



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday, 22 October 2019**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday, 22 October 2019**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### *Bills*

#### **MUSIC FESTIVALS BILL 2019**

##### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 16 October 2019.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:18:11):** I lead for the Opposition in this place in debate on the Music Festivals Bills 2019. My colleague the Hon. John Graham, MLC, has done an exceptional job not only in bringing this bill to Parliament but also in standing up for the music industry, jobs, artists and our cultural wellbeing in New South Wales. I commend him for the work that he has done. I also commend a number of people in the industry who have worked hard, particularly over the past few days. The Government has caused a lot of unnecessary uncertainty and confusion and, as the festival season approaches, some of the biggest music festivals are threatening to leave New South Wales. That is a very big issue, and I call on the Government to consider exactly what the industry is asking of the Government.

The Music Festivals Bill 2019 is similar in content to the two festival regulations that Parliament disallowed on 26 September 2019: the Liquor Amendment (Music Festivals) Regulation 2019 and the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment (Music Festivals) Regulation 2019. Those regulations were disallowed following a report by the Legislative Council's Regulation Committee. A key finding of the Regulation Committee's report was that the consultation process for the original regulation was inadequate. The Regulation Committee's report also recommended that the New South Wales Government immediately establish a regulatory roundtable for music festivals. That was a very simple recommendation, which should have been acted on immediately. As the disallowed regulations are now presented as a bill, the Parliament has the option of making those amendments, and I foreshadow that the Opposition will be moving an amendment in this place and amendments in the other place. I urge members to support the Opposition's amendments in relation to the roundtable. I hope the Government will support that amendment.

The Opposition supports music festivals. They have been around for centuries. As someone of Greek heritage, I am a huge fan of music festivals, including many cultural music festivals. The first known music festival was the Pythian games, the precursor of the Olympics, which was held from the late sixth century BC at the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. In fact, the word "music" is derived from Greek. Today, music festivals are a major part of the cultural life of New South Wales. According to the recent Legislative Council Regulation Committee report, there are more than 80 musical festivals in New South Wales each year, including multicultural musical festivals. They play an important role in the multicultural community.

Around 400,000 people attended music festivals in New South Wales in 2017. Festivals are also a major source of economic activity. Live music contributes around \$3.6 billion to the New South Wales economy and supports more than 23,000 jobs, directly and indirectly. Unfortunately, the Government's approach is putting all of this at risk. In today's edition of *The Sydney Morning Herald* Lisa Visentin writes that festivals such as Splendour in the Grass, Falls Festival and Laneway Festival—among the biggest music festivals in New South Wales—are threatening to leave the State. The Government has a crisis on its hands and it has to fix it today. Labor understands the rationale for this bill—to keep people safe at music festivals. All of us absolutely support that objective of keeping people safe at music festivals.

**Mr Stuart Ayres:** No you don't; that's why you disallowed the regulations.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** The Minister should not talk too loudly because this affects his portfolio in a big way. Labor has, for a long time, offered its bipartisan support for appropriate festival regulation. Labor believes in four principles for festival regulation. The first is that no extreme hit list of festivals should be published. The second is that health guidelines should be used and power should be granted to require the use of guidelines where they are needed. The third is that medical providers at festivals should be required to be registered and must adhere to New South Wales health guidelines. This is not currently the case. The fourth is

that the regulatory roundtable should be established immediately to allow festivals, the Government, local councils and services, including emergency services, to work together. Unfortunately, the bill in its current form does not meet these four principles. Of greatest concern is the lack of provision for a regulatory roundtable. As I mentioned earlier, today's *The Sydney Morning Herald* states:

Splendour in the Grass, Falls Festival and Laneway Festival are among some of the biggest music festivals in the state threatening to leave NSW as the government pushes ahead with legislation for a safety regime ahead of the busy summer season.

The festivals, which also include the Listen Out, Field Day and Groovin the Moo festivals, say they will now "consider their futures in NSW" after failing to secure a commitment from the Berejiklian government to establish a music industry roundtable as part of the proposed new laws.

The establishment of a roundtable has been supported by a parliamentary inquiry, the Opposition, Government members of the inquiry, government agencies and the industry. The music industry has made the need for consultation clear. This view has been expressed by the Australasian Performing Rights Association and Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society, the Australian Festivals Association, Live Performance Australia, MusicNSW and the Live Music Office. In a statement issued on 21 February this year, those stakeholders stated:

The impact of the Government's badly designed licensing requirements is already being felt with festival operators shutting down events or facing hugely inflated costs almost overnight to meet the Government's demands. Despite statements to the media these changes won't impact "low risk" festivals, the Government has failed to provide clarity and certainty around its risk categories. It's a fact that well-run festivals with excellent safety records are already being affected by these new guidelines.

Festivals across NSW, in metropolitan, regional and country areas will be hurt by Premier Berejiklian's approach. Our musicians and performers, production crews and festival staff will lose jobs and income. Communities, including regional centres and country towns, which host festivals and thrive on the business generated by festivals and their fans will also be hurt.

The Government's approach does not make economic sense. Nor does it do anything to deliver better safety outcomes.

Labor agrees with industry stakeholders that we need well-designed regulations. Everyone supports a certain and safe playing field. However, regulation cannot be effective unless there is a place for industry and government to discuss the issues together. That is why there is an urgent need to establish a regulatory roundtable. The music industry has repeatedly expressed its strong desire to work collaboratively with the Government as part of a shared commitment to safer music festivals. However, the music industry is opposed to the new regulations for many of the same reasons that it was opposed to the earlier regulations, including using the term "high risk" to describe festivals that are nominated for regulation. I have foreshadowed that the Opposition will move a number of amendments to the bill.

From speaking to young people across the State, we have learned that music festivals give youth a chance to see international acts in Australia without the need to spend extra dollars to travel overseas. It also gives Australian acts the opportunity to build their reputation. Many known artists started their careers playing at festivals. Many Australian artists have played at festivals. A number of those music festivals have formed a cultural following that has evolved into a support group that looks forward to reconnecting every year. We are aware of one event in greater western Sydney that has injected \$4 million into the local economy over the course of three weeks. It impacts bus drivers, security guards, stallholders, small business, cleaners and catering. Music festivals are an employment multiplier that can directly impact 5,000 workers per event. Music festivals are attended by a whole range of people in our society. There is no age limit and age does not matter. People look forward to coming, connecting and listening to really good bands, including upcoming Australian bands. We do not want to see these festivals go interstate.

I urge the Government to establish a roundtable in order to sit down with key stakeholders in the industry and work on the issues. It is very simple. As I said, we want safety and a level playing field for everyone. The Government needs to support the experienced musical festival operators and not impede them providing a service that significantly impacts the culture and economy of New South Wales. I will have more to say during the amendment process. I urge the Government to support our amendment.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (12:29:54):** I support the Music Festivals Bill 2019. In September 2018 a 23-year-old man and a 21-year-old woman died after collapsing at Defqon.1 music festival. In addition to these deaths, seven people were admitted to hospital with drug-related illnesses, of which three were admitted to intensive care. In response to the tragic deaths of two young people at a music festival the Premier announced that an expert panel would be established to advise the Government on how to improve music festival safety. The panel was made up of NSW Police Commissioner Mick Fuller, Chief Medical Officer Dr Kerry Chant and the chair of the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority, Phil Crawford.

Following consultation with industry, medical providers and government agencies, the panel made seven recommendations to the Government. The Government provided its response to the panel's recommendations to



Parliament as part of the Community Protection Legislation Amendment Bill 2018, which was passed with support from both sides of this House. Part of this package of reforms included creating a new regulation-making power under the Liquor Act 2007 to allow the creation of new liquor licence types. This power was used for the successful introduction of the pop-up licence, which is being used to encourage vibrancy in the night-time economy, and a new music festival licence to ensure that the health-related risks of a music festival were appropriately mitigated before an event was given a licence.

Between November 2018 and the end of February 2019 the Government worked with industry to develop the new music festival licence. While a small minority of the community had concerns regarding the misperception of undue pressures on music festival operators, it was important that measures were put in place to keep patrons safe at these events. Operators owe this duty of care to their patrons, their patrons' families and the broader community which was reeling following the deaths of five young people last summer. The new licensing scheme commenced on 28 February 2019. Following its commencement the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority wrote to 14 music festivals to indicate that NSW Health and the NSW Police Force had provided advice that there were elevated health risks associated with their events and that these events would be subject to a music festival licence, including an enforceable safety management plan.

Each of these 14 music festivals was provided an opportunity to consider the NSW Health and NSW Police advice, to make written submissions to the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority and to appear before the authority to make oral submissions. The authority then determined that 11 of these original 14 music festivals would be better managed under a music festival licence than another type of licence and directed them to commence working with NSW Health, NSW Ambulance and other government agencies to develop safety management plans for their events. Later one other music festival was also directed to apply for a music festival licence.

In May 2019 an inquiry by the Legislative Council Regulation Committee was established to examine the impact and implementation of the music festival regulations. The committee received submissions from the Government, music festival organisers and the wider community. Interestingly, not one of the submissions was able to articulate how the new scheme added an additional regulatory burden on music festival organisers or to provide evidence on how the new scheme did not make music festivals safer. While this Government continues to work with industry, contrary to what those opposite say, it is critical that we work collaboratively and with the one common interest: getting people home safely.

The Government has made clear that the Opposition is responsible for the disallowed regulations. It was disappointing that ahead of the summer festival season the Opposition left the Government without the tools to make music festivals safer. I am pleased to support this bill as it resets the debate and signals a return to evidence-based policy. The bill is about ensuring that there are qualified medical personnel on site at music festivals. It is about requiring festival organisers to provide the right kind of treatments as quickly as possible to people who are overdosing from illicit substances. It is about ensuring that festival operators provide enough water, shade and chill-out spaces to allow people to look after themselves at music festivals.

It is disappointing that some people are still opposed to having a clear and easy-to-understand framework in place that holds operators accountable for what happens at these events. The Government does not shy away from doing what is necessary ahead of the summer festivals season to make sure this happens. We are debating this bill today because those opposite played politics with this important issue. Without this legislation there will be deaths this summer; there is no doubt about that. As a result of the games played by those opposite any deaths will be solely on the shoulders and the consciences of those opposite. We know where the Leader of the Opposition stands on this issue. She believes taking drugs is okay and there is a safe level to take drugs. She continues to espouse that in this House.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Point of order: This bill is about music festivals. It is not about casting aspersions on the Leader of the Opposition with respect to a drug policy. If the member wants to do that he should do so by way of substantive motion. The member knows the rules. I ask he be returned to the subject matter.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** Actions speak louder than words; I rest my case. The Leader of the Opposition believes there is a safe level for taking drugs.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** The member for Swansea has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (12:36:25):** The member for Drummoyne is a coward. He comes in here making assertions about the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr John Sidoti:** Point of order: What is this rubbish?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** What is your point of order?

**Mr John Sidoti:** Potty-mouth like the rest of your colleagues.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** Does the member for Drummoyne have a point of order? The member for Swansea will continue.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I speak in debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. I believe that this bill is of great importance and the matter that we are discussing here today is significant for the State of New South Wales. Festivals are an important part of our economy, which has been described by the—

**Mr John Sidoti:** They make donations to your party.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Point of order: I ask that the member be directed to cease interjecting.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** I could not hear him. The member for Swansea will continue.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Festivals are an important part of our economy, as the Labor member who preceded me in this debate stated. They are significant to metropolitan and particularly regional economies. Regional communities around New South Wales benefit very much from the festival industry. The numbers are staggering, with the University of Tasmania estimating that the live music sector contributes \$15.7 billion to the Australian community. Importantly, the live music sector is the engine room for jobs creation, amounting to 65,000 jobs across this country. We are not talking about an insignificant industry. It is a very significant industry. New South Wales is the largest contributor to that figure—for now. But, of course, that is all at risk. There is a real chance that this industry could walk away from New South Wales, and that would be an absolute travesty. I represent the electorate of Swansea, which has had live bands and festivals operating along the coast for decades and decades. They bring enormous enjoyment and generate an extraordinary amount of money in each of the towns along the way, which is very important.

In New South Wales this industry generates \$3.6 billion worth of investment and 23,000 jobs are created in the live music industry alone. Festivals are a subset of the live music sector; however, they are a significant contributor to the economy nonetheless. In 2017 in Australia almost 400,000 people attended festivals. Many of these festivals support rural and regional communities, as I pointed out in my opening remarks. Major events on the festival calendar outside Sydney include the Byron Bay's Bluesfest, Falls Festival and Splendour in the Grass, and Groovin the Moo at Maitland, much closer to the electorate that I represent. Of course, both the Central Coast and Wollongong have very vibrant communities as well. There are also many festivals in Sydney, which contribute to the Sydney metro economy, such as Field Day and St Jerome's Laneway Festival.

The industry has spelt out the economic importance of the contemporary music and festival sector for New South Wales, generating \$325 million in revenue for the State's economy, with six million attendees at various kinds of events and festivals each year. The music festival sector is vital to a thriving and vibrant creative scene and economy in our State. These festivals are vital to boost our tourism, creative and hospitality industries—all great employers in the State. Attendees at the regional festivals are not just going out for a day to listen to music; they are staying in local accommodation, eating at local venues, shopping at local shops, wineries, farms and the like. During times of drought, supporting this kind of economic stimulus is a must, particularly for our regional communities.

However, we also know that there have been tragic events associated with festivals in recent and past history. The regulations that were disallowed were put in place following the deaths at the Defqon.1, Harbourlife and Stereosonic festivals. That is not to say the industry should be without regulation. We on this side wholeheartedly agree that this is an industry that should be regulated. In fact, no parties disagree with that statement. Industry, the Government and the Parliament agree that the sector should be subject to good regulation and allow the industry to thrive and, most importantly, that people attending festivals are safe and have an enjoyable time.

However, we believe a fundamental part of the bill gets it plainly wrong and that the original regulations as set out by the Liquor Amendment (Music Festivals) Regulation 2019 and the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment (Music Festivals) Regulation 2019 were done poorly and, of course, without adequate consultation. Not much has changed there. The way in which the original bill and regulations were introduced was rushed—to say the least. When the regulations were introduced they applied to hundreds of festivals, ethnic events, country folk festivals, and the list goes on. The goal was that they would cover all festivals; however, it was then limited to just 14 festivals.

Essentially the Government has regulated 11 festivals with a music licence but hundreds of festivals and events still fall within the definition of the regulations, and that is inadequate. This is the key reason the Legislative Council Regulation Committee recommended a disallowance motion in its report following an inquiry into festival

regulations. A key finding of the report was that the consultation process for the original regulations was inadequate. Industry feels that it has been left behind by these regulations. People in the industry want to make festivals safer and better for attendees, yet they have not been adequately consulted in the process and in fact have been quite isolated. It is for that reason that the Labor Opposition will move an amendment in this place to address the lack of consultation with the industry.

We know that the best legislation we can deliver in this Parliament happens when we have consulted with stakeholders—because when we work together we get good outcomes. To be silent with stakeholders is a mistake. It is mistake when you think you know everything and you know so little. It is so important that the Government consult broadly and listen to stakeholders when they ask for a roundtable. The Opposition believes this is a sensible measure that will deliver better outcomes—the best outcomes, in fact—for the partygoers, for the sector and of course for the economy of this State. I foreshadow that the Opposition will move an amendment in this place and I encourage the Government to support it.

A key finding of the report was that the consultation process was inadequate, as I have said. But that is not how the Government and the Parliament should be doing its job. We should be consulting widely and fully. Yesterday I met with the industry and its members could not be clear enough: they want to work with Government and they want their industry to succeed. They are a big economic driver of this community and they want to be part of it. The Government needs to bring about a roundtable so consultation and conversation can take place. The Government needs to stop thinking it knows everything when it knows very little. Again, Labor members understand that the solid rationale behind the bill is to keep people safe at music festivals. We have offered our bipartisan support for appropriate festival regulation for a very long time.

Previously in the Parliament we have spelt out the four principles of festival regulation that we would like to see: Firstly, no extreme hit list of festivals should be published—these should instead be classed as designated festivals; secondly, the health guidelines would be used and there would be a power granted to require the use of guidelines where they are needed; thirdly, medical providers to festivals would be required to be registered and adhere to NSW Health guidelines—alarmingly, that is not currently the case; and fourthly, a regulatory roundtable would be established to immediately allow festivals, the Government and local councils to work together. In fact, one of our greatest concerns is that there is no provision for a roundtable or advisory panel as part of this bill. [*Extension of time*]

In case the Government is unsure of why this is so important, I will read from the parliamentary inquiry's foreword on the matter. It stated:

The committee heard from inquiry participants that the way in which the regulations have been implemented has caused much uncertainty across the industry, with many still confused as to which festivals are captured by the new licensing scheme, how they are being assessed and the financial implications to event organisers. As the committee heard, the uncertain atmosphere is causing festival operators to question whether New South Wales is a viable state to hold their events. We believe that the regulatory roundtable is a positive first step in resolving the uncertainty across the industry and addressing the issues presented in this report. It will ensure much greater involvement by the industry in charting a constructive way forward.

It could not be clearer that this is a sensible way forward. Industry is not asking for no regulation. It is not even asking for a light touch. It is simply asking to be consulted in the process and to have regular communication and contact with those agencies that are most important through this roundtable. The committee recommended that a wide range of agencies be involved in the roundtable, including: Liquor & Gaming NSW, NSW Health, New South Wales police and other government agencies; industry representatives such as the Live Music Office, the Australian Festival Association, APRA AMCOS, MusicNSW and Live Performance Australia; Local Government NSW; and health-related harm minimisation groups such as Harm Reduction Australia, NSW Users and Aids Association, and the Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education.

It is important that we get the balance right and that industry has every opportunity to work constructively with the Government to ensure festivals are safe, enjoyable and deliver good value to our community and economy. There are jobs and livelihoods at stake, particularly in those regional areas such as Byron Bay, as I have mentioned, that receive a significant economic boost from these festivals. As I said, we must get the balance right. We do believe that this is the right approach; however, we feel that the Government has got it wrong on a number of counts, as I have already outlined. Therefore, we will be seeking to amend the bill accordingly so that it reflects and addresses the concerns that I have raised. We have two goals here—firstly, to ensure that festivals are safe for all, and secondly, to ensure that we support and work with this vibrant and creative sector that boosts our economy. An amended bill will achieve these outcomes, and I strongly recommend that the Government support Labor's amendments.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:49:50):** I speak in support of the Music Festivals Bill 2019. What a lot of weasel words we have just heard from members of the Opposition. An amended bill—but what on earth would that amendment be? What is wrong with the current bill? They will not say what aspect of this bill in

particular they disagree with—in fact, they have not said whether they will support this regulation or oppose it. They want to hide behind saying, "We're going to move an amendment" without saying what that amendment will be. All we heard of any specificity is that they want to talk some more, they want to consult some more, while festivals go on and people who attend festivals are at risk of harm or even death. They are going to talk some more. They are going to have a roundtable for as long as they can put it off because they do not want to confront the fact that people are at risk now.

The regulation, which they disallowed—voted against—in the upper House, would have protected those people who attend music festivals. Those opposite have put those people at risk. Labor and The Greens will stand condemned should people come to harm during this summer season of festivals because Labor and The Greens have abolished the protection that would have been there for those people. This bill is all about public safety. As we know, we have rules for licensed premises across New South Wales because we recognise the risks associated with the consumption of alcohol. These rules reflect various categories of risk and past performance, as they should, and so it should be with music festivals, which have a record of incidents in which people have come to harm.

If promoters wish to run a business that carries inherent risks, just as publicans do, they must be prepared to adequately address those risks to protect the members of the public who attend these events. That is a fair principle. Many promoters do so already, without the need for intervention by regulatory bodies. There events have occurred without significant incident and without harm being done. Those festivals will be able to continue unchanged under this legislation because they will not strike the threshold of being high-risk events. It is all based on past performance, on identifiable features of the particular festival. Labor and The Greens have combined to take away that sensible protection, the kind of protection we afford people in licensed premises through the responsible service of alcohol and a dozen other regulations. Labor and The Greens have taken protections away from festival-goers. They have left them unprotected, because Labor and The Greens have an ideological bias in favour of the taking of drugs—a bias in favour of cultivating political popularity.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** Order! Government members will come to order.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** They are trying to cultivate political popularity by this irresponsible stance and they stand condemned for doing so.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** What will Labor abolish next in the way of protective legislation? Seat belts were introduced decades ago to save people on the roads. Is there a problem with that? Is there some reason they would abolish seat belts? Are they going to get rid of random breath-testing next? Do they not like random breath-testing? Do they want to take away hard hats from work sites? Do they want to stop people from being protected from those sorts of harms? The principle is the same. Legislation and regulations are designed to protect people from known and foreseeable risks. The Government has done the responsible thing by putting protections in place and Labor and The Greens have abolished those protections.

Labor and The Greens stand condemned for a stance that has removed sensible, pragmatic, well-identified measures to protect people from knowable and foreseeable risks. They stand condemned for doing that and they have no positive alternatives to put up. We have heard their contributions to this debate. They have had nothing positive to say. Instead, they said, "We're going to move an amendment". What on earth might it be? Has anyone in this place heard anything specific? We have heard about more roundtable discussions, but we have heard about nothing that needs to be changed in the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** The Clerk will stop the clock. It is very early in the day to put people on calls to order. I understand this is an emotive issue, but members will be respectful throughout the debate and cease interjecting.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** I turn to what is in the bill to see how it is so horrible and offensive that the upper House had to disallow it. It states that a high-risk event—and we will talk about what "high-risk" means—must have a safety management plan. The safety management plan must include a site plan that shows an area for providing access to medical assistance and an area for providing supervised relaxation spaces for people. It must have information about areas for the entry and exit of emergency services. It must have information about evacuation points if people need to get out. It must have information about the fencing and the arrangement of the site. It must have information about signage intended to indicate the location of health services. Clearly, these are terrible things that should have been disallowed in the upper House.

It must have information about proposed health services and harm-reduction initiatives. Labor and The Greens had better disallow that! It must have information about how the health services and harm reduction

initiatives are consistent with NSW Health music festival guidelines. Festival organisers must show how that matches up. It has to have information about the people who will be providing those health services.

Aren't they all outrageous propositions and unreasonable impositions on the promoters of music festivals? Would not festival organisers be doing those things anyway? Would not a responsible promoter do all of that anyway for the safety of its patrons and the good of its business? Is that not just a sensible measure that somebody running a festival would assume they would have to do? None of that is unreasonable. None of it is outrageous. It is what we would expect of a responsible promoter running a sensible, professional business.

What is a high-risk business? Who is caught by that? It will be decided on the following criteria: any advice from the Health Secretary or the Commissioner of Police; whether a death has occurred in the State on a previous occasion at a festival run by this promoter; whether a prescribed event occurred at a festival under the management of the promoter elsewhere in New South Wales, caused by alcohol or drug use or by crowd behaviour or improper safety management; and any submission made to the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority by that particular promoter.

All of those criteria are based on the track record of the particular promoter and the particular festival. They are sensibly targeted to cases of known risk. There is nothing unreasonable, unfair, or outrageous. No undue burden is placed on anybody. A business that has been run safely and successfully in the past will not be caught by the bill. Indeed, even if a business is caught by the bill, the requirements are not draconian. They are simply sensible, pragmatic safety measures designed to keep people safe. Members opposite have quoted a lot of statistics. I heard one member say six million people attended such events. I do not know over what period, but if six million people go into these events I want six million people to walk out safely at the end. That is the key statistic.

We want everybody who goes to a festival to be safe and well at the end of the festival. The measures in the bill are simple, sensible, reasonable measures designed to achieve that end. Labor and The Greens disallowed them in the other House for political purposes only—simply for shameless vote-gathering among a particular section of the population that has a different view about drugs than the rest of us. That is the agenda of members opposite. Labor and The Greens should be absolutely condemned by every parent and every responsible citizen across this State who wants to see music festival-goers stay safe. The Government wants to do that. I believe this House will achieve that end today by passing the bill to make people who attend festivals in New South Wales safe.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:58:22):** I start by explaining to the member for Riverstone the difference between "amend" and "oppose". Labor does not oppose the bill; it seeks to amend it to make it better. They are big words that the member for Riverstone might not understand because he has marched into this place with an ideological bent. He wants to criticise Labor over drug policy. He does not understand the difference between "oppose" and "amend" so I will take him through some of that after I set some context.

I ask everyone to turn their minds back to the October long weekend a couple of weeks ago. While a lot of people were enjoying a long weekend and taking part in all sorts of recreational activities, in Wollongong 20,000 people were attending the Yours and Owls Festival, which has been held for many, many years. Adam Smith, Ben Tillman and the guys from Yours and Owls do a fantastic job of not only making the festival safe and secure but also attracting great acts and providing an environmentally friendly festival event. The festival, which held the main events that weekend, is also an all-ages gig so that young people were not excluded. Police praised the event for being violence-free. Over many years I have had the opportunity to attend and enjoy a number of festivals throughout New South Wales and internationally. You can see the difference between good and bad operators. The Australian Festivals Association said that uncertainty surrounds the bill and that meaningful consultation surrounding festival measures has been lacking. The bill has been described as unworkable. That is why we will seek to amend it in this place.

Members opposite have spoken a great deal about the disallowance motion in the upper House. For those who are watching out there in the big wide world and those who might be reading this later, I want to be clear about the circumstances of that disallowance motion. It was recommended by the Regulation Committee in its report following an inquiry into the regulations. So Labor implemented the recommendations of a committee that reviewed the regulations. I know it is a shocking thing for the Government, to pick up the recommendations of a committee and introduce them, but that is what we did. The member for Tweed, who is gibbering over there, knows exactly what the key finding of the report was. He is sticking his head in the sand. He wants the Bluesfest to move. He would like nothing more than for the Bluesfest to move out of the Tweed and into Queensland. That is exactly what he is about.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** Order! The member for Tweed will cease interjecting.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** A key finding of the report was that the consultation process for the original regulations was inadequate. Again for the member for Riverstone, who has disappeared from the Chamber—he came in, had his spray and then ran away—inadequate means not adequate. It means not good enough. The report recommended that the New South Wales Government immediately establish a regulatory roundtable for music festivals. You would not think that was too hard to achieve—a roundtable including people involved in music festivals.

Over many years of involvement in public policy, I have attended a number of industry roundtables. A few years ago when the steel industry was going through troubles with a downturn and dumping from Chinese steelmakers, guess what the Government did? This Government, with involvement from the Federal Government, held a roundtable conversation with representatives from the steel company, the fabricators and the workers to discuss what might be the good thing to do. Steel industry roundtable? Tick. When the car industry was going through its various changes before the Abbott Government dared it to leave and it did, what happened? There was a roundtable and ongoing discussions about the future of the industry, and what might need to be done to promote innovation and keep the car industry going.

When the aged care industry was contemplating reform and how to improve the care of older Australians, what did we do? We had a roundtable involving industry representatives—both for-profit and not-for-profit organisations—regulators, consumer representatives and worker representatives. There was a roundtable, ongoing discussions and consultations. The university sector is another huge employer in Australia and what did it have? It had an ongoing roundtable of industry consultations and discussions. This is not a new concept, and it astounds me that the Government will not hold a roundtable.

It was not until 12.30 p.m. yesterday that the Government even bothered talking to the music industry—a multimillion dollar industry in New South Wales. The festival industry employs six million people a year and brings in \$325 million in revenue annually. The other weekend in Wollongong 20,000 people not only consumed products that were purchased locally on the festival grounds, but also engaged with and went to restaurants and bars, stayed overnight and enjoyed themselves in a great town. The member for Canterbury was just reminding me of when she used to come down to Wollongong to attend music festivals. That is what people are enjoying.

The other thing that happens is that people go to visit the towns—they might even go to visit the Tweed even though the member for Tweed wants the blues festival to move out of Tweed—and guess what? They come back again to visit in a different capacity. Labor's amendment—and it is not very complex, but I will spell it out slowly for members opposite who struggle to understand—will require the Minister to establish a music festival roundtable. Its function will be to support the growth, safeguard patrons' safety, conduct reviews of legislation, report and advise of other matters and look at other issues affecting the industry.

Who would be on this roundtable? The Minister would choose 10 members to represent the Government. They could come from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Health, ambulance, the Police Force, Liquor & Gaming NSW, the Department of Planning, Transport for NSW, Destination NSW, Create NSW—dare I say it—the Minister himself or herself and industry representatives; 10 industry representatives. What is it supposed to do? It is supposed to meet and discuss with industry how it can be done better. How we can make sure we have good regulations in future. Labor agrees that the industry should be regulated. No-one disagrees with that. It is the view of the Parliament, the Government and the industry. Members opposite would know the view of the industry if they ever bothered talking to members of the industry.

Instead they are staring down the industry—as the Abbott Government did to the car industry—and daring it to leave New South Wales. I have never seen a government that wants to get rid of a growth industry as much as this Government wants to get rid of festivals. We should move another amendment, renaming the bill the music festivals that Liberals want to end fun bill 2019. The music industry has repeatedly expressed its strong desire to work collaboratively with the Government as part of a shared commitment to have safer music festivals.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** You don't care about people's safety.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The member for South Coast is chirping away. I will remind her—in case she missed it—this is part of the industry's desire to work as part of a shared commitment for safer music festivals. This Government thinks it can get in a room and decide on legislation. It thinks it knows enough about running a music festival to regulate one. I would hate to go to a music festival put on by the Government. It would be dull. There would be no fun in it whatsoever.

**Mrs Shelley Hancock:** It would be safe.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It would be so safe. People would be sitting on their hands, having no fun whatsoever. Guess what? This amendment Labor is moving—and that the Government should support if it desires safe festivals—would mean even safer festivals, but they would be fun as well. There are four principles Labor

wants legislated and our amendment backs these up. Firstly, no extreme hit list of festivals would be published; secondly, health guidelines be used and power granted requiring the use of those guidelines where needed; thirdly, medical providers be required to be registered and to adhere to NSW Health guidelines, which is currently not the case and is notably absent from this bill; fourthly, the regulatory roundtable should be established immediately, enabling festivals, the Government and local councils to work together to give parents, music festival attendees and everyone else confidence that the industry and the Government are working together for the betterment of festivals and to ensure they stay in New South Wales rather than go to Victoria, as they are threatening to do according to *The Sydney Morning Herald*. I commend the amendment to the House.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (13:08:28):** I support Music Festivals Bill 2019, which reinstates the policy intent of the Liquor Amendment (Music Festivals) Regulation 2019, which Labor did not support. We all agree that music festivals are important, which is most of what the Opposition is saying. Yes, they are creative and they build tourism. They draw people from overseas and interstate. Yes, they are entertainment and are attractive, particularly to our young people who are spreading their wings and going out—sometimes underage—to attend and have a musical and social experience. Music festivals also generate economic benefits to the State.

We are all in agreement. But that is not the point of the legislation that is before the House; it is that those music festivals have to be safe. This Government takes community safety as its highest priority. It particularly takes that safety obligation to heart when it concerns some of the most vulnerable members of our community—our young people, some of whom are underage, whose brains are still maturing, and who might make decisions that might not be in the best interest of their welfare and safety.

I do not know exactly what to make of the contributions by Labor members in the House today. They were all over the shop. There is finally an amendment from them, which seems to be just about a roundtable. I am sure the Minister will address that amendment. Labor says it will support the bill today but with amendments. We now know what the amendment is. That is good—tick. But why did Labor members disallow the regulation in the Legislative Council in the first place? I put to them that they were just playing politics with the lives of our young people. That is all they were doing. The speeches I heard from Opposition members sounded like Labor does not support the bill. I caution Labor members to be a little bit clearer about the exact stand that they are taking on the bill. They must get their story straight so that young people, parents and our broader community understand that they are with us on this journey to make our community safe.

I do not know whether any members of the Opposition have been in this situation. Two ministries that I have served in had direct relevance to this issue. When I first came into the Ministry, I was sports Minister. The sports portfolio at that time had a number of community assets in it. For example, Defqon.1 was hosted in a sports Ministry portfolio asset. Around this time of the year, maybe a little bit later, I would brace myself for a call about the operator of that sports Ministry portfolio asset that perhaps something might have gone wrong at a music festival over a weekend. It would usually be a Sunday morning when I would get a call and somebody would say, "We had a casualty last night or this morning. That person is in hospital being resuscitated. It is not fatal."

When I was environment Minister, there were music festivals at Centennial Park and Moore Park. Although I was not the health Minister, who has oversight of liquor regulation and licensing, I was always left with the question: What more could I have done to help those children? I asked myself: What could I have done to help those families whose kids have been affected by choices that were made too easy for them by unscrupulous festival operators or by those who were not cautious about the safety management plans that should be in place? We as a Government will ensure that they are in place. Since Labor did not support the regulation by supporting its disallowance in the upper House, this is the time to do this—at the start of the summer music festivals when schoolies will head north. I do not know what it is like for Labor members. A number of us on the Government side of the House have young people—adults and maybe soon-to-be adults—who are heading north after they finish their HSC in a couple of weeks. The bill must go through the House ahead of that. There is a pressing need to do this and the time is right.

I caution Labor members to ensure that, like members of this Government, they put the safety of our young people first. As colleagues in this House said, we must remember that these inquiries followed the tragic deaths of six young Australians whose promising lives were just beginning. I cannot even imagine the tragic, heartbreaking impact that must have had on their parents' lives. Any mother, father or carer would want to precede their child in death. No-one wants to face the grief of losing a child for no good reason. I have no tolerance for illegal drugs or for pill testing. The only thing that Labor members have said in the House today that has made any sense is that the bill is not about pill testing. We agree on that only. But members of this House must move forward with this legislation, which ensures that all high-risk music festivals are subject to a rigorous regulatory regime.

We must put at the centre of this regime the safety of people in attendance at those music festivals. We have had a high-level expert panel. No-one can quibble with the expertise of Ministry of Health Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant; Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority Chair Philip Crawford; and Commissioner of Police Mick Fuller, who is a respected figure in our community. Seven recommendations were made for our consideration. One of them was for a consistent approach to music festival regulation, including a new category of liquor licence. Another recommendation, which I am focused on today, requires that organisers adhere to a safety management plan for their event supported by a two-tier system of risk with variable regulatory conditions. That is a sensible recommendation. As my colleague said today in this House, "All good businesses will have good management and safety plans." That is what good members do.

**Debate interrupted.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Gurmesh Singh):** I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Visitors*

### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to student leaders from Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta and Parramatta Marist High School, guests of the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans, and member for Parramatta. I acknowledge the Illawarra Justices of the Peace Association in the public gallery, guests of the member for Shellharbour. I also acknowledge Hayden Grey from the University of New England, guest of the member for Wollongong.

*Committees*

### STANDING ORDERS AND PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

#### Reports

**The SPEAKER:** I table the interim report of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee entitled *Modernisation and Reform of Practices and Procedures: Epetitions*, Report 2/57, dated October 2019. I order that the report be printed.

*Bills*

### RACING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019

#### Assent

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bill.

*Question Time*

### HEALTH BUDGET

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:20:54):** My question is directed to the Premier. Last week we had furious surgeons slamming the Premier's cuts to western Sydney hospitals. This week leaked documents show her Government ripping a quarter of a billion dollars out of NSW Health. Why is the Premier imposing these cruel cuts on a health system that cannot cope?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:21:19):** The best point of reference for what a government is doing in relation to spending—whether it is in Health, Education or Transport—is the budget papers. I refer the Leader of the Opposition to the budget papers that came out on 18 June. What those budget papers show is that when you look at the Health recurrent spending, which is the day-to-day spending that this Government invests in Health, it is around \$24 billion. That is about a billion dollars more than last year—a billion dollars more.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am being entirely relevant.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Let me tell you what this document says.

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is under Standing Order 129. The Premier is ripping a quarter of a billion dollars out of the budget.



**The SPEAKER:** If the Leader of the Opposition seeks to take a point of order I am happy to show her the respect of taking a point of order. However, it is not an opportunity for her to make a statement.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The only reason the Leader of the Opposition took that point of order is she is embarrassed about the question she asked.

**Mr Ryan Park:** No, she is not. I can assure you that is not the word today.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The facts are—look at our budget papers—a billion dollars more in recurrent Health funding this year compared with last year. Also, in relation to infrastructure spending, for the first time Health has exceeded \$10 billion over the forward estimates. Those opposite are going to have to do better than produce documents that have no official status.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on both sides of the Chamber are making too much noise.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Let me stress on the record that the best indication of public information on what this Government is investing in every portfolio area, including Health, is the budget. This year's budget shows a billion dollars more than last year and \$10 billion on infrastructure over the next four years. Whilst those opposite spend their weekends going to emergency meetings about the future of Sussex Street, we are taking care of the people of New South Wales—whether it is in relation to Health, Education or Transport. Those opposite cannot do better than hold up a piece of paper that has no status. We are delivering for the people of this great State.

### SCHOOL CURRICULUM

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden) (14:24:33):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on how the Government is ensuring we get back to basics with our education system?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24:42):** I thank the member for Camden for his question. In particular, I acknowledge that he has a number of school upgrades in his community—one of the fastest growing regions of New South Wales—which is a great thing.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I stress that it is not just government schools that we are building and upgrading in Camden; non-government schools, independent schools and Catholic schools are also making their contribution. I was very pleased to learn of the findings of the interim report into the review of the school curriculum. The last time the school curriculum was reviewed in New South Wales was in 1989, when that great Premier Nick Greiner decided schools needed to have their curriculum reviewed. Some of the findings of the interim report are things that our Government feels very strongly about, including for all students to get back to basics in their learning environment. We strongly believe literacy and numeracy are the things that should be focused on in learning, including STEM—science, technology, engineering and maths—learning, to ensure not only that our students are equipped with options and choices for the future, but also that they have the qualifications to be able to further their study and learning, if that is what they wish, or that they have the ability to get a job that they need into the future.

It was interesting to know that the interim review attracted over 2,000 submissions. We thank everybody who contributed to that important process. We also acknowledge, of course, the importance of having students have a greater focus on basics and also reducing what we call the clutter—the fact that there are so many subjects and so many things students have to focus on. Especially in those earlier years of learning, we want them to focus on the basics of maths, English and science. New South Wales generally does better than all the other States, but unfortunately in Australia about 40,000 students every year do not get to a learning capacity beyond 15 years of age in terms of their level of reading. It is similar with numeracy.

We want to ensure that our children and students have a better chance of ensuring that they are ahead of the curve when it comes to furthering their education. I stress to all members of this place that we hope they are communicating the process to their constituents because the final review of the curriculum will come back at the end of April, after which the Government will make changes as required. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us to focus on the learning environment. We know that, when it comes to our Government, we are investing a record \$6.7 billion over four years in building 190 schools. In fact, recently I was very pleased to join the education Minister—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Auburn should feel proud of the fact that we used Auburn Girls High School as a school to demonstrate learning on the day of the HSC.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We used Auburn Girls High School as an example of public education at its best. I encourage the member to support her local schools as much as we do. In addition to building and upgrading new schools, we know that it is not just the new schools and new classrooms that we are building, but also the learning environment that is so important—what happens inside the classroom. Not only are we promoting and recruiting an additional 5,000 teachers over the next four years, but also we are ensuring that, where possible, teachers have opportunities for further learning in the workplace and we make sure they are updating their training and credentials in relation to what happens in the classroom.

Most importantly, I stress that the New South Wales Government has a couple of Premier's Priorities of raising literacy and numeracy standards within schools. One program I am incredibly proud of—which was started by the previous Minister, Minister Stokes, and is being championed by Minister Mitchell—is what we call the Bump It Up program. We identified schools that, unfortunately, for one reason or another had lower examination results in literacy and numeracy than other public schools within the same area. When schools in a certain area are having a particular outcome and other schools are not, you have to ask questions as to why that is. We did a deep dive into those schools, individualised the care that students were receiving and asked teachers what could be done to lift standards. The Bump It Up program was so successful in key areas that we are now rolling it out across the whole State. If you believe in equality of opportunity, if you believe in giving every student a chance to be their best no matter where they live in New South Wales, you also need to ensure the education system—*[Extension of time]*

As I was saying, if you are seriously committed to equality of opportunity and to every student having equality of access to education, you need to ensure these programs are available so that, no matter where a student learns or how they learn, they have the opportunity to be their best and they have the opportunity to make choices to live a full and satisfying life. That is why our education system is so important in ensuring that happens. Our Government also feels strongly—and we have made this a Premier's Priority—about increasing the number of our Indigenous students who finish high school. Unfortunately, not enough Indigenous students finish high school. Those who do have amazing outcomes, but we want to increase by another 50 per cent the rate of students with proud Indigenous heritage who are finishing high school.

Whether it comes through Local Decisions or whether it comes to empowering principals to make decisions about their school, our Government cares passionately about what happens inside the classroom as much as what happens in the new building and new infrastructure. The review of the curriculum is a good opportunity for all of us to talk about the values that underpin our education system: the need to get back to basics and to ensure that every student has a strong grounding in maths and English and also the sciences to be prepared not just for additional learning but also to join the workforce. We are passionate about the opportunities that education provides for every single person and every single citizen in our great State.

#### HEALTH BUDGET

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:31:20):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. This document shows that the Treasurer has personally imposed cuts on NSW Health of a quarter of a billion dollars and his Treasury cap will rise every year. Will he now tell us the size of the cut in every local health district in New South Wales? I am happy to table the document.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:31:47):** Just like we tabled the budget. I thank the shadow Minister for his question and commend him for his financial illiteracy. His question shows everything that is wrong with the New South Wales Labor Party. When it comes to health investment, New South Wales is not just leading the nation; we are leading the world. If you look at our Health budget, as the Premier has said—we will get to the history lessons shortly—when it comes to health investment, we are breaking our own records every single year. This year's Health budget is \$24 billion. That is up, as the health Minister knows, by more than \$1 billion on last year. That is 28 per cent of the budget. That is an investment you can only make if you manage money well, and that is why, if you look at our investment since 2011, recurrent funding has hit \$181 billion. We have increased funding every single year for the past eight years.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. The question related to the cuts to each local health district. I would think the Premier should be able to answer that.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer is being relevant to the question. He may continue.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Of which there are none, because we are investing in every single health infrastructure project right across the State. Let us go through a bit of a history lesson. In the last nine years of Labor, health capital was \$5.3 billion. In our past nine years, it is \$13.9 billion.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Is it a different point of order to relevance? I warn the member for Campbelltown that it had better be a good one. I will not put up with deliberate interruptions of the Treasurer.

**Mr Greg Warren:** It is under Standing Order 73. If the Treasurer wants to debate the good, prosperous years of Labor Government, he should do so by way of substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order under Standing Order 73. The member will resume his seat. I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Let us think about this. Under Labor, we had \$5.3 billion in nine years. The Government is investing \$10 billion over the next four years.

**Mr Rob Stokes:** That's more.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** As the astute planning Minister points out, that is more. That is double in half the time. He is a smart fellow; that is why we have him on our team. Let us go through the Health budget. In 2011 the budget was \$16.5 billion; in 2012, \$16.9 billion; in 2013, \$17.9 billion. On and on it goes. In 2019 the budget is \$24 billion. This Government is breaking records every single year. In the last year of Labor combined with recurrent capital the budget was \$16.2 billion. This year the budget is \$26.7 billion. That is an increase of 64 per cent.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

I hear the interjections from those opposite but the population did not increase by 64 per cent. This is a record investment right across the board, which the Opposition has opposed every step of the way. Given the shadow health Minister asked the question, I have to point out that one of the Government's greatest assets during the election campaign was none other than the former shadow Treasurer. There is a reason he is the former shadow Treasurer.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about local health districts. The Treasurer has not even mentioned that.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** He had Andrew Clennell do a bit of a puff piece for him. Mr Clennell asked, "What percentage of the New South Wales budget is Health?" Then there was an 18-second silence like an awkward moment on a first date. There were 18 seconds as his time in opposition flashed before his very eyes. He knew it was forever.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Chris Minns:** This is why people cannot stand millennials; they do not shut up about themselves.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** How many times was the member mentioned? Was it 78 times? He has been mentioned a lot on that side of the House. He does not need to mention himself; he has others doing it for him. After his 18 seconds the shadow health Minister—the former shadow Treasurer—comes out and says 40 per cent. It is 28 per cent. He just got it wrong by \$9 billion. That is about 90,000 Aldi bags. He just got rid of the entire Transport recurrent spending in one hit. That is why we won.

#### COUNTRY UNIVERSITIES CENTRES

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:37:17):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government is improving access to higher education for students in regional and rural New South Wales?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:37:56):** I thank the member for Cootamundra. She is someone who champions continued investment in the regions. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge David and Helen Goddard, who are in the gallery today. David is from my electorate. Like many in the gallery today, he was here to be

recognised for his service to the people of New South Wales as a justice of the peace. David was recognised today for 50 years of service as a justice of the peace for the people of Braidwood, Monaro and New South Wales. It is great to have him here and it was great to see all sides come together in the Parliament when the Government recognised so many justices of the peace. It is so important for the fabric of New South Wales and they form part of who we are.

I thank the member for her question. As I said earlier, she is working very hard for the people of Cootamundra. As my Parliamentary Secretary, she is also working very hard for the people for Murray. That is why I have dubbed her "the member for Cootamurray"; she is covering two electorates, delivering for people right across the Riverina and making sure that investment in the area is significant and that the Government continues to support regional and rural communities. There is no greater investment in regional and rural New South Wales than the investment in our kids. The country university centres [CUCs] were formed off the back of the Cooma Universities Centre in my electorate, where we saw a significant shift in young people remaining in regional and rural New South Wales to get post-secondary education.

That is important because if we want regional and rural New South Wales to grow and prosper we need to retain the next generation of kids to become community leaders, business leaders and political leaders, to make sure those areas have a future. That is why we are establishing country universities centres right across the board and why the Government has invested \$16 million in supporting CUCs in regional and rural New South Wales. There are CUCs in Broken Hill, Grafton, Goulburn, Narrabri and Moree. Last week I had the opportunity to visit the Riverina, where we officially opened a CUC in Griffith and Leeton. I acknowledge that the member for Murray was in attendance at those openings, and I appreciate her support for them.

Let me cover what the CUCs have achieved in a very short period. Right now, through the CUCs in regional and rural New South Wales, we have 1,000 students accessing tertiary education—300,000 different courses and 35 universities partnering with the CUC model. In Broken Hill, 250 students have used the centre. That is five times more than the target. In Goulburn almost 230 students have used that centre—four times the target that had been set. Last week, only eight weeks after opening, the CUC in Grafton, which I opened recently, enrolled its 100th student—doubling the centre's target. The Government was expecting 100 students by this time next year, but the centre has already achieved an enrolment of 100 students. It is a significant investment for 1,000 students. It is changing lives. For so many who are accessing tertiary education through the CUC, they are the first in their families to do so. So this is not only changing the plight of an industry; it is changing the plight of a generation. These are the first members of their families to access tertiary education.

The proportion of women accessing the CUC delivery model is in excess of 65 per cent. The Government is reaching the corners of this State. It is a significant investment there. If there is nothing else the Government achieves in its time in office, the greatest legacy I believe it can leave is to give opportunities to young people in regional and rural New South Wales to access education. We know that education is a tool for prosperity, freedom and choice, and creates wonderful individuals who are needed in regional and rural New South Wales. I remind the House that this does not come without pain. Those opposite, including the Hon.—perhaps I should say "dishonourable"—Walt Secord in the upper House, have used every opportunity, including hiding in the cowards' castle of parliamentary privilege, to attack the CUC chief executive officer, the husband of the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, who undertakes that role free of charge.

I can hear those opposite; they hate the truth. Labor's Walt Secord said that the Government has "many questions" to answer about funding CUCs. There are 1,000 students; I have the answers. The Hon. Walt Secord said that the Government should not have funded the project. In other words, he is saying that the Liberals and The Nationals should not be investing in regional and rural children. Those opposite take for granted the opportunity to jump on a train or a bus to access a university just down the road in Sydney but in regional and rural New South Wales they do not want us to deliver a model that achieves outcomes—1,000 students today, with 35 per cent of those students the first in their families to attend. Those opposite want to deprive those students. They do not want to see the investment. The Hon. Walt Secord has led the charge, criticising the CUC and criticising the students. [*Extension of time*]

The Hon. Walt Secord has been criticising the students, the staff and the chief executive officer. He has been attacking the Hon. Bronnie Taylor while hiding behind parliamentary privilege. I have a message for Labor and ABC South East that I am not going to cop that criticism. This Government will be judged on outcomes and delivery, while those opposite play political games. I commend the member for Murray for being with us at the opening of a CUC but her colleagues in the upper House have supported Labor's attacks on the CUC. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in the upper House has supported Labor's attacks on CUCs. That party says it supports regional and rural New South Wales but it does so with slogans not with action. Last week those opposite voted against the Right to Farm Bill 2019 in this House. Those opposite—the Labor Party—want to see vegan

trespassers continue to terrorise our farmers and families in regional and rural New South Wales. Their reason for opposing the legislation is that they will come back with something new in the future.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This has now moved a very long way away from the question that the Minister was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy for the Deputy Premier to continue. He has been relevant for the vast majority of his answer.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I will never be lectured by the member for Liverpool on this issue. He has not set foot in regional and rural New South Wales. He could not give a damn about the regions, but we do. We will continue to invest so that 50 per cent of the students are the first in their family. We will continue to invest to make sure our regions have access to tertiary education. We will continue to invest so that kids can stay at home in their communities where they built friendships. That is the next generation. We will continue to invest in the future of regional and rural New South Wales using the greatest investment of all, which is education. While we are continuing to invest in the regions, those opposite will play politics with the people of regional New South Wales.

### HEALTH BUDGET

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (14:44:59):** My question is directed to the health Minister. In my local area the South Western Sydney Local Health District has some of the busiest hospitals in the State, given the population boom. Given the Government is cutting a quarter of a billion dollars from NSW Health, what is the size of the cut in the South Western Sydney Local Health District?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will not start his response until members are silent.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:46:11):** I thank the member for his question. I think next time he needs to check who exactly is giving him the question.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Mate, you need to check. You need to check today.

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

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** The member for Keira is precious. He got it wrong and he's led you astray.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** It is like outing yourself, isn't it? I was about to get to the member for Keira and suggest it was him who gave the member for Macquarie Fields that question. As the Treasurer just pointed out, I have been here a long while and I have never heard a shadow Treasurer ever get a budget wrong in one particular area by \$9 billion.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I was very pleased that the Treasurer has such a good memory. He reminded me of that most excellent journalist, Mr Clennell, who we all respect a lot. He wrote an excellent piece on 18 March 2019. It stated:

... Mr Park, took 18 seconds to respond when asked during an interview with *The Australian* what was the proportion of the NSW health budget in terms of the overall state budget.

What did he say? This is one for you guys up there in the gallery. He is actually an ex-teacher; heaven help you if you are doing maths and you had him for a teacher. Lord above! He said: "Um, let me have a think. I think it is about"—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is a question about the size of the cut to the budget for south-west Sydney. Minister, this document clearly shows that Treasury is taking a quarter of a billion out of your budget. What is the cost for south-west Sydney?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being generally relevant. The Minister will continue.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** This is what happens when you let someone who has no real understanding of Treasury or how to run a major portfolio answer a question—

**Opposition members:** Answer a question!

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** —when an incisive journalist asks about the Health budget: "Um, let me have a think. I think it is about, probably about 40 per cent. Then Education comes out about 20-odd. I think it is"

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I just will hear a little bit more.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** "Transport that comes next, then you go to law and order". As Mr Park was then told by that incisive journalist, it was 28 per cent, which the Treasurer told you before. I reiterate that there has been no cut to the State Health budget. There has been a massive increase in the State Health budget. The budget this year was \$24 billion. To answer the member for Macquarie Fields, in addition to the current budget—as you would know, or at least some of your colleagues should know—there has been almost three-quarters of a billion dollars committed to Liverpool Hospital, \$1 billion to Westmead and \$700 million to Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital—a packet of money. However, to south-west Sydney the budget this year is \$2 billion, which was an increase of \$94 million—no cuts, but an increase of \$94 million.

**Mr Ryan Park:** What does this say?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Sorry? Let's have a look at western Sydney: \$1.9 billion budget, an increase of \$88 million, contrary to the lies and stupidity that have been put out here today. Hunter New England is up by \$72 million. Northern Sydney Local Health District is up by \$57 million. South Eastern Sydney is up by \$61 million. What those opposite have got is just a stupid, stupid understanding of budgetary procedures. Let me make it very clear: In the last year they were in government their budget was, give or take, about \$15 billion to \$16 billion. It is now \$27 billion this year—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** —including more than \$2 billion on infrastructure. Those opposite have got it wrong. They do not know what they are doing. They cannot manage the health budget. They cannot manage the State.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We have got brave surgeons speaking out—

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** And the Leader of the Opposition can't count!

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Yes.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has completed his answer.

#### SYDNEY METRO WEST

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:50:58):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on the Sydney Metro West project?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The project that will never happen.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (14:51:17):** Can I get that interjection by the member for Strathfield recorded? She said, "It will never happen." I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. He knows that three million people in western Sydney will benefit from this rail project. He knows that around 80,000 jobs—10,000 direct and 70,000 indirect—will be created off the back of this project. He knows that we can actually deliver a rail line between the city and Westmead and the travel time will be 20 minutes. For the benefit of the western Sydney Minister, the travel time between the city and ANZ Stadium will be 14 minutes. This is the type of stuff that will happen as a result of Sydney Metro West. In terms of the Government's record and in terms of the building stages of the Metro—we have delivered Sydney Metro Northwest.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** We have got Sydney Metro now, of course, with tunnelling underway between Chatswood and Sydenham, which will be complete in the first quarter of next year; and as for Sydney Metro Southwest, there is no doubt that we are going to get on with this project and deliver a game changer for three million people in western Sydney. That train is a fully automated driverless Metro with three doors on the side. It is a turn up and go service, so no need for a timetable. It has the capacity to go to a train every two minutes, given the growth that we are going to see in western Sydney over the many decades ahead. This is without doubt going to be the largest transport project and stage of the Metro in the history of the country. That is something that for those opposite is a dream.

When we announced this, you got the stock standard Labor Party press release. First of all they say it will never happen. Well, guess when Labor first announced a train to Parramatta from the city? It was 1995. They had 16 years in office to deliver. The good old Leader of the Opposition goes on Ray Hadley's show and says she

is not a friend of Kaila Murnain and Kaila Murnain had nothing to do with her becoming Leader of the Opposition, to the bemusement of the member for Kogarah. I am just waiting for the Leader of the Opposition to say she was not a Minister in the last Labor Government. That is what we are going to get out of her next. She will pretend. Then the shadow Minister also puts out a press release yesterday in relation to Sydney Metro West.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rockdale will remain silent.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Guess what he wants? He wants a Metro station at Silverwater.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Guess what is at Silverwater? The jail and Eddie Obeid. We are not going to build the Obeid Express!

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** The Minister has strayed a long way away from—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is being relevant. He has been relevant the whole time. The Minister will continue.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** To help the Deputy Leader of the Opposition out, I have a press release here, issued by Mr Minns and Ms Voltz, which says that the Government has curiously excluded a Silverwater station. Why on earth would you want to build a train line to a jail? For someone mentioned at the ICAC 78 times he might have a vested interest, I would have thought.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** What is also telling about these misleading press releases—one from the Leader of the Opposition and one from the shadow Minister—is that I was particularly bemused by the Leader of the Opposition claiming that the Metro will cost \$30 billion, and then complaining we have allocated \$6 billion across the forward estimates. One might have a look and see what the Labor Party did with the Parliamentary Budget Office [PBO] in relation to Sydney Metro West at the last election.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Chris Minns:** What is this bloke crowing about? There will be three Olympic Games before you build it. It is miles away. You are not doing a thing.

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

**Mr Chris Minns:** Three Olympic Games. You'll be long gone.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Kogarah to order for the second time. The Minister will continue.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** How old were you in 1995 when this was promised? Three? For goodness sake. Just to help the Opposition, the press release goes out and it says: Oh yes, \$30 billion and \$6 billion in the forward estimates—

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** You will be mouldy Bega Cheese by then.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Let us go to this point. I went to the Parliamentary Budget Office costings of Labor in Transport and there are a couple of things here. It says: Do not proceed with the Sydenham to Bankstown line conversion. That is one cancellation. It also says: Do not proceed with the Western Harbour Tunnel. It says: Do not proceed with the F6 extension. These are the costings in the last election for the PBO: cancel, cancel, cancel, do not proceed. Guess what is missing in the PBO costings in the last election? Sydney Metro West. [*Extension of time*]

Who was responsible for the PBO costings for Labor at the last election? The same guy running around today carrying on about Treasury caps. For goodness sake. He could not even put a costing to the PBO in relation to Sydney Metro West at the last election. There is a big fat zero next to their contribution for Sydney Metro West, and he is giving us a lecture about the time frame that it is going to be delivered.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Keira and the Treasurer will desist speaking across the table.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** You did not allocate a sack at the last election and now you are complaining about how we are going to profile the project. We have a record of delivery, you do not. We have a shadow Minister who has been mentioned 78 times down at the ICAC and a Leader of the Opposition not willing to do anything about it. I point out to those opposite that I have noticed a lot of upset among Labor MPs in the Parliament over the past few weeks. But I have to say that I think probably what is upsetting them the most is that they are about to have their incomes taxed to pay for \$700,000 to Kaila Murnain.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** We know about this corruption tax on Labor members. We saw that with the Medich money and now we will see it with paying out Kaila Murnain.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order—

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** No wonder Jodi's got everyone upset—\$700,000 out of your incomes combined is pretty upsetting.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I mean that is seven Aldi bags.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Mr Speaker, you gave me the call—

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

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** —and the Minister continued to speak after you gave me the call.

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

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This has nothing to do with the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will continue. He is being relevant.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** It does actually. It goes to the competence of the Leader of the Opposition, firstly to act on a shadow Minister mentioned 78 times at the ICAC, and then go out and spread lies about Metro West throughout western Sydney—I am happy to withdraw that word; I will say mendacious information—to the people of western Sydney about a train line they so desperately need and we will deliver.

#### WYONG HOSPITAL

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (14:58:44):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health and Medical Research. Will the Minister and the Government give a public apology to the family of 21-month-old Lorelei Bellchambers, who was tragically misdiagnosed at Wyong Hospital last Monday?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health and Medical Research) (14:59:13):** I thank the member for Wyong for his question and I acknowledge his interest on behalf of his constituents and little Lorelei. Ben and Elise, Lorelei's parents, are obviously very worried about her. The question of the diagnosis at Wyong is, to say the least, a challenging one. One needs to give time to determine whether or not the staff who made the assessments made them in an appropriate way. If there does turn out to be some issue about that, of course I, as health Minister, will make sure that the Ministry of Health does all it must do to ensure that the staff at Wyong understand whatever shortcomings there may have been. Having said that, I emphasise that at this point it is still unclear.

Dealing with a little baby like Lorelei, who is only 21 months old, is very challenging. I know from talking to her mum and dad that they have a view on what should have occurred, but it is fairly complex when one gets into medical issues. They take the view that a CAT scan should have been undertaken. A CAT scan irradiates an area. Babies have very vulnerable organs, particularly the thyroid area, and the question of whether or not that was appropriate at that point is something that will be looked at in depth. Obviously there are some possible negative consequences that doctors weigh up every day as part of their professional practice.

Having said that, I have also spoken to the senior medical staff at Westmead hospital about the issues. I think I can safely say that Lorelei is getting incredible care. She is in a cast that is keeping her chest and her head moving in a simultaneous direction while the issues of her C2 fracture—which have been mentioned publicly, so I can mention them here—are addressed. At this point I understand that today she was happy and looking good. I think the issue is that Elise and Ben are feeling very protective and very concerned—as any one of us with a little baby would. I am sure all in the House would express similar concerns.



I am more than happy, as I have already said to Elise and Ben, to keep them well and truly informed. In fact, they both have my mobile number and they know they can talk to me at any stage. I am very sorry that Lorelei is in this situation and that her mum and dad are so upset about it. I have indicated to them that once I know more about it, I am happy to make some further comments in a couple of weeks when things become apparent. It will take a couple of weeks to work out exactly what may or may not be the issue.

The doctors are very positive about her current situation. I am very sorry for Ben and Elise, and little Lorelei, for their concerns and for what apparently occurred at Wyong. On the other hand, I let the community know that at this point there is no clarity about that because it will take a little while for the Ministry of Health to work its way through talking to the relevant people. I think all members share Elise and Ben's concerns about Lorelei. I say to all of them again, as I did on the phone privately, that we are all thinking of them. Hopefully everything will go well and little Lorelei will be up and around before they know it.

### **CORRECTIVE SERVICES CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:03:17):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections. Can the Minister update the House about the creative arts programs within Corrective Services NSW, how they assist to reduce reoffending, keep our community safe and other germane facts?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order relates to standing Order 130. I refer to your ruling on 20 August. I put to you that that question is flouting your ruling. It is undermining you and undermining this House because it is clearly designed—

**The SPEAKER:** I just want clarity. Are you speaking to Standing Order 130? If you are speaking to a ruling that I have made, please refer me to that ruling please.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Under Standing Order 128 (2)—

**The SPEAKER:** Earlier you said it was Standing Order 130.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Yes, but I am referring to your ruling in relation to Standing Order 130 on 20 August. Clearly, that question—

**The SPEAKER:** Is it Standing Order 130?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Yes. You made a ruling on 20 August, Mr Speaker, in relation to questions that could be debated under Standing Order 130. That question is clearly flouting your ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** I want to hear what the point of order relates to. Can you quote my ruling or tell me what you are talking about?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Your ruling was basically—I do not have it written down in front of me—

**The SPEAKER:** That is fine; just paraphrase it.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Ultimately, it was about having a bit on the end of a question such as "are there any other alternatives" and things like that.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, you have made it clear. I am happy to rule on that and to make clear that the phrase "and other germane facts" relates to the main question and is, in my opinion, superfluous but not expanding the question into a second question or otherwise of the nature of "and related matters". It is not in the same category. I am satisfied that the term, albeit superfluous, is acceptable.

**Mr Greg Warren:** I refer to your finding and I accept that, Mr Speaker, but at the outset I would flag that if that part of the question ignites further debate, I will be calling further points of order.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. I take the member's point, but there is nothing in the question; it is the answer that is important.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections) (15:05:50):** Before I answer the question, if I may approach the bench. The great Speakers, Arnold, Allen and Barton would agree with you today, Mr Speaker, on the fact that germane questions are not covered by any previous rulings—not that I am aware of. But I am happy to discuss this in your chambers, perhaps?

**The SPEAKER:** I will point out to the Minister that I ruled in his favour and he is wasting his own time.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I withdraw my submission. This is déjà vu and I again thank the member for Dubbo for his question. Last week I was able to provide the House with a brief update on creative arts programs within Corrective Services NSW and how they assist to reduce reoffending and to keep our communities safe. As I stated last week, we know that engaging inmates in education and work opportunities whilst they are in custody

drastically improves their chances of successfully reintegrating back into society and their communities upon their release. That is why the programs run in correctional centres have a central focus on preparing inmates for employment on release. Being able to get a job and maintain stable employment is critical for an offender who has been released from custody to ensure that they do not reoffend and return to prison. As a Government, we are committed to the Premier's Priorities to reduce adult reoffending following release from prison by 5 per cent by 2023.

Now I would like to update the House on the other germane facts. Learning new skills is not only a pro-social activity; it is a step towards prisoner rehabilitation. Speaking of new skills, I was ruminating only this morning at my yoga class, between the upward-facing dog pose and the standing-big-toe hold, that question time just is not the same anymore. There is just no excitement because Labor is in so much strife. There is just no competition anymore. Labor now is the equivalent of those teams that show up to play the Harlem Globetrotters and, just like basketball players, Labor members are also not allowed to criticise China.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Greg Warren:** Do I really need to explain, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, you do need to explain it. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Standing Order 73. If the Minister would like to debate matters with the Labor Party—

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister is making comments of a general nature about Labor. I have made it very clear on numerous occasions that that does not breach Standing Order 73.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Indeed, Labor's policy agenda really seems to have dried up since it stopped taking instructions from Beijing. It just occurred to me, but does anyone here remember Country Labor? I do, sort of, but I have to remind myself. During my yoga session I checked up on what Country Labor had to say about our Corrections arts program. Nothing whatsoever. Indeed, at a time when this Government is responding to help rural and regional New South Wales in one of our worst droughts, I thought Country Labor might have something to say about it. It gives me no pleasure to inform the House that, unsurprisingly, Country Labor's response to the drought is a link that states: Here's how we'll help. However, if you click on it there is no link, no policy, just crickets.

Is there a policy, for example, from Country Labor on rural assistance grants? No. Is there a policy from Country Labor on securing town water supplies? No. Is there a policy from Country Labor on pipelines? No. Is there a policy from Country Labor on building dams to drought-proof rural and regional New South Wales? No. There are no dam policies—in fact, there are no damn policies at all! But I can inform the House that Country Labor had 95 tweets in the month of March, during the election campaign.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. Fascinating as this is, the question was on creative arts programs.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will return to the leave of the question shortly.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** How many tweets have there been since those 95 in March, during the election campaign? One, which is 0.1429 tweets a month—I am happy to round that up to 0.143 per month. An asthmatic ant crawling over a keyboard would have produced more activity than we have seen on regional policy out of Country Labor. And if you click on one of those tweets—

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

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. I want to hear about Brewarrina and Ivanhoe jails closing, which is the Minister's portfolio and both are in regional and rural New South Wales.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Then ask me a question on it. I am happy to answer that.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, I will give you another 10 seconds and then I expect you to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** When you click on one of those policies, you are told that Safari cannot open the page because this server cannot be found. We know where the server is; it is probably being forensically examined by ICAC. With respect to creative arts programs and the emergency that we are facing, in a germane manner I note that in *The Sydney Morning Herald* today there is indeed an emergency facing not just our community but also those in Corrections. There is a crisis meeting around leadership in the Labor Party. I read

that there have been emergency meetings in left-wing branches. The member for Summer Hill is quoted saying that branch members are furious. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, I am granting you an extra two minutes but I do not want two minutes of rambling about the Labor Party.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** You can see that meeting now, all these furious lefties dropping a couple of pingers and endorsing a rainbow unicorn as the next general secretary, only to find out that the Right already sorted that last week.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129 again. We have now heard over five minutes on the Labor Party in answer to a question on Corrective Services.

**The SPEAKER:** I have given the Minister a guideline for the next two minutes. The Minister will continue.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** You just have to feel for them. It is sad to sit and watch them, to be honest. Their party is broken—indeed, last week it looked as though I would have to deploy the Special Operations Group from Corrections to remove the general secretary from her office.

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

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Point of order: It is absolutely ridiculous, when Corrective Services is so important in this State, that this Minister behaves in this way for over six minutes.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Auburn. I have given the Minister some guidance. I do not want two points of order taken within the space of 10 or 15 seconds of my ruling.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Indeed, it looked as though we would have to deploy the Security Operations Group from Corrections last week to remove the general secretary from her office. The way we are going at the moment, New South Wales Labor will have to start getting corporate sponsorship just to keep the lights on. It will have to rebrand itself as "Colgate toothpaste Labor Party", except no-one would believe it could sell freshness.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. As much as I enjoy indulgence about the inner-city Left, it is very important for the Minister to return to the question and talk about Corrections.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, just put in the word "Corrections" or make your answer relevant.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Yes, I am on my way. Indeed, as someone in Corrections said to me just the other day, "Maybe Aldi could throw them an endorsement deal after all the free press they gave them". Labor's implosion has at least had one benefit. It means we get more newspaper articles mentioning the dominant Right faction. I like seeing that in print; I pretend it is my faction being talked about. Again, I sympathise with Labor members. Everyone always blames the Right for everything that goes wrong. I make this very clear: The confected outrage— [*Time expired.*]

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:14:36):** My question is directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment. Given that coal-fired power stations in New South Wales produce up to an estimated 8 million tonnes of coal ash every year, yet typically repurpose less than 30 per cent of it, will the Minister act to have power companies maximise the beneficial re-use of this material and reduce the impact of storing this toxic waste?

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (15:15:05):** What a great question from a great member. He is the best member that Lake Macquarie has ever had. He is also the first non-Labor member that it has ever had. Is that any coincidence? That is a very sensible question. I know the interest the member for Lake Macquarie has in both re-using and recycling, as well as in the coal-fired power industry.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Did you give it to him, mate?

**Mr MATT KEAN:** No, on this occasion he gave it to me. This issue is close to the heart of the member for Lake Macquarie because the Eraring Power Station is in his electorate. I also know that the member for Swansea is very interested in this issue because of the Vales Point Power Station. As the member for Lake Macquarie correctly points out, these power stations create a large amount of coal ash. According to 2016 data from the Ash Development Association of Australia, around 5.65 million tonnes of coal ash is produced in New South Wales annually. Coal ash is the fly ash and bottom ash, sometimes called coal combustion products, generated from the burning of coal for electricity generation.

Earlier this year an ABC article noted that 500 kilograms of coal ash are generated each year per person in Australia. That is a huge amount of waste being created. This is one of Australia's biggest waste problems and accounts for nearly one-fifth of Australia's waste stream, but the good news is that coal ash can be re-used and the re-use of coal ash for beneficial purposes is regulated by the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] in New South Wales via the coal ash order 2014, issued under the Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014.

For the benefit of the House, coal ash is re-used primarily by the cement industry, but it is also used as an engineering fill material. During 2018-19 approximately 21 per cent of ash generated from Vales Point and approximately 35 per cent of ash generated from Eraring was recycled. These rates are below international best practice—in fact, they are well below the world average. Around 44 per cent of ash is recycled worldwide. Australia's utilisation of coal ash is one of the worst in the world and certainly compares unfavourably with India, which re-uses about 61 per cent; China, which re-uses about 69 per cent; the United Kingdom, which re-uses 70 per cent; and Japan, which re-uses 97 per cent. We can and must do better.

Coal ash can act as a partial substitute for cement. Evidence suggests that coal ash makes the concrete technically better and reduces the amount of cement used in concrete. This is good not only from a resource re-use perspective but also because cement is one of the largest producers of carbon emissions. Anything we can do to reduce carbon emissions is a good thing—noting that there are dangerous elements in coal ash that we do not want to see put into our natural environment. For example, the coal ash order 2014 sets limits for metals that are consistent with levels that occur naturally in the environment. Without undermining this robust regulatory framework, I echo the member for Lake Macquarie in saying that I want to see as much of this ash re-used as possible.

The Government is currently developing its 20-Year Waste Strategy for NSW, which will look at how we can reduce, re-use and recycle a number of different waste products. I commit to the member for Lake Macquarie and the House that the Government will include coal ash in the scope of the work it is doing and will ensure that it has a policy in place to increase the required re-use of coal ash going forward. As part of this work I will look at the development of re-use industries in New South Wales—including in the electorates of Lake Macquarie and Swansea—once we speak to the members.

The Government wants to encourage the re-use of a range of waste products across New South Wales and will look at re-using coal ash in bricks, construction blocks and lightweight aggregate. If players like the cement industry will not jump on board and do the right thing then the Government will look at measures that require them to do so, but the Government wants to work with industry to get the right result. I was disturbed to hear recently that in Queensland the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission fined the cement industry \$20 million for restricting the supply of coal ash. For the benefit of the House, the cement industry has a direct contract with the power stations and it restricts the use of that supply from going to other industries and businesses that may want to find a beneficial re-use of that product. *[Extension of time]*

It not good enough that the cement industry is restricting the ability for other industries potentially to find innovative ways to use coal ash. The Government wants to open that up and see a circular economy when it comes to coal ash, but it also does not want to put unnecessary costs into the marketplace. The Government wants to see power stations do the right thing and help to re-use this product beneficially so that we can protect the environment and ensure that the Government does not have to step in directly. In summary, for the benefit of the member for Lake Macquarie, I understand that coal ash is a big issue. The Government does not want to see it seeping out into the natural environment. Strict regulations in place administered by the EPA. The Government wants to ensure that those regulations are enforced, but it also wants to encourage the re-use of this product.

Coal ash does have a beneficial re-use, particularly when it comes to cement not only because it gives a better quality of cement but also because it will help to reduce the carbon emissions created by cement. Cement production is the second-highest generator of carbon emissions so if that can be reduced it obviously will also have a beneficial impact on the economy. I look forward to working with the member for Lake Macquarie and other members who are interested in the Government's 20-year waste strategy to increase the rate of recycling and re-use of products and waste in New South Wales.

#### COAL ASH

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### DEFAMATION LAWS

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:21:36):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is fixing Australia's defamation laws?

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:21:56):** I thank the member for his question. I acknowledge his passion about defamation law and his considerable professional expertise. In 2005 all State and Territory Attorneys-General agreed to a uniform national approach to defamation law through the adoption of model defamation provisions, which have been in place since 2005, but a lot has happened since that time. In 2005 Myspace turned down an offer from Mark Zuckerberg to purchase Facebook for US\$75 million. Today its market capitalisation is \$541 billion. The laws in 2005 came several months before the first-ever tweet, before you could defame someone in 140 characters—or in 280 characters these days. According to a 2018 report from the Centre for Media Transition at the University of Technology Sydney, over half of all defamation cases in New South Wales concern digital defamation. So the landscape has changed.

David Ipp, corruption fighter and former judge, has described our defamation laws as the Galapagos Islands division of tort law. In other words, while other areas of law have evolved, defamation has stood still. The intergovernmental agreement between all States and Territories requires that before any State changes its defamation law it has to refer that legislation to what was once called SCAG, an unfortunate acronym for the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. These days it is the Council of Attorneys-General [CAG]. In June last year I took to CAG a proposal for New South Wales to lead a review of defamation law across Australia and to see whether our laws are fit for purpose. Do they stifle the press, as many in the media claim? Do they get the right balance between protecting reputations on the one hand and protecting freedom of speech or freedom of expression on the other hand?

New South Wales is leading this charge in answering these questions and ensuring that our defamation laws are fit for purpose in our digital age. In February this year the Council of Attorneys-General released a discussion paper that was drafted by the then Department of Justice, now the Department of Communities and Justice, that raised a number of key issues that that discussion paper raised. I will not address them all, but I will raise just a few. One is the single publication rule. Defamation occurs whenever a defamatory meaning is communicated to a third party. Under our law a person has one year to commence proceedings. That is easy if it is print, radio or TV, where the date of publication is fixed. But if it is internet material, communication occurs whenever a third party downloads that material. This is the multiple publication rule.

If material is downloaded repeatedly a publisher is potentially exposed to indefinite liability. The United Kingdom [UK], Ireland and several United States jurisdictions now have a single publication rule from the date of first publication—the date of first download. New South Wales is keen to see whether it can implement this reform across Australia to make sure that the current multiple publication rule, which is ill-fitted to the digital age, disappears. The defence of qualified privilege and public interest in making publications is another area we are looking at. That defence recognises that there are limited circumstances where a person has a duty to communicate information to a recipient who has a corresponding duty in receiving it—for example, giving a job reference, answering police inquiries or parent teacher interviews, which should be frank and fearless.

Does this extend to media articles in the public interest where the interested recipient is the public at large? No media organisation has ever successfully relied on this defence, which suggests that our defamation laws do not protect public interest journalism. We do not want to protect journalism at any cost, where the publication is reckless as to cause reputational harm, but there are other jurisdictions that have come up with solutions for responsible publications on matters of public interest. Again, New South Wales is keen to lead the way in this area. The defence of triviality is a defence if the defendant proves that the circumstances of the publication were such that the plaintiff was unlikely to sustain harm. In theory this should stop trivial, vexatious or spurious claims, but it seems that is not happening in Australia, specifically in Sydney. Between 2014 and 2018 there were 268 references to libel in the UK, which has a population of 66 million. [*Extension of time*]

By comparison there were twice as many references in Australia's superior courts despite our population of only 25 million people. More than half of those came from New South Wales. On a per capita basis defamation issues are 10 times more likely to arise in Sydney than they are in London. In the age of social media, where

someone can make a small Facebook post or restaurant review that may lead to a full-scale defamation suit, we are looking at reform to introduce a serious harm threshold. The cap on damages at the moment for non-economic loss is \$407,500, which is no small number, but recent case law has abolished that cap where an award of aggravated damages is appropriate. Damages such as the initial \$4.7 million awarded in *Wilson v Bauer Media Pty Ltd* [2017] VSC 521, reduced to \$600,000 on appeal, can have a chilling effect on our press, which cannot afford to keep publishing.

We are keen to look at reform to make sure that we do not have perverse outcomes. These reforms have been a long time coming. Some issues require further consideration in light of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's *Digital Platforms Inquiry: Final Report*, which suggests that internet providers are responsible for content on their own platforms, but that is no reason to delay progress on the issues I have just discussed. We know there has to be change and that is why New South Wales is leading the charge on getting this done. New South Wales is leading the country on the economy, with the strongest economy in the country, the greatest jobs growth, the lowest unemployment, the greatest infrastructure program and the greatest improvement in service delivery. We are also leading the country on the law reform front. That is why we are happy to lead the charge on defamation reform. That is why we recognise that there are some issues like digital platforms that require further consideration but we will urge CAG to get on with reform in these other areas.

#### *Documents*

### **INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 78 (2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1978, I announce of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2019, received out of session on 18 October 2019 and authorised to be printed.

### **INSPECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 78 (2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1978, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2019, received out of session on 18 October 2019 and authorised to be printed.

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 7/57* dated 22 October 2019.

I move:

That the report be printed.

#### **Motion agreed to.**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding *Legislation Review Digest No. 6/57*, dated 15 October 2019.

#### *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**.

#### **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**.

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION**

#### **Membership**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council regarding the appointment of Mr Khan to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Blair.

#### *Bills*

### **STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2019**

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (15:31:47):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The State Revenue Legislation Further Amendment Bill 2019 amends the provisions of three Acts—the Duties Act 1997, the Land Tax Act 1956 and the Land Tax Management Act 1956—as part of the Government's ongoing program of keeping the tax legislation effective and up to date. This bill has three key purposes: Firstly, to avoid discretionary trusts becoming subject to surcharge purchaser duty or surcharge land tax where there is no intention that income or assets in the trust be distributed to foreign persons; secondly, to enhance the landholder duty provisions to address inequities and anomalies in their application, bring them into closer alignment with other jurisdictions and fortify them against avoidance through the use of foreign acquisition vehicles; and, thirdly, to ensure consistency between recent changes to provide for the indexation of stamp duty thresholds and stamp duty concessions provided under the First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme.

The bulk of the amendments concern the Duties Act and fall into three categories: surcharge duty for discretionary trusts, landholder duty and miscellaneous duty-related amendments. Dealing firstly with the surcharge purchaser duty and related surcharge land tax amendments, surcharge purchaser duty and surcharge land tax are imposed on foreign persons who acquire or own residential land. "Foreign person" means a person who is a foreign person within the meaning of the Commonwealth's Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975 and includes a trustee of a trust in which an individual not ordinarily resident in Australia, or a foreign corporation or a foreign government, holds a substantial interest.

With discretionary trusts there is a risk that trustees can unknowingly become liable for the surcharges. This is because discretionary trusts often give the trustee powers to distribute income and/or capital to a wide range of beneficiaries, including named beneficiaries, such as relatives of the settlor, and classes of beneficiary, such as charities. If any one of the potential beneficiaries is a foreign person, or if the terms of the trust deed would allow for income to be distributed to a foreign person at any time, the trustee may be deemed to be a foreign



person and therefore be liable for surcharge purchaser duty and/or surcharge land tax, even though none of the beneficiaries who actually receive or are likely to receive income is a foreign person.

To address this, schedule 1 to the bill—new section 104JA and its associated transitional clause—provides for surcharge purchaser duty exemptions and refunds when the terms of a discretionary trust are amended before the end of 2019 to prevent a foreign person from being a beneficiary. The transitional provision has retrospective effect to the commencement of surcharge purchaser duty on 21 June 2016 so that trustees who may have incurred liability prior to the commencement of this bill have an opportunity to obtain relief. However, since March 2017, Revenue NSW, through revenue rulings, client education activities and engagement with the Law Society of New South Wales and other stakeholder groups, has been advising taxpayers of the potential liability for surcharge purchaser duty that can arise under discretionary trusts and the possible need to make amendments to trust deeds.

Many trust deeds have now been amended and no surcharge duty incurred as a result. With this in mind, the Government considers that the end of 2019 allows sufficient time for any remaining trustees and their advisers to make necessary changes to trust deeds. As I mentioned previously, relief from surcharge liability will be contingent on the trust deed being amended to prevent a foreign person from being a beneficiary of the trust. This requirement has two elements: First, that no potential beneficiary of the trust is a foreign person—the no foreign beneficiary requirement; and, second, that the terms of the trust are not capable of being amended so as to allow for a foreign person to be a potential beneficiary under the trust—the no amendment requirement.

The first element essentially speaks for itself. The deed must not allow for property to be distributed to a foreign person. The second element is an important anti-avoidance measure to ensure that a deed cannot simply be amended to avoid surcharge and then be re-amended for the purposes of distributing income or assets to foreign persons. The terms of the trust deed preventing a foreign person from being a beneficiary under the trust must be irrevocable. When this legislation commences, some trust deeds will meet the no foreign beneficiary requirement already and the transitional provision specifies that such deeds will not need to be amended to meet the no amendment requirement. However, from commencement, an existing trust that does have potential foreign beneficiaries, or a new trust, will need to meet both requirements to ensure that a trustee is not deemed to be foreign person.

I will now discuss briefly discretionary trusts created under a will. Discretionary testamentary trusts can give rise to the same issues that I have just outlined. However, because such trusts are established under a will, the trustee generally has no legal capacity to amend the deed after the deceased has died. The transitional clause therefore provides that where the deceased dies before, or within two years after, the commencement of the new section 104JA, and the deceased was not a foreign person at death, the trustee of a discretionary trust will not be a foreign trustee, even though the trust does not prevent a foreign person from being a beneficiary under the trust. These discretionary trust amendments to the Duties Act are reflected in and adapted, as required, to land tax surcharge as detailed in schedules 2 and 3.

I now turn to the remaining amendments, which exclusively concern the Duties Act. A landholder is a unit trust scheme, a private company or a listed company that has landholdings in New South Wales with a threshold value of \$2 million or more. Landholder duty is paid on the acquisition of a significant interest in a landholder. A significant interest is one that constitutes 50 per cent or more of the landholder. Landholder duty is intended to ensure that transactions that essentially amount to an acquisition of land do not escape duty simply because the acquisition does not involve a direct transfer of land. The threshold is currently based on unimproved land value for land held in freehold. For leasehold land, unencumbered value is used. Unencumbered value is the market value or the sale amount that the landholdings might be expected to achieve in the open market disregarding any encumbrances such as mortgages. Once the land value threshold is met, duty is calculated on the unencumbered value, regardless of how the land is held.

The current threshold provisions have proved problematic, are not consistent with other jurisdictions' landholder provisions and are not in line with this Government's efforts to make the State tax system simpler for the taxpayer to navigate. Just to highlight a few of the problems, the current provisions can cause confusion to taxpayers because the valuation methodology used to determine whether duty is actually payable—unimproved land value for freehold land or unencumbered value for other land—is different from the one used to determine the actual amount of duty payable, being unencumbered value for all land. They can result in unfair outcomes for taxpayers. Let me illustrate that with two examples.

The first example concerns a power station whose landholdings consist of low-quality rural land. The unimproved value of the land is \$1.5 million. However, because of the substantial assets on the land, the unencumbered value is \$12 million. Despite the substantial unencumbered value, the acquisition of a significant interest in this landholder would not attract any duty because the unimproved land value falls below the threshold. By contrast, consider the situation where a farming landholder has an unimproved value of \$3.5 million and an

unencumbered value of \$5 million. In this case, the acquisition of a 100 per cent interest would incur a duty of \$260,000, even though the unencumbered value of this landholder is far less than that of the power station. The second example concerns a landholder that consists of leasehold interests over land. The leasehold interests have an unimproved value of \$1.8 million and an unencumbered value of \$2.5 million. Although the unimproved value is less than \$2 million, an acquisition of a significant interest in the landholder will incur landholder duty because the land is held in leasehold and thus its unencumbered value of \$2.5 million is used.

As I have mentioned, New South Wales threshold provisions differ from those in other States and Territories, all of which use an unencumbered value threshold. This bill brings us into closer alignment with those jurisdictions. The bill therefore amends section 146, and repeals section 146A, to change the method of assessing the value of a landholder for the purposes of determining if an acquisition of an interest in a landholder is liable to duty, so that unencumbered value is used instead of unimproved value. This amendment will simplify the duty's operation and make it easier to understand for taxpayers by providing that the unencumbered value of landholdings is the basis for determining whether liability exists for the acquisition of an interest and, if it does exist, the amount of the liability to be paid. It will ensure that acquisitions of interests in landholders that have an unencumbered value of more than \$2 million are subject to equal landholder duty treatment and bring the landholder provisions into closer alignment with those applying to direct transfers of land.

Turning now to the second landholder duty amendment, which concerns how land is defined for the purposes of determining the value of landholdings, once the land value threshold is met, duty is calculated on the unencumbered value of not only the landholder's land but also the landholder's goods, subject to certain exceptions. Whether landholder possessions are assessed as land, including fixtures, or goods can determine whether duty is payable or the amount of duty. By way of illustration, under section 163G if the value of the goods of a landholding entity is 90 per cent or more of the value of all of the entity's land and goods, a concession is available under which landholder duty applies only to the value of the land, which substantially reduces the duty payable.

Determining whether items constitute land or goods, however, is often problematic, and can involve lengthy and complex deliberations on the part of taxpayers, revenue authorities and their respective legal advisers. Reliance on common law authority is required to determine whether items are fixtures, and therefore land. Under common law, items that are physically fixed to the land may not necessarily be regarded as fixtures, but instead as goods in some situations. This has created ambiguity and led to disputation. All other jurisdictions, apart from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory [ACT], have addressed this problem by expressly defining land to include items that are fixed to the land, regardless of whether such items would be considered fixtures at common law.

The bill therefore includes new section 147A, providing that land includes anything fixed to the land, whether or not it is a fixture at common law. The bill nonetheless makes clear that land does not include those items that are expressly defined under section 163K as not being goods, such as livestock, registered motor vehicles and goods under manufacture. The new section 147A also provides the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue with a discretion to determine that a thing fixed to land is not part of the land if the thing is not owned by the landholder or their associate and is not used in connection with the use of the land. These amendments will reduce arguments over what constitutes land and goods, thereby facilitating speedier tax assessments and reducing compliance costs.

I now come to the third and final landholder duty amendment. Landholder duty poses particular challenges for revenue authorities because payment of duty is heavily reliant on the entity that acquires the interest or the landholder bringing the transaction to the attention of the revenue authority, supported by the authority's audit activities. This challenge is compounded by the fact that many acquisitions are by foreign entities, so that even where we are able to identify a liable transaction, there is little we can do to secure the outstanding duty if the offshore entity refuses to pay and has no Australian assets. Anecdotal evidence suggests that advisers in some international jurisdictions are aware of this vulnerability in New South Wales and exploit it by transacting through foreign entities. I am sure that members would agree that this situation is unacceptable.

Consistent with legislation in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, section 154 of the bill makes a landholder jointly liable for the landholder duty payable on the acquisition of an interest in the landholder and provides for the liability of the landholder to be a charge on the land, for which a caveat can be registered by the Chief Commissioner. A key point to note here is that, unlike a direct transfer of land where ownership of the land changes on transfer, the acquisition of an interest in a landholder does not involve any change to the legal ownership of the land itself. The land remains in the ownership of the landholder. It is therefore appropriate that a landholder entity bear joint responsibility for ensuring that outstanding duty is paid. In situations where a landholder is held liable to pay landholder duty that is not paid by the acquirer or other relevant parties, the landholder will be able to recover that duty as a debt from one or other of those parties.

I now turn to the miscellaneous amendments to the Duties Act. An assignment or a transfer of an option to purchase land in New South Wales is a dutiable transaction as if it were an agreement to transfer property. In a recent Supreme Court decision, it was held that the current provisions do not apply to a scenario under which an option holder A agrees, for valuable consideration, to relinquish an option and the owner of the property B agrees to sell the dutiable property to a third person C. In this case, A has effectively assigned the rights under the option to C. The bill therefore amends section 107 to ensure that arrangements having the same effect as an assignment of an option to purchase land are subject to duty under the Act.

Part 1 of chapter 12 contains general provisions for the stamping of instruments evidencing a dutiable transaction. However, part 5 of chapter 2A has stamping provisions specific to surcharge purchaser duty, with the effect that a transaction that is liable to both transfer duty and surcharge purchaser duty is likely to require separate stamping to indicate that both duties have been paid. Separate stamping is an unnecessary administrative impost. For avoidance of doubt, the bill amends section 104ZQ to provide flexibility around the requirement for separate stamps to indicate that both purchaser duty and surcharge purchaser duty have been paid. This will make compliance procedures simpler and more efficient for taxpayers and Revenue NSW.

Finally, I turn to the amendments in schedule 4 that are consequential to the indexation of transfer duty thresholds. Earlier this year the New South Wales Government made changes to provide for the annual indexation of transfer duty thresholds; that is, the stamp duty brackets now change each year in line with the consumer price index, beginning with 1 July 2019. Following on from this are now two consequential changes: firstly, to the Duties Act 1997 for the First Home Buyer Assistance Scheme; and, secondly, to the Aboriginal Land Rights Regulation 2014 for the community development.

I will deal first with the First Home Buyer Assistance Scheme. The scheme provides first home buyers with a duty exemption or concession, which is done through applying a separate duty scale set out in section 78A of the Duties Act 1997. While the transfer duty thresholds are being indexed annually, no similar changes have been made to section 78A. This has inadvertently created an anomaly. Because of the indexation of transfer duty, for properties valued between \$799,700 to \$800,000, first home buyers claiming the duty concession will actually be liable for more duty than a purchaser for the same property who does not claim the concession. This is the same problem with first home buyers of vacant land valued between \$449,500 and \$450,000. These properties are at the upper end of the scheme, just before the concession entirely phases out for properties valued at \$800,000 or \$450,000 for vacant land.

While the range of properties is currently narrow, this problem will only increase over time as the transfer duty thresholds continue to be indexed annually. To address this, the bill amends the formula for calculating duty for first home buyers. This ensures that the scheme will move in line with the indexation of transfer duty thresholds each year, and that first home buyers continue to benefit from the same duty exemption or concession as they do now. That is, for properties valued up to \$650,000 or \$350,000 for vacant land, first home buyers receive a full duty exemption. For properties above that but valued up to \$800,000 or \$450,000 for vacant land, first home buyers receive a duty concession on a sliding scale.

I now turn to the amendment to the Aboriginal Land Rights Regulation 2014. The community development levy is a levy imposed under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 on dutiable transactions made by Local Aboriginal Land Councils. While these councils are exempt from duty under the Duties Act 1997, the community development levy may still apply. The levy is collected by Revenue NSW. Currently, schedule 6 of the regulation sets the levy as follows: for property valued at more than \$80,000 and up to \$1 million, the levy is 100 per cent of the duty; for property valued at more than \$1 million, the levy is 150 per cent of the duty. These brackets of \$80,000 and \$1 million are meant to align with the transfer duty thresholds in the Duties Act 1997. However, those are now \$81,000 and \$1,013,000 respectively because of indexation. The amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights Regulation 2014 directly link the levy thresholds with the transfer duty thresholds. This ensures that the levy remains aligned with the transfer duty thresholds going forward. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **DIGITAL RESTART FUND BILL 2019**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (15:53:28):** Earlier this year this Government established the Customer Service cluster—a first for Australia and one of a very small number

of customer service ministries across the globe. The introduction of a cluster for Customer Service underscores our laser focus on delivering best-in-class service to the citizens and businesses of New South Wales when getting things done. One of the biggest enablers of good customer service is the digital and information and communications technology [ICT] systems that run the agencies and services used by customers and staff.

These systems form our digital infrastructure and are the backbone of our service delivery. Whether taking payments, issuing licences or providing information to help citizens find the right place to go, this infrastructure is crucial to the day-to-day running of government. I do not need to explain to this House how technology is advancing at an ever-increasing rate. Consumer technology is a great example. In the last five years, we have had five iterations of the iPhone, the widespread adoption of drones and the near ubiquity of virtual assistants like Alexa and Siri.

The same is true in government, with the maturity of cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things giving rise to huge opportunity to further improve the experience of our customers. Transformation is not a problem exclusive to government. Businesses of all sizes in Australia and overseas are reinventing themselves to meet the rising expectations of customers, to whom the experience of booking a taxi, opening a bank account, or booking accommodation has seen radical transformation in recent years to be instantaneous, streamlined and seamless.

To provide services so in tune with customers' needs requires us to rewrite the book on how technology is delivered. The apps and online services used by citizens and businesses every day are delivered not through enormous information technology [IT] projects, but by starting small with seed investments, then growing, changing and improving over time in response to customer demand and real-time feedback. We have already begun to bring this best practice delivery approach into government, enabling apps like FuelCheck and Park'n Pay, services like Active Kids and the launch of Service NSW for Business. These services were developed in an iterative way, listening to the needs of customers throughout their creation and with real-time feedback monitoring built in. It proves the model works in government.

But for this delivery approach to succeed, it necessitates a new approach to technology investment such as starting with seed funding for prototypes to test if an idea will actually meet customers' needs and, if it does, growing it gradually over time rather than having a big-bang release. It necessitates a holistic view of investment across government so we can solve problems like taking payments, issuing licences or "tell us once" across the whole of government, rather than solving them multiple times over, cluster by cluster, agency by agency. It also necessitates a strategic view on the future of our legacy systems such as the technology platforms that are more than a decade old and that are ripe for renewal, but are so large and deeply embedded across government that they are wicked problems to tackle. Therefore, this Government is establishing the Digital Restart Fund. It is a fund that will facilitate the delivery of major digital infrastructure projects with a view across the whole of government. It will apply an agile and iterative delivery approach so that the projects funded will be in tune with the needs of customers and have real-time feedback built in.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The Digital Restart Fund will be established with initial funding of \$100 million over two years. The scope of the fund is four-fold. It will fund initiatives that deliver on whole-of-government citizen journeys and life events, shared capabilities that create cost savings and consistent user experiences for our customers, modernisation of our aging systems to reduce the risk of failure and overhead costs to maintain them and initiatives that grow the digital capabilities of the New South Wales Government. The bill will establish the fund in the Special Deposits Account and release funding for projects that promote these purposes.

The establishment of the Digital Restart Fund will change the way in which information and communications technologies and digital investments are planned, implemented and operated in New South Wales. The fund moves away from the approach of funding large capital projects where benefits may not be realised for many years. Instead, the fund is designed to draw focus to smaller, iterative solutions linked to the life events and customer experiences that matter to people. The fund will assist in generating benefits more quickly, reducing duplication in investment and eliminating inefficient legacy systems. It will enable government agencies to use technologies with common components, optimise and extend the life of existing technologies and uplift the digital capability of the New South Wales public sector.

This new model for funding whole-of-government digital service products will encourage agile delivery methods, ensure that New South Wales digital infrastructure is up to date with current technologies and that customers are delivered the best services. The fund will support citizens as they access related services across the whole of government such as those needed after the loss of a loved one or in a child's early years. All clusters have contributed to the fund, ensuring that it is truly a whole-of-government initiative. The establishment of this fund will have lasting positive effects on the customer experience and will enable New South Wales to build

digital infrastructure that citizens can be proud of in this age of ever-evolving technology. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **MUSIC FESTIVALS BILL 2019**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:00:41):** Upon enactment the Music Festivals Bill 2019 will enable the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority to direct festival organisers of high-risk festivals to prepare a safety management plan. This plan must be approved by the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority. The safety management plan must be made available to New South Wales police officers, gaming and liquor inspectors, health officers and emergency service officers. The Act makes it an offense for festivals that are deemed by this Government to be high-risk to be held without an approved safety management plan, or to be conducted in a manner that does not comply with the approved safety management plan. The penalty for noncompliance is set at an \$11,000 fine and/or 12 months imprisonment.

The bill also establishes the need for festival organisers to provide briefings in the days prior to the event, at the start of the event and after the conclusion of the event to the Independent Liquor & Gambling Authority, NSW Police Force, Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Rural Fire Service, the Ministry of Health and the local council where the festival will be held. This will help to ensure that all stakeholders charged with maintaining public safety are aware of the festival plans and safety processes as well as the intentions of other organisations involved in keeping festival-goers safe.

Organisers of festivals deemed to be high-risk must keep a register of an incident that: results in the death of a patron; results in a patron requiring medical assistance due to intoxication; involves violent or antisocial behaviour occurring at the festival premises; involves violent or antisocial behaviour occurring in the immediate vicinity of the site involving a person who has left the site or been refused admittance to the site; involves possession or use of a prohibited plant or drug, except when this information has been disclosed by an attendee to a health practitioner or service engaged by the festival organiser; results in a person being turned out of the premises; and, finally, where a minor has been located on premises when the festival does not allow minors to attend. This register will be made available to police and health officers to ensure that festival organisers are complying with their safety management plan and to improve safety at future festivals.

For the purpose of enforcement, this Act will be taken as being gaming and liquor legislation. This will enable the enforcement of the provisions of the Act by Liquor and Gaming inspectors. This is in line with their current duties to enforce liquor licensing laws at festivals in New South Wales. This legislation is important to improve safety at music festivals. However, several improvements are needed to ensure that the festival environment is as safe as possible whilst ensuring that this State can maintain a vibrant set of festivals. The Labor Opposition and I believe that there should not be a published list of high-risk festivals, but that the Government should work with all festival organisers to ensure the safety of patrons at all festivals. Festivals that are required to have an approved safety management plan should instead be referred to as nominated festivals rather than high-risk festivals.

Further, medical providers at festivals should be registered and be required to adhere to NSW Health guidelines. Importantly, greater industry consultation and participation is required in the festival regulatory process. A regulatory roundtable should be established to allow festival organisers to work together with State and local governments and their agencies to improve safety while ensuring that festivals in New South Wales stay economically viable and are able to continue providing entertainment and employment to our community.

Today representatives from several of the largest festivals in New South Wales stated that they will have to consider their future in the State due to this legislation. Those festival organisers are willing to make changes to ensure safety, but they believe that there is need for an industry regulatory roundtable to ensure that legislative reforms will not make it economically unviable to hold festivals in New South Wales. Adelle Robinson, the managing director of Fuzzy Operations and organiser of the Listen Out and Field Day festivals, stated that the music industry "has repeatedly offered to work with government" to develop a "workable framework". However, she stated:

Yet again, last week we saw new legislation for music festivals introduced by this government without any consultation.

Beyond the regulation of music festivals, the bill is most notable for what it does not contain. Despite calls from numerous experts from the health, law enforcement and legal fields the Government has made no provisions for a trial of pill testing. Supposedly the bill is about ensuring the safety of festival-goers in New South Wales.

The fact is that the Government has not allowed or given due consideration for even a trial of pill testing at festivals. This Government seems only concerned about safety so long as it does not conflict with its ideological opposition to pill testing, rather than providing evidence-based policies.

The provision of pill testing at music festivals should simply be treated as a public health issue. Support for the introduction or trial of pill testing has come from medical practitioners, former police—including the former Australian Federal Police and Northern Territory police commissioner Michael Palmer—legal professionals and church groups. The Uniting Church has volunteered its properties to be used as pill-testing sites. There has been clear evidence from overseas trials and programs that pill testing works. A concern often raised about pill testing is that it will increase the prevalence of drug taking, as those who have had their drugs tested will believe them to be safe. However, research conducted by Professor Alison Ritter from the University of New South Wales into pill-testing regimes overseas found that it does not increase drug use.

The users of pill-testing services are persons who already intend on taking drugs and would use them if they were not tested. An evaluation of the first pill-testing trial in the United Kingdom found that one in five pills tested were not the expected substance. This led to two-thirds of people who had purchased drugs with contaminants handing over additional drugs to be destroyed. Professor Fiona Measham from Durham University stated that there was a 95 per cent reduction in hospital admissions at the trial site. Pill testing also allows for a dialogue between medical professionals conducting the tests and festival attendees about the risk of drug taking and harm minimisation strategies. During the pill-testing process, those who are taking the drugs are engaged by medical professionals and informed of the risks related to this behaviour.

The introduction of pill testing was a key recommendation of Deputy State Coroner Harriet Grahame following the coronial inquest into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Alex Ross-King, Joshua Tam, Callum Brosnan, Joseph Pham and Diana Nguyen. This recommendation was dismissed out of hand by the Premier. I am disappointed that it was not given the due consideration that a coronial recommendation deserves. Police Association of New South Wales vice-president Kevin Morton has made the eminently reasonable suggestion that the New South Wales Government should hold a drug summit, bringing together experts to debate issues around drug use and to advise the Government. This drug summit would study issues including pill testing and make recommendations as to whether this should be introduced in New South Wales. It is important that this Government takes an evidence-based approach to minimising the risk of harm at music festivals.

In conclusion, the bill is an important reform to improve safety at music festivals and ensure that attendees can enjoy themselves while minimising risk. This House should carefully consider the proposed amendments to establish a music festival industry roundtable to advise the Government on regulation around music festivals. This legislation should also be amended to use the term "nominated festivals" rather than "high-risk festivals". The Government should not be ruling out proposals such as pill testing and should instead hold a drug summit to investigate options to reduce harm. With the amendments I have discussed and recommended in this speech, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:10:05):** I speak in support of the Music Festivals Bill 2019. As a father of two young adults aged 21 years and 18 years, it is my wonderful children and their friends who are of course the people this legislation is intended to protect. I speak in debate on the bill as someone who had their first paid work playing as a professional musician in a band. I have played guitar and sung in pubs and clubs and outdoor concerts but I am not the only member of the Coalition who has gigged in professional bands. I know what a great atmosphere festivals present when you are young. Members on this side of the Chamber are not anti-young people, anti-music or anti-fun.

I call out the hypocrisy of those who set aside the regulation in the upper House which has caused the need for this legislation. It is one thing to treat politics as a game; it is an entirely different thing to be playing with the lives of our children and their friends. Just when the public thinks that Labor is completely morally bankrupt, with bags of \$100,000 in illegal cash floating through its party door, there is another rung on the ladder that it can stoop even lower on. I am at a loss to understand the actions of Labor members in the upper House and the absence of any leadership by the State Labor Party on issues such as this. Most if not all members of the Labor Party in this Parliament who have been trade union officials have been champions of strong occupational health and safety laws over the years. They talk the talk but they do not walk the walk.

One basic tenet of work safety law is that the employer who controls a place of work has the responsibility for the safety of its employees and anyone who comes onto its worksite and so it is required to have safe work plans to keep its employees and others who come onto its worksite safe. Guess what? The regulation that upper House Labor members voted to disallow as a law of this State required the operators of high-risk music festivals to prepare a safety management plan, like any workplace in New South Wales. It required high-risk festival operators to ensure that appropriate harm reduction services were provided at those music festivals. The things at

worksites that the Australian Labor Party championed over decades of industrial action are the very things that its members in the upper House voted against in the regulation of music festivals.

The public is sick of political games. How else can it be explained that Labor says a safe work management plan is needed on a building site but it has stopped a regulation that requires exactly the same thing at high-risk music festivals, leaving no protection and no regulation at those music festivals? The bill does not apply to every music festival. The regulation and the bill apply to approximately 11 festivals that are held in New South Wales every year. We are all devastated by the loss of five lives at music festivals during last summer. We are also shocked by the evacuation of 40 other people from music festivals and 20 people who were admitted to intensive care. Leaving these high-risk festivals without any regulation was a breathtaking and irresponsible move by Labor Party members. The public will never forgive or forget their irresponsibility.

The safety management plans cover a range of different issues, but one of the more important features is compliance with the NSW Health guidelines. The *Guidelines For Music Festival Event Organisers: Music Festival Harm Reduction* has been written to support event organisers to deliver safer music festivals. The feedback on the guidelines has been overwhelmingly positive. They reflect world's best practice in clinical and harm reduction services. The guidelines were developed in consultation with clinicians, harm reduction specialists, public health and safety experts, festival operators and medical service providers. The latest iteration reflects months of hard work by NSW Health to create an implementable best practice set of measures that all festival operators should refer to in planning for their event. Making the guidelines enforceable will ensure that all operators are implementing this best practice.

We do not shy away from the fact that we are requiring operators delivering high-risk events to adhere to best practice because failure to do so could put people at risk of death or other serious injury, just like the Labor Party requires of employers on worksites. We want to make sure that if something goes wrong at a music festival, such as someone having an adverse reaction to drugs, there are qualified staff on site to give immediate treatment and get that person to hospital as quickly as possible. The guidelines step through how a festival operator should implement general harm reduction considerations, harm reduction messaging, peer-based drug and alcohol harm reduction programs and onsite medical service provision. Some of those measures are common sense, like making sure there is enough water and shade available. Others require more sophisticated advice, including how to ensure the right mix of medical personnel are on site with the right qualifications and experience and the appropriate health emergency escalation and management strategy if something goes wrong.

We know that all operators want to keep people safe at their events. The bill ensures that all operators of high-risk festivals will put in place the right plans for their event, which will be developed in consultation with NSW Health, Ambulance Service of NSW, NSW Police Force, Fire and Rescue NSW, Liquor & Gaming NSW and the local council. Just as no two festivals are the same, no two safety management plans will be the same as they will be specifically designed to meet the particular risks of that event. There is no substitute for a well-run event on the day and we stand committed to ensuring that festivals are well placed to do so. Part of this is through better plans, but it also includes the Government making sure it is an active participant on the day.

In support of this, NSW Health invested over \$1.7 million implementing measures to reduce drug-related harm at music festivals over 2018-19. These included: enhancing social marketing and harm reduction messaging targeted to music festival patrons; strengthening peer support and education services; developing and implementing strategies to make the music festival environment safer; and developing clinical guidance and enhancing the onsite response to serious medical illness at events. In addition to this, last summer NSW Health and the Ambulance Service contributed additional resources to meet the demand for medical services that were not covered by festival operators. The Government will always make sure that proper medical treatment is readily available across the State. With proper planning, the Government can ensure that we manage any medical risks at high-risk music festivals without compromising our ability to provide emergency services to the broader community.

In my opinion, an appropriate safety management plan should not include any pill testing. We all agree that we should do what we reasonably can to stop anything killing our precious young people. But pill testing makes little sense as a harm minimisation strategy when one understands the way in which ecstasy—sometimes called MDMA—pills have been killing young people. It is true that pill testing can tell whether there are any impurities, like paint, in an ecstasy pill. But the evidence suggests that it is not the impurities that are killing our young people but the ecstasy itself. Anna Wood was the first high-profile case of a young person dying from an ecstasy pill. Her father has drawn attention to the fact that the State Coroner found that it was the ecstasy in the pill that caused his daughter to die, after the toxicology reports showed the only chemical present in her body was ecstasy. Anna's three friends also took ecstasy pills but did not die, demonstrating that the chemicals in ecstasy affect everyone differently.

NSW Poisons Information Centre Clinical Director Professor Andrew Dawson confirms that ecstasy can be dangerous for anyone because it can cause a potentially deadly body temperature spike. This is especially so at very hot—much more so than in Europe—summer festivals in Australia, with high-energy dance music and where ecstasy is often consumed with alcohol. It is the ecstasy—not any impurities in the pill—that causes human internal organs to overheat and then stop working, causing death. Ecstasy is more dangerous when consumed with alcohol. *[Extension of time]*

Pill testing is intended to tell the user that a dangerous substance is in the pill. But the proponents of testing have to explain the logic behind pill testing to identify substances in pills that are not ecstasy when it is the ecstasy that is in fact killing the users. Alarming, pill tests run the risk of allowing young people to believe a dangerous substance like ecstasy is somehow safe to use because of a government-sanctioned test to prove it is present. Pill testing at music festivals will not mean that ecstasy is taken in circumstances remotely like those at the medically supervised injecting centre in Kings Cross, which has become a complete red herring in this debate. The proposed onsite pill testing at music festivals, which even proponents acknowledge is not fully accurate, might confirm that the pill contains the inherently dangerous substance of ecstasy. Fully accurate tests require laboratory-standard analysis over significantly longer periods. After the proposed pill tests, the user is then free to take a pill, or more, and attend the festival.

Unlike the medically supervised injecting centre, there is no proposal for on-the-spot medical supervision of a person's reaction to ecstasy nor immediate sophisticated medical treatment on hand, because that would not fit in with a music festival or the nature of the drug ecstasy. Pill testing would have told Anna Wood that what was contained in the pill she took was exactly what she expected it to contain. Pill testing, as proposed by its advocates, does not guarantee that the drug tested is safe to consume. I have heard proponents say that education is part of the pill-testing process. But if education is important in this area—and I agree that it is—there are equally effective or better education campaigns that can be undertaken without the mixed message involved in pill testing. The effectiveness of anti-smoking campaigns is a good example. The interests of public safety do not permit mixed messages on ecstasy use. It is for that reason I do not agree with pill testing.

We know that compliance with the NSW Health guidelines will save lives. We know that without proper planning at high-risk music festivals there will be a repeat of last summer. We cannot allow that to happen. The Government remains ready to work with industry on ways to improve health management at music festivals and the bill provides the framework for that support to be given. I support the bill and commend it to the House.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:22:46):** I make a contribution to debate on the Music Festival Bill 2019. The bill is incredibly important, particularly as we head into festival season. As members of the House might be aware, I am a big supporter of Australian music, a big fan of live music and have been known to attend many music festivals. In the recent past I have thoroughly enjoyed attending, on numerous occasions, Stereosonic, Field Day, Harbourlife, Sure Thing, Good Vibes, Listen Out and Godskitchen as well as a Vans Warped Tour. My little sister Mary works in the music industry. She hosts the red carpet for the CMC Music Awards, which opens the CMA Festival where she also interviews artists.

Festival attendees are not uncommon in the electorate of Coogee. Festivals bring together people from all walks of life. When diversity is combined with the power of music, the shared experience of a festival truly becomes a great social force, removing existing barriers and connecting people through commonalities. Music causes our brain to release dopamine. People who are feeling happy and enjoying music are more likely to be open to learning about different people's life experiences and cultures and more open to forming social connections. This is more important than ever as we see growing experiences of loneliness and the negative flow-on effects of isolation.

We are all guilty of getting caught up in the routine stress of our daily lives that work can bring. It is easy to get stuck in a rut and lose focus on what brings you joy. Attending a music festival gives you a great opportunity to get a reprieve from daily stressors. You can relax, eat food, commune with other people and take a break so that you can better engage with regular responsibilities. But perhaps, most importantly, music festivals are a way to introduce yourself to new and exciting live music acts and support artists from your community, your State or across the country. We want festival organisers to continue the good work they do in bringing people together. We are, however, highly cognisant that in recent years we have witnessed some tragedy at events in New South Wales—events that we do not ever want to see repeated.

I note that the Opposition will be supporting the bill, but will be moving two key amendments. The first amendment is that the term "high risk festivals" be replaced throughout the bill with the term "nominated festivals". Legislation is meant to be forward looking and so we must promote positive change within the industry. Punitive terms will not prove helpful. As legislators, our job is to bring industry with us on the journey of continual improvement, not to chastise or to undermine. Secondly, the Opposition will be moving an amendment that requires a music festival industry roundtable to occur that will facilitate communication between government and



industry to help us to come to the best solution possible, with all stakeholders at the table. This amendment will be in line with the advice provided to the inquiry by government agencies and, potentially most importantly, this amendment is just plain old common sense.

I am advised that the Minister met with the music festival industry for the first time about the regulation or bill on Monday 21 October 2019. Monday 21 October was yesterday. The Government has not looked to establish a roundtable to consult with industry—an oversight that can only be described as arrogant and out of touch. An industry roundtable has been supported by a parliamentary inquiry, the New South Wales Opposition, Government members of the inquiry, government agencies and the industry itself. The only group that does not want to find the best solution by consulting with all key players is the Government, because it thinks it has all the answers when it comes to music, the night-time economy and the social fabric of our State. The Government thought it had all the answers when it applied the lockout laws to this city, and see how that worked out for our local music industry and night-time economy.

A roundtable did not happen when the lockout laws were introduced to huge sections of our inner city. You only need to walk around our city at night to hear the impact that legislation has had on music in this city and the night-time economy. The silence is deafening. This roundtable amendment will help to remove the hubris that is so commonplace in this Government that does not want to consult with an industry that is incredibly important to the New South Wales economy and to the social fabric of our community. We want the Government to work with industry to get the best results. The lack of consultation on the lockout laws transformed our night-time economy in such a negative way that it prompted the creation of a single-issue political party that, according to its website, received 97,000 votes in the March election.

The music industry has spelt out the economic importance of the contemporary music and festival sector to New South Wales, generating \$325 million in revenue for the State economy, with six million attendees every year. More significant than economics is the impact on the social fabric of this State—a concept that seems too complex for this Government to grasp. The power of music is an incredibly important and unique tool that aids the human experience. When added to a social gathering where people from all walks of life have come to celebrate this art together, it becomes a force unparalleled by anything else. We agree that regulation must exist to ensure safety at our festivals, and every music lover and their family deserves to attend a festival and go home safely at the end.

But we on this side of the House know that, if the Government fails to consult properly with the industry on the proposed changes, many festivals will cease to operate in New South Wales. That will have a devastating impact on our State economy as well as on our social fabric. We simply ask that the Government establish a music festival roundtable with Government and industry members and task it to grow the industry, support safety at festivals and review evidence and regulation to ensure they operate effectively. Industry is at the table. The Opposition is at the table. I urge the Government to come to the table and support the amendments. It is time.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:29:15):** I speak in support of the Music Festivals Bill 2019. Members on both sides of the House have spoken today in debate on this bill. We have heard about the music industry, venues and the lockout laws, but the ultimate goal of the Government in this legislation is to keep people safe. I referred to the lockout laws. I had the pleasure of serving on the late-night economy committee and note that we visited a number of venues in various areas to see the impact of the laws. We went to Kings Cross, Oxford Street, George Street and so on. The committee held three days of public inquiries and attracted numerous submissions.

At the end of the day, we are talking about human life. The implementation of the lockout laws had the desired effect. Since the laws were introduced, we have not lost one young person. During the debate today we have heard that five young people who attended music festivals are no longer with us. What price do we put on a single young life in New South Wales? Is there a value to a young life? Certainly there is. Can we regulate music festivals better? Yes, we can. That is why we are in this Parliament: to review legislation and actively engage in debate about legislation in an effort to keep the wider community safe. At the same time, we must support the local industry.

Many years ago—in the 1980s—I served as an entertainment manager at Revesby Workers' Club during the heyday of AC/DC, The Angels and Mental As Anything. With the indulgence of members, I digress slightly to say that I had the pleasure of meeting Chuck Berry at that time. Chuck had an unusual style. One night we had a full house of around 2,000 people, who had paid a fair amount of money to hear Chuck. Five minutes before he was due to go on stage he called me to his dressing room. He explained that he wanted his fee of about \$45,000 to be paid in cash or he would not go on, because he said he had been ripped off by many other promoters. Needless to say, I ran around to every bar and poker machine change box and—

**Mr David Elliott:** Was that legal?

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** In those days we did not have Aldi bags, but it came very close to that. The industry is evolving. A number of major events are held in my electorate of Tweed and just south of us. I note that the member for Ballina is in the Chamber. Her electorate is host to Splendour in the Grass, and Blues & Roots—

**Mr David Elliott:** What?

**Ms Tamara Smith:** That's what it's called.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** That is what it is called. And there is the Falls Festival. I believe this year Splendour had record crowds—some 40,000 to 50,000 people. Now the festival has a permanent home and a lot of work is being done. The new laws will be a safety net for the industry. It is a safety plan, after all. Could there be more discussion between both sides? Absolutely—there is always room for more discussion and more notification. What changed the debate was playing politics in the other place and the advent of the summer festival season. If you look at the calendar you will see that the season is pretty intense. There is a festival virtually every couple of weeks during the season and it behoves the Government to implement safety regulations. When I was an entertainment manager the local council would inspect our venues—the fireys would inspect us and we had to be careful not to have a chair or something stuck in the fire escape. I used to growl about that and go crook at my staff but, at the end of the day, if there had been a fire those inspections would have saved lives.

I think this legislation is a sensible step. I will not go through it chapter and verse, because speakers on both sides have done that. Ultimately, I would like all members to think about the phone call that some parents have taken in the middle of the night telling them that their young daughter or young son is no longer with us because they took an illicit drug. The peer pressure on kids is intense. My kids go to festivals all the time and they tell me there are drugs everywhere. Is pill testing the answer? I honestly do not think so. The member for Ku-ring-gai discussed pill testing and explained that the kids who died had been killed by MDMA, not impurities in the drugs they took. Everyone reacts differently to drugs. I do not want to see any more young people lose their lives, nor do I want legislation to impinge on the entertainment rights of people. People benefit from social interaction at music festivals, and a number of speakers have told us how important it is. I think it is a positive move. I am sure there will be some unhappy promoters but, having dealt with many promoters over many, many years, I have never found too many happy ones at the end of the day. Band riders were always interesting at any point. I commend the bill to the House and I hope that our young people stay safe over the summer period.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (16:34:45):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. Whilst I understand the good intentions of the bill, it seems that as per usual the Government has drafted legislation in a hurry and without proper consultation with the industry it impacts. We need to be very careful when we impose more regulation on businesses, events, festivals and concerts, particularly those in drought-ravaged rural New South Wales. If excessive regulation forces the closure of a festival in Sydney, people will just move on to other events. But if legislation kills a festival in a small town, the entire town could die with it.

In my electorate of Murray festivals such as Strawberry Fields, Rewind in the Vines and the Deniliquin Ute Muster have the potential to be captured and impacted detrimentally by this legislation. Strawberry Fields, for example, is keeping the small town of Tocumwal alive. It brings an estimated \$2.6 million to the broader region every year. Tocumwal is on its knees thanks to this Government's dreadful water policies and the town cannot afford to lose this festival. While Strawberry Fields is not on the high-risk festivals list, the legislation as it currently stands puts it in limbo. The organisers are justifiably very concerned. The legislation gives the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority the power to decide operating terms for this event even though Strawberry Fields does not sell alcohol. I have personally dealt with the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority and found it very difficult. Its staff are often confused about its own laws and rules.

The bill will enable festivals that already have planning permits in place and local stakeholders on side can now be told days out from an event that they have new conditions or must apply for new permits. This creates huge uncertainty for events that normally start planning and budgeting 12 months in advance. It also appears the safety management plan requirements duplicate legislation that is already in place. The Government would have found this out had it bothered to consult with festival organisers before introducing this rushed bill. Thankfully, we in the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party have members in the upper House who are actually speaking to stakeholders—the people who will be affected by this bill. There is a novel idea—talking to people before changing laws. The Government should try it one day. My colleagues in the other place will consider amendments to the bill to address its shortcomings and some of the concerns that regional festival organisers have raised. While I support the intent of the bill to improve public safety at festivals, I am also glad that there will be an opportunity for the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to improve this legislation.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (16:38:16):** Here we are again. I feel like I am standing on a very familiar soapbox as this Government once again looks to rush through a change and consult later. Despite

outcry, it knocked down stadiums to serve a few high-profile mates; despite the need for blue-collar jobs, it has sent manufacturing jobs overseas; and now, despite festival organisers asking them to just slow down on the Music Festivals Bill 2019, those opposite cannot even stop for a real conversation. Is it too much to ask for a roundtable with festival organisers and local stakeholders to have a genuine discussion about how the needs of music festivals and punters can be balanced with the needs of law enforcement and government? That is the amendment we will be seeking in this place today.

Apparently a roundtable is too much for this Government because, when it comes to the Government's nanny-state agenda, nothing is off limits. For example, in Newcastle we had the UP DOWN Festival earlier this year. It had a 4,000-person capacity, was headlined by international acts and had never been held before. Yet it was named a high-risk festival. According to the Minister's February media release, a high-risk festival is one where a serious drug-related illness or death has occurred in the past three years or where the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority [ILGA] has determined, having regard to expert advice from NSW Health and police, that there may be a significant risk of drug-related illness or death. I reiterate: When it was named a high-risk festival, UP DOWN had never been held before. So there certainly had never been a serious drug-related illness or death in the past three years.

The Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority made this determination, but how and based on what data? Was it because of the electronica and dance music? Did ILGA just decide to tar UP DOWN with a tainted brush? The organisers of UP DOWN were just as confused about this as I was. They were so confident that the event would be safe they even invited Premier Gladys Berejiklian to see for herself what a great environment it would be. Of course, you cannot go to the festival without a few mates so the Premier was offered a guest list of 10 people with the suggestion that she bring Newcastle's Liberal election candidate or perhaps Minister Paul Toole. If she had attended, she would have seen exactly what the NSW Police Force was referring to when it said it was pleased with the crowd behaviour. She would have seen that there were no medical transports off site and no ambulances required. But she could not possibly come and see it, could she? That would mean she would be proven wrong, and there is no way the Premier could face the music for her mistake.

After the festival, organisers issued a statement saying that they believe the police presence was unnecessary and that UP DOWN was not even a high-risk event. In addition, they said, "Unfortunately, our invitation to Premier Gladys Berejiklian was rejected. However, we welcomed Newcastle Labor member of Parliament Tim Crakanthorp for a boogie"—and boogie I did. I attended because I am a massive supporter of Australian music and our live music industry. Sure, I was a bit of a grandpa in the crowd but I wanted to see firsthand why UP DOWN had been declared high risk and what happens on the ground at these festivals after reading media report after media report and receiving countless representations about the Government's war on live music.

So what did I see? I saw A whole lot of people having a whole lot of fun. It was reported after the festival that 50 people sought medical aid. Two incidents were alcohol related and those affected went home of their own accord. The other 48 involved minor cuts, bruises and a few bandaids. Sounds terribly wild, does it not? By no means am I saying I do not support measures that make music festivals fun and safe environments, but I do not support this Government's sneaky tactics to clamp down on festivals without any meaningful consultation with stakeholders. I do not support the use of the inflammatory term "high-risk festivals" and I do not support the publishing of an extreme festival hit list, which shames organisers for the behaviour of a minute portion of the crowd. What I do support is real engagement, and our amendment will have that effect. That is what we do in Newcastle, where I set up a live music roundtable with our future Minister for music, John Graham.

The roundtable included police, young people, musicians, booking agents, venues, the Australian Hotels Association and other associated stakeholders. It is a lot more than the Government ever seems to do in any electorate I have been to with regard to roundtables and engaging with local stakeholders in the music industry. That is why Newcastle City Council set up its night-time economy strategy called Newcastle After Dark, a four-year strategy to guide the development of the city's night-time economy. Believe it or not, this was done in consultation with local stakeholders and the community. Wow, what a surprise! That is something this Government is very unfamiliar with. That is why I support real engagement.

As I have said, we need a music industry roundtable with Government and industry members. This has been supported by parliamentary inquiry, the Opposition, Government members of the inquiry, government agencies and the industry itself. Let me be very clear: This is why we are seeking to amend the legislation to allow for a roundtable rather than oppose it. But stakeholders need to talk. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported today that these festivals are prepared to leave our State. This is bigger than the interests of Government, law enforcement or the music festival industry. More than \$50 million in revenue was generated in New South Wales by the 400,000 people who attended music festivals in the State last year, which is almost half the entire national figure.

Punters travel to attend festivals. This money goes into accommodation, local campgrounds, food from the local cafes and sundries from the local corner store. That \$50 million is not pocket change but members of the Government tend to snub their noses at it. When a portion of that goes to regional communities it is a significant boost to their economy. Do not forget that some of our regional communities are in dire straits. Members of the Government certainly have forgotten about this because they do not want to do any consultation. Once again this Government has put the cart before the horse. Legislative change to increase the safety of music festivals is reasonable, but not without proper consultation. Stop marching to the beat of your own drum and simply listen.

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:46:22):** I support the Music Festivals Bill 2019. The bill creates a holistic regulatory framework for music festivals to ensure that music festival operators have the advice and support they need to run safer events. This bill provides the urgent mechanism that the Government needs to support music festival operators over the summer music festival season and to hold them accountable when they fall short of community expectations. I am pleased that the Government has moved quickly to respond to the irresponsible decision by members of the other place to remove the music festival licensing scheme that was introduced earlier this year without replacing it.

The music festival licensing scheme was developed in consultation with industry and was informed by the findings of the expert panel in its report, *Keeping People Safe at Music Festivals*. In this report the expert panel recommended that the Government develop a consistent approach to the regulation of music festivals through the introduction of a new category of liquor licence specific to music festivals. The Government's response was taken to Parliament last year and endorsed by both sides of the House. Following this endorsement the Government worked with industry from November 2018 until February 2019 to finalise a set of regulations that would ensure operators of high-risk music festivals would have comprehensive plans in place to address the risks associated with their events.

I commend the work of the Government in developing a licensing framework that effectively balanced the needs of industry with the expectations of the community without imposing unnecessary regulatory burden. This last point is quite important, as it is something that was not properly tested by the Legislative Council Regulation Committee inquiry into the music festival regulations. The new licensing framework did not impose additional regulatory burden on industry. The licensing costs for a music festival licence were the same as the limited licence for a special event that many of the operators were already using. Having plans in place to address health-related risks was something that operators were already required to do under their development consent or contractual arrangements with the landowner.

There was no change to policing at these events, as this is already dealt with under the Police Act 1990. The Government believes it struck the right balance in the disallowed regulations and has done so again with this bill. This is why the summer festival season will be as full as last year with new and exciting offerings. We know that industry wants to work with Government to run safer festivals, so it was disappointing that the Legislative Council Regulation Committee recommended to disallow the regulations, rather than find a middle ground that would keep people safe at festivals. The Government was forced to move quickly in developing the regulations but rejects that the framework was not the right way to improve safety at music festivals. I support the policy consistency of this bill with the previous framework.

This approach ensures that festival operators have the right mix of health and harm-reduction measures in place to make sure that if something goes wrong at their event they can respond quickly and effectively. Yes, some operators will need to lift their standards. Yes, some operators will need to think more carefully about what medical personnel they have on site in case something goes wrong. But we think that operators are the very people who are best placed to design and implement measures that are suited to their event, rather than relying only on patrons and the public to put in place measures to keep people safe at their event. We know that last summer the immediate intervention of qualified medical staff saved the lives of several festival-goers who had adverse effects to illicit substances.

The Government wants to make sure that all festival patrons are given the same support no matter which festival they go to. Anna Woods has been mentioned in this debate. I went to a "how to drug proof your kids" course back in the 1990s run by Anna Woods' father. Going minute by minute through the effect of an illicit drug on poor Anna's system was absolutely horrific. I went home to my boys, who were 12 and 16 at the time, and I sat them down. I told them exactly what happened to Anna Woods. For parents who send their kids off to a festival, or for kids who are heading off to a festival, something as simple as one pill can take a life so dramatically and so quickly. It is just horrifying.

I commend the bill to the House and I also err on the side of caution. The people who are making these illicit drugs need to be sitting at this roundtable. The people who are creating this issue are the bikies, the Comancheros. They are causing the problem, not necessarily the festival-goers. It is the bozos making ice in the

Sunbeam frypan. They are the people we need to chase down. We need to stop them from selling drugs to our kids so that we can keep our kids safe and, hopefully, they can enjoy many festivals for years to come.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:52:29):** On behalf of The Greens I contribute to debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. I was very moved by the contribution from the member for Tweed; not so much his days managing an establishment, but more his comment about the fact that there is no price for a life. We certainly do not think this is about putting a price on a life—not at all. But who is best placed to decide what the remedy is? The preliminary recommendations from the Deputy Coroner, certainly jurisdictions overseas and all of the research we have seen would suggest that the remedy to this is a lot more drug awareness and education. I am not sure that the remedies that focus on business models do anything to address the social issues behind why young people are taking pills, which is the focus.

I have fantastic festivals in my electorate and I will talk about what they are suggesting would be good for them in terms of improving safety. It was a great pleasure to inspect the facilities at the Falls Festival, Splendour in the Grass and the Bluesfest. In particular, I would argue that their medical facilities, which support anyone, are equivalent to any of our hospitals in the region. I have no concerns about police presence at the festivals. However, I do have concerns that young people are standing in line, they are seeing sniffer dogs and, I am told anecdotally by many young people, they are popping all their pills at once.

It is young people who are taking pills. The issue about why young people are taking pills, and what we think about that, is very different from the regulations on festival businesses before the House today. We saw this with the lockdown laws. We saw a very noble intent—a moral intent—to remedy something that was unacceptable. Coward punches are unacceptable. It is also unacceptable for young people to die at a festival because of pills that they have ingested. How we address that is very broad; it has to do with much more than these regulations.

I grew up visiting my aunts in Kings Cross. This really does remind me of the early days of debate around safe injecting rooms and medically supervised injecting centres. There was outrage then that this was endorsing heroin, that it was giving a green light to heroin; it was far from that. We have seen the results and its success has been talked about all over the world. As at 2015 more than 965,000 injections have been supervised, with management of more than 6,000 overdoses without a single fatality. More than 15,500 people have registered to use the centre since its opening. Seventy per cent of the people visiting the medically supervised injection centre had never accessed any local health services prior to visiting the centre and more than 12,000 referrals have been made to external health and social welfare services. That is a game changer.

Safe injecting rooms have been an absolute game changer in preventing deaths from heroin overdose. Why is the discussion around pill testing any different from this? It is very hard to understand, and it is very reminiscent of that. I note that the Deputy Coroner's early comments and recommendations were discussed in the public domain. The result of the coronial inquest was not that we need to put more regulation on festival-goers. The inquest talked specifically about education, the creation of a State-sponsored drug-checking facility to mirror the Netherlands-based drug information and monitoring system, and strip search legislation being overhauled. I would argue—and I will come back to it after the public interest debate—that we need to take this health and social welfare approach to address the death of young people at festivals.

I turn now to the industry context, particularly in my area where some of the largest festivals in the country are held. Music festivals are a cornerstone of the cultural vibrancy of New South Wales, with almost 400,000 people attending a contemporary music festival in New South Wales in 2017 alone. Festivals are held in metropolitan, regional and rural locations. As the member for Tweed said previously, I have the Byron Bay Bluesfest, Splendour in the Grass and Falls festivals in my electorate. These events have a global reputation.

They are significant contributors to my local economy—a significant proportion of ticket sales goes to charities and back into our community—but that does not mean it is a bed of roses. On many occasions I have raised safety issues about bushfire and flood events and I have worked very productively with the industry. The impact of these regulations is significant. It is The Greens' view that they are not going to do anything to disrupt the death of young people at festivals. I am told by the industry that the cost of management plans that festivals now have to put in place is prohibitive. Most of all, the industry is saying that it wants to be consulted. It wants a roundtable.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Public Interest Debate*

#### **SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (17:00:00):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the interim curriculum review has been released.
- (2) Notes that the New South Wales school curriculum is set for its first major shake-up in over a generation with a renewed focus on maths, English and science.
- (3) Notes that the New South Wales Government strongly supports a back-to-basics approach.

For the first time in 30 years we have looked at the whole curriculum in schools right across the State in what is to be the biggest shake-up in a generation. I am very proud that one of the priorities of those on this side is education. This review was first announced by Minister Stokes in 2018 with the aim of examining, decluttering and improving the curriculum. I acknowledge and thank the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, in the other place and the Premier for their commitment to this review of the curriculum. To paraphrase the words of the Premier, we want a curriculum that leaves no-one behind; we want to inspire students who are advancing faster than others; and students need a strong numeracy and literacy foundation for the future.

Industry and employers tell us all the time that numeracy and literacy are very important for future careers. Indeed, industry keeps telling us that students and graduates need foundational skills in numeracy and literacy to be productive employees and our community expects schools to prepare our kids for the future workforce and for further education. I place on record our thanks to Professor Geoff Masters for his thorough and insightful interim report released today. The report's back-to-basics focus on maths, English and science totally aligns with the Premier's view in terms of focus on numeracy and literacy. As we heard earlier today, we expect all students to have a level of comprehension and competency in the foundational skills of maths, English and science—things that transcend jobs, that are taken throughout careers, no matter what vocation or industry one works in. These are skills that prepare students for further education and for different vocations and career aspirations. The interim report identifies two key areas for change. The first is the decluttering of the curriculum.

Students should be able to manage the basics. Quite often, when one talks to teachers, students and parents one sees that the curriculum can be overly full. It can be difficult for students to master one area before moving on to the next. We need to focus on the basics. I welcome the interim report regarding the need for decluttering. Similarly, I welcome the identification of flexible progression rates as a key area for change. We all know that some students are faster than others. Some grasp concepts and want to move on. We have to develop a system that allows for students to excel, that challenges them and offers them a flexible approach. We have to look at how we can challenge students to achieve higher levels and we want to challenge all students—no matter what level they are at. I am reminded of the words of Greg Whitby, the Executive Director of Schools in the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta. He believes that the focus of the school system should be to inspire students and to excite learning so that students get the most value out of education.

As Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, I found Professor Geoff Masters' report very insightful. I acknowledge the importance of his work, especially in the vocational education and training [VET] sector. VET is valuable and often undervalued in our schools and throughout our society. It is important that all members acknowledge that vocational education and training is an important part of students' career options, no matter what stage of life—whether school leavers, people who want to retrain or people who are changing vocations later in life. As Minister, I often say that university is a great pathway for some students, but it does not have to be for everyone and it should not be for everyone.

A VET career offers great job opportunities and rewarding careers and is appropriate for many students, many learners and many people in our community who want to get great jobs and rewarding careers. I support the Premier's vision that higher education and VET should be mentioned in the same sentence when we talk about young people's career options. They are alternative pathways and the pathway that best suits each student should be adopted. At the moment and for far too long, we have had a cultural bias towards the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR] and students have been pressured into going to university. The sad reality is that some 25 per cent of people who go to university drop out. We have an opportunity to address that situation by focusing on VET as a great career path with rewarding jobs.

The curriculum review has also identified the need to apply knowledge to the real world. In schools in my area of Parramatta, I have seen firsthand examples of problem-based learning, team-based learning, problem solving, self-directed learning and the applications of knowledge to real-life settings. It is very important that we look at other ways to teach people. To sum up, I congratulate Minister Mitchell for her commitment and commend the Premier for her support of going back to the basics and focusing on maths, English and science. I ask teachers, parents, students and the wider public for their feedback on the interim report to inform the direction of the reforms. Consultation is open until 13 December. We are proud this Government is focusing on giving every student every opportunity to be their best. I commend the motion to the House.

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:07:08):** I welcome the opportunity to lead for the Opposition in this public interest debate. The curriculum review is needed in this State; the Opposition will not be arguing against that. In fact, the previous shadow Minister for Education and current shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE was the one who called for the HSC to be reviewed as part of this curriculum review, and we see that has eventuated. The member for Lakemba should be congratulated on that. It is important, in talking about the curriculum review, to put it in the context of where we stand currently with students and student results in New South Wales. It would be very hard for any member to argue that New South Wales has to do better when it comes to education. We know that standards are dropping across the board. We know that outcomes are falling on this Government's watch, and the statistics on that do not lie.

The interim report released today by the Government includes the statistic that New South Wales students have slipped from being amongst the highest performers in the world in the year 2000 to being near the OECD average in 2015. That is despite the fact that we spend more per student than the OECD average. Much of that 15-year period has occurred under this Government. There will be a lot of talk in this debate about going back to the basics. If we look at the basics of literacy and numeracy and particularly reading and writing, we know that they have slipped. We know that levels of reading and writing are unacceptably low for our year 9 students. They deserve better. The Government has to use the curriculum review to get this right.

Of course there is a need to do better in the basics. But I, for one, would want to make sure that the buzz phrase of "back to the basics" is not some sort of code for cutting in other areas—that we make sure children who want to flourish in other areas can do so, and that our education system is creating children who are proficient in the basics but are also intelligent, creative, scientific children for a world that is rapidly changing. We can hardly even imagine the skills they will need to go forward in this world. The Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education said—and I wholeheartedly agree with him—that the nexus between school education and vocational education is absolutely broken in this country. The curriculum review is an opportunity for the Government to improve that as well. That is crucially important. As a postscript, a lot of that is because of this Government's savage cuts to TAFE and vocational training across the State.

Lots of things are not working in this State's education system. The curriculum review is welcomed by education stakeholders and by student and parent groups. We want to make sure that the curriculum is the best it can be and that we try to put a stop to the phenomenon in New South Wales of parents being forced to seek out and pay for extra tutoring just to give their children the basic skills. We do not want people to have to pay to get through the system. There is a lot of talk about the HSC and the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR]. Over many years there has been a lot of concern about the ATAR system. Those concerns should be heard. However, we have to make sure that any changes to the system do not disadvantage students in disadvantaged areas and that no matter where you live or go to school, there remains an equal playing field.

In short, we need to make sure that the Government commits wholeheartedly to ensuring this curriculum review results in a system where students can leave school ready to face a rapidly changing world. That is not to mention the fact that in New South Wales they are currently going to schools that are overcrowded and probably not air-conditioned, and that probably have some sort of asbestos in them—we are putting that to one side. A lot of things need fixing in education in this State. We will work with the Government to ensure this curriculum review gets the best for our students. They deserve nothing less. They are entering a world that is rapidly changing and they deserve the best out of the school system. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:12:18):** I commend former education Minister Rob Stokes, firstly, for commissioning this review. I also commend his successor in the other place, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, who has continued his work. Particularly, I commend Professor Geoff Masters for his thorough and professional approach. Of course, I commend my colleague in the portfolio cluster, the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education. How could I leave him out? This task is an important one. This task is something that does not happen frequently; it is 30-odd years since the last review of the curriculum. It is timely and appropriate. I think members on both sides of the House can agree that we are all concerned to ensure that the education system in New South Wales is as good as it possibly can be for all children in the State to realise their potential.

The terms of reference of the review included articulating the purposes of the school curriculum—really foundational and important—and identifying essential knowledge, skills and attributes as the common entitlement for all learners. I like that concept; I will come back to it. The terms of reference also included explaining how the curriculum could be redesigned and presented to better support teaching, learning, assessment and reporting; and identifying the implications of any new approach to curriculum design for assessment and reporting, pedagogy, teacher preparation, school organisation and so on. These are key elements and Professor Masters has delivered for us an important blueprint for how to proceed.

In identifying the purposes of schooling, many submissions to the review referred to supporting each student to reach their potential, to experience individual success and to achieve their personal best or their

aspirations. Some emphasised that this purpose embraced more than academic success; it was more holistic and included supporting students to achieve their social, physical, emotional, creative and spiritual potential. I think members would broadly share the view that education should be a holistic enterprise. Ensuring that every student makes the best possible progress in their learning and development while at school was seen as essential to improving an individual's life chances and providing every student with opportunities after school. I think we all instinctively know that a good education is a great foundation for a good life and that in New South Wales and Australia we are blessed with opportunities that are not available to those growing up in some other countries.

The review's first set of proposals addressed the content of the curriculum, particularly the concern that many syllabuses are currently overcrowded. Reducing the degree of overcrowding will be essential to enable a focus on deep learning of core disciplinary knowledge rather than breadth, although breadth is important. It is most important that people understand the "why" of education not just the "what". Together with overcrowding, the review also considered submissions that dealt with the burden for teachers and other school staff of administrative procedures and record keeping, and recommended that the NSW Education Standards Authority [NESA] look at ways to reduce the burden they place on a teacher's time.

The concept of this core element of what kids should learn—what people should come out of school with—is an important one. It is something that the whole community has a legitimate interest in. I am keen that submissions are received between now and the final report about that concept, and that there is vigorous debate to ensure that we agree, as a community, what we want children learning in schools. I note that in talking about the structure of the school curriculum Professor Masters said that age or year groups should not necessarily be in lock step with what people achieve. As the member for Parramatta said, there are different rates of learning and we should be able to identify attainment at different stages. It will be more complex for organisations, but I hope it achieves solid attention in discussions in the community between now and the final report.

We have heard a little bit about the review of the senior curriculum and the division we have at the moment between academic subjects and vocational subjects. It is necessary to find a way to incorporate both of them within the students' education, put them on a level playing field and integrate the process so that students can progress and be assessed in the same way in different subjects, and be treated similarly regardless of their direction in life, their interests and where they will go after school.

As part of the final assessment the review proposes to have a single major project as a standalone component of the senior certificate. Students will choose a principal learning area for their projects, which will be assessed by teachers using essential provided criteria—another way of modifying the process of demonstrating deep learning. All of these concepts are very important and very useful contributions to the debate. I hope that the process now widens and the community engages in the task of providing the best possible education for all of the children in New South Wales through this review process.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (17:17:18):** I thank the Government for moving this motion today.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** That's nice.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** It is very timely. I will make five quick points about what I am going to touch upon—the notion of decluttering; the concept of "back to basics"; the contribution of Professor Masters; the renewed focus on mathematics, English and science; and educational opportunity. The member for Canterbury asked me if I was ready to speak today. I said that I guess I had about 18 years as a chalkie to get ready. I taught in Walgett, Kempsey, North Lakes and Kurri Kurri, and I did a couple of stints at Newcastle TAFE teaching modern history.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** A fellow TAFE teacher.

**Ms SONIA HORNER:** Yes, a fellow TAFE teacher. I will touch on educational opportunities. My brother was made to leave school at 15, like the rest of my family members. He was a bricklayer. He got his qualification as clerk of works and became a bricklaying technical teacher at Coffs Harbour. He became a head teacher at Singleton and then moved to Newcastle TAFE and became the schools manager for New South Wales before he died. I learnt a lot about TAFE through my brother—he was heavily involved with TAFE and loved it. TAFE is a wonderful organisation.

I will focus for a minute on opportunity because I agree with the Government on each of the points in this motion. Every teacher in New South Wales would say that we must make sure that every child who leaves school has the basics—reading and writing. It is definitely important that maths, English and science are a focus of the curriculum. For those who are not naturally inclined to the subjects of maths, science and English, once they learn how to read and write it is, of course, important that their creative skills are acknowledged. I will be really interested to hear how the Government and Professor Masters seek to declutter the education curriculum. I know that the many thousands of teachers in New South Wales will also be very interested to hear that.



I will talk about opportunity as well. Opportunity is very important when considering what the curriculum offers and what the education department in New South Wales offers. I was a child from a commission housing area and I went to a disadvantaged school, but when I first went to Walgett I saw that there were three tiers of education. There was the tier of the richer folk who sent their children to boarding schools. The less rich, or those who wanted to have their children around, sent their children to the local Catholic school. The poorest kids—the kids that I taught as a 22-year-old—went to Walgett High School. No-one could ever question that the kids at Walgett High School were the poorest kids in the region. They missed lots of opportunities that the kids who were lucky enough to have richer parents—the kids who were sent to boarding school—had.

One of the things that I noticed when I was teaching at Walgett was that all of the teachers were 22 or 23. The children at Walgett were not getting experienced teachers because experienced teachers were not going to Walgett. If we are looking at decluttering the curriculum and how we can change the face of education, particularly public education, let us take teachers along with us. While we are looking at the curriculum let us talk to teachers at Burke, Walgett, Maitland, in the inner city and in the western suburbs and ask them, "What do we need to declutter from the curriculum? What are you doing that you do not think best benefits the students?"

At Walgett the biggest problem was getting the kids to school. I do not think they saw the value in going to school, and I can understand why. So let us ask the teachers, "How can we give the students from the poorest families the opportunity to be at school every day?" Let us make sure that the poorest kids in our schools can read and write. Then let us look at how to improve the relationship between high schools and TAFEs so that students who want to do educational courses are encouraged and their decisions are not devalued. I think we are making a really good start. There is a long way to go, but I congratulate the Government on making a start.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:22:27):** I support the motion moved by the member for Parramatta noting the release of the interim curriculum review. As the first major shake-up to the New South Wales curriculum in over a generation, this is of great public interest to the parents and students of our State, and as a member of The Nationals representing regional New South Wales it is a privilege to speak to this motion. As we have heard, the interim review proposed a renewed focus on maths, English and science. It is a back-to-basics approach that proposes changes in three areas: the content of the curriculum, the structure of the curriculum and the senior school curriculum.

The 78 schools in the Cootamundra electorate vary in enrolment size from five students at Wyangala Public School to 580 students at Young High School. The needs of our students are diverse: We need a curriculum that meets the basic, commonsense markers to enable students to finish their education and continue to thrive in regional New South Wales, regardless of the career they choose to pursue. This interim report will be subject of consultation and public feedback, which are vital steps in this important reform. However, I take this opportunity to support one of its key tenets. The interim report proposes reducing the amount of content in the curriculum so that students have time to build in-depth subject knowledge and develop the skills needed to apply knowledge in real-world contexts, such as critical thinking, collaboration and communication. The New South Wales Government strongly supports a back-to-basics approach, and I could not agree more.

Country people, like my constituents from the Cootamundra electorate, tend to have a no-fuss approach to life and it is about time this was reflected in our curriculum. Students need to have strong foundations in maths, English and science to be prepared for the jobs of the future and for attaining lifelong skills. Whether you work on a farm or in logistics for a major freight company, foundational skills in mathematics, English and science are absolutely vital. I acknowledge Minister Rob Stokes for his work in this area and more recently my Nationals colleague the Hon. Sarah Mitchell for leading this review. Being from Gunnedah she is someone I know is extremely passionate about rural education and is absolutely committed to ensuring that our country kids reach their full potential. I support the simplification of the New South Wales curriculum to ensure that our students graduate with the skills they need to survive and thrive.

The interim report's key review areas include reducing the amount of content in the curriculum so that students have time to build in-depth subject knowledge and develop the skills needed to apply knowledge in the real world, and flexible progression that uses levels of attainment to organise syllabuses so that students are recognised and challenged according to where they are on the continuum of learning. It also identifies other pressures that can crowd out teaching and learning. For example, extracurricular topics include important and valued learning, but they are often added to what schools are required to cover with no analysis of impact on classroom time, and compliance requirements on teachers and schools, real and perceived.

Our teachers took on the very challenging but rewarding role to teach. There is no denying that compliance and red tape can take up valuable classroom support and mentoring time. The interim report also identifies this as a pressure that is crowding out learning and recommends a review. In my view this is an important step to ensuring that children's school years are focused and that they gain what they need from their skilled teachers. This is absolutely imperative. Parents, teachers, students and the public can have their say on the interim

curriculum review via the website. I encourage all parents and students from the Cootamundra electorate and across the State to do so to ensure this historic review is informed by the thoughts, wishes and lived experience of the people, particularly those in the bush. Consultation closes on 13 December 2019. I support the motion. I thank the member for Parramatta for moving this important motion. I commend the motion to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Cootamundra for her contribution. Before I call the member for Lakemba I welcome those members of the public in the gallery who are attending "A Little Night Sitting" program conducted by the parliamentary education unit. I welcome you to State Parliament.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:27:31):** I thank the member for Parramatta for moving this motion. A number of members have spoken already. There is not a member in this place who would not say that education is exceptionally valuable. It is probably the most important service that any government can provide. Whether you are in Government or Opposition what we all want is the best education system that we can create. There is lots of discussion about the education system, that says regardless of the school you attend and regardless of the amount of money your parents have in their bank account you have an opportunity to have a world-class education. However, we have to go beyond world class; we actually have to have the world's best education system. The world's best education system has to be accessible to every single person, whether you are in the regions, whether you are in remote schools or whether you are in an urbanised setting. Saying that is one thing, but making it happen is another.

I am one of probably eight other members in this place who have taught in a classroom. We know what it is like to be in a classroom. We know what it is like to see that twinkle in the student's eye when they finally get it. We know what it is like when a parent comes into your school and says, "I need help with something that is not necessarily in the curriculum." The one thing teachers will tell you is that the syllabus will say one thing, but the reality of what happens in the classroom and in schools is completely different. If members have been watching the news lately they would have seen the principal of Trundle Central School, John Southon. I heard my colleague the member for Orange talk about it on the radio; I think it was yesterday. Principal Southon was talking about the impact of the drought. Nowhere does the teaching manual tell you what to do. Nowhere does it tell you how to deal with that in a classroom. However, there is something in your heart that tells you how you make that kid's life better.

All of that then leads to the curriculum. I met with Professor Masters last year and I made a submission. I commend him for opening up an opportunity for everybody to talk about it. It is not the only educational inquiry that we have had, but in the past 30 years it is certainly very substantial. Certainly the HSC, which has been 51 years in the making, needed to be looked at. Nobody was saying remove the HSC and nobody was saying get rid of the curriculum. Nobody was saying lower educational standards. What everybody was saying was, "Provide us with the best education system that we can have", not only in terms of the curriculum but also in terms of recognising that schools are so much more than bricks and mortar. Schools are a hub of the community. There is so much more that you learn at a school than just reading and writing. That is not to underestimate reading and writing. Through this debate you will often hear, "We are going back to the basics." I think we can aim higher than going back to the basics, which would indicate a zero-sum game. Education is not a zero-sum game; education is an opportunity for everybody to get ahead in life.

We need to have a look at this curriculum review. We want to declutter. A primary school teacher will tell you that they have so much to cover in a syllabus, but then more and more gets added—all of these extracurricular programs. A high school teacher will tell you—especially those who are doing year 11 or preparing their year 12 students for the HSC—that they are marking at night and doing more and more. There is so much stuff that happens that is not in the curriculum. If we can get the curriculum right then we will do it. I concur with the shadow Minister: Let's not throw out bits of the curriculum at the loss of something else. We do not want a curriculum that is narrowed. We want a curriculum that goes deep. Let us have a look at what works and what does not.

Everyone looks for the silver bullet in education. I hate to say it, but there is no silver bullet in education. Education is a series of things that comes together; they interlock and are interdependent. If we are talking about a curriculum and we want to retrain teachers, let us have a look at the whole system. Let us have a look at the ways in which we are supporting teachers. Let us have a look at how we are helping them with their professional development. It cannot just simply be another review. A review is really good, but the proof of it will be in its implementation. I trust and hope that the Government will work with the Opposition to make sure that this gets done right. Education is far too important to be left to political games. We are not talking about one thing or another. We are talking about the future and the prosperity of our State. It will only occur when we are together and make sure that we do not have a world-class education system, but the best education system in the world.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:32:35):** On behalf of the crossbench I am pleased to contribute to this public interest debate. I welcome the Minister's motion. I gave my word to the regional members of the

crossbench that I would specifically mention them and their concerns about the school resourcing standard across all public schools in New South Wales. We continue to advocate for that. Teachers are amazing. I believe I was with the member for Lakemba when we met Professor Masters last year. At the time I was the spokesperson—we both were—for education.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Yes, that's right.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** One of the things that amazes me about his interim report is just how generous teachers are. Teachers have change fatigue. As a senior English teacher for 21 years I know others in the Chamber would agree that even though this might be the first overhaul from kindergarten to year 12 in 30 years, it is not the first time that the curriculum has been reviewed in HSC core subjects. Teachers do have change fatigue, but they keep on engaging. They keep getting up every day to improve the lives of their students. They are amazing. I say to the Minister that we should do better than *The Daily Telegraph* headlines such as "back to basics". This is an incredibly nuanced review with incredibly detailed recommendations. There is nothing basic about it. I understand common entitlement, and that is how Professor Masters coined the standard for students in core subjects, a common entitlement. I love that, because it suggests that young people are entitled to have that standard. We agree with that. I have also communicated today with Denis Fitzgerald of the NSW Teachers Federation, which is very supportive of Professor Masters' interim report. He has treated teachers very respectfully and the recommendations are very sound.

We look forward to the creation of a less crowded curriculum being teased. Overprescription of content has been a trend, which I would argue does not result in greater intelligence or higher results. We welcome the flexibility about how to reform the content of the curriculum. There are a lot of pressures on teachers to deal with other aspects of young people's lives, but the stress and the pressure to cover all of the curriculum with a massive syllabus gets in the way of that. We welcome those recommendations, particularly when it comes to deep learning. My brother started working for a tech start-up. A lot of the young people who are recruited are tech nerds, but unless they have creativity they do not last long. Creativity is not about learning dot points and ticking a box. Teachers who can engender real creativity across their subjects have an amazing skill.

I think this is moving more to a capital A arts approach to subjects at school, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM]. We welcome the deep understanding. It is well and good applying knowledge and regurgitating it, but we know the real world context is what young people strive for. They love it. We welcome putting knowledge to work, including the project-based learning. We have seen project-based learning in subjects like Aboriginal studies, dance, drama and music. I was thrilled to see that Professor Masters is moving in that direction across the curriculum. A common entitlement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is so needed. We know that once children reach year 2, that gap is never reduced statistically. The recommendation for all students to develop at least basic knowledge about and appreciation of Aboriginal languages, cultures and histories could not be more welcome. We look forward to the continued consultation process around the review.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (17:37:34):** In reply: I commend the members in this place for their contributions to this important debate on the curriculum review, including members representing the electorates of Londonderry, Wallsend, Lakemba, Ballina, Riverstone and Cootamundra. I thank them for their support of the curriculum review and the productive way the debate has been handled today. It is also an example to the public gallery that whilst we may be on either side of the political spectrum, it is great to see that we all believe that education is the empowerment of young people to achieve all that they can in their lives.

The way we do it may be slightly different, but all members on both sides of the Chamber are equally supportive of the role of schools for young people to develop foundational skills to make them successful in their future studies and careers and to provide the building blocks that will empower them for the rest of their lives, not just straight after school. This is an important review; the first in 30 years. It is important to get feedback on the review. As I said, it is important to encourage teachers, students, parents and the wider community to give feedback about the direction of education. The interim report was released today and we really want to see how best to implement the necessary changes.

The member for Wallsend, a former teacher, reiterated the need to declutter and get back to the basics. The member for Lakemba, a teacher and school principal in his past life, gave considered thought to the implementation of the review being critical to its success. The member for Ballina, a former teacher, highlighted the need for the application of knowledge in a problem-based learning environment. It is great to see that the NSW Teachers Federation supports this interim report. The member for Riverstone, eloquent as ever, identified the tension between academic and vocational education and training subjects in the final years. About one-quarter of all students who start a bachelors degree drop out. We must align our subjects to the areas of interest of the students. The member for Cootamundra's regional perspective was fantastic. Schools with five students, compared

to 580 in the city, would be considered quite small. But this Government is about delivering for all. Unfortunately, the member for Londonderry again wanted to politicise this important debate, which is very disappointing. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills*

**MUSIC FESTIVALS BILL 2019**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:41:23):** The Greens position is that the deaths of young people as a result of overdosing on pills, not knowing what is in pills or taking pills must be separated from the festival industry regulations. On 18 February my colleague in the other place, Ms Cate Faehrmann, hosted a crisis meeting, along with member for Sydney Mr Alex Greenwich, for festival organisers in New South Wales. People came from across the State, including the Tropical Fruits organisation from northern New South Wales, which issued a statement. I will not read the whole statement, but it affirms its support to form a music regulation roundtable to review all regulation impacting live music; to immediately undertake a regulatory impact statement for any regulation impacting music festivals; to develop an industry standard with full transparency for user-pays policing and medical services; and to work with the music industry to develop robust, effective and achievable safety protocols for festivals.

I note that amendments will be moved to the bill, which we support, and no doubt there will be amendments in the other place to try to make this workable for the festivals. The issue is to respect the coronial inquest process. We should wait to see the final report of the inquest and think long and hard about conflating these two issues. We have seen unintended consequences before, not just to business. I care about business, but that is not what gets me up in the morning. I care about a warming planet. But I do care about people, and I certainly care about young people. When young people in my electorate of Ballina tell me that they line up at a festival, get absolutely wasted before they get there because they cannot afford to buy drinks there, that pills are cheaper than alcohol and when they see sniffer dogs they swallow pills without a single thought, that tells me that there is some real work to be done in the community. Prohibition and creating crime is not the way to go. It is about education, young people and health. Safe injecting rooms have been a success. I remember so well the furore and stigmatisation of drug users, yet safe injecting rooms have been one of the most successful harm-reduction programs in this country's history.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:44:50):** In 2003 two Newcastle neighbours, one a teacher and the other a statistician, were having a drink together one evening and came up with the idea of hosting a music festival for people in the greater Newcastle and Lake Macquarie region. From that first conversation and that idea, the great music festival that we now know as Groovin the Moo was born. Those two friends tell the story of their festival on the Groovin the Moo website and it is an inspiring story. They wanted to create a cultural event that the whole of the local community—the whole of my community—could be a part of: the Newcastle TAFE Music School, local bands, local clubs and local businesses. It is an event that was serviced by local community groups with the main focus being on fun and affordability. I wonder if, in 2003, those neighbours knew where their dream would take them.

In April 2005, after much planning and preparation, the first Groovin the Moo festival took place at the Gloucester Showground, about an hour away from my electorate and 1,400 people attended and had a great time. The following year the festival moved to its new home in Maitland, just up the road from where the people in my electorate live. Groovin the Moo also gave birth to parallel music festivals in Albury and Darwin. In 2007 the festival in Maitland sold out for the first time. Twelve years later, Groovin the Moo was hosted earlier this year in Wayville in South Australia, Maitland, Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory, Bendigo in Victoria, Townsville in Queensland and Bunbury in Western Australia.

If I sound like I am proud of this festival, it is because I am. Groovin the Moo was conceived in the Hunter and it is one of the great exports of the Hunter—indeed, it is one of the great exports of our State to the rest of Australia. We should all be proud of its creativity and its economic benefits. We should all be grateful for it and other festivals like it. Across this Chamber we may not all share a delight in the music that this festival offers; it may not necessarily be to all of our tastes, but which of us would not wish that such a festival could be held in their local community? This festival brings not only the local community together but also people from across the State and the country, and it brings an injection of jobs and income to the region.

All that being said, imagine how I felt when I read this morning's *Sydney Morning Herald*. Under the headline "Festivals threaten to leave New South Wales", the article reports that the Australian Festival Association, which includes Groovin the Moo and a number of other music festivals in New South Wales, has released a joint statement saying that because of the legislation before us and because of the lack of any meaningful dialogue, these festivals are considering their future in New South Wales. So a festival which began as an idea in Newcastle, and which has expanded across Australia, may from now on be available in other States and Territories but not in its home of New South Wales.

Are we really prepared to let this happen? Are we really contemplating the withdrawal of the music festival sector from New South Wales? Are we going to stand by and allow a sector, which is worth over \$325 million in revenue for the New South Wales economy, to simply walk out of the door? These festivals fill hotels, restaurants, bars, coaches and many other businesses benefit from the industry. Should we let these festivals head to other States and not be held in our own State?

This is not the time for simply pushing legislation through at all costs. It is time for meaningful dialogue, a genuine roundtable and a coming together of minds, so that music festivals with the highest standards of safety can continue to thrive in our State. Labor's amendments will ensure this dialogue occurs. For the sake of our music industry, which is an important part of our economy, surely the Government will support these amendments.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:49:55):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. The bill is all about ensuring that patron safety comes first. Indeed, the most significant responsibility of any government is to keep its citizens safe. Our Government's number one priority will always be to keep people safe. I say from the outset that I am very disappointed that this bill needs to be brought before the House. Between November 2018 and the end of February 2019, the New South Wales Government worked with industry to develop the new music festival licence. While a small minority of the community had concerns regarding the misperception of undue pressures on music festival operators, it was important that measures were put in place to keep patrons safe at these events.

Musical festival operators owe a duty of care to their patrons—no matter their age—their families and the broader community. A new licensing scheme commenced on 28 February 2019. Following commencement, the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority wrote to 14 music festivals to indicate that NSW Health and the NSW Police Force provided advice that there were elevated health risks associated with their events, and that these events would be subject to a music festival licence including an enforceable safety management plan. Last month we saw Labor, The Greens and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in the other place overturn those regulations. That was a disgraceful act. That is why the bill is before us today. The summer season is upon us and it is critical that appropriate safety measures are in place before music festivals are held.

Many events are safe, but the huge risk of death or injury at some means the Government must act. As I said before, our Government's number one priority will always be to keep people safe. This bill will require high-risk music festivals to prepare a safety management plan in consultation with NSW Health, the NSW Police Force and the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority. I repeat that these plans are mandatory only for high-risk festivals.

Part 2 of the bill specifies that the following factors will be considered by the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority when deciding whether a music festival constitutes a high-risk festival. These include: first, any advice from the Health Secretary or the Commissioner of Police, who are two relatively experienced people, in my books; secondly, whether a death has occurred in the State on a previous occasion at the music festival or in connection with the music festival in the last three years—a reasonable consideration; thirdly, whether a prescribed event occurred at a music festival, or an event related to a music festival, for which the music festival organiser was the organiser, in the three years immediately preceding the date on which the proposed music festival is to start—again, a reasonable consideration; and fourthly, any submission made to the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority by the music festival organiser about the reasons the proposed music festival is not a high-risk festival. These are reasonable considerations. These regulations were put in place and proved successful, although they were removed by members of the other place not long ago in a disgraceful act.

The requirement to create a safety management plan does not apply to every music festival in New South Wales. Of the more than 90 festivals in New South Wales, only 11 are classed as high-risk. Among those 11 is Lost Paradise on the Central Coast. We have heard a lot of members in this debate today claiming that music festivals in this State are closing down. I need to make it very clear that, since those regulations were introduced, not one festival has closed down in New South Wales—not one. Some members have commented in this Chamber that music festival organisers are walking away from New South Wales or closing. I repeat that since those regulations were introduced not one festival, across the entire State, has closed down.

Like so many, I was devastated by the loss of five lives at music festivals last summer. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of those young people who tragically died as the result of drug overdoses. One of those people lost their life at Lost Paradise. I cannot begin to imagine the pain a family goes through when their son or their daughter, having going to a festival for a few days, never returns home. That is what we have to focus on and that is why the Government is so steadfast and resolute in ensuring it does everything possible to avoid a repeat of last year. We must ensure that no other families have to go through the horrific experience of losing a loved family member due to a drug overdose at a music festival.

The bill will provide the tools needed to avoid another summer like last year's. I am concerned that if Labor, The Greens and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party get their way again in the other place and refuse to support this legislation, we could see hospital admissions, serious illnesses or—worse—a death as a result. We should never have been put in a situation where this bill had to be introduced. The regulations were already in place. The experience of local police on the Central Coast, who I have spoken to at length about this issue, is that festivals such as Lost Paradise are absolutely awash with drugs. Holding a music festival over the new year period, when temperatures are highest and police resources are stretched to their limit, could be a recipe for disaster. I note that the member for Wyong is in the Chamber. I have a great amount of respect for him as a colleague. I know that if he has not done so already, he too will speak to local police about their concerns with regard to music festivals on the Central Coast.

High-risk music festivals are not safe places. The bill aims to improve safety by introducing the requirement for a safety management plan. I emphasise that the vast majority of events are managed responsibly. However, the deaths that have occurred over the past year and the extreme risk of more occurring has compelled our Government to act. This approach is about ensuring that festival operators have the right mix of health measures and harm-reduction measures in place to make sure that if something goes wrong at their event, they can respond quickly and effectively. Some operators will need to lift their standards and some operators will need to think more carefully about what medical personnel they have onsite in case something goes wrong. If that is what it takes to prevent or reduce the risk of serious illness and death, then it absolutely must be done.

As I said before, the number one responsibility of any Government is to keep its citizens safe. I am proud to be a part of a government that takes this responsibility seriously. I urge members in the other place to do the right thing. When this legislation is presented before them, I urge them to vote in favour of the bill as it is. It is disappointing that some people are still opposed to having a clear and easy-to-understand framework that holds operators accountable for what happens at their events. The bill provides absolute certainty for music festival organisers, clearly specifying their roles and responsibilities. The Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority, NSW Health, the NSW Police Force and other stakeholders are aware of this. The bill is the way to reduce the risk of death or serious illness at music festivals this summer. As the Premier said last week, the festival season is now upon us and urgent action is required.

I have been listening to this debate all day and I have heard mistruths about festivals leaving New South Wales and festivals closing down. However, those regulations were put in place a while ago and since that time not one festival has walked away or closed its doors in New South Wales. Seriously, if making festivals safer is such a concern to organisers, they need to have a good long look at their business model because their number one and most paramount duty should be the care of their patrons. That is what they need to focus on. If those opposite want to talk to key stakeholders, they should talk to the women and men of the NSW Police Force, especially those on the Central Coast, who have had to spend four days at a music festival doing the best they can to make sure nobody dies. That is a clear indication of a key stakeholder—they take serious risks and support the regulations that this Government has put in place because they help save people's lives. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:59:29):** I speak in debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019, which aims to promote a safer environment at music festivals through the introduction of stricter regulations for organisers of high-risk festivals. From the outset, I note that no member in this Chamber would disagree that the safety of our community is of paramount importance. However, it is clear that the regulations set out in the bill before us today have culminated from the Government's reluctance to work with the industry towards a favourable solution for everyone affected by the bill. Issues concerning the safety of patrons at music festivals have been on the Government's radar for some time. However, to date it has failed to appropriately consult with industry representatives and has instead placed ultimatums and impositions on the industry without affording it the opportunity to be part of the process.

The bill before us today more or less walks with the same stride as its regulatory predecessors, which were disallowed in the other place on 26 September 2019 as a result of the Regulation Committee's report. The report recommended that the New South Wales Government immediately establish a regulatory roundtable for music festivals. Despite everything that has taken place and the fact that a roundtable discussion has the full

support of a parliamentary inquiry, the Opposition, Government members of the inquiry, government agencies and the industry itself, the Government still refuses to make the foreshadowed roundtable an inclusion in the bill. An article which appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* today included a joint statement by the Australian Festival Association, which condemned the lack of substantive consultation by the New South Wales Government and pointed out its unwillingness to get the industry involved as part of the reform process despite repeated offers being made by industry representatives.

The industry has spelled out the economic importance of the contemporary music and festival sector for this State. It generates \$325 million in revenue for the New South Wales economy, with six million attendees every year. As a result of the Berejiklian Government's inaction and failure to adequately consult with key stakeholders and participants, New South Wales now stands at the precipice of losing out on the cultural and economic benefits these events bring to communities throughout our State. As I mentioned earlier, no member is opposed to doing the right thing to ensure the safety and security of the people of New South Wales. However, a totalitarian approach simply will not work. The Labor Opposition has offered bipartisan support to work with the Government, industry representatives and key stakeholders throughout the community to shape appropriate festival regulation through appropriate consultation.

A regulatory roundtable needs to be established immediately to allow festival stakeholders, the Government and local councils to work towards an amicable solution through collaboration and their mutual desire to rectify the issues sought to be resolved by the bill. I commend my colleagues both here and in the other place for their ongoing advocacy on this matter and for doing what is right for the people of New South Wales. It is unfortunate that the bill before us today is essentially another attempt by the Berejiklian Government to circumvent recommendations and feedback provided by industry representatives and the Regulation Committee. Instead, it is steamrolling forward with its totalitarian approach to fixing something it knows very little about. I urge those opposite to support the introduction of a regulatory roundtable, which would welcome key stakeholders and industry representatives, to help shape an amicable framework which would not cripple yet another industry operating in our great State.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:04:09):** I contribute to debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019, which is very important to everyone in New South Wales. Regardless of what members have said in this debate, I would be right in guessing that no-one wants to see another death at a festival in New South Wales. I wish to make two things clear from the start. Firstly, I support the bill because I believe it will go some way towards making these festivals safer for those who visit them. That may well include consideration of amendments but I will await the Minister's response to that. Secondly, I am disappointed that the bill does little to address the tried and tested formulas that have mostly failed governments and law enforcement agencies for decades.

The bill does not address the elephant in the room. In fact, it does not address a number of elephants in the room. I am concerned the bill will long be remembered for what it does not achieve rather than what it does. It is time to stop papering over the cracks and pretending the problem will go away. It is time to stop pretending that police and government have the State's drugs issues under control. They simply do not and the five young festival-goers who died in New South Wales last summer are testament to that. Though we all hope not, it is very clear that there will be more deaths at music festivals this year or in future years. This will occur while we tinker at the edges, fervently hoping that we have found a solution to drug taking that has not been found here or perhaps by any modern state around the world.

I acknowledge that the bill will provide a health and safety orientated plan for music festivals that are identified as high risk. I acknowledge that festival organisers will have to meet stringent guidelines and will be held accountable for running safer events. I also acknowledge that the bill will fix the issue regarding festival liquor licensing and regulation. Organisers of high-risk festivals will need safety management plans approved by the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority. I agree that these are steps in the right direction, but the bill does not address any of the major issues delivered by the Deputy State Coroner's investigation into last summer's tragic festival deaths. The bill does not address the issue of drug testing or monitoring, sniffer dogs, police stripsearching 16-year-old girls or the growing calls for a drug summit that the vast majority of experts in the field have called for.

Doctors, health and medical professionals, drug and alcohol counsellors, lawyers, coroners—in fact, every expert group working on the front line, including a growing number of senior police officers—and other progressive overseas governments have said that we have to change tack because the way we have always fought this State's drug issues has not worked and is not working. Tragically, five young people died at music festivals last summer after taking illicit drugs. Meanwhile, members of Parliament have come up with more of the same responses. The message, "Drugs are bad. Don't do drugs," is a failure. We applaud the police when they intercept a major drug syndicate or bust some stupid fool selling MDMA capsules at a music festival, and that is fine, but guess what? Our kids are still taking drugs and they are still dying.

We need to move away from the argument that there are no safe pills, though this is absolutely true. We need to move away from the slippery slope argument about decriminalising personal drug use and the tired argument about sending the wrong message to kids who might try illicit drugs. Those lazy arguments have been wheeled out for decades and have produced the same result time and again. Unfortunately, our youth in particular are too often willing to roll the dice with illicit drug taking, alcohol consumption or unsafe driving. The hard line is not the only line. That is what the experts on the front line are saying and we have to start listening to them.

Most members would remember a similar debate almost 20 years ago when a safe injecting room was proposed for Kings Cross. We heard the same arguments then. I was elected in 2007 and in my first term at Parliament one of the first significant issues I was involved in was the conscience vote on the renewal of that particular program. I was pleased that the importance of the injecting room was recognised and that the program was continued. However, the difference between then and now is that the leaders of the Government and the Opposition, Bob Carr and John Brogden, sat down at the table and said: We have a real problem and we need a different approach to fix it. In the 18 years since that supervised injecting room was opened, more than 1.1 million supervised injections have occurred without a single fatality. Thousands of heroin users have been provided with health services and support to wean them from their drug addictions and heroin use has drastically reduced.

These are plain and simple facts. Why are we not learning from that lesson and at least trialling pill testing at New South Wales music festivals or other high-risk events? The better, more appropriate health services at music festivals proposed in the bill might help some people who have ingested an illicit drug, but why not use some common sense and try to head it off at the pass? I firmly believe that a lot of people, including many of my colleagues in this House, believe that pill testing gives a potential user a green light to take MDMA, ecstasy or whatever they have bought from a backyard dealer. Those people do not run off from a pill test with a certificate that says their pill is safe. That is not how pill testing works. Most often this is the first time a drug user will talk with a health professional about the drug they are taking, its compounds and the inherent risks.

It is likely to be the first time that they will second-guess or reconsider the decision to buy or take drugs—we certainly hope so. People who say that no drug is safe are exactly right and that is the message that will come from pill testing. But this will also force potential users to think more about their choices, long after they have ignored the age-old "drugs are bad" message from tired old politicians who have been waging a war on drugs for decades. As I alluded to earlier, the issues of police sniffer dogs and strip searches at festivals should also be put under the microscope as part of this reform. Aside from the fact that sniffer dogs fail in their detections far more often than they get it right, and aside from the fact that they have negative impacts on the majority of people who do the right thing, any expert will tell you that many festival-goers have swallowed their entire stash of illicit drugs at the mere sight of a sniffer dog approaching them. Obviously this can have very severe and significant consequences.

In the past week an inquiry has heard from a 16-year-old girl who was subjected to a complete strip search and internal examination at a music festival despite not carrying, ingesting or coming into contact with any drugs. That is a disgrace. I would be furious if that were my daughter or granddaughter. Again, we must put these issues under the microscope and shift away from the traditional drug control measures that have not solved our problems. The Premier has spoken a number of times over the past week about the parents of Anna Wood, the girl who tragically died 20 years ago after taking pure MDMA at a music festival. I urge the Premier to listen to the parents of other victims, many of whom have said that pill testing should at least be trialled at music festivals. Jennie Ross-King sat through the inquest into the death of her daughter, Alex, and spoke about the experts and the commonsense evidence that she wishes the politicians would start to understand. [*Extension of time*]

In subsequent media reports Jennie Ross-King said she would support a trial of pill testing at high-risk music festivals. She said:

From everything we heard, it's based on the facts, the evidence, the information that was brought to the coroner. More importantly, she said she would back a drug summit. She said it would be "... the best opportunity to get politicians in the same room as experts to hear the evidence that had been presented in the inquest" into her daughter's death. As I have indicated, I support the bill on the basis that it takes a step in the right direction, but it is only a small step. We could do so much better. No-one wants to give the green light to illicit drugs, but no-one wants to see our kids continue to die at music festivals while a room full of politicians think that doing the same thing that has been done for years will somehow bring a different result. It will not. Every drug crime statistic and health report in the book will tell members that. It is time to get over long-held ideologies and listen to what health experts are telling us overwhelmingly. We have to try something different. We have the chance to save many more young lives and we need to be brave enough to take that chance.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:14:42):** In contributing to debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019 I endorse the words of the shadow Minister, who spoke earlier today on behalf of the Labor Opposition. This is an important bill for a few reasons. One is that, as the member for Lake Macquarie and others have said, we all have a responsibility to ensure that through the law and to the best of our ability we protect people from harm. If the Labor amendment is passed to legislate for a roundtable it will give us a way forward to have a wider discussion



on this issue. The member for Terrigal said earlier that he had consulted police, but I do not think he consulted anyone in the industry. We have to make sure that the consultation process includes everybody involved.

The member for Lake Macquarie said correctly that people take drugs. They do. I say that as someone who is probably a little unique in that I have never had alcohol, I have never smoked tobacco and I have never taken drugs. That is a personal choice. I have a 17-year-old daughter and a 19-year-old daughter, and they will make their own choices. But, as a parent, every time they go out—particularly my 19-year-old, who has just got her licence—I worry whether they will be okay. As I said, I have made my personal choice and, as a parent, I have to understand that my daughters will make their own choices. But I want to make sure that they are informed and have the right information so they make safe choices.

I think the approach of the Government, which is heavier regulation, does not make the situation safer. I have spoken to a lot of festival goers and asked them about their experiences. They said quite clearly—and this has come up in the Coroner's report and is backed up by overseas research—that young people are risk takers. They will try things. We cannot stop that; it has always happened. Rick, a friend of mine, was a big risk taker. He used to build and fire cannons, and one day he blew off half his hand. We all knew what he was doing was ridiculous, but unfortunately that is what young people do. They are not always safe. Telling young people not to do something is not a solution, and having more police, more sniffer dogs and more regulations will not change their behaviour.

The member for Gosford and I met with Simon Beckingham and Pete Haselhurst who organised the Lost Paradise festival in Glenworth Valley at which unfortunately one person died. That was probably the last straw that led to the investigations. People should be aware that 11,000 people attended the event and one person died. This was the sixth year of that festival and in the previous five years—the member for Gosford may correct me—no deaths occurred. At that one event attended by 11,000 people three drug charges were laid. I do not think more police, more sniffer dogs and more regulations will greatly change the safety of that festival. The organisers have done the responsible thing and voluntarily put in place a lot of new support mechanisms. They have even got an organisation that deals with people who take drugs to attend the festival to talk about the effects of drugs. The organisers are running a business and employ a lot of people. Yes, they want to make a bit of money but a lot of additional money comes to our community.

The alternative is that the Government chooses not to work with organisers and to regulate festivals without constructive consultation. The Mountain Sounds festival at Kariong, in the electorate of the member for Gosford, was cancelled and the festival organisers got into great financial difficulty. Everyone who had paid for a ticket missed out and festival jobs were lost. The member for Terrigal stood in this place and told us that since the regulations were introduced not a single festival had closed or moved. Yet the Mountain Sounds festival on his own doorstep was cancelled because, at the eleventh hour, the organisers were told they had to pay \$220,000-odd for extra security. They had sold most of the tickets but put no money aside for that—it was dropped on them at the last minute—so they chose to cancel the festival.

We should look to research overseas, where there is pill testing and more open, caring regulations rather than simply more police and sniffer dogs. The overseas experience tells us that the number of people taking drugs has actually reduced. In countries like Switzerland and France, where pill testing has been introduced and where there is a smarter educative process, they have found that when people find out what they will potentially be taking they choose to throw it away. When people counsel them about the potential effects of drugs, they tend to take fewer drugs. It makes sense. Young people are not stupid. If they are presented with the information, in most cases they will not do something that they know will end their life. We have to understand that.

A friend of mine who attends festivals all over New South Wales and interstate told me that people will take pills but that alcohol is a bigger problem because when people drink they get angry and they fight, which is worse. Is the Government going to ban alcohol from festivals? Is it going to breath-test festival goers? We have to be sensible about this and work with the industry. The industry grew from underground festivals, when people would get a text message or a phone call saying to meet at such-and-such a spot. Such events were totally unregulated. People just went and did whatever, and I do not think we can possibly know how many died. But festivals grew out of that, and then there was regulation. People who understand the history of festivals know that festival organisers want them to be successful. They want people to have a good time and they want them to be safe—otherwise their industry does not work. The problem is not solved by the Government not addressing the main issue—the fact that people do take drugs—not having a roundtable or a drug summit, and simply burying its head in the sand. [*Extension of time*]

The Opposition, and I know many crossbench members, will move amendments to the bill. The Government should support those amendments. We should legislate for a roundtable so that the Government and government departments can sit down with people from the industry and come up with a sensible set of rules that everyone can live with. That is absolutely essential. The other issue is the language we use. When we call

something "high risk", we are labelling it as something that has a massive problem. The Lost Paradise festival has been labelled high risk. As I said, 11,000 people went to it last year. It has run for five years and has not had terrible issues. I am not saying there have been no issues, but suddenly it is labelled high risk. The Opposition will move an amendment that seeks to normalise the language so the bill recognises that some festivals—because they are overnight, have large crowds, or are run at a particular time of year—may need to be looked at in a more intensive way, but that does not necessarily mean they are high risk. A small festival with very few people in attendance could have high levels of drug taking and could be far more high risk. Using that label is wrong.

At the end of the day, this should be about the safety of kids and understanding that they will behave in certain ways. It is not just kids; my mate that I was talking to is 40 years old. He is a DJ and he loves festivals. So it is not just kids; it is also people like him who go along to these festivals. It is about understanding that festivals create jobs and are good for the economy. My mate told me that if the festivals close down, everybody will go somewhere else and they will still take drugs. So let us be frank about this. We can say, "Oh, it's all about festivals," and we can regulate them out of existence. But that will not stop anything; experience should have taught us that. When the United States introduced Prohibition, for example, alcohol just went underground. People will still take chances. Unfortunately, they will still use substances and, as a Parliament, we have to recognise that. We have to recognise that people will do these things, so let us regulate it in a way that is sensible and that keeps it in the public eye so we can control a little of what is going on.

Let us not have a situation where, as the member for Lake Macquarie said, a 16-year-old girl is stripsearched. She had done nothing wrong, but had to go through that experience. As I said, I have two girls. When I heard that story I had tears because I thought, "That could be my daughter." It is just outrageous. Unfortunately, the sniffer dogs are not successful a large amount of the time. My friend, who is 40 years old, said to me, "David, what happens is these young people have their pills in their pocket. They walk up towards the gate. They see the police, they see the dogs and they panic. They scoff them all down in one go. If they are lucky, it does not have an effect, but who knows?" The regulation is causing harm and potential problems. It is not really fixing anything. I ask the Government to please listen to what is being said and to support the amendments that will be moved. Let us do something that will make a difference and not just continue to keep our heads in the sand.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:28:11):** I speak in support of the Music Festivals Bill 2019 and also to suggest some amendments. I support the comments of the member for Lake Macquarie. In my experience, having worked in the alcohol and other drugs field for a number of years—and having been a young person at one stage—people experiment with drugs. People use drugs. People find different ways to augment their reality. It is not even a characteristic that is unique to humans; different species of animals seek to augment their reality as well. They find substances and ways of doing that. It is not unusual; people find ways to get a buzz and get high. I will not waste the House's time repeating the calls to wait for the Coroner's findings, and I do not think I need to reiterate that no member of this Chamber wants to see young people come to harm as a result of attending an event that is meant to be a good time with their friends. It is an absolute tragedy for the families involved.

In 2013 French techno duo Daft Punk—I am getting a laugh—came to Wee Waa and 3,000 people came to town for that festival. There were massive economic benefits and a tourism legacy, with people visiting Wee Waa as a result. Overall, it was hugely beneficial for the town. In Barwon we do not have many things that we would describe as music festivals, but concerts that are music and dance focused could be caught by this bill. We need to be sure we do not kill off events in regional communities. They have massive economic and cultural benefits for those communities. I am a father of three children; I have a 14-, a 16- and an 18-year-old. I have no doubt that, if they follow in their father's footsteps, they will have all sorts of adventures. My job will be done by the time they leave home, so their choices are theirs—and the same for their friends. But I reiterate that I do not want to see any young people come to harm. That is the most important point here.

Administrative law is supposed to be transparent and procedurally fair, and all the elements of natural justice are supposed to be present. I suggest that the bill should be amended to deliver clear, transparent triggers for changing the risk status of events to avoid perverse outcomes for organisers and communities. If an organiser wants to run an event, they should know exactly what triggers they will need to be aware of from previous events that will kick them into the high-risk category. At the moment it sounds like there is still discretion as a possible way of moving something to high risk, and I think administrative law would require that we make those factors transparent and clear for everyone. We need to have an avenue of appeal and the ability for risk status to be challenged and changed through appeal. That means organisers who have been assessed as high-risk need to have an avenue of appeal to say, if they wish, to the regulator, "We don't think that we're high risk, and here's why." That is another element of administrative law: It enables people to say, "I'd like a review of the situation." Unless we do that, the legislation does not really contain those elements of fairness.

We need to tighten the definition. We need to define exactly what comes under this bill and what does not. I know that any ticketed event that is music or dance focused with 2,000 or more people in attendance could be affected by the bill. I would not want to see a corroboree caught up, for example—an event out west involving a cultural event for Aboriginal people. When the Lumpy Underdaks—that is actually a band—play for the Outback Trek charity, it is a partially ticketed event. Again, we need to define "ticketed event". Does that include partially ticketed events? I would not want to see that event caught by the bill. A military tattoo involves dance, music and thousands of people. Statistically, people in that audience could die; could it be caught up? I realise it is a stretch, but Carols in the Domain and other carols events are ticketed events attended by thousands of people. I do not want to see perverse outcomes and I do not want to see economic benefits denied not just to regional communities but also to Sydney as a result of this bill.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:33:09):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Music Festivals Bill 2019. I begin by acknowledging the pain of those families who have lost loved ones as a result of incidents in the past. I also acknowledge that members in this Chamber recognise that pain and that there is genuine concern on the part of the Government and the Opposition to try to address this issue for the community and prevent any future deaths. I support the bill because I believe it will make festivals safer. I think it is necessary because of the actions in the other place that took away the regulations. I believe it also addresses some gaps in those regulations, so that is all good. As far as I am aware, festival organisers will now need to provide the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority with an approved safety management plan for music festivals that are identified as being high risk. In fact, I suggest there is an argument that every event of this nature should have a plan for health and safety purposes to mitigate identified risks.

I say that because those events are associated with widespread drug use and there is often a real danger to participants, particularly in summer. Often there is exposure to heat, a lack of mobile coverage and a crush of people. A number of factors can contribute to hyperthermia, dehydration and deaths associated with drug use. This is a recognition that drugs are there; it does not condone drug use. No drug is safe. I do not think anyone is condoning drug use; we recognise that it is a reality and that we need to take action. So I welcome this legislation that puts requirements in place, particularly for high-risk festivals. I acknowledge that the organisers will have to follow the guidelines to the letter and will be held accountable. I applaud that.

But I think the bill does not go far enough. For example, it does not directly address the issues that were highlighted in the alleged draft State Coroner's report that was published in *The Daily Telegraph* about a week ago. That report received a fair bit of criticism in the press because of the recommendations around pill testing. I will come back to that in a moment. I was disappointed by the response to those draft recommendations because I believed, on reading them, that they were well thought through and reflected what I had read about the evidence to the inquest. I would like to see some genuine discussion of those issues, not have them subsumed in a culture war that revolves simply around the issue of pill testing. No-one likes to talk about strip searches, sniffer dogs and pill testing. They are issues that evoke emotive responses in the community but, as the member for Lake Macquarie stated so eloquently, if we keep doing what we are doing we will get the same result. It is about time that we looked at some alternatives.

Unfortunately, I do not think the proposed legislation addresses those concerns. I support a trial of pill testing. I do not believe it condones drug use. In no way does it say that drugs are right, safe or should be taken. The member for Lake Macquarie highlighted eloquently that pill testing provides an opportunity for one-on-one counselling about the dangers of drug use. People will not receive those opportunities if pill testing is not available. They will simply be subjected to a mass media message, which is so easy to ignore, about not taking drugs. So I think a trial is worthwhile, although it is not always supported even by those in my community. It is a sensible idea and it is worth considering. I also note that the Coroner's recommendations included a requirement for NSW Health to hold an annual stakeholder roundtable. I encourage the Government to consider that in applying this legislation.

In my discussions with the Minister I said that the concept of a roundtable with the industry is important. I encourage the Minister to undertake to set up that consultation mechanism, although I must confess I do not support its being legislated. This legislation takes a step forward. It allows the Government to implement future recommendations. Its construction will allow the Government to implement some recommendations of future reviews or the formalised recommendations that the Coroner may make. I would like to see the Government consider those issues and the implementation of a NSW Health stakeholder forum on an annual basis to review the medical and health aspects of the bill and festivals, and to see the establishment of a roundtable.

In summary, the legislation is a good first step. We need harm minimisation strategies to be put in place. This legislation is important but it could go further. I acknowledge the Government's commitment to community consultation, and I look forward to the outcome of further consultation with interest groups. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:39:12):** Tonight in speaking to the Music Festivals Bill 2019 I send a shout-out to the fabulous Lost Paradise festival organisers. For the seventh year running, we will celebrate the festival on the Central Coast this new year. I reiterate the importance of festivals on the Central Coast and across New South Wales as places for people to come together. It is not just young people who attend festivals; I know that people in this place attend festivals, and I have been to festivals. People like to attend festivals to celebrate and enjoy. It is a supply-and-demand situation: The fact that festivals are run is a very clear message that they are needed. As the member for Wyong said, we do not want them to go underground. We do not want people to run away and hide in order to have a good time in this State.

Organisers of the Lost Paradise festival, alongside all festivals large and small, should be commended for their efforts to meet a demand in our community and should be recognised as this legislation goes through the Parliament. In various forms, festivals across New South Wales have faced obstacles put in place by this Liberal Government when clear consultation and support would have been so much more appropriate. I support the shadow Minister, who said that the legislation should be amended to support the Coroner's recommendation to have ongoing reviews and consultation with organisers in New South Wales. I know that the Lost Paradise organisers have been stressed out this year because, with the time for the festival approaching, they did not know what legislation the Government was going to chuck down.

The organisers did not know whether they should go ahead. They had been overseas consulting, trying to bring huge acts to the Central Coast. They did not know what this legislation would put in place and whether it would prevent them from holding the festival. But the festival organisers are risk takers. They have put their money on the line in their commitment to bring great acts like Hilltop Hoods, Rufus du Sol, Green Velvet, Dom Dolla and many more to the Central Coast this new year, despite the Government's threats. The festival organisers know that people are keen and that they will have to take on the additional costs, whatever they are, although they were not consulted by the Government in introducing the Music Festivals Bill 2019. Festivals offer so much more than music. There are stereotypes of what young people get up to at festivals but there are a whole bunch of activities for people to be involved in, night and day, to play, learn, connect and be inspired.

On 26 September 2019 the New South Wales Parliament disallowed the Liquor Amendment (Music Festivals) Regulation 2019 and the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment (Music Festivals) Regulation 2019. The new Music Festivals Bill 2019 is similar in content and its impact on the industry to the two sets of festival regulations that the Parliament has already disallowed. This disallowance was recommended by the Regulation Committee in its report following an inquiry into the regulations, with key findings that the consultation for the original regulations was inadequate. The report recommended that the New South Wales Government immediately establish a regulatory roundtable for music festivals. As it is now in bill form, the Parliament has the option of amending the legislation. I support the shadow Minister's comments about that.

The commitment and organisation involved in bringing together a festival are amazing skills and require a vast network and very high-level logistical planning. Yet the Premier came to The Entrance at the end of last summer and accused local festival organisers of just wanting to make a fast buck. That did not make the organisers happy at all. Today I send a shout-out to all those young people who protested on The Skillion saying, "We do not want people to wage war on music festivals." They sent the message loud and clear that there is a lot of economic commitment by young people on our coast to ensuring that festivals go ahead. Mountain Sounds was heading into its seventh year on the coast. It was an annual gathering of like-minded souls and grew because of the ongoing commitment of local organisers. It was a fantastic outlet for young people to have fun, connect and celebrate shared interests and a sense of community.

Today in the Parliament I celebrate the efforts of Mountain Sounds organisers and their families and friends who wove together the complex gathering we knew as Mountain Sounds at Kariong Parklands. They made it very clear to me and the member for Wyong the complexity, responsibility and high-level stress involved in organising any festival, whether "high risk" or not. The Government's last-minute policing demands are the straw that broke the camel's back for the organisers. It is sad to be in the New South Wales Parliament today, knowing that despite their passion and commitment, Mountain Sounds was not held this year and we may never see it on the Central Coast again. The Government says that festivals have the advice they need. The Government needs to listen to the industry, and festival organisers want a voice to the Government.

We have had a parliamentary inquiry and even the New South Wales Coroner is recommending that pill testing be introduced at festivals. In the Gosford electorate we know the consequences. We lost a well-loved member of our community. Alex Ross-King, from the Central Coast, was attending a Sydney festival when she collapsed in the evening and was taken by ambulance to hospital, where she later passed away. Ms Ross-King was the fifth of six people to die at a music festival in New South Wales over the summer. Today in this House we send our love to her family and her friends, who still stand beside pill testing and real education for young people attending festivals. Her family does not want festivals stopped; they want better education and harm

minimisation like we see in many countries around the world. We also send our condolences to all members of our community who have lost loved ones.

Tonight I say to the Premier, as a former high school teacher: I know our young people will continue to take risks. I hear loud and clear the need to make these events safe, yet the Government needs to work with the organisers to get the best possible solutions, not push down draconian rules from the outside, adding expenses and pushing fear into festival goers. The research says that education about pill safety is needed, and introducing best practices is what we should be doing. Other nations are working with festival organisers to create safe outcomes, not inducing fear in young people. In New South Wales we have seen best practice safe injecting rooms reduce harm and what have we learnt? We now have far better practices around injecting in known high-risk areas in New South Wales. Let's see this education and harm minimisation applied to festivals, and let's see young people be educated to help them make better choices.

This bill caps off another issue where the Government has refused to consult and has ploughed through with its own half-baked ideological position. Instead of working with industry to get the best result, we get something that fits an immediate political goal. For a long time Labor has offered its support for appropriate festival regulation, but this bill falls far short. We want to make festivals sustainable and safe. We want to make sure that no festival is singled out and that there is no extreme hit list of festivals. We want to make sure that official health guidelines are used, power is granted to require the use of guidelines where they are needed, and that medical providers at festivals are registered and adhere to NSW Health guidelines, which is not currently the case. What should be the simplest of all requests is that the regulatory roundtable be established immediately to allow festivals, the Government and local councils to work together. The establishment of a roundtable has been supported by a parliamentary inquiry, the Opposition, Government members of the inquiry, government agencies and the industry.

The bill does not address sniffer dogs, nor the over-policing identified in the inquiry. It does not add any education program accessible to any of our high-risk behaving young people. It does not even take into account what other nations are doing effectively to prevent deaths in the first place. Research in Switzerland, Belgium and Germany shows improved behaviours of less risk-taking and choices to not take those risky pills. The bill does not discuss the dire need we have for a drugs summit in this State. The industry has been supportive of change and has worked with Government and, when it has been able to, made changes. Festival organisers do not want to run dangerous festivals, but they also do not want to be held up as scapegoats because the Government keeps moving the goalposts. They want to be part of a shared commitment to safer music festivals. Festivals are an important part of our economy, generating over \$325 million in revenue, with six million attendees. The Central Coast and my electorate are home to a number of popular festivals that provide an enjoyable time to people of all ages. *[Extension of time]*

I repeat, over \$300 million in revenue, with over six million attendees every year. It is pretty clear that we want festivals but, sure as ever, no organiser wants a death at their festival. This was never the plan from the outset. I say to the Premier that I stand by the young people of my electorate and across New South Wales in saying, alongside festival organisers, we do not want New South Wales to be the first music festival free zone.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (18:49:55):** I make a brief contribution to the Music Festivals Bill 2019. I indicate from the outset that I support the bill. I understand that my colleagues in the other place will move to move some amendments to improve the bill. I acknowledge and recognise that the Minister is in the Chamber and I thank him for bringing the bill before the House. The primary concerns I share with my colleagues revolve around ensuring community protection and safety. As the member for Fairfield said earlier, nobody in this Chamber, no matter which side of politics they are on, wants to see any harm caused to any person attending a music festival. It is sad to hear of the five deaths that occurred at music festivals last summer. I convey my condolences to the families of those who were evacuated and the 20 or so who were admitted to intensive care from the many festivals that were held and the hundreds of thousands of people who attended them.

The clear message is that we need to find a balance that can compare and compete the interests of ensuring the safety and protection of people who attend festivals, but do so in such a way that does not deter or prevent organisers from holding festivals by causing significant inconvenience or impost. That is especially the case in rural areas. In my electorate of Orange we have VANFEST, a music festival held at Forbes that provides significant economic stimulus to the Forbes economy, which is much appreciated in the current drought conditions. Several thousand young people attend this festival, as well as picnic races, which could also fall under the category. There are a few issues in the bill that the Minister may like to address in his response, including the definition of "concert" and "music festival". On 1 February I am going to a Cold Chisel concert in Orange at Heifer Station Winery. I purchased 10 tickets for myself and my friends and it is anticipated that 11,000 or 12,000 people will attend the event. It is a single stage—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** The Elvis festival.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** That is right. It would be deemed to be a festival and I do not want to see events such as that—it is just one of myriad events—affected or captured inadvertently. There are many in my electorate that take place at wineries, for example. I know we are talking about high-risk as opposed to music festivals, but I will expand on that later in my contribution. There are four or five members in Cold Chisel who will be performing and Birds of Tokyo will be the support act, so that would fall under the definition of a music festival as opposed to a concert. There needs to be a consideration and an analysis of the definition of music festival and concert.

The other thing that was raised by my colleague the member for Barwon was the right of review. There is nothing in the bill that allows a music festival, especially if it has been declared a high-risk music festival, the right of review or right of appeal to declare it a high-risk event. I understand that, in terms of whether it be a death in the past three years or the organisers had another prescribed event occur at a previous music festival in the past three years, but the concern I have is the discretionary power placed on the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority. I do not want to see music festivals declared high risk without proper substance and consideration. I do not want to see a heavy onus being unfairly put on them. If a death or something of that nature happens at a festival I can perfectly understand why it would be declared high risk, but I believe there needs to be a statutory right for a music festival to have that decision reviewed. They are some of the amendments that my colleagues in the other place will consider.

Another issue I have is finding a balance with competing interests. I do not believe that some of the criteria that is considered in section 6 is overly onerous for an event that is required to have a safety management plan included, which means showing points of entry and exit; providing access to medical services; providing supervised relaxation, information about entry and exit points for emergency vehicles, information about evacuations, signage and health services. I do not believe that those things are overly onerous to comply with. However, I note some of the comments that were made by other speakers in their contributions to this debate in relation to the oppressive nature of police searches—for example, the sniffer dogs and the strip searches.

I appreciate that nobody would want their child stripsearched if there was not a legitimate reason to justify it. However, I want to clear up a few things that have been said. The sniffer dogs are pretty accurate. Take it from me as a former police officer and a police prosecutor, if you do not have drugs on you, you probably had them on you at some time leading up to a dog showing a positive indication that you may be carrying a drug. Sometimes those drugs are on the person, maybe in a bag or in a pocket, but often they are secreted inside a person, especially if that person intends to supply drugs once they enter the music festival. That is the reality of what can occur when people go to these music festivals. Certainly we want our young people to go to these festivals and enjoy them; music festivals provide a vibrant social experience as well as significant economic, cultural and social benefits, especially in rural and regional communities that need additional assistance at the moment. As I said, it is all about finding that balance with competing interests.

I listened very carefully to the contribution of my good friend the member for Lake Macquarie, in which he spoke about pill testing. I do not agree with him; I do not agree with pill testing. I know that before being elected to this place the member for Lake Macquarie worked in mental health facilities. My view is that no pill is a safe pill. Even if it does not kill you it can cause you serious and significant harm—for example, it can bring on a psychotic episode or the onset of schizophrenia.

**Mr Greg Piper:** For the record, I agree with you.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** That is the message that we need to get out there. I know it is probably controversial, but I do not support pill testing. I think we need to educate people and make them aware of the dangers. I heard the member for Lake Macquarie mention the heroin injecting room.

**Mr Greg Piper:** The safe injecting room.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** The safe injecting room in Kings Cross. In 1997 I worked in Cabramatta as part of Operation Puccini and I attended many heroin overdoses where people died or had to be revived with the use of Narcan by ambulance paramedics. Fortunately, these days heroin is not as big an issue as it was back then, but we certainly need to make our young people aware of the dangers of drugs. It is a difficult message to get out there that no pill is a safe pill, that if it does not kill you it can make you seriously unwell. We need to deter young people from taking these pills. I accept that young people take risks, but the message needs to be out there. Hopefully some of the amendments will help find that balance. I note the amendments that my colleagues will put forward in the upper House. I will consider Labor's amendments, which more than likely I will support. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:59:29):** The Music Festivals Bill 2019 seeks to require organisers of "high-risk" festivals, identified as such by the Liquor & Gaming Authority, to comply with approved safety

management plans. These safety management plans are related to the medical, emergency and harm reduction measures laid out by the NSW Health music festival guidelines. The bill seeks to legislate regulations that were disallowed in the Legislative Council following a regulation committee report that rightly found that the consultation in the lead-up to their implementation was inadequate. I note that the report recommended a regulatory roundtable for music be established, which has not yet occurred. Instead, we have a bill before us that still fails to reflect the views of the music festival industry, a bill that raises many questions and a bill that moves to lock in a framework that would have considerable unintended consequences both for the music festival sector and for the predominantly young festival goers who attend these events across New South Wales every year.

Approximately six million people attend a contemporary music event or festival each year, contributing around \$325 million in revenue to the New South Wales economy. Much of this revenue is raised in regional communities, where annual festivals are a lifeline for local businesses and workers. What is being ignored here is that music festivals are an absolute boon for regional communities. The Fairgrounds Festival, for example, is held on the first weekend of December each year in Berry, and brings around 6,000 visitors to the Shoalhaven. The festival contributes \$3 million to the local economy and accommodation is booked out months in advance as far away as Kangaroo Valley, Nowra and Jervis Bay. Despite being family friendly, organisers of the festival are worried that the regulatory regime will push up costs and jeopardise its ongoing viability.

Splendour in the Grass brings around 35,000 people and \$25 million to Byron shire each year, numbers which continue to grow. I was pleased to attend this year's festival as the representative for the Leader of the Opposition—it is a hard job sometimes. In addition to attending the festival and enjoying an amazing line-up of both local and international acts, patrons crammed local cafes and businesses across the region, supporting people working in hotels, hospitality, food and beverage services, retail and much, much more. At this year's Splendour, accommodation was booked out. There were no hire cars left at local airports. Locals rely on these jobs and there can be no question that these regulations put some of those jobs at risk.

Earlier this year I spoke to the owner of a scaffolding company who contacted my office because he was worried about the Government's festival regulations and noted that key festivals his company was contracted to were signalling that they might not be able to continue. He was facing dire consequences and was devastated by the prospect of having to let staff go. It is clear that the Government does not understand what is really happening at these festivals and just how important they are to local economies and communities. But the value of these festivals cannot simply be defined by numbers. People flock to these festivals because they are an opportunity to see world-class performances by local and international acts in a once-in-a-lifetime setting. They are opportunities to let loose, to connect with friends and to have fun.

We absolutely have a responsibility to ensure we protect the safety and wellbeing of young people in our community, and operators absolutely have a duty of care to their patrons to do the same, but I am deeply concerned that this bill is another example of the Government sticking its head in the sand, ignoring experts and the evidence, and stubbornly pushing ahead with its knee-jerk law-and-order approach when we know that there is a different way forward. The regulations laid out in this bill originated in response to the tragic deaths of young people last summer. They were young people out to have fun with their mates and they paid a terrible price for their choices. They made their choices despite all the warnings from public health professionals, police and educators—for reasons we might all recognise, even if we are not driven to make the same choice they did. Those people do not deserve our judgement. They were deeply loved and deeply cared for. At the end of the day, for all of those young people, we have categorically failed.

I believe the Premier when she says she is working to protect the lives of young people, I really do. I respect and share her objective, but I fundamentally disagree on the best approach to do so. Every death from illicit drug use is a tragedy, more so because they are preventable. I have long been on the record as an advocate for a harm minimisation approach to illicit drugs and making laws based on evidence. I appreciate these are difficult and deeply personal issues for legislators. They are complex, wrenching, intractable and often emotive. But they are also made clearer by close scrutiny of the evidence and facts.

I want to focus on three elements: the current situation around music festivals, our approach to illicit drugs and keeping young people safe. Firstly, pill testing saves lives. In addition to countless overseas trials and successful ongoing programs, there have been two pill testing trials in Australia at Groovin the Moo festival in Canberra. These trials were conducted by Pill Testing Australia and supported by event promoters, including the Australian Capital Territory Government, health services and police. In this year's trial, the medical service tested a total of 170 substances for 234 participants. Seven substances were detected to contain the highly dangerous drug N-Ethylpentylone. In each instance that that substance was detected, the patrons discarded the pills in the amnesty bins provided.

The trial meant that there was an easy exchange of information between those medical professionals testing the pills and the tent providing medical support, meaning that any adverse reactions could be easily

identified and acted on urgently. Each of the 234 participants was provided with drug counselling. Many people reported that they would change their behaviour as a result of their conversations with health workers. The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre's latest report into Australian drug use reports that 45 per cent of MDMA users are testing their own pills using less trustworthy kits. I note that the Uniting Church of NSW has recently announced it would like to host pill testing trials on church properties in line with its broader commitment to harm reduction and treatment. [*Extension of time*]

Secondly, I refer to sniffer dogs and strip searches, which are far from infallible. In fact, they are wrong more times than they are right. In 2006 the NSW Ombudsman's review of police powers revealed that sniffer dogs were correct roughly only 26 per cent of the time. Similarly, a report recently commissioned by the Redfern Legal Centre revealed that only 30 per cent of recorded strip searches resulted in a charge despite increasing over twentyfold since 2006. Of those charged, 82 per cent were for the summary offences of drug possession and only 16.5 per cent for supply.

New South Wales likes to talk a big game in terms of targeting supply, but the numbers do not lie. The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] is currently reviewing strip searches, including the behaviour of officers at Splendour in the Grass last year. Some 143 people were purportedly stripsearched and only 8.4 per cent of people were found to be in possession of illicit drugs. The LECC has also heard of harrowing reports of a 16-year-old girl who was stripsearched by police at Splendour in the Grass without a parent present. Following a false detection from a sniffer dog, she was separated from her friends, asked to squat naked and remove her panty liner for inspection. She sobbed uncontrollably and later reported she had lost all trust in police and felt she could never report anything to police officers again.

Thirdly, we are doubling down on policing without investigating rather than instituting a full suite of harm reduction measures. That will not work. We simply cannot arrest our way out of this problem. It has been said again and again. Our current approach is not working. We need a holistic and evidence-based approach to reduce harm and illicit drug use. Like so many others in the community, I was horrified to learn that the New South Wales Government was dismissing out of hand the recommendations of the Deputy Coroner following her inquest into the tragic deaths last summer. The inquest was held over four weeks and drew on evidence from medical professionals, law experts and law enforcement, as well as families and music festival attendees. [*Extension of time*]

The Deputy Coroner is yet to produce her final report. However, her draft report was shamefully leaked and published by *The Daily Telegraph* and the Deputy Coroner's recommendations were rejected by the Premier. Those recommendations include allowing pill testing at music festivals, ending the use of sniffer dogs at music festivals, hosting a drug summit and decriminalising the possession of small amounts of drugs. Importantly, the Deputy Coroner recommended that the Government redefine "illicit drugs as a primarily health and social issue rather than primarily a law enforcement issue". That is where we need to be.

I am incredibly proud that the Leader of the Opposition has said she is open to a medically supervised pill testing trial in New South Wales. She has showed leadership and a commitment to listening to the experts and following the evidence. By way of contrast, rather than considering the Deputy Coroner's recommendations, the Premier has ignored and dismissed them before they were even finalised—before she even received the final report. In response, Julie Tam, mother of one of the young people who lost their lives last summer, said:

There's not much that comes from the loss of a child, but at the very least I'd like to think that it shines a light on the potential for there to be change. Obviously what's happening now is not working, and if we don't change we're going to continue to see young people fall by the way side ... It's disappointing to think that following the amount of effort and money invested into the coronial inquest into the deaths ... I just think that's such a waste, I really do. The coroner is paid to be impartial, to gather information based on what the experts say, and for the NSW government to just say 'nope, we're not changing our minds' because what she's recommended might be unpalatable to them, I just struggle to find a word to describe it.

I will find a word for it. I think it is ignorant, short-sighted and dangerous. I am angry because this bill seems to follow a pattern of behaviour from the Premier. Despite the best intentions, she continues to ignore expert advice and pushes ahead with the same failed approach. The key reason behind the Legislative Council's decision to disallow the original festival regulation was the appalling lack of consultation with the sector prior to its drafting. This is not merely a point about process. To make decisions about how to best reduce harm faced by young people at music festivals, you need all the information on the table and you need all the people in the room. Frankly, it is irresponsible to foist regulations on festivals that the sector has called unworkable without seeking the input of experts and operators testing the feasibility of the proposed measures and gauging how patrons would respond.

Last week in question time the Premier berated the Legislative Council for overturning her regulations, drafted by her hand-picked panel following the deaths over the summer. These were capable, expert people, but were instructed not to examine pill testing. I say that the Premier cannot have it both ways. She cannot, on one hand, point to one panel of experts who are denied the opportunity to investigate key reforms that might save lives



and then, on the other hand, ignore the Deputy Coroner, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Ombudsman, research from Redfern Legal Centre and UNSW Law and the Legislative Council's Regulation Committee, as well as the countless medical, legal and community experts who say an alternative approach is worth considering. She cannot ignore the very people these music festival regulations are intended to impact.

Labor will move important amendments in the Legislative Council to establish a music festival industry roundtable in line with advice from government agencies and the Regulation Committee. What the sector has been asking for is not unreasonable; it is just asking to be at the table. Without amendment, feedback and input from the sector, this bill will result in poor outcomes. I note this morning that Splendour in the Grass and Falls Festival have threatened to leave New South Wales. It is a very real possibility that we will see these festivals go interstate.

I am worried that this is just the beginning. I am worried that these regulations will do nothing but force operators out of New South Wales and see the return of unregulated paddock parties and sand dune doofs. That is in no-one's interest. It is particularly not in the interest of the regions of New South Wales, and not just the Northern Rivers. To name a few, the Hunter, the South Coast and the Central Coast will lose jobs across the sector. I do not doubt the best intentions of the Premier and the Minister. However, they are ignoring expert advice and instead rushing to implement these laws, which cut out the people who will be charged with implementing safer festivals: the operators themselves. I understand these are complex issues but we cannot afford to put our heads in the sand and ignore the advice of experts and the evidence. Shutting down festivals will not save lives; a consultative approach that includes harm reduction, education and empathy will.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (19:14:52):** I speak to the Music Festivals Bill 2019. My electorate of Maitland and the Hunter region have been a central part of one of the most popular festivals, Groovin the Moo, since its inception in 2003. It was the vision of a local high school teacher and a statistician thinking that they wanted to put together a music event that everyone could be part of, an event that would include Newcastle TAFE music school and local clubs and businesses. It would be an event for everyone, serviced by local community groups, with the main focus being on fun and affordability. Before Groovin the Moo, if you asked my two young adult children what they liked about Maitland they would not have said the nightlife.

The Moo first grooved in Gloucester, where 1,400 fans saw amazing acts that they would never in their wildest dreams have hoped to see in their regional community. In 2006 we were able to get the event to Maitland. It happens in our local agricultural showground and is open to everyone. There is a huge amount of effort that goes into staging it. In fact, in the first year she tried to go to Groovin the Moo my daughter, who is quite strategic, told me that she was going to help out the local Rotary club rather than go to the actual festival herself. I think she just did that as a bit of a scoping study to see how things were going. It is a festival that has grown from our little towns of Gloucester and Maitland in the Hunter to go to five States across this nation and brings so much joy to so many young people, particularly in our regional areas. It has been going for 13 years. We are so lucky as a community to host it each year.

The festival does come with its traffic snarls, which we all worry about, but it also comes with that concern of many parents. I remember a year ago when my daughter went for the first time. All the parents in my demographic were at a fundraiser for a local charity. At about 10.30 p.m. or 11.00 p.m. we all started looking at our clocks because we wanted to know that our children were safe and we wanted to make sure they were getting home in the right way. As parents we are always concerned about our kids doing things that they see as a rite of passage. It is a long day for them. We wonder how they are going to cope with sunburn, heat stroke and the sheer number of people at the venue. For many of them it might be their first opportunity to be with so many young people. Of course, underlying all of that is always the fear of what might happen to them in terms of drugs and alcohol.

This is a problem that we all see in our community. It is a problem that we all have to work on together. I am concerned that this Government is not working with everyone. That is what we have seen so much from the Premier in recent times: A failure to work with others, to listen to the experts. I am a mum of kids in their late teens. I worry about them every day and what their response will be to drugs and alcohol—is this whole pill testing scenario just about encouraging it, as the Government and Premier try to portray it? I asked my daughter whether she would tell someone who was doing pill testing that she was on another medication. She said to me, "No, Mum, I wouldn't". These are things our kids do not understand. They do not understand the interaction of drugs and other medications. When they are at a music festival with all their mates, grooving around and being cool, Healthy Harold is a long way away. "Just Say No" was a long time ago.

We need to see if there are other ways that work. When you have kids of that age you will do anything to keep them safe. Every single parent in that fundraiser that I attended last year wanted their kids to be safe. This bill is just the typical "Premier knows best" approach from this Government. We have got an industry that wants to make things safe. There is no benefit to them. My local Rotary clubs want to make kids safe at Groovin the Moo. The promoters, the acts—the people who were themselves probably inspired by these festivals—want to

make people safe. What the Opposition is trying to do is to get this Government to come to the table and actually do the consulting work that it needs to do.

The Government's default position on every behaviour it does not like is to ban it. It is so arrogant that it does not want to negotiate with people who are experts. It ignored the Deputy Coroner. It set up a commission of inquiry to have a look at options and excluded options before it even got the terms of reference. There is an upper House committee inquiry report that recommends that the New South Wales Government immediately establishes a regulatory roundtable for music festivals. Where is that in the bill before the House? The Government should have included that in its bill, but just like last week it brings the half-finished legislation. Where is the amendment from the Government to put in that roundtable?

As the shadow Minister for Investment and Tourism I am appalled that the Premier is not going to set up a regulatory roundtable body to ensure that those people who have the expertise around how festivals work get together with Government to find the safest and best pathways. I do not know; I am a middle-aged woman. I do not know what festivals are like. I have not been to one. I have seen them. I have driven past them. Why does the Premier and the Government think they know? Maybe they have a different lifestyle to me. They should be going to the experts.

Today I got a phone call from my local radio station saying that Groovin the Moo is talking about pulling the pin this year because this Government will not negotiate with them. That is not the way for the Government to ensure that it is keeping a good investment of local music, local festivals, local talents, and local jobs in our communities. We know that festivals drive jobs in our regional areas. For so long the Opposition has offered its bipartisan support for appropriate festival regulation, as it does on so many of these issues, and it has been rebuffed.

All members in this House want people to be safe at festivals. We spelled out four principles for festival regulation that we would like to see. We wanted no extreme hit list of festivals published. We wanted to see that health guidelines would be used and that there would be a power granted to require the use of guidelines where they are needed. We wanted medical providers to festivals be required to be registered and to adhere to NSW Health guidelines, which is not currently the case. We wanted the regulatory roundtable established immediately to allow festivals, the Government and local councils to work together. Unfortunately, the bill in its current form does not meet these four principles. The lack of provision for a regulatory roundtable is the most concerning.

Labor agrees that this industry should be regulated. No-one disagrees with that. It is the view of the Parliament, the Government and industry. However, regulation will not be effective unless there is a mechanism for industry and the Government to review and discuss these issues. We need to make sure that this is done. What is it saying about New South Wales when we have a bill such as this come before the House that is basically a head-in-the-sand approach by the Premier? We are saying that this State is regressive and ignorant, that we are unwelcoming to economic investment. We are saying, "Okay, go interstate". Where is the safety in that? Where is the safety in our kids getting into trouble at festivals interstate because they cannot go to festivals in New South Wales? It is such a short-sighted approach.

Police want to help. I talk to my local area commanders. We have got issues around how we keep kids safe. We need to have everyone in authority at those festivals working together and kids feeling safe to go and speak to them. If we do not take a harm-minimisation approach, and have experts at the table thinking about how these processes go forward, that will not happen. I urge the Government to do something very different with the bill than it has done for most of this year—that is, work in a bipartisan manner. I note that the Deputy Premier is in the House. I urge him to think about the kids in the regions who want to go to festivals and to work with the industry to keep them there.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Private Members' Statements*

#### **SNOWY HYDRO SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (19:25:35):** Tonight I talk about a celebration held in the electorate of Monaro last Saturday, the seventieth anniversary of the Snowy Hydro. The Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme was the largest, most significant infrastructure investment of our time. In 1949 our forefathers, statesmen at the time, thought of a project to change the nation forever. At the time it was the largest engineering feat, not only in Australia but also globally. Thirty nations came together in the workforce required to build the great scheme. It took three decades to deliver 225 kilometres of pipeline and aqueducts, nine power stations and 16 dams. It was

a significant infrastructure project and one that we should be proud of as a nation. At the time the nation understood that it could build the impossible.

The celebration on Saturday was exciting because we were surrounded by hundreds of former scheme workers. I am the son of Italian migrants. My father did not work on the scheme but my father-in-law did. He said to me once that it was the toughest work, it was the coldest work, it was hard work, but it was also one of the most enjoyable times of his arrival in Australia. That was because of the camaraderie, the mateship and the way the people of Cooma and the Snowy Mountains embraced the migrants who came to a new nation. For me, as the son of migrants, when we talk about immigration in this country, there is no question that the Snowy scheme and that region was the melting pot for multiculturalism, where nations came together for the betterment of the country and its future generations.

This significant infrastructure project is just as important to the energy market and water infrastructure today as it was then. As I said, we had politicians, to whom I refer as statesmen, who were visionary. They looked beyond the election cycle and built a project, which the original decision-makers were not there to cut the ribbon on, because of its importance to the nation. Imagine today in this environment of political correctness, red and green tape, trying to build something like the Snowy scheme. Imagine going to a community called Adaminaby and saying: "We are going to move you to the top of the hill"—when I say "move", it was not about building them new homes, but literally picking up their homes and putting them up on the hill—"so we can flood Old Adaminaby and turn it into a dam reservoir for future generations."

Imagine that community today, the outcry, the backlash that one would receive, and the political climate with The Greens being opposed to anything environmental. Today they use the data and the science to stop development. Our forefathers at the time used the data and the science to build something. That is a significant difference from today compared with our forefathers. The celebration on Saturday gave us the opportunity to meet a number of workers who told us great stories. I heard from a nurse who said she might have broken the rules at the time, but she met her husband. He was a Pom who worked on the scheme and got injured, ended up in the hospital and from there she quietly and romantically fell in love with him. They are still together today.

There are great stories especially from my heritage, the Italian story of a lot of migrants coming together and finding new friendships, building families and the scheme. A lot of those skilled workers who came from those nations built businesses to also supply the scheme. They went on to do more and built the nation's capital as well. It clearly shows that immigration has been a positive story for this country, one we should be very proud of and talk about. The Snowy scheme is celebrating 70 years and we are just about to embark on Snowy 2.0, so my region gets to relive the past all over again.

The idea of Snowy 2.0 is the big battery to underpin renewables in this nation. It will again bring up to 10,000 people to the region in the next 10 years—skilled workers, businesses and the supply chain. Once again the Snowy Mountains will get an opportunity to experience something from the past, which is very rare. An experience that I know has left a positive imprint on the communities that I represent as the member for Monaro. That is something of which I am very proud and we will get to do that all over again. To all of those who celebrated, to Snowy Hydro CEO Paul Broad and his team who put on a wonderful celebration on Saturday, and most importantly to the hundreds of people who turned out, especially to the former workforce of Snowy Hydro, I say well done. Congratulations and happy seventieth anniversary.

#### MURDER OF NICHOLAS MCEVOY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:30:35):** There are a number of crimes that have had a major impact on our community in the electorate of Prospect and throughout western Sydney. Tragic murders such as that of Anita Cobby—who was from southern Blacktown—and five-year-old Nicole Hanns from Greystanes, not far from where I live with my children. I thank the New South Wales police detectives and the Director of Public Prosecutions who have brought these murderers to justice. But, sadly, a recent murder has impacted on my community and many people throughout western Sydney: the murder of Nicholas McEvoy.

On 21 February 2014 Nicholas McEvoy was struck and killed on Richmond Road, Glendenning, by a van driven by a man by the name of Michael Meakin. Meakin was charged with murder and in October 2016 stood trial before a jury. The jury found him guilty. The court sentenced Meakin to a non-parole period of 18 years. The facts behind the trial are these: Meakin was drinking and playing pool at the Plumpton Hotel at Glendenning. At some point Meakin spoke with Nicholas McEvoy. When Nicholas was outside leaving the pub Meakin exchanged words that were not friendly. At that point Meakin took a swing at Nicholas's head and he blocked the punch. Nicholas was not aggressive, he was simply defending himself.

Meakin watched Nicholas leave and walk down Richmond Road. Shortly thereafter Meakin drove his van from the hotel car park. He turned right into Dublin Street and then, contrary to the no right turn sign, turned

right into Richmond Road. Meakin actually lived in the opposite direction. At that point Nicholas was walking along the nature strip. Meakin saw him and drove at 60 kilometres an hour, mounted the gutter onto the nature strip and struck Nicholas almost straight on. The pathologist considered that death occurred instantaneously. Meakin had used his van as a weapon. Meakin did not stop but drove home where he parked the van at the back of his property out of sight.

Meakin to this day has shown no remorse. At no time has he expressed any sympathy for Nicholas or his family. He had previous convictions for assault and high-range drink driving. Meakin appealed his conviction. The Court of Appeal stated that the trial judge erred on leaving to the jury that Meakin's fleeing of the scene was evidence of his guilt. The conviction was quashed and a retrial was ordered. This time Meakin was arraigned before a judge alone trial on an indictment of murder and, in the alternative, dangerous driving occasioning death. Unlike the first jury trial, and despite the Crown Prosecutor putting forward the same evidence and arguments, the judge alone trial found Meakin not guilty of murder. He pleaded guilty to the lesser charge and is now awaiting sentencing.

The McEvoy family has raised a number of serious allegations about the decision and the conduct of the second trial. The allegations are troubling and I have serious concerns about the decision and the conduct of this case. The allegations can be summed up as follows. The trial was originally set down for a three-week period, but this was extended to a six-week period due to the regular absence of the trial judge. Regularly the court only sat for half days at the instruction of the trial judge. The trial judge was allegedly seen drinking alcohol during the lunch period. The trial judge breached the Charter of Victims Rights as proscribed under the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013, in that the judge's attitude and actions showed little respect, courtesy or dignity for the McEvoy family.

I wrote to the Attorney General on 15 October 2019 to ask that he give consideration to the concerns raised by the McEvoy family. That he review what measures need to be taken to investigate these allegations and whether the determination reached in the decision needs to be reconsidered and challenged. Further, I requested that the Attorney General give consideration to referring these allegations to the Judicial Commission of NSW and Victims Services at the New South Wales Department of Justice. In the interests of justice for our community, I ask that the Attorney General act on these requests. Finally, I would like to read an extract from the victim impact statement of Nicholas's mother, Marie:

I fail to find the words to express how Nick's murder has affected my family and me.

It's almost impossible to describe the loss, pain, anger, and overwhelming sadness that haunts me on a daily basis...

Nick did not deserve to die on the footpath, so close to home and all on his own...

We all loved Nick and miss him every day, on every family occasion.

I ask that members of this Parliament stand with the McEvoy family and seek justice for Nicholas. I thank the House.

### KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (19:36:05):** There is no doubt that Ku-ring-gai offers an abundance of recreational activities catering for every age and stage of life. While winter has kept most of us cooped up indoors, spring has most definitely blossomed, the clocks have gone forward and there is no better way to enjoy the season than getting outdoors and making the most of the daylight hours. From hikes, picnics, bike riding, gardening and golf to just enjoying the tranquillity of the bush, Ku-ring-gai's leafy region is not only adored by its residents but also as a destination on weekends for visitors, being just 40 minutes from the CBD.

As many people would know, studies have shown that spending time in or living near natural spaces is associated with a diverse range of health benefits. With that in mind, with the weather gradually warming up, despite the recent and much-needed rain, I have assembled some of Ku-ring-gai's top things to do with family and friends this spring and summer. One of Ku-ring-gai's hidden gems is Bicentennial Park, located in West Pymble and home to the Ku-ring-gai Fitness and Aquatic Centre, Golden Grove playground, West Pymble Bicentennial Club, numerous walking and cycling tracks and an off-leash dog exercise area, and it plays host to community events. With its verdant setting and spacious lawns, Golden Grove playground within the park is popular with family gatherings, parties and mothers' groups. The space offers two playgrounds, barbecues and undercover picnic tables, and just beyond lie lush green lawns, perfect for that weekend family cricket game.

In 2012 the West Pymble pool was closed to accommodate the reconstruction of the YMCA Ku-ring-gai Fitness and Aquatic Centre. Its operators believe in building healthier, happier and better-connected communities. The centre, which opened in 2014, offers year-round swimming with an outdoor 50-metre pool and indoor heated 25-metre pool, a health club, a creche, a cafe and surrounding play areas for the kids. However, if you are someone

who enjoys a relaxed Sunday afternoon, then why not book barefoot bowls at the West Pymble Bicentennial Club. The club is family friendly and offers a bar and bistro—a popular destination for locals.

A more intangible effect of spending time outdoors is what it does for one's appreciation for nature. The Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is one of the largest land areas and it is shared between Hornsby and Pittwater. In the last sitting week, I appreciated hearing the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and member for Pittwater, speak about his contribution to the plan of management for the park, as it is a recreational favourite for my community and visitors alike. The heritage-listed park is Australia's second-oldest national park and anyone who drives, cycles or walks down to Bobbin Head will know what it has to offer with its attractions and facilities. Along with being a great place for bushwalking—and for this I recommend the Gibberagong track, which is a little over eight kilometres long—the park offers fantastic camping sites, picnic areas, mountain bike trails, breathtaking lookouts and significant Aboriginal sites.

Furthermore, Ku-ring-gai is lucky to share not one but two national parks in New South Wales, with the Lane Cove National Park just on the southern side of my electorate shared with Epping. Ku-ring-gai residents are very proud of both parks and do not take for granted how fortunate we are to have them outside our backdoors. If bushwalking is not on your to-do list then why not soak up the atmosphere and sunshine at one of the markets held in Ku-ring-gai. Markets offer value for money and often raise funds for local not-for-profits, as well as being a great way for the community to get together. On the second Sunday of each month, Turramurra and Ku-ring-gai Rotary clubs hold the Gordon Markets in the public car park behind the station. Stalls include clothing, stationary, books, food, plants and Normanhurst resident Michael Ackerman's antique stall. Michael started his interest in antiques 35 years ago and has been attending the Gordon Markets since it first operated 25 years ago.

October is also the month for the Wahroonga Food and Wine Festival, which returns to Wahroonga Park, another local favourite, this Sunday 27 October. Held annually and up to its seventh year, all are welcome to this fun-filled day to meet winemakers, taste a selection of gourmet food and, to add to the vibrant community atmosphere, live music and performances by local schools will be heard. Ku-ring-gai is not just a great place for our residents; it is a vibrant destination spot. I look forward to getting out myself with family and friends and enjoying what Ku-ring-gai has to offer. We also are enjoying some interesting wildlife at the moment, including brush turkeys—they are very fond of my garden.

#### **LANE COVE ELECTORATE COMMUNITY HERO JENI ZUBER**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections)**  
**(19:41:15):** Friends in the House and the people of New South Wales, it is with great joy that I bring to your attention one of Lane Cove's community heroes, Jeni Zuber. Retirement for many people is a chance to kick the feet up and do the day's crossword, but for Jeni Zuber it was an opportunity to dive into community work. Since her retirement, Jeni Zuber has dedicated at least three days every week to numerous grassroots and national charitable groups and organisations. Without people like Jeni, the communities we live in would not be the places they are today. Thanks to Jeni's volunteering, the elderly and disabled can continue to live in their homes, maintaining a morale-boosting level of independence while reducing the pressure on our aged-care facilities.

Organisations that provide support and deliver enjoyment to children suffering through illness or disability would not be able to do so without the time donated by Jeni and others. Moreover, women and young children trying to escape abusive homes would struggle to survive without organisations such as Share the Dignity and the Nappy Collective, which again rely on the many beautiful people who volunteer their time to help keep these good causes running. The satisfaction that Jeni receives through the good that she does and the example she sets for her family, friends and our local community is why we have nominated her for Lane Cove's 2019 Community Hero of the Year.

**Mr Nathaniel Smith:** Hear, hear!

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I thank the member for Wollondilly for his support of Jeni. She is involved in numerous organisations that assist those in need. She undertakes volunteer cooking for Dignity, an organisation that supports people in housing crisis due to experiencing domestic violence. One of the ways Dignity supports its clients is through the provision of healthy, home-cooked meals, made with love. These meals are then distributed to those living in emergency accommodation. Jeni will spend more than eight hours a week cooking the meals in her home, in addition to another eight hours driving out to the organisation's facility to collect the ingredients and then return the prepared meals. In the last month alone she has made over 200 meals.

Jeni is involved in the sanitary item collection for Share the Dignity. Share the Dignity's work directly benefits women in crisis, and Jeni helps out with its "It's in the Bag" campaign. She collects everyday goods such as toothpaste, deodorant, soap and sanitary items and sorts them into handbags, which can be given to those

lacking these essential items that everyone else takes for granted. Jeni spends approximately 300 hours a year volunteering her time to pack the bags, source donations and more.

Then we have Jeni's nappy collection for The Nappy Collective, which aims to support women with young children in dealing with domestic violence. Jeni assists with nappy collection and donation twice a year. She runs a personal donation drive amongst her network that has seen thousands of nappies donated to people fleeing dangerous home situations. Then we have her admin work for Redkite, which provides support to children and young people dealing with cancer. Jeni works in their offices 250 hours a year performing various administrative tasks to help keep the organisation running without the additional burden of the administration cost and has done so for the past couple of years.

Then, dare I say, we have her food delivery for Meals on Wheels, which aims to maintain the independence of the elderly and disabled. Jeni gives up one to two days a month delivering food to those in need. Her service is more than just providing meals; she takes the time to connect and check in on each client to ensure they are well. Over the years her cheery demeanour has endeared her to so many people. Then—we have not finished yet—we have her administration work for Touched by Olivia, which is a foundation that builds inclusive playgrounds for all children. As she has with Red Kite, Jeni has donated one to two days a month to assist with fundraising drives and administrative work required in the office. Jeni has been an incredible asset to this small grassroots organisation and it would be lost without her. Jeni's work ethic and dedication to serving those in need continues to set the standard for our community and, indeed, our nation. That is why we have proudly nominated her as our local community hero of the year. On behalf of a grateful community in the State of New South Wales and on behalf of the Commonwealth, I thank you, Jeni.

### OURIMBAH RAILWAY STATION

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:46:19):** Ourimbah railway station is the oldest remaining serviceable railway architecture on the Sydney to Newcastle line. The station on the Newcastle platform, which is now referred to as platform 2, was one of the first railway structures built when construction on the Newcastle to Gosford line began in 1887 during the fourth premiership of that enthusiastic railway supporter and Father of Federation, Sir Henry Parkes. The railway station at Ourimbah was built before the completion of the Sydney to Newcastle line, which did not open until 1891. It is one of the few remaining timber structures that records our railway heritage in New South Wales. It is not only important for the State, but is also immensely important for the local community's sense of place and sense of history of the local region. Heritage NSW reports:

The station comprises a rare and highly intact grouping of original railway buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century including platform buildings ... The station building on Platform 2 is rare as one of the last surviving original buildings to remain from the opening of the line from Sydney to Newcastle and is of high significance in its own right ... The grouping of platform buildings, signal box, toilet annexe, station master's residence and adjacent park containing the town War Memorial also demonstrate both the major development phases of the railway station and exemplify the late nineteenth and early twentieth century attitude to railway construction and planning principles. The station has retained the same landmark qualities within the town since it was constructed.

Ourimbah railway station is one of 22 heritage items located in the Ourimbah village, so it is very important for the area. Tonight I will talk about the stationmaster's residence and the stationmaster's cottage, and the progress of that building's treatment as part of our State's heritage. In 2016 I made inquiries as to why, during the maintenance, refurbishment and repainting of the railway group of buildings at Ourimbah, the stationmaster's cottage was not being repainted and upgraded as well. I was surprised to learn that it was not included in the Ourimbah station refurbishment as the outcomes of the conservation strategy endorsed by the Heritage Council of NSW deemed it not suitable for retention. The Minister's office advised me:

... the stationmaster's cottage at Ourimbah is structurally unsound and has been cut off from the rest of the station precinct by the realignment of the Pacific Highway. These factors make it unsuitable for use. It was therefore recommended for demolition under this strategy.

So I began a community campaign. I thank the Ourimbah community, especially the Ourimbah residents and ratepayers association, and my constituents for getting on board to protect that heritage. Our petitioning and the pressure we put on the Government paid off as we obtained a six-month reprieve on the demolition. That reprieve later became indefinite. Our continued representations have meant that in the past six months the stationmaster's cottage has begun to be refurbished. It is a double victory for the Ourimbah community and my constituents in The Entrance community in the protection of our heritage.

The last advice I have received is that the stationmaster's cottage has received routine maintenance, including an annual termite inspection, condition inspection and works as required to maintain the property at its current condition. Additional works are scheduled for completion in June 2019, including repairs to the roof, external painting and floor repairs. Those works have proceeded. I thank my community for supporting me. We are heading in the right direction. I will not rest in my vigilance to protect my community's heritage. This is an

important part of our community and an important record of Ourimbah's origins. We will continue to work until we have the cottage back to a suitable condition.

#### **LIFELINE CENTRAL WEST**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:51:31):** It gives me pleasure to talk in this House tonight about a significant organisation that provides support not only in the Bathurst and Central West areas, but also in other communities like Orange, Lithgow and even all the way to Dubbo. This is the organisation known as Lifeline Central West. Late last week I joined Mayor of Bathurst Bobby Bourke and Lifeline's CEO Alex Ferguson, executive director Stephanie Robertson, volunteers and members of the board for the official opening of Lifeline's refurbished building. The organisation's headquarters have moved from Stewart Street in Bathurst to the corner of Rankin Street and Howick Street in the city, its brand-new home.

The New South Wales Government provided funding of \$162,000 towards the refurbishment of Lifeline's building. This has seen some refurbishing and some major modifications to the inside of the building. When you have a look at the work, you can see it makes a big difference to the way in which that facility can operate. The building has a telephone centre, training facilities and the capacity to deal with people who may be dealing with some of the darkest moments in their lives and lend them support. Any amount of money that goes towards this cause is a significant support to this organisation that provides incredible support to individuals, their families and their loved ones. It also goes beyond that: It provides support to the volunteers who give up their time, become telephone counsellors and listen to the stories of those who are picking up the phone and calling that organisation.

Lifeline Central West plays a pivotal role in the local community, providing support around mental health, domestic violence, financial issues, gambling addiction, and drug and alcohol counselling. Lifeline's new building gives it the capacity to train the volunteers within the facility. It is quite light and bright due to the painting that has taken place. We used a local company, MJC Building Group, to undertake that work in the local area.

A lot of people think of Lifeline Central West as just the 13 11 44 telephone number, but they actually answer around 13,000 calls a year as part of the Lifeline Australia network. Lifeline Central West is funded by the New South Wales Government, which recognises that all communities benefit from Lifeline's work. Minister Rob Stokes knows the valuable work that it provides. We opened that new building for Lifeline last week, but I also acknowledge that the Government announced additional funding over the next three years towards supporting our most vulnerable tenants and home owners in our area with vital education, advice and advocacy services. Lifeline Central West received a grant of \$557,000 from the Government to ensure that the most vulnerable tenants and home owners will receive the information and support that they may need from time to time.

During the week we announced the No Interest Loan Scheme, which makes available loans of up to \$1,500 for people on low incomes to purchase essential goods and services such as fridges and washing machines, or educational and medical expenses. Lifeline Central West held the Mega Book Fair over the weekend, which has become an important fundraiser for the organisation. On Saturday it raised \$26,000 and there was a focus on mental health. People were able to have a casual conversation and share their stories, which was quite important as well. I acknowledge some other programs that Lifeline Central West is currently undertaking, including an anxiety support group that provides a safe place for people to share their stories and talk to one another. They have just initiated a new program known as Walk 'n' Talk where people can come together to talk about and deal with stigma, and other issues around mental health.

#### **TRIBUTE TO DR JIM MACKEN, AM**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:56:50):** It is a great honour to acknowledge the incredible contribution of the Hon. Dr Jim Macken, AM, late of the coastal hamlet of Coasters Retreat in my community of Pittwater. While diminutive in stature and personal ego, Jim was a giant. He was a father to 11 children, grandfather to 23 grandchildren, author of no fewer than 19 books, historian, unionist, judge of the Industrial Court of New South Wales, life member of the Labor Party, Member of the Order of Australia and a legend of Pittwater. Jim's contribution to his local community, to New South Wales and to our nation has been immense. I remember many occasions as a teenager talking to Jim over at the Basin on the western foreshores of Pittwater, hearing his tales of law, of life and of history.

Born just prior to the Great Depression into some of Australia's most well-known families, the Foyes and the Mackens, Jim had a lifelong commitment to social justice and the concept of a fair go for all. His Catholic faith and education informed his compassion and constant focus on those less fortunate. The sheer length and variety of his career, combined with his humanity and intellect, forged an uncommonly wise man. Members opposite are undergoing a moment of introspection about how to fix the corrosive issues that have ailed the party over the past 10 years. It reminds me quite vividly of conversations with Jim, who had quite a reformist view on

how to fix the Labor Party. His thesis was that what is wrong with the Labor Party is that the unions it seeks to represent have become so big and impersonal, consolidated and faceless that, ironically, they have become the mirror image of the corporations it seeks to hold to account.

He also argued that as the unions have grown in size they have shrunk in diversity, becoming more of a public sector union rump rather than a broad reflection of working people across the economy. The dominance of public sector unions in the Labor Party presents a conflict of interest. The conflict, according to the thesis, is between the interests of union members working for the Government and the interests of good government, to which the Labor Party should institutionally aspire. Jim believed that if the unions control the government of the day there is an inherent corruption risk for that government, which then sets the union members' wages and conditions. Members opposite are also members of associated unions of the Labor Party.

Members of the other place are often appointed to their positions by associated unions of the Labor Party directly. If unions want to survive into the future they need to align themselves with their people, not the politicians they seek to influence. They need to disconnect from the Labor Party and the innate corruption risk posed by that affiliation. To share my experience based on conversations with Jim, one of the great things I enjoyed in my time as education Minister was my relationship with the NSW Teachers Federation. It is not an affiliated union of the Labor Party, so I always felt I could speak quite freely and frankly with its members without feeling like I was talking to an institutionally affiliated branch of the Labor Party. Its integrity was in its independence from any party.

The NSW Teachers Federation's unwillingness to align its priorities and the priorities of those it represents with the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, or any other political party for that matter, was its strength. But you do not have to take my word for it; a member opposite agrees. In his inaugural speech in this place Mr Chris Minns said that trade unionists are "shackled by an association within our Labor tribe" and that the Labor Party had to "take steps to reduce union control". As members opposite reflect on the corrosive culture of their tribe, I encourage them to reflect on Jim's ideas. I knew him personally, and I know that he was a giant of industrial law, he was a giant of our community, and he was generous with his wisdom and his expertise. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the pleasure of listening to his big ideas and observing his passion for social justice.

I recall on several occasions hearing about his deep compassion for Aboriginal people at a time when that was not yet something that was widely considered by the community at large. I was fascinated when he showed me evidence of thousands and thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation within the community I represent. He then hurriedly covered up the evidence so it would not be damaged. I speak for many when I say that Jim will be sorely missed in our community. He was a good man, a great man. May he rest in peace and may his great ideas live on.

### NSW POLICE FORCE STRIP SEARCH PRACTICES

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:02:00):** A number of locals have spoken to me recently about strip searches conducted by the NSW Police Force. It is easy to dismiss this as a young person's issue, but the fact is that it is parents who are overwhelmingly concerned. The recent revelations from the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission's review into police actions at last year's Splendour in the Grass festival are appalling. We have learned that seven minors were stripsearched at the event and only one in the presence of a parent or guardian, as is required by law. We have learned that just 8.4 per cent of people stripsearched at the Splendour in the Grass were found to be in possession of illicit drugs. Today we heard from one of the police officers involved, who said that none of the strip searches conducted at the festival may have been legal.

This experience is reflected in the report from the Redfern Legal Centre, in conjunction with the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales, entitled *Rethinking Strip Searches by NSW Police*. The report reveals that there has been a twentyfold increase in the number of strip searches between 2006 and 2018, with a total of 5,483 searches conducted in the 12 months up to 30 June 2018; only 30 per cent of strip searches in that period resulted in a criminal charge, with 82 per cent of charges for the summary offence of possession and less than 16.5 per cent resulting in charges of supply; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people account for 10 per cent of all recorded strip searches; and 45 per cent of all strip searches—that is almost half—were conducted on people aged 25 years and younger.

Those statistics lay bare a stark truth about strip searches: They are not effectively targeting supply and, similar to sniffer dogs, are wrong more often than they are right. The story that the statistics do not tell is the emotional damage that is wrought on young and vulnerable people. Reading case studies from the Redfern Legal Centre's report confirms that conclusion. A young woman, Emma, was stripsearched at a music festival after a false identification by a drug dog. Emma was a survivor of sexual assault. She said:

... when I was being strip searched, I felt the same feelings I felt during that assault. This is just one of the stories in the report and it shows how it is the most vulnerable who are often impacted most by strip searches. In fact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



account for 10 per cent of field strip searches, 22 per cent of strip searches in custody and 45 per cent of all recorded strip searches of people under 25 years of age. Strip searches disproportionately impact survivors of sexual assault, with the report finding that strip searches "reproduce the dynamics of sexual assault and re-traumatise" survivors. A local parent who visited and spoke to me about strip searches did not want their kids to take drugs; but they know that a "just say no" approach will not work.

Continuing to approach illicit drug use through a punitive law-and-order approach will only get us so far. That is broadly accepted, it seems, except by those opposite. The parents who speak to me are deeply concerned that their kids will be stripsearched, often in a public space; asked to strip or partially strip, asked to squat and cough, to bend over, and to lift their breasts or testicles. They are concerned at the lack of clarity in the definition of what actually constitutes a strip search: Is pulling clothing from a person a strip search? It is important to have clarity because the definition determines the procedures police are to follow.

I am concerned at reports that this lack of clarity is leading to basic procedures not being followed, including reports where officers of the same sex have not been present during strip searches by officers of the opposite sex. I am concerned about how this lack of clarity may determine whether strip searches occur with minors, particularly without the presence of a parent or guardian. It is clear that the use of sniffer dogs and strip searches is more about intimidation than results. It is my firm view that these methods of enforcement should not be used in the way that they are as a method of deterrent—and it is clear that this is not working.

We need to act now to strengthen the legislative framework under which strip searches occur, including making the law clearer about what constitutes a strip search; strengthening limitations on when strip searches can be conducted, both in public and at police stations; ensuring searches of children are conducted in accordance with child protection principles and only with a court order; and improving accountability, record keeping and review mechanisms. The report offers appropriate recommendations that deserve consideration by this House and the Parliament. Parents have made it clear to me that they will not stand silent as their kids are subject to humiliating and degrading strip searches, seemingly allowed by a loose interpretation of the current law.

#### NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS DAY

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (20:06:58):** A very special event is coming up on Sunday 27 October as communities and families throughout New South Wales will come together to celebrate Grandparents Day. This is a fantastic time of the year as we are reminded of the tremendous contribution grandparents continue to make to our families and throughout the broader community. I must admit I really do love this initiative, as the enormous contribution that grandparents make is too often overlooked and they do not really receive the appreciation they so rightfully deserve.

Each year, on the last Sunday in October, the Grandparents Day campaign strives to recognise and promote the contribution of grandparents and the diverse roles they play in today's modern Australian society. Irrespective of age group, cultural background and geographical location, grandparents continue to undertake increasingly diverse roles in their families. This has become far more prevalent in recent years as the fast-paced lives we all strive to juggle become increasingly complex and the need to streamline the workload throughout the household increases. I would not be surprised if the next big addition to the Marvel cinematic universe is titled "Grandparents" because they are the real-life superheroes who continue to stand as the backbone in communities across New South Wales.

As the member for Fairfield, I can attest to the tremendous contribution throughout our local area of grandparents and senior members of our community, from volunteering to caring for individuals with sickness or disabilities, mentoring and teaching. Grandparents in our community have a wealth of knowledge, a diverse skill set, and the desire to assist and support those in need throughout the community. I recently attended the truly wonderful celebration of the eighth annual Grandparents Day, otherwise known as Nonni Day, hosted by Associazione I Nonni at Club Marconi. This celebration serves as an opportunity for the community to get together to acknowledge the tremendous contributions made by grandparents throughout the year, and thank them for their ongoing hard work and dedication to their family, friends and community.

I am pleased to advise that the celebrations were very well attended. The community was joined by Dr Andrea de Felip, Consul-General of Italy; Dr Geoff Lee, member of Parliament and acting Minister for multiculturalism; Mr Joe Commisso, the President and Ambassador of the Associazione I Nonni; Mr Antonio Bamonte, AOM, Vice-President of the Associazione I Nonni; and numerous other distinguished guests. I draw attention to one special guest who was in attendance, Professor Concetta Cirigliano Perna, the editor of *A Journey Back to Origins*. This literary project received over 60 story submissions that beautifully portrayed the lives of Italian migrants through the eyes of their grandchildren. Submissions were received by second generation young Italians who recounted the life of their grandparents prior to emigrating and following their arrival here in Australia. I promise you, reading through these stories will bring a tear to your eye as these young Italians recount the tales of hardship and adversity that their nonna and nonno faced when emigrating to a new land to start anew.

These children, who would be used to today's modern comforts and privileges, took their grandparents by the hand as they delved through their memories, retracing the long journey that took them away from Italy, which had been devastated by two world wars, and led them to this great country filled with opportunity, promises and the great unknown. It is beautiful to see such raw emotion, passion and memories retold through the voice of their nipoti, which means "grandchildren" in Italian. This really struck home for me, as the son of Italian migrants who had to overcome adversity and slogged it out in a foreign land, which, over time, became known as home.

On a personal note, I acknowledge the contribution of my nephew, Julian Fedele, and his recounting of the tale of his grandparents', Francesco and Giovanna Pellegrino, who happen to be my in-laws and are great people. I say to my nephew: Well done on preparing and presenting a book of the family history. As the years come and go, change is inevitable. Thankfully, some things do not ever change, such as the role of grandparents in our lives. Grandparents are, and will forever be, cherished and respected for their lifetime of unconditional love, friendship and sacrifice, all in the name of family. To all the grandparents out there, thank you for everything that you have done and everything you will continue to do. On behalf of the Fairfield electorate, we hope you have a fantastic Grandparents Day this Sunday.

#### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:11:56):** From our stunning harbour views to our spectacular beaches, my North Shore community has some of the most beautiful natural landscapes in Australia. Not only is our natural environment beautiful, it is precious, and it affects us every day of our lives. In the North Shore electorate I am proud to see the Berejiklian Government continuing to protect and preserve our environment. Delivering on our \$10 million Middle Head and Georges Head masterplan, we are progressing the creation of a three-kilometre walking track linking Middle Head and Georges Head to the Sydney Harbour scenic walk. I joined local residents and community groups recently for an information session with national parks and wildlife services to hear about the progress of the upgrade, and I am pleased to see that the feedback received so far has been very positive.

I thank locals, including Mosman Parks and Bushland Association President Kate Eccles, Mosman Historical Society Secretary Anne Fernandez, Headland Preservation Group, Mosman Council and the National Parks And Wildlife Service, including local ranger Mel Tyas, for getting so involved in this project. It is a testament to their commitment to protect our local environment. Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, joined me recently to explore the walking track, in particular the battlements and military fortifications around the area. I thank the Minister for delivering this project and for his commitment to protect the environment across the North Shore.

Nestled between two heritage fig trees in Milsons Point is another wonderful green space. The newly opened Northcliff Park started with a \$3.2 million investment delivered by the Berejiklian Government to purchase the land to save it from the risk of development and turn it into a public park. I thank the Minister for property for joining me and my community to officially open Northcliff Park. It is a stunning slice of nature and local history in my electorate. With environmentally sustainable, locally sourced and recycled materials utilised in Northcliff Park's construction, I am proud to see our Government's sustainability commitment in action. I especially thank local residents who were lobbying for this park for quite some time and were working with the Government to deliver it: David Bowman, Ian Curdie, Joan Street, John Mitchell, Judith Kirby, Julia Connor and North Sydney Councillor Ian Mutton. They were very involved in the development of the park. With Northcliff Park now officially open, I look forward to delivering our next commitment to expand Blues Point Reserve with the acquisition of 1 Henry Lawson Avenue.

As the millions of people who visit every year could tell you, some exceptional environment protection programs are going on at Taronga Zoo in my electorate. Recently I joined the environment Minister there to meet some critically endangered corroboree frogs, which are part of one of the many breeding programs at Taronga that are helping to save our species from potential extinction. But wildlife protection is not the only thing going on at Taronga Zoo. Its Return and Earn collection point is a popular drop-off for Mosman Public School's Sustainability Club. The school recently won the Return and Earn Litter Prevention Award for schools for its recycling efforts.

I commend Mosman Public School for its recycling initiative, which also raises funds for environmental charity Take 3 for the Sea. I also acknowledge P&C president Amanda Scammell; committee members Jenni Hagland, Sarah Angus and Maggie Jackson, and the many members of the Mosman Public School P&C for empowering kids to be environmentally conscious and bringing a sustainability focus to the school. I note in particular that their outstanding fundraising efforts secured over \$18,000, which will be matched by the New South Wales Department of Education to get solar panels through the Solar my School program, with support also from the Purryburry Trust.

Over at the Sydney Institute of Marine Science [SIMS], some phenomenal marine research under the leadership of Professor Peter Steinberg is supporting and informing conservation efforts across the country and around the globe. Using infrared lasers to measure the amount of microplastics found inside oysters, SIMS is currently working on research to understand the full biological and environmental impacts posed by plastics. North Shore is blessed with stunning harbour foreshore and magnificent beaches, so protecting our marine and coastal environments is something the people in my electorate are very passionate about. The electorate was home to the late Ian Kiernan, AO. I am proud that Clean Up Australia Day is still thriving in North Shore. I recognise the 1st North Sydney Scout Group, which I joined again this year at Sawmillers Reserve for Clean Up Australia Day. In particular, I commend Rob Blayney for coordinating the event and encouraging social responsibility from a young age.

I acknowledge Responsible Runners Balmoral, which is a group of locals who use their passion for staying fit to tackle marine rubbish pollution. The group meets every month for a run and spends half an hour cleaning up Balmoral Beach. I thank Eva Kiss and Mary Botto, who have been running the group for years. Recently group members picked up 161 cigarette butts, 45 pieces of hard plastic and over 350 pieces of soft plastic. That is just one of the reasons why we need to address plastics in our environments, and I support the Government's efforts to do so.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (20:17:09):** I am delighted to acknowledge the Local Government NSW Annual Conference 2019, which was held recently at Warwick Farm. I was delighted to attend and I was particularly delighted to engage with all of the mayors, general managers, councillors and stakeholders from the 128 councils right across our State. I congratulate the Deputy Mayor of Sydney, Councillor Linda Scott, for being returned as President of Local Government NSW [LGNSW]. I congratulate all of the other board members who were elected. I also congratulate everyone else who ran for election to the board. They had the courage of their convictions to stand for what they believe in for local government, which we know is the important level of government.

The 2019 conference started on 14 October and ended on 16 October. I was delighted to attend and meet with so many stakeholders. The news is clear: They feel disengaged and that they need the attention that they deserve. When we talk about water, I cannot help but think about the devastating circumstances throughout rural and regional New South Wales and all those farmers, primary producers and businesses that are struggling at the moment. But we must not lose sight of the fact that those councils manage the assets that we know as dams. They do feel quite lost at the moment; that was discussed intently at the conference and I paid close attention.

The forced amalgamations have had detrimental effects throughout our State and some of those amalgamated councils need to be reviewed in certain areas. I cannot help but bring up Cootamundra and Gundagai. I have been down there and have spoken to that community and they are deeply concerned. The finances of that forced amalgamation must be reviewed for the sake of its financial success going forward and for the people of Gundagai. I cannot forget Tumbarumba. I know the Snowy Valleys Council is going through challenges. I remember talking to stakeholders at that conference, but I believe the Mayor of Snowy Valleys Council has the best intentions and is doing his best for what he feels is right. In the former Gloucester Shire, Great Lakes and Greater Taree council areas—now MidCoast Council—10,000-plus people signed a petition. I thank them for doing so. That community is a powering force. I acknowledge that the member for Myall Lakes is present. I also acknowledge that the member for Upper Hunter is not present; I am not sure where he stands on the matters that exist in his community.

The waste levy continues to be an issue. Only 11 per cent of revenue was fed back to local councils to manage waste, which is simply unacceptable. Some innovations are in place where government could use that money to provide the incentive, direction or leadership that councils are crying for. In the 2018-19 budget, the waste levy was in excess of \$800 million but only \$628 million, or something like that, was fed back. We could do a lot with that amount of money. We cannot return it all, but what we are giving back we can use more sensibly.

Resources for Regions continues to be a concern. There was meant to be \$50 million available for local government areas with a heavy mining industry presence. I met with representatives of Singleton Council and it has nothing. It is one of the largest mining communities in our State. To its credit, it has applied many times and it has missed out time and again. I know the circumstances of the application, but that is where we rely on government to provide them with direction and leadership. At the end of the day, local government needs to be about local people and State government needs to be about leadership and direction to provide what local councils need for local communities. It is apparent and very clear that this Government has failed to do so. I commit that a Labor government will provide that direction and leadership where and when required for the appropriate means. I thank the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (20:22:15):** The member for Campbelltown made a statement about a number of matters but I will touch on just a couple of those. He failed to say that in 2005 Labor forced a number of amalgamations by facsimile, without consultation and with no financial support, unlike this Government, which had substantial consultation from 2012 all the way through to when the amalgamations took place. They were also given significant financial assistance. For example, MidCoast Council was given \$20 million to assist with the cost of its amalgamation. The member mentioned water, but he failed to say that since 2016 this Government has built one dam at Nimmitabel, 14 pipelines—including a half billion dollar pipeline to Broken Hill—and 60 bores for towns out west. It has also just announced another three major dams with more to come. The member forgot to mention those important things when made his private member's statement, which was meant to be an opportunity to talk about his local community and not all things across the State.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I acknowledge that we have young people present in the gallery who are interested in the democratic process in New South Wales. That is something of note and I welcome them to the oldest Parliament in Australia. We love having you here.

### BEES NEST BUSHFIRE

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (20:24:24):** Words fail adequately to describe the absolute devastation caused by the recent Bees Nest Bushfire near Ebor and throughout the nearby national parks. Since the end of August, 106,018 hectares of land has been burnt out, with private property, native flora and fauna and people's livelihoods decimated by the blaze. Pristine bushland within the Guy Fawkes National Park has been reduced to a lifeless and smouldering landscape. The mop-up is ongoing and this month, Local Land Services [LLS] staff have been working tirelessly with local landholders to assess the losses of farm infrastructure including fencing, stockyards and sheds.

Sadly these losses extend to an estimated 398 head of livestock caught in the fire's grip. New losses are being discovered as the full picture starts to emerge from the ashes. In total, 149 properties have been impacted by this fire, and so far 109 of those properties have been visited by LLS for emergency assessment and to support landholders with emergency fodder. However, those losses also include the all-important fencing—boundary fencing in particular—and it is estimated that at least 2,250 kilometres of fence line was destroyed by fire and needs immediate replacing. On current estimates the cost of replacement sits at around \$10 a metre, so we can safely say that the total fencing bill is upwards of \$22 million.

The Bees Nest fire continues to burn, however, many landholders have now entered the recovery phase as they tally their individual losses and the cost of rebuilding their livelihoods—their farms. These farmers, already burdened with the pressures of drought, which is well known to this House, now face the prospect of rebuilding vital infrastructure like boundary fences. For those farmers who have boundaries with the national park that means reinstalling dog fences to protect what animals they have left from dangerous predators that lurk in national parks. My office has received multiple letters, emails and phone calls from farmers who have talked about how the fire has changed their mindset from facing the worst drought in history to now include processing the outcome of the worst fire in their local history.

Those landowners sharing a boundary with national parks are promised fencing materials from park management, but are then told the cost and time of constructing those fences is up to them. They feel that situation is an insult given that the fire is reported to have started inside the Guy Fawkes National Park. As a result of this fire landholders whose properties join Guy Fawkes National Park are now asking two main questions. I join them in posing those questions. First, what is NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service doing to manage fire fuel loads to prevent large-scale bushfires and how often are those processes being reviewed? Secondly, can a discussion be had between the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, the NSW Rural Fire Service and the impacted private landholders to allow for better and more consistent hazard reduction burning practices in the future? One property owner whose farm shares 10 kilometres of boundary with Guy Fawkes National Park and who lost a total of 22 kilometres of fence line told me in an email:

The devastation of our native woodland or forest is indescribable to a point where it may never recover to its original state along with the National Park.

To this point locking up park for environmental protection appears to be having a devastating opposite effect to what it was intended. Without some change in management wildfires will continually occur and will make it impossible for us to continue our business on adjacent land to parks.

Currently in New South Wales more than 50 bushfires are burning, with the largest of those inside national parks. Shockingly, the worst of the bush fire season may still be in front of us, given that we have not hit summer yet. I have written to Minister for Energy and Environment Matt Kean requesting a full and immediate review of fire management in the State's national parks. It is clear that landholders feel that there is a "lock it and leave it" approach to management in national parks, which is not good enough. I have also written to the Minister for Police

and Emergency Services demanding that a full public debriefing take place with those in Ebor who have been affected. I give the commitment today to continue to work with landholders, no matter how long it takes, to ensure that they get the support they need to get back on their feet.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper):** I thank the member for Northern Tablelands and acknowledge the incredible devastation that has been wrought upon his community. I am sure the community will get his support and, hopefully, the support that they need from the Government.

### WOMEN IN SPORT

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:20:50):** Today I celebrate the launch of the Sutherland Shire Sixers Girls Cricket League under-12 competition this weekend. The inaugural teams in the competition are from Bangor, Caringbah-Cronulla, Engadine-Bosco, and the club dearest to me in the Miranda electorate, Como-Illawong. It is exciting that there has been a massive expansion in the coverage and increased professionalisation of female sport. Cricket has been a leader in this positive trend since 2016 when now Premier Gladys Berejiklian launched the New South Wales women's cricket program. The New South Wales Breakers are one of, if not the first, domestic sporting team to professionalise women's sport, with all squad members earning a wage to participate as full-time cricketers. Girls' cricket in New South Wales continues to grow from strength to strength, with there being 283 dedicated girls' teams across the State last season, demonstrating an overall growth of 25 per cent.

Whilst cricket for girls has been growing steadily, local clubs have never before had the number of participants needed to run a dedicated girls-only competition in the shire. Now they do. The Sixers Girls Cricket League will facilitate an opportunity for girls to simply try cricket or even improve their skills in a positive environment amongst their peers. It gives them the opportunity that their brothers and friends have had for so long. It was my pleasure to support the Sutherland Shire Junior Cricket Association with \$15,000 towards this fantastic league. This funding will be used to provide specialist training and coaching, and new come-and-try sessions, including during school holiday periods, to encourage girls in the Miranda electorate to participate in sport and test their cricket skills. Furthermore, because we know that one of the barriers to female participation in sport is access to the correct equipment, I am delighted that this funding is being used to supply the Como-Illawong team with new equipment and uniforms.

I had the pleasure of meeting the amazing girls in the Como-Illawong team on Saturday morning as I presented them with their new cricket bats to start off their season. Whilst the girls from Como-Illawong fell to Engadine-Bosco in round one, their performance was outstanding considering they had only met for the first time the night before. I take this opportunity to congratulate Sophie Boyle, Elizabeth Baird, Chelsea Shar, Charlie Evans, Eve Doble, Gemma Raven, Tara Skelton and Gabriella Dicello, along with coach Renee Westwood. I want to highlight that the first hat-trick of the competition was scored by Gabriella and she even almost made it a double. The Como-Illawong team is a joint venture of players from both Como Jannali Junior Cricket Club and Illawong Menai Cricket Club, which have heavily supported increasing female participation and development in cricket. From Como Jannali Junior Cricket Club I acknowledge President Peter Conroy, Treasurer Geoff Fitzgerald, Secretary Brad Abrook, and girls coordinator Jason Felice. From Illawong Menai Cricket Club I recognise President Evan Watson, Treasurer Timothy Mattison, Secretary Mark Sterbic, and girls coordinator Warren Dess.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the hard work and efforts of the Sutherland Shire Junior Cricket Association, whose vision it was to make the Sixers Girls Cricket League a reality. I commend the executive committee at Sutherland Shire Junior Cricket Association, notably President Chris Hewitt, vice-presidents Roy Amos and Stuart Clark, and Secretary Terry Spyrides, as well as committee members Scott Phillipson, Roy Robinson, Mathew O'Brien, Raiko Miletich, Mathew Kennedy, Bill Johnson and the girls cricket coordinator, Warren Dess. None of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Justin De Domenico from Cricket NSW.

The committee's dedication to girls' participation in sport is evident not only in their facilitation of a Sixers Girls Cricket League but also in the organisation and training of an under-13 girls representative team. I acknowledge the team's coach, Dave Gibson, and manager, Jennene Abrook, as well as this fantastic group of girls, including Katie Abrook, Ava Blackburn, Holly Bold, Emily Davis, Hannah Gibson, Camryn Harland, Hayley Jurinario, Lucia Martin, Pinyada Mitchell, Juliette Morton and Aleisha Rutherford. I take this opportunity to extend my best wishes for their season and all those to follow. I wholeheartedly believe that it is fantastic to see such a positive trajectory for female sport across the State, but especially at home in our shire. I am so incredibly proud of the new Sixers Girls Cricket League, and am pleased I could contribute to the journey of the Como-Illawong team. I look forward to the day when we no longer have inaugural women's competitions and that the same pathways exist for women in sport across all codes. With the Women's Big Bash League competition

having just kicked off for the season as well as the ICC Women's T20 World Cup to commence in February, there has never been a better opportunity for girls to take up cricket.

### ANTI-POVERTY WEEK

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:34:40):** Last week was Anti-Poverty Week. As economics editor for *The Sydney Morning Herald* Ross Gittins stated in an opinion piece entitled "Politicians too poor at their jobs to fix poverty" on 15 October:

You could be forgiven for not knowing this is anti-poverty week.

I reflected on what he wrote and some comments at the time, as well as how little we members actually said about poverty and Anti-Poverty Week. I thought of other conversations that we have in this place, the issues that we discuss and the issues that we tackle. I am not saying that we do not care about poverty or that we do not want to tackle poverty, because I know that all members strive to do what they can for their electorates and the people who are in need. However, it is something we have to come together as a whole, as a group, as a Parliament, as a Government and an Opposition to say that we are going to tackle this. I have been in parliaments, in politics and public life. There is sometimes a belief sometimes that we cannot fix poverty. When I look statistically at how we have tackled poverty globally over the past few decades and how poverty has halved over the past few decades, I know that we can do it. We have made gains in our society. However, it seems to have dropped off the agenda. There is a big debate in the Federal sphere about Newstart and how people can live on it. Ross Gittins also states of people living in poverty:

The question we should be asking, but rarely do, is: why hasn't their luck been as good as mine? Why didn't they choose their parents more wisely? Why didn't they go to a better school? Why can't they afford health and car insurance? Why don't they have a few thou in the bank in case of emergency? Why don't they have well-placed relatives and friends to help them find a job or talk their way out of a problem with the authorities?

We know that if people have all those safety nets they are okay. They are not in poverty. On the statistics of poverty, I will quote some headlines out of the NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS] report entitled *Poverty in New South Wales*, which is an Anti-Poverty Week statement it made a few years ago that still reflects the situation today. The report stated:

Poverty affects nearly nine hundred thousand people in New South Wales—more than in any other state or territory. The rate of poverty in NSW is 14.6% - also among the highest of any state or territory, and well above the national average. In addition to the hundreds of thousands of people living in poverty in NSW, a further 7% are near, or at risk of poverty.

We will hear more from NCOSS this week. I know that those figures will not have changed much. When it issued this statement a few years back it talked about households in rental stress, which amounted to 41.7 per cent nationally—that is high enough. In New South Wales at the time it was 47.6 per cent. Some of the other things it talked about that have not changed in any material sense are that where you live affects your life chances. The report stated:

Far too many people in ... in disadvantaged communities, characterised by low levels of employment and skills, low educational attainment, run down housing and infrastructure...

It goes on to say more; that this, of course, absolutely affects the outcome on you. It also quoted from someone in my electorate of Lismore at the time, someone who worked four days a week as a trainee, who was studying part-time at TAFE who was not eligible for a concession. The bus fare from her home of Coraki cost \$10 each way. The local bus operator did not offer discounts—such as a travel ten for frequent travel. Over the course of the week she spent more than \$100 on public transport, which was more than one-fifth of her weekly income. The other statistic that has not changed a lot—in fact, it has increased a bit—is that around one million people in New South Wales experience mental ill health problems today. This is an issue that we need to come together on and actually have the Parliament debate it to see what we can do to tackle poverty in New South Wales.

### TRIBUTE TO JACK EDWARD IRELAND, OAM

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (20:39:46):** I inform the House of the recent passing of a great Australian, Jack Edward Ireland, OAM. He lived a life of integrity, honesty, justice, generosity, community and country service; he had a deep sense of family loyalty and, most of all, a love of God that was the foundation of his life. Jack Ireland was born in Bulahdelah in the spring of 1922, the first son of Beatrice and Tom Ireland. He was raised on a secluded dairy farm at Crawford River, attending the one-teacher school. In 1935 the family—Tom, Bea, Jack, Peter and Lindsay—moved into town at Bulahdelah to buy the butcher shop in Crawford Street, with the slaughterhouse being built south of the town in 1939, where it operated till 1973.

Jack had a terrific maths brain and sense of logic, which he inherited from both his parents. However, much to his teacher's disappointment, Jack left school at 14 to help run the family business, a job he continued for more than 80 years. These were Depression years and times were tough. Everyone worked long and hard hours,

a pattern and work ethic that was to continue throughout Jack's life. The war years were very tough for the family but they survived, a story too long to tell here. Meanwhile, Jack and Thora Macpherson had met and fallen in love. Thora remembers seeing Jack at a weekend tennis day when she was only 13—everyone had a court in their backyard in those days—and thinking, "That's the man I'm going to marry". They did not start walking out until she was 16.

War broke out and Jack was conscripted in June 1942. Jack and Thora became engaged in June that year on the day he left for initial training and then to New Guinea. Thora's mother gave her her engagement ring. Jack came home to be married in 1944. After a brief leave of only six weeks in Greta, during which time Jack had malaria most of the time, he returned to Borneo. Jack recalled being able to run a mile in under five minutes during those years and being AWOL to visit Thora many times, but caught only once—a blemish on his service record. Jack was discharged in February 1946 and was able to return to the family business and his beloved Thora.

In 1948 Jack's brother Peter left the butchery business and took over Arch Dee's bakery. In 1951 the butchery and bakery were amalgamated and became TL Ireland and Sons. The buildings that still stand today were built in Stroud Street by Oscar Macpherson. In 1955 the shop was established in the new buildings, with good grazing land being purchased in the area to raise and fatten beef cattle. The business prospered until the twenty-first century. Jack and Thora lived in various houses in Bulahdelah until Thora's brother Oscar completed the house in Boolambayte Street in 1950. Their family started in 1947, with Rodney, Graeme, Malcolm, Elizabeth, Beatrice, Thora-Louise, Daryl and, finally, Meredyth in 1963. Jack always gave credit to Thora for raising the children, as he worked long hours in the shop, on the land and, of course, the council.

Jack successfully stood for election to the Stroud Shire Council in 1959. So began a 40-year career in local government. He was president for a record 16 of those years. The things Jack achieved in his time as councillor and president are too many to mention. Probably the most notable was the moving of the headquarters to Forster in 1971 and the building of the bridge to connect Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest in 1964. He was instrumental in developing tourism in the area and roads being tar sealed, as well as overseeing water and sewerage connections for towns and villages in the shire. He represented the council on many committees and boards, and was a quiet visionary, but always had the best interests of his community at heart.

Jack was also heavily involved in Bulahdelah clubs and organisations, but the Methodist Church and later the Uniting Church were his main focus. He held the roles of treasurer, elder and chairman for much of his adult life and served on the Dungog-Myall River parish council for years. Faith was the cornerstone of his life. He rarely missed Sunday worship. Along with Thora, he encouraged a love of God in all of his children. With his brother Lindsay, who passed away in 1998, his sister Joan and many other folks in the town he had a vision for a nursing home in Bulahdelah. There were many years of hard work, raising funds, acquiring grants and approvals, and getting the work done. This wonderful asset for the town, the Great Lakes Nursing Home, was opened in 1992 and is now operated by Anglican Care as Cedar Wharf Lodge.

A list of his achievements is not important, as we know that Jack would like to be remembered only for the way he treated others: fairly, kindly and with honesty. While Jack was comfortable at state occasions, mixing with Kings, Queens and dignitaries, he really was just a shy country boy who loved his cattle and pigs. Jack is survived by Thora, his sweetheart of 75-plus years, his brother, Peter, and sister, Joan. His legacy includes eight children, 23 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren. Vale, Jack Ireland.

#### OATLEY ELECTORATE SPORTING PROJECTS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:44:56):** I inform the House of a number of local sporting projects currently occurring in my electorate of Oatley. My local area has a hugely active sporting community and it has been my pleasure to advocate on behalf of and try my best to support those groups. Perhaps most important is the huge injection of much-needed funding for Gannons Park. For many years Gannons Park has been the home of Lugarno FC and Forest Rangers FC. Our local sporting clubs deserve first-class facilities and this funding boost will help Georges River Council deliver new and upgraded playing surfaces and amenities at some of our most popular parks and ovals.

Late last year funding of \$1.8 million was announced to upgrade Gannons Park. This funding injection will allow council to deliver high-quality infrastructure, facilities and services to its residents. Of this funding, \$1 million was for Gannons Park stage three, which included upgrades to the playing surfaces with irrigation and drainage works for the eight heavily used sporting fields at the northern end of the park. Construction of many of these sporting fields has begun, and returfing and irrigation works at Gannons Park are underway as I speak. This work will see better playing fields for many local sporting teams, particularly Lugarno FC and Forest Rangers FC along with the ICC Cricket Club and of course Oztag, which uses Gannons Park.

Additionally, \$800,000 has been set aside for a brand-new sports amenities building at Gannons Park. This has been topped up with much-needed funding by Georges River Council and will include a canteen, male and female change rooms, medical rooms, storage, public amenities and a covered barbeque area. The Federal Government has also provided much-needed funds. Construction is now also well underway of a synthetic field and sports amenities building at Poulton Park. This is exciting news. This is one of two synthetic fields that the electorate of Oatley will have in the lower part of the St George area. Some \$3 million was allocated to the project for an additional synthetic mini-field for younger players and an upgrade to the amenities block.

This is a great result for the Connells Point area and for soccer overall. It is also a good win for Connells Point Rovers FC. Too many players were getting injured at Poulton Park due to the poor condition of the fields. I was saddened to hear from Connells Point Rovers FC President Mr Stephen Matthews that over the past three years club players have had more than 12 serious injuries that were directly related to the quality of the field surface. These new amenities will provide a safer playing environment for all players, not just for the Connells Point Rovers but all teams that play at Poulton Park.

This year during the election campaign I had the pleasure of announcing \$500,000 in grant funding for Olds Park field 2. This funding injection will provide a better playing surface for many local sporting groups, including netball, junior cricket, soccer, Australian Football League [AFL] and Little Athletics—to name a few. I give a big shout-out to Penshurst Panthers AFL, a fantastic team. I know that many local sporting groups will be pleased with this funding announcement as local sport is an intrinsic part of life in our community. I am pleased to announce that Georges River Council has proceeded with the irrigation and returfing of field 2. That funding commitment is being delivered by the Government.

Over at Peakhurst Park, along with the previous Minister for Sport, I was able to announce that the St George Football Association would benefit from the second round of funding from the 2015 Asian Cup Legacy Fund. The association received \$150,000, along with some additional funding from the State Government, with money from council to construct a new synthetic sports field at Peakhurst Park field 5. This is a fantastic achievement for everyone who plays soccer at Peakhurst Park, along with other grassroots sporting teams. Additionally, local football players, volunteers, officials and spectators will benefit from a \$300,000 grant from the New South Wales Government for an upgraded amenity block at Oatley Park. This is a big upgrade and a big win for Oatley FC.

This is only the beginning of many sporting commitments that we have made to the council over the past 12 months. There are many more projects to deliver and much more to say. I look forward to informing the House of the development of our local sporting facilities in the future.

## **WALLARAH 2 COAL PROJECT**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (20:49:53):** On the weekend there will be a protest rally outside the Central Coast Council chambers in Wyong organised by the Central Coast Environmental Alliance. The alliance is protesting and bringing to the attention of the community the Government's disgraceful decision to award a mining licence for the Wallarah 2 coalmine underneath the Central Coast main water catchment. On the one hand, the Government is bringing in a bill about dams and water protection—we are in a water crisis and there is a drought—while, on the other hand, it is awarding licences to mine underneath water catchments. It is important that the House understands what that means for the water catchment. The NSW Office of Water made an assessment against the Aquifer Interference Policy [AIP] and asked two questions. First, is the activity defined as an aquifer interference activity? Yes, it is. Secondly, is the activity defined as minimal impact aquifer interference activity according to section 3.3 of the AIP? No, it is not. That means it will be a major interference with the aquifers.

The figures are very disturbing for Central Coast residents. The surface water areas impacted are Jilliby Creek and the Central Coast unregulated water source, which is the Wyong River. People familiar with that catchment will know that at times of high flow water is pumped out of the Wyong River after it joins Jilliby Creek and pumped into Mardi Dam and then up to Mangrove Creek Dam. It is a very important part of the catchment. The company's groundwater model predicts cumulative seepage of 26,500 megalitres over 28 years. That is 946 megalitres per year, which is equal to 384 Olympic swimming pools of water lost into the mine. Some 270 megalitres a year will be lost from the creek itself, and 30 megalitres a year from the Wyong River. That adds up to another 300 megalitres.

The company admits that a substantial amount of water that would have gone into the dam will disappear into the mine. The Central Coast is one of the State's fastest growing areas. The current population of about 320,000 will grow to 450,000 at the same time as the source from which water is taken into the dam will have a mine under it and lose the equivalent of 384 Olympic swimming pools a year into the mining void. The situation is even more serious when one considers the plan that the company has put forward. It is thought there would be



some water loss, so a part of what will be lost—300 megalitres a year—must be given back to the water supply. The company has said it will do that through a water sharing plan and water licences.

However, the department said, "No, you cannot do that. You have to build a desalination plant. You have to recycle the water and put that back into the water supply." Yet the licences were approved with no design for the desalination plant and no information about where the water will be returned to the system—no information at all. The department is taking the company on trust. The Government is saying, "We know you are good guys. You can do this and then do the right thing 10 years down the track." The community is very concerned that the company itself admits that the mine will act as a groundwater sink for 500 years. Even after the mine is finished, for 500 years—five generations—we will still be losing water into the mining void that should be going into the water catchment.

The Government cries foul, saying, "We need dams, we need dams. There is not enough water around." At the moment the Central Coast catchment is at 55 per cent while the population of the area is growing and the drought is getting worse. Conditions are worsening yet the Government is approving licences that literally put water down the mine shaft—which is exactly where it is putting our community. It is no surprise that the Government could not win any of the Labor-held seats on the Central Coast. People on the Central Coast are onto the Government. They know this Government is not committed to our community; they know this Government is committed to big business and granting licences to big business. Labor turned down this licence in 2000. We deserve a better deal from the Government. The Government needs to review the licence in view of the water crisis and make changes. It is not good enough that our community is being put at risk like this.

### SAFFRON DAY

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (20:55:10):** Tuesday 22 October is Saffron Day, a day to honour the life of Deyaan Udani from western Sydney, who passed away suddenly at the age of seven and became an organ donor. New South Wales recorded its highest ever number of organ and tissue donors in 2018, with 388 New South Wales lives saved through an organ transplant. I take this opportunity to share Deyaan's story. These are the words of his father, Rupesh Udani. He said:

Our lives were shattered with the loss of our beautiful boy Deyaan. Whilst on a family holiday in India, Deyaan our son, suffered a brain haemorrhage. We felt powerless when he was in hospital and couldn't believe the doctors when they told us that his brain had died.

Deyaan was a beautiful boy who loved his family and was always willing to help others.

After learning about organ donation at school, Deyaan was excited about the idea of organ donation and the potential it offered to save the life of another.

Deyaan and his sister Naisha both understood how we can all help in some way to give the gift of life to another person in need.

Deyaan and Naisha told us that they would both support being organ donors and pressed us to also personally register. Deyaan told me "Daddy, you are being selfish not to register so that you can help others".

Who was to know that months later we would be faced with the decision of whether to donate Deyaan's organs. It was my worst nightmare. But when the time came to make the decision to switch off life support, I knew that there was one thing that we could still do for Deyaan.

In line with Deyaan's desire to help others, we made the decision to donate his organs and four other lives were saved. Deyaan has given these recipients the opportunity of life and we are very proud of him.

If our family had not discussed organ donation before we were faced with the decision, we would not have honoured Deyaan's wish and legacy to help others.

A tragedy took Deyaan from us but if our circumstances were different and Deyaan required a life-saving transplant we would do anything we could to make it happen.

Deyaan's family have honoured his legacy by creating Saffron Day, a special day to remember Deyaan and to raise awareness of the importance of organ and tissue donation. Saffron Day, now in its second year, asks all Australians to "Do it for Deyaan" by wearing orange and registering their decision to become an organ and tissue donor. Saffron symbolises courage, strength and sacrifice—qualities seen in little Deyaan. Saffron is particularly important to the Udani family, as orange was Deyaan's favourite colour. A pinch of saffron goes a long way, as does the generous gift of organ donation.

People of any age, gender, ethnicity or religion might one day require a transplant. This issue affects us all. Workplaces and schools around Australia are participating in Saffron Day in an effort to raise awareness of organ donation. Registration and family conversations about organ donation are important as nine in 10 families agree to donation when their loved one is registered on the Australian Organ Donor Register. Only five in 10 of families agree to donation when their loved one is not registered, nor had previously discussed their wishes. So please register at [Visit.donatelife.gov.au](http://Visit.donatelife.gov.au); it takes less than a minute. All you need is your Medicare card and to have a conversation with your loved ones.

### MIDWIFERY GROUP PRACTICE PROGRAM

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:59:10):** The process of bringing a child into the world is inarguably an awe-inspiring but arduous experience. It necessitates the best possible care from highly skilled professionals, who support mothers-to-be through what can be some of the most stressful, yet rewarding, periods of their lives. The best care available for these mothers is currently being delivered in hospitals across the State through the Midwifery Group Practice [MGP] program. This program ensures that women have continual care from the same two midwives from the start of their pregnancy, through childbirth and beyond. Extensive evidence has shown that the program substantially improves health outcomes for mothers and babies across numerous measures.

Women who receive midwife-led continuity of care are 24 per cent less likely to experience pre-term birth, and their chance of miscarriage before 24 weeks is reduced by 20 per cent. These new mums also report higher rates of maternal happiness and feeling empowered about their choices of things like the place of birth and pain relief. The program also sees a decrease in the rate of births requiring interventions, which is positive for mothers and our broader health system across the Central Coast. But this program, with its excellent evidence-based outcomes, is being modified with zero notice in Central Coast hospitals. In a growing region the capacity of this gold-class program will be slashed by 100 births per year, with 2½ full-time positions axed from the program and shoved somewhere else in our health system.

**Mr David Harris:** Is that a cut?

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** That is a cut. The Central Coast is expected to have a population of more than 415,000 residents by 2036. We need greater investment from the State Government in supporting and recruiting healthcare professionals, not less—and definitely not cuts and shifting deckchairs on the *Titanic*—because everyone in our community deserves to live happily and healthily, especially our expectant mums. Since the director of the Central Coast Local Health District announced on radio that the MGP program would be cut next year, my office has received countless letters from local mums who are horrified and angered that the option to be cared for by these continuous care dedicated midwives will be denied to more than 100 Central Coast women each year.

They have shared their personal stories with me, and I would like to share them with members tonight. Pamela from Woy Woy wrote to me and said, "Building relationships with midwives increases confidence, you feel safe and looked after." Now that she is pregnant with baby number two, these cuts have left her anxious and unsure of her options. Jo from Davistown wrote in strong support of the MGP program, saying, "As an older mum this program provided me with confidence and a sense of safety. During the births of both my sons I built a strong relationship with my midwives, I trusted them implicitly and they were completely aware of my wishes. When I experienced some unforeseen issues they ensured my wishes were adhered to as closely as possible." She also said, "A strong bond is built between mother and midwife, and having the one-on-one care throughout provides women with better outcomes. The MGP program delivers an amazing service and it is beyond belief that there would be cuts to it when it should be expanded."

Those sentiments were echoed time and time again by the women who have written and spoken to me about this issue. I thank all the women who have reached out to me and I also thank all the midwives who have taken the time to talk to me about the amazing program that we offer on the Central Coast. It could not be clearer that the Midwifery Group Practice program, and the support it provides, is invaluable to mothers and their babies. This program is ensuring the best-case outcomes for mums and babies that our healthcare system is constantly striving to achieve—care for the coast—because the women of the Central Coast deserve the best possible health care for their pregnancies, births and beyond.

The Midwifery Group Practice program offers that gold standard in health care. To cut this program and replace it with a lesser standard of ongoing midwifery is to deny hundreds of women the ability to choose what is best for their health and their families' wellbeing. The cuts reaffirm the behaviour of a government that refuses again and again to support our incredible doctors, nurses and midwives. The cuts show that this Government is happy to fail the women of the Central Coast in the process. I call on the Liberal Government to expand, rather than reduce, this gold standard in service that is available for mums and bubs on the beautiful Central Coast.

#### *Bills*

### **ELECTORAL FUNDING AMENDMENT (LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE CAPS) BILL 2019**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later time.

*Community Recognition Statements*

**WOONONA SHAMROCKS RUGBY CLUB**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (21:04:45):** It is with great humility that I stand in this Chamber today to pay tribute to the Woonona Shamrocks Rugby Club and my colleague the member for Keira, Ryan Park. As many people will know, I am strong supporter of the Campbelltown Harlequins. I have been for many years and will be for many more. I gave the member for Keira and the Shamrocks an undertaking that when we played if the Quinnies lost I would hold up the Shamrocks jersey in this House. I am doing that now. I am a man of my word. However, I take nothing away from the mighty Harlequins. Unfortunately, after two clashes between the clubs' first grade sides this year, we did not do as well as we could have. In May the Shamrocks travelled up to the Quinnies home ground and won a 36-3 victory. They were very strong. I give credit to the Shamrocks, but I also remember how good rugby is in Campbelltown and indeed in the Illawarra.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I remind members that if they want the call, they must seek the call.

**CROWS NEST FESTIVAL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (21:06:15):** I had a fantastic time this weekend joining North Shore community groups, small businesses and locals at the thirtieth annual Crows Nest Festival. There was a talented line-up of kids on the band stage, including from my local schools: North Sydney Demonstration School, North Sydney Girls High School, Anzac Park Public School and Cammeraygal High School. Every time I have attended I have seen the festival grow and grow. This year an estimated 60,000 people came together to share the community spirit and support local businesses. I was particularly proud that this year's festival went single-use plastic free by encouraging customers to bring re-usable cups and asking vendors to refrain from using plastic packaging.

I commend Zar Bingham, Vince Caruso, Dennis and Peter Xenos, David French, Rudi Dietz, Andrew Morgan and chairman Anthony Melinz from the Crows Nest Mainstreet committee for their coordination of the event. I also thank North Sydney Mayor Jilly Gibson and all the volunteers who dedicated their time. It was great to hear from residents at our NSW Liberal Party stall, which I shared with the Premier and my Federal colleague Trent Zimmerman. I cannot wait until next year's fair.

**CLOVELLY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (21:06:59):** I congratulate Clovelly Public School's year 6 class on a wonderful production of *Out of Time* produced by Mr Scale and assisted by year 5 as backstage crew. The production was a very timely reminder of how our behaviour and actions impact those around us, including the role that we are all playing in the destruction of our biodiversity, the impact of ignoring climate change and the role that capitalism and consumerism have in shaping a generation of people. I take this moment to thank Mr Jackman, the wonderful principal of Clovelly Public School, who has been doing such an amazing job since taking on the role earlier this year. Once again, I congratulate year 6 on a wonderful performance.

**WAHROONGA ADVENTIST SCHOOL**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (21:07:41):** It was a great day recently as students, teachers, parents and special guests gathered at Wahroonga Adventist School to witness the opening of its new junior school building. The state-of-the-art complex, which was partially funded by the New South Wales Government, includes 12 classrooms, shared learning spaces, a rooftop play area and a ground-floor amphitheatre. Pastor Terry Johnson delivered the opening address while the junior school prefects, senior school captain and vice-captain reflected on the impact that their new school has had on the students and the broader Adventist community. Pastor Johnson and I also had the privilege of unveiling the school plaque to commemorate the occasion. After the ceremony principal Michelle Streatfeild expressed her appreciation to the State Government as the community's dream would not have become a reality without the Government's funding. The new building will provide an opportunity to offer more in-demand high school places. As always, I thank the teachers, students and school community for welcoming me so warmly.

**CENTRAL COAST BRING YOUR BILLS DAY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:08:43):** The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW, in association with Coast Community Connections, will again be hosting the Central Coast Bring Your Bills Day on 24 October 2019. This free event will take place at Coast Community Connections, Peninsula Community Centre in Woy Woy from

9.00 a.m. till 3.00 p.m. this Thursday. The event aims to assist residents in relation to a number of areas, including energy bills, outstanding fines, legal issues, pensions, tenancy issues and tax-related matters. Residents are required to bring with them personal identification and evidence of bills or issues that they wish to seek assistance with. On the day a collection of service providers will have info stalls and will be offering expertise and assistance on a range of matters. The Hope Church of Umina Beach and the Salvation Army will be selling food and beverages and I hear that there may even be the famous mouth-watering scones prepared by the Country Women's Association of Woy Woy. Be proactive and get along to the Central Coast Bring Your Bills Day this week.

### **LADIES PROBUS CLUB OF GRANDVIEWS**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:09:41):** On 18 September I had the pleasure of hosting a visit by the Ladies Probus Club of Grandviews at Parliament House. Grandviews Ladies Probus is a very active Probus group in my electorate of Oatley. It regularly holds social events and outings and has guest speakers at its meetings. Probus clubs are a great way for community members to meet and engage in activities together. It was great to have the Grandviews Probus Club come to Parliament for a tour and a lovely lunch, and I was very interested to hear about the club's recent activities. We were also lucky enough to be joined by some fantastic guest speakers. I thank the Premier, the Minister for Local Government and the Special Minister of State for attending. Finally, I thank the Ladies Probus Club of Grandviews and its president, Jenny Crockett, for their continued interest in our community.

### **VERA DEACON**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (21:10:40):** I acknowledge Stockton resident Vera Deacon, who last month was named a Freeman of the City of Newcastle. Vera is a writer, philanthropist and historian who was born in Mayfield and raised on Dempsey Island and Mosquito Island in the Hunter River. This was where she developed an interest in local waterways and the health of the wetlands. While she spent most of her married life in Sydney, Vera returned to Newcastle in 1997 and settled in Stockton. There she joined the historical society and returned to her roots in the river's estuary islands through research and interviews. She pieced together their history and turned it into award-winning stories.

Vera also volunteered with the Kooragang Wetlands Rehabilitation Project on Ash Island. For almost 20 years, Vera has made donations to the University of Newcastle's Cultural Collections, with the university establishing the Vera Deacon Regional History Fund to recognise her generosity and contribution to regional history archives. It takes passion and dedication to undertake the projects that Vera has, and as a city we are thankful. This recognition as a freeman of the city is extremely well deserved. Congratulations, Vera.

### **MIRANDA RSL SUB-BRANCH**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (21:11:45):** I acknowledge the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch, whose recent Battle for Australia Day commemoration I was humbled to attend. This annual commemoration and wreath-laying service is held on the first Wednesday of September and marks the first defeat of Japanese forces in the Battle of Milne Bay. It was fantastic to see Roy Craven of Sylvania lay a wreath on the day, as he is the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch's oldest surviving World War II veteran. Roy served 18 months in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan at the end of the Second World War. Roy's service contributed to the freedom of our great country and ensured the prevention of a Japanese invasion of the continent.

I acknowledge the 2019 sub-branch committee, including president Arie Havenaar, vice president John Goodger, vice president and welfare officer Alan Lark, honorary secretary and treasurer Brian Senior, and entertainment committee members Barry Fletcher and Ian Sonneman. I commend both Roy and the sub-branch committee for their service and sacrifice, both past and present, and thank them for their continued dedication to our community.

### **BLAKE CARR**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (21:12:41):** I am delighted to have the opportunity this evening to recognise my incredible local constituent Blake Carr. Blake is a para-athlete who recently represented Australia in Brisbane at the INAS—International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability—Global Games. The games are the world's biggest sporting event for athletes with an intellectual disability, with 1,000 athletes from 50 countries competing in 10 sports last week. Blake has been competing in high-level athletics for three years and has already represented our country three times. He competed in the 110-metre hurdles and the discus throw at the games. The past 12 months have been the most challenging of Blake's life and sporting career. He suffered a back injury, had serious nose surgery and, sadly, lost his beloved grandmother whom he lived with. He trains five days every week and also works as a labourer at the HTS Group, where he is a valued member of the team. Blake enjoys winning medals, but his focus is more on enjoying the sport and pushing himself to

continually improve. Blake's positive outlook on life is an inspiration to me and to people in the community that I represent. I wish him all the very best for his future sporting and working life.

#### **TOORMINA PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (21:13:49):** Teamwork continually brings out the best at schools across the Coffs Coast. This is particularly true at Toormina Public School, where extraordinary efforts are producing outstanding results. Its Tournament of Minds team, comprising Regan Luck, Hunter Broadbent, Siena Walsh, Fyn Harrison, Amy Dart, Miranda Crawford and Emily Crawford, is heading to Hobart to chase an international title on 26 October. This follows the team's stunning Language Literature success at the Tournament of Minds State final in Sydney. I wish the students, led by their Tournament of Minds teacher and assistant principal Jodie Perry, all the best as the eyes of the world fall upon them. To help the team attend the Tassie tournament, I visited the school to present a \$3,000 New South Wales Government grant on behalf of education Minister Sarah Mitchell. I applaud principal Matt Hankinson on his leadership of a thriving school community. I know the community is extremely proud of its Tournament of Minds team and I look forward to speaking about them again after they win the international title.

#### **YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (21:14:49):** I congratulate the two Wyong High School students, Josef Graf-Cooper and Mikayla Gualtieri, who have been presented with the Order of Australia Association Youth Community Service Award. Josef and Mikayla are the 2019 captains at Wyong High School and were two of just 25 students across the State who received the award. The award was presented to student leaders for outstanding service in their community or to Australia in general.

Josef has participated in several programs over the years, including the Central Coast Primary Care Family Wellbeing program, the Indigenous Talent Identification program, the Batyr youth empowerment leadership program, the Ngara leadership camp and the Youth Frontiers project. He was also recently invited to attend New South Wales Parliament House to be a part of a youth leadership program.

Mikayla embarked on a personal learning journey last year, participating in the Max Potential leadership development program. She received a trainee scholarship for assistance in health services and was awarded the Wyong Race Club Community Spirit Award and the Newcastle Permanent academic award. She has also been recognised in her workplace, receiving a crew training award for leadership.

#### **BLACK DOG RIDE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (21:15:55):** I commend Dubbo's Wayne Amor on his six years of service to the suicide prevention and awareness charity Black Dog Ride as the New South Wales ride coordinator. Wayne recently announced his retirement from that role, which he has held since 2014, though he will continue to coordinate the local one-day Black Dog Ride in Dubbo.

Starting in 2010, the Black Dog Ride takes hundreds of motorbikes through normally sleepy remote and regional towns. The event is a way to start conversations about depression, mental health and suicide. Most of the riders are driven to take part because of their own experiences. They have either been personally affected by mental illness at some point or they have seen a close friend or family member suffering from depression. The conversations that start on these days are crucial.

They help to rid our communities of the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide, which we all know leads to more people seeking help. Importantly, the Dubbo ride has raised almost \$40,000 for Lifeline Central West in the last five years. I had a great time on the ride from Dubbo to Mungery earlier this year. Well done to Wayne. I thank him for his dedication and for his great work for the cause.

#### **PINK RIBBON DAY**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (21:16:59):** This Thursday marks the Cancer Council's Pink Ribbon Day, dedicated to raising awareness and funds to tackle breast and gynaecological cancers. Every day in Australia 50 women are diagnosed and eight pass away from breast or gynaecological cancer. We would be hard-pressed to find anyone in our community who has not been touched by these cancers.

I was very grateful to attend Wests Ashfield Leagues Club Pink Ribbon Day breakfast last week and to assist in raising funds and awareness to support this important cause. At the breakfast Simon Cook spoke of the devastating loss of his mother because of breast cancer. Renee Pinto spoke bravely of her ongoing battle with cancer in an incredibly inspiring and moving speech.

We also heard from local community groups such as Metro Assist in Ashfield, which highlighted the hard work it does every day to support women fighting breast cancer across our multicultural community in the

inner west. These inspiring people had one clear message for us all: Early detection saves lives. I thank everyone involved in coordinating the breakfast at the Wests Ashfield Leagues Club.

#### **EAST HILLS BLUE SOX**

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (21:18:05):** I offer encouragement at this stage, as opposed to congratulations, to a group of year 12 students from De La Salle College Revesby, who decided to take on a sporting challenge prior to their HSC exams. They intended to do so as their time together at the school was coming to a close. The novelty of the exercise was that they chose to take on a sport that none of them had played before. The group chose baseball.

They made inquiries of the East Hills Baseball Club, requesting an opportunity to take part in the local competition. After the club vetted the group and organised mentoring, scorers and briefings for umpires on the level of the team's experience, knowledge and skill—or lack thereof—the East Hills Blue Sox, as this team were known, were on their way. I encourage the group to continue to share the friendships they have developed at school long after the HSC has been completed. Sport is a great way to engage socially. Well done to East Hills Blue Sox for trying something new and having a go.

#### **JUSTICES OF THE PEACE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (21:19:09):** I was delighted to attend a ceremony today in the Strangers' Dining Room here at Parliament House to thank the justices of the peace [JPs] who have obtained 50 years' service. I joined two justices of the peace from my electorate, John Jacobson and Warren Phelps, who travelled from Lismore to receive their "Golden Jubilee of service awards", as the Attorney General referred to them. He presented the awards alongside local members of Parliament.

Fifty years of service is a wonderful commitment and it is all voluntary. The Attorney General made the point that 130 of 258 JPs who had reached the 50-year mark were gathered in the room, comprising 6,500 years of service in total. The most senior recipient was 102 years old, while the most junior was 87 years old. John Jacobson was joined by his daughter, Karen, and Warren Phelps was joined by his wife, Beverley. I thank them on behalf of my community.

#### **GONE FISHING DAY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:20:10):** Last Sunday I was pleased to attend the Gone Fishing Day at the Empire Bay Wharf in my electorate of Terrigal. Seventy-one local kids participated in this event and every single one managed to catch a fish! Between 9.00 a.m. and 12.00 p.m. fishing club members volunteered their time to help everyone have a go at fishing.

I commend members of the Empire Bay Fishing Club—and a special shout-out to Errol Baker—which hosted the event and assisted with equipment and logistics to provide this opportunity. This was in addition to the State grant it received to provide both fishing rods and reels. The event was not just a chance to get outdoors and throw in a line but also a prime opportunity for the current generation of fishermen and fisherwomen to pass on their knowledge and experience to younger people.

Across New South Wales on Sunday's Gone Fishing Day there were free how-to-fish lessons, casting competitions, Roads and Maritime Services boating safety stalls and much more. I commend the Department of Primary Industries for this fantastic fishing initiative. I congratulate the Empire Bay Fishing Club on their fantastic work over the weekend with our young fishermen and women. I encourage them to keep up the great work.

#### **MICHELLE FAITHFULL**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (21:21:12):** Many people around Newcastle would know Michelle Faithfull for her role with Compass Housing Services but she is also a wonderful fundraiser, notching up \$175,000 for charities over the last 10 years. In a recent article in *The Newcastle Herald*, Michelle was described as having "obsessive compulsive fundraiser disorder"—a description that cannot be denied.

Through Michelle's phenomenal work she has raised \$90,000 for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, almost \$60,000 for the Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation, while \$125,000 worth of Michelle's fundraising has come from an event called Divas on the Green. Now celebrating its tenth anniversary, this event is an all-women's golf day that contributes to other funds that are raised on fundraising treks all over the world.

On these treks Michelle has walked locations, including the Great Wall of China, Peru's Inca Trail, the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea and El Camino in Spain. This year she also led a group trek for a Kenyan children's charity, Rafiki Mwema, and next year she will trek through Tuscany for Got Your Back Sista. Congratulations to Michelle. Her fundraising is nothing short of amazing and we are very grateful for her work.

### OLD JUNEЕ HALL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (21:22:28):** I congratulate the Old Junee community along with Old Junee Hall committee president Michelle Grinter, secretary Anna Lashbrook, treasurer Beverley Crowe and all the other members I caught up with on Friday 11 October to open the newly renovated hall. The entire community got behind this wonderful project to install solar, a new playground, insulation and a water tank thanks to the Stronger Country Communities fund. The village of Old Junee dates back to the mid-1800s. This history has been beautifully painted onto a mural by inmates at the Junee Correctional Centre, which was unveiled as part of the day's celebrations. Congratulations to this small and mighty little village.

### CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:23:19):** I congratulate all the local businesses in my electorate that recently won awards at the Central Coast Regional Business Awards evening, held in October at the lavish Crowne Plaza. There were a number of award categories to be won on the evening and there was strong competition between the nominees. The lucky winners from the electorate of Gosford were: LEP Digital Pty Ltd, a content marketing business based in Gosford that won the Excellence in Micro Business award; Gosford Private Hospital, an exceptional hospital providing remarkable healthcare on the Central Coast, which won the Excellence in Sustainability award; the internationally renowned Australian Reptile Park took out the Excellence in Business award; the fantastic aged-care facility at Umina Beach, Peninsula Villages, won the Outstanding Employer of Choice award; and finally, Mr Matt Kelly, CEO of Gosford Private Hospital, has taken out this year's Outstanding Business Leader award. I congratulate all the businesses and individuals nominated, especially the successful recipients of this year's 2019 Central Coast Regional Business Awards.

### NORTHERN TABLELANDS RURAL FIRE SERVICE CADET TEAM

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (21:24:22):** I recognise the Northern Tablelands Rural Fire Service cadet team on earning fifth place at the recent Australia Fire Cadet Championships held in Sydney. The Northern Tablelands cadet team competed against 23 other teams from across Australia in a variety of scenarios and activities, including portable pump relays, use of firefighting hand tools, hose and hydrant drills, flying fox and archery.

The event is open to youngsters aged between 12 and 16 years, and teams are made up of six cadets and two adult leaders. The cadet team consisted of captain Shae Raw and Chelsea Raw from Delungra, Jarrod White from Gum Flat, senior deputy captain Josh Wallbridge and Annaliese Gillet from Glen Innes, and David Cox from Steinbrook. Three of those members had never competed before at the championships. They travelled up to two hours at a time, each and every month, to attend training, drills and exercises, and the judges commended them on their communication skills and team work. I congratulate all the members—you have done us proud.

### WYONG ROOS BASEBALL CLUB

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (21:25:24):** I congratulate the Wyong Roos Baseball Club on taking out the Central Coast Baseball Association first grade competition for 2019. The Wyong Roos were competing against the Woy Woy Wolves, who have been on a winning streak for the past three premierships. The match was close and intense, with the score locked at 3-all after eight innings. The Wyong Roos pulled ahead in the ninth innings, claiming this year's premiership with a final score of 5-3. After the match Pat Maat was announced the Central Coast Baseball Association's First Grade Player of the Year. Rowan Street was announced the Roos' most valuable player. Each of them should be proud of their efforts and team work in the match. Well done to the Wyong Roos Baseball Club.

### JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (21:26:17):** To be a justice of the peace is to be a respected and trusted member of the community. From witnessing the signing of mortgage papers to witnessing sworn affidavits, justices of the peace are involved in the everyday and extraordinary moments of our lives. I was proud to join my North Shore locals, Roger McGrath, Dulcie Murnaghan and Helen L'Orange, AM, to celebrate their 50 years of service as justices of the peace.

Justices of the peace must have an exemplary character, a deep respect for the law and unwavering honesty. In Roger, Dulcie and Helen I am proud to see we have three outstanding justices of the peace. I thank them all for taking up this important duty in my local community. I can only hope that the future justices of the peace that we, as members, support go on to serve their community as those celebrating 50 years of service have done. I thank the Attorney General for taking the time to honour their service. I once again congratulate Helen, Dulcie and Roger on their 50 years as justices of the peace.

### PRINCE OF WALES HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (21:27:11):** I congratulate the Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation for its Lighting the Way of the Future gala dinner. The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the 2019 Annual Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation Research Medal. The winner was Professor Jacqui Close. She was recognised for her work in falls in people with cognitive impairment and dementia. It was my absolute honour to present this very prestigious award, which includes grant funding of \$50,000 to support the research, salary and professional development of Professor Close.

Over the course of the evening the foundation raised more than \$150,000 for the initial stages of the hospital's Virtual Care Centre, the first of its kind in the southern hemisphere. I take this opportunity to thank Associate Professor Leanne Zalapa, or Lulu, who is the founding CEO, as she will be departing later this year. Lulu, on behalf of the electorate of Coogee, thank you for your service to the foundation—there will be giant shoes to fill.

### SHOPFRONT ARTS CO-OP

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:28:06):** On 15 August I attended the Shopfront Arts Co-op for its foundation laying ceremony to celebrate its expansion to becoming a dedicated youth arts facility serving the St George area. The expansion includes the construction of a new multipurpose performance space and other community rooms that will be shared with community and arts organisations. This significant expansion will allow Shopfront to support an additional 1,160 young people per year, including young people at risk of disengaging from the school system, those at risk of entering the juvenile justice system and emerging artists with a disability.

I am pleased that the New South Wales Government was able to provide much-needed funding through the ClubGRANTS program and Create NSW's Arts and Cultural Funding Program to support this great project. Thank you to CEO Daniel Potter and to the rest of the Shopfront team for providing young people with training and development opportunities to allow them to bring their ideas to life.

### SPORT AUSTRALIA HALL OF FAME

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (21:29:00):** Congratulations to Newcastle footballer Cheryl Salisbury, who has been inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame. Cheryl is the first female footballer to be inducted, continuing her legacy as a trailblazer for women in the sport, where until her retirement in 2009 she held the record as the most-capped Australian player of either gender. During 15 years in the Matildas, Cheryl played 151 matches and scored 38 goals, and also captained the team from 2003 until her retirement. She played in four World Cups, two Olympic Games and two Asian Cups.

As well as playing junior football locally with Adamstown and the Lambton Jaffas, Cheryl has played in the American and Japanese women's leagues and for our own Newcastle Jets. In 2009 Cheryl was inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame in the Hall of Champions category and in 2017 became the first woman to be awarded the Professional Footballers Association Alex Tobin medal, which is the highest honour for Australian football players. Cheryl is a true model for female footballers around the country, and we are immensely proud to say she is one of our own. Congratulations, Cheryl.

### GYMEA TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (21:30:07):** I congratulate the newly elected school captains of GyMEA Technology High School. To be democratically elected by your peers demonstrates these individuals' competencies in areas of effective leadership, communication, organisation and innovation. I encourage them to make the most of such a fantastic opportunity to develop life skills and qualities that shape community and professional leaders. I congratulate school captains Rhys Thomsen and Ellen Marsh, and vice captains Reanna Fitzgerald and Sean Record, on their successful appointment as captains for 2020, and I extend my best wishes for their final year of high school.

I also take this opportunity to commend the outgoing captains of GyMEA Technology High School for their service. I acknowledge 2019 school captains Blake Shearsby and Georgia Brownhill and vice captains Marcus Doty and Caitlyn Clancy, and wish them all the best for their upcoming exams and whatever the future may hold. I extend my best wishes to this group of fantastic student leaders as they continue to embody GyMEA Technology High School's vision to inspire, learn and succeed.

### WORLDPRIDE 2023

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:31:00):** Woohoo! Sydney will be home to World Pride Day in 2023. I acknowledge the work, effort and commitment of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Destination



NSW—whose representatives are possibly still celebrating in Athens, Greece—who have won the bid on behalf of our great State to host the 2023 World Pride Day right here in Sydney. This event will be a great way to showcase our only international city, Sydney, and extol some of the many features that make our city distinct from other places around the world.

As part of our bid, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Destination NSW will have our First Nations and multicultural communities play a significant role in the event. Coupled with this, the event will also pay homage to the ongoing LGBTQIA+ campaigns taking place around the Asia and Pacific region for inclusion and equality. Also in 2023 Australia will celebrate 50 years since its first Gay Pride week, Sydney will celebrate its forty-fifth year of its Mardi Gras festival and, as a nation, Australia will celebrate its fifth anniversary since passing legislation to allow marriage equality.

#### **CORINDI-WOOLGOOLGA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (21:32:05):** Our State Emergency Service crews hold a special place in the hearts of Coffs coast residents. Their training ensures that they are ready to respond whenever and wherever we need them, like the men and women I met at the Corindi-Woolgoolga State Emergency Service unit when they hosted a chainsaw training and assessment course. Their boundary is from Halfway Creek in the north to Emerald Beach in the south and west to Glenreagh.

I thank each member for their dedication to saving lives: Paul Maher, Unit Commander; Claire Constantine, Deputy Commander; Jeff Eggins, Deputy Commander; Dennis Houghton; Dianne Forrester-Clarke; Dona Powell; Fiona Kealy; James Daniels; Jennifer Travis; Paul Nilon; John Isoniemi; Ken Boyle; Kevin Wilson; Leo Channells; Ray Browne; Ray Powell; Steven Perry; Susan Perry; Barry Carter; and Tania Lambeth. Thank you for everything you do for our community.

#### **STARS OF THE EAST, DANCE FOR CANCER**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (21:33:00):** I congratulate the Cancer Council on its fabulous Stars of the East, Dance for Cancer gala night. This inaugural event brings together our community for an evening of laughter, entertainment and fundraising. Congratulations to everyone who competed. There were, however, some stars who stole the show. Special congratulations to the People's Choice Award winner, Lynne O'Brien, with dance partner Heloise Ella from Leap Performing Arts, and the Judge's Choice Award winner, Shelley Bays, with dance partner Chloe Rosenberg. Lastly, huge congratulations to the Highest Fundraiser Award winner, Dirk Hansen, with dance partner Kristine Wuthrich. Collectively, this wonderful event raised over \$60,000 for the Cancer Council; an amazing result for an amazing cause. Thanks to East Leagues Club for hosting this fantastic event and congratulations to all involved.

#### **DUBBO POLICE CITIZENS YOUTH CLUB**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (21:33:56):** I thank two of Dubbo's finest for the outstanding work they do in helping the young people in our community. Senior constables Craig Skeme and Sally Tracey work for the Dubbo Police Citizens Youth Club [PCYC] delivering the Fit for Life and Fit for Work programs. Fit for Life is a breakfast program aimed at helping kids between eight and 17 get the most out of their education. We know no-one performs well on an empty stomach, so the PCYC bus picks the kids up and delivers them to the PCYC. Breakfast is prepared while they engage in some physical activity, and after the most important meal of the day the kids are dropped off at school.

Fit for Work operates three days a week with the aim of getting young adults who might be disengaged from school ready for the workforce. Trainer Corrie Taylor and youth worker Sam Matthews help deliver that program, which is really kicking goals. Thomas Hoppe completed the program earlier this year and he is now volunteering at the PCYC and helping other young adults through Fit for Work. Well done to all involved in these amazing programs.

#### **BHP NEWCASTLE STEELWORKS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (21:34:53):** On the twentieth anniversary of the closure of Newcastle's BHP steelworks, I acknowledge the tens of thousands of men and women who worked at the plant and contributed to the formation of Newcastle's social and cultural identity. Opening in 1915 and closing in 1999, for over 80 years BHP was Newcastle's largest employer and at its peak provided jobs for 13,000 people. A significant numbers of its employees spent their entire working lives at the steelworks, with several generations from the same families taking up the work.

Many people continue to work to honour the legacy of the steelworks and its people. I particularly thank Aubrey Brooks and Bob Cook for their commitment to remembrance and ongoing education. I also pay tribute to the hundreds of people who lost their lives at the steelworks during the course of its operation, as well as the

families left behind. Thank you to all the men and women of steel for your contribution to Newcastle. May you never be forgotten.

#### **TERRIGAL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:35:56):** I congratulate Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club on 100 years of service to our community. This season—the 2019-20 season—marks the centenary of the formation of Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club. On 13 October I had the privilege of attending a parade at Terrigal Beach. It was the first of what I am sure will be many celebrations during this season. The parade consisted of a paddle on boats, surf skis and an inflatable rescue boat display, as well as a march past the surf club. Parade participants then formed the shape of the number 100 on the beach for a photo with surf lifesavers.

All present and past members were invited to join in. Terrigal is the largest surf lifesaving club on the Central Coast and I am proud to be patron of this fantastic organisation. I acknowledge club president Mardi Love and office holders Beris Meldrum, Joel Green, John Deacon, Julie Redfern, Marc Gunasinghe, Richard Green, Tim Pittolo and Wendy Walsh. Surf clubs are a hub of social activity on the Central Coast, but they also play a vital role in patrolling our beaches and keeping people safe during summer. I thank all members of Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club.

#### **CHARLIE KELLY**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence)—**I offer my congratulations to Charlie Kelly of Townsend who has signed a contract with the Newcastle Jets Academy. Charlie has shown a level of commitment and dedication to his sport, far beyond his years, however, like every talented junior sports person, it also takes the commitment of the whole family to support the sports person and I commend Charlie's parents Mark and Lisa for the support they have given to Charlie to allow him to achieve his dream. He has, at times, trained 3 times a week in Coffs Harbour, approximately 120km each way, along with travelling to Newcastle for additional training. For most of this year he has travelled to Coffs Harbour twice a week and Newcastle every Friday. I wish Charlie every success as he pushes forward to play within the A-League.

#### **COMMISSIONER RAYMOND CLAUDE BELL, OAM**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba)—**For the past 75 years, Raymond has tirelessly worked for the community and the cadets of the Australian Air League, first joining as a young 12-year-old boy in 1944 with the "Marrickville Company". He quickly rose through the ranks to become Officer Commanding of Marrickville at the young age of 18 and oversaw his squadron become national champions in band and field competitions while supporting the community. In 1968, at the age of 36, Mr Bell became a "Group Field Commissioner" for NSW Boys Group. In this role he interacted with the Governor and political leaders throughout the state in organising to host parades. This was a role he held until 1984 when he was promoted to "Group Executive Commissioner" for NSWBG at age 52. Within the Australian Air League, he has been honoured with a number of awards including "Distinguished Service Award", "Meritorious Service Award" and "Life Member". Mr Bell has also been the recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1995 "in recognition of service to the youth, particularly through the Australian Air League". His greatest achievement however are his grandchildren with 5 following him through the league.

#### **POLA FANOUS – ST CLAIR POET**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—**I would like to congratulate St Clair resident and Egyptian-born immigrant Pola Fanous who at the young age of 14 years old discovered his attraction to writing. The now 20-year old recently debuted his first book, Strongsoft, which is made up of 130 unique poems that he has written over the last five years. This book is based on Pola's life philosophy – the concept of strength through softness. This inspiring St Clair artist is also an educator and political activist in western Sydney. Pola has competed in many Poetry Slam contests and was declared the NSW Slam Champion in 2018. Well done Pola and I greatly look forward to seeing more of your work in the future!

#### **STRESS IN HSC STUDENTS**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—**Most Year 12 students across NSW, including in the Davidson electorate, experience some level of stress and pressure during their HSC exams. Many struggle to maintain study schedules and worry if they will achieve their desired ATAR score. A recent survey of 722 Sydney students found 42% experienced high levels of anxiety. Stress levels were even higher among gifted students. Many reported physical symptoms including nausea or fatigue, along with nerves and irritability. To deal with this pressing issue, youth workers at Ku-ring-gai Council have been holding weekly sessions at the AWOL Youth Hub in Gordon. These sessions are described as a "chill out" zone and offer free food, table tennis and even hand massages to HSC students, to help alleviate their stress and pressure. According to the council's youth services co-ordinator,

Cherise Ricciardo, more than 140 students used the program last year. A balance of work and relaxation is important, and programs such as the AWOL Youth Hub initiative, along with similar initiatives run by schools, offer great coping mechanisms for many HSC students. Well done to all concerned.

#### **ENGADINE HIGH SCHOOL FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—Engadine High School opened its doors in 1969, this year marking their 50th anniversary. This special occasion was commemorated with the '50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner' and reunion on the Friday, followed by the 'Back 2 Engadine' Day on Saturday 14 September. The School Band is renowned for their performances and they didn't disappoint on the night. The only difference was that it encompassed past students, current students and teachers. Although they had limited opportunities to rehearse they blew the crowd away with their remarkable performance which had the audience up and dancing!

The open day drew in large crowds including past students who reminisced on their school days. Historic photos, memorabilia and even school magazines from the mid-seventies were on display. Many talented students performed showcasing their diverse talents. There were also activities in the hospitality classroom, library and open learning spaces. Over the past 50 years Engadine High School has produced a plethora of successful students and I myself feel privileged to have attended High School there. I congratulate Principal Kerrie Jones and the entire staff for hosting this fantastic 50th anniversary, they truly went above and beyond to ensure this celebration was a success.

#### **RYLEY BATT MARKS 300 GAME WHEELCHAIR RUGBY CAREER**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise Port Macquarie local, Ryley Batt who reached a significant milestone as he led his team to victory against Canada in the 2019 World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge (WWRC) on Thursday 17 October in Tokyo, Japan. An inspiration and popular role model in our community, Ryley Batt celebrated his 300th career game representing Australia with the Steelers in Tokyo, defeating Canada 61-54 in a hard-fought win that secured passage for a semi-finals birth on the weekend. During the match Ryley scored an incredible 34 goals keeping the pressure on Canada with a strong defence that meant Canada conceded five turnovers in the final minutes of the game and a convincing win to the Steelers.

Ryley has had a stellar career in wheelchair rugby which began when he was 14-years-of-age when he made his debut in 2003 for Australia, quickly rising through the ranks to become a star athlete and a very proud sporting champion. The World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge is held every four-years and comprises eight national teams ranked among the top 10 nations in the world competing for the title. Congratulations Ryley for reaching this tremendous milestone representing Australia.

#### **PARA-ATHLETE BLAKE CARR**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Congratulations to Paralympic athlete Blake Carr, who recently went to Brisbane to represent Australia at the INAS Global Games – the world's biggest sporting event for athletes with intellectual impairment. Blake, who has autism, has only been competing in high-level athletics for three years and has already represented his country three times. Having dabbled in athletics, Blake was mainly involved in rugby league while attending Hunter Sports High. After a concussion ruled him out of rugby league, Blake gave athletics a crack.

Blake usually competes in both the 100 metre and 200 metre sprints, long jump and discus, and attempted the 110 metre hurdles for the first time late last year in an attempt to qualify for the INAS Global Games. Despite injuring his lower back and completed what is usually three weeks of intense rehabilitation in two, Blake then broke the national record in his category. Once again, I would like to congratulate you Blake on all your achievements thus far, proving to everyone that autism is not a barrier to success and encouraging everyone despite your ability to pursue your goals and dreams.

#### **WHITLAM ORATION 2019**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I recognise the 2019 Whitlam Oration organised annually by the Whitlam Institute. The Oration held in conjunction with the University of Western Sydney, was delivered in 2019 by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet. She addressed guests on 'Australia's Role—Human Rights in a Changing World.' Dr Bachelet commenced in her current position of High Commissioner on 1 September 2018. She is the seventh Commissioner in an office established in 1993.

Companera Bachelet was elected President of Chile 2006-2010. She was the first Socialist President of Chile since Salvador Allende. She was the first female President of Chile and she served again as President 2014-2018. She had previously been Health Minister 2000-2002 and Latin America's first female Defence Minister 2002-2004. She was imprisoned and tortured in Pinochet's fascist coup in 1973. Her father died while imprisoned. She was a political refugee in Australia.

## **24 HOUR FIGHT AGAINST CANCER MACARTHUR**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)**—The residents of Macarthur have once again proven to be extremely generous and community-minded at the 15th annual 24 Hour Fight Against Macarthur. The fund-raiser was held on October 19 and 20 where thousands of people took to the track at Campbelltown Athletics Stadium to walk laps and raise money for the Macarthur Cancer Therapy Centre, the Oncology Ward and Paediatric Ambulatory Care Unit at Campbelltown Hospital, and the Palliative Care Unit and Outreach service at Camden Hospital. This inspiring initiative was started by my dear friend, the late Councillor Fred Borg, in 2005 to ensure every cent raised by the people of Macarthur goes to the local cancer services.

Since then, \$4.3 million has been raised by the annual event to provide world-class equipment and services such as specialist scanning machines, high-tech treatment chairs for chemotherapy patients and part-time lymphoedema therapist to reduce patient waiting times. My hearty congratulations goes to the entire organising committee, headed by Chairperson Councillor Warren Morrison. I also want to thank each and every person who walked laps, donated money and supported this great cause.

## **MARY MCKILLOP DAY – TUESDAY 20 AUGUST 2019**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Tuesday 20th August, Mary Mackillop College celebrated Mary Mackillop Day, an annual event which teachers and students look forward to when they can take a break from their regular curriculum to enjoy a fun day and fundraise for various causes. Students and staff as well as parents and members of the wider community attended Mass and joined in a range of activities throughout the day.

One of the highlights of this event is of course – MacFactor – a talent quest which students and staff are encouraged to participate in. This is a great opportunity to have a glimpse into the wide range of talents that exist in the Mary MacKillop community. Also commendations to the teachers who took part in the "Pie in the Face" fundraising initiative for their brave spirit and willingness to participate in the worthy cause. Well done to Mary Mackillop College Wakeley for a successful and entertaining event!

## **WAVERTON COAL LOADER CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I congratulate North Sydney Council, who received a Culture Change Innovation and Excellence Award for their Coal Loader Centre for Sustainability at the Local Government New South Wales Gala Awards night. Demonstrating what can be achieved through long-term planning in sustainability, North Sydney Council is setting the bar when it comes to environmental initiatives. Through the Coal Loader, North Sydney Council is showcasing sustainable innovation, and operating a diverse range of programs which provide enormous benefits for our community.

By integrating rainwater recycling, and a local nursery into the site's historical layout, the Coal Loader is both preserving local history, and improving our environment. From its community gardens, to its battery recycling drop-off spots, the Coal Loader challenges its visitors to make more sustainable choices. As a Local Government initiative, this project exemplifies how early stakeholder involvement can help promote community buy-in from the outset. I commend Mayor Jilly Gibson, and everyone at North Sydney Council for working to deliver more environmentally friendly services and continuing to involve the community in significant projects like this one.

## **TRIBUTE TO ALANA WHITE AND GEORGIA SELMON**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Alana White and Georgia Selmon of Illawong for their dedication to raising awareness of and promoting open conversation surrounding mental health. Recently, Alana and Georgia's close friend Tom sadly lost his life following a struggle with depression and anxiety. As a result, Alana and Georgia have pledged to make a changed and hopefully help save the life of someone else. The two friends are organising a fundraiser for Beyond Blue, aiming to raise \$10,000 through a trivia night to run early next year. In doing so, Alana and Georgia hope to prevent as many other families as possible from experiencing the same loss that they have.

Initiatives such as Alana and Georgia's fundraiser are so important to promoting awareness and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health. With Australian Bureau of Statistics data indicating that 458 young people aged under 25 died as a result of suicide last year, community-led events such as this one assist in ensuring young people in our community feel less isolated by demonstrating an active support system. I commend Alana and Georgia on their efforts and extend my best wishes for their upcoming fundraiser.

## **RUAN SIMMS**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—Women's Sport - the great Ruan Simms. On the 29th of September and Leichardt Oval, Ruan took to the field for the final time in the mighty tri-colours of the mighty

Roosters. Ruan is a true trailblazer of the women's game – has displayed an abundance of talent and leadership that has seen the gritty forward compile an enviable list of history-making achievements. A CRS does not allow enough time to list all of these achievements, but here is a few. She is a former Australian and NSW captain, was the first woman to be offered an NRL contract, captained her state to a drought breaking State of Origin win in 2016 and captained her country to a world cup title in 2017. During all of this, she was also a coach, a commentator and rugby league ambassador and a trained fire-fighter.

Mr Speaker, in a previous life I played high level Rugby League and was lucky enough to line up with and opposite Ruan and from first-hand experience, I can tell you that there is nothing more intimidating than seeing her run the ball straight at you. I am sure we will see plenty more of Ruan over the coming years as she continues to give back to the Rugby League community. Enjoy hanging up those boots Ruan, we wish you all the best.

#### **PORT HACKING LITTLE ATHLETICS CENTRE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—As a patron of the Port Hacking Little Athletics Centre, I was delighted to attend the opening of the 42nd season at Sylvania Waters Athletic Field on 28 September. Every year several hundred young people engage in healthy activity on a Saturday morning in track and field events. The centre encourages young athletes to participate in sport and improve their skills within their own abilities, whilst creating friendships. The centre follows the philosophy of the Little Athletics movement of "Family, Fun and Fitness".

I congratulate the 2019-20 executive and thank them for their tireless volunteer efforts: President; Mark Laverance, Vice President; Abe Yavala, Secretary; Rachelle Harrington, Treasurer; Cameron Burne, Registrar; Liz Wever, Assistant Registrar; Sharon Potts, Championships and Centre Competition; Heather Mitchell, Records and Ranking; Jenny Blanch, Coaching; Ray Russell, Officials; David Chernich, Publicity/Public Relations; Ron Impey and Equipment; Darren Bauer.

#### **AMBER KING GEE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Mr Speaker,

It is an absolute privilege for me today to recognise an outstanding and talented student from Barham High School – 15 year old Amber King Gee. Recently Amber took second place in the Ag Art Wear novice division at the Elmore Field Days. The dress entry was part of Amber's Year 9 major art project and inspired by recycling. Amber's initiative and imagination can be seen in her use of show ribbons, a wool pack and even AI straws in the dress supports. In the final year for the Ag Art Wear event it was a wonderful effort to secure a place in the near two decades of history and winners. Congratulations Amber on your success at such a prestigious event.

#### **MR PETER HAZELWOOD**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—I would like to pay tribute to Peter Hazlewood, a teacher at Wollondilly Anglican College just near my Electorate Office in Tahmoor. Peter was tragically killed in a car accident last week. Peter was a father of four who loved God, his wife Emily, his children Kiara, Elijah, Elliana and Malachi, his students and his friends. Peter was a beloved teacher, Oztag coach and pastoral care co-ordinator at Wollondilly Anglican College. Through his prayerfulness, warmth, humour, wisdom, integrity and care of others Peter had a deep and lasting influence on the lives of the students, staff and many parents at the college.

The college's headmaster Dr Stuart Quarmby paid tribute Mr Hazlewood and said that the school community was deeply affected by Mr Hazelwood's death. He described Peter as a larger than life personality who lived his life with a passion which reflected his joy of living. His presence and influence at Wollondilly Anglican College will be missed by all. I offer my condolences to Peter's family and to those at Wollondilly Anglican College

#### **MICHAEL AND JOHN SCHWARZ**

**Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)**—I commend Michael and John Schwarz producers of "Danger Close: The Battle of Long Tan" for the successful launch of the Australian war film. I note that the film follows a Company of 108 Anzac soldiers who face off against more than 2000 enemy soldiers in the Long Tan rubber plantation. I acknowledge the Australian actors Travis Fimmel, Luke Bracey, Daniel Webber, Alexander England, Stephen Peacocke, Nicholas Hamilton and Richard Roxburgh who all played important roles in the film. I wish Michael and John Schwarz continued success with their production company.

### FUSION19 FESTIVAL

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I had the joy of sampling cuisine from Burma and Iraq on Saturday, which I have to say aren't traditional McGirr menu items. But that's one of the great things about Wagga Wagga's Fusion festival: a celebration of diversity, showcasing our colourful, flavour-rich cultures, attracting upwards of 8000 participants from across the region. We had 30 vendors sharing traditional foods, with Pop-up shops, giant games and the Trash Puppets workshops making activities interactive and accessible for all ages. The Victory Memorial Gardens were buzzing well into the evening with entertainment from Kardajala Kirridarra, Thandi Phoenix, Hot Potato Band and Big Sky Mountain, DJ Fairbanks, Cosmic Bubble Beings and the Twilight Twins.

With close to seven per cent of our community born overseas, including about 500 settled families, these events help break down barriers through food, music and dance. I would like to congratulate Fusion19 organisers Wagga Wagga City Council and the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga, its sponsor Riverina Water and community partners Origin and The Daily Advertiser. Special thanks go to community development officer Victoria Lowe and other Social Planning Team members; and Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga chief executive Belinda Crain.

### TAMIL COMPETITION OF THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF GRADUATE TAMILS

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education)**—I was privileged to attend Silver Jubilee Celebration of Tamil Competitions of the Australian Society of Graduate Tamils. The celebration was to honour all the students that participated in this year's competition. Australian Society of Graduate Tamils has been conducting 'The Tamil Language Competition' annually since 1994 as one of its major initiatives. The Tamil competitions have been held for the last twenty-five years in New South Wales and 13 years in other states and territories of Australia and New Zealand.

This not-for-profit initiative encourages the learning and use of the Tamil language. It also provides a platform for developing interpersonal skills. In NSW more than 565 students participated in this year competition. Top performers in the state competitions compete at the national competition. I would like to congratulate all the students for competing in this year's competition and also in the national competition. I would also like to thank Mr Senthikumar and Dr Anushiya Kannan for all their hard work and dedication and thank them for inviting me to the Silver Jubilee Celebration.

### COOPER BOYD

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—I rise to recognise the recent achievements of Cooper Boyd of Caparra in the Upper Manning Valley. Cooper is 11 years old and in his first year of competing in the NSW Off Road Championship series. What a successful year it has been with Cooper securing first place in the 2019 JM class for nine to under 12 years on a 65cc motorcycle, and was undefeated throughout the entire series. Not only did he take home the winners trophy in the JM class, but he also took out second place in his Enduro class on his 85cc motorcycle. Cooper first started riding at an early age, when he showed an interest in older brother Blake's bike. Cooper and his brother Blake train on the family's property, and Mum Sherree and dad Brad are frequently travelling from Kyogle in the north to Nowra in the south for the boys' competitions. A special mention to those local business people who support Cooper; Mid Coast Bearing Centre and Taree Motorcycles. Next year Cooper will be competing on his 85cc bike, and his goal is to take out the championship on the bigger bike.

I look forward to following his future success.

### RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE MOON FESTIVAL

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, the Chinese community recently celebrated their Moon Festival, and I had the pleasure of attending Riverwood Community Centre's Moon Festival Celebration. The celebration of the moon festival is about bringing people together and giving thanks. This year, Riverwood Community Centre hosted a lively event with some fantastic performances from the Riverwood Chinese Dancing and Choir Group, the Chinese Family Group and the Australian Chinese Senior Group. Everyone was able to enjoy these performances, as well as play some traditional games. Riverwood Community Centre is a fantastic local group that provides services, activities, and facilities for children, young people, those with disabilities and the elderly. The Centre is run by locals, and with the support of volunteers, is able to service hundreds of people in the community. I would like to thank all those who are involved with the Centre, particularly CEO Michelle Newman, for the important work they do for our community.

### MURWILLUMBAH HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I was extremely pleased to learn that, recently, Murwillumbah High School was among the recipients of the Secretary's School Achievement Award at the 2019 Minister's and Secretary's Awards for Excellence. The award celebration was held at Sydney Town Hall on Tuesday, 27 August 2019. These Awards showcase the extraordinary talent across NSW public education. The Murwillumbah High School was recognised for its Learning through Engagement, Agency and Passion (LEAP) program. LEAP is an innovative and successful approach to teaching and learning, focusing on teaching and learning rather than student behaviour. How wonderful!

Since 2017, LEAP has significantly improved outcomes for students through a strong professional learning program, focused leadership, innovative approaches to enhancing student wellbeing and engagement. This program has demonstrated positive impacts by reducing off task behaviour by 43% and increasing enrolment by 33% in the past two years. I congratulate the Principal of Murwillumbah High School, Mr. Peter Howes, teachers, staff members, students, parents, P&C and Murwillumbah Teachers Association for this achievement. As the only school from the Electorate of Lismore acknowledged at this year Awards for Excellence, this award is certainly something to be celebrated and one that our community can be proud of.

### GLENN INNES SHEARERS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)**—I congratulate exceptional Glen Innes shearing quartet Daniel and Ryan McIntyre, Jack Hillier and Byron Campbell on being selected in the NSW team to compete at the National Shearing Championships at Dubbo next month. Ryan will compete in novice shearing, Jack in the novice wool handling and Byron in the intermediate shearing division. Daniel will contest the open section, having previously represented Australia as the national team captain in the world championships in France in July this year, finishing 16th in the world! Glen Innes will have one of the largest regional contingents of any town its size – with a population of around 6,000 people. I commend each of the competitors from Glen Innes on their selection and wish them all the best for success at the Championships. The four men have made Glen Innes the shearing capital of NSW.

### GAIA RESORT AND SPA

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I congratulate Gaia Retreat and Spa of Brooklet for being nominated for an award as the World's Leading Retreat in the World Travel Awards 2019. This is one of the most prestigious award programs in the travel industry worldwide. In 14 years Gaia Retreat and Spa has grown from being a small business of under 20 staff to become a world leader in the spa and wellness industry, now offering diverse job opportunities to more than 100 Northern NSW residents. Gaia is an icon in the Northern Rivers that embraces an environmentally conscious attitude. It is an asset to our region and is well deserving of the recognition it receives on the global stage.

### CYNTHIA BACON - PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT OF THE YEAR

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I warmly congratulate Cynthia Bacon, proud mum of Sophia and Olivia at Marrickville West Public School, who has been named Public School Parent of the Year at this year's Public Education Foundation Awards. The award acknowledges parents, guardians and caregivers who have made a significant contribution to their local NSW public school community. Cynthia is a pillar of the Marrickville West Primary School P & C, giving over 700 hours to helping out as the class parent for her daughter's classes, at school carwashes, discos and Election Day fundraisers.

Cynthia has helped deliver the ground-breaking "Conversation with Kids" literacy program, assisted with reading and craft groups, as well as helping co-ordinate carnivals, book clubs and other events. Cynthia has wrapped hundreds of easter egg gifts, been responsible for the costuming and make up for many school productions, as well as volunteering at the school canteen. I am exhausted just thinking about it! I am so grateful and proud of all the parents and guardians who give their time to P&C's and P&F's across the Summer Hill electorate and offer my special congratulations to Cynthia on this incredible achievement.

### DARLO DARLINGS

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I acknowledge Darlo Darlings, and in particular founder Mike Galvin, for their community building and support for marginalised people, including those sleeping rough. Darlo Darlings is a community of residents and businesses in Darlinghurst and Surry Hills. They celebrate local vibrancy and aim to create a supportive, encouraging and fun community that is both online and in person. Darlo Darling's Facebook page allows people who live, work and enjoy visiting the area to share events, find out about good shops and get community information and tips on all sorts of things.

For example, Darlo Darlings is encouraging residents to support a local restaurant that will donate two per cent of profit to charities Rough Edges and The Girls and Boys Brigade, both of which help local people who are struggling with life's challenges. This is a win for all involved – residents businesses and people having a rough time. I thank Darlo Darlings for their care and commitment to this inner city community, and commend their efforts at bringing the community together and providing support to people in need.

#### **AMOUR MALOU – DAME MARIE BASHIR PEACE AWARDS**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I congratulate Amour Malou a Year 10 student at the Chifley College, Shalvey Campus, on receiving a Highly Commended Certificate at the recent Dame Marie Bashir Peace Awards for 2019. This award is presented to young women who have displayed leadership in fostering harmonious relationships and peace in their communities. Amour was nominated for this award by School Principal, Ms Jenny Linklater. I applaud Amour for her demonstrated efforts in bringing peace and harmony to her community.

#### **LEICHHARDT AGAINST WESTCONNEX**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I recognise an extremely hardworking group from my local area: Leichhardt Against WestConnex. Our community has faced disruption and destruction at the hands of WestConnex and I would like to put the work and achievements of this group and its members on the record in this place. Leichhardt Against WestConnex was formed three years ago to stand up for our community and oppose the dive site proposed for Darley Road. Despite many setbacks these residents have never backed down. They achieved some remarkable things including successfully changing tunnel routes, winning important safeguards for residents and, critically, defeating that Darley Road dive site.

Community organisations like these make our city a better place to live. They care for its residents and provide a voice for local people who otherwise would have none. In particular, I want to acknowledge Christina Joy, Catherine Gemmell and Jennifer Aaron who are the co-conveners of Leichhardt Against WestConnex in addition to all the members and supporters. The strength of our community shows through these organisations. Thank you to everyone who has been involved in them over the years, your work does not go unnoticed.

#### **BLAKE FOX**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I congratulate local rider Blake Fox - recently crowned Australian champion at the Australian Junior Motocross Championships in Adelaide. Racing in the 15 years 125cc class, Blake achieved a string of podium finishes in the finals, and claimed the overall title. He followed that incredible performance with second place overall in the 15 Years 250cc championship. The title caps off an amazing year for the talented young rider which also saw him win the NSW championship, and represent Australia at the World Junior Motocross Championships for the second year in a row. It was great to see 6 juniors from the Dubbo Dirt Bike Club competing at the National level against 500 of the best from around the country over 6 days.

Dubbo's Jack Deveson showed he's one to watch in the future with some great results in the 10-12 Years classes, while older brother Brock finished with a number of top 10 results in the 13-15 Years. Justin Harrow rode really well, with some top 20 results in the 13-15 Years. Brothers Jonty & Kyan Hatton suffered unfortunate injuries but both boys are fine now. Well done to all the riders and to Dubbo Dirt Bike Club.

#### **SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL A R BLUETT MEMORIAL AWARD**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I bring to the attention of the House a recent prestigious achievement by Shellharbour City Council. Last week, Shellharbour City Council was awarded local government's highest honour in New South Wales, the A R Bluett Memorial Award. The prestigious prize is awarded to the most progressive Council in New South Wales and takes into consideration all aspects of Council operations. I would like to sincerely congratulate Mayor Marianne Saliba, her fellow Councillors, Council staff, and the community members who contributed to this achievement.

Shellharbour City Council is a shining example of excellence in local government, and this prize is all the more worth celebrating because of the NSW Government's proposed, and failed, council merger four years ago. Shellharbour City Council last won this award back in 1948. It's inspiring to think how far Shellharbour City Council has come since then, and also what they've overcome in recent history. Every day, I'm grateful to work alongside an organisation as well-run and forward-thinking as Shellharbour City Council to help achieve the absolute best for the residents of Shellharbour. Congratulations again to everyone at Shellharbour City Council on this very well-deserved achievement.



**BERT COLLINS**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)**—I would like to pay tribute to one of Bankstown's most well-known, respected and loved identities, and our oldest war veteran, Mr Albert (Bert) Collins, who I have the honour and privilege of calling a dear friend. Bert was recently presented with a Quilt of Valour, made by Quilts of Valour Australia, in recognition of his military service to our nation and his decades of involvement with the RSL. Bert has been an active member of the RSL for over 70 years, with the last 58 years in the Bankstown Sub-branch, and this year Bert was the oldest ANZAC veteran to march in Sydney's ANZAC day commemorations.

Quilts of Valour Australia is a little-known not-for-profit organisation, which makes quilts for returned defence personnel and the immediate families of the fallen. Bert is due to celebrate his 104th birthday in March next year and has remarkably survived a heart attack, a stroke and in 2017 became the oldest person known to survive skin cancer, having made a full recovery from melanoma. Bert is a pillar of our community and the Quilt of Valour is a powerful and symbolic recognition of his lifelong commitment to service. Congratulations Bert!

**RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 9'S**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—On Friday night I was honoured to represent the Premier at the Rugby League World Cup 9's at BankWest Stadium. The new stadium was packed to the brim and I was delighted to see the result of the government's 360 million dollar investment in Western Sydney being well-received by the community. This competition united 16 teams from across 12 different countries in Parramatta for two days of thrilling rugby action. Of particular note throughout the evening was the Australia-New Zealand double header, with both the men's and women's teams playing successively.

It was great to see Dylan Brown for New Zealand, Brad Takairangi for the Cook Islands, Maika Sivo for Fiji, and Clint Gutherson, Nathan Brown and Mitchell Moses for Australia on the field. It is always a privilege to see Parramatta Eels players in their home ground. Whilst it was unfortunate that our Aussie women didn't win in the final against New Zealand, it was great to see women's sport taking the world stage and embraced by fans of the code. Congratulations to the Australian Men's team who convincingly beat New Zealand in the Final. I wish all players luck for the 2020 season.

**SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF TAMIL COMPETITIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF GRADUATE TAMILS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was terrific to attend and deliver remarks on Sunday, September 29th at the Silver Jubilee Celebration of Tamil Competitions of the Australian Society of Graduate Tamils! The Australian Society of Graduate Tamils has been conducting the competition annually since 1994, and this year marked 25 years in New South Wales and 13 years in other States and Territories across Australia and New Zealand. This year's theme was "Dreams Can Come True." Contestants compete in categories of written, verbal, speeches and poetry. Top performers from this state competition will go onto compete at the national level. These competitions help encourage the learning of the Tamil language, which is one of the world's oldest, amongst younger generations, along with the development of interpersonal skills. This year alone over 1600 Students participated nationwide, with 565 keen students right here in New South Wales. Thank you Mr. T Senthikumar, National Coordinator of the competition, and Dr. Anushiya Kannan, New South Wales Coordinator for all your hard work in organising this excellent event.

**GUNDAGAI'S VIKING HORN**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr Speaker,

I'm sure we all know Sydney has recently hosted the National Rugby League grand final when the Canberra Raiders and Sydney Roosters contested the Provan-Summons Trophy. Sydney Roosters may have won the premiership but I'd like to acknowledge Gundagai electrician, Wayne Pollack, his mates Pete Smith, Frank Roddy and Mark Smith who constructed the now much celebrated Canberra Raiders Viking horn. Wayne and his mates crafted the horn using polystyrene, wire, glue and coated it with fibreglass before painting. The Viking horn, made in Gundagai, travelled from Canberra to ANZ Stadium for the grand final and was proudly blown by Canberra Raiders legend Mal Meninga, as the team ran on to the field to a rousing Viking Clap.

**BELINDA NADWIE**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—Today I would like to congratulate artist Belinda Nadwie whose artwork was recently featured on TV Show The Block. The Galston local was hoping one day to have a piece of her work featured on the reality TV show which follows couples renovating three storey homes in St Kilda. That dream became a reality when she got a call from couple Jessie and Mel who had seen her painting online and wanted to use it in their renovation. The painting was huge and difficult to ship but they got it to Melbourne just in time. Locals will know Belinda's work which is on show at

Galston Public School where she painted an 18 metre long mural last year. Belinda donated the mural, which normally would cost thousands, to show her appreciation for all the school does for her children and all the students who attend the school. Congratulations Belinda on a dream come true and for brightening the playground at Galston Public School.

#### **FOOTBALL4ALL GALA DAY**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services)**—Football4All is a Football NSW initiative introduced in 2008. The initiative provides individuals with a disability or special needs with the opportunity to enjoy a wonderful day of football with family and friends at no expense. On Sunday, 30 June, I was pleased to join over 450 participants from the Football4All programs and various disability providers across NSW at Valentine Sports Park for the Football4All Gala Day. Among the participants, I was delighted to see the North Rocks Rockerballers and Hills Knights Kickaroos this year representing the Baulkham Hills electorate. I commend Football NSW on their initiative to encourage people with a disability to become involved in football and enjoy all its benefits. It is a big win for NSW when more people can participate in sport and active recreation.

#### **INTEGRATED PAEDIATRIC UNIT**

**Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)**—I thank my community who have continued to work and advocate for the improvement of the Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital precinct. It was my pleasure to join with hospital staff including General Manager Craig Hamer, Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services Brad Scotcher, Maternity and Women's Health Service Lead Angela Jones and Manager Capital Projects Vince De Santis to officially open the upgraded Integrated Paediatric Unit last week, which was made possible thanks to a \$250,000 NSW Government investment, and significant donations from Terry and Bronwyn Bec and Kevin Cummins.

The upgrades are designed to reduce the amount of stress young families experience when their child is in the hospital. There is an enhanced playroom and outdoor area with new equipment and furnishings, an expanded and refurbished Special Care Nursery and improved parents facilities. These upgrades have improved the way staff work on the ward by providing more space and better flow through the wards. This will have a significant impact and ease the stress for the South Coast community who use these facilities. Thank you to the donors and hospital staff for their hard work and efforts caring for the sick children of the Shoalhaven.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:37 until  
Wednesday 23 October at 9:30.**