine wildlife like seabirds, whales, fish and turtles mistake plastic waste for prey, and most die of starvation as their stomachs are filled with plastic debris.

Wildlife suffers from lacerations, infections, reduced ability to swim and internal injuries. Floating plastics also contribute to the spread of invasive marine organisms and bacteria which disrupt ecosystems. Invisible plastics have been identified in tap water, beer and salt, and are present in all samples collected in the world's oceans, even in the Arctic. Toxic contaminants can accumulate on the surface of plastic materials as a result of prolonged exposure to seawater. When marine organisms ingest plastic debris these contaminants enter their digestive systems and accumulate in the food web.

Plastic, which is a petroleum product, also contributes to global warming. If plastic waste is incinerated it releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, increasing carbon emissions. Shocking statistics have been cited on both sides of the Chamber today and we know what a serious threat plastics are to our environment, including the food chain and our marine environment. That is why I stand by what I said in 2014 about the need to end the use of single-use plastic bags, and it is why I support, wholeheartedly, the efforts of the environment Minister to take a holistic approach to this.

I accept the need to end the use of single-use plastic bags but let us put this into context. The shadow environment Minister issued a media release in my electorate which claimed, "Globally, 80 per cent of the rubbish that ends in our oceans each year is plastic bags." That is manifest nonsense. We know that plastic bags ending up in our marine environment are a problem, but it is a small piece of the overall plastics problem. The Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index reports on litter volume per thousand square metres in Australia. Beverage containers grossly outweighed and out-volumed plastic bags.

Plastic bags made up 0.23 per cent of the litter stream in Australia. When the Government introduced the container deposit scheme, it was reported that litter from beverage containers represented about 45 per cent of the litter stream. I am not denying the need to take action to end single-use plastic bags, but let us put this in context. The context is that with its container deposit scheme the Government is addressing a volume of litter, landfill and debris that is at least 40 times greater than that represented by plastic bags.

Ms Jo Haylen: Well done! But let's do the bags too.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Thank you for that accolade, member for Summer Hill. One of the proudest achievements that I will have as a member of Parliament is being the Minister at the time we legislated for the container deposit scheme. We hear the cries today from the Opposition about delay after delay, but why for 16 years did the Labor Party in New South Wales fail to introduce a container deposit scheme? If the Opposition were focused properly on litter reduction and plastic reduction in New South Wales it would have brought in a container deposit scheme in its term of Government.

The Opposition should take up the environment Minister's offer of bipartisan cooperation—or multi-partisan cooperation because we have The Greens here as well—on a holistic approach to plastic reduction. In her speech in reply I would like to hear the shadow environment Minister address what the Labor Opposition here in New South Wales is doing about the Labor laggards in Victoria, who have not introduced a container

deposit scheme. So whilst in New South Wales the Labor Opposition members are talking about taking action on plastic bags, which represent 0.23 per cent of litter in Australia, they should be getting their laggard Labor colleagues in Victoria to take action on drink containers, which represent at least 40 times more than what we have here.

The Government also introduced voluntary agreements to phase out microbeads and micro plastics. I congratulate my predecessor Rob Stokes, the member for Pittwater, for the great action he took in phasing out microbeads in personal care, cosmetic and cleaning products. We need a comprehensive strategy to deal not just with plastic bags but all single-use plastics. That includes straws, cutlery, cups, food containers and packaging. I welcome the Minister's intention to develop one. That involves banning products but it also involves developing new products and investing in research and development for replacement products.

Probably more important than recycling is avoiding the use of plastics in the first place. We have heard today about low recycling rates. It is often incredibly difficult to get these products recycled. It is far better, in a circular economy, to avoid the use of these plastics in the first place. This action should not be—and is not—the monopoly of the Left. Centre Right governments are quite capable of taking firm action on plastics. We have seen, for example, the Conservative Government in the United Kingdom commit to the phasing-out of avoidable plastics within 25 years. Centre Right political philosophy is not just about the economy; it is environmental. We talk about fiscal conservatism and living within our economic means. To me those on the Centre Right should be just as committed to living within our environmental means.

I am very conscious that our children and grandchildren will look back at what we have done, in 25 or 50 years time. Future shoppers will not thank us for avoiding the minor inconvenience of having to take their own bags along to supermarkets instead of getting single-use plastic bags, or having to wash cutlery instead of using single-use cutlery. They will not thank us for allowing them to avoid those minor inconveniences but they will thank us if we take decisive action to preserve our planet for their generations. That is what we will be judged on, and that is why I am so passionate about the work that the environment Minister is undertaking to develop a holistic approach to plastics strategy.

I know from talking to my constituents—particular young people in my electorate—how passionately they feel about the obligations that members of Parliament have, as custodians of this planet, to leave the world in a better state than the state in which we found it. So I support the end of single-use plastics. I spoke about this in 2014, and I stand by every word I said, but we have to go further than a policy on single-use plastic bags. We have to develop a comprehensive strategy. I will passionately campaign for that within Government and within my community because I want to leave this world a better place than that which I inherited.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:27:46): I start by saying that what we have heard this morning from those opposite is environmental denialism. Government members have stood in this place for the third time and denied that there is an issue with plastic bags. In contributing to this debate I offer my support for this bill. This bill may have come as a surprise to those opposite, but the New South Wales public is surprised that this has not happened already. Every other State and Territory in Australia has passed legislation to ban single-use plastic bags. Victoria's ban on single-use plastic shopping bags came into effect fewer than two weeks ago. The Queensland ban came into effect on 1 July 2018. Western Australia's ban came into effect on the same day. Tasmania banned plastic bags back in 2013. When you are dragging behind Tasmania you know that there is a real issue.

This is not leadership. The Australian Capital Territory's plastic bag ban came into effect in the same year. South Australia was the first State to ban lightweight plastic bags and it did so over 10 years ago, back in 2009. Why has every other State and Territory in Australia banned these bags? For one reason: Australia uses four billion disposable plastic bags every year—that is 10 million every single day. Clean Up Australia estimates that around 50 million of these bags end up in our waterways and ocean. Likewise, it is believed that globally 80 per cent of the rubbish that ends up in our oceans each year is plastic bags.

Perhaps most frightening is the fact that on average a single-use plastic bag is used for just 12 minutes. That same bag then spends 1,000 years in landfill, in our waterways and oceans or on the side of the road. If that does not ring alarm bells for members opposite then nothing will—wake up! The impact of single-use plastic bags on our environment must be taken seriously. All around Australia governments are taking this issue seriously and promoting environmentalism in their citizens—that is, everywhere except New South Wales.

It will come as no surprise to anyone in this House that I believe Shellharbour is the best electorate in New South Wales. We have beautiful beaches, the great Lake Illawarra, Killalea and The Farm, rainforests at our fingertips, rolling fields and bushwalks right on our doorstep. Shellharbour is a haven for surfing, diving and snorkelling. You can spot whales off our coast. Our local undersea cliffs are packed with sea creatures. It should then be obvious why the bill matters to me and to my community. The bill would make our State better. It would

only do good things. I cannot think of one good reason why everyone in this House should not support the bill. However, I can think of 10 million reasons why they should: because 10 million plastic bags are going into our environment every single day. They are going into our waterways, rivers and lakes. They are hurting our sea life and bird life. We need to do everything we can to turn these figures around. We do not have time to waste.

When will those opposite stop delaying the inevitable and instead get on with delivering for the people of New South Wales? As the shadow Minister has said, governments should lead. Instead, the New South Wales Government is happy to wait, hold off and let big business take the lead. The supermarket industry in Australia phased out shopping bags well over a year ago. Our Government should be leading the pack, not trailing behind. In the first year supermarkets removed single-use bags from their checkouts it is estimated Coles avoided 1.7 billion single-use plastic bags ending up in landfill. Woolworths avoided approximately three billion plastic bags, or 4,700 tonnes of single-use plastic entering the environment.

No matter how long those opposite stall they will never get the glory for this ban. Every day that they wait to pass this legislation—every day that they wait to catch up to the rest of this country and to the expectations of the citizens of our State—more plastic bags are being distributed in New South Wales. The people of New South Wales will remember that you waited. They will remember that you put petty politics before the future of our environment. They will remember that instead of taking real action you decided to act busy. Make no mistake: This ban will happen eventually. It is a ban that has been praised and applauded in every State in Australia. The only reason it will not happen today is that members on the other side of this House are standing in its way. When Labor members vote on the bill we will vote for the people of New South Wales. We will vote for our State's waterways and the future of our environment. If the Coalition members vote against the bill they will be voting only for themselves.

A so-called "plastics discussion paper" is not good enough, not when real action can be taken today. There is nothing to stop that discussion paper going ahead if the bill passes today. It does not have to be one or the other; it can be both, as the member for Summer Hill said in her contribution to this debate. Undoubtedly, one of the recommendations will be to ban single-use plastic bags. That is what history tells us and what the rest of Australia is telling us. The Minister must act today. Recently I joined the shadow environment Minister, Ms Sarah McGuinness and Jasmine Rapela from Plastic Free Kiama at the Kiama Lighthouse to highlight this issue. We took the opportunity to call on my Illawarra colleagues the member for Kiama and the member for South Coast to support the bill. I again call on my local counterparts. Your constituents and your communities want you to support the bill. Vote with them and support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (11:34:08): I contribute to debate on the Plastic Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2019. If, like those members opposite, you are interested in the politics of this issue then my contribution will send you to sleep. However, if you are passionate about plastics, as I know some members of The Greens and the crossbench are, my contribution will reveal why the bill is completely inadequate. The global view and science to solve plastic waste have dramatically evolved in the past 18 to 24 months. To be truly effective and visionary this legislation would have provided that all plastic packaging, including shopping bags, should be 100 per cent reusable, recyclable or compostable. The legislation also would have considered that single-use plastic altogether—not just shopping bags—should be a thing of the past and that in the event there are still single-use plastic bags, no plastic should end up in the environment.

Banning single-use plastic on its own, independently of any other action, does not reflect global best practice. It is not part of the circular economy target state, which is the most effective pathway to ridding the environment completely of plastic. There is a global movement underpinned by research and science that supports a vision of a circular economy for plastic, where plastic never becomes waste. It provides a root-cause solution to plastic pollution with profound economic, environmental, and societal benefits. The Government is leading the way, developing a 20-year waste strategy that will include new long-term goals for the sector. Two weeks ago we launched the NSW Circular economy network—the good Minister was here to do that—which lays the foundations for a truly globally leading approach to smashing plastic waste.

For the benefit of members opposite, in a circular economy waste and pollution are designed out, products and materials are kept in use and natural systems are regenerated. This means that each piece of plastic is either recyclable or compostable, ideally after several re-use cycles. Instead of today completely ignoring the reason why plastic exists in the first place or overlooking the fact that most consumers now reach for the thicker bag conveniently placed at the automatic check-out, I propose that we can and will do much, much better. Technology is key to solving this problem. Legislation passed in this House to tackle the problem of plastics should think big and be bold. It should move us towards a scenario where we are entirely replacing plastic as we know it today. For example, innovations are creating a substance as a replacement to plastic that breaks down in relatively short periods of time—bags that begin breaking down in the wheelie bin at home. By the time the bag reaches the tip it has gone some way to becoming plant food. If you put it in the household waste bin, by the time the truck comes

around it is essentially gone. This technology exists and it should be supported as part of a broader, far-reaching strategy.

Furthermore, legislation should focus efforts on strengthening our capacity to turn plastic, if it must exist, into a secondary raw material and on creating a world-leading circular economy. Yes, implementing policies such as banning supermarket plastic bags is admirable, but they do not address the root cause of the problem. To be truly effective, what we should support through legislation is scaling concepts like Boomerang Bags. We should support technology and policy that mean we will recycle plastic so that it never reaches the environment in the first place. To be truly effective, we should introduce policies surrounding compulsory recycled content for use in road base, infrastructure projects, public assets and the like. Perhaps it should be legislated that supermarkets promote customers bringing their own bag, like Boomerang Bags—not replacing single-use with harsher, thicker bags, which is the practice that we have seen in other States.

Government should invest alongside industry to achieve a vision that sees the elimination of problematic or unnecessary plastic packaging and plastic bags through redesign, innovation and new delivery models. This will require a combination of redesign and innovation with industry and their business models—the materials that they use, the packaging that they design and the reprocessing technologies that go into that. Looking to globally leading examples, in January 2018 the New Plastics Economy brought together leading companies committed to working towards 100 per cent reusable, recyclable and compostable plastic packaging by 2025. This was scaled to an industry-wide, global effort in October 2018 with the launch of the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment.

The Global Commitment, launched by the foundation and the United Nations Environment Programme in October 2018, draws a line in the sand in the fight against plastic waste and pollution. It unites over 250 businesses, governments, non-government organisations, universities, and other organisations globally behind a vision that addresses the issue at its root cause—unlike the bill. To help make this vision a reality businesses and governments commit to a set of ambitious 2025 targets, which is not that far away. They will work to eliminate the plastic items we do not need; innovate so all plastics we do need are designed to be safely re-used, recycled, or composted; and circulate everything we use to keep it in the economy and out of the environment.

The Global Commitment builds on and reinforces, amongst other things, the G7 Ocean Plastics Charter, the European Union strategy for plastics in a circular economy, the Commonwealth Blue Charter and the Communities of Ocean Action established by the United Nations [UN]. It will aim to contribute to the implementation of the UN Environment Assembly resolutions on marine litter and microplastics, and several Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs], including SDG 12 and 14. Fast forward to June this year and signatories to the pledge account for more than 20 per cent of all global plastic production. Business signatories include six of the top 10 global fast-moving consumer goods companies including, but not limited to, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Unilever and The Coca-Cola Company. It also includes seven of the top 10 global plastic packaging producers including, but not limited to, Amcor, Sealed Air and Berry Global. It also includes five of the top 15 global retailers, including Walmart and Target.

All consumer packaged goods, retail, and packaging producing signatories, numbering 123 in total, have committed to making 100 per cent of their plastic packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. That represents significant widescale change. The issue of plastic waste is urgent. The impact of plastic on the environment begins not only at the start of the chain, not mid-way through, and not at the end when people are grabbing single-use plastic bags. It must be seen and addressed as the complex problem that it is. The policies that we develop in this place must give plastic waste the appropriate support that it requires. I thank the House.

Mr Clayton Barr: I move:

That the question be now put.

The House divided.

Ayes36
Noes48
Majority..... 12

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N

AYES

Lynch, Mr P
McKay, Ms J
O'Neill, Dr M
Saffin, Ms J
Tesch, Ms L
Washington, Ms K

McDermott, Dr H
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Voltz, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

McGirr, Dr J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T.F.
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

NOES

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

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Donato, Mr P
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W
Pavey, Mrs M
Preston, Ms R
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Smith, Mr N
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Dalton, Mrs H
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T

Dominello, Mr V
Provost, Mr G

Motion negatived.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:51:50): The electorate of North Shore has a strong connection to the environment, I would say second to none among Sydney electorates. It is home to incredibly beautiful harbour beaches, the amazing Middle Head and the Sydney Harbour National Park. Not only that, but each year millions of people from around the world come to my community of North Shore to meet Australia's finest native animals—koalas, echidnas, wombats and kangaroos—at Taronga Zoo. The people of North Shore care deeply about the environment. They care about the impact we are having on the climate. They care about ensuring our natural environment is protected for generations to come and they care about the impact that plastics are having on the environment—not only plastic bags but a range of other plastics. My community is not only home to Taronga Zoo and its amazing conservation efforts but it is also home to the Sydney Institute of Marine Science at Chowder Bay. I recently read a Sydney Institute of Marine Science report on microplastics and its findings were shocking. An ABC article on the report stated:

... 27 sites were tested across the harbour, with researchers discovering up to 60 microplastics per 100 milligrams of sediment.

... several hotspots were identified and the worst-affected area was in the pristine-looking waters of Middle Harbour.

This directly impacts the people I represent. It troubles me deeply and I know that we must act. The threat posed by plastics in the marine environment is well recognised and the Government acknowledges this. To advise the House, microplastics are small pieces of plastic that are less than five millimetres in diameter. They include microbeads found in cosmetic products, microfibrils from synthetic clothing and broken-down fragments of larger plastic items like plastic bags. While we need to do more as a population, I am proud of the work that the Government has already done in this area. I commend our Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, for his leadership in addressing plastics pollution.

I highlight the work of this Government to reduce the impact of our suite of microplastics initiatives. At the Fifth Meeting of Environment Ministers in November 2016 all Australian environment Ministers agreed to an industry-led voluntary phase-out of microbeads in personal care, cosmetic and cleaning products. The New South

Wales Government has taken a leadership role in this work. Together with the Commonwealth Government, we have worked with the industry group Accord to achieve a voluntary phase-out. Data from Accord and an independent audit indicates the phase-out has been very successful. At the Seventh Meeting of Environment Ministers in April 2018 Ministers announced that 94 per cent of cosmetic and personal care products are now microbead free. Together with other Australian jurisdictions, this Government remains committed to eliminating microbeads in the final 6 per cent and examining options to extend the voluntary phase-out to other types of products. We are also actively supporting research into other sources of microplastics.

We must act, but we must not act in isolation. I welcome the Minister's words about his commitment to a comprehensive plastics strategy and the 20-year waste strategy. I have spoken about microplastics, but we need to take a holistic view of all plastics. We need to look at the impact of the most polluted plastics. A recently released World Wide Fund for Nature report looked at the most polluted plastics, which include straws, stirrers, coffee cups and lids, balloon sticks, cutlery, plates, cups, containers, cotton buds, plastic bottles and, of course, plastic bags. I know that these items are frequently found throughout the harbour. A number of community groups in my electorate work on a daily basis to clean up Sydney Harbour and our beaches. In fact, it was in my community of Mosman that Ian Kiernan founded Clean Up Australia Day as he reflected on the impact of waste, particularly plastics, on the harbour and across our oceans.

I welcome the Prime Minister's recent commitment to a cleaner environment through a commitment to growing our domestic recycling industry and his contributions about plastic waste in our oceans. I hope that each of the items listed as most polluted plastics will be considered by the Minister in his upcoming discussion paper on plastics. The Plastic Shopping Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2019 will ban only the plastic bag, and I echo the Minister when he says that we must ban the bag. But we should not do it in isolation; we should do it after consulting with the community and with business.

This weekend I will once again host a stall at the annual Crows Nest Festival, which I note is going single-use plastic free this year in another sign of fantastic community-led initiatives to ensure that we can address the scourge of plastics in our environment. I reiterate that the New South Wales Government is already taking strong collaborative and evidence-based actions to tackle plastics, even at the microscopic level, in partnership with industry and without bans. I reiterate my opposition to this bill, but I commend the Government's action to reduce plastics in the environment. We will continue to work together to deliver the appropriate outcome for plastics in our environment and in the world.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (11:57:30): On behalf of The Greens, I am delighted to support the Plastic Shopping Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2019. I will keep my contribution to this debate short, as did other members of The Greens earlier, because we want to vote on this bill. Twice The Greens have introduced a ban-the-bag bill, once in this place and once in the upper House. To say that the community, all the stakeholders and the business world are crying out for this legislation would be an absolute understatement. I recently visited family in California and Washington State, and I note that two years ago the entire city of Seattle banned not just all plastic bags but plastic straws, plastic coffee cups and a raft of plastic objects. The ban took effect overnight, yet the world did not end. I genuinely believe that the Minister for Energy and Environment wants legislation that will go further than banning the bag, but we simply cannot wait.

We do not need to have all our ducks in a row before we move on a ban-the-bag bill. We know that the supermarket duopoly started to ban the bag and then did not go there, and now there is vacillation around the ban. But in my electorate of Ballina, the grassroots community right across the electorate is taking this matter into its own hands. We do applaud the Government for the Return and Earn scheme. We are looking at lots of amazing opportunities in my region for radical soft plastics recycling, upcycling and all kinds of great innovations that will support people to have jobs in that space. To say that we need to wait while there is further consultation, with all due respect, Minister, is unnecessary. There are models all around the world. I encourage the Minister to look in particular at what Washington State and Seattle have done and simply go for it. It is disappointing that the Government does not support this bill because it is absolutely the next right thing to do. We support the bill.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:59:52): I speak on the Plastic Shopping Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2019. My views on plastics have been well articulated in this place previously. I have expressed my concern in relation to the proliferation of plastics in the marine environment on many occasions. I know that is a view shared by many people in my coastal electorate of Pittwater and that many of its beach users are familiar with the plastics that are becoming increasingly ubiquitous on our beaches and waterways. It is shocking in this day and age that, of the plastics that are becoming increasingly widespread, particularly since the 1970s, less than 9 per cent are recycled and about 12 per cent are incinerated, globally. That leaves 79 per cent to go into either landfill or waste streams and end up in the marine environment.

As someone who has done a fair bit of sailing in my time, I have seen plastics in otherwise pristine environments. It is quite shocking to go through the Arafura Sea, for example, and see plastic detritus lining the

tideline of deserted beaches. We have a plastic problem throughout the world. But what we need to be conscious of doing, and what this bill does not do, is deal comprehensively with the scourge of plastics in modern industrial society. By implementing a piece of virtue-signalling legislation which selects only one part of the waste stream and neglects to deal with the other parts, we could inadvertently bring about wider consequences. For example, by banning one particular variety of lightweight plastic bag without any direction as to how retailers might otherwise meet the needs of customers to convey their goods, we could see increased use of heavier plastics. Proposed section 4 (2) (c) of the bill notes that "This section does not prevent a person from supplying bin liners". It continues:

This section also does not prevent a person from supplying a plastic shopping bag of the kind usually supplied by clothing and department stores, because those bags ordinarily have a thickness of more than 35 microns.

On the face of it, the bill directs people to use heavier plastic bags, with some sort of perhaps mistaken assumption—based on evidence that I have not seen—that those bags are more likely to be used repeatedly than lighter weight plastic bags. I use that as an example because there are so many holes in this legislation. It makes the point that we need to deal with the issue comprehensively, which is what the Government is proposing to do. We would like to do that in a bipartisan way. For example, the bill states clearly that, "The object of this bill is to prohibit retailers from supplying plastic shopping bags to their customers," but it says nothing about the production of single-use plastic bags or their distribution through other means.

For example, the bill does nothing to proscribe commercial or industrial uses of lightweight plastic bags. Nor does it direct customers and retailers as to what other alternatives there might be. It is important to note, as other members have done, that this Government has been at the forefront of a progression of reforms. Others have spoken of our leadership role in relation to preventing the use of microbeads, which is an insidious form of plastic in our marine environment. Something else that has not been raised in the debate to date is the Government's work in banning cigarette butts, for example, in national parks, which include more than 50 per cent of the State's coastline.

Debate interrupted.

Members

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): I report receipt of a message from Her Excellency the Governor regarding a vacancy in the Legislative Council following the resignation of the Hon. Niall Blair. I direct that the joint sitting with the Legislative Council for the election of a member to the Legislative Council be set down as an order of the day for 3.45 p.m. today.

Motions

FARMING COMMUNITIES

Debate resumed from 26 September 2019.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:05:57): By leave: It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the member for Cootamundra's notice of motion. She is indeed a passionate country member. Living in regional and rural communities, it is so important that we acknowledge the great work that those communities do. The member for Cootamundra moved:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the hard work and dedication shown in farming communities across regional New South Wales during the drought.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government's ongoing commitment to supporting primary producers with both financial and wellbeing assistance.

I note that an amendment to the motion has been moved, with the member for Cootamundra's support, so that it reads, "Acknowledges the Parliament's ongoing commitment to supporting primary producers with both financial and wellbeing assistance." The motion continues:

- (3) Notes this commitment will continue through the wetter winter months to ensure farmers continue to demonstrate they are the best in the world.

Those three points are absolutely well recognised by this Parliament and I am extremely proud to speak in support of the member for Cootamundra's motion. As we know, farmers in regional and rural New South Wales have been doing it extremely tough. The member for Cootamundra outlined the difficulties in her electorate and we have some great primary producers on the Central Coast who are also doing it a bit tougher than usual. Luckily, they have not experienced the significant drought conditions that the electorate of the member for Cootamundra has

been experiencing. This Government is getting on with the job of helping to deliver, where we can, record investment on infrastructure and services to help create jobs, improve quality of life and deliver opportunities right throughout the State of New South Wales, including for our primary producers.

I also note the recent announcement this week that the New South Wales Government is forging ahead with new dams and water infrastructure. We face unprecedented times and are now taking decisive action to help our regional communities, especially those farmers who have been doing it so tough. In my electorate of Terrigal, our men's sheds have got right behind our farmers in rural and regional communities by visiting and helping them where they can. They have helped raise funds to support those farmers. This is how our local community is getting on with the job of helping to support our farmers. Whether by financial means or through providing goods and services, the people of the Central Coast are digging deep. Our schoolchildren also support our farmers.

The Government is taking this extremely seriously. This week the water Minister announced the first new dam in New South Wales in more than 30 years. This is how seriously we are taking the drought conditions. We need to do our best to futureproof this State and to help farmers in the future. These things run in cycles, sometimes they are unpredictable, but this Government is getting on with the job. Since 2017 it has committed close to \$3 billion in drought relief and water security. As a regional member, Madam Temporary Speaker, you know that our primary producers are so important. The funding we have announced includes 60 bores across 23 communities and 14 pipelines, such as the excellent piece of infrastructure from Wentworth to Broken Hill. I am pleased to support the motion from the member for Cootamundra. I congratulate her on bringing it to the House.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (12:10:33):

By leave: I thank the member for Cootamundra for bringing forward this motion, which highlights the significant problems that this drought has created. Farmers are resilient. They know how to prepare for climate change and climate changes, whether they are floods or devastating droughts. That is part of what they do on a day-to-day basis. The challenge we face today is a drought that has lasted significantly longer than many people anticipated, planned for or budgeted for. Budgeting for the drought is a significant problem. Farmers have run out of money while they try to maintain their properties and their businesses and indeed support their families. Many are now in dire straits, with their backs to the wall.

As a member of the Government and as the member for Tamworth, I think about the drought every day. This goes to the heart of what we do and is part of every conversation we have about those communities, particularly in the electorate of Tamworth. I know this Government will stay at the table to provide necessary funding. We need to be flexible to provide the timely funding, resources, support and assistance that farmers need. The support and assistance we were providing 12 months ago is different from what we are providing today. If the drought does not break soon we will need to reconsider what support and assistance we provide to manage that, in terms of the Emergency Drought Transport Subsidy, the Farm Innovation Fund and a range of other support measures.

I have been focused on mental health in particular, working with and funding non-government organisations to put people on the ground. The point has been reached where Local Land Services run chemical days where farmers can learn about chemical use and treatment. Psychologists are gently walking around at field days, using a soft approach to mental health. While farmers are learning, upgrading and updating techniques and business models, psychologists are gently going around saying g'day to farmers. "Hey, mate. How're you going?" They are starting the conversation in a similar fashion to "R U OK? mate". That starts the conversation, which ultimately moves offline. For example, Centrecare will talk to a farmer. Staff will say, "Mate, let's catch up for a cup of coffee a little bit later on."

While on the surface all appears fine, the resilient farmer will say, "Yeah, no worries, mate. Everything is good. We are just here today to learn some more about chemicals and what I can do to keep my business running." What happens is that conversation is taken offline. That is where you really understand what is happening. To farmers who are struggling in drought-affected times, whether they are in the city, in country towns or in villages, I say we will stay at the table and we will remain flexible with what we need to do. Hang in there, it will rain again and we will be there for them.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (12:15:20): By leave: I contribute to the motion moved by my colleague the member for Cootamundra. I commend her for bringing this sensible motion to the House. Members who have observed the member for Cootamundra's work will not be surprised that she has brought such a sensible motion to the House. When members observe the way that she conducts herself in her electorate and how deeply she cares about all of her constituents, particularly farmers and farming families, this will come as no surprise. I really thank her for bringing forward this motion. I thank her for highlighting not only the plight of people on the land in the electorate

of Cootamundra but, by extension, every single farmer, farming family, contractor and agriculturally reliant business in communities across the length and breadth of this State.

A lot has been said in this debate about the Government's extensive Drought Assistance Fund; I will not rehash that. The member for Cootamundra will cover that in her contribution in reply. I commend and highlight the magnificent work that has been done by many wonderful staff at Local Land Services [LLS] and the Rural Assistance Authority [RAA]. They are doing their absolute best to provide support through counselling, access to various forms of government assistance, as well as conducting farm visits and having discussions at farm field days or other important agricultural shows and community events.

There are just over 1,000 employees across the State working in Local Land Services. They are almost all based in regional and rural New South Wales. They are on the front line, helping farmers over the phone or even going onto farms. Most of these staff are locals in their communities. They know the farmers. They play sport with them and their children go to school with the children of families who they are helping. This is not just a job for these staff; this is about helping people in their community who are doing it really hard. I shout out to staff at the Rural Assistance Authority who are based at Orange. I have seen the wonderful work that they do, working day and evening shifts to process hundreds and hundreds of applications every week for assistance across our State.

The staff also speak on the phone and hear the harrowing stories firsthand from farmers and farming families who struggle to deal with a set of conditions that no farmer before them has ever experienced in this State's history. Staff at the RAA and the LLS do not get many plaudits because when people contact them they are often at their wit's end. They are emotional, stressed and upset. It is important to place on record my support. I speak for all members in this House when I thank them for the huge amount of work they do to support our primary producers by helping every single one of them to access assistance and also by providing advice on how to potentially access available Commonwealth assistance. In closing, I thank the member for Cootamundra for bringing this motion forward. As always, the New South Wales Government will continue to stand by our farmers, our farming families, our businesses and contractors, and I look forward to some very positive announcements being made in a number of weeks' time about further measures of assistance to support our State's farmers.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Before I call the member for Cootamundra in reply, I will clarify what is before the House. The original motion was moved by the member for Cootamundra, to which the member for Maitland has moved an amendment.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (12:19:57): In reply: I thank the member for Maitland and the member for Orange for supporting the motion. I thank the member for Dubbo and the member for Terrigal for their comments in support of farming communities struggling through these difficult times. I thank the Minister for Water, Property and Housing for referencing plans to raise the dam wall at Wyangala. That is a project in my electorate and it will ensure greater water security for communities throughout the region. I thank the Minister also for mentioning the opening of the Mandamah scheme, to which she accompanied me recently. This is a great example of a local community coming together and taking the initiative to implement solutions that will deliver water security to farmers and help them to manage through drought.

I also thank Ministers Marshall and Anderson whose own electorate communities are in the grip of the deepest drought conditions ever experienced in New South Wales, and I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his comments about the importance of innovation in tackling drought. With farmers in New South Wales contributing around 23 per cent of national agricultural output, our primary producers make a valuable contribution to our economy and to the fabric of our farming communities. New South Wales farmers are innovative, strong and resilient, and I am very proud to represent a rural electorate in which agriculture is the largest employer. The current drought conditions are causing primary producers and our farming communities to suffer greatly.

I pause to express my disappointment at Labor's decision yesterday in this place to vote against our Right to Farm Bill. I would say that by delivering on key election commitments, such as a dairy advocate, and introducing historic legislation to enshrine a farmer's right to farm, the New South Wales Nationals are fighting for our farmers, something which Labor simply cannot claim. The New South Wales Government is backing farmers all the way. Since 1 July 2019, 11,562 farmers have been approved for the drought transport subsidy, totalling more than \$95 million. A further 2,200 farmers have been approved for the farm innovation fund and drought assistance fund, totalling more than \$448 million.

The New South Wales Government has provided a further \$18.7 million towards the cost of transporting donated fodder. Just over \$47 million dollars has been spent waiving Local Land Services rates and more than \$4 million has been spent in preschool relief payments, \$9 million on emergency water infrastructure rebates and \$4.3 million through the farm business skills program. This is just a brief overview of the outcome of funding that

the New South Wales Government has supported and achieved for farmers. We are doing this with the current drought conditions in mind, but also with an eye to the prosperous future of our communities in the long term.

I thank all of those farmers who have taken the time to reach out to me about their experiences and those who have made me welcome for a cup of tea and a chat about how they are faring. I know that these are very difficult times. Many of my farmers are cutting hay at the moment, but some will not even be able to do that, and they have no stock to graze out, so we will simply see the crops die in the ground, which is a very sad sight. I am particularly mindful of all of my farmers in the west of the electorate—Weethalle, Naradhan, Ungarie and Kikoirra. These are very difficult times and my heart feels for them. This Government will continue to listen to the needs of farmers and to support our farming communities through this drought. I thank all members of the House for their support.

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

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

Motions

PRINCES HIGHWAY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(12:24:41): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the Government on its record investment in the Princes Highway.
- (2) Notes the Government's \$960 million election commitment to upgrade the Princes Highway south of Nowra.
- (3) Condemns Labor's candidate for the Federal electorate of Gilmore for opposing the Albion Park Rail Bypass.

Ms Anna Watson: She is not a candidate.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member has interjected before I have even spoken. You would think that she would have learned her lesson by now, but it is like the definition of "stupidity"—you keep doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result, and it never works out too well for you, does it?

Ms Anna Watson: We'll see how it goes.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: Of course you can.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Opposition members will remain silent.

Mr GARETH WARD: Shield me from those opposite.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): You need no shielding, Minister. I ask that you direct your remarks through the Chair.

Mr GARETH WARD: I certainly will put all of my appropriate comments through the Chair. I start by acknowledging in the gallery two very good friends from my electorate, Wes and Vicky Hindmarsh.

Ms Anna Watson: There's only one.

Mr GARETH WARD: I have more friends than just two. You have none; I have two.

Ms Anna Watson: There is one.

Mr GARETH WARD: No, they are in the gallery over there. Don't you worry, just sit there and listen, and you might learn something. I thank both of them for being great community champions and for being in Parliament today. More importantly, I acknowledge my South Coast colleagues—the member for South Coast, Shelley Hancock, and the member for Bega, Andrew Constance—for standing up for the Princes Highway for years both in Opposition and in Government. In Opposition we saw years of neglect on the Princes Highway from those opposite because they only care about Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. They do not care about regional New South Wales. What a difference the change of Government has made.

We now see upgrades to the Princes Highway through Gerringong—lifesaving upgrades that were promised by Barry O'Farrell. I remember standing with the Hon. John Ajaka and Shelley Hancock when Barry quite clearly said, "If they don't build it, don't vote for them." But we built it, and they continue to support us because this is an article of faith for South Coast members of Parliament and the community with this Government. We are proud to have delivered that project. We got on and delivered the Berry bypass, something that has changed our region. It has helped to improve travel times enormously for people of the South Coast. This is something that people comment on. They remember the old hairpin bends, and I remember the crosses that still stand alongside the road where people lost their lives.

This has not just been a tremendous time saver for our community; it has been a tremendous investment in road safety. If you travel to our part of the world today you will see the work between Berry and Bomaderry, investments to duplicate the Princes Highway, to make it safer and to improve the connectivity and reliability of the road network. My favourite is the Albion Park Rail bypass, which those opposite voted against in this place. The record will forever show that you wanted trade unions, you wanted those poles and wires, you wanted to go home at night and hug those power poles; you did not want new roads or hospitals or schools.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The Minister will direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr GARETH WARD: They did not want it, but we wanted it and our communities wanted it. Now we see the construction of the largest ever single investment in the history of the Princes Highway at Albion Park Rail and the record will forever show that the member for Shellharbour, who loves to talk about this project, could not get a commitment from her own side, nor could she support it in this Chamber. This is the side of the House that delivers. This is the side of the House that gets on with it. The member for Wollongong chuckles on the other side. I will ignore the chortle because he has not been around this place long enough to remember their appalling record in Government when it comes to the Princes Highway.

We had to sit and listen to Labor members talk triumphantly—Bob Carr, parading like an emperor, as he talked about investments but never made them. We are now saving lives where those opposite ignored our communities. Our communities will never forget the treachery of Labor in government. They will never forget what it did not do for them. At the last election, Labor had the opportunity to match these projects. Did it match them? No, it did not. But the member for South Coast and the member for Bega, together with me, have managed to secure record investments in the Princes Highway. I am very proud of the \$960 million commitment that the member for South Coast and the member for Bega, in particular, were able to secure.

Mr Adam Crouch: How much?

Mr GARETH WARD: It was \$960 million for the Princes Highway further south. They have also been able to achieve a commitment from this Government to duplicate the Princes Highway to the Victorian border. We saw the shadow Treasurer run out at the last minute and try to match that. As the member for South Coast will recall, those opposite said in a press release they would match that commitment, but when it came time to put in their Parliamentary Budget Office submission—uh-oh! It was not there. They forgot to include it. I have to give the former shadow Treasurer his due. There were a few things he stuffed up while he was shadow Treasurer. He was a pretty average shadow transport Minister. He was an appalling shadow Treasurer. Now he is the shadow health Minister. He is the only bloke I know who has failed upwards in every role that he has ever held in his career. But we will put that to one side and ignore it, because those opposite have ignored our community for too long.

We will continue to come to this House and fight for investments that make a real difference. We will take on whatever level of government is necessary—be it the failure of Shoalhaven City Council to invest in the Nowra road network or the Federal Government partnering with us in an 80-20 funding split—to continue raising things that we believe are important. It is critical to use the House's time today to talk about our investments in the Princes Highway. I am proud of the fact that we are delivering for our communities. People do not need to read the press releases or see the tweets; they see it every day when they drive through our part of the world. I am proud of the lives we are saving. I am proud of the jobs that are being generated and the young people who are being given apprenticeships and an opportunity to learn trades on this project. We will always stand up for the Princes Highway. Everyone in our community needs to know that a vote for Labor is a vote against infrastructure in the Illawarra.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:31:51): Sometimes there are simply no words after listening to the member for Kiama.

Mr Gareth Ward: Good. Shut up and sit down.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I do have a few. I move:

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

- (1) Notes the investment undertaken by successive governments in upgrading the Princes Highway.
- (2) Indicates bipartisan support for the investment upgrades to continue in a timely manner by all governments in the interests of improving road safety for all motorists.

Nobody can disagree with that. I seek to amend the motion of the member for Kiama because members on this side of the House believe we should not be playing politics with the lives of drivers and passengers on the Princes Highway. Sadly, that is what the member for Kiama seeks to do here today. That is how he operates; that is his *modus operandi*. The statistics are horrifying: Between July 2012 and June 2017 there were 1,494 crashes on the Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and the Victorian border, resulting in 30 fatalities and 350 serious injuries. Between December 2017 and June 2018 eight more people lost their lives on the Princes Highway south of Nowra.

Sadly, it seems that not a holiday period goes by without hearing tragic news about lives being lost on that notorious stretch of the Princes Highway. I welcome with open arms this \$962 million investment in the upgrade of the Princes Highway. But it should be clear to everybody in this Chamber today that something needs to be done to ensure the safety of drivers travelling along that highway. Nobody disagrees with that. I seek to refocus this discussion through a bipartisan lens and shut down petty politics. Successive New South Wales governments from both sides of politics have invested in upgrades for the Princes Highway.

Mr Gareth Ward: Rubbish.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Yes, we have. Let us not forget that at a local level, previous Labor governments have invested significantly in upgrades to the Princes Highway. Labor constructed the Oak Flats interchange and in 2009 upgraded the Princes Highway between Oak Flats and Dunmore. They are two local milestone Labor Government projects. This is a bit of a history lesson. On 28 November 2005 then Labor Premier Morris Iemma officially opened the 7.6-kilometre North Kiama Bypass. In today's dollars those projects combined would come in at a cost of \$800 million. This \$962 million upgrade will improve road safety for our State's motorists. Every member in this House will agree that protecting and improving the lives of our citizens is our ultimate goal. That is why members on this side of the House will not play petty politics with those opposite when it comes to upgrading the Princes Highway. I have moved my amendment and I hope those opposite will support it. I remind members that the Albion Park Rail bypass project has been long awaited by the community. Preliminary investigations for the project first took place in the 1990s.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Kiama will cease interjecting.

Ms ANNA WATSON: But the Albion Park Rail bypass project has been subject to a budget blowout that the Government would love to rebrand as a funding boost. The budget blew out by \$80 million—from \$550 million to the current figure of \$630 million in June last year.

Mr Gareth Ward: You're still reading off Gino's talking points. Gino gave you this.

Ms ANNA WATSON: No, he did not. I pointed out the budget blowout when the funding announcement was first made by then Premier Mike Baird during the 2015 election campaign. I would have liked the Government to revisit some of its decisions in relation to the Albion Park Rail bypass—namely, to provide access to motorists from Dapto and West Dapto, which are both fast-growing population centres. I have not said it once in this place; I have said it 100 times. West Dapto is the fastest-growing urban release outside Sydney, which, once complete, will include approximately 19,000 new dwellings and house over 50,000 more people. In the spirit of bipartisanship that I have offered today, I again invite the Government to reconsider that aspect of the project.

Our communities do not want or require self-indulgence. They do not care for motions of self-congratulation. They do expect, however, that one of the Illawarra's primary trunk roads, which snakes its way through the Illawarra and along the South Coast, will be upgraded by the government of the day—you lot. That is what this Government has done, what the previous Labor Government did and what whichever government comes next will do, because that is our role as leaders and it is what governments need to do. If we have the funds and the technologies, it is our duty to provide for the people of our State. Upgrades have been undertaken by successive governments, and we agree with that. The overriding objective must be to continue with upgrades to the Princes Highway. Those upgrades must be properly planned and properly funded by both the New South Wales and Federal governments. That is what the tens of thousands of motorists using the Princes Highway expect, and that is what they deserve.

I invite the member for Kiama to reconsider his motion and vote to support my proposed amendment. Let us leave petty politics and pointscoring outside. When he replies to the debate I hope that the member for Kiama will reflect on the strong bipartisanship that Labor offers to continue with the Princes Highway upgrades. It must be noted that successive governments have contributed to improvements on the Princes Highway, and that

must continue. Every member in this House supports safer roads. Our citizens want to see upgrades on the Princes Highway delivered, irrespective of the government of the day. They want to see us working together, which is what I am offering today.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (12:38:27): Well, that is nice; we have discovered bipartisanship on the Princes Highway after about 30 years of infighting. Just to help out the member for Shellharbour, in relation to West Dapto our focus will be on saving lives south of the Jervis Bay turn-off, which the member did not mention once.

Ms Anna Watson: Yes, I did—at the very beginning.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: No, you did not. You said, "Build us West Dapto." Guess who did not make any financial commitment to fixing that project during the election campaign? It was Labor. They had every opportunity to do so, but they did not. On that score, this Government has got on with it. Since coming to office, this Government has built Gerringong bypass and Berry Bypass and Berry to Bombaderry is under construction. This Government is upgrading Nowra Bridge—

Mr Victor Dominello: Albion Park Rail.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: —and work at Albion Park Rail. Now let us start work on the area that I have described as the death zone. That is the area south of the Jervis Bay turn-off, where lives are being lost, but Labor just wants to focus on the northern end of the Princes Highway, where it holds seats. Labor was in office for 16 years. I sat in this Chamber in opposition for eight of those years and, with the member for South Coast, I watched tragedy after tragedy occur within a period of six months when the crash rate exceeded that on the Pacific Highway although there was less traffic. Labor did nothing about it. I had to ask the State Coroner to conduct an inquest to try to get the Labor Government to shift. But now those on the other side of the Chamber are saying they want bipartisanship.

During the State election campaign I heard Mike Kelly say that Michael Daley built the Dignams Creek upgrade. It was built five years after the Coalition won government because we got on with it on the basis of a State coronial recommendation. The work got done—the construction was finished. Exactly the same thing happened at Victoria Creek. Labor is saying, "We have done all this wonderful work," but that is a load of rubbish. I have just talked about the big projects in the Kiama electorate and north. The thing that galls me most is that this Government is now having to duplicate the highway south but during the election campaign Labor could not even match the \$1 billion that the Coalition offered for Jervis Bay to Sussex Inlet and the Moruya bypass.

On top of that, the Federal Government offered another half billion dollars so we could throw in the Milton-Ulladulla bypass. Labor members could not bring themselves, at any point during the State or Federal campaigns, to say, "Well done; this is a good idea." They had to be dragged, kicking and screaming—for three days it was in the South Coast local papers—in relation to the \$960 million worth of construction that the Government will go to contract on in this term. It was a disgrace. But Labor members have the hide to come into this Chamber and ask, "What about West Dapto?" Construction at West Dapto does not save lives. This is about saving lives.

Let me talk about Labor's track record in this regard. The projects that I have just mentioned recycled capital out of leasing Port Kembla, Port Botany and the poles and wires. Guess who voted against that? Labor. Batemans Bay Bridge was funded through recycled capital but that was voted against by Labor. I do not know how those opposite think this all comes about. The reality is that if a government puts in the hard work and puts the finance in place it will be able to duplicate a highway and save lives. Thirty lives have been lost south of Jervis Bay in the past seven years.

Ms Anna Watson: Between Jervis Bay and the Victorian border. Get your facts right.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Thirty lives. I do not believe there was that degree of crash rate further up the coast on the Princes Highway since it has been duplicated, but I am happy to check. That is where this Government is getting on with things. I thank those opposite for bipartisanship; I am glad they have found it after about 30 years. That is really insightful!

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:42:33): In considering this motion it is important to set the scene. Notice of this motion was given on 8 May. Ten days after that, on 18 May, there was a Federal election. The member for Kiama moved this motion. He stood in this Chamber and pranced about like the King of Sheba, pretending that this is anything but a political stunt. But that is an absolute falsehood. That is why we debate this more in sadness than in anger, because there is genuine bipartisan support for getting something done on the Princes Highway. The motion before the House, excellently amended by the member for Shellharbour, seeks to condemn only one individual—the then Labor candidate. Correct me if I am wrong, but I believe candidates can

do very little but commit to the future. That is exactly what Fiona Phillips has done. She will pursue those commitments even though Labor did not form government at the Federal level.

Mr Gareth Ward: She's done nothing. What has she done?

Mr PAUL SCULLY: She has done something. She has continued to pursue the Morrison Government up hill and down dale because the Federal Government and those opposite will not commit the full amount of money to deal with the Princes Highway. The Coalition is happy for the problems to continue because it is happy to use this place to take cheap shots at candidates who are not even running for the New South Wales Parliament. Those opposite think they can get away with using pathetic motions in this place, which do little but condemn someone, so why did the member for Kiama not condemn the former member for Gilmore? Why did he not condemn the former member for Gilmore in this motion? He should have condemned her track record. After all, on 14 January 2015 the former member for Gilmore described the member for Kiama as "irresponsible and incorrect".

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: My point of order is with respect to relevance. My other point of order is that if the member wishes to have a debate on this issue he should do so by way of substantive motion, as he knows full well. He is drifting from the leave of the motion. I ask that he be brought back to it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Wollongong will confine his remarks to the motion before the House. I remind the member for Kiama that he was extended some latitude in the debate.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I believe this is relevant to the motion because it reflects on a period when there were simultaneous Liberal governments at a State and Federal level and the two members responsible for getting something done on the Princes Highway and along the South Coast—three members if I include the member for South Coast, because she was not great mates with the former member for Gilmore—did nothing. The fact is that the Minister just went through a cavalcade of 16 years of Labor in office—we got stuff done—but he did not say much about the eight years that the Coalition has been office. He said very little about the Coalition's track record. Why? It is because he is too scared to talk about what those opposite have not done.

This motion is an absolute disgrace. It should never have been debated in this place because it is nothing more than a cheap political hit against a candidate and is now outdated. Labor wants to work to get things fixed on the Princes Highway. It disappoints me to report to the House that in the nearly three years I have been a member of this House the member for Kiama—in his great joy and desire for bipartisanship on this issue—has never raised it with me. We have had conversations about Unanderra station, about the WIN Entertainment Centre and about the South Coast rail line but not once about the Princes Highway.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (12:46:40): I congratulate the member for Kiama on bringing this motion forward. I say to the member for Shellharbour that this is not about politicisation. It is not a cheap political stunt because the member for Kiama has always advocated for issues that he is passionate about. He will always do that. I remind the member for Shellharbour that this is about advocacy and passion for the community. Members advocate whenever and wherever they can, and in that way they will get results. The member for Kiama has achieved results.

The member for Wollongong wanted to go back in history and suggested that this Government has done nothing over the past eight years. Maybe he needs a little bit of a history lesson too. Just after its election in 2011 the Government completed the section of Kinghorne Street south to Forest Road, at a cost of \$74 million. In the past eight years the Government has also completed the Burrill Lake Bridge, at a cost of \$59 million, and highway upgrades. The Government completed the Termeil Creek Bridge and highway upgrades of \$21 million. I know members opposite have probably never driven that far south but if they had they would have seen the safety upgrades and the work that has been undertaken—costing millions and millions of dollars—on the Princes Highway, and that is ongoing today.

Why has that happened? It has happened because members have advocated for their communities, as the member for Kiama has done since he was elected to this place. When the Coalition was in opposition—I was elected to this place in 2003—I advocated for upgrades to the Princes Highway. What did I get? Nothing. Not one project in my electorate was undertaken by those opposite. They did not commit to one project. Labor members talked a lot and they had a lot of brochures. Labor produced a lot of brochures on the Berry Bypass, if I remember correctly, and it had a lot of drop-in sessions but it had no money in the budget. The Labor Government did not have the wherewithal to complete one project on the Princes Highway.

So Labor members should not come into this Chamber and accuse anyone on this side of politicising the issue or trying to score political points. That is what those opposite need to do if they want to advocate for their communities. That is the way it is done. It is not the only way, but it is the way of actually getting your point

across to the community, showing that you are passionate about it and then taking up your cause with various Ministers and the Treasurer to try to achieve funding. If you drive along the Princes Highway—

Mr Paul Scully: Talking to your colleagues, even. You haven't mentioned it.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: If the member for Wollongong cares to do that—if he cares to come south and out of his comfort zone up there in Wollongong—he can have a look at Berry to Bomaderry. He can look at the Berry Bypass.

Mr Paul Scully: I am regularly down there. I've been there a lot more than you two, mate.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: We noticed that the member for Port Stephens was on the South Coast last week. She would have seen the upgrades as she was driving through, presumably. There will be more to come—

Ms Kate Washington: I got stuck in traffic.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: Because it is the most popular destination outside Sydney. The member for Port Stephens laughs at that.

Ms Kate Washington: Aside from Port Stephens.

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK: You disagree? Oh dear. I think the fact that the member for Port Stephens does not agree we are the number one tourist destination outside Sydney is not going to go down well in my electorate. The member for Port Stephens should get her facts right. I congratulate the member for Kiama and the member for Bega. We have teamed up and secured a fantastic commitment of \$960 million, which will indeed see upgrading from Jervis Bay Road to Sussex Inlet. We will also see planned works on the Milton-Ulladulla Bypass begin later in this term or at the beginning of next term. We will proceed with works along the Princes Highway. It has always been our aim and our plan, unlike those members opposite, who have never had a plan for anything along the Princes Highway. They are happy to sit there and criticise us and interject. However, they were never happy to advocate for any section of the Princes Highway when they were in government or to support us now while they are in opposition. Shame on you.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (12:50:52): In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of South Coast and Bega for their contributions to this debate. We understand the issues facing the Princes Highway because we live there. We know the issues that are faced by our community. We have come into this place to fight hard to get results. You can talk all you like, but unless you actually demonstrate that you can get things done there is no point being in this place. I cannot extend the same gratitude to the two speakers proffered by the Opposition. I have to say one thing for the member for Shellharbour though: She stuck to the notes that Gino Mandarino wrote for her years ago. I only wish that the member for Wollongong actually read the speeches prepared for him by the staff member who used to work for the member for Shellharbour, because her speech was far more insightful than the verbal diarrhoea that flooded across the table from the member for Wollongong.

The member for Shellharbour talked about the alleged "blowout" on the Albion Park Rail bypass. Yes, it is true that we originally said it would cost \$550 million. However, then we went to this thing that those members opposite do not understand very well—it is called "the market". The market came back and said the cost of the project was \$630 million. The member talks about investing in roads and then complains when we invest in roads. It was an extraordinary contribution—even from her. In relation to the member for Wollongong, I think I will have to get an anthropologist to review that speech. I am not exactly sure what he was trying to achieve. On the issue of bipartisanship, I say to him that you cannot build roads with press releases. You cannot build roads with comments and nonsense in the local media. You build roads by fixing the State economy and by ensuring that we have the funds to invest in infrastructure.

The problem with those opposite is they come into this House and say, "We want to be bipartisan". That would have been great if the Opposition had actually committed any funding. When Labor went to the election it had the opportunity in its Parliamentary Budget Office submission to make a contribution and say what it would do. It did not do that. It had the opportunity to match the \$960 million secured by the member for South Coast and the member for Bega, but it did not do that. It had the opportunity to join me in calling on Canberra—it has never worried me who has been in government federally; whether they have been blue or red, I have taken them on and called them out.

I particularly commend John Hanscombe from the *South Coast Register* for the campaign that the local media has been running—united behind the Fix It Now campaign—to get outcomes. People do not care about the Opposition's press releases and rhetoric. Those opposite wander down to the South Coast. They probably visit a

few wineries while they are there, buy a crate of chardonnay and then make some comments about the Princes Highway. They think because the once great old Labor Party—

Mr Paul Scully: What? So you don't want us to support regional jobs either?

Mr GARETH WARD: Well, there is a great Aldi down there. I am sure Labor members could pop down, get some Aldi bags and pick up some donations while they are there. The Aldi store in Nowra is one of the busiest—there are lots of bags there. They can stuff them full of their dodgy cash and get some donations. Labor members swan down, make a few comments and think they have changed the world. If I were a Labor voter on the South Coast I would be appalled at their performance. I would be appalled because Labor has nothing to say. The Opposition has not matched any of the Government's commitments and its members vote against them in this House. Those opposite say they are for bipartisanship. Why did they vote in this place against the proposals for those highways?

I have not seen any action from the Federal Labor member for Gilmore, Fiona Phillips, on the Princes Highway. I suggest to her that she start making some noise on the Princes Highway and actually get some outcomes and commitments from her party. Every time the shadow infrastructure Minister has stood up in this place he has never matched our commitments. This is the side of the House that gets things done. This is the side of the House that delivers infrastructure. This is the side of the House that understands you need to invest, you need to do the hard work and you need to deliver. People do not believe those opposite; they can see what we have delivered. We will continue to deliver for the South Coast.

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

The House divided.

Ayes39

Noes44

Majority.....5

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dalton, Mrs H
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
O'Neill, Dr M
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T.F.
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N
McGirr, Dr J
Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Saffin, Ms J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
Scully, Mr P
Voltz, Ms L
Zangari, Mr G

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tuckerman, Mrs W
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Saunders, Mr D
Smith, Mr N
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.
Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M
Lindsay, Ms W
Pavey, Mrs M
Preston, Ms R
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

PAIRS

Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Warren, Mr G

Gulaptis, Mr C
Provest, Mr G
Singh, Mr G

Amendment negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The question is that the motion moved by the member for Kiama be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes48
Noes35
Majority.....13

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Coure, Mr M
Davies, Mrs T
Elliott, Mr D
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Lee, Dr G
McGirr, Dr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Preston, Ms R
Sidgreaves, Mr P
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Constance, Mr A
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L.J.
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
Williams, Mr R

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Dalton, Mrs H
Donato, Mr P
Gibbons, Ms M
Hazzard, Mr B
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G
Saunders, Mr D
Smith, Mr N
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D (teller)
O'Neill, Dr M
Saffin, Ms J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Voltz, Ms L
Zangari, Mr G

Bali, Mr S
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T.F.
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Gulaptis, Mr C
Provest, Mr G
Singh, Mr G

Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Warren, Mr G

Motion agreed to.

CARTERS ROAD, LAKE MUNMORAH

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:07:13): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that Carters Road, Lake Munmorah, is a worry, and a danger for residents and parents.
- (2) Notes that the four schools and a childcare centre are on a single lane road that is congested, and is a danger to parents and children.
- (3) Acknowledges that the local community is united and willing to work with the Government and Central Coast Council to resolve ongoing problems at Carters Road.
- (4) Considers that minor changes made to the road in an attempt to address the traffic chaos, including line markings, are insufficient and do not adequately address the problems at Carters Road.
- (5) Calls on the Minister for Transport and Roads to resolve the chaos and imminent danger on Carters Road.

I again bring to the attention of the House the lack of funding for infrastructure in the electorate of Swansea, in particular on Carters Road, Lake Munmorah. The House knows, because I have said it so many times, that the residents of Lake Munmorah have been fighting for a long time to have improvements made to this road. Four schools are situated on this road—Lake Munmorah Public School, Lake Munmorah High School, St Brendan's Catholic Primary School and St Brigid's Catholic College—and a preschool. Thousands of children and family members move in and out of this precinct daily. It is dangerous and the residents and I have had enough. I encourage the Government to fund a study to upgrade this goat track off the Pacific Highway to avoid the traffic chaos at both the morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up times throughout the school year.

It is critically important that the Government stops pushing away its share of the responsibility to fix this very important piece of infrastructure. The Government needs to acknowledge that it has to play a part in fixing this road. Over the past four years the amount of traffic on Carters Road has actually increased, with St Brigid's Catholic College growing to include year 12 students. That means that these students are now driving to and from school on Carters Road. I do not want to talk about parking, but I acknowledge that parking is also a terrible problem. In addition, the threat of motor vehicle accidents on the road is very high.

As representatives of our community, we cannot continue to overlook this serious matter. We need to think seriously about how to ensure that these children and their families are safe on the road. They need to continue to use Carters Road because no-one is suggesting moving any schools. Therefore we need to make the environment safe for school students, their families and their teachers. I note that these schools were approved by State planning or the Department of Education, when it comes to public schools. When planning approvals are given, we need to make sure that there is adequate infrastructure for the number of people using access roads.

I have said it before, but I will say it again: Carters Road is like a goat track. It consists of one lane in and one lane out. We need a solution to the congestion on this road. In 2014 then Wyong council proposed on paper the building of a road with Ausgrid infrastructure to meet up with Tall Timbers Road, which runs parallel with Carters Road. Both of these roads intersect with the Pacific Highway. The council looked at this proposed road as a possible alternative route. This idea and others need to be looked at in overcoming this problem of congestion. I am not a traffic engineer, but I recognise that we need to employ a traffic engineer to conduct a proper study of this road so that we can find the best and most appropriate alternative route to make this precinct safe.

I have met many, many, many times with representatives of Roads and Maritime Services [RMS]. Whilst these meetings have resulted in some minor improvements—for instance, after a long community campaign a left-only lane was installed, which has been helpful and there have been some other line markings—and RMS has been good about fixing traffic lights to ensure that signals are optimally set. But these minor changes have not had any impact on the twice-daily congestion on Carters Road, five days a week during school terms. Last year the council moved a motion saying that Carters Road is a priority road and finding a traffic solution for the road is a priority. I would encourage the State Government to work closely with local government to get this road fixed once and for all, given that this road has been made a priority.

Community members are appealing to the goodwill of the Government and I know that they would appreciate the Government doing something about traffic congestion on Carters Road. Community members feel that they are not being listened to when they express their concerns about Carters Road congestion and I completely understand why they feel like that. The Government simply is not listening. Instead it says, "There's nothing to see here. This is a local council road and we will not be putting any funding into it". Frankly, I find that attitude to the community quite reprehensible.

In this instance, the Government is ignoring the fact that Carters Road is a major road. It also adjoins the Pacific Highway. Carters Road congestion is causing congestion on the Pacific Highway as well, which makes it

a matter for the State Government to address. The reality is that the State Government can find 16 million bucks for a footy grand final, but it cannot fix local infrastructure to make sure that there is a safe environment for the children who attend schools in the Lake Munmorah area and their families. I am disappointed that this Government has not stumped up.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (13:14:20): I contribute to the debate on the motion moved by the member for Swansea. Carters Road is a local road managed by the Central Coast Council. I understand that Carters Road has one lane in each direction and it intersects with the Pacific Highway at Lake Munmorah. The Carters Road, Elizabeth Bay Drive, Pacific Highway intersection is controlled by traffic lights. Adding to the picture is a pedestrian footbridge, which is provided over the Pacific Highway. Carters Road is a no-through road and is the access road for four schools: Lake Munmorah High School, Lake Munmorah Public School, St Brendan's Primary School and St Brigid's Catholic College.

Debate interrupted.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to student leaders from Arthur Phillip High School, Catherine McAuley Westmead and Cumberland High School, who I met in the corridor on my way into the Chamber. They are guests of the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans and member for Parramatta. I welcome Wesley and Vicki Hindmarsh from Kiama, guests of the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and member for Kiama.

I also welcome Councillor Neil Marks from Lismore City Council, his wife, Deborah Marks, and son, Addison Marks, guests of the member for Clarence as well as the Hon. Ben Franklin in the other place. I welcome Tori Bonhomme, who is on work experience with the member for Miranda. I acknowledge Terry Pryor, Doug Saxon and Paul and Caitlin Schofield, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge Parissa Zand and Andrew Johnsen in the gallery, guests of the member for Balmain. I acknowledge and welcome the twenty-third delegation of young political leaders from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The President and I enjoyed meeting them over lunch today. I hope they enjoy their stay.

Announcements

FAMILY FUN DAY 2019

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge all those in the Parliament who contributed to the Family Fun Day last Friday. Over 900 people attended; it was a great success. The barbecue raised \$900 for the charity Fighting Chance. The theme was "Member for a day" and children delivered first speeches in the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council. The most popular rooms were the Presiding Officer's dining rooms—I wonder why that was? The range of activities included role play, children's craft, music, a sausage sizzle, a mystery object guessing competition, a children's trail and access to special places. The dining rooms and other areas were well set for the occasion. The Family Fun Day was only possible with the support of many people in this place. On behalf of all members I thank those people for making sure that day was a success.

Members

MEMBER FOR BALLINA

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Ballina a very happy birthday for this Saturday. I hope she has some wonderful celebrations planned. Her electorate staff are keen to see that she enjoys that day as well.

Question Time

RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:21:37): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Our firefighters and volunteers are heroically performing in northern New South Wales but the Rural Fire Service has entered the bushfire season with 174 permanent full-time vacancies in its professional paid staff.

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

Ms JODI McKAY: How could the Government leave the Rural Fire Service so depleted during the bushfire season?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:22:05): I thank the member for her question. It is a tough question in the sense that now is not the time. It is not the time to be taking a swipe at the NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS], its volunteers or the organisation.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Yesterday I spoke in this House about the fires at Rappville and how the Prime Minister, the Premier, the local member and I had visited this past weekend. On that visit we acknowledged about 1,000 RFS volunteers on the fire front protecting community, assets and life. If not for the heroic efforts of our firefighters, RFS personnel, our men and women, who knows what other losses we may have incurred in this early start to this fire season. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services and I have spoken in this House before about how well-equipped the RFS is in New South Wales. Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons has also spoken about this. It has greater assets and investment than the RFS in any other State jurisdiction. We have resourced our volunteers as best as we can to prepare for what is going to be a very tough summer.

Mr David Elliott: Some \$541 million, an increase of 12 per cent.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That \$541 million is not a number to sneeze at—an increase of 12 per cent. The reality is if those opposite wish to question us in relation to budgets then there is a thing called budget estimates. They had their opportunity to question us then, but chose not to. It is disgusting that members have come to this place today in the midst of some of the worst bushfires, especially with the temperatures and winds that are forecast for the weekend. When I recently visited the electorate of the member for Clarence we held a barbecue to thank those firefighters. It was a small token.

The local member and I turned up with a couple of cases of XXXX, the local butcher put on the free snags and the free meat. All the volunteer firefighters turned up. Some of them had just come straight from the fire front. Some of them had been fighting fires for weeks, if not months. I acknowledge also that the member for Coffs Harbour attended that barbecue. They were pleased to see politicians took time out of their busy day to acknowledge the sacrifice that each and every one of them made. We acknowledge the commitment of those firefighters.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: While I was at that event, and it was no different in Rappville, Drake or Tenterfield, no-one was talking about our firefighters and our RFS personnel lacking the equipment to fight fires—no-one is saying that. What they are saying is thank you to the men and women who are prepared to risk their own lives to save communities. We were in Rappville on the weekend and we met the cleaner of the local school who, when that community was under threat—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: I raise a point of order under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being highly relevant. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Ms Yasmin Catley: There are 174 permanent full-time vacancies. Why will he not fill them?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The world is envious of the RFS because of its 70,000-odd volunteers. Nowhere else in the world will you find an organisation like the Rural Fire Service and I am proud of it. Last week when we were in Rappville we met the local cleaner of the school. She cleaned the hall where a number of people from the small community of 250 residents were evacuated. They congregated in this town hall because they were under threat from fires and she was there looking after that community while her own home burned down. These are the people we have in our communities. These volunteers are heroes who are prepared to do whatever it takes to support their fellow Australians. I will not allow the Leader of the Opposition to come into this place to play politics with an issue that is so live and raw. We have already had loss of lives. If she would like to ask questions about the budget, budget estimates are in February. She may ask those questions then. But do not come here and play politics with regional and rural communities.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge Mary Rooney in the gallery, the aunt of the member for Swansea. In general she should be proud of the member for Swansea, despite her failure to sit down after I had asked her to do so.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (14:27:33): I address my question to the Premier. Will she update the House on how the Government is getting on with the job of delivering world-class infrastructure?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27:45): I thank the member for North Shore for her question. It is a great time to discuss the major infrastructure upgrades we have made across the State in the past week alone. Whilst members on the other side review themselves and look for a new general secretary, we are getting on with the job of governing the people of this great State. In the past week alone I am pleased to say we have wrapped up testing on the light rail from Kingsford and Kensington onwards. Those light rail vehicles are being tested for the first time. Remember when those opposite said this was a vanity project? Wait until it opens! Remember when they could not even build the inner west light rail extension? In fact, when we came to Government those opposite had promised it so many times that we had to rip up the old rail they had laid down because they got it wrong. We had to start from scratch. I know many members of the inner west—

Mr Ryan Park: What about the Rozelle metro?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Wait until I get to that. You know members opposite are in trouble when the member for Balmain supports this Government!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do like the member for Balmain Jamie Parker; he knows that. I will follow up on the interjection from the member for Balmain, but I am also pleased to say that in the past week alone the transport Minister and I were able to see another tunnel boring breaking through at the future Martin Place metro station. This is off the back of the great North West Metro, which is going great guns. Of course, the next stage is being built. As the member for Balmain reminded us, members opposite wasted \$500 million on the CBD to Rozelle metro.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You know the metro is a good thing if the member for Bankstown now wants it in her electorate! She has now said that she wants it.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will remain silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I note many students across the State are starting their HSC today. On behalf of all members I wish them well. On Monday I was with the education Minister at Merrylands Public School, one of seven schools that had a major upgrade at the beginning of term four. We are not only upgrading roads and rail, but also our schools across the State. Seven upgrades have happened across the State: Rose Hill, Quakers Hill, Old Bar, Denistone East, Belmont, Auburn North and Merrylands. These are seven of the more than 30 that we have upgraded, out of a total of 190 to be done in the next four years. Pleasingly, in the past week the Deputy Premier, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister and I announced the acceleration of two new dams in New South Wales. The updates I have provided occurred in the past seven days. I am pleased to say that no matter where you go across this great State there are over 1,520 projects that we are building for the people of New South Wales.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I was also pleased to hear about the job figures that have come out today. I know that the Treasurer will speak today, but I will talk about it while I am here. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the nation at 4.5 per cent. That is 1 per cent lower than the rest of Australia, and 70 per cent of those jobs are full time. When Labor was in office New South Wales had the highest unemployment rate in the nation. That is why we are the party of the workers, we are the party of infrastructure and we are the party of the people of New South Wales. They can do all the reviews they like.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: You have previously ruled on that type of behaviour.

The SPEAKER: I have not ruled against that; it is fine. The Premier may continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is not my fault if Government members are enthused by our progress. That happens naturally. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. If he would like to see me in my chambers I would be happy to discuss with him and explain to him how this is quite different from the ruling I made some weeks ago. That sort of dissent is inappropriate.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Whilst they are reviewing themselves and finding a new general secretary, we are getting on with the job. Out of interest, a colleague just texted me a job application going in the Leader of the Opposition's office. It is a media adviser position that is publicly available on LinkedIn. It says the person will be expected to get across a range of policy issues including infrastructure, transport, health and education. Really? What are they? Has anyone here heard a policy out of those opposite?

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: I raise my point of order under Standing Order 129. This has nothing to do with the question the Premier was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will remain silent. The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am not sure what the job is paying, but I have not heard a policy out of those opposite in a very, very long time.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I digress. We are getting on with doing what we told the people of New South Wales that we would do. We were elected in March; we are getting on with the job—unlike those opposite—and the future of New South Wales is strong and bright.

TWEED HOSPITAL

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:34:36): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. The people of the Far North Coast would like to know whether the Minister will impose paid parking at the new Tweed Hospital.

The SPEAKER: Order! Inappropriate interjections are coming from both sides of the Chamber. Members will remain silent as the Minister commences his answer.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:35:53): I thank the member for Lismore for the question and for her interest in the Tweed Hospital. I am fascinated that the New South Wales Labor Party now has an interest in the Tweed Hospital because it certainly did not have any interest during the election. I remind the member for Lismore that this is the first time that she has uttered the words "the Tweed" to me on anything, but the Labor Party did mention it a lot during the election. What Labor kept saying was, "We don't think this hospital should be built" where professional advisers had determined that it should be built, that is, the Cudgen site. In fact, according to the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister, the hospital should have been built where a developer mate was building—

Mr Geoff Provost: He had an Aldi bag.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: He did—he had a very large Aldi bag.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The health Minister may think this is funny yet again, but it is about paid parking at Tweed Hospital.

The SPEAKER: The Minister started to talk about the hospital, which is relevant, and then he started to get diverted. I will hear further from the Minister.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I remind you that you backed your local candidate, who was the husband of the Federal member of Parliament—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Could you ask the Minister to direct his comments through you?

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Minister should direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: And you—

The SPEAKER: I have just directed the Minister to direct his comments—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: And you—

The SPEAKER: I am serious. Minister, if I give an instruction, I expect you to follow it.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Certainly. Mr Speaker, I indicate to you my great concern that the Leader of the Opposition, who is sitting over there somewhere—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I want the Minister to answer the question that the member for Lismore asked. Does he support paid parking at Tweed Hospital?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The Leader of the Opposition ensured that her candidate, who was the husband of the Federal local member who had received donations from the developer—that is what was determining Labor's interest in the Tweed Hospital site. That was the sum total of its interest.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I am happy for him to do that by way of substantive motion. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. It is actually a really important issue for the Tweed. Can we get back to paid parking? I know the member for Tweed would like the answer to this.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will return to the leave of the question. Paid parking at the hospital was the central part of the question and I ask the Minister to come back to that shortly.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is necessary that there be the setting of the scene so that the Labor Party can be held out to be showing exactly the paucity of its thinking and the nexus it has with developers to try to corruptly get a decision that suits its candidate. The member for Tweed, on the other hand, has a very good connection with his community. The member for Tweed ensured that by going out and talking to doctors—I think Dr Rob Davies, who is the emergency department specialist, and Mike Lindley-Jones, who is one of the other specialists—there was maximum community consultation on that hospital. In the end, did he get a swing of 1 per cent to him?

Government Members: No!

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Did he get a swing of 2 per cent?

Government Members: No!

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Did he get a swing of 3 per cent?

Government Members: No!

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Did he get a swing of 4 per cent in every booth? Yes!

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I am a little sick of the games and the fun that the Minister keeps having on that side of the House when these are incredibly important issues. What he is doing today is confirming that there will be paid parking for the people of the Tweed. If that is not the case, he should use his time to deny that.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I cannot even finish because you took so many points of order. That is why you got chucked out yesterday—points of order that were useless.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has completed his answer.

Mr Ryan Park: He has completed his answer? And you said this is not an important issue for Tweed?

The SPEAKER: The member for Keira will come to order.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:41:42): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government's record-breaking investment in regional infrastructure is helping local communities during the drought?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:42:01): I thank the member for Clarence for his question. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads and Infrastructure, he is someone who has seen the unprecedented investment that this Government is making in communities across regional New South Wales. This is a once-in-a-generation investment in our roads to keep our communities and freight moving. This investment is laying the foundation for a strong future for our regions. It is creating jobs and driving economic activity at a time when our bush is hurting.

Thousands of people are being employed on some of our big road and transport projects across New South Wales. In Dubbo we have started work on a new maintenance facility that will look after our new regional rail fleet—200 jobs will be created during the construction phase. In Gunnedah we are building a new bridge that will create a better freight route for higher mass trucks, which will create more jobs in that community. In Forbes we are building the new Camp Street bridge, which will create another 50 jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members are making more noise than Opposition members.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: We are talking about jobs and, while members opposite might want to mock and make fun of this, these jobs are critical to our communities at a time when they are doing it tough, a time when our communities are suffering from drought. Those opposite want to make jokes and mock the people of regional New South Wales. This is typical of an Opposition that has no understanding of what is happening out there in the country. The member for Clarence also knows that in Grafton we are moving closer to completion of the new Grafton Bridge, which is another project that will transform how traffic flows through that town. It has also created another 420 jobs. Projects like that are keeping our regional economies ticking over, especially when drought has hit our agriculture-related activities so hard.

I know that there are more jobs to be created. I know that the member for Dubbo is excited about the 400 direct and indirect jobs that we will see as a result of supporting the River Street bridge. I also know that the member for Coffs Harbour is excited about the fact that we will create 12,000 direct and indirect jobs as a result of the Coffs Harbour bypass. Every single job counts. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to go to Moree with the local member. We were able to meet the first customer service attendant at Moree train station since 1998—almost 20 years later. Jemma will be there to assist customers and will be the first person to meet many people when they arrive in town.

This Government is investing in infrastructure and services that support our regions' growth. It is creating employment and driving economic activity at a time when our regional communities need it most. Now is the time for this House to throw everything in behind the regions, to forget the politics that divide us and unite behind projects that drive activity and to show our regional communities that we support them. I shake my head at the Opposition because what I have seen from those opposite this week is the exact opposite.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. We have a new highway that goes through my electorate. How many jobs are being created on the new highway, Minister? Tell us how many jobs.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the member for Orange to order for the first time.

Mr Philip Donato: It is going to BMD from Queensland. How many jobs?

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: This is typical. The member can align himself with the Opposition, which does not support our regional communities. What we have seen this week is just pure politics in this place. Members opposite do not want to support dams, they do not want to support water infrastructure and yesterday they had the hide to actually vote against the Right to Farm Bill. They should be embarrassed. They should hang their heads in shame because communities across the State have seen Labor turn its back on them. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Clearly what the Minister was just babbling on about has nothing to do with regional roads. A number of members gave notices of motions in this House today about regional roads and we want to hear about them. We want to hear the Government's plans for funding them.

The SPEAKER: If Opposition members continue to respond as they have done, it will only encourage the Minister. I ask him to focus on the question. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the first time.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 52. Earlier today I commented on Government members' responses to the member at the lectern and you said that was all fine.

The SPEAKER: I did not say everything was all fine.

Mr Clayton Barr: Now you are criticising Opposition members' response to the member at the lectern.

The SPEAKER: As with the member for Keira, after question time I will be happy to explain to you the dynamics behind that particular ruling.

Mr Clayton Barr: Thank you, I appreciate that.

The SPEAKER: Interjections are not fine. I have asked the Minister to return to the leave of the question for the next two minutes. I also ask Opposition members to listen to him and to not respond—it will only encourage him.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: On this side of the House we will continue to focus on supporting our regions in every way that we can. We will continue to build the roads and bridges that will create efficiencies and opportunities for people living in regional New South Wales. We will do that by providing registration waivers on heavy vehicles for primary producers and by helping councils to do maintenance and improvements to ensure heavy vehicle access. We will make it easier to get access permits for the heavy vehicles we need to move food, water and stock efficiently.

Yesterday Labor members were happy to walk out of this House for the benefit of the cameras. When they walk out today, they should reflect on what they have done this week and how their time might have been better spent working with the Government to support bush communities at a time when they need it most. Some of those opposite are deeply embarrassed by their actions yesterday. They were forced to follow the leader, who

claims to care about regional New South Wales, instead of staying put and asking questions about what impacts the people in New South Wales. Clearly the best thing that Labor could do for our regions is to get out of the way and let us continue to represent the people of this State. On this side of the House we will not be distracted by their antics. We will continue to focus on our plans in this State and we will continue to deliver for the people of regional New South Wales.

HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:51:07): My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Today it has been revealed that a convicted sex offender who was hired as a senior investigator at the Health Care Complaints Commission has resigned. Does the Minister stand by the commission's decision to pursue the two staff whistleblowers who discovered that the man was hired without appropriate background checks?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:51:38): I must say—

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: The Minister has indicated a willingness to answer the question, but I seek a future ruling on this matter. We need to be very careful in this Chamber when it comes to whistleblowers. Members opposite should know that better than anybody. I would like clarification in relation to the question, because it is a pretty slippery slope to be sliding down. There is an appropriate forum for these issues in which shadow Ministers can come to Ministers and raise this type of question. I am not convinced that it is appropriate for question time.

The SPEAKER: Is the Minister comfortable with answering the question?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Sure.

The SPEAKER: Please continue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The member has asked a question about the operations of the Health Care Complaints Commission, which is an independent body with oversight roles. It has a parliamentary committee that oversees the Health Care Complaints Commission. As I understand it, these matters were discussed at length before that committee. It is quite inappropriate for the member to ask me, as Minister, what my views are on an independent body in regard to a particular matter that is under review by the Health Care Complaints Commission.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is answering the question seriously. Members will listen to him.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The issue, of course, is challenging and, as I said, has had an extensive review. I can indicate that I have called for information on the issue that the member has raised because, as Minister, I do have concerns. But there are times in this place when a discussion—which has been quite readily available from me with the Labor Party—would have been more appropriate. It is simply not appropriate for me to answer that question in the context of an independent body. It is fascinating that those on the other side of the Chamber talk about corruption. What absolute experts on corruption they are! Let us go back to the subject of the Tweed, since I have an opportunity to talk about the Tweed for a few minutes.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The health Minister was asked a question which he has attempted to answer in relation to the treatment of whistleblowers. That does not now give him licence to talk about absolutely anything.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that the Minister has fully answered the question. He has time left on the clock. He may choose to speak more broadly during that time. That is my ruling with respect to relevance as it applies to the rest of this answer. So long as the Minister stays broadly within the terms of his portfolio I am comfortable for him to continue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Every member who sits in this place on the Labor benches was part and parcel of trying to ensure that a corrupt approach to trying to win the seat of Tweed was at the heart of their campaign to win government. Months later we have seen that corruption is endemic in the Labor Party.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will remain silent. I am happy to take the point of order, but the level of noise in the Chamber is not helping. I warn the member for Baulkham Hills that he may be put on a second call to order.

Mr Greg Warren: I have two points of order. One relates to Standing Order 73 and the other relates to Standing Order 130. Under Standing Order 73 it was fair and reasonable for the Leader of the House to request

any reference to whistleblowers to be followed up. That is great. But it is equally fair and reasonable for the Minister not to refer to any kind of corruption allegations or anything like that, which are outside his portfolio.

The SPEAKER: I will rule on that point of order. The member's reference to Standing Order 130 is frivolous, and I will not uphold it. With respect to Standing Order 73, the Minister has made no comments in relation to individuals. I have made it clear that generic criticisms of a party do not fall within Standing Order 73.

Mr Greg Warren: Further to the point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. The member has had a good go. The Minister for Health will continue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: This Labor Party knows more about corruption than any other party in political history because it is a master of corruption.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the member for Campbelltown.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. It is inappropriate for the Minister to refer to any member in this House with false allegations that are unfounded and not substantiated. If he wishes to do so then he should do so via a substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Standing Order 73 states:

Imputations of improper motives and personal reflections on Members of either House are disorderly other than by substantive motion.

As I have ruled previously, if the Minister makes comments about the Labor Party—or any group of people—in general and does not personalise it, that is not imputing motives or making personal reflections on individual members. It is a general accusation. Any attempt to personalise those types of comments would not be appropriate. I am happy to hear further on the point of order because it is a serious area, which I do not take lightly.

Mr Greg Warren: Further to the point of order: On 20 August, you made a ruling that went to the heart of the credibility and the personal attacks coming from those opposite. You referred to Standing Order 130 as well as Standing Order 73. You were right to do so with those subsequent rulings. However, all that I reasonably request is that you enforce your ruling on the Minister and those opposite.

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. I refer the member to Standing Order 130, which he may be misconstruing. The Minister will continue.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I did not realise that the member for Campbelltown was so across the detail of corruption. I did not think he could get points of order so wrong. The problem is that the Labor Party endorsed a particular member in the other place to go up to the Tweed, despite the fact that he was a former chief of staff to Justine Elliot, and try to do a dirty deal with a developer to take away what the community had been properly consulted about.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister has indicated that he has finished his answer. I call the member for Auburn to order for the second time. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. I call the member for Ku-ring-gai to order for the first time. I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:01:25): My question is addressed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is cleaning up the State?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:01:44): The Government is doing that by keeping Labor out of office. There is nothing more toxic for the people and the environment of New South Wales than the party of those opposite. All morning they have been banging on about cleaning up the environment but the Leader of the Opposition cannot even clean up the Labor Party. In the morning she was Jumping Jodi when it comes to banning the bag but she is Missing McKay when it comes to kicking out Kaila.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Kate Washington: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being remotely relevant to the question that was asked. It was about energy and the environment.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is making introductory comments. I am happy for him to proceed on that basis.

Mr MATT KEAN: The Government is cleaning up the State by stopping Labor getting into office. Is it any wonder that the Leader of the Opposition would not kick out Kaila? Cover-up Kaila Murnain delivered bags of votes to the Leader of the Opposition and her reward is leaving with bags of cash.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: We all heard that.

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

Mr Ryan Park: It relates to Standing Order 73. I am assuming the Speaker heard that and I ask: Is that an imputation of an improper motive to the member for Strathfield, the Leader of the Opposition?

The SPEAKER: I invite the member to be more specific. The Minister will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: Cover-up Kaila delivered bags of votes to the Leader of the Opposition and her reward was to get bags of cash—in fact, seven Aldi bags of cash.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: I say this with great respect and with great seriousness. I hope the Minister listens. This is Mental Health Week. With respect to the person that the Minister is referring to, he should be very careful—

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

Mr David Harris: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is not about the environment. I want to caution people that they should be very careful about what they say in the current climate.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister to continue. I will not remark on the comment made by the member for Wyong. However, I warn the Minister not to breach Standing Order 73.

Mr MATT KEAN: We are doing lots of things to clean up the environment. We have the Return and Earn scheme in New South Wales, the biggest plastic reduction scheme in the State's history. What have we done? We have delivered to recycling 2.5 billion containers that are not going into parks, not going into rivers, not going into beaches. The Return and Earn scheme has been great for the environment but it is also been great for community groups. Many community groups and charities have benefited from the Return and Earn scheme. I was delighted to get a request from the Leader of the Opposition for a charity to benefit from the Return and Earn scheme called "Kick a Can for Kaila" to knock over \$700,000 that her payout is going to get—

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will take the point of order of the member for Canterbury.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I am very interested —

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been relevant. In fact, he has come back to being relevant.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: I am very interested to hear about what the Government is doing in terms of the environment.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has come back to the leave of the question.

Mr MATT KEAN: We have got the Waste Less, Recycle More initiative. It is an \$800 million initiative to make sure that we are recycling more and wasting less. It is a great thing. We want to see more recycling and improvement of our environment. We have been talking a bit about bans recently. I was very happy that the Environmental Protection Authority [EPA] stepped in to ban a mixed waste organic output product that resulted in pesticides, PFAS and plastic going into the soils from which our food is grown. That has been welcomed by environment groups and Local Government NSW.

I congratulate the new President of Local Government NSW, the outstanding Linda Scott, who is doing a fantastic job. She stated that "local government strongly supports banning this process". She said, "You can't take chances with people's health." Who wants to take chances with people's health? The shadow environment Minister, who supports the use of mixed waste organic output being distributed on our farms. That great journalist from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the Deputy Premier's favourite, Peter Hannam, quotes the shadow environment Minister saying:

This Liberal-National Government has a history of slapping on bans without listening or working through the consequences.

What did she ask for this morning? A ban on the single-use plastic bag, in isolation from other plastics. [*Extension of time*]

We support a comprehensive plastics strategy in New South Wales. It is not just plastic bags. That is not the silver bullet. It needs to be done, but so too do other plastics. We do need a comprehensive plastics strategy that includes more recycling and education. That is exactly what I am going to take to Cabinet. That is exactly what I am going to take to the party room and that is exactly what we are going to take to Parliament.

Ms Kate Washington: It's been 8½ years and you don't even have a discussion paper yet.

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

Mr MATT KEAN: Well, you talk about a discussion paper. There is one discussion paper I am looking forward to reading and that is Michael Lavarch's discussion paper into the corrupt conduct of the ALP. Let us talk about discussion papers.

Mr Paul Scully: Point of order: I refer you to a ruling by an excellent Speaker in the past, when on Monday you directed a Minister to be relevant to the question.

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

Mr Paul Scully: It was Speaker O'Dea. I ask you to repeat that and direct the Minister to be relevant to the question, too.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: I cannot wait for Michael Lavarch's discussion paper. I can see the title now: "What to do with a corrupt party". In Labor, you do not get penalised for lying to ICAC.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 59, tedious repetition and irrelevance. The Minister is flouting your previous ruling and directive to him.

The SPEAKER: What was that ruling?

Mr Greg Warren: You called the Minister to come back to the question. You gave him extra time but called him back to order.

The SPEAKER: The Minister did come back to the leave of the question.

Mr Greg Warren: He continues to inappropriately refer to—

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. In relation to Standing Order 59, the Minister is not being tediously repetitious. The Minister will continue.

Mr MATT KEAN: In Jodi McKay's Labor Party you do not get penalised for lying to ICAC; you get paid for it. Some \$700,000 of union fees, of members' fees and of levies paid for by the members of those opposite—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Yasmin Catley: You clearly have to agree that this—

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: It is obvious—

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: —to everybody here that the Minister is not answering the question.

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

Ms Yasmin Catley: It relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Ms Yasmin Catley: I say to the Minister, talk about the environment because it is important.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Or maybe you could just send us all a text.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea is pushing it again. Please do not continue to talk at the table after I have asked you to stop.

Mr MATT KEAN: I am happy to talk about the environment. I am happy to talk about the political environment. I am happy to talk about the fact that lying to ICAC, breaking the law and covering up a crime does not get penalised in Jodi McKay's ALP; it gets paid.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Minister is conducting himself in a grossly inappropriate manner. It is grossly inappropriate and unparliamentary. I ask you to call him back to order.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired.

FRANK BAXTER JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (15:10:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services in his capacity as the Minister for youth justice. After the riot at the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre on 21 and 22 July the Minister announced an independent inquiry by former NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Lee Shearer. Given that the report was due on 21 August and the Minister has now received it along with the recommendations, why has this report not yet been released and when will he release it?

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services) (15:11:28): Thank you very much. I have been waiting 198 days for this question. It has taken those opposite 198 days to ask me a question. It might interest members to know I have got not one, not two, not three, not four but five shadow Ministers. It is almost a fair fight. Seeing as this is the first opportunity I have had to respond to a question from the Opposition, I take the opportunity to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition. However, I need to defend her. There was recently an article that reflected on her sartorial selection. I was appalled by some of the comments that were made by those opposite. It is appropriate that when she goes to an Indian event she dresses in a sari; when she goes to an Asian event she dresses in a sarong. I suggest that means when she goes to a shadow Cabinet meeting she dresses as a clown.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order from the member for Liverpool. However, I point out that the Minister is making preliminary comments.

Mr Paul Lynch: We are 20 per cent into the answer and he has not gone anywhere near it. He has been waiting so long for a question; maybe he should try and answer the question. My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

Mr GARETH WARD: You are going to get the answer you deserve. You are going to get the answer. Sit down, comrade.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is making preliminary comments, but he will come to the question shortly.

Mr GARETH WARD: I certainly will. I thank my friend and colleague the member for Lakemba for his question. As the member for Lakemba knows—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

You are a marked man now. Recently, in an act of bipartisanship, the member for Lakemba and I visited the Frank Baxter juvenile detention centre. The feedback from the staff was wonderful. They said to me that they were grateful to see both sides of politics standing there to support them. I extended that olive branch to the member for Lakemba and I am pleased that he accepted it. I very much appreciate his bipartisanship on this issue. As members of the House would be aware, on 21 and 22 July there was a serious incident at Frank Baxter. What occurred there was unacceptable. As a result, I commissioned an independent review into that matter by former NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Lee Shearer.

I have received that report. As I said at the time, we would take some time to consider the more than 60 recommendations. It is a comprehensive report. I have spoken to Stewart Little from the Public Service Association [PSA] in relation to a number of items. In fact, the PSA requested that I contact Corrections to do a safety audit of the six facilities. That has been done. I thank my friend and colleague the corrections Minister,

who has been incredibly helpful. He has also assisted with engaging the Special Operations Group in a memorandum of understanding. We appreciate that support. The Government will respond to the recommendations.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: When?

Mr GARETH WARD: Shortly. Obviously, these matters need to go through appropriate Cabinet processes. Once I have had the opportunity to do that, of course we will respond. I note the genuine interest of the member and I thank him for that. We want to see fewer children in Youth Justice. Since this Government has been in office we have seen record low numbers in Youth Justice; a 40 per cent reduction. I am very proud of that reduction. It is very good news. The programs that we are running, particularly the early intervention programs like Youth on Track and the Bail Assistance Line, are working. We are about to conduct a review of the Young Offenders Act to ensure that we work across all government agencies to reduce young offending. No-one wants to see young people in prison, but when they are we want to ensure that we respond appropriately.

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

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being highly relevant. This is not an opportunity to speak. I have heard the member's point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: The question was: When?

The SPEAKER: The Minister has answered that question. The member will resume his seat. The Minister has the call.

Mr GARETH WARD: There is no such thing as a silly question. There is, however, such a thing as an inquisitive idiot.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Lakemba has the call.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. I have given the call to the member for Lakemba, to whom the comment was directed. The member for Canterbury will remain silent.

Mr Jihad Dib: We cop this rubbish every single day. We get told here—I have every right to speak.

Mr GARETH WARD: That is not a point of order.

Mr Jihad Dib: Sit down.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. I have given the member for Lakemba the call. He should direct his comments through the Chair calmly and briefly.

Mr Jihad Dib: First and foremost, we hear the Government often talk about bipartisanship.

The SPEAKER: I do not want to hear a speech. Are you asking for the comment to be withdrawn?

Mr Jihad Dib: I would expect it to be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: I will address that. Will the Minister withdraw the comment?

Mr GARETH WARD: The truth cannot be withdrawn.

Mr Jihad Dib: Is that how you want to play, Gareth?

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will restart the clock. I am happy to take a further point of order.

Mr GARETH WARD: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Is the Minister withdrawing the comment?

Mr GARETH WARD: I am happy to withdraw in the interests of moving on.

The SPEAKER: The comment has been withdrawn. I will allow the Minister to continue. The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. I make the observation to the Minister—

Mr GARETH WARD: You are a grub.

Ms Anna Watson: I'm a grub? Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour has appropriately sought the call and she has the call.

Ms Anna Watson: Yesterday you threw the member for Canterbury out of the House for a mere whisper, and today we are witnessing an obscene amount of noise from the Government side and not one person has been called to order. I ask: At which point will consistency be applied to the House?

The SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat. I place the members for the electorates of Baulkham Hills, Kiama and Ku-ring-gai on one call to order.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: There were several personal abuses. It was an exceptional answer, before the Minister ruined it at the end.

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

Mr Chris Minns: The personal abuse at the end, in addition to the comment he levelled at the member for Lakemba, should be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has withdrawn that comment, as he should have initially. If the Minister makes those types of comments he can expect the response he is receiving from Opposition members. The Clerk will restart the clock.

Mr GARETH WARD: I did withdraw. As I was saying, in the spirit of bipartisanship I appreciated the visit and I will be briefing the shadow Minister on our response when the Government has finalised its response to all the recommendations. I thank the shadow Minister.

STATE ECONOMY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:19:09): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer inform the House on how the culture of an organisation is important to its success and boosting the New South Wales economy?

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: There are two parts to the point of order. Firstly, there were two questions, not one. Secondly, most of the question relates to matters entirely outside the Treasurer's portfolio and therefore is invalid under Standing Order 126 and Standing Order 128.

The SPEAKER: I am satisfied that it is one question that relates to success and boosting the New South Wales economy. I am happy to hear further.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: Which members on the Government side are on calls to order, compared to members on the Opposition side? I am interested.

The SPEAKER: I am happy to clarify that at the end of question time. I have given members the names of Government members who are on calls to order. Opposition members who are on calls to order are the member for Londonderry, who is on three calls to order; the member for Auburn, who is on two calls to order; and the member for Keira who is on two calls to order. The member for Orange, who is on the crossbench, is on two calls to order. The Minister has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (15:20:32): I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question. I start with my own question: How much does it cost to become the Labor Leader of the Opposition? Is it \$700,000? Seven Aldi bags in Labor currency? I am still getting through the exchange rate. Who on that side of the House believes Kaila should have got \$700,000 in a payout? Who believes? There you go. I was trying to help the Opposition yesterday. I was trying to save them some money. I am the most benevolent Treasurer in all the land. I find savings here. I was trying to find savings there.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Hold on. The Opposition could not find \$250,000 for McGurk's blood money, but it could find \$700,000 for "Cover-up" Kaila.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to both Standing Order 73 and Standing Order 129. There cannot possibly be a question asked that could have an answer like that. For the answer to be so—

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. I have made it very clear that Standing Order 73 is totally inappropriate. In relation to Standing Order 129, I ask the Minister to return to the leave of the question. He has made enough preliminary comments.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I think we can all believe in the culture that New South Wales is Australia's most exceptional State and Sydney is our most exceptional city. We are not a suburban city, we are a global city. We are the birthplace of modern Australia and the economic heartbeat of our country. We have unique strengths that no other State can match, with a strong and diversified economy. When New South Wales goes

well, Australia goes well. We are home to some of Australia's biggest and best world-leading businesses; retailers like Westfield, innovators like Cochlear and ResMed, financial giants like Macquarie Bank and tech pioneers like Atlassian.

The one thing that all of these successful organisations has in common is a strong internal culture. According to the *Harvard Business Review*—Minnsy will like this one—culture is one of the most important attributes in any organisation; the values, rituals and ways of doing things that integrate people together. I meet many business people and Macquarie Bank CEO Shemara Wikramanayake told the media that her company has a "wonderful internal culture" based on merit. Virgin Australia former CEO John Borghetti was able to transform his organisation by transforming its culture. One of the most famous start-ups, Atlassian, right here in Sydney, attributes much of its success to its alternative company culture which focuses on teamwork and customer service. The Sydney Startup Hub and the Sydney Swans—they reckon they won the 96 championship because of the change in their internal culture.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: If members want to experience great culture in action they should go to Service NSW. In the old Labor days of the Roads and Transport Authority, just like in the movie *Zootopia* with the sloths map, that is what it was like under Labor. Walk into Service NSW and see the customer service success. The flipside is that organisations that fail tend to have a very bad culture. I am trying to think of one. Any ideas? I will give you a hint: lost the last three State elections, lost the last three Federal elections. It begins with an "L" and ends with "abor". A corruption scandal has seen obscene amounts of cash, straw donors, fake invoices, fake testimonies, Aldi bags and wine boxes. What has the response been? There is to be a review conducted by a former Labor politician, Michael Lavarch. They call him Professor Lavarch, but he is Labor Lavarch.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: I refer again to Standing Order 129, with regard to what the Treasurer is talking about now.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer is being relevant to the question. I will hear from him further.

Mr Clayton Barr: He is responsible for the State's finances.

The SPEAKER: The member for Cessnock will note that I am not pulling up members for interjecting. The Treasurer is being relevant to the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It comes to culture, and what the Liberal-Nationals Government has done in New South Wales is change the culture of the public service that was falling away under the previous Government. That has delivered record infrastructure and great service delivery right across the board. That comes down to leadership from our great Premier and goes through our secretaries to the front line of public services in this great State. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: Mr Speaker, the alternative, wannabe Speaker is making so much noise that I cannot hear the Treasurer. I ask you to direct him to be quiet.

The SPEAKER: The member for Maitland has asked that members on both sides of the House be quiet so that she can hear the answer, which is an appropriate request. When a Minister makes a political attack on the Opposition, I am less inclined to pull up members who are interjecting or making comments. I do not know whether members have made that observation. However, when the Minister returns to the leave of the question I will ask members to remain silent. I remind the Treasurer that he has been extended a fair amount of latitude. I ask that he does not give us two minutes of attack. Please be relevant.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I have been pretty soft, Mr Speaker. The culture is important. Talking about Labor's culture, Premier Nathan Rees—who is a great man—said, "At the end of the day, you can have all the rules and recommendations you like, but none of that matters unless the culture changes." How right he is. Labor MLC Anthony D'Adam—who is apparently a member in the other place—said, "Our unethical culture has meant the party selects the wrong people for the wrong reasons." Maybe like him. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition, when asked whether Kaila Murnain deserved a \$700,000 payout, said, "Yes, because she was only 27 when she took up the role." At what age do Labor members learn what is right and what is wrong? We had Tim Fischer elected at 24, as we heard yesterday.

Mr Paul Scully: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Paul Scully: Mr Speaker, about a minute ago you asked the Treasurer not to proceed with two minutes of attack. I ask you to uphold your ruling and bring him back to the question.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer is less than halfway through that two minutes and I am listening. The Treasurer may continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Who else is going to get a payout? Is Milton getting a payout on the way out as well? Today we have a statement from Kaila Murnain that talks about the nasty culture of sexism in the Labor Party. Importantly, she talks about banning cash donations and other reforms. In this statement Kaila Murnain sums up everything that is wrong with the Labor Party—no responsibility, no accountability, no credibility.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: It has been drawn to the Government's attention that mental health issues could be at stake here. I think the Treasurer is going well beyond making a political attack to launching a personal attack on someone—

The SPEAKER: It is not outside the standing orders to make an attack on someone outside this House.

BMD GROUP

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:28:55): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Roads, and Leader of the House. Will the Minister explain to the residents of Forbes and Gilgandra shires why the Government awarded procurement contracts to Queensland-based BMD Group to construct overtaking lanes on the Newell Highway, whilst bypassing local councils and contractors for employment opportunities that would have kept desperately needed New South Wales taxpayer dollars in our rural and regional drought-stricken communities instead of profiting big interstate businesses?

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:29:50): First of all, to clarify things for the member for Orange, I am actually not the responsible Minister. That would be the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the standing order?

Mr Philip Donato: It is Standing Order 129. If the Minister is too scared to answer the question, I will ask Paul Toole. I do not care. Are you too scared to answer it?

The SPEAKER: The member for Orange will resume his seat. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure will continue. Government members will remain silent.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Again, to help out the member for Orange, I understand that he met with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads about this.

Mr Philip Donato: I did.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: So why are you asking me this question? Did you not ask him the question?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Nationals members on the front bench will remain silent.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let me get this straight: The member for Orange has asked the wrong Minister a question and he cannot remember meeting the responsible Minister about the issue he has raised. He is not a very bright fellow, is he? On that score, I am happy to help out, mate. This Government has thrown half a billion bucks at the Newell Highway to combat challenges in relation to flooding, for instance. I know the previous roads Minister, Duncan Gay, made it crystal clear when there was a major disaster on that road—it was shut for about six to seven weeks—that this Government would invest very heavily in the road.

This Government is investing to make sure that there are 30 overtaking lanes on that road, given the high volume of trucks that travel between Brisbane and Melbourne and the road's strategic importance to the State. Part of the question was about contractors. Guess what head contractors do? They employ local people and local subcontractors. To enlighten the House, there is a capacity constraint because this Government has got on with so many roadworks in this State that we need to rely on head contractors nationwide to come to New South Wales to deliver the 40,000 jobs that we are delivering in regional New South Wales right now.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: We are in the middle of a drought and we are building roads, building ports, getting on with delivering rail and yet the member for Orange asks this type of question.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.

Mr Philip Donato: I refer to Standing Order 129. The question was specifically in relation to the Newell Highway and giving local councils the opportunity to tender for the jobs, which did not happen.

The SPEAKER: The member for Orange will come to order. The Minister is being relevant to the question. He may continue. The member for Orange will resume his seat.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It was very kind of the member for Kogarah to give the member for Orange, who is a member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, a seat on the Labor frontbench because that is where they belong at the moment.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Philip Donato: It is taken under Standing Order 129. How is that at all relevant to the question?

The SPEAKER: The member has just taken that point of order. The Minister has said nothing since the last point of order. The member for Orange will resume his seat. I will not hear another point of order from the member for Orange because I believe he is trying to get thrown out of the Chamber. He will stay in his seat and not take another point of order. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Just to help out, old mate, we have about 12,000 contracts on the road across the State. The Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, who is managing this project, just indicated to me that the council did actually run through the contract processes. And guess what?

[A Government member interjected.]

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Orange to cease interjecting. I will hear the point of order from the member for Swansea. There was a comment from the Government benches that I did not hear. But if it was inappropriate, I am happy to hear the point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock. I cannot hear all the comments in the Chamber because there is too much noise. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: The water Minister has twice now made very disparaging remarks about the member for Orange. I ask that she withdraw those remarks.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the remarks. They will not be put on the record. If there were comments of that nature, I ask the Minister to desist from making them.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: To help everybody out here, particularly the member for Orange, the project has been brought forward from eight years to four years—tick. Workshops are going to happen in the next month in Peak Hill and Parkes—tick. And guess what? There will be more job opportunities for locals than there ever were before because the Liberal-Nationals Government knows what to do in regional New South Wales. We do not go and form silly alliances to knock out legislation and regulations in this place, as the Shooters are doing currently with The Greens and the Labor Party in the upper House. The Shooters vote one way in this place and in a very different way in the other place.

Mr Roy Butler: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Let's have a look at the RMS bill. Let's have a look at music festivals. Let's go on and on and on. Come down and fire up, mate.

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

Mr Roy Butler: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is an important issue. This is about employment and money in regional communities. It is being played with instead of being answered.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There is a good member of the Shooters party. The only good member of the Shooters party is Roy Butler because he is in here fighting for his community, unlike this character. Give me another two minutes, mate.

Mr Philip Donato: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Orange seek an extension of time?

Mr Philip Donato: I seek an extension of time. I want an answer to the question. As the member for Barwon said, this is an important issue in our community. I want a proper answer.

The SPEAKER: The member for Orange will resume his seat. I grant a two-minute extension. I remind the member for Orange that I will hear no further points of order from him.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Given the emotion in the room, let me help everybody out. I reiterate that we are moving the project from eight years to four years. That is important—tick. We are having workshops next month at Peak Hill and Parkes—tick. That is about more local jobs because the reality is when you have a head contractor they come in and employ local people. It does not matter if it is the Newell Highway, Batemans Bay Bridge, Princes Highway, Pacific Highway—you name it. It is all about local jobs.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I thank the member for Barwon for taking that point of order because he is talking about local jobs and we are all passionate about that too.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: If you look at the record of the Liberals and The Nationals in terms of delivering regional infrastructure in a time of drought, we have created 40,000 jobs because of road projects like the Newell Highway that employ local people. That has made a world of difference, and it has to continue.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I do not understand the dynamics between the member for Orange and playing it up for local government, but local government likewise has a lot of projects to get on with in regional New South Wales employing local people. There is no doubt that the half a billion dollars that is going into this road project to deliver 30 overtaking lanes and obviously futureproof the road as best as possible is key.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am bewildered by the question from the member for Orange this afternoon. I thank him for his time and for his sensible question. I have given him a very sensible answer for his community to understand.

WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES AIR SERVICES

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:39:21): My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is supporting north-western communities through the reinstatement of critical air services?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will wait for silence.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (15:39:55): I thank the member for Dubbo for his question and his strong advocacy on behalf of his community of Dubbo, particularly Dubbo City Regional Airport. A huge investment is going into that airport. The member for Dubbo plays an important role in the economic development of his community and in the Central West. This week in Parliament we have heard a lot about what is going on—and rightly so—and the stress and strain that rural communities are under. We have heard a lot about the devastation that this drought is causing. Too often in the commentariat and in this place we focus on the hardships and difficulties being confronted by country communities and forget to highlight some of the wonderful things that are happening in country New South Wales.

One of the wonderful things happening in the electorate of the member for Barwon is the reinstatement of critical air services to a number of communities. This is an opportunity to bring back not only those services that connect with Sydney, but also the hope and opportunity that they bring that economic development and tourism dollars will be injected into those communities. In August this year I had the great pleasure of returning to Cobar Airport with the Mayor of Cobar, Lilliane Brady, the Mayor of Bourke, Barry Hollman, and the Mayor of Walgett, Manuel Martinez, the respective general managers and representatives of their communities to announce the culmination of a lot of hard work between the New South Wales Government and the Far West Joint Organisation, which includes the councils of Cobar Shire, Bourke Shire and Walgett Shire.

We will utilise an \$8 million investment from the State Government to reinstate air services. These services are returning, in some cases, after a 12-year hiatus. They create critical links into Dubbo and further on to Sydney for those regional communities. Each and every week 26 air services will link Bourke, Cobar, Walgett and Lightning Ridge to Dubbo and also link Cobar to Sydney. Combined, they will carry about 14,000 seats per year from the Far West into Dubbo and Sydney, unlocking further opportunities for growth and tourism and

helping to bridge the geographic divide between those communities, the capital city and Dubbo. At the moment for people in Cobar, as the member for Barwon knows, it is about a four-hour drive into Dubbo and then a further flight to Sydney. Now people in Cobar have the opportunity to jump on a beautiful 19-seat Jetstream aircraft from FlyPelican and be in Sydney in an hour and 20 minutes. There is a return service as well. It is much more convenient.

Thanks to the hard work of the joint organisation, investment by this Government and legal support provided by this Government to negotiate between the Far West Joint Organisation and those air service providers, we have negotiated a community fare for those services. For every flight, there will be at least six community fare options—for locals only. They are not for politicians or public servants who live outside the community. They are reserved for locals as cheaper fares. Those fares will save locals about \$100 per one-way flight and get bums on seats because, as we know, without people using the services into the long term they will not be sustainable. I am happy to report that I was in Cobar with the Deputy Premier very recently, utilising that service. It is a very comfortable service—so much so that I think the Deputy Premier caught up on a bit of rest on the flight out and the flight back. It was a very smooth flight.

I am happy to report that the service is incredibly well patronised, with an occupancy average around 60 per cent—which is very positive at this early stage. Those services begin early next month and extend from Bourke, Walgett and Lightning Ridge into Dubbo using a smaller seven-seat aircraft provided by a company called Air Link. The FlyPelican service began a number of weeks ago and has been incredibly successful. I congratulate the mayors from each of those councils who have worked very closely with the State Government. This stands out as a great news story at a time when there is a lot of desperation, a lack of hope and few good news stories in country New South Wales. Congratulations to all.

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**.

*Members***LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

At 15:45 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to elect a member to fill a seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. Niall Blair, resigned.

At 15:59 the House reassembled.

The SPEAKER: I report that the House met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber this day for the purpose of electing a person to hold the place in the Legislative Council rendered vacant by the resignation of the Hon. Niall Blair and that Samuel Jacob Faraway has been duly elected. I table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting. I order that the document be printed.

*Petitions***SYDNEY'S NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY**

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

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:00:22): The member for Sydney is unavailable today because he is supporting an important international bid, and I speak on his behalf to accept and promote this petition which has been received by the Parliament. It is important that we recognise the incredible effort that has been undertaken by so many people throughout Sydney and New South Wales to have this petition come before us today. Only two members in this House voted against the proposal for lockouts—myself and the member for Sydney. The Greens were the only political party in New South Wales that voted against the introduction of this law, which we now see has had so many negative consequences. The Labor Party and the Coalition voted in favour of the lockout. We have seen over the years very positive acknowledgement that this needs to be changed, and that is why the petitioners brought this to us. I will highlight the details of this petition:

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. The Petition of the residents and visitors to Sydney's CBD brings to the attention of the House the issue of the 2014 amendments to the Liquor Act 2007 and the Liquor Regulation 2008. The amendments allowed regulations to prescribe precincts and impose conditions on licensed premises within those CBD precincts relating to patron lock out times and drinking restrictions.

The undersigned petitioners therefore petition the Legislative Assembly to withdraw those regulations and allow Sydney's CBD return to being a 24 hour city.

At the time of the introduction of these amendments in 2014, the member for Sydney and I spoke very strongly on this. We highlighted the importance of this issue for all the people in New South Wales because the matter is important for people not only in the CBD but all over New South Wales. It is a measure of the community's concern that almost 22,000 signatures have been gathered to keep Sydney open. I acknowledge the work of Keep Sydney Open—the movement and then the political party. These signatories have demanded smarter solutions for our city, solutions that will keep Sydney safe and open. They come from Sydney's music, arts and creative communities, venues and businesses within Sydney, as well as locals who want to live in a vibrant late-night city.

The tragic nature of the incidents that took place in our city and that the Government used as justification for the introduction of these laws is undeniable. Let us be clear: There are serious concerns about alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour that need to be addressed in our community. Signatories to this petition know that there is a need to address those safety concerns. They do not want the streets of Sydney to be unsafe, but they also know that the solution is not to close the doors of the city at midnight. A lockdown does not deal with the root causes of this problem or address the problem with any specificity, but it does punish everyone who makes a living in or enjoys Sydney's vibrant night-time culture.

The Government's response to the tragic acts of violence has not been about proper planning and licensing controls to prevent the saturation of venues in small areas. It has also not been about further constraining the alcohol industry or the city's casinos, which have been carved out of these laws. I agree that the statistics show that there are now fewer violent incidents in the lockout zones and, at this juncture, I want to acknowledge the role of the emergency services—the paramedics, nurses and doctors who are tasked with cleaning up the mess of alcohol-fuelled violence on our streets. There is no doubt that the lockout laws have provided a circuit breaker for the escalating violence and antisocial behaviour associated with late-night hotspots, but they cannot sustainably be retained as standard conditions if we are going to have a vibrant and diverse city at night.

Too many venues have already closed and more will shut their doors if these laws persist because the laws are an incredibly blunt instrument. Different late-night communities and cultures exist across Sydney and New South Wales. In Byron Bay, in the Ballina electorate, for example, there have been violent incidents, but following extensive local and detailed community consultation that community put in place tougher restrictions which the community supports. These lockouts should not have been applied to well-managed venues, small bars

and live music and entertainment venues. Those venues that do not contribute to violence and antisocial behaviour but help civilise our night-time culture should not be subject to the same level of restrictions as those with a history of violence and poor management. I encourage the Parliament to adopt this petition and recognise that change must happen. I know there has been some progress, but more needs to happen, and happen soon.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:05:43): The New South Wales Government recognises there is strong community interest in the regulatory measures applying to licensed premises in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross precincts. That interest comes from people who work and perform in licensed venues, patrons and others who are also involved directly and indirectly in Sydney's night-time economy. The broad level of interest in Sydney's night-time economy is reflected in the 10,000 signatories who signed the petition to remove the precinct-based liquor trading conditions that was lodged by the member for Sydney.

Precinct-based regulatory interventions have been imposed in parts of New South Wales that have historically experienced unacceptably high levels of alcohol-related violence, including the Kings Cross and Sydney CBD precincts. They allow tailored regulatory measures to be imposed on licensed premises across a precinct in a standardised way to help reduce risk to public safety across a geographic area as a whole and provide local solutions to local problems. The Government recognises that these measures were put in place at a point in time when existing regulatory controls were viewed as insufficient to address unacceptable levels of alcohol-related violence and the evidence indicated that further targeted action was needed. I am pleased that these additional measures have been successful in reversing that worrying trend of alcohol-related violence.

We fully appreciate the complexity of the current regulatory arrangements, which reflect that historically special licence conditions in the precincts were imposed in response to specific local issues in each precinct at different points in time. Many special conditions in the Kings Cross precinct were originally introduced as part of implementing a plan of management to address issues in that precinct back in 2012, with the patron ID scanning requirements later introduced for that precinct in 2013, and subsequently lockout laws in 2014. In contrast, many special conditions in the Sydney CBD entertainment precinct were only imposed in 2014 when that precinct was newly defined and a plan of management addressing the issues in that precinct was implemented.

Over the past few years the Government has taken steps to repeal, clarify, consolidate and amend the special conditions from time to time to respond to review findings, new evidence and community expectations. We also appreciate that it is important for these types of approaches to be reassessed as precincts change and adapt, taking into account the latest evidence on their effectiveness and community expectations. Indeed, one of the key objectives of New South Wales liquor laws is to regulate and control the sale, supply and consumption of liquor in a way that is consistent with community needs, expectations and aspirations, which we recognise can change over time. The inquiry of the Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy, which was expertly chaired by the Hon. Natalie Ward, has provided an opportunity to assess the precinct-based special conditions and the committee has made findings and recommendations concerning several precinct conditions.

The Government is now considering those findings and recommendations in a process that includes examining whether the conditions referred to in the petition concerning patron lockout times and drinking restrictions remain fit for purpose. The Government recognises the importance of refreshing our liquor laws to ensure that New South Wales has the balance right so that we have a safe and vibrant night-time economy in Sydney. I assure the people of New South Wales that the Government recognises that now is the time for change, but any changes must be considered as part of the Government's response to the inquiry. We want our night-time economy to thrive. We want people to enjoy all that Sydney has to offer and we want Sydney to continue to be a world-class city and an envy to others.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:09:53): I am pleased to speak in debate on the petition about Sydney's lockout laws tabled by the member for Sydney. This is actually the second time we have debated a petition calling on the Government to end the lockout laws, which shows the depth of community feeling about this issue and the need for change. This time, we have the benefit of the excellent findings of the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy, which call on the Government to urgently repeal the laws in the CBD and Oxford Street, including the 1.30 a.m. lockout, the prohibition of shots and other certain liquors after, the prohibition of cocktails and drinks prepared onsite that contain 30 millilitres or more of spirits or liqueur, the restriction of glass in the late trading period, and the 3.00 a.m. cessation of service.

We do not yet have the official Government response to the inquiry's findings. However, the Premier has indicated she will introduce legislation to scrap the 1.30 a.m. lockout in the CBD by the end of the year, which would be an excellent move forward for Sydney and one that the Labor Opposition will absolutely support. Every person who signed this petition or made a submission to the inquiry can know that they have played a part in ending the lockouts. I take this opportunity to thank all the members of the joint committee, particularly the member for Sydney and Labor members the Hon. John Graham and the member for Fairfield. I also acknowledge

and sincerely thank the more than 800 residents in my electorate who made individual submissions to the inquiry and who overwhelmingly called for the lockout laws to be scrapped.

The night-time economy is estimated to make up 17 per cent of the total New South Wales economy and supports up to 230,000 jobs. In fact, the inquiry heard that Sydney may be forgoing up to \$16 billion by not taking full advantage of our night-time economy. Its value goes much deeper than the numbers, though. Our night-time economy tells the story of our city and the eclectic, thriving culture that underpins it. The lockout laws curbed violence on the streets of Kings Cross, but we cannot ignore what we lost along the way: 270 venues closed and the number of live music venues across the city dropped by 50 per cent. In its evidence to the inquiry, MusicNSW said that:

... 85 per cent of people working in the industry agreed that the 2014 laws have directly impacted their music career, 75 per cent had a reduced number of gigs and 40 per cent reported reduced earnings per show over the last 5 years.

Sydney is a global city, blessed with a beautiful natural environment, world-class public services, iconic landmarks and a vibrant economy. But our best asset is our people. We are friendly, diverse, innovative and excited about the opportunities that are before us. We see that nowhere more clearly than in our cultural industries. It has been a really tough time for people working in areas impacted by the lockouts. So many jobs have been lost, including bar staff, bartenders, security guards, cleaners, food and retail workers, workers in hotels and accommodation, as well as taxidriviers and transport workers. Lifting the lockouts will give workers in those sectors a chance and ensure we can take full advantage of the economic benefits.

Sydneysiders have the right to enjoy themselves, and they have the right to do so safely. According to *Time Out* magazine, Sydney is now the tenth-worst city in its ranking of global cities. Melbourne beats us hands down now; it is in second place. Tourism remains a critically important part of our economy. When people visit Sydney, I want them to speak about more than just our sparkling harbour—as beautiful as it is. I want them to enjoy our unique live music. I want them to delight in our world-class restaurants, catch a show, enjoy a drink in a small bar tucked down a lane, or dance the whole night away if that is what that they want to do. I want them to know that there is dependable and accessible public transport to get them home safely, and I want them to know that they can enjoy our city. I want young people who live in Sydney to know that there are jobs to support them and that Sydney is a fun and vibrant place in which to live.

As well as winding back the lockout laws in the CBD, the inquiry's report makes a number of vital recommendations that will support businesses in the sector. It recommends adopting the Inner West Council's live music venues policy. It recommends that the planning department investigate introducing the agent of change principle. It recommends appointing a Minister with responsibility for the night-time economy. If adopted, these recommendations will move us forward, strengthen the economy and support jobs. Finally, I thank the many Sydneysiders who have worked so hard to bring us to this point. When the lockouts are rolled back, it will be to their credit. Labor knows we need a holistic approach to restore our night-time economy and support the workers who depend on it. It is time to bring Sydney back, end the lockouts and make our city safe and fun again.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:15:02): The New South Wales Government is committed to improving the vibrancy of Sydney's night-time economy while ensuring public safety improvements seen over the years are maintained. Since the Government introduced liquor law reforms in 2014 in response to shocking cases of alcohol-fuelled violence, the number of non-domestic violent assaults in the Sydney CBD entertainment and Kings Cross precincts has declined. During that period, we have also worked to enhance the night-time economy by introducing initiatives such as a trial of a later lockout time of 2.00 a.m. and a 3.30 a.m. last drinks time for live entertainment venues, a streamlined licence approval pathway for restaurants and cafes and a pop-up bar licence. It makes sense for us to now take stock and examine whether any further changes should be made to the liquor laws. That is why the Premier asked the Parliament to establish the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy. The inquiry provided an opportunity to thoroughly examine the regulatory arrangements influencing the night-time economy and also find ways to enhance the night-time economy.

I was appointed as a member of the joint committee. During the inquiry we thoroughly examined and carefully listened to the views of experts from across the community, business owners and those involved in public safety and health. Recently I joined committee Chair the Hon. Natalie Ward, MLC—who I commend for her stewardship of this process—and fellow committee members to release our final report. Sydney is Australia's only global city and the report said that our nightlife should reflect that. As such, the committee made a few recommendations, including removal of what is known as the 1.30 a.m. lockout laws in the Sydney CBD and Oxford Street, which have a range of diverse venues that greatly contribute to our culture. The committee also recommended changes to the use of glassware and service of single shots, for example, and removal of the 3.00 a.m. last drinks cut-off time. It recommended the establishment of a governance framework headed by an overarching coordinator to improve collaboration and ensure the growth of our night-time economy is well managed.

Earlier this year I joined fellow committee members at Kings Cross police station and St Vincent's Hospital to hear from police and health representatives on the impacts of the 2014 liquor law reforms. Kings Cross has a unique night-time culture. Due to the area's history, high density and small size, the committee has recommended retaining what are known as the lockout laws in Kings Cross, with a further review in 12 months. The committee has handed its report to the Government, which is working on its response to the committee's findings and recommendations. The Government will recognise that while we strive to enhance the night-time economy, maintaining safety remains a key priority to ensure we do not see a repeat of the levels of alcohol-related violence we saw prior to the introduction of the precinct measures. We acknowledge the petition submitted by the member for Sydney requesting the withdrawal of the 2014 lockout laws, which, it asserts, will allow Sydney's CBD to return to being a 24-hour city. We appreciate that segments of the community would like to see all restrictions on licensed venues removed.

However, it is important that any changes to the laws reflect the needs of the broader community and assist with resolving the complex issues with the night-time economy that arise when we try to balance safety and vibrancy. Indeed, simply removing the 2014 measures will not automatically result in the 24-hour city sought by the petition. The removal could impact the balance being sought in the Government's response to the committee report. While Sydney's bars and nightclubs play a big part in the night-time economy, a truly great city offers more than just a place to drink when the sun goes down. There also needs to be a complete offering in Sydney's night-time economy, including the city's landmarks, our fabulous cultural institutions, sporting and entertainment facilities, annual festivals and integral industries such as transport, security and retail outlets.

We want to foster an after-dark economy that benefits the entire community—people of all ages as well as family groups. Sydney needs a reasonable and well-rounded approach to support the night-time economy—one that looks after the needs of our community and fosters sustainable growth in our entertainment and live music industries. At the same time, we need to maintain a safe public environment. It is important for us to do that in order to continue attracting residents and visitors.

The Government agrees that we need to enhance Sydney's night-time economy. The Government understands that now is the time for change, and that Sydney's night-time economy requires a regulatory framework that will see it prosper. The Government is carefully considering the findings and the recommendations. The Government's response will help to make Sydney a safe, vibrant and global city that all Sydneysiders can be proud of. I want to make sure that every individual who signed the petition knows that the Government hears them. I thank the member for Balmain for introducing the petition on behalf of the member for Sydney.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:20:09): I acknowledge all of those who have raised concerns and signed the petition about the effect of the Liquor Amendment Act 2014 reforms, commonly known as the Sydney lockout laws. This is an important issue affecting not only business and industry suppliers, but also law enforcement, the medical profession and healthcare workers. It is also an issue that is important for patrons, families and those affected directly and indirectly by this law. Since the enactment of the Liquor Amendment Act 2014, we have seen a reduction in the number of assaults, particularly in the Kings Cross precinct.

Public safety must be paramount in this debate. While the economic impact on the night-time economy needs to be considered, the social and human cost of alcohol-fuelled violence on our streets must be remembered and taken into account throughout this debate. Frontline emergency service workers like the New South Wales police, as well as New South Wales ambulance, paramedics and emergency department hospital staff have seen the positive impact of the introduction of Liquor Amendment Act 2014 on public safety. It is for this reason that the Police Association of NSW openly supports the Liquor Amendment Act 2014. The Secretary of the Police Association, Pat Gooley, stated recently:

The statistics are stark and indisputable. Assaults in the Cross have decreased by almost 94 per cent between 3am and 6am; St Vincent's has seen the number of patients admitted with serious head injuries reduced by 50 per cent between 8pm and 8am; incidences of indecent and sexual assault in Kings Cross have also both reduced by almost 50 per cent ... You can't argue with those facts. Lives are being saved; fewer families are being torn apart.

This evidence from the Police Association of NSW is supported by a large volume of statistical and academic evidence. Evaluations conducted by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research as well as the Public Health Advocacy Institute of Western Australia at Curtin University and researchers at La Trobe University have demonstrated the success of the Liquor Amendment Act. Following the introduction of the law there was a 49 per cent decrease in assaults in Kings Cross and a 13 per cent decrease in the CBD. This evidence is consistent with overseas findings that a reduction in the trading hours of late-night precincts causes a reduction in alcohol related assaults and injuries. A Norwegian study found that for each one-hour reduction in trading hours there was a 16 per cent drop in recorded assaults. In the Netherlands a study found that there was a 34 per cent increase in alcohol-related ambulance attendances following the extension of trading hours in two entertainment precincts in

Amsterdam. This should act as a cautionary message that longer trading hours will increase the amount of violence in Kings Cross and the Sydney CBD.

If the Parliament of New South Wales is to consider reforming these laws this House should also consider recommendations made by the Police Association of NSW and the Health Services Union. The HSU, on behalf of paramedics and health staff, has recommended that penalties be introduced for larger alcohol businesses and conglomerates who do not take proper care of their patrons but actively encourage extreme intoxication as a business model; a more rigorous training and accreditation system be introduced for alcohol service and security staff; large venues be required to provide a space for individuals who have become intoxicated to recover prior to departure; and consistent statewide laws be implemented to prevent the displacement of violence from the major entertainment precincts.

Additionally, the Police Association of NSW has stated that their members have had success using information from mandatory ID scanners in Kings Cross, and that this system should be expanded to other entertainment precincts, including the Sydney CBD and Newcastle, to help further reduce violence and assist criminal investigations. If pubs, clubs and other venues serving alcohol wish to ensure the safety of their patrons they should support these recommendations and ensure that they are successfully implemented before pushing for increased trading hours. In conclusion it is worth noting that current levels of assaults and violence in the Sydney CBD have now returned to 2014 levels. We need laws that are finely balanced to protect our community but also support our night-time economy in a rational and considered manner. I thank the House.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (16:24:44): I speak on behalf of the New South Wales Government regarding a petition submitted by the member for Sydney requesting the repeal of the 2014 lockdown laws. In 2014 the Government introduced a significant package of reforms that included lockdown laws to deal with unacceptable levels of alcohol-related violence occurring at the time. Over the past five years these reforms have helped make Sydney a safer place for those who wish to enjoy a night out, people visiting Sydney and local communities. The Government remains committed to growing a vibrant, safe, strong night-time economy for Sydney. However, the Government recognises that Sydney's night-time economy must continue to grow and prosper in a way that does not compromise the inroads that have been made in improving public safety in recent years. That is why a joint select committee was established. I commend the Hon. Natalie Ward for her stewardship for that committee.

The committee thoroughly examined Sydney's night-time economy, including whether the lockdown laws remain appropriately balanced. This approach ensured there was a comprehensive review of the lockdown measures and it took into account diverse community and expert views, related night-time economy issues, and current evidence. The committee reported back to Parliament on 30 September. I would like to pay special thanks to all committee members for their hard work throughout the inquiry process. Their efforts will help to shape the night-time economy and make it stronger moving forward. I would also like to thank all those individuals who contributed to the inquiry with their submissions, and those who spoke and provided evidence to the committee.

In total, the committee received over 790 submissions. This is a great contribution, which ensured that the views and opinions of a broad and diverse range of stakeholders were heard. The Government is carefully considering the report's findings and recommendations. This includes the recommendations to change current lockdown arrangements. However, the Government recognises that changes to lockdown arrangements cannot be made in isolation. These changes must be part of a comprehensive strategy to strike the right balance between community safety and boosting the night-time economy. The Government's response to the committee's report is currently being developed and aims to strike that balance by implementing a holistic approach to enhance the night-time economy.

The petition submitted by the member for Sydney requests the 2014 lockdown laws be removed in isolation. If this request were to be granted it would undermine the Government's ability to respond to the joint select committee's report through a comprehensive approach that addresses night-time economy issues. In the circumstances, the Government appreciates the collective voice this petitions represents, and hears that voice loud and clear. I can assure the people of this State that, through the night-time economy inquiry process, it is our goal to deliver liquor laws that are fit for purpose and support the diverse needs of stakeholders. I thank the member for Sydney for lodging this petition. It provides an additional avenue for those with a strong interest in Sydney's nightlife to be heard.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:27:57): I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Manly, the member for Summer Hill, the member for North Shore, the member for Prospect and the Minister for Customer Service. I welcome the comments and, in particular, the recommendations from the report of the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy. However, it is our view that there are some missing elements to that report, and that two key recommendations should be included. The lockdown laws should also be repealed

in Kings Cross, and the Government must address the culture of over-zealous policing—in particular the use of strip-searching and sniffer dogs.

It was particularly satisfying to hear both the Labor Party and the Government changing their positions on this matter. When the member for Sydney and I voted against these matters in 2014 Fairfax, News Limited, Labor and the Liberal Party were very upset about the position that we took on this matter. I am glad to see that sanity is prevailing and that a more nuanced approach is being taken. The truth is that we can have a night-time economy that is vibrant and world class, that generates jobs and is joyous for people in New South Wales but also very safe. Music, arts and the creative communities and the locals who work to protect them have worked very hard to get to this level, and I appreciate the fact that the Government is acknowledging that change must take place.

I conclude by acknowledging those many thousands of people who signed this petition. I acknowledge the member for Newtown, who brought forward the first petition on this matter and rallied in our streets calling for an end to these laws. I urge the Government to act on Sydney's night-time economy as a priority. I thank the member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich, my colleague when we sat together in this House and voted against these laws in 2014. We both undertook to do everything to ensure that we had a more realistic and smarter solution for dealing with alcohol-related violence, to regulate the liquor lobby and the zoning and density in our city. We have been continuing those efforts. I appreciate everyone who has made an effort to help bring about significant change in this regard. I commend this petition to the House.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

BUILDING STANDARDS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:30:10): I again raise in the House an issue relating to another apartment complex in my electorate that has been found to have major structural defects. Those living in the Otto Rosebery were told to be careful on their balconies after an investigation on behalf of the strata body discovered the strength of balustrades was inadequate. I understand that residents have been advised in a letter to prevent children from playing on the balconies and to avoid leaning on the balustrades. I also understand residents were warned not to allow more than three people to stand on the balconies due to safety concerns. The company that constructed the Otto Rosebery also constructed Opal Tower. That company, Icon, responded by telling News Limited:

The Otto Rosebery apartment complex has been fully certified by an independent engineer and witnessed by the Accredited Certifier as part of the occupation certificate certification process.

Whilst that is what the company states, the fact is that as a result of the warnings there are clearly some substantial defects in the structure of the building. This is now about the fourth building in my electorate that has been found to have major structural defects. However, the second major pending one is Mascot Towers. As I have told the House previously, I was there together with the then mayor of Bayside Council as residents of Mascot Towers were being evacuated. On that evening I was told by emergency services and State engineers the likely cause of the damage to Mascot Towers. A building does not stand for 12 years and then have such a significant structural defect that requires immediate evacuation unless a significant event occurs. They believe the significant event occurred as a result of the way in which the neighbouring site that had been approved by the NSW Land and Environment Court over the top of the council had dewatered their site on an area of land that has a high water table.

That view was conveyed to me, conveyed to the Premier and conveyed to the Minister. As is often the case in times of crisis, despite that view everybody is looking for somebody to blame and expects that somehow or other there is a significant immediate political solution. The reality of the situation is that it has only been recently that engineers confirmed for the owners' corporation what everybody knew in respect of it. I told the House two weeks ago that those residents in Mascot Towers are in a crisis. There are some 35 of them who cannot receive loans from lending institutions because their strata titles have little value, as members could appreciate. Some of them are considering bankruptcy.

I understand the New South Wales Government has been helpful behind the scenes. Uniquely, it has paid for the accommodation of residents in other areas as this matter is being sorted out. However, two weeks ago I asked—and I ask again—for interest-free loans to be made available to those persons from the Government that can be secured on the title. There was some urgency in respect of it because engineers said works had to be commenced by the end of September. Those works have not commenced and the building has further cracked and moved. Unless some urgent work is done that will become irreparable.

I know there is some frustration with the Government's dealing with the owners' corporation and that the owners and the managing agents have different views. However, there are times when citizens need assistance from government and where government needs to involve itself. In my view, what is required in the Mascot Towers situation is probably some urgent government intervention, and even urgent legislation, where the Government takes charge of the project. If the Government does not move quickly I am afraid there will be a catastrophe.

KAMAY BOTANY BAY NATIONAL PARK

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (16:35:22): Last year I informed the House about the joint Federal-State \$50 million project for a major upgrade of the Kurnell precinct of Kamay Botany Bay National Park, including new ferry wharves at Kurnell and La Perouse and a new visitors centre. As I have told the House before, proper recognition of this historic site, where Cook landed in 1770 and the first meeting of European and Indigenous culture on the east coast of Australia took place, has been a longstanding passion of mine. This project represents a great opportunity to upgrade a site of major national significance to commemorate our Indigenous culture and history, Cook's story, the meeting of two cultures, our modern heritage and a shared future.

An important part of this project will be the installation to commemorate the 250th anniversary. This installation will tell the stories of this first meeting. It is aimed to be delivered by 29 April next year—the 250th anniversary. A Kamay 2020 project board, of which I am a member, has invited expressions of interest for designs and has now shortlisted two designs for public exhibition and comment until 11 November. The commemorative installation is to be a public artwork or structure to mark the arrival of the HMS *Endeavour* and the meeting of two cultures at Kurnell and to interpret the cultural heritage and significance of the park—ideally with a view from the ship and a view from the shore.

The first of the commemorative installations on public exhibition at the moment is a submission by Think OTS, which is a cross-cultural collaboration between Gweagal artist Theresa Ardler and public artist-sculptor Julie Squires. Again, it looks to bring the view from the ship and the view from the shore. It envisages four installations. One of those installations is a humpback whale, the iconic figure of Dharawal Dreaming, which symbolically represents the Gweagal people of Botany Bay that Cook encountered. The second element is a Gweagal family group, inspired by a journal entry of Joseph Banks that records his observation of the family from the ship.

The third element is a traditional stringybark canoe. People fishing in bark canoes were seen from the ship and recorded by both Cook and Banks. The final element is an installation called *Yalabi Dayalung Bora – The Gathering*. This represents the view from the shore. The Gweagal people thought the ship was a big white bird coming in through the heads and sailing towards them. The white sails reminded them of white bird wings stretching out as far as they could go, ready to fly. This will be a big white bird formed in flannel flowers that oversees a bora or gathering place for ceremony and the passing of cultural knowledge.

The second proposal on public exhibition is entitled *Eyes of the Land and the Water*, by Alison Page and Nik Lachajczak. It is a sculptural installation that centres on the notion that the land reveals the stories of the shore and the water reveals the story from the ship. As far as the "eyes of the land" are concerned, under this proposal there will be work placed on the foreshore where the Gweagal people looked out and watched two warriors encounter Cook and his men. The eyes of the land will symbolically represent the middens that symbolise occupation and survival of the people who once gathered there and our physical echoes of the generations of Gweagal who hunted, gathered, sang, laughed, cried, danced and ate.

The sculptural element representing these eyes will be made of layers of tempered glass of various thicknesses with words, artefacts and cultural imagery revealing Gweagal culture etched and embedded into the material. In the tidal zone the eyes of the water will reveal the ribs of the ship cast in bronze, also reminiscent of the ribcage of a whale, so it can be looked at both ways. It is essentially the skeleton of HMS *Endeavour*, which is always present in Australian's minds regardless of where the place is marked.

These will be important works of public art commemorative installations. It is essential that all community members—whether Indigenous or not, whether Cronulla or Kurnell locals or from further afield in the shire or elsewhere in New South Wales and overseas—have their say on the exhibition, which closes on 11 November. I encourage everyone to go the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website to have their say and tell us what they think of this important suggested contribution to the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the meeting of the two cultures.

TWEED HOSPITAL

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:40:28): I inform the House of the progress of one of the biggest capital works events occurring in the Tweed: the new Tweed Valley hospital. As members know it had a bit of an airing today during question time. Ten out of the 17 contracts awarded to date by the early works contractor, Lendlease Building, have gone to local northern New South Wales businesses. There have been 195 personnel engaged on the site since early works commenced, over 40 per cent of whom are from the northern New South Wales area. Up to 650 construction workers are expected on the site each day at the peak of the construction activity in 2021-2022. Bulk earthworks are approximately 50 per cent completed, with over 20,000 cubic metres of earth moved around the site as the work continues to install the internal haul roads and piling pads.

The project is over one-third of the way along the project time line from the announcement to the completion. It is on track to be completed in 2022 and open to patients in 2023. I praise the health Minister, Mr Brad Hazzard, and Health Infrastructure CEO Rebecca Wark for their ongoing support, guidance and 100 per cent commitment to delivering such vital infrastructure. I mention some interesting statistics. When this activity was first announced around 450 beds was mooted. Currently there is a development application submitted to State planning that will increase that figure to 560 beds, which is a significant increase. Over 5,000 patients will no longer need to travel outside the region for cancer treatment. There will be more beds, enhanced medical, surgical and mental health facilities.

Recently I met with the mental health Minister, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor. The existing mental health facility has been revamped with 25 beds. The Minister advised that the new facility will have 40 beds, which is a significant increase. There are new outpatient services, a catheterisation laboratory for interventional cardiology services and radiotherapy as part of integrated cancer care. The new hospital is adjacent to the large Kingscliff TAFE college. A ward and operating theatre are being built for training purposes. Once the staff at the new hospital are fully trained that will be used by the TAFE college to train people in medical procedures.

It is a real benefit for the whole of the community, who are looking forward to it. It is one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the Tweed and we need to get it right. We have fast-tracked the development to give Health Infrastructure the best opportunity to build a hospital that exceeds community expectations. I will fight for free parking on the site, but we need to build the hospital first. It is only the New South Wales Nationals in government that will do that. Recent comments by the Labor Party attacking the Government for building the new hospital in the Tweed Valley are an unwelcome distraction from this critical project. If Labor had had its way at the last election the building would have been delayed by at least two to five years, which is totally unacceptable.

Labor was doing that to support its developer mate down the road. Labor fought against the new hospital from the moment the \$534 million to build it was announced. Labor priorities do not include building a new hospital in the Tweed Valley. It is hypocritical to oppose a project in one breath and attempt to tell a government how to run it in another. It is beyond belief. Each time Labor Party members come to the local area, they do not meet with the doctors or the local communities. They make up their own minds, stand on a street corner, have a press conference, throw something out, hop in a car and drive away. That is why at the last election we increased the percentage. By the way, there were 19 booths in my electorate and I won every single one of them.

Ms Janelle Saffin: It is good that you are humble about it.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: It was a referendum on the hospital. Guess what? You lost. We won and we are building a hospital for the future of the Tweed. The member for Lismore should hang her head in shame with the questions she put today.

Ms Janelle Saffin: I took a seat from The Nats.

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

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Why not try looking about Murwillumbah hospital?

Ms Janelle Saffin: You made the promise, not me.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: You have neglected Murwillumbah hospital, which is absolutely shameful.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:45:46): I reflect on the solid work done over many years by the member for Tweed to achieve the wonderful outcome that is taking place in the Tweed. A hardworking member who takes his responsibilities seriously, advocates for his community and ensures that the process undertaken is thorough and responsible so that Ministers can commit to projects like the hospital for the Tweed. I congratulate him on the work done.

TRIBUTE TO KENNETH STANLEY KING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:46:20): It is with a heavy heart I inform the House of the recent passing of one of Bankstown's finest locals and a true stalwart of the Labor Party, Mr Kenneth Stanley King—affectionately known simply as "Ken"—who sadly passed away on 13 September 2019. Ken spent the whole of his 91 years in Bankstown. He was born, grew up, went to school, worked, ran a business, raised his family and spent his retirement in Bankstown. He was born in 1928, the youngest of eight children and was raised at the time of the Great Depression. This resulted in Ken having to leave school at the age of 12. He did so to support his family, in particular his father.

His first employment was at Bankstown Ice Works, a job that involved waking up at 4.00 a.m. to load an ice cart and make deliveries around Bankstown. This was physically demanding work for such a young man but it helped Ken to develop his strong commitment to community and to improve the working conditions and lives of working people. At the age of just 17, Ken suffered the devastating loss of his father to pneumonia. At this time he took a bigger role within his family. Ken commenced his own business at just 19 years of age. He established an auto electrical business in Bankstown, which he successfully operated for 14 years before he retrained as a fitter and turner and then as a lawnmower mechanic before his retirement. In 1950 Ken met his wife, Moya, and the couple married two years later when they were both 23. In 1962 they purchased their first and only family home at Kitchener Parade, Bankstown, where they raised their three children—Michael, Sharyn and Dawn.

Ken had developed a keen interest in politics. He joined the Metal Workers' Union in the 1960s and advocated for improved wages and conditions for workers. He became very interested in our local council. In my time as mayor of Bankstown Council we often referred to Ken as "Councillor King" because he attended every council meeting and collected every business paper. So much so, in 1997 when there was a fire important documents were lost and the town planner had to raid Ken's garage to collect the business papers in order to be able to make decisions on developments.

Ken became a member of the Labor Party in the 1970s, joining the Bankstown branch and working tirelessly to represent the Labor Party over many years by supporting the election of Labor candidates at all levels of government. He stood at pre-polls for every election from morning till night. It was in this context that I had the fortune of crossing paths with Ken. I first met him during the 1996 Federal election, campaigning for the Labor candidate for Blaxland. As a young person I assisted the electorate office of then Prime Minister Paul Keating. When I called the office to volunteer I was told to go to the pre-poll where Ken was in charge and he would teach me everything I needed to know.

Ken was true believer but he asked for nothing from the Labor Party. He believed completely in the cause and supported the Labor candidate, irrespective of who won preselection. I was pleased that Ken's longstanding involvement with and commitment to the Labor Party was recognised at the 2014 State Conference, when Ken was became a life member. I had the pleasure, as the local MP, of formally nominating Ken for life membership. He played a vital role in encouraging me to stand for local government and later as the State member for Bankstown. He always supported me in my political career and the careers of others, such as the Federal member, Jason Clare, and many local councillors.

Ken will be dearly missed. I had the honour of giving a eulogy at his funeral. I thank his son, Michael, and daughter Dawn for the opportunity. Sadly his daughter Sharyn passed away several years ago. He will be missed by members of the Labor Party in Bankstown where he was highly regarded and loved. At all times, Ken had a positive demeanour. He was always friendly and always encouraging. He is a great loss to the Labor Party as well as a great loss to the electorate of Bankstown. I acknowledge his immediate and extended family in paying tribute to Ken King. Vale, Ken King.

TAFE NSW

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:51:30): This Government is committed to improving and educating the workforce of tomorrow. We can see this by looking at the Government's actions in developing and building our TAFE colleges. Recently the Hon. Dr Geoff Lee, MP, Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and I had the privilege of officially opening the new multimillion-dollar carpentry, construction, electrotechnology training facility at TAFE NSW Miller. This was made possible by the \$7.6 million in funding supplied by the New South Wales Government. During the election this was just a construction site, so it was very exciting to see the completed training facility. It will be in use as the new term begins after the holidays.

This project is part of the New South Wales Government's \$22 million investment in upgrades of western Sydney TAFEs. The Miller TAFE upgrade is great news for locals in the electorate of Holsworthy and those living in the broader Liverpool region. To me, ensuring that the best education is provided to the residents living in the south-west is very important because they are educated close to home and do not have to sit in traffic to commute

to further their education. I love the fact that the Miller TAFE is right on a T-way bus stop, which gives ease of access. A TAFE education equips people with highly useful skills for society and prepares them for their vocation.

At the opening, I was able to meet Andrew Palfrey, from Casula in the Holsworthy electorate. He is already benefiting from his TAFE education. It was interesting to hear his story about studying carpentry at TAFE while also doing his HSC, which gave him a great head start for his future career. This filled me with optimism and reminded me of when I studied at TAFE a fair few years ago while doing my HSC. I studied child development and play, while Andrew is working on his carpentry skills. We know that education is the cornerstone of a productive society and that better education leads to more productivity, lower unemployment and better living standards.

With all the infrastructure being built now and in the future, we need 50,000 skilled construction workers to make that happen. This large supply of new workers can only be supplied by a strong, innovative and state-of-the-art TAFE system, which is being delivered by this Government. In addition to the upgrade at Miller TAFE, a new \$80 million Western Sydney TAFE campus will be constructed. Students will receive specialised training in areas such as carpentry, construction, electrical and plumbing. The new TAFE will train 700 new students each year and be located close to the new western Sydney airport to ensure that our State has the next generation of trades it needs to build the infrastructure of tomorrow.

On top of the investment into TAFE infrastructure, the Government is delivering over four years an additional 100,000 free TAFE and vocational education and training [VET] courses. Of that investment, 30 per cent will go towards mature-aged workers to help them with their employment, making sure the workforce is prepared for the technological changes that will affect the labour market, while the other 70,000 places will be reserved for young job seekers taking on traineeships. Altogether this is an \$85 million commitment that I am proud to say that the Liberal-Nationals Government is investing in helping people right across New South Wales. This is a big contrast to the election promise given by the New South Wales Labor Party, which promised only 600,000 places over a decade. Labor was willing to invest only \$64.5 million. This is a strong reminder that only a New South Wales Liberal-Coalition Government can back a stronger future for New South Wales because we invest in people and give them a head start.

I also thank all the TAFE teachers for their dedication and passion in working hard to make sure that the New South Wales workforce is prepared for growth and innovation. I thank the Hon. Dr Geoff Lee, the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, for his stewardship. He has done a fantastic job managing his portfolio. When he visited Miller TAFE it was his second visit to a TAFE in my electorate. He also visited the Liverpool TAFE, where he taught. There he walked down memory lane when he went to his classroom. I know he will continue his good work and leadership into the future.

I commend the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's commitment to TAFE and infrastructure. The positive work we are doing can be easily seen—through the opening of the \$7.6 million carpentry, construction, electrotechnology training facility at Miller TAFE, investing \$80 million for a new Western Sydney TAFE campus and funding 100,000 additional TAFE and VET courses over four years. All these programs and projects can be guaranteed and implemented only by a New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. I am grateful to be a part of this hardworking Government. We are dedicated to delivering the very best education for the people of New South Wales. We recognise that TAFE plays a significant role in ensuring our workforce is well trained in practical skills, so we can continue building better infrastructure for tomorrow.

KARIN STARK

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:56:35): I recognise the pioneering work being done by Narromine's Karin Stark to help boost the resilience of our rural communities. Karin was recently a New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory finalist in the 2019 AgriFutures Rural Women's Award, an accolade that identifies and celebrates the vital role of women in regional Australia. Awards like this are very important in providing a platform for women in our rural communities to promote the work they are already doing on a grander scale. In Karin's case, that work is in the future of farming.

Karin works for a business called REAQUA, which distributes a range of solar pumping technology. That company is looking to make small- and large-scale solar pumping both simple and affordable for farmers across irrigation, livestock, horticulture, sugar, dairy and a range of other farming industries. But Karin is also on the land with her young family on her husband's family property, Waverleigh, near Narromine. They use solar pumping technology to complement a diesel pump, which is there for back-up. I have had the opportunity to visit the property and see the operation firsthand, and it is been used as a base for a number of field days to show just what is possible across a range of farming operations and situations. It is a really impressive operation.

That is really only the beginning for Karin, who has a strong environmental background. She is also keen to do a lot more, including to plant more trees and implement battery storage as the technology advances. Through her work, Karin has seen firsthand the enormous amount of interest from farmers in technologies like solar irrigation. It is no surprise, actually—farmers rely on healthy soils, land and water for their businesses to grow and prosper. They are the original innovators—scientists, environmentalists, pragmatists—willing to embrace and even pioneer new technologies to produce the world-renowned quality that Australian agriculture is known for.

It is in times like this that innovative spirit is all the more important. Drought continues to grip our State, and so farmers are looking for ways to diversify and drought-proof their properties into the future. If there's one thing Australia has in spades—particularly in my part of the world—it is sunshine. Our farmers will continue to be at the forefront of adopting renewable technologies like solar to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels, save money and build business resilience well into the future.

The actual uptake of solar irrigation has been quite slow for a number of reasons, and Karin has told me one on one some of the reasons for this. One is the lack of working examples for farmers to witness and learn from. To help solve that issue, Karin has organised the National Renewables in Agriculture Conference and Expo in Wagga Wagga in November. The inaugural conference will bring together farmers, agriculture and energy consultants, peak bodies and government representatives to share knowledge and learnings about on-farm renewables. Hopefully, it will also help break down some of the barriers to farmers making that investment. In reality, the investment is quite significant to start off with.

The expo is a great initiative and a good example of the value of the AgriFutures Rural Women's Award, for which Karin was a finalist for in June. It was great to join her and her family at the awards. The dinner was held in the Strangers' Room in Parliament House in June. Karin received a \$1,000 Leadership Skills and Development Bursary from the New South Wales Government as part of that award. The awards have certainly given Karin a platform to share her passion and vision for the future of agriculture. I congratulate her on seizing that opportunity with both hands.

People like Karin epitomise the spirit of people in the bush; she is resourceful and full of hope for the future—again, traits we all should display. I commend Karin for her important work so far. I am excited to see how bright the future of agriculture can be with people like her at the helm. She and her family are a great example of how solar pumping can be used for irrigation and so many other uses on family properties. I hope that the Renewables in Agriculture Conference in Wagga Wagga next month will see a great response from people who are looking to invest in renewables. With all the stakeholders involved, I am sure it will be a great learning experience for any of the farmers who are looking at adding renewables to their enterprise. Good luck, Karin. Well done on what you have achieved so far and good luck for the future.

TABULAM BRIDGE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:01:26): I will share with this House an issue of great cultural significance for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities of Tabulam and Upper Clarence in my electorate of Lismore, which I have spoken of previously in this place. I refer to these communities' campaigns for the New South Wales Government to review its August 2016 decision to delist from the State Heritage Register the truss bridge crossing the Clarence River at Tabulam. The community is asking loudly and clearly for the bridge, built between 1900 and 1903, to be listed on the register and retained as a pedestrian bridge for future generations. It is a shame that the current groundswell of support to save the bridge from demolition was less evident during the public consultation period prior to its removal from the State Heritage Register, which was approved by the then heritage Minister.

A major consideration is that the area under the bridge was used as a safe, dry birthing area for Aboriginal mothers, which explains the deep spiritual connections to this specific crossing of the Clarence River. For example, Aboriginal Queen Ponjam Derry, also known as Teresa Agnes Ponjam, was born in 1872 and lived under Tabulam Bridge in a gunyah. She was the great-grandmother of champion boxer Tony Mundine, OAM. Another important historical link, and one of national and international significance, is that of General Sir Harry Chauvel, GCMG, KCB, who was born in Tabulam in 1865 and started his distinguished military career as the second lieutenant in the Upper Clarence Light Horse.

Sir Harry Chauvel went on to achieve global fame as commander of the Anzac Mounted Division and later the Desert Mounted Corps, becoming the first Australian to command such a corps. At Beersheba in October 1917 his light horse captured the town and its vital water supply in one of history's last great cavalry charges. Many of those soldiers would have been involved with the construction of the bridge, itself a monumental exercise for the early twentieth century. The light horsemen's original training path and triumphant post-war parades crossed this bridge, so it would be almost sacrilege to tear it down. From an engineering point of view the

bridge, built from wood and steel by men and horses and sitting 60 feet above the water—out of flood level—is the longest single-span wooden bridge in the Southern Hemisphere.

Roads and Maritime Services' 2012 timber truss bridge conservation strategy outlines the cost of maintaining a bridge like this one, but surely if we are only seeking safe pedestrian access rather than vehicular access, these costs should be less prohibitive. Kyogle and Tenterfield shire councils clearly cannot bear these costs—nor should they—but a pedestrian bridge with so many historical and cultural links to the community could become a major tourism attraction. The campaign to save the Tabulam 1903 truss bridge has the public's support as well as the support of Federal member for Page Kevin Hogan and a host of community groups ranging from the Tabulam Progress Association to the Country Women's Association.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE SCHOOL LEADERS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:05:15): Every year I invite the primary school captains and vice-captains in my electorate of Davidson to attend New South Wales Parliament over two days. This year's visits commenced on Monday of this week, with another group to attend this Friday. This year I am privileged to welcome 72 primary school leaders from 18 local schools to experience this Chamber and the Legislative Council Chamber. These events conclude with an afternoon tea and the presentation of leadership certificates. I always enjoy meeting our young school leaders and thank them for demonstrating leadership within their local school communities. I encourage them to continue contributing valuably to their schools and to the broader community as they transition into high school next year and to encourage others to do likewise.

The names of the schools and students are as follows: from Roseville Public School Lachlan Cox, Sophie Lambourne, Kevin Chen and Elizabeth Gracey; from St Ives North Public School Jemimah Bywaters, Matthew Warnes, Anna Ferguson and Dean Segel; from Lindfield East Public School Tilly Goddard, Elliot Dawson, Eliza Freeborn and Oliver Campbell; from St Ives Park Public School Lana Cleasby, Finlay Kosasih, Millie Atkinson-Di Candillo and Sebastian Kelly; from Castle Cove Public School Emma Wood, Josie Evans, James Bestic and Reuben Dickins; from Kambora Public School Laura McGregor, Holly Dorsey, Taylor Anderson and Donnie Duncan; from Wakehurst Public School Jasper Chipman, Rebecca Solomon, Jack Evans and Katie McGough; and from Belrose Public School Caelan Barros, Charli Marks, Charlotte Smith and Liam Watsford.

I also invited from Mimosa Public School Jack Antcliffe, Roxy Hathorn, Jamie Wallace and Mia Singh; from Masada College Ryan Levy, Aaron Newhouse, Leora Bass and Ari Siganos; from St Martin's Primary School Olivia Hayden, Lili Mury, Hayden McLellan, Christopher Pereira and Marley Galvin; from Holy Family Catholic Primary School Alana Gonzalez, Ani Zilifian, Finn Lloyd and Max Agresta; from Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School Hannah Gill, Briella Chung, James Bouwer and Olivia Roland; from Roseville College Cordelia Howard and Isabelle Griffiths; from Gordon East Public School Millie Robertson, Christian Kim, Emily Visier and Lachlan Heap; from John Colet School Marlon Leforesteir, Simara Razzaghipour, Annica Pittar and Heidi Pietschner; from Newington College Lindfield Prep School Connor Mosely, Jack Mannix, Lachlan Brownrigg, William Eddowes and Jack Ireland, and finally from Lindfield Public School Claire Blewitt, Spencer Taylor, Anna Blewitt and Max Lee.

I certainly enjoyed meeting many of these students on Monday and look forward to meeting the balance of those young student leaders of New South Wales tomorrow. I am confident they all have bright futures ahead of them. All members in this place join with me to encourage young leaders in our schools to do the best they can for themselves and also for our community.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I thank the member for that outstanding private members' statement.

COUNCILLOR BILL SARAVINOVSKI

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:10:07): I sincerely congratulate Councillor Bill Saravinovski on the completion of his first term as the inaugural Mayor of Bayside Council and I thank him for his continuing service to our local community.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Hear, hear!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Assistant Speaker Mark Coure would be very familiar with the work of Mr Saravinovski over the years and I am sure he appreciates what I have to say. Councillor Saravinovski has been serving our community for more than 36 years. It is incredibly fitting that he was guiding our city both as the last Mayor of Rockdale and the first Mayor of Bayside. In the two years of his mayoral term the infrastructure spend across our city has been absolutely incredible, particularly in new sporting amenities. During his first term as Mayor of Bayside, Councillor Saravinovski leaves a legacy that will be felt in our local community for

generations. He should be very proud. I put on record the outcomes of Councillor Saravinovski's infrastructure agenda.

In just two years he has overseen the construction of new amenities at Scott Park in Sans Souci; a new kiosk and sporting facility at Tonbridge Street Reserve in Ramsgate; a new kiosk, amenities and sporting facility at Scarborough Park in Kogarah; a brand-new synthetic playing field at Ador Avenue Reserve in Rockdale; a major new amenities block at Peter Depena Reserve in Dolls Point; new amenities at the Kyeemagh Boat Ramp; lighting upgrades at the Angelo Anestis Aquatic Centre in Bexley; a new kiosk and amenities building at Bexley Oval; much-needed drainage upgrades at Exell Street in Botany; and delivery of major upgrades at Cahill Park in Wolli Creek, which will soon rival the likes of Sydney Park for its beauty and for its amenities.

He has also delivered major upgrades at Pine Park along the Botany Bay foreshore, including huge improvements to the Botany Bay cycleway and Rhodes Street Reserve East at Hillsdale, brand-new outdoor play areas at the Hillsdale Child Care Centre and the Mascot Child Care Centre, heritage restoration works on historic Wilson's Cottage in Rockdale, construction of a brand-new playground and amenities at Rowland Park Playground in Daceyville, upgrades to the streetscape at the Kingsgrove Town Centre, construction of new amenities at AS Tanner Reserve in Monterey, upgrades to the Banksmeadow Town Centre, and delivery of a new skate park at Mitch Park in Pagewood. Wow!

These projects represent tens of millions of dollars of investment in our community's future and I am very proud to work with Councillor Saravinovski and the council to deliver many of them. It is most impressive that this infrastructure agenda has been delivered during very challenging times for Bayside Council. It has been revealed on the public record that, following the amalgamation of Botany Bay and Rockdale councils, a number of former council officers were involved in significant corruption. On top of the other challenges that amalgamated councils face, Bayside was forced to deal with the legacy of these corruption issues and the significant fraud that those officers carried out against the people of Botany.

Bayside had to go through incredibly detailed auditing processes and governance reforms, requiring a great deal of community leadership from Councillor Saravinovski. Despite these hurdles, Councillor Saravinovski has kept Bayside Council firmly focused on community outcomes. His long list of accomplishments speak for themselves. In addition, under Councillor Saravinovski's leadership Bayside Council delivered the first joint enterprise agreement of any amalgamated council. His years of experience and his Labor values mean Councillor Saravinovski knows how important the wellbeing and morale of council workers are to community outcomes. This process was one of his key priorities and is no small achievement. I understand that some of the councils that were merged in the Bob Carr era still have not entirely moved to a single agreement!

I have known Councillor Saravinovski for more than 40 years, ever since he ordered me around when he was a prefect at James Cook Boys Technology High School. He is a homegrown Rockdale treasure and I am very proud to call him my friend. Once again I congratulate Councillor Saravinovski on the completion of his first term as Mayor of Bayside. I look forward to working with our new Mayor, Joe Awada, to continue delivering for our city. Again, I thank Bill for all he does. Here is to many more years working together for our community.

MY COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANT PROGRAM

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (17:15:18): I am pleased to talk about the successful projects from the New South Wales Government's My Community Project grant program that were announced last month. I am delighted that the Drummoyne electorate has received just under \$250,000 in funding for four projects. This funding is a wonderful way to make a difference at a grassroots level. These projects touch the lives of many different people. The community will be very appreciative of these contributions, which will go to various community organisations. One of the successful projects was put forward by the Liberty Grove Community Association for \$40,000 to provide two state-of-the-art playgrounds for Liberty Grove.

This funding will ensure children can play in a safe and traffic-controlled environment just outside their apartment or house. Prior to the grants for these facilities, residents had to take their children to the next suburb to play at a playground. The new child-safe playground will be suitable for all age groups and will comply with Australian safety standards. The project will create environments that encourage educational and rewarding play, and provide stimulation and excitement to support children's cognitive, muscular and coordination skills. It encourages children to get off their devices and to be active.

The second project was put forward by the Breakfast Point Men's Shed to replace and renovate the bathrooms and storage areas at the facility. This local building is also used by diverse groups, including the Probus Club of Breakfast Point, a ukulele group and the Community Association of Breakfast Point. The proposed improvements will make rooms easier to manage, and allow for greater strata and community use. Inner West

Neighbour Aid is the third project to receive funding as part of the My Community Project grant program. The organisation successfully received \$50,000 funding towards a series of free therapeutic workshops that enhance the quality of life for people with dementia. This project provides people who have dementia, their carers, family members and friends the opportunity to learn about various therapies that can improve health and wellbeing.

The project will promote a sense of mutual understanding and support among participants by bringing people in similar circumstances together. The workshops will be practical in nature, based around therapies such as music, art, horticulture, meditation and exercise. Although dementia now affects many people in our community, a certain amount of stigma and lack of awareness about the condition remains. The workshops will be held in the 5 Senses Garden at Rhodes Park, Concord West. The location could not be more fitting, given the 5 Senses Garden has been designed as a place that allows the elderly and people living with physical and intellectual disabilities to feel included.

The fourth project to receive grant funding is a sunshade at Lucas Gardens School, which will provide much-needed cover from the elements for students with disabilities and sensory needs during outdoor activities. I have spoken many times in this House about Lucas Gardens School. It is a very special place. A few years ago, with the assistance and vision of previous education Minister Piccoli, Lucas Gardens was totally knocked down and rebuilt. The new state-of-the-art school is leading the way in terms of inclusive education. School principal Jenny Zagas is extremely dedicated. A sunshade over the playground will encourage more outdoor activities and ensure that students, particularly those using wheelchairs, can participate in outdoor activities and spend time outside. I look forward to the completion of these projects in the coming months.

GOSFORD AND WYONG HOSPITALS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:19:54): The job of any member of Parliament in this place is to advocate on behalf of their community. I was very upset this morning when the member for Terrigal suggested that the member for Gosford and I were misleading the public—tantamount to accusing us of lying—and I want to put the facts on the record. The information we got initially was from the general manager of the Central Coast health service, which made an announcement on the radio about positions being cut from the midwife-led model in place at Gosford and Wyong hospitals. That is where our information came from. It surprised the mothers groups and the midwives because, before that, they were not aware that this was going to happen, so I feel it is our job to advocate for those services.

The Midwifery Group Practice service has been operating across the Central Coast because when Wyong Hospital's maternity department opened it had a terrible time getting obstetricians, so it put in place this best-practice model of midwife-led birthing, which provides support with low-level births during pregnancy, through the delivery itself and after pregnancy. I note that the member for Riverstone is at the table. We did an inquiry into this last year, so we know that it is one of the better models you can have. If there are complications, you would move out of that model into normal maternity care, usually moving to Gosford Hospital.

Each year on the Central Coast there are around 3,200 births and at the moment approximately 913 of those births are through the Gosford and Wyong Midwifery Group Practice services. All of us were surprised when the CEO of the Central Coast health service—and I am not attacking him specifically because he is trying to manage a budget—announced that 2½ positions from that model were being moved to general midwife positions. That equates to 100 fewer mothers a year being able to access this best practice service, and that is the point that the member for Gosford and I were making. We met with the mothers who were part of the program and children who had been born through the program, and they told us how shattered they were that, with no consultation, this was being forced upon them.

This is not an attack on the model by the CEO and it is not the health Minister's problem either. The reality is that we have a situation in New South Wales where a lot of money is being spent on infrastructure, which is great, but the services are not being expanded through funding to cope with things such as population growth. I think the main culprit is—and I often wonder why the Government does not make more of this—the Federal Government, which is failing to put the money into health that it should. The State Government does not have enough money for recurrent services, which means that each health district is really struggling to cope with normal demands, so they have to shuffle the deckchairs.

You have a best-practice service that mothers on the Central Coast love and respect. You have dedicated midwives who are part of the program and are on call 24/7. They do it because they love their job and they want to work through a long-term process with mothers to make sure that they are getting the best level of care. But because of the strain on health dollars, this model will be interfered with so that 100 fewer mothers a year will be able to access it. That is what the member for Gosford and I have been saying in social media and, instead of defending the CEO, the member for Terrigal should be joining with us and saying that this is a best-practice model. Let us support it. Let us make sure that it is not pulled apart. I am happy to be criticised if we stuff up, but

when the CEO goes on the radio to make an announcement and the Nurses Association puts out a press release then we are justified in standing up for mothers on the Central Coast.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:25:12): It certainly is the role of members of Parliament to advocate for the needs they see in their community, and I have no drama with the member for Wyong and the member for Gosford doing that. As the member for Wyong noted, we jointly visited services on the coast, looking into services for new babies in New South Wales. The health budget in New South Wales has increased year on year by more than inflation since we came to Government, and significantly so in some of those years. I am sure we would all want more, we would all want to do better and do more in every field, but it is worth noting on the record that the health budget is increasing faster than inflation, and that is particularly the case in areas of rapid growth like the Central Coast and western Sydney. If members have concerns about a particular program, I urge them to write to the health Minister or take the matter up with him personally. I am sure he would be receptive and try to do what he can to resolve those issues.

SMALL BUSINESS EXPO

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:26:24): Last Friday, 11 October, I had the privilege of attending and opening the Small Business Expo at the Crookwell Memorial Hall at Crookwell. Hosted by Upper Lachlan Small Business Association, the expo was a huge success showcasing many local businesses and supporting both the local economy and employment. The Crookwell community is a tight-knit bunch of rural folk. It was great to see locals supporting locals in such a warm and friendly environment. I had the pleasure of opening the event with the Mayor of Upper Lachlan Shire Council, Councillor John Stafford, with the assistance of Susan Reynolds and the newly formed Upper Lachlan Small Business Association.

The event was promoted in outlying villages including Taralga, Gunning, Collector, Binda and Bigga, and it was great to see such a large community interest. Businesses across the shire are incredibly varied. Those in attendance included domestic services, furniture restoration, health and healing, special gift ideas, work wear, housing maintenance, trophies and plaques, building services, solar pumps, satellite broadband, farm equipment, artisan products, florists, and much more. This expo opportunity to promote local products was cleverly timed to coincide with Small Business Month. As the New South Wales Government knows, 765,000 small businesses in New South Wales employ 1.65 million employees—quite a significant figure, particularly in our rural areas that are being hit with severe and intense drought, resulting in farming families looking to supplement the family income. Often the best way the Government can help is by getting out of the road and letting our small businesses get on with the job.

Over the course of two days, exhibitors had the opportunity to develop their small business skills with information sessions on digital marketing, marketing plans and the provision of business health checks. The range and variety of businesses was certainly impressive and I commend all those involved in such a fantastic event. I congratulate Susan Reynolds on putting it together. I was very pleased to chat with many business representatives who attended, such as Chrissy, from Taralga's Eclectopia Gifts & Specialty Homewares. I discussed the success of the festival last weekend. Sally Cullen introduced me to "Postie", Kathy Potts; Crookwell Trophies; and Cath Ranyard, and her history in human resources and her business, NDL People.

On the same day I also visited the Crookwell Men's Shed in Park Street, Crookwell, to see the recently installed awning that was funded in 2018 through the office of Premier Gladys Berejiklian. It is an impressive structure that was built for just \$10,000 plus donations, in-kind support from the community and a whole lot of hard work from the men's shed members. I thank President Ron, secretary Don, Mandy, Gabby, Wendy, John, Lutz, Gerry and Peter for the cuppa and conversation. The Crookwell Men's Shed is truly doing so much for the community, from handyman work and odd jobs for those in need to installing custom ramps in homes that require greater accessibility. The group regularly builds possum boxes for the Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service; annually sponsors the Upper Lachlan Shire Council Hall of Fame; and is a trusted place for locals to take their loved furniture and heirlooms for restoration.

In addition to all of that, the shed is also a fully accessible community space that can be used by the community for activities and events not related to the men's shed. The Crookwell Community is thriving and I was warmly welcomed when I visited last week. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is supportive of our rural communities, which was cemented during the election campaign when the Government committed an extra \$2.5 million to Crookwell District Hospital. Good governments recognise the importance of rural services, particularly health services, and I look forward to continuing to advocate on behalf of the Crookwell community.

ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (17:30:26): Active transport is a key transport mode for the future. Whether it be cycling or walking to work, more and more people are embracing active transport for their daily

commute. The people of my electorate of Coogee are passionate about active transport because we know active transport is a critical piece of the transport puzzle and a huge part of the solution to congestion on our roads. The electorate of Coogee has a median age of 35, with a great number of working people who have to head into the city or out of the eastern suburbs every morning for work. In the traffic jam along Alison Road, many of my constituents have had the virtues of active transport instilled in them as they watch cyclists and, indeed, walkers travel past them.

Active transport is a key solution for busting congestion, a crucial player in improving public health and an important part of our greatest challenge: sustainably reducing carbon emissions and addressing our role in climate change. If we can learn something from the truly global cities of the world, it is that active transport and the effective blending of active and public transport are key pillars to creating a flowing city free of congestion and full of healthier people. It is disappointing that the Berejiklian Government does not think the same way as those thought leaders. Rather than investing in cycleways and bike lanes, this Government has actually made it more difficult for people from my electorate to cycle to work.

Recently I received a report put together by BIKEast and Bicycle NSW that details the numerous problems that active commuters in my electorate are facing now that the light rail nears completion. In a meeting with me and the member for Summer Hill and shadow Minister for Active Transport, representatives of both groups walked us through over 25 separate safety hazards cyclists now face on their commute between my electorate and the CBD. Significant safety hazards include cinder blocks and concrete bollards being stored along shared pathways and dedicated cycleways, and exposed wiring on pathways that run alongside light rail stations. Cyclists coming through Randwick need to switch between dedicated cycleways, shared pathways and the open road several times within the space of only one kilometre. Several of those transitions have to be made at acute angles across light rail tracks, often causing wheels to be stuck and cyclists to be thrown from their bikes.

Those representatives told me that their members are unhappy with how their commute has been affected and are nervous for their safety when they need to contend with light rail vehicles and cars along the already crowded roads that lead from my electorate into the city. The groups are crying out for dedicated cycleways. Their mission is to encourage people to leave their cars at home, walk or cycle to work and help to promote an active lifestyle and reduce congestion. Despite these benefits, we are not seeing an increase in cycling numbers because cyclists do not think it is safe to cycle in Sydney. As the member for Summer Hill said in this Chamber, the greatest protection for cyclists is more cyclists. We will achieve this only if we properly invest in the infrastructure that makes cycling safe.

We now have a channel carved through the eastern suburbs for the light rail. This provides the perfect guide rail for a dedicated cycleway that could funnel constituents in Coogee to their workplaces and homes safely and quickly. A forward-thinking government—one that was invested in better outcomes in health, congestion-busting and the happiness of people in its State—would be looking to invest significantly in active transport solutions. Both of those local cycling groups are bitterly disappointed by the level of funding allocated to active transport infrastructure.

In actuality, the budgetary commitments to active transport infrastructure make up less than 1 per cent of the State's \$73 billion budget for infrastructure over the next four years. During the 2019 State election campaign, the Liberal-Nationals Government promised to increase funding from \$147 million to a total of \$330 million over the next five years for the expansion of the active transport program, including funding for eastern suburbs cycleways. Despite the Government's promises, the 2019-20 budget has allocated only an additional \$16.8 million for the program—far short of the average of \$36.6 million per year needed to meet the amount promised by the Government. Randwick City Council has applied for two grants for separated cycleways and both have been rejected.

People want to be healthy. They want to belong to and feel part of a community. They want to lower emissions and they want to do their bit to make a better world. Solutions to these problems exist but are being ignored. The Government is about to bring online a major piece of public transport infrastructure and has made no attempt to leverage this new commuter corridor to encourage cycling from the eastern suburbs. It has made no attempt to integrate the light rail with active transport in order to create usable and efficient intermodal transport hubs. It has made no attempt to ensure that light rail supports active transport; rather, it has created dangerous disincentives. We all know that congestion is bad in Sydney. We know that effective moulding of active and public transport infrastructure is the future. Now is the time to invest in active transport, invest in the future of our city and its commuters and transform Sydney into a global city once again.

INNER WEST HERITAGE BUILDINGS

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:34:45): Today I speak about an incredibly concerning decision of the Inner West Council to privatise some of the most iconic heritage buildings in the inner west. It has been

referred to as a "fire sale" or a "flog-off". The Labor-led Inner West Council has issued an expression of interest seeking "proposals from experienced property developers and land owners to provide a strategy to address Council's future accommodation needs". The expression of interest includes Leichhardt Town Hall, Petersham Town Hall and a range of council depots across the inner west, as well as administrative offices in Leichhardt and Petersham. It is little more than a plan to rip off the people of the inner west.

Our town halls, in particular, are some of the most significant buildings in our community. The beautiful Petersham Town Hall was built in 1937. The Australian Institute of Architects considers it to be an important twentieth-century civic building due to its stately Art Deco design and unique identifiable quality. For 82 years it has remained in public hands for public use. Leichhardt Town Hall dates to 1888. It has been open to the public for 131 years and its heritage value was listed on the Register of the National Estate. Disappointingly, the Inner West Council is proposing potentially to close these properties to the public for the first time ever.

If private corporations are allowed to take over the buildings, they will run them to extract the greatest possible profit, locking out community groups and local residents. If there are buildings that are not being used—they may be empty, for example—because of the amalgamation, the council should collaborate with the not-for-profit sector to build up its capacity and allow not-for-profits to bid in an effective way for the properties, rather than throwing out an expression of interest for a couple of weeks. Not-for-profits and community organisations simply do not have the capacity or expertise to respond in such a short time.

The proposal ignores the immediate needs of our community. We know many local community organisations and charities are crying out for space. In fact, it was only because of an amendment moved by one of the Independent council members that community organisations and not-for-profits were even considered. As long as local community organisations are in need, public assets and the work of the council should come first, instead of developers and property owners. We have heard that the only buildings that the council has said will remain in public hands are the town halls. But that is a sleight of hand because, as we saw with poles and wires, 49 per cent of the assets can be leased out long term. Those assets, while technically not privatised, will be closed off to the community forever. That is why we say it is privatisation and should be opposed. It is completely disingenuous for Labor councillors, in particular, to argue against privatisation by the New South Wales Government at the same time that they are trying to sell off every significant piece of land that the council now owns.

Only a council in the most dire financial position would consider such a thing, but that is exactly where I fear the Inner West Council is. Its financial black hole is so deep that the council now sees privatisation as its only possible way out. It is remarkable, considering the KPMG report that contained financial modelling for the proposed amalgamation of Marrickville, Leichhardt and Ashfield councils. That report projected that the Inner West Council would produce a surplus of at least \$15 million during the 2017-18 financial year. However, last year the council produced a deficit of \$3.9 million. The report also projected that in the 2019-20 financial year, the amalgamated council should expect a surplus of about \$30 million. But what do we have this year? We have a projected deficit of \$18 million. That is a difference of \$48 million. These buildings have been in public hands for over 100 years, but the seeming financial mismanagement by the council over several years has culminated in an incredible \$48 million reversal of its projected position. It has produced such a financial predicament that the council is now looking to sell off these assets to save itself.

I believe that some things are too important to sell. I believe our iconic heritage town halls are too important to flog off and close to the public. I have always stood against privatisation and I am absolutely committed to defending these precious public assets from sale, whether it is a depot or an administration building. I do not want this council to sell them to the highest bidders and for development. They should be used for council purposes first and for purposes that serve the community. These assets are facilities that should serve the community, not serve developer interest or serve to produce a profit to get this council out of a financial predicament. I will do everything I can, along with the members of the public who have expressed alarm at these proposals, to make sure this does not happen.

HORNSBY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (17:50:21): There are many things in my Hornsby electorate that make me proud, but none more so than the amazing, hardworking local community organisations. Today I pay tribute to one of those organisations, the Hornsby Chamber of Commerce. This year it will celebrate 100 years of supporting local business. I congratulate and thank the chamber for its service to our business community. Today Hornsby has many thriving businesses spread out over the electorate but 100 years ago they were all located in one central triangle. Coronation Street, Station Street and Peats Ferry Road formed a hub of activity with a grocer, butcher, tobacconist, hairdresser, milliner, dentist, surveyor and dry cleaner. While businesses in Hornsby have now spread out, this is still an area which is home to many local businesses and is known affectionately as the old side of Hornsby.

It was this close proximity of all the major businesses and a desire to promote Hornsby that saw the establishment of the Hornsby Chamber of Commerce. It was a combined effort by Rob Smith, the local police sergeant, shire president Paul James and Federal MP Frank Lidell. It started with just 26 members and Alec Sommerville, from the store James Sommerville, was the first president. In those early days they hoped to promote the economic development of Hornsby and protect the interests of local business. It was a popular organisation and a drive for members saw an increase from the original 26 members to 97 members by 1921.

The Hornsby Chamber of Commerce was a strong lobby group for initiatives that help both the community and local business. In 1920 it successfully campaigned for a Sunday train service to deliver the newspaper to the area, which previously did not receive a Sunday paper. In the same year the chamber lobbied local State MPs for an extension to the electricity so Hornsby could have lighting. It was not successful but they did not have long to wait until Hornsby Council was able to bring electricity to the shire in 1923. Other initiatives driven by the organisation in those early days included the upgrade of the Hornsby Court House, representations to have a hospital built in Hornsby, the upgrade of Hornsby Park and the first street callbox, which was located on Peats Ferry Road. They also campaigned for better lighting, for more trees to be planted at Hornsby train station and for the reconstruction of Pennant Hills Road between Pearces Corner and Hornsby.

While there were many things the chamber achieved, none was more exciting than bringing in late night shopping in 1921. It was a move that was way ahead of its time. It was a huge drawcard and became a social event, with shoppers dressing up and spending the night walking the streets. The Hornsby brass band would play at one end of the street and the Salvation Army band at the other end. You would also find residents on their soapboxes, speaking of their political and religious beliefs. It certainly was an entertaining night for local residents. It was also in October 1921 that the chamber held their first gala event and exhibition. It ran over a week, with most events held in Hornsby Park or at the Hornsby Literary Institute, which is where the Hornsby TAFE is located today. It was called "Put Hornsby on the Map", a motto that the Chamber still strives to achieve to this day.

In October this year, 100 years later, I will join the Hornsby Chamber of Commerce in holding our annual business networking evening. This is an event I have held for the past six years. It has brought together small business owners from across the shire. It is a chance to get together, share ideas and meet local business owners. Over those six years we have heard from a range of guest speakers including Minister Victor Dominello, the NSW Small Business Commissioner and Premier Gladys Berejiklian, who at the time was the Minister for Transport. This year I am pleased to be joined by Treasurer Dominic Perrottet. Back in 1921 the gala event raised money for Royal North Shore Hospital and for the construction of the Hornsby War Memorial. It is a tradition we keep alive with donations from our event going to a number of local charities including Triple H radio, St Lucy's at Wahroonga, Hornsby Connect and this year The Dish, an organisation that provides food for homeless people.

I thank the unstoppable Alexi Boyd, who runs Small Biz Matters and hosts a show for small business on local radio station Triple H. I also thank our incredible president, Mandy Taylor, who has done an outstanding job over the past six years in ensuring the success of this event. Hornsby is home to some of the most successful small businesses in the State and I want to continue to support them and to see them not just survive but thrive. These days times are moving so fast that businesses can change in an instant. The Hornsby Chamber of Commerce meets regularly with its members, offering networking opportunities as well as events or guest speakers. I highly recommend to all local businesses in Hornsby to consider attending these events.

There have been many great volunteers who have come through the Hornsby Chamber of Commerce. Greg Bepper's leadership saw the amalgamation of Hornsby and Berowra sub-chambers of commerce in 2007. He also produced a DVD, *Hornsby Open for Business*. Today the president is the wonderful Mandy Taylor, with Alexi Boyd assisting as vice-president. The committee is made up of Shelley Duffy, Nilesh Golani, Darren Hart and Harrison George. I make special mention of Darren Hart, who is always on hand to take photographs at every event—thanks, Darren. I thank these amazing volunteers for their service to the Hornsby Chamber of Commerce and for supporting local businesses more broadly across the Hornsby shire.

TRIBUTE TO LES BENTLEY

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:45:44): Located in the East Hills electorate, Bankstown Paceway is almost as old as the entire Bankstown area and its surrounds. It is an important social and recreational hub and has given the suburb of Condell Park a uniqueness separate from the other suburbs in my electorate, as you can often see horses and riders trotting down the streets on the way from their stables to the paceway to train or race—an unusual sight in the middle of suburbia, so close to the city of Sydney. Bankstown Paceway was the first harness racing club in New South Wales to partake in the Australian national saddle racing competition. I pay tribute to Les Bentley, who served as Bankstown Paceway president from 2003.

Sadly Les passed away late in September. He was the loving partner of Sue, the much-loved father of Shane, Troy, Chad, Tana and Glenn and their families, and beloved grandy to his 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. A funeral was held for Les at the Bankstown Paceway winning post at 12.00 p.m. on Wednesday 2 October. I would like to read into *Hansard* the tribute the incoming president, David Rosen, paid to Les. He has provided a beautiful testament to Les's dedication to Bankstown Paceway and harness racing, as well as his highly admirable efforts in helping others:

Exactly thirty years to the day (2 October 1989) that life-long Bankstown local Les Bentley formally joined the Bankstown Harness Racing and Agricultural Society as a member. A grateful and tearful crowd of hundreds of Bankstown Paceway members, racing industry enthusiasts, family and friends packed out Condell Park's Phil Lopez OBE Grandstand to mourn a man whose dedication and service to industry and community are without parallel.

A passionate punter and race horse owner, Bankstown Paceway's longest ever serving president joined the Society's committee in 2002, and, following a stint as Treasurer, was elected President of the Society in 2003—the office he would hold up until his sad passing on Friday, September 20th. He was 71.

It is impossible to describe in words the enormity of the legacy of Les' sixteen years as Bankstown Paceway president—not to mention his past service as Harness Racing Clubs Committee chairman and a Harness Racing NSW board member—and his abundance of achievements for our industry and the local community are simply too numerous to list.

Bankstown Paceway was Les Bentley's magnum opus. He lived, breathed and slept with Bankstown Paceway in mind. He contributed all of his efforts, energies and endeavours to our race club and we are in the position in which we are today as the undeniable result of his own blood, toil, tears and sweat. Despite being diagnosed with a serious illness earlier in the year, Les continued to carry out his duties with the same dedication and zeal that he had for the previous sixteen years. Les is survived by his partner, Sue, who was never far from his side at our race track; his children, Shane, Chad, Troy, Glenn and Tana, their partners and his beloved grandchildren and great grandchild, to whom Bankstown Paceway and all of our members extend their heartfelt sympathy.

In due course, the Bankstown Paceway committee will meet to consider options for a fitting and permanent memorial tribute to recognise and acknowledge Les' long-lasting contribution to the Canterbury Bankstown community, our society and members, the harness racing industry and each and every one of the people that he touched in his lifetime with his generosity of spirit.

Vale, Les Bentley—a great loss to our community.

BRING YOUR BILLS COMMUNITY EXPO

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:50:00): On Wednesday 2 October 2019 I hosted a Bring Your Bills Community Expo in my electorate. The event was held at the Canterbury Earlwood Caring Community Centre in Earlwood. Up to 500 residents attended the event during the day. I also acknowledge our shadow Minister for cost of living and seniors, Jo Haylen; the Mayor of Canterbury Bankstown, Khal Asfour; the Deputy Mayor of Canterbury Bankstown, Bilal El-Hayek; and Councillor Maryanne Duggan from Strathfield Council, representing NSW Labor leader Jodi McKay. Many organisations were present. I am very thankful to them and to their very professional staff who attended the day. Those organisations included the NSW Energy & Water Ombudsman, Sydney Water, Revenue NSW, Service NSW, the NSW Trustee and Guardian, Legal Aid NSW, LawAccess NSW, Centrelink, the housing team from the Department of Communities and Justice, City of Canterbury Bankstown Council, Metro Assist, and the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW.

The Bring Your Bills Expo gave my constituents a chance to interact with these services face to face. The Energy & Water Ombudsman had more than 50 people approach it about problems with their energy and water providers. Ten constituents who attended discovered they were eligible for rebates, which will save them a combined amount of \$2,700 a year. This should not be the case, particularly for elderly people; this should be happening automatically. This Government promised cheap energy prices, but unfortunately energy and water prices are going up and up. One of my constituents who attended is Mrs Chrisanthi, a 70-year-old widowed pensioner living in Earlwood. She was able to save \$332 on her electricity bill. Metro Assist provided her with an Energy Accounts Payment Scheme voucher worth \$300 and the remaining amount of \$32 was able to be waived.

Metro Assist also helped one of my constituents who is currently living with cancer. He is undergoing regular chemotherapy treatment and consults a specialist every month. His wife is currently not working and he is struggling to make ends meet on Newstart. He was able to save \$300 after he too was given a voucher. The community expo casts light on systemic issues that affect older people, especially pensioners, people who are busy and many working parents. I found there is a gap in the need for coordination of public services. Many people are unaware that subsidies, rebates and services are available to them. Service NSW is a concept that the Opposition supported back in 2012. However, we need to ensure that more information is provided, particularly in different languages. Many pensioners in attendance, particularly from culturally diverse backgrounds, struggle to speak English proficiently. They do not have access to a computer and are not tech savvy.

These people are the most vulnerable, need the most care and require face-to-face support as they have difficulty in communicating their concerns on a daily basis. I spent the whole day speaking to so many of my constituents. Many of them do not know what is available to them. When the Government talks about online

services it has to understand that they are not accessible and equitable to everyone, particularly elderly people. I know from my own parents and my father-in-law, who are all pensioners, that they do not access any of these services because they do not have online access. It makes them even more isolated and disenfranchised in our community. Residents who attended the Bring Your Bills Expo were grateful to have an opportunity for face-to-face interaction with these services.

I thank Narelle Brown from the NSW Energy & Water Ombudsman, who facilitated Bring Your Bills. I also thank Jacquie Cheetham and her staff and the volunteers from the Canterbury Earlwood Community Centre. I thank my staff: Zoi, Bobby, Floris and volunteer Costa. My husband, Arthur, was also there translating. I look forward to holding similar events. Many lessons were learnt from this event, the second such one that we have held. What I want to see as the shadow Minister for Better Public Services is more people in Service NSW speaking a second language. It is something that I am going to look at and talk to my colleagues and community leaders across the State about. I want to see the Community Language Allowance Scheme increase. It is something I am going to fight for. We need to see more face-to-face access, particularly for pensioners, elderly people and busy parents.

MY COMMUNITY PROJECT PROGRAM

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:55:07): Hawkesbury residents had the opportunity to consider which projects would provide the most benefit to their local area and choose what they would like funded as part of the New South Wales Government's My Community Project program. Voting in Hawkesbury opened on 15 July and local residents were able to cast an online vote for between three and five of the 19 nominated Hawkesbury projects. Residents were able to view eligible projects and vote online or by visiting a Service NSW centre. Voting ended on 15 August 2019.

In September the successful projects were announced. There was great excitement among the Hawkesbury community. We had four successful projects. The Community Defibrillator Project at Wisemans Ferry was awarded \$35,000 for the purchase of public-access defibrillators and community education that improves the safety of locals and visitors. Richmond Swimming Centre was awarded \$61,144 for shade and seating installation. This includes wheelchair access to tables. Hawkesbury Men's Shed was awarded a total of \$81,000 for a new men's shed. This will improve the amenity and help with community assistance projects. Finally, Richmond School of Arts was awarded \$90,750 for a lighting and sound update to replace the fragile, obsolete 1970s lighting system used in this historic and beautiful old building.

The successful applicants will now be able to bring their ideas to life. I look forward to seeing the applicants and sponsors getting on with the job of rolling out these projects and the benefits they will provide to the local community. I am sure these successful projects will serve the purpose of the program, which is to make communities more liveable, cultural, accessible, safe, revitalised and healthy. It was great to have such an innovative and exciting program that puts decision-making back into the hands of community members to weigh in on their top picks for projects in the region. I thought it was a great example of real grassroots democracy in action, with the allocation of funding being reflective of the will of the community. More than \$24 million was available for eligible projects across the State, with between \$20,000 and \$200,000 available for each project.

I thank all applicants and sponsors within the Hawkesbury electorate for taking the time and effort to develop their ideas and promote their projects, along with the members of the community who voted. The project captured the imagination of our community, with people putting a lot of work into their ideas. It was great to see people get behind the projects that matter to them. The My Community Project was made possible by the NSW Generations Fund. I encourage all successful and unsuccessful participants from the Hawkesbury electorate to see if they are eligible for other community grants funding programs as well.

TAXI LICENCES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:58:27): I have resorted to using this opportunity to belatedly contribute to the important debate on the petition moved in this place on 26 September this year by the member for Manly. I note the member is in the Chamber, quite conveniently. The petition related to the proposed implementation of a scheme to buy back taxi licences at a value in line with pre-industry-reform prices. On that day the gallery was completely packed with taxi owners who had travelled here to witness their petition being debated. These people had waited years for this issue to be fully discussed by members on all sides of this House.

Sadly, the Minister for Transport refused to grant leave for members of the Opposition and the crossbench, myself included, to contribute on behalf of constituents whose lives and futures hang in the balance depending on the outcome of the debate. The Minister's excuse was that he wanted to ensure his regional politicians did not miss their flights home. But in the eyes of those thousands of taxi owners who were gathered here and those who tuned in online, it was not a reasonable excuse to cut such an important debate short.

I acknowledge all taxi owners in my electorate. I have met with many of them on several occasions, and it is a truly humbling and confronting experience to hear about the decimation of their industry brought about by the Government.

The year 2016 will long be remembered for the destructive decisions made by the Government. Indeed, it is several of those ill-considered decisions made by the Baird Government in 2016 that led to my election and the largest swing in New South Wales political history. My election that year precipitated a dramatic political shift in the communities throughout the State, the result of which is that I am now joined in this place by two new Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party colleagues. Together, we will scrutinise this Government and hold it to account for its many wrongs. One of those wrongs is the reckless legislation that saw devaluation of taxi plates. The victims—some of whom were present in the gallery that day—should be compensated appropriately for the financial losses incurred in plate devaluation.

The Premier—who at the time was the Minister for Transport in the Baird Government—allowed Uber to operate illegally for two years before the introduction of the point to point legislation. The Government-sanctioned invasion of rideshare providers into the transport domain has resulted in catastrophic consequences for the taxi industry and the people who rely on it. Such is the damage occasioned to the taxi owners of New South Wales—particularly to the small, family-owned businesses whose life savings were invested in the ownership of the expensive plates—that very many have arrived at financial ruin. In many cases, the investment in their plate or plates was to be their superannuation to live on in retirement. Many are now forced to continue to work in their twilight years instead of enjoying a well-earned retirement because of the Government's point to point transport reforms, which saw the value of taxi plates drop from hundreds of thousands of dollars to a mere fraction of that.

The devastation and loss to the individuals and families cannot be underestimated or overemphasised. Many face bankruptcy, the loss of their family homes, foreclosures, marriage breakdowns, lost inheritance and severe physical and mental health issues, while banks and financial institutions are now refusing to lend against the value of an owner's plates. Those people are now faced with the real prospect of being forced onto social security payments to survive. There are people, victims of the Government's decision, who have tragically taken their own life. The Government's token compensation—which is an insult to say the very least—was limited to \$20,000 per plate for a maximum of two plates per owner, which the taxi owners have been forced to raise to compensate themselves.

I recognise the efforts of the Taxi Owners Small Business Association [TOSBA] for its representation of taxi owners—particularly the small, family-owned businesses—and lobbying for compensation. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has worked cooperatively and collaboratively with TOSBA to seek fair and just compensation for the thousands of victims who have suffered significant financial loss as a result of their taxi plate devaluations. The petitioners requested implementation of a scheme to buy back taxi licences at the value in line with industry pre-reform prices. I support such a scheme, and the Government must accept responsibility and offer taxi plate owners the full amount of pre-rideshare plate values. The Government must now swallow its pride, accept responsibility and immediately offer a buyback for the full amount of pre-reform plate value to compensate those victims, and re-regulate the industry to correct the unequitable work environment that the Government has been complicit in creating. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will not be gagged and will not stop fighting until this is delivered.

MOTORCYCLE AWARENESS MONTH

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:03:35): Motorcycle Awareness Month was officially launched this morning in The Domain off Hospital Road. I attend the annual ride by the Motorcycle Council of NSW to officially launch Motorcycle Awareness Month with parliamentarians each year. It is invaluable for members to go along and be part of it. It is certainly a lot of good fun. Today was a great day for it—get up early, meet people, have breakfast and enjoy a bit of camaraderie amongst different motorcycle groups, such as the Motorcycle Council of NSW and the Brotherhood Christian Motorcycle Club, and other motorcyclists who come along to meet parliamentarians and talk about road safety issues. This was the launch of Motorcycle Awareness Month, which is important, but it was also the first anniversary of a program called the Motorcycle Clothing Assessment Program. The program takes a better look at the safety standards of motorcycle clothing such as jeans and jackets—including their abrasion resistance when a rider comes off—and of the most important part of a motorcyclist's safety gear, their helmet.

It was pleasing that Minister Constance made time to come along and talk to people about motorcycle helmet standards. He had a quick look at—and assessed straightaway as being unsafe—the helmet being used by the health Minister. I was very pleased that he brought it to the Minister's attention. The Minister promptly ignored his advice. We were very lucky to have not only people from the Motorcycle Council of NSW and the Brotherhood there but also three Ministers—Andrew Constance, Paul Toole and Brad Hazzard. I thank them all for coming

along. Motorcycle awareness is important. I have been riding motorcycles all my life. People seem to think I am having a midlife crisis, but it started when I was 17. I just had a midlife injection of funds so that I could buy more motorcycles—and bigger ones. It is true that I do a lot of riding.

This week we have been talking about legislation to get people off their mobile phones with the rollout of new camera technology to catch drivers using mobile phones and increasing the penalties for their use. Motorcyclists are acutely aware of people who do this, particularly older riders who are a little more aware of their surroundings. I see it in people's eyes. It is something I am incredibly aware of. Having been involved in a head-on accident when I was very young—possibly because I was going too fast but also because the other person was not watching where they were going—I am very aware of people who become distracted when driving at me in a large vehicle. It is important to talk about this issue constantly. The new legislation is important and it was wonderful that we could line it up with Motorcycle Awareness Month. The Motorcycle Council of NSW has been running a campaign for years to create awareness for people to get their hands off their phones. It is so important.

Once again, I acknowledge the Government for introducing the new measures to prevent people using mobile phones whilst driving. The Government's actions have probably exceeded the expectations of the Motorcycle Council of NSW. I thank everybody involved, including Kevin "Trip" Henry, Jason Antony and Brian Wood from the Motorcycle Council of NSW. I also thank Ministers Constance, Toole and Hazzard for being there. The member for Coogee, Marjorie O'Neill; the member for Newcastle, Tim Crakanthorp; the member for Barwon, Roy Butler; and the member for Wagga Wagga, Dr Joe McGirr, also attended. We had a talk, got out on the bikes and had a run through Woolloomooloo and back. I say to everyone out there: If you are riding, ride safe and stay upright; and if you are driving, get your hand off it.

SHOALHAVEN DISTRICT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government) (18:08:40): Tomorrow marks another important stage in the continued enhancement and redevelopment of Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital. Over a number of months, upgrades and enhancements of the paediatric unit at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital have been underway and, with works now complete, tomorrow the new unit will be officially opened. The New South Wales Government was pleased to support these important upgrades with \$250,000 in funding, allowing the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District to enhance the existing playroom and outdoor area, make the special care nursery a supportive environment for parents and newborns and improve parents' access to facilities in the integrated paediatric unit. Head of Paediatrics at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital, Dr Mark De Souza, said of the works, "The clinical care is the important part of the hospital but this money will reduce the impact of what can otherwise be a harsh and cold environment".

As a government, we are focused on providing the best possible environment for patients and their families, and I was particularly pleased that our clinical staff contributed to the planning for these new enhancements. This is another example of the New South Wales Government's investment in our local region and our local hospital. Works at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital's new \$11.8 million multistorey car park are progressing well. The new five split-levels car park will provide more than 220 new spaces in addition to the 60 ground-level spaces that were constructed as early works, and when complete the project will increase the hospital's overall parking capacity to over 550 spaces. This is an important project to ensure patients and visitors to the hospital are able to access facilities easily and securely, with the car park to provide improved connectivity and direct access to the hospital. Additionally, staff will also have access to improved parking facilities, ensuring that long walks to their vehicles late at night are something of the past.

I thank Premier Gladys Berejiklian for her visit to the South Coast last month. The Premier joined me and the member for Kiama to mark the near completion of the multistorey car park. Importantly, the Premier confirmed that construction of the redevelopment of Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital would begin within this term of government. My local community is well aware of the Liberals and The Nationals' commitment of \$434 million to redevelop Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital and know that when this Government makes a commitment, we deliver. That is why many across the community were dismayed when the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Health made a flying visit to the South Coast to do a press conference in which they criticised the hardworking doctors, nurses and hospital staff, who work tirelessly to provide care to our local community.

The Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister owe an apology to each and every staff member at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital, whom they insulted with their cheap political stunt. Many of those staff members have contacted me since the visit. Given that Labor had to be dragged kicking and screaming over the past three months to match the New South Wales Government's almost half a billion dollar commitment to redevelop this hospital, its stunt is nothing more than a slap in the face for our hardworking hospital staff. If the Labor Party had respect for our hardworking hospital staff, its representatives would have gone inside the hospital to speak to them. If they had, they would know that the New South Wales Government is currently finalising the

planning for the redevelopment, with \$15 million included in the 2018-19 State budget to progress the site's master plan.

The redeveloped Shoalhaven Hospital will see significant community benefits that are likely to include expanded elective surgery, more surgical, acute medical and aged-care beds, expanded maternity services, more operating theatres, increased capacity in the emergency department and expansion of outpatient and ambulatory care zones. The \$434 million investment will deliver new and upgraded health facilities so that residents on the South Coast no longer have to travel for some services. It is important that we continue to invest in our regional hospitals to ensure patients can receive high-quality health care closer to where they live. This incredible investment is only possible because of the strong economic management of the New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals, and the New South Wales Government is getting on with the job of delivering better healthcare services for the South Coast community.

This week I also met with the Minister for Health and Medical Research, Brad Hazzard, who reaffirmed that the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and Health Infrastructure NSW were well advanced in determining the range of health services needed as part of the redevelopment. I thank the Premier and the Minister for Health and Medical Research for their ongoing commitment to the South Coast and look forward to continuing to work with them and with local health staff to finalise plans for the hospital so we can commence construction in the coming years. I say to the Opposition leader and the shadow Minister: Please, if you are planning to visit my electorate, try to meet with the appropriate stakeholders, so that they do not have to come to my office to complain about a visit during which the Opposition leader and the shadow Minister did not bother to talk to them.

WOY WOY SERVICE CENTRE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:13:45): Customer service is one of the many focuses of our Government. Indeed, "making government easier" is one of the 14 Premier's Priorities that we are aiming to achieve over the next four years. Making life easier is also one of the things that many Central Coast residents would like to see. I inform the House that last month we officially opened the brand-new Service NSW centre at Woy Woy. Service NSW has transformed the customer experience for people. It is a one-stop shop for all government services, as well as the more than 70 cost-of-living measures, rebates and discounts on offer. After opening the Woy Woy Service Centre, I sent some photos of it to customer service Minister Victor Dominello. This service centre is so good that it has to be seen to be believed. I was delighted to welcome Minister Dominello to the Central Coast on 20 September to tour the new centre.

It must be said that customers in Woy Woy and surrounds, including the southern suburbs of my electorates, absolutely love the service centre. More than 3,400 customers were served over the counter and 2,800 used the digital kiosk in the first six weeks alone. The customer satisfaction rating of 96 per cent is testament to this. Let me emphasise this point: Labor's model of service delivery is the old Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA], but ours is Service NSW. The contrast is indeed stark. The Woy Woy Service Centre features a fantastic digital-first design. It is the first of its kind in New South Wales. Additional staff are available at Woy Woy to help customers on the self-serve touchscreens and mobile tablets. The centre is open from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on weekdays and from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. on Saturdays. A lot of residents of my electorate use the Woy Woy Service Centre, especially those who commute via Woy Woy station.

I also take this opportunity to promote the cost-of-living service, as 55 local families have collectively claimed more than \$22,000 in savings since the service went live last month at the Service NSW centre in Woy Woy. As I said before, there are more than 70 cost-of-living savings that can be accessed through Service NSW. Cost-of-living appointments allow people to sit down one on one with a cost-of-living specialist. It is simple and easy, and the average saving is \$408. On the day of the Minister's visit we also visited the Erina Service Centre in my electorate. It is just across the road from my electorate office and has been very well patronised. One of the highlights of being near a Service NSW centre is that I have been able to get to know the staff very well.

Gail Coombes is one of those fantastic staff members and her employment is a 30-year journey. In 1989 Gail began at the Department of Main Roads on what was initially a two-week contract. Gail continued to work at the Department of Main Roads at both Gosford and West Gosford offices. The Department of Main Roads then became the Roads and Traffic Authority. The RTA later became Roads and Maritime Services, which then became Service NSW. Fast-forward to April 2016, when Gail was hired by the Erina Service Centre when the office opened. This wonderful lady lives in my electorate, at North Avoca. She should be congratulated on her journey working with the wonderful team at Erina Service Centre. Gail had thought that at her age she would not find employment, but she got the job and absolutely brained it. Gail was quite emotional when she found out that she had secured the job. She started her job on day one and she is still there today. It is always a pleasure to speak with Gail. She is an absolute delight—a credit to Service NSW.

Mr James Griffin: Go Gail!

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Absolutely—go Gail! She is awesome. Minister Dominello had a chance to meet her when he visited. She is why Service NSW is an outstanding investment by this Government. She is very good at liaising one on one with older members of our community. Another initiative I want to highlight is the FuelCheck app. It is an easy way to save money when filling up the car with fuel. I use it regularly and FuelCheck often highlights that the Caltex service station at Erina provides fuel at very competitive prices. People across New South Wales have been voting with their phones, with over 500,000 people now using the app to save money and time by shopping around. I commend the Minister for Customer Service, Victor Dominello, for spearheading this approach to improving the delivery of government services. And I commend to the House each of the measures that our Government is taking to make life easier for people. Once again, I commend Gail for her outstanding work at the Erina Service Centre. I am sure that she has many years of service delivery ahead of her.

Community Recognition Statements

RAYMOND CLAUDE BELL, OAM

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:18:59): I acknowledge the remarkable dedication and outstanding work of Commissioner Raymond Claude Bell, OAM. For the past 75 years Raymond has worked tirelessly for the local community and the cadets of the Australian Air League, in particular with our local Padstow Squadron. Raymond first joined the Australian Air League in 1944 as a 12-year-old boy with the Marrickville Company. Raymond then rose through the ranks and, at the age of 18, became officer commanding of Marrickville. His principles of integrity, hard work and community spirit stayed with him throughout the years as he continued to climb the ranks and eventually became group field commissioner and group executive commissioner and established the League's own flying school—the only operation of its kind in Australia.

His dedication has seen him honoured not only with a number of awards from the league, but also with a Medal of the Order of Australia in 1995. After 34 years, Raymond stepped down from his role as the group executive commissioner in December 2018 to focus on his efforts with the Padstow and Moorebank squadrons. I commend Raymond for his lengthy and tireless community service.

TRIBUTE TO JEFFREY SAYLE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:20:05): I speak today about Jeffery Sayle—or Sayley—a much-loved figure and absolute legend of rugby union, Randwick Rugby Club and Coogee Surf Life Saving Club and a keystone figure in the Coogee community. If you do not know who Jeff Sayles was, you definitely are not a local. With over 60 years involved in so many guises, Sayley was the heart and soul of the Wicks and a lifetime devotee to his local community. While there was so much to be celebrated in his brief representative career as Wallaby 510, it was in his beloved myrtle green jersey that Sayley had his proudest moments. Sayley fronted up to 379 club games, 160 of which were in first grade.

After finally hanging up his boots in 1982, he earned legendary status as a coach, steering Randwick's first grade side to six Shute Shield titles and nurturing some of the greatest talent that Australian rugby has ever seen, including the Ella brothers, Simon Poidevin and David Campese. He later served as the club's treasurer, secretary and president, and was club patron from 2003. So famous was Sayley in Sydney's east that he even had a beer, Sayley Ale, named after him. Rest in peace, Jeffrey Sayle. Up the Wicks!

MANLY WARRINGAH DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:21:10): This evening I update the House on the outstanding work of the Manly Warringah District Cricket Club and its upcoming golf day fundraiser at Long Reef Golf Club. The Manly Warringah District Cricket Club was founded in 1878. It is the second-oldest existing district cricket club in New South Wales. I am immensely proud to be a patron of the club. It has an outstanding community spirit, as is evidenced by its Manly for Manly program, which commenced in 2014 and has seen the club support a number of community events and charity partners. I congratulate president Andrew Fraser, vice president David Gainsford, secretary Steve Beatty and the rest of the board on the great success of the club and wish them all the best for the fundraiser.

JILLIBY PUBLIC SCHOOL 130TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:21:44): I acknowledge Jilliby Public School for celebrating 130 years of public education on 21 September. Jilliby Public School is one of the oldest schools on the Central Coast. Teachers, students and the community were invited to attend the day held on the school grounds, which featured interesting historical and memorabilia displays from the past to now. The celebration included entertainment and games such as live music, a haunted house, acrobatics and dance displays, chocolate and sponge throwing, food and coffee vans, a petting zoo and more.

Jilliby Public School was first declared open by Mr William Baldwin on 5 May 1889. The school emblem was created when Mr Baldwin planted a bunya bunya pine—which is still there today, standing gracefully in front of the school. The teachers should be proud of themselves for creating an effective learning environment and dedicating their time to the students. Well done to the teachers and students for reaching this milestone. We wish you all the very best for the future. I acknowledge that Jilliby Public School was my partner school when I was principal at Dooralong, and I have spent many great hours at Jilliby Public School.

COPACABANA SURF LIFESAVERS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:22:46): I acknowledge and thank the quick-thinking lifesavers at Copacabana. On Monday 7 October two volunteer lifesavers, Adam Richards and James McNamara, were preparing to begin the day's beach patrol when they were alerted by fellow lifesaver Alistair Shaw to a man who had collapsed and was not breathing. Adam's and James' quick thinking led them to grab the surf club's defibrillator and race to the scene. They quickly began administering oxygen and applying the defibrillator. Thankfully, the man responded and began to breathe unassisted. Paramedics from NSW Ambulance arrived later to take the man to hospital. While the man's condition is currently unknown, the lifesavers' quick thinking and application of practical first-aid skills went a very long way to helping him. I thank Adam and James for their fast response in this moment of crisis. It just goes to show that basic first-aid training does quite literally save lives. I thank everyone in our community who volunteers with a local surf club to help others.

DELPHI BANK 26TH GREEK FILM FESTIVAL

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:23:44): It was great to attend the Delphi Bank 26th Greek Film Festival Australia with my husband, Arthur, at Palace Cinemas in Leichhardt last week. I commend Harry Danalis, president of the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW, and Nia Karteris, vice president of the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW. I also thank the board, staff, volunteers and the amazing sponsors who once again made this annual event a great success. It gets bigger and better every year, and is part of the New South Wales cultural calendar, when the Greek Orthodox community across Australia screens quality films that increase our economic contribution to our State and involve many young people. I commend the Greek Orthodox Community for its student film day competition. On behalf of the New South Wales Parliament, I thank the Greek Orthodox Community.

DANIEL COOK

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:24:53): I congratulate a local gentleman by the name of Daniel Cook on winning the Business Person of the Year Award at the recent Hawkesbury Local Business Awards. Daniel is the director of Cook Constructions and this award is a reflection of and reward for his hard work and dedication. True to his respectful nature, Daniel credits his staff members with his success, and I extend my congratulations to them on this wonderful achievement. I acknowledge what Mr Cook and other small businesses do in that area. Their knowledge, hard work, risk taking and innovation create jobs and provide our community with the goods and services that we require. The community appreciates the honesty and integrity with which Daniel Cook and his team carry out their work. It is for this reason that I have no doubt they will be considered for many more awards in the future. I wish Daniel Cook and his team continued success.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE HSC STUDENTS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:25:43): I congratulate all those students in the electorate of Swansea who have reached the milestone of sitting the HSC today. The electorate of Swansea is home to St Mary's Catholic College, St Brigid's Catholic College, St Francis Xavier Catholic College, the great Swansea High School, Belmont High School, North Lakes High School and Lake Munmorah High School. I pay tribute to all those educators and wonderful teachers throughout our system who help children achieve this wonderful milestone. I also give a big shout-out, on indulgence, to my daughter Georgia, who is sitting the HSC today, and to her friends who have worked very hard to reach this point. Of course they are looking forward to schoolies, but I say to them, "Kids, it is a great milestone but it is not everything. Good luck."

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): We wish Georgia all the best with her HSC.

PANTHERS MEN'S BOWLING CLUB

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:26:56): I recognise the charitable efforts of the Panthers Men's Bowling Club, which recently donated \$1,500 to the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute, collected as a result of wayward bowls. Established as a penalty to discourage wayward bowls at a tournament, the Panthers Men's Bowling Club collects a gold coin for each bowl that accidentally heads in the wrong direction on the green as a result of a wrong bias. Although clearly nothing to boast about, yet hard to begrudge, each fine collected goes directly into what the bowlers call the "wrong bias charity box" to support the cancer institute. Club secretary

Darrel Forster confirmed that, sadly, the Big C had hit close to home for a number of members of late, so it was a unanimous decision by the bowling club to contribute something back and make a difference to the lives of local people.

Nursing unit manager Jenny Baroutis acknowledged the men's heartfelt support through the wrong bias charity box and the support the funds would provide through the purchase of comfort items for patients undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatments. I extend my gratitude to president John Wright, secretary Darrel Forster, club patron Keith Uptin and each member who has found themselves contributing as a result of a wayward bowl.

RANDWICK CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:27:53): I commend Randwick City Football Club for its fantastic awards night. Randwick City Football Club was founded in 2010 by a group of like-minded individuals who had the vision to create an all-inclusive family club. It has since grown into one of the most vibrant and ambitious sports teams in Sydney, catering for multiple teams and abilities. Through passionate management and community and sponsor support, players and members can enjoy football all year round and there is a place for anyone regardless of talent, age or gender. It was my utmost pleasure and privilege to present the awards to the Purple Heart disabled footballers with my Maroubra colleague, Michael Daley. I thank club president Richard Baldwin for all his efforts, and congratulate all the award recipients on their fantastic work this season.

CAMDEN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2019

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:28:38): I congratulate the 31 Camden businesses named winners in the 2019 Camden Local Business Awards. There are too many to name individually. I also congratulate the many more Camden businesses that were finalists in the awards. New South Wales has the highest number of small businesses in the country. Without small businesses the New South Wales labour force would not be as strong as it is. I commend business owners and staff for their achievements and wish them continued success.

WYONG NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:29:18): I congratulate to Wyong Neighbourhood Centre for celebrating its fortieth anniversary on Tuesday 1 October at Wyong Community Centre, along with the old Wyong Public School, which turned 130. The neighbourhood centre is the longest running on the Central Coast and has provided services since 1979. It began in 1970 when new families moving to the Wyong area were isolated from their extended family. Nine years later it all changed. In 1979 Marian's Place was created for people to meet and connect with the community.

Later it began providing a variety of services, including chat groups and informative talks on various topics. In 1985 the name was changed to Wyong Neighbourhood Centre and it became an associated incorporation. Other funding successfully established an occasional child care group and a men's health group. The organisation continued to grow, enabling other services such as financial counsellors, support vouchers, support workers, kids' activities and programs for individuals, groups and families. Well done on its fortieth anniversary.

YOUNG FOOD HALL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:30:21): The Young Food Hall celebrates five years of invaluable service to our local community. The hall opened in 2014 and is going gangbusters thanks to the amazing volunteers and wonderful support it receives from the broader Young community. I congratulate the original committee members on getting this wonderful local not-for-profit organisation up and running. Original members include president Debbie Longhurst, secretary Judy Barker, Naomi Peters, Donna Davis, Gerard Simms and the late Murdoch McDonald.

I acknowledge incoming committee members Gwen Gunning and Kerry Palmer, as well as over 40 volunteers who support the hall in one way or another week in, week out. Thanks to volunteer coordinator Jenny Howe and also Laurel Merren, who previously held the role. The Young Food Hall is supported by Foodbank NSW, donations from local businesses including Woolworths and Aldi stores, as well as generous members of the Young community. I congratulate and thank everyone involved in the Young Food Hall.

CAVES BEACH SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (18:31:24): I bring great news to the House today. Last Saturday Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club celebrated turning 90 in style. I pay particular tribute to president Alicia Drane and secretary Steve Smith, who guided this wonderful organisation into its ninth decade. It was such a wonderful tribute to have a room full of life members who have carried this club for the last 90 years on their shoulders. There were generations of surf lifesavers in that room last Saturday night who have ensured that Caves Beach

remains safe. There were whole families of dedicated volunteers. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate with the club that I have been a member of from the age of 16. This is a great milestone for Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club. In 90 years there has never been a life lost at Caves Beach.

RAINE AND HORNE TERRIGAL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:32:29): I congratulate Raine and Horne Terrigal for being awarded 2019 Australian Innovator of the Year. Raine and Horne Terrigal adopted world-first artificial intelligence and voice recognition technology to access tenancy records, initiate points of contact, receive rental ledgers and report maintenance issues. By using innovation technology and techniques, Raine and Horne operate more productively and efficiently. I congratulate the company on the acknowledgement as the best innovator in Australia for 2019. It beat a tough field of 10 finalists from about 50 nominations. The Real Estate Business Awards are in their seventh year and reflect innovation, leadership, good management and excellence in the real estate sector. As members know the real estate business is extremely competitive. I congratulate Raine and Horne Terrigal on receiving such a prestigious award and I commend it for what it does for our community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh): Having worked with Raine and Horne Terrigal in a previous life I echo the sentiments of the member for Terrigal.

WESTFIELD TUGGERAH LOCAL HEROES

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:33:34): I congratulate Westfield Tuggerah Local Heroes Bryan Dorfling from Camp Breakaway, Rhonda Doyle from Central Coast Kids in Need and Rebecca Law from Shoebox Revolution. Nominated by the community, the three local heroes were awarded a \$10,000 grant to put towards growing the important work of their affiliated organisations. Westfield Local Heroes is a community recognition and grants program that connects and enriches local communities. Bryan Dorfling is youth leader at Camp Breakaway. He connects with people through his love of music, removes social barriers and encourages people to socialise and join in activities.

Rhonda Doyle is a retired hairdresser who volunteers 30 hours a week at Central Coast Kids in Need. She and 17 other volunteers help the families of seriously ill children travelling to Sydney or Newcastle hospitals for treatment. Rebecca Law is the driving force behind Shoebox Revolution, a charity that distributes 400 packs of food and necessities a month directly to recipients or through other local services and charities. Well done to the three local heroes whose support and care for the local community makes a difference on the Central Coast.

GREG RUDOLPH

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:34:38): I pay tribute to Greg Rudolph who recently resigned from the role of CEO at Hawkesbury Race Club after 3½ years at the helm. Mr Rudolph oversaw a prosperous time for the club with the completion of several major projects and initiatives, including the installation of the Polytrack training track and the refurbishment of the onsite Hawkesbury Race Club Motel.

He also increased corporate sponsorship at the club and in the provincial sector, with new partners and sponsors including Tabcorp, Polytrack, Killahy Equine and Robert Oatley Wines. Mr Rudolph presided over the most successful Saturday stand-alone in the club's history. Our community is grateful for his dedicated support for numerous charity race days and events. Mr Rudolph plans to complete his business studies and increase his involvement in other areas, including charity work. I congratulate Mr Rudolph on his excellent tenure and wish him continued success.

CANTERBURY ELECTORATE HSC STUDENTS

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:35:40): I congratulate all HSC students currently doing their exams, particularly within my electorate—All Saints Greek Orthodox Grammar School, Canterbury Girls High School, Canterbury Boys' High School, Belmore Boys High School and Kingsgrove North High School. I thank every single teacher, parent, caregiver and volunteer. I want all year 12 students to know that it will be okay. Try not to stress, though I know it is a difficult time. These students have their whole lives ahead of them. They should be very proud of their achievements and the work they have put in to reach this point. Congratulations, good luck and no matter what they decide to do in life I am sure they will be great.

PORT MACQUARIE ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:36:46): I recognise the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association for coordinating a special stargazing event at St Columba Anglican School on 2 November to raise funds for the \$3.5 million redevelopment of the local observatory. Highly anticipated by local astrophysicists and astronomers alike, the event will captivate audiences and provide insights into what lies beyond the skies. Event

coordinator Alice Totonjian and vice president Chris Ireland aim to showcase the association's history and significance in the hope that locals and visitors will be inspired to learn more about our planet and solar system.

Astronomer and University of Sydney Associate Professor John O'Byrne will draw the crowds. The event will also include live music, food, telescopes, science experiments and a model of the proposed new building. The Port Macquarie Astronomical Observatory was originally built in 1961. Its doors officially opened to the public in 1965. The observatory opens its doors to the general public on Wednesday and Sunday nights, which is only possible thanks to a group of dedicated volunteers. Anyone interested in astronomy must attend the 21 November event.

NORTHERN UNITED RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:37:50): I congratulate the Northern United Rugby League Football Club on its tenth birthday and for organising the Koori knockout competition in Lismore this year. The Lismore Koori Knockout is a large event that brings an estimated 10,000 people into Oakes Oval over two days in late September each year. On Saturday 21 September I went to the game and caught up with many old friends and made new ones. It was a great day. Northern United is operated by a voluntary board of Aboriginal men and women.

I make special mention of the following individuals: Lester Moran Senior, Ashley Moran, Laurie Mercy, Melinda Moran and Martyn Mills—the only non-Aboriginal member. There were 18 teams participating in this year's competition. I congratulate Bundjalung-Dunghutti United for winning the 2019 title and runners-up, Cubawee Connection. I congratulate the Tabulam Turtle Divers on winning the Women's Lismore Knockout. I also thank the women who generously gave up their time to run the canteen during the competition. I will be there in 2020.

BENDIGO BANK COFFS HARBOUR RUNNING FESTIVAL

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:38:50): The Bendigo Bank Coffs Harbour Running Festival was held on 8 September under blue skies and in moderate temperatures. There were four distances on offer—three kilometres, five kilometres, 10 kilometres—and a half marathon of 21 kilometres. The Key Employment three-kilometre distance was won by Trent Alley, with Ricardo Moncada in second place and Will Bennett, son of proud parents Jasmine and Craig, in third place. The Southern Cross University five-kilometre event was won by Hudson Barry, with Olissa Onley in second place and Jack Roohan in third place.

The Mike Blewitt Ford 10 kilometre was won by Ryan Binskin, with Ben Burridge in second place and Keelan Beien in third place. The Beachside Radiology half marathon was won by Reece Edwards, with Isaiah Koopmans and Darrel Nelson rounding out the podium. Michelle Pearson was the fastest female, with Reegan Ellis and Clare Palmer finishing second and third. The Bendigo Bank Coffs Harbour Running Festival, together with the Coffs Harbour Rotary Club, also distributed \$20,000 to local charities and community groups. Congratulations to all competitors and organisers.

DANIEL PETERSON

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:39:54): I acknowledge Daniel Peterson, the wonderfully committed homeless outreach worker at Community Northern Beaches. He is a tireless advocate for the vulnerable and the voiceless in our community. When we speak on matters of homelessness in this place, I often wonder what Daniel would think. I appreciate his efforts in being on the front line in supporting and working with homeless people for many years. The northern beaches community is incredibly lucky to have a passionate advocate like Daniel Peterson supporting the voiceless and the vulnerable.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:40:32): I recognise the Armenian community in my electorate of Davidson and particularly put on record the tribute concert that is being held on Friday night for the 150th anniversary of Komitas. *Armenian Music of Remembrance: The 150th Anniversary of Komitas*, celebrates the legacy of renowned Armenian musician Komitas. He was an Armenian priest, composer, singer, ethnomusicologist and choirmaster who travelled around villages, collecting and writing down Kurdish and Armenian folk songs.

Komitas is considered the founder of the Armenian National School of Music. He was arrested and deported to a prison camp during the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Government, along with many other Armenian intellectuals. Haunted by the mass death marches and massacres of the Armenian genocide, he had a mental breakdown and spent much of his life in a psychiatric hospital. He is seen as a martyr of the genocide and is an important man who will be celebrated on Friday evening.

CRAIG HOUGH AND MANDY DEVLIN

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (18:41:40): I commend Craig Hough and Mandy Devlin—team "Fat and Furious"—for their efforts in raising funds for the Cancer Council by participating in its national fundraiser. I note that participants drive from Melbourne to Townsville via Birdsville in a car that is worth less than \$1,000, raising money to fund research into preventing and curing cancer, and supporting cancer patients and their families. I acknowledge Craig and Mandy's charity and their community-minded approach to helping others, and I wish them all the best with fundraising efforts and in the rally in October.

NORTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES BUSHFIRES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:42:20): I share with the House a message that was posted on Facebook by His Excellency Governor-General David Hurley. The message reads:

Prince Phillip and I have been deeply saddened to hear of the tragic loss of life and property caused by bushfires affecting communities and businesses across northern New South Wales and south-east Queensland.

I am heartened that once again the richness of spirit that defines Australians has drawn people together to support those in need.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the victims.

It is signed "Elizabeth R". I know that pleased a lot of people in the local community where I live, and also in Clarence where my colleague, Chris Gulaptis, is the member. Various mayors and other people have also commented on it. They were very pleased and surprised to get that message.

GRENFELL GARDEN CLUB

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:43:15): I acknowledge the Grenfell Garden Club on its latest wedge-tailed eagle project. The Grenfell Garden Club commissioned local artist Kathleen McCue to create a sculpture that would be a point of interest for visitors and a symbol of community spirit. I congratulate Kathleen on her excellent talent in producing a wedge-tailed eagle made entirely from recycled material. I encourage all visitors to Grenfell to stop by to admire this wonderful artwork.

ASIAN WOMEN AT WORK

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:43:48): I congratulate Lina Cabaero, the president of Asian Women at Work, and thank her for inviting me to the inaugural Filipino group that meets on Wednesdays. It has been recently set up to try to ensure that the Filipino community does not feel isolated, particularly when it comes to a lack of services. One of our community leaders, George Bousamra, and I visited a couple of weeks ago and a number of issues were raised in relation to English classes and online access, which many of our Filipino and other non-English speaking background community have difficulty accessing. I resolved that I would write to key Ministers and let them know. I thank them for inviting us and congratulate them on establishing this committee.

TERRIGAL MATCHAM CRICKET CLUB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:44:55): We know that many young women across the nation are taking up more and more sport every day, including the great game of cricket. This gives me the opportunity tonight to highlight the outstanding work being done by the Terrigal Matcham Cricket Club, which was recently successful in round two of the New South Wales ICC T20 World Cup 2020 Cricket Legacy Fund. I was delighted to be able to provide the club with \$3,200 of grant funding for the female participation and retention program.

It was great to be able to meet with players from the junior side, Emily Humphries and Tara French, and also Ella Merritt from the Ladies T20 competition. These young ladies are absolutely outstanding cricketers on the Central Coast. I also have to pay tribute to club president John Toohey, who unfortunately could not be there on the day, but Gerard O'Rourke, who was representing him, has the very distinguished job of being the grant writer and is obviously doing exceptionally well. Once again, congratulations to the Terrigal Matcham Cricket Club. I look forward to another great season!

WOOLGOOLGA SCOUTS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:45:58): Our future leaders are developing their potential and learning about community service at Woolgoolga scouts. I was honoured to attend their recent open evening to coincide with International Youth Day. I was impressed by their proud dedication to civic duty. As many as 40 families are actively involved at 1st Woolgoolga Scout Group, which meets weekly during the school term at its Hastings Street headquarters—in fact, it has been the scouts' home for the last 60 years.

Whenever there are community events, large and small, you can count on Woolgoolga scouts to be there—Clean Up Australia Day, Anzac Day and Remembrance Day are just a few examples. Their regular activities include BMX mountain biking, rock climbing, kayaking, archery and even flying light aircraft, and there

are opportunities to attend jamborees both here in Australia and overseas. Woolgoolga Scout Group has a strong team at the helm: Scout Leader James Daniels, Cub Leader Kate Dean, Joeys Scout Leader Kirsty Bransdon and Group Leader Janine Mackie.

TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN ANNE MCMAHON-NOLF

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:46:51): I pay tribute to the life of Kathleen Anne McMahon-Nolf, a lovely Hawkesbury local who sadly passed away in June this year at the age of 75. Kathleen was born in 1943 to Kevin and Betty McMahon. She was born and raised in a family that had a strong passion for history and who have been vitally important and valuable to the exploration and preservation of the history of our area. Kathleen was the founding president of the Kurrajong-Comleroy Society, which was formed in 2001 with great involvement from the McMahon family. She was also very active with, and supportive of, other groups such as the Colo Shire Family History Group. Kathleen's memorial service was held on 3 July, on what would have been her seventy-sixth birthday. I offer my condolences to Kathleen's family and friends.

LAURIETON VOICES U3A CHOIR

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:47:50): Laurieton Voices U3A Choir recently delivered a wonderful performance of vocals and percussions at the School of Arts to raise funds to support the local NSW Ambulance Service. The audience who came from across the Camden Haven region were treated to an array of beautiful symphonies, with songs reflecting the theme of calamity and courtship. Soloist Betty Boyd mesmerised the crowd with a special performance of *Sentimental Journey*, which reminisces on a road once travelled and that longing to return to a loving memory.

During the course of the evening U3A convenor Sue Bartholomew announced that the concert had raised about \$400 for the local ambulance service, with attendance exceeding expectations. Musical director and choirmaster Iain Pole conducted the proceedings, accompanied by pianist Patricia Frank, together delivering a beautiful chorus of music to the pleasure of the audience. I acknowledge U3A president Lorraine Beukers and thank all performers past and present who have contributed to the end-of-term concerts. Other charities that have benefitted from the performances include Marine Rescue and Camden Haven Community at 3. I note that the next fundraiser will be supporting Club North Haven's drought appeal initiative. On behalf of the community I thank everyone involved.

EARLWOOD WANDERERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:48:53): It is very exciting that the Earlwood Wanderers Under 16s have made it to the grand final. I wish them all the best; they have done an exceptional job. They are just a breath away from winning their first male Champion of Champions tournament since 2011. They are up against the University of Wollongong Under 16s this Sunday. I wish the Earlwood Wanderers Under 16s all the very best. It is fantastic for them to achieved this result. I congratulate them and wish them good luck. I will be barracking for them. Go, Earlwood Wanderers Under 16s!

COOLAMON SHIRE COUNCIL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:49:36): I extend my thanks and congratulations to the Coolamon Shire Council's Gail O'Brien, Peter Dennis and Margaret Payton for their decades of service to the local council. At the August council meeting Gail O'Brien and Peter Dennis were recognised for 30 years of service and Margaret Payton for 20 years of service. Mrs O'Brien is the dedicated executive assistant to general manager Tony Donoghue, and that is nothing to be sneezed at. Margaret is the executive assistant to development and environmental services, and Peter Dennis is a plant operator. Their loyalty and dedication to Coolamon is very admirable. Well done!

TERRIGAL ELECTORATE MEN'S SHEDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:50:22): It gives me great pleasure again to talk about the wonderful men's sheds in my electorate of Terrigal. I recently had the pleasure of joining the guys at the Erina Community Men's Shed for a morning tea and to officially open its alfresco area. The new space has been made possible by funding from the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's Community Building Partnership program, as well as hundreds of hours of fantastic work by the guys themselves. I have also been able to secure an additional \$5,000 from Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women the Hon. Bronnie Taylor for a second shed on site. It was a pleasure to be able to present that funding to the guys on behalf of Minister Taylor at the morning tea. The Terrigal electorate is lucky to have three men's sheds, with a fourth soon to be getting underway in the wonderful suburb of Copacabana. Again, all of the guys at the Erina Community Men's Shed do a fantastic job. I have said over and over again that our men's sheds save lives—they are one of the greatest institutions. I congratulate the guys at the Erina Community Men's Shed.

AIDAN YOURELL

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to Aidan Yourell of Evans Head who has been a member of the Evans Head Surf Life Saving Club for the past 14 years. Aidan has been an active member of the Surf Club since the age of 6 and his contribution to the Club was recognised at the NSW Surf Life Saving Awards where he was presented with the Youth Volunteer of the Year Award. Last season, Aidan did more than 200 patrolling hours, was part of the fundraising efforts and supported the Nippers with water safety every Sunday. Aidan is terrific young man and this is a wonderful accolade for a young person who puts his community first and I am sure the Evans Head community joins with me in congratulating Aidan on this achievement.

ONE PENNY RED

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I congratulate Summer Hill's One Penny Red on recently being awarded A Good Food Guide chef's hat in the Sydney Morning Herald's Good Food Guide awards. One Penny Red represents the very best of the inner west's vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, revitalising our heritage buildings and adding further clout to Summer Hill's renowned foodie culture. In 2012, David Murphy and Nina Alidenes gave the historic Summer Hill Post office a new lease on life, reinventing the 114-year-old heritage building as a landmark restaurant for inner west residents. Each year since, One Penny Red has gone from strength to strength and I send my heart-felt congratulations to David, Nina and all the staff at One Penny Red on this extraordinary achievement. I look forward to visiting again soon, although I imagine it will only get harder and harder to get a reservation now that the word is out about Summer Hill's best kept secret!

CENTRAL WEST GROUP COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF NSW

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I congratulate the members of the Country Women's Association Central Western Group on their 94th Annual Conference, hosted by the CWA Cudal Branch on Saturday 12th October 2019. I wish to also recognise the dedication and efforts of Central West Group CWA President Jan Kerr, Patron Gail Haydon, and all the branch delegates who mustered for this conference, following in the footsteps of those who have maintained this tradition for almost a century. It is a testament to the unity and strength of the Central Western Group that it has continued and flourished for 94 years, given that the Country Women's Association in New South Wales was first formed in 1922.

I wish to recognise the important work and contributions they have made and continue to make in the communities across the Central West and broader rural New South Wales. They have provided support, relief and assistance to the community through those many years in response to war, flood and drought. They have been instrumental in the delivery of baby health care centres, funding of bush nurses, building and staffing maternity wards, hospitals and schools. Congratulations and thank you, one and all.

GRENFELL GARDEN CLUB

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the Grenfell Garden Club on its latest "Wedge-Tailed Eagle" project. The Grenfell Garden Club commissioned local artist Kathleen McCue to create a sculpture that would be a point of interest for visitors and a symbol of community spirit. I congratulate Kathleen on her excellent talent in producing a Wedge-Tail Eagle made entirely from recycled materials. I encourage all visitors to Grenfell to stop by to admire this wonderful art work.

WARATAH DAY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—Campbelltown is extremely fortunate to be home to a number of dedicated and passionate community groups. From groups that look after the elderly to those who focus on health and sport, there is a plethora of organisations out there to assist everyone. Beautiful Minds is one of those groups. Last Friday Beautiful Minds held its annual Waratah Day fundraiser. The fundraiser sees a number of stalls set up throughout Macarthur selling NSW's state emblem at \$5 a pop. All money raised goes back into supporting mental health services and patients throughout the Macarthur region and south-west Sydney. It is a tremendous cause that is backed by the community every single year.

Waratah Day also coincided with Mental Health Month. As we know, mental illnesses do not discriminate – they can affect anyone. Raising awareness is just as vital as raising funds. There is no doubt the negative stigma surrounding mental health has diminished significantly from society in recent years – but there is still a lot of work to do. Initiatives like Waratah Day have made, and continue to make, a substantial difference when it comes to eradicating that stigma. Well done to all involved in Waratah Day 2019.

WESTERN SAHARA BRIEFING

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise a briefing held in the NSW Parliament on 23 September hosted by the members for Lismore and Balmain. The briefing was about Life in Western Sahara Refugee Camps. The briefing was delivered by Ms Techbar Ahmed Saleh. Also present was Ambassador Kamal Fadel, Polisario Representative to Australia and New Zealand, who I've known for about 20 years. Polisario aims at ending the Moroccan occupation of the Western Sahara and exploitation of its natural resources. The UN considers Polisario to be the legitimate representative of the Sahrawi People. They aim for the independence of Western Sahara and the exercise of the inalienable right of self-determination. The Western Sahara is on the north west coast of Africa and is partially occupied by neighbouring Morocco. It was previously occupied by Spain. Since 1963 it has been on the list of non self-governing territories.

NORTHERN RIVERS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—On Thursday, 3 October 2019, I attended the Northern Rivers Volunteer of the Year Award ceremony, hosted by Ms Gemma Rygate, CEO of the Centre for Volunteering, at the Lismore Workers Club. Volunteers from across the Northern Rivers region were recognised for their outstanding contribution at this special ceremony. There were 84 nominees who reside in the Lismore Electorate, giving their precious time to volunteer for the following organisations:

- CASPA
- CWA Bonalbo Branch
- CWA Kyogle Evening Branch
- CWA Lismore Branch
- CWA Lismore Evening Branch
- CWA Murwillumbah Evening Branch
- CWA Nimbin Branch
- CWA Old Bonalbo Branch
- CWA Tabulam Branch
- Guide Dogs NSW / ACT
- Northern Rivers Community Gateway
- Primary Ethics
- Rowing NSW
- Scouts Australia
- SES Richmond Tweed Region
- St John Ambulance Lismore

I congratulate Ms Sheliya Van Buggenum for winning the Adult Volunteer of the Year and Mr Robert Grasby for winning the Senior Volunteer of the Year and the Northern Rivers 2019 Volunteer of the Year. I also thank the host organisations for providing our volunteers with the opportunity to make a difference in our community. To all winners and nominees, congratulations and thank you for making our community a better place to live.

CAMP QUALITY 1000K4KIDS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Congratulations to the riders and support crew who pedalled 1000kms from the Gold Coast to Newcastle raising more than \$400,000 for Camp Quality. Well done to Amanda Morris, Andrew Howard, Andy Olrich, Anthony Fleming, Ben Kulhanek, Brad Harris, Brad Shawcross, Brendon Rae, Chris Kuhnel, Clint Lewis, Craig Stevenson, Cvetko Misevski, Daniel Gleeson, Danny Mortensen, Darren McGuinness, Ellis Krischer, Garry Beams, Geoff White, Gerard Dorahy, Grace Elkin, Greg Smits, Ian Hulse, Ian Richardson, Jarrett Pacheco, Jarrod Baker, Jayden Rowett, Jo Kuhnel, Jody Duff, Joe Hastie, Karli Pacheco, Ken Bolderly, Kristi Ayerst, Luke Redgrove, MJ Hulse, Megan Gleeson, Michael O'Sullivan, Michael Phillips, Nick Newton, Paul Brownlee, Paul Elkin, Pete Hodgson, Peter Egan, Peter Youman, Rhys Field, Rose Nathan, Ross Sly, Ryan Daley, Sally Lewis, Sally Rainbow, Sarah Dunn, Scott Sam, Shannon Redgrove, Simon Bowles, Simon Hunt, Simon Mead, Simon Morris, Steve Morris, Todd Wallington, Ben Kemp, Donna George, Carol Compton, Dan Hali, Dave Booth, Debra Moore, Gail Armstrong, Graeme Towns, Halli Kleinig, Ian Fleming, Jack O'Toole, Jim Papadopoulos, Karen Powers, Kellie Wall, Kristy Morrison, Lindley Hill, Maria Orlandi, Michelle Youngberry, Pete Rowett, Rebecca Collins, Rodney Gregory, Rodney Mawson, Roy Dorahy, Sara Dodds, Shell Walton, Stephen Wilson.

DENILQUIN RECOGNITION AT THE MURRAY RIVERINA REGIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise Meghan Fisher and the Deni Ute Muster team for taking top prize in their respective categories at the recent Murray Riverina Regional Business Awards. Meghan and Vicky Lowry from the Deni Ute Muster last month received the Outstanding Young Employee Award and the Excellence for Social Enterprise Award, respectively. Meghan,

is a young case worker for Vinnies Services in Deniliquin with an amazing passion for social justice and determination in advocating for her clients. Her commitment to the work and residents in a regional town like Deniliquin is of great importance and the excellence award is much deserved. This recognition for excellence is a testament to the impact the Deni Ute Muster has on the community and greater region. The dedicated organisers and support from the wider Deniliquin community makes the Muster the event that it is and they should be congratulated. Again Congratulations to Meghan and the team at Deni Ute Muster, the community of Deniliquin are lucky to have such driven residents.

LYNN BERGHOFER

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—I would like to congratulate Luddenham resident, Lynn Berghofer who was recently celebrated for her contributions to the NSW St John Ambulance for over 50 years. Her incredible career as both a volunteer and staff member has seen Lynn learn many valuable skills & life lessons that have allowed her to go above and beyond in her service to the community. She was also recently awarded the well-deserved, Dame of Grace, the highest honour given to women who volunteer for St John. Beginning her journey at St John when she was just 11 years old, it is clear that Lynn has become a very valuable member to every group she serves in. Congratulations and thank you Lynn for your hard work and service to your community for the last 50 years!

PARRAMATTA POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Parramatta New South Wales Police Force Officer of the Year Awards, held on the 30th of September 2019, was a fantastic evening of celebrating professional excellence and outstanding service by members of the Parramatta Police Area Command. Congratulations to Leading Senior Constable C. Bayad for being awarded Police Officer of the Year, Detective Senior Constable K. McGee for receiving Investigator of the Year, Sergeant J. Ludkin for receiving the Community Award, Probationary Constable D. Stephen for receiving the Customer Service Award, Sergeant A. Beeche for receiving the Fellowship Award (Sworn) and Ms. J. Stofmeel for receiving the Fellowship Award (Non-Sworn).

The event is organised by the Combined Rotary Clubs of Parramatta, and awards sworn officers as well as civilians in the NSW Police. All proceeds from the dinner go to New South Wales Police Legacy, who provide important support for Police Officers and their families, and the Police Citizens Youth Club of Parramatta, who help support young people in our local community. Thank you to the combined Rotary Clubs of Parramatta for an excellent event supporting a great cause and to the members of the Parramatta PAC for their service keeping our families safe.

COAL POINT NATURESPACE AND COMMUNITY HUB

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I wish to congratulate the Coal Point community and public school which recently secured more than \$198,000 in funding to create a local Naturespace and community hub. The funding was secured through the My Community Projects scheme and will help to create a major recreational hub for the community within the school grounds. It will include interwoven gardens and paths through nature areas and activity zones. The hub won't be restricted in use to the school's pupils but also their families, regular bush trail walkers and the fitness conscious outside of regular school hours.

The project will revitalise community assets within the school and make better use of what is one of the few flat spaces in the Coal Point area. Such a space will broadly contribute to the local community by providing free and accessible recreational activities for people of all ages. I've no doubt that it will in turn foster a greater community spirit and a better understanding of the need to protect and promote the area's environmental assets. I acknowledge and congratulate everyone involved with the project.

16TH ANNUAL DELANY CUP GOLF DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—On Friday 11th October 2019 Patrician Brothers' College Fairfield hosted the 16th Annual Delany Cup Golf Day. All proceeds from the day were donated to the Delany Foundation, the Patrician Brothers' charitable missionary works foundation which seeks to improve the lives of young people in need in various countries of the world. On the day, participants have the opportunity to showcase their golf skills in the name of a good cause. However, you don't have to be a professional to share in the fun of the day – amateur golfers are also welcome. And other events add to the enjoyment including raffles and great refreshments. Congratulations to Patrician Brothers' College on once again hosting a successful event this year, the proceeds of which will be a contributing factor in changing the lives of young people around the world for the better.

KINGS LANGLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL – 'SIMBA'S PRIDE'

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)—It was fantastic to recently attend Kings Langley Public School's musical performance of 'Simba's Pride'. I am incredibly proud of the many Kings Langley Public School students

who took part in the terrific performance. The choir performed magnificently, as did the jazz and contemporary dancers. Well done to the teachers, choreographers and the P&C for their tireless efforts and dedication to the students and school community – especially for their work on 'Simba's Pride'. I'd like to also note the main cast including:

- Joshua Vaz as Simba
- Charlotte Hutton as Nala
- Hannah Speechley as Scar
- Bramley Kayler-Thomson as Mufasa
- Cameron Eves as Timon
- Cooper Finkbeiner as Pumba
- Chanel Cascio as Zazu
- Solei Vogel as Sarabi
- Jessica Barbin as Sarafina
- Millie Stubbs as Rafiki
- Tristan Roper as Ed
- Jessica Callaghan as Shenzi
- Eli Small as Banzai, and
- Alex Karadjov as King Insectica.

WAYS YOUTH & FAMILY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—WAYS Youth & Family, formally known as Waverley Action for Youth Services, was established at Bondi Beach in 1979. The organization began as a humble, grass roots not-for-profit, aiming to offer a safe space for local young people to socialize, engage in organized recreation activities and receive practical assistance to be engaged in education and employment. During its 40 years of serving the local community, WAYS has expanded its services to include: a registered RTO- WAYS Youth Training with completion rates double the national average; a leading, innovative and accredited alternative high school for students in years 9-12 which has generated outstanding success stories; the original WAYS youth center, now including after school care for those aged 9-12; and the WAYS Wellness Centre providing support services to over 400 clients yearly. WAYS has flourished under the leadership of CEO, Russell King. Russell started as a volunteer at WAYS in 1987, and has been the CEO of WAYS since 1989. In 2017 Russell was awarded the Premier's Community Services Award in recognition of his many years of outstanding work. I thank WAYS Youth & Family and Russell King for their continuing efforts and contribution to our community.

HIGHLANDS BIGGEST TOURISM WEEKEND

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I congratulate Destination Southern Highlands on the 59th Tulip time festival for achieving the biggest tourism weekend in the regions history. This year the festival recorded 54,500 visitors over the 14 days of the festival. Also to be congratulated are the Wingecarribee Shire Council Parks and Garden team and volunteers whose efforts were instrumental in the success of the festival. The many hours of hard work put in by them ensured the success of the Festival. This year the Mary Poppins theme added more to the colour of the festival and provided that little bit of extra excitement. I offer special congratulations to Co-Ordinator Izabella Lane and to Lorna Bussell for the inspiration of the Mary Poppins Theme. Plans for the 60th year Anniversary in 2020 are now well underway.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW CONFERENCE

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—This week I was honoured to join with councils from across New South Wales at the LGNSW Conference held at Warwick Farm in the Liverpool City Council Local Government Area. Conference provides a unique opportunity to meet with many councils, and hear first-hand of the many successes and achievements of councils across the state. I was also pleased to join with the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for Water and Minister for Western New South Wales to sign an Intergovernmental Agreement, which highlights our mutual goals and sets out our joint ambitions for the future.

I congratulate Bourke Shire Council - Winner of the Rural Councils section of the AR Bluett Awards, and Shellharbour City Council - Winner of the City and Regional Councils section of the AR Bluett Awards, both be recognised for their councils' outstanding service to their communities. I also congratulate the new and re-elected members of the LGNSW Board, who I look forward to continuing to work with over the coming years to continue to strengthen the sector. I thank LGNSW and all those involved for their continued advocacy on behalf of councils right across New South Wales.

RETIREMENT OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MARK WILSON PSM

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections)—I recognise Assistant Commissioner Mark Wilson PSM who this week retires from his 36 year distinguished career with Corrective Services New South Wales (CSNSW). Mark Wilson has been the Assistant Commissioner of Security and Intelligence for CSNSW since 2012. However, Mark has worked in many roles with CSNSW throughout his 36 year career, including as an Officer in the Malabar Emergency Unit, Weapons Instructor, Superintendent of Goulburn Supermax, General Manager of Goulburn Correctional Centre and Chief Superintendent of Security.

I would like to acknowledge Mark's commitment and dedication to NSW Corrections throughout his career. Notable achievements in Mark's career include the development of the first accredited weapons and officer survival instructors' course and the High Security Escort training course. Mark also championed the introduction of the Nation's first prison phone-jamming system in 2013. Most recently, Mark was awarded a Public Service Medal in 2017 for his outstanding public service to the correctional sector in New South Wales. I extend my most sincere thanks to Mark for his service to Corrections and to the State of New South Wales and I wish him many successes in any other future endeavours.

FOUNDATION AND FRIENDS OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—I visited the Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens plant nursery recently and saw the impact of their Community Building Partnership grant in upgrading the nursery equipment. The expert knowledge, passion for plants and commitment to sharing from the volunteer 'Growing Friends' group is impressive and inspiring. My husband and I intend to go back to the nursery to buy plants for our balcony garden. For over 35 years, the Foundation and Friends has been holding events, tours, exhibitions, classes and courses to educate and enthuse the wider community. These activities also raise funds to support Botanic Gardens research and education, helping to protect our unique plants, conserve species at risk, prevent plant disease and encourage the great pleasure to be had in gardens and plants. These are vital efforts in the busy heart of built-up Sydney, especially when we face climate crisis. On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I would like to recognise the inspiring work of the Foundation and Friends of the Botanic Gardens and thank volunteers for their valuable contribution to our community and our environment.

7TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION A.I.F ASSOCIATION

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was honoured to attend the 7th Australian Division AIF Association's 56th Annual Commemoration Ceremony at Bass Hill Memorial Park on Saturday, 12th October 2019. It was a privilege to join the Association's President, Mr Dick Payten OAM, as well as the Association's Patron and former Governor of New South Wales, Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, in laying a rose to remember the fallen. I commend the 7th Australian Division AIF Association for their efforts in organising this important annual remembrance and thank the Association for their invitation to attend and take part in the service and I acknowledge Commemorations and Memorials Advisor Mr Darren Mitchell, who addressed the service.

The 7th Australian Division AIF Association unveiled a new plaque in memory of members of the 32nd Infantry Division of the United States, known as the 'Red Arrow Division,' who fought alongside Australian soldiers in New Guinea. I acknowledge the attendance at the ceremony of veterans, including Kokoda veteran Mr Wally Robertson OAM and American League Post Commander Mr Ken Studerus, representing the Red Arrows, as well as the many family members and friends who also attended to pay their respects. Lest we forget.

TRIBUTE TO SHANTELLE TAGG

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the outstanding work of Shantelle Tagg of Sylvania, who continues to break down barriers for children with special needs. Shantelle believes that no one should be prevented from enjoying the magic of dance due to disability. She operates Shimmy Shakes Dance Studio in Sylvania to bring the love of dance to all children, keeping its fees low and welcoming boys and girls who cannot join mainstream classes. Shantelle's uniquely inclusive classes for under-fives feature teachers using sign language, a high staff-to-student ratio and a low-sensory environment designed for children who would be overwhelmed in conventional studios. Shimmy Shakes also offers classes for school-aged children with severe to profound disabilities, run in a studio with wheelchair access and no ballet barres or distracting dance mirrors.

Shantelle's inspiring dedication to children with a disability was recently recognised in her being a recipient of the 2019 Westfield Local Heroes community recognition program, which will see a \$10,000 grant awarded to Shimmy Shakes to hire more teachers and provide accredited disability dance training to all staff. I commend Shantelle for her award and thank her for her continued dedication to children in our community.

CHERRYBROOK DEEPAVALI FESTIVAL

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—Today I want to pay tribute to the Cherrybrook Hindu community and in particular I would like wish all my constituents a happy and prosperous Deepavali. Deepavali (also known as Diwali, Divali or Dipavali) is a five-day festival which symbolises and celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Throughout this period, Hindus from across the world adorn their finest clothes, illuminate and decorate their homes and partake in great family feasts.

This year the primary day of celebration falls on 27 October and will be celebrated by one billion Hindus worldwide with around six hundred thousand celebrating here in Australia. Just this last weekend, some of the Cherrybrook Hindu community gathered at Cherrybrook Village Shopping Centre to showcase Deepavali. This event included music and dance performances that are linked to this ancient tradition of celebrating Deepavali. I would like to acknowledge the twenty years of hard work by the Hindu Council of Australia and in particular National President Prakash Mehta and State President Jay Raman OAM, as well as Ashwani Kumar Jain and National Secretary Bharathi Rengarajan for putting on this spectacular event.

BREAST CANCER CHARITY GOLF DAY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise the Port Macquarie Women's Golf Club who are preparing to host the annual Breast Cancer Charity Golf Day to be held on Wednesday 30 October. Sponsored by Fran and Adam Scutts from KFC Port Macquarie and Port Macquarie Service Centre, the Breast Cancer Charity Golf Day is acknowledged as one of the biggest events on the golfing calendar each year, with proceeds invested locally to support women affected by a cancer diagnosis. Championing the cause is Club President Patsy Choo and her team of pink ladies - Di Collocott, Sheena Gunn, Robyn Cooper, Jackie Rider, Glenys Cummings, Rosalind Smith, Robyn Ryan, Lyn Somers, Di Andrews, Bev Morris, Maus Grant and the Women's Social Committee who understand the hardships faced by a friend or relative impacted by breast cancer.

Mid North Coast Cancer Institute's Breast Cancer Nurse Specialist, Joanne Woodlands commended the Women's Golf Club for supporting her team through their fundraising efforts. October is Australia's Breast Cancer Awareness Month and provides us all with an opportunity to understand the devastating impacts breast cancer can have on those affected by the disease in our community.

CORALANN AND NEVILLE SHEAD

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I wish to acknowledge and bid farewell to some local residents from Sandy Point - Coralann and Neville Shead. They have been stalwarts within the local community, bringing together other residents to help work on many local projects. Coralann was a driving force behind the embroidery of the beautiful Bicentennial Mural hanging in the Community Hall, and has held the position of Secretary of the Hall Management Committee. Additionally, Coralann, along with Robyn Robertson, formed the Movers and Shakers group which looked after those unable to get around on their own, organising outings and events to help improve the local's lifestyle.

Along with her fellow committee members they also worked closely with me to deliver a Mammoth Swing in the Sandy Point Playground. Neville Shead has also held many positions on the Association and Hall Management Committee and I am told that he is fondly known as Mr Fixit and was always ready and available to step up and fix whatever was needed fixing within the Community Hall. I will miss their passion and dedication for our local community, and wish them both the best of luck with their move.

PENRITH VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—Congratulations to the newly elected Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce board members who will serve for the next 12 months. The new board includes: Simon Gould – President, Anil Puri – Vice President, Suzanne Walker – Treasurer, Greg Mitchell – Secretary and additional board members Carol Bennett, Kate Rafton, Mary Donnelly, Asha Dooley and Linda Wilson. I also take this opportunity to thank the outgoing board members for their service, Wayne Willmington, Greg Lawton, Grace McIlvride and Gordon Henwood.

SUTHERLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL SHOWCASE

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—I recently had the opportunity to attend the Sutherland Public School Showcase Spectacular at the Sutherland Entertainment Centre. All students were involved in the showcase to highlight their talents whether that be singing, dancing or playing an instrument with students performing solo, in a small group or a whole class. It was great to witness the talented students and a fantastic night was enjoyed by all. Congratulations to the entire school community and a special mention to Principal Leah Woolley on leading the students in this fantastic initiative.

CASS SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP MOON FESTIVAL CELEBRATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, the Chinese community recently celebrated their Moon Festival, and I had the pleasure of attending the Chinese Australian Services Society's Social Support Group Moon Festival Celebration. The celebration of the moon festival is about bringing people together and giving thanks. This year, CASS invited me to join their Social Support Group in Peakhurst, where I was able to serve moon cakes to their disability group as well as their elderly group. It was a great opportunity to interact with the CASS community, and discuss their concerns about the local area. CASS Care has been an active organisation within the community since 2002, and provides a wide array of services and activities for those from culturally diverse backgrounds. CASS services almost 3,000 families every week. I would like to thank all those involved with CASS for the important work they do for our multicultural community, and to all those who celebrate it, I wish you a very happy moon festival.

GRAEME BANKS – WESTERN SYDNEY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I congratulate and recognise Mr Graeme Banks of Rooty Hill on receiving the Senior Volunteer of the Year Award for his work with Mama Lana's Community Foundation, an organisation which provides meals for the homeless. Mr Banks volunteers his time transporting food from local supermarkets and suppliers, to assisting with cooking and cleaning, as well as helping with grant applications. The selfless efforts and dedication of our volunteers should never be taken for granted. Volunteers make an enormous contribution and help to better our communities. I take this opportunity to thank Mr Banks for his selfless efforts and dedication to volunteering.

THE D MAJORS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Today I acknowledge The D Majors, a community choir which is open to all women who have been on a cancer journey, whether it be through their own diagnosis or the diagnosis of a friend or family member. The D Majors were founded six years ago by Lauren O'Brien as a support network for women touched by breast cancer, based around music, fun and friendship. It has since expanded to include a variety of cancer types including mouth cancer, brain cancer, lung cancer and ovarian cancer.

Last month they staged a beautiful impromptu performance for Jill Emberson, who is currently on her own ovarian cancer journey and has become a nationally-recognised advocate for increased research into and funding for the disease. In Jill's backyard they performed "Lean on Me" and "You Are My Sister", in a touching display of what makes The D Majors so wonderful – their dedication to supporting each other and creation of a beautiful community. Congratulations to all involved in The D Majors – you are a shining example of what makes our city amazing.

DAVID SILVER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I rise today to formally recognise the outstanding career of NSW Ambulance Inspector David Silver, who in August officially signed off for the last time. Inspector Silver joined NSW Ambulance in 1975 and witnessed many significant events in the state's history, including the 1977 Granville train disaster. He worked at Ryde, Armidale, Barraba, and Barradine before moving to Narromine in 2004, eventually becoming duty operations manager for the western region. He saw many changes throughout his 44 years in NSW Ambulance, including the mandating of 2-person crews, wheels added to stretchers and the introduction of defibrillators. The highlight of the job, he says, was having the chance to help so many people and hear their life stories. Inspector Silver was seen off with a guard of honour from his final shift at the Narromine Ambulance Station – a fitting farewell for a man who helped so many across our great state. Thank you for your work Inspector, and enjoy your retirement.

HSC EXAMS COMMENCE FOR STUDENTS IN BAULKHAM HILLS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services)—Year 12 students have kicked off their HSC exams today, with more than 61,000 students across the State taking part in the English Standard and Advanced, English Studies and English as an Additional Language or Dialect exams. 123 written exams will be held during the exam period, including the examination of 16 new syllabuses in English, Maths, Science and History. I wish the 903 Year 12 students across the Baulkham Hills electorate the very best of luck throughout the examination period, and remind them to take care of themselves during this stressful time. You have been preparing for these exams for months now, and today marks your time to shine and show how hard you have been working. Don't be afraid to reach out to family, friends or teachers if you feel at all overwhelmed at any time. Teachers across NSW have done a wonderful job in preparing students for their exams today, and I wish everyone the very best of luck.

MERRIWA "BUGGER THE DROUGHT" INITIATIVE

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter)—I would like to inform the house about the "Merriwa Bugger the Drought Initiative" which was selected as a finalist in the 2019 Get Ready Community Awards that held at Parliament House on the 19 September, 2019. The Merriwa Tourist Welcoming Centre and the Merriwa Men's Shed came up with an idea to strengthen community bonds after learning that a connected community is more resilient to any crisis. The project held a fantastic event to forget about the drought and show their support for each other through hard times, bringing together nearly the entire population of Merriwa. With careful planning, using out of town volunteers to run the day, locals enjoyed the event and community spirit soared. A great initiative born from this event was a "credit card" for use only at Merriwa Businesses. Since being launched \$45,000 has been loaded onto the Merriwa "Why Leave Town" cards. I congratulate The Merriwa Tourist Welcoming Centre and the Merriwa Men's Shed on their ingenuity in bringing this wonderful initiative together to brighten the spirits of the Merriwa community.

WOMEN'S CRICKET

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—With the second round of funding for the NSW ICC T20 World Cup 2020 Cricket Legacy Fund having recently been announced, I'd like to recognise North Sydney Cricket Club and Mosman Cricket Club, two extraordinary organisations who received funding. I acknowledge North Sydney Bears Cricket Club, As an Honorary Women's Cricket Ambassador, I was proud to see them granted over \$15,000 for their women's cricket team. I thank their President, Rob Lavery and their women's coach, former test player Michelle Goszko, for expanding their efforts encouraging women and girls to pursue cricketing careers. Mosman Cricket Club, particularly it's President Bernie Smith, and Girls Cricket Convenor Caroline Veitch, is driving strong sporting participation from girls in my electorate. With five active all-girls cricket teams, I am proud to see our Government award them \$6000 to continue developing the skills of their female players. It was fantastic to hear about the enthusiasm shown by the young girls at Mosman Cricket Club when they met Australian Women's Cricket Team stars Nicole Carey, and Heather Graham at the recent Australia versus Sri Lanka Women's T20 game.

JUNIOR RUGBY 7'S STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—Last weekend NSW Rugby hosted the Junior Rugby 7's state championships in Tuncurry. The weekend's competition attracted 95 teams, 50 boys and 45 girls from across New South Wales – from the Far North Coast to the Illawarra. The State Championships have delivered an important economic boost to the MidCoast region estimated at over \$300,000. Sevens is a huge area of growth for NSW Rugby Participation in women's rugby has increased year-on-year, with sevens a fantastic vehicle to introduce girls to the game of rugby – now accounting for roughly 10% of the playing population in NSW.

The weekend provided a showcase of young talent with special mention of the teams from Manly and Sydney University but congratulations goes to Western Sydney Academy who claimed the Under 17's title. The women's teams certainly impressed with Randwick and Manly meeting in the grand final, in the end Manly took home the cup with a 22-12 win. Congratulations to Michael Doyle and the team at NSW Rugby, Dan Aldridge and the works team at MidCoast Council and to Forster Dolphins President Damian Daczko and the volunteers in the canteen and on the BBQ for a job well done.

DURGA PUJA CELEBRATIONS

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—As a Member of Parliament, I am privileged to share in many special celebrations in my local community. The experience has taught me that we have more in common with each other than things that divide us. I was honoured to attend Sri Sri Durga Puja celebrations in Glenfield – a vibrant and festive occasion celebrated by Bengali Hindus around the world. Steeped in ancient tradition and rituals, Durga Puja centres on the goddess Durga and the universal fight for good over evil. While Durga Puja features cultural and religious activities, the celebration prides itself on being inclusive and accessible to all.

Celebrated over many days, Durga Puja features colourful and elaborate processions, music and dance, prayers, feasting, family visits and gift giving. I would like to congratulate Shankhanaad Inc. and all those involved in organising Durga Puja events in our community. Events such as Durga Puja remind us that our community is strengthened and enriched by our diversity. I trust that the event continues to grow in strength while promoting the universal values of peace, love and kindness.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:51 until
Tuesday 22 October at 12:00.**