



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 14 November 2019

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 14 November 2019

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

WATER SUPPLY (CRITICAL NEEDS) BILL 2019

MUSIC FESTIVALS BILL 2019

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the bills with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council amendments be set down as orders of the day for a later hour.

[Notices of motions given.]

WATER SUPPLY (CRITICAL NEEDS) BILL 2019

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 13 November 2019.

No. 1 GOVT No. 1 [c2019-246A]

Page 3, proposed section 5(1)(a). Insert after line 10—

(iv) the locality that includes Cobar and Nyngan,

No. 2 SFF No. 1 [c2019-207C]

Page 3, proposed section 5(1)(a). Insert after line 10—

(iv) the locality that includes Walgett,

No. 3 SFF No. 3 [c2019-207C]

Page 3, proposed section 5(1)(a). Insert after line 10—

(iv) the locality that includes Bourke,

No. 4 SFF No. 5 [c2019-207C]

Page 3, proposed section 5(1)(a). Insert after line 10—

(iv) the locality that includes Bourke and the Darling River between Bourke and its junction with the Murray River,

No. 5 SFF No. 7 [c2019-207C]

Page 3, proposed section 5(1)(a). Insert after line 10—

(iv) the locality that includes Warren,

No. 6 GOVT No. 2 [c2019-246A]

Page 13, proposed Schedule 2. Insert at the end of the Table in the Schedule—

Works to connect the Cobar and Nyngan town water supplies to alternative available groundwater sources

the locality that includes Cobar and Nyngan

No. 7 SFF No. 2 [c2019-207C]

Page 13, proposed Schedule 2. Insert at the end of the Table in the Schedule—

Walgett weir and Walgett water treatment plant Project

the locality that includes Walgett

No. 8 **SFF No. 4 [c2019-207C]**

Page 13, proposed Schedule 2. Insert at the end of the Table in the Schedule—

Bourke weir, bore water supply and water treatment project	the locality that includes Bourke
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No. 9 **SFF No. 6 [c2019-207C]**

Page 13, proposed Schedule 2. Insert at the end of the Table in the Schedule—

Re-establishment of natural rock weirs on the Darling River between Bourke and its junction with the Murray River	the locality that includes Bourke and the Darling River between Bourke and its junction with the Murray River
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No. 10 **SFF No. 8 [c2019-207C]**

Page 13, proposed Schedule 2. Insert at the end of the Table in the Schedule—

Works for the Warren town water supply, including bores, connecting piping and associated infrastructure for the Warren bore field	the locality that includes Warren
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Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (09:49:47): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

These changes ensure that other towns are included in the schedule of our emergency Water Supply (Critical Needs) Bill 2019. The locations of Walgett, Bourke, Darling River, Cobar, Nyngan and Warren are included within the amendments. We agree that they are localities of critical need. This is the worst drought our communities have ever seen and, as we know, the forecast does not predict rain anytime soon. However, this bill is another tool that we have to secure and supply towns with drinking water as we build emergency infrastructure and pipelines, and to ensure that we can go into the recovery phase with the construction of new dams under our critical State infrastructure pathway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.**Motion agreed to.****MUSIC FESTIVALS BILL 2019****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.***Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 13 November 2019.*No. 1 **OPP No. 5 [c2019-194D]**

Page 2, proposed section 3, lines 41 and 42. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

music festival organiser, for a music festival, means the person or other entity noted on the public liability insurance policy provided to—

- (a) the owner or other person in charge of the premises on which the festival is to be held, or
- (b) the local council for the area in which the festival is to be held.

music festival roundtable—see Part 4No. 2 **OPP No. 11 [c2019-194D]**

Page 4, proposed section 5. Insert after line 8—

- (b) any advice from the music festival roundtable,

No. 3 **GRNS No. 1 [c2019-245A]**

Page 5, proposed section 6, lines 4 and 5. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead—

- (h) information about the types of health services that will be provided at the festival and the number of persons who will be providing those health services,

No. 4 **GRNS No. 2 [c2019-245A]**

Page 5, proposed section 6. Insert after line 14—

- (3) The music festival organiser must also, at least 14 days before the festival is to be held, give ILGA an addendum to the safety management plan that includes information about—
- (a) the persons that will provide health services at the festival, and
 - (b) the qualifications and work experience of the persons engaged to provide the health services.

No. 5 **OPP No. 15 [c2019-194D]**

Page 5, proposed section 6, line 15. Insert ", at least 14 days before the festival is to be held," after "ILGA must".

No. 6 **GRNS No. 3 [c2019-245A]**

Page 5, proposed section 7, line 26. Omit "100 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both". Insert instead "500 penalty units".

No. 7 **OPP No. 28 [c2019-194D]**

Page 8. Insert after line 16—

Part 4 Music festival roundtable

Division 1 Establishment, functions and membership

13 Minister must establish music festival roundtable

The Minister must establish a music festival roundtable.

14 Functions of music festival roundtable

The functions of the music festival roundtable are—

- (a) to support the growth of the music festival industry in the State, and
- (b) to support the safety of patrons of music festivals by—
 - (i) conducting reviews of regulatory schemes that are relevant to music festivals, and
 - (ii) providing advice to government and industry about best practice in relation to the safe operation of music festivals, and
- (c) to conduct reviews of legislation, reports, advice and other matters that are relevant to the operation of music festivals, and
- (d) to address any unforeseen consequences from the enactment of this Act.

15 Membership of music festival roundtable

The members of the music festival roundtable are—

- (a) 10 members chosen by the Minister to represent the Government including, for example, members chosen to represent the following—
 - (i) the Department of Premier and Cabinet,
 - (ii) the Ministry of Health,
 - (iii) Ambulance Service of NSW,
 - (iv) the NSW Police Force,
 - (v) Liquor and Gaming NSW,
 - (vi) the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment,
 - (vii) Transport for NSW,
 - (viii) Destination NSW,
 - (ix) Create NSW, and
- (b) 10 industry representatives, being—
 - (i) 4 members nominated by the Australian Festival Association, and
 - (ii) 1 member nominated by APRA AMCOS, and
 - (iii) 1 member nominated by MusicNSW, and
 - (iv) 1 member nominated by Live Performance Australia, and
 - (v) 1 member nominated by Local Government NSW, and
 - (vi) 1 member nominated by the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA), and

- (vii) 1 member nominated by Unions NSW.

Division 2 Operation of music festival roundtable

16 Co-chairs of music festival roundtable

The music festival roundtable is to be co-chaired by—

- (a) a member referred to in section 15(a) chosen by the Minister, and
- (b) a member referred to in section 15(b) chosen by the industry representatives referred to in that paragraph.

17 Meetings

- (1) The music festival roundtable is to meet—
 - (a) in March and August in each year, and
 - (b) on at least 2 other occasions in each year.
- (2) At least 1 meeting of the music festival roundtable in a year is to be held at a music festival site.

18 Reporting

- (1) The music festival roundtable must, within 4 months after 30 June in each year—
 - (a) prepare a report on the activities of the roundtable during the year ended on that 30 June, and
 - (b) give the report to the Minister.
- (2) The Minister must ensure a copy of the report is—
 - (a) published on an appropriate government website, and
 - (b) tabled in each House of Parliament within 1 month after receiving it.

19 Review of operation of Act

- (1) The music festival roundtable is to review the operation of this Act in relation to music festivals held between the commencement of this Act and 30 April 2020.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as practicable after 30 April 2020.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament by 30 June 2020.

No. 8 **OPP No. 29 [c2019-194D]**

Page 9. Insert before line 2—

13 Review of objectives of Act

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

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (09:51:54): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (09:52:24): We are so pleased that the Government has accepted the amendments. I thank our members in the other place for all their hard work on this very important legislation. The music industry and festivals are significant employers across the State. We have always known they are critically important. I pay tribute to the sector, which had advocated for a roundtable from the get-go because it knew, as we did, that government could not do this alone; it had to be done in cooperation with the sector. That has been achieved today, so we are very thankful that the Government has agreed to the amendments. We know that this is now a much better bill that both the sector and the Opposition embraces. We know that it will lead to the best result for the people of New South Wales and we certainly support the amendments.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (09:53:43): I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for her comments. First, I acknowledge the music festival sector and thank each and every person for the work that they have done and for their engagement with all of us in this place. I acknowledge the hard work, consideration and contribution of everyone. This is an important outcome. I acknowledge the shadow Minister for Music and the

Night Time Economy, the Hon. John Graham. I understand that the Government may appoint its own night-time economy Minister, but the Labor Party can claim a world first in having our shadow Minister, who has done a fantastic job in coordinating and engaging with a very important sector. I acknowledge that the music festival roundtable amendment was agreed to, which is a fantastic outcome. When it was introduced in this place the Government opposed it. Indeed, it opposed it last night in the other place. We should not forget that. However, this morning the Government has accepted it. An industry roundtable makes common sense.

This morning's news again highlights the fact that a lack of music venues is costing our economy hundreds of millions of dollars, so this is an important measure. Labor is on the front foot in providing live music venues and ensuring that everybody who attends is safe and that management plans and regulations are in place. It is important that the sector, the Government and councils all come together. We have to ensure that music festivals and the sector, whether it is hospitality or live entertainment, are destinations. We want the middle class of South-East Asia to come to Sydney to watch a live band because that has direct and indirect benefits. I welcome the amendments.

As members can see, I am wearing my INXS T-shirt from many years ago. I know I am not allowed to take off my jacket. Today the Parliamentary Friends of Music have organised an event to support Australian music artists who are injured or otherwise in need of help. We got out our old T-shirts from many years ago and we are wearing them today in support of that excellent cause. As I said, we welcome these amendments. They are really good news because they will provide certainty and stability and they will open up important dialogue and opportunities. In the next six to 12 months we will see economic benefits and opportunities come to New South Wales because of these amendments.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSON (Upper Hunter) (09:58:03): The Music Festivals Bill 2019 builds on the Government's commitment to keep people safe at music festivals. It builds on the work of NSW Health in developing world's best practice clinical and harm reduction guidelines to help organisers to develop comprehensive plans for their events. It builds on the work of the New South Wales Government in providing taxpayer-funded medical retrieval teams at music festivals to get people the immediate help they need to prevent more deaths at music festivals. It also builds on the funding that the Government has provided to harm reduction services, including awareness and education campaigns targeted at giving festival goers the information they need to make better decisions.

The bill that the Government has passed puts us in the best possible position to not have a summer like we did last year. It gives us the tools to work collaboratively with festival organisers and the industry as a whole to make festivals safer. The Government is disappointed that amendments were made by the other place, but still feels that this framework is the right way to address broad community concerns around drug use at music festivals. While we feel that the original model struck the right balance, we are willing to accept the amended bill and hope that it will work. We do not want to make this critical issue political. It must continue to be about evidence-based policy and keeping people safe. I commend the bill to the House

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

Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL FUNDING AMENDMENT (CASH DONATIONS) BILL 2019

Second Reading Speech

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (10:00:27): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

As this bill was introduced in the other place on 16 October 2019 and is in the same form—the second reading speech appears at pages 42 to 43 in the proof of *Hansard* for that day—I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (10:00:44): The Electoral Funding Amendment (Cash Donations) Bill 2019 amends the Electoral Funding Act to ban donations of more than \$100 from being made or accepted in cash. It certainly suits me because no-one donates to my campaigns. I get very, very small donations every now and again when I manage to wrangle some out of my mum, my dad or my sisters. So the ban is not going to be a problem for me and I am happy to go along with it. But it could be an issue for some members on the other side of the House. I remember a poor dog a few years ago. A vet had to stop an operation on the poor dog while he went out to collect some money in a bag. I do not know how Fido went after that, but a bag of money was exchanged—certainly a lot more than is exchanged at any of my fundraisers. We hope that that sort of behaviour does not continue and that this legislation will crack down on those sorts of donations.

The bill sets out penalties of \$44,000 and/or two years' imprisonment for contraventions of the ban. That is fairly serious—it would have got the vet in a little bit of trouble and it certainly would have been an issue. I would have thought that it may have got Eight By Five in a little bit of trouble once, or possibly twice. I do not know about the member for Wagga Wagga; I am not sure about that. It was probably a select case concerning the member for Wagga Wagga's behaviour. But we will move on. The bill will increase transparency and confidence in the political donations system in our State—and that is a good thing—by ensuring that donations can be properly traced to their true source.

Labor supports the bill, but we call on the Government to support Labor's bill to ban developers from Cabinet, which the Leader of the Opposition will introduce later this morning. We believe that is an important safeguard. When you govern the State and you are on the Executive of government we believe that should be your main job. It should be your priority to focus on the women and men of New South Wales and make decisions in their best interests. That is why we do not believe that those who choose to be developers—and there is nothing wrong with being a developer—should be sitting on the Executive of government.

Like everyone, I have been appalled at what has been uncovered in recent corruption hearings at ICAC in relation to both sides of politics. I do not think anyone on either side of our major political parties can walk away from the fact that what has happened is unacceptable by any measure. I certainly applaud the Leader of the Opposition for taking a very strong stance on a number of issues, and I also commend previous Leaders of the Opposition, but I recognise that it is important that we deal with this issue in a bipartisan way if we are going to restore confidence in our electoral system.

At times the Government tries to focus on one political side, but that should not be the case. We have seen what happened with Operation Spicer and we have seen what happened over the past eight years with around 12 Coalition members facing time down at ICAC. This is certainly not an issue focused solely on one political party; any member who says that is wrong. That is not the case in this Chamber; it is not realistic and our approach to the issue should be bipartisan. That is why we are hoping that, given our support for this bill—sensible support for a reasonable step taken by the Government—later on today the Leader of the Opposition's bill to ban developers from Cabinet will also be supported.

This is an issue that all of us in the Chamber and all parliamentarians must get right. We must continue to have a watching brief to ensure that we develop legislation that is in line with the community expectations in the way we operate and the way campaigns are funded—the more transparency the better. This legislation will not be the last of electoral funding laws. I am very confident that either in this term of Parliament or in the next there will be even more improvements and more enhancements to those laws because of community expectations, and rightly so.

The community needs to trust that political campaigns are run transparently and that those who donate to political campaigns do so because they want to support a particular individual or political party and their views, not because it gives them unfettered access and an inside lane to decisions made by the elected government. I believe all of us can agree with that. We will support the Electoral Funding Amendment (Cash Donations) Bill 2019. We encourage the Government to support the bill that the Leader of Opposition will introduce later today. We believe that both of these pieces of legislation are important. Given the bipartisan way in which the Opposition has treated the Government's bill we would like to see that same treatment given to the bill that will be introduced later today by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:07:16): I admire the front of the member for Keira. In my former life I have seen some people at the bar with some front, but that was a gold medal winning performance by the member for Keira.

Mr Adam Crouch: Conveniently he forgot about the Aldi bag donation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I will come to the Aldi bag in a minute. I remind the House of the absolutely extraordinary circumstances that have led to the necessity for this legislation to come before the House. I will use as my reference source the opening address of counsel assisting at ICAC on 26 August this year in relation to Operation Aero and the extraordinary matters that have been disclosed in the evidence that has come before ICAC this year. The starting point is the Chinese Friends of Labor function on 12 March 2015. As I have said before, rather than the Chinese Friends of Labor the organisation should be called the Labor friends of Communist China because this organisation and its connections with the Chinese communist government are truly of concern to anybody who cares about a properly functioning democracy in this country.

On 12 March 2015, \$138,930 was raised at the so-called Chinese Friends of Labor function, \$100,000 of which was donated in cash. One of the significant matters that the Labor Party really needs to explain is that the

evidence before ICAC is that the \$100,000 in impugned cash received by the Labor Party was actually received after the 2015 State election. The corruption of our democratic process, and I will develop the evidence that went before ICAC, is that the \$100,000 in corrupt cash in the Aldi bag was actually used for the 2019 State election. I will come to this in a moment. The Labor cover-up was known by the most senior official in the New South Wales Labor Party. The State general secretary covered up the illegal donation.

The Labor Party did not give the money back before the 2019 State election; it used the money for the 2019 State election. Every member of the Opposition should be absolutely disgusted at the fact that their party's most senior official and an elected representative of the Labor Party in the upper House, Ernest Wong, knew about this illegal conduct, perverting our democratic processes. Rumours must have spread around the Labor Party at the time. Nobody receives \$100,000 in cash without people knowing about it. Every elected member of the Labor Party in this Parliament sat mute and did not say a thing to the public. They took the money, they hid the illegality and they went to the 2019 State election. All of them should be absolutely ashamed of themselves. The public will judge them—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The public will judge them at the appropriate time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: But the conduct that Opposition members stay silent about is the conduct they own.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Opposition members all own this extraordinary tale. You could not dream up a fictional tale like this if you wanted to. This is an extraordinary tale of a corrupt lunch where \$100,000 floated into the Labor Party HQ, which was covered up by the General Secretary of the Labor Party, Kaila Murnain, and involved employees of the New South Wales Labor division.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Has anyone reminded you about Glenn Brookes?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Listen to them!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Auburn will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Opposition members should be sitting in silence and should be ashamed of themselves.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: The member should make allegations through the Chair. By the way, he should look at Ronney Oueik and Glenn Brookes, and what his mob did at the last election.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Auburn will resume her seat. I call the member for Auburn to order for the first time. The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Ku-ring-gai will be heard in silence. Members who wish to participate in this debate will have an opportunity to do so at a later time.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The \$100,000 in cash in the Aldi bag breached several provisions of the electoral funding laws, which has significant consequences. The first is that anybody who is involved in a conspiracy to circumvent the electoral funding laws—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: —under more serious laws and penalties imposed by the Coalition Government after the Coalition Government in 2015—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Auburn that she is already on one call to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Those laws have a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

Ms Lynda Voltz: As if you care.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Indeed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Auburn will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The laws that were breached in respect of the \$100,000 cash in the Aldi bag include the laws that require a cap on the maximum political donations that can be made in any single financial year. The laws that prohibit donations from property developers—these moneys originated, on the evidence from

Mr Huang, a property developer associated with the Chinese Communist Government who was denied entry to Australia because of that association. These matters are very serious.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: What do members opposite do?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: They interject and interrupt my speech.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: They carry on—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat and put the props away.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: They carry on like the member for Shellharbour. That is very unparliamentary conduct.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Instead of actually doing something at the relevant time—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: —which was to not cover up this illegal donation, what do they do?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. Opposition members will put away the props now or they will be put on calls to order. I will not repeat myself. After three calls to order members will be removed from the Chamber. I do not care if it is question time or not. Members on either side will be heard in silence without interruption. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: There is a great contrast between the noise that is emanating in the House from Labor Party members now and the absolute silence before the 2019 State election when the most senior official of the New South Wales branch of the Labor Party knew about a \$100,000 illegal cash donation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Auburn will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The behaviour that we are seeing now is quite extraordinary. Opposition members make a lot of noise in this Chamber. They often try to take the moral high ground on every sort of issue known to mankind, but when somebody focuses on the fact that they misled and deceived the people of New South Wales at the State election about a \$100,000 illegal cash donation that they used in that State election—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The way that they have behaved is an absolute democratic disgrace. Look at them now. They all have these little—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: —"you have caught me out" looks on their faces. [*Extension of time*]

The bill is important. I am surprised there is so much noise from Opposition members because I understand they are going to support the bill.

Mr Michael Daley: It is because you are so boring.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Well done, mate. You need a PhD to work that out, do you? You need a PhD to work that out, old son? What a class act you are!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The House agreed that the member would have an extension of time. He will be heard in silence.

Ms Lynda Voltz: As a new member I seek clarification. My understanding is that extensions of time are given by leave. Is that correct?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is put to the House as to whether leave is granted. The question was put and there was no division on the question. The member has an extension of time. Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai will be heard in silence. I thank the member for Auburn for her question.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The 10-year penalties in the legislation for people who conspire to circumvent the electoral funding laws clearly will not stop the Labor Party. It cannot be trusted to maintain probity. The only way to sensibly deal with its modus operandi, which is inherently illegal—

Debate interrupted.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT—PROPERTY DEVELOPERS) BILL 2019

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jodi McKay, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:20:30): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The highest aim of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Code of Conduct—Property Developers) Bill 2019 is to restore confidence in government decision-making. There are currently two government bills before the House that deal with the community's expectations of parliamentarians. The Opposition will support both of those bills because it is important that the community has faith in the jobs we do, and is confident that we act with integrity and transparency in all that we do. This bill is important to ensure that the community has confidence in what we all do as parliamentarians. The bill sets out the community's expectations for Parliamentary Secretaries and Ministers in Cabinet. Today I say to the Premier that the Opposition supports the government bills before the House and seeks the same support for the measures that Labor is proposing to ensure integrity and transparency.

The highest aim of the bill is to restore public confidence in government decision-making. The public has every right to expect the highest standards from members of this place. They expect that those who have the privilege to sit in Cabinet are there to serve the interests of the people of New South Wales; not their own interests or the interests of those whom they know. These expectations are set out in the New South Wales Code of Conduct for Ministers of the Crown, which sits under the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] legislation and accompanying regulation. The fact that the code sits under the ICAC legislation proves how serious it is. The code sets out some objectives that all members should aspire to every day, including a responsibility to maintain public trust, exhibit the highest standards of probity, and perform duties with honesty and integrity.

Those obligations are even more crucial for the Premier, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries—those at the heart of government decision-making. The code of conduct sets out internal governance practices to ensure that community expectations are met. Currently, part 1 of the ministerial code of conduct deals with prohibited interests. It sets out the obligations of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, the disclosures they must make and the conduct they must not engage in, including shareholdings, directorships and secondary employment. Recent experience has proven that this section of the code of conduct needs to be amended because, incredibly, there is nothing to prevent a property developer from taking a seat at the Cabinet table. The idea of a property developer in Cabinet does not pass the community test, but it is happening in New South Wales under the Berejiklian Government. There are people who are Ministers by day and property developers by night.

That is simply not acceptable. It is no wonder that the community is cynical when Government Ministers buy up big around metro stations and then reap the windfall, miraculously dodging compulsory acquisitions. We must ensure that the community has confidence in the decisions we make in this place. This bill seeks to achieve that. Having specific legislative provisions for property developers is not a new idea. In New South Wales laws that ban property developers from making political donations have been in place since 2009, a measure introduced by Labor. That change was not popular with everyone at the time, but it served to restore public confidence that developers were not making donations to obtain favourable planning decisions or gain information around planning decisions.

However, in New South Wales there is nothing to stop the same developer from sitting in Cabinet. When critical decisions are made information is shared and voices are heard. Cabinet Ministers are exposed to information that no-one else has and that people often want. I now turn to the detail of this bill, which amends the code of conduct to insert a much-needed requirement for a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary to not remain or become a property developer. It sets a clear expectation: You can be a Minister or you can be a property developer, but you cannot be both. For consistency, the definition of "property developer" is the same as that stated in section 53 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018. That definition is very important. The bill does not target a Minister who decides to rebuild his or her home. Instead, the definition states:

- (1) Each of the following persons is a property developer for the purposes of this Division:
- (a) an individual or a corporation if:
 - (i) the individual or a corporation carries on a business mainly concerned with the residential or commercial development of land, with the ultimate purpose of the sale or lease of the land for profit, and
 - (ii) in the course of that business:
 - (A) 1 relevant planning application has been made by or on behalf of the individual or corporation and is pending, or
 - (B) 3 or more relevant planning applications made by or on behalf of the individual or corporation have been determined within the preceding 7 years,
 - (b) a person who is a close associate of an individual or a corporation referred to in paragraph (a).

Using that existing and well-established definition will limit confusion, which is what we seek to do. Consistent with the requirements for directorships, secondary employment and shareholdings under the code this bill requires a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary to take all reasonable steps to cease to be a property developer before or, if that is not practicable, as soon as practicable after appointment. Consistent with the requirements for directorships, secondary employment and shareholdings, the bill provides that a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary may remain or become a property developer where:

- (a) the person is a property developer only by virtue of being a spouse of a person, and
 - (b) that other person's property developer business is not likely to give rise to a conflict of interest, and
 - (c) the Premier gives a ruling that the Premier approves the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary remaining or becoming a property developer in those circumstances.
- We expect that any Minister with property development interests would have disclosed their conflict under the code already, but in recent times that has not happened. I am also concerned that there seems to be a lack of understanding or clarity that the same rules apply to Parliamentary Secretaries. There has not been an adherence to the code of conduct on that matter. We expect that all Ministers should disclose their interests. This bill seeks to ensure that occurs. It is explicit in this amendment that that is required.

So far in this term of Parliament both sides of the House have turned their minds to improving public confidence in this place through the decision-making processes of government and the rules around electoral donations. The Premier has put forward a bill that includes a proposal to ban cash political donations over \$100, and that proposal has been referred to this morning in this place. As I have indicated, Labor has put on record its strong support for that bill. I call on the Premier to put politics aside and support our bill, as we have supported hers. In a best case scenario, this should not be a partisan issue. We can and we must act now to restore public confidence in government.

I ask the Premier to seriously consider supporting our bill. In most cases the Premier and the Government do not support bills put before the House by the Opposition, for whatever reason. Usually it is a political decision. The bill before the House sets out very clearly a way to remove conflicts of interest from the Cabinet decision-making process. That is all the Opposition seeks to do. I ask the Premier to support this bill. I look forward to the Premier's response, given the Opposition has supported the measures that she has proposed in this House in recent times. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AMENDMENT (STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS) BILL 2019

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:32:02): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Amendment (State Owned Corporations) Bill 2019 on behalf of the State Labor Opposition. The object of the bill is to amend the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 [PPIPA] to remove the exclusion of State-owned corporations [SOCs] from that Act and to extend that Act to State-owned corporations that are not subject to the 1988 Commonwealth Privacy Act. A substantially similar bill was introduced by me in the previous Parliament, although it incurred the traditional and predictable opposition of the Government.

In recent years the protection and defence of privacy has not received the regard that it is due. Indeed, privacy legislation in this jurisdiction is in need of thorough reform. The Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act was introduced before the invention of the iPhone. That is a powerful way of putting the argument for renovation and reform. A reform of the Act should include mandatory notification of serious breaches of privacy by government agencies. Such reform has been adopted by conservative Federal governments in Canberra but rejected here. Indeed, it was recently voted down by the Government in this place.

A reform of the Act should also include improved civil remedies for serious breaches of privacy, which a separate private member's bill in my name will attempt. In so doing, the bill will implement the unanimous recommendations of a bipartisan parliamentary committee. It also should involve the application of privacy principles and legislation to all SOCs, as this bill proposes. The justification for this bill commences with first principles. State-owned corporations hold quite substantial amounts of personal information about the people of New South Wales. It follows logically that SOCs should thus be included within the PPIPA regime. Other State agencies are included and the reasons for their inclusion apply equally to the inclusion of SOCs. As I have previously quoted, the Privacy Commissioner said:

This regulatory gap in SOCs' responsibility for the personal information they collect, use and hold results in inconsistent privacy protections for consumers. This needs to be addressed as the community has heightened concerns around the collection, storage, use, and disclosure of their personal information and expects Government to provide protections for their personal information and privacy as shown by recent research.

However, SOCs are specifically excluded from PPIPA. The justification for this exemption historically was to create a level playing field with commercial corporations, which were not covered by a privacy regime. Over time that basis for exclusion has become logically untenable. That is because there is now Federal privacy legislation that covers many of the private corporations. A number of years ago a review by the Attorney General's department stated at paragraph 8.4:

SOCs are specifically excluded from the ambit of the Act. The government's intention in their excluding them was originally to ensure a level playing field so that SOCs did not have to comply with privacy legislation that did not apply to their equivalent service providers in the private sector. Subsequently, the Commonwealth Privacy Act was amended to include the large companies in the private sector, however the application of the Commonwealth Act to state instrumentalities is incomplete, as they must either be incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 ... or prescribed as organizations for the purpose of the Commonwealth Privacy Act before it will apply.

The expectations of the community have moved on significantly, as has the development of technology since SOCs were excluded from PIPPA because privacy principles were not applied to large corporations. In the context of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's recent moves in two actions that it is pursuing on personal data—the latest against Google and locational data—and in the context of greater technological scope, the need for privacy protections against private corporations is overwhelming. That is only reinforced by the discussions around and arising from books like Shoshana Zuboff's *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. Businesses—government-owned or not—should be within the jurisdiction of privacy laws.

Additionally I note that Commonwealth legislation allows SOCs to opt in to the regime. Some New South Wales SOCs are included but some are not, which is at best anomalous. If they are included already, this legislation would not force them to change. As the Privacy Commissioner noted in her report under section 61B of PPIPA, many SOCs claim they are morally bound by privacy regimes, whether or not it is a matter of legal fact. That is obviously a good start but it means including them formally within PPIPA should not cause any substantial increase in operational costs or create any difficulties for them. It would, however, give citizens a formal path of complaint and external review in relation to such entities. I note also that SOCs are covered by freedom of information regimes and the State Records Act, and they seem to quite easily manage that.

The measure in this bill has been recommended by the Privacy Commissioner and the Law Reform Commission in recommendation 2.1 of its report No. 127 entitled *Protecting Privacy in New South Wales*. The Australian Law Reform Commission has noted that statutory corporations are covered by privacy legislation in other jurisdictions but not in New South Wales. There is a long history of support for privacy regimes being extended to SOCs. The statutory review of PPIPA by the New South Wales Attorney General's department, which I have mentioned, in recommendation 12 said that New South Wales SOCs should be subject to privacy regulation. Paragraph 8.5 of the report of the review said:

Very few SOCs made substantive submissions to the review. The most common concerns were that they not be subject to more than one privacy regime, and the need for competitive neutrality with private sector competitors. However, many larger private corporations are now obliged to conform with the Commonwealth Privacy Act NPPs. Further, SOCs have a number of statutory objectives, not just to be a successful business and operate at least as efficiently as a comparable business (section 20E(1)(a)), but also "to exhibit a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the interests of the community in which [they] operate" (section 20E(1)(b)).

In relation to the first comment in that quote, I note that this bill does not subject any particular SOC to two different regimes. As I mentioned earlier, the Privacy Commissioner's report under section 61B of PPIPA, dated

February 2015 and tabled in this place, recommended this change. Failing to make the change will mean that a regulatory gap remains in relation to SOCs. It means inconsistent privacy protections for consumers, with some SOCS being bound by formal regimes and some not. Given the time constraints, I will conclude my second reaching speech. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 17 October 2019.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (10:39:48): The Government does not support the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019. If enacted, the bill would amend the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009—or the GIPA Act for short—so that, first, all agencies falling within the scope of the GIPA Act would be required to accept electronic GIPA applications; second, all agencies falling within the scope of the GIPA Act would be required to establish an electronic payment system and accept electronic payment of any fees or charges when a GIPA application is lodged electronically; and, third, electronic GIPA applications would be considered complete once an application is made and any associated fee is paid.

In November 2018 the member for Liverpool moved Opposition amendments to the then Government Information (Public Access) Amendment Bill 2018. If adopted, those amendments would have required all agencies falling within the scope of the GIPA Act to accept applications in electronic form. The Government opposed those Opposition amendments on the basis that the Government's Government Information (Public Access) Amendment Bill 2018 amended the GIPA Act to permit electronic lodgement of an access application by giving agencies discretion to receive applications as they see fit and that not all agencies falling within the scope of the GIPA Act currently have the capacity to accept electronic applications.

As I said when responding to the Opposition's proposed amendments in 2018, the Government is committed to the policy objectives of the GIPA Act, which include maintaining and advancing a system of responsible and representative democratic government that is open, accountable, fair and effective. The Government Information (Public Access) Amendment Act 2018 actioned a number of recommendations made in the 2017 statutory review of the GIPA Act to improve the Act's operation and efficiency. These improvements made it easier for members of the public to make electronic access applications and promoted the object of the GIPA Act by facilitating access to government information.

While the Government supports in principle improving access to government information, the bill before the House is problematic for a number of reasons. I will initially deal with the proposed requirement for all agencies to accept electronic GIPA applications from the time of hypothetical assent to the bill. The term "agency" in section 4 of the GIPA Act goes beyond public sector agencies and also includes numerous agencies much smaller than the large government departments which first come to mind. The proposed bill would have significant resourcing implications for a number of these smaller agencies. Because the bill does not define the term "electronic lodgement", it is not clear whether lodgement via email would be sufficient. Is the bill requiring agencies to develop specific online platforms to accept applications?

The GIPA Act currently affords agencies the discretionary power to accept access applications lodged electronically without having to seek the Information Commissioner's prior approval to do so. This has made it easier for agencies to accept access applications and has promoted the object of the Act by facilitating public access to information held by government agencies. Some public service agencies have recently launched specially designed online portals which allow for GIPA applications to be submitted entirely online. Last month, for example, the new Department of Communities and Justice commenced accepting GIPA applications through an online platform that allows users to both lodge and pay for requests for government-held information. The system also provides SMS and email notifications to individuals on the progress of those applications. Both the NSW Department of Customer Service and the Transport department host similar online portals.

While these larger agencies should be recognised for their commitment to facilitating access to government-held information, their achievements should not and cannot be a yardstick against which to measure and benchmark the online services of smaller agencies. Some of these other agencies already offer citizens the option to submit GIPA applications via email. These include the NSW Department of Education, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Property NSW, SafeWork NSW, Service NSW, Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Police Force, the NSW State Emergency Service, the Information and Privacy Commission NSW, Destination NSW, UrbanGrowth NSW, the Office of Local Government, the

NSW Environment Protection Authority, the NSW Institute of Sport and the New South Wales Office of Sport. But not every agency is as large and well resourced as these agencies and some receive very few GIPA applications.

If the Opposition is expecting that all agencies within the scope of the Act develop specific online platforms to accept GIPA applications, this would have uncoded resourcing impacts and may be excessive for those agencies that receive very few GIPA applications, not to mention requiring these platforms to be ready by the time of the hypothetical assent to the bill. These costs need to be clearly identified before proceeding with a proposal such as this. These costs are, at present, unknown. In addition to requiring electronic applications, the bill would introduce a requirement for agencies to establish an electronic payment system from the time of hypothetical assent to the bill. Again, this proposed amendment is problematic because of the broad reach of the term "agency" under the GIPA Act. For example, the GIPA Act does not distinguish between agencies the size of the Department of Communities and Justice on the one hand and the Judicial Commission of New South Wales on the other hand.

The bill would place an uncoded burden on smaller agencies like local councils, local health districts and various commissions to introduce electronic payment mechanisms if they do not already have them. Smaller agencies like local councils may not have the resources required to develop and to host online payment and submission mechanisms. Local councils are also subject to their own information release guidelines which may make online GIPA applications impractical. Agencies already have the discretion to accept electronic payments if they have the capacity to do so. The bill would thus have further uncoded resourcing and efficiency implications by forcing this change in a time frame that agencies, regardless of their size, may not be able to meet.

Proposed new subsection 41 (1C) is also of concern. Section 41 of the GIPA Act already establishes what needs to be done in order for an access application to be considered valid. This includes lodgement of the application and payment of a fee as well as inclusion of such information as is reasonably necessary to enable the government information applied for to be identified and provided to the citizen requesting it. The proposed new subsection 41 (1C) would provide that GIPA applications are considered "complete" once an application is sent electronically and the fee is paid. Yet these matters are already captured by section 41. The proposed new subsection introduces a new term—namely, "complete"—into the GIPA Act without fully accounting for its effects and implications. It is also unclear how subsection 41 (1C) interacts with these existing provisions.

The Government is committed to focusing on customer service delivery and digital transformation. The Government is at the leading edge of digital service delivery, making it easier for citizens to interact with government for everyday things such as getting a driver licence or accessing our extensive range of cost-of-living programs. It would be premature to introduce a bill of this kind while so much work is underway on focusing on building capacity to digitise customer service experiences. I acknowledge and thank the Information Commissioner, Elizabeth Tydd, for her work in promoting open government under the GIPA Act and for her strong advocacy for greater use of electronic lodgement of GIPA applications.

Under the commissioner's leadership the Information and Privacy Commission plays an important role in supporting agencies that are developing online facilities for GIPA applications. The commission is available to advise on whether any proposed facilities comply with the requirements of the GIPA Act and are appropriately accessible to New South Wales citizens. I commend the work of the commission in this area and look forward to working with it in the future to further advance the objects of the GIPA Act. While the Government's vision is one of improved customer service and digital transformation, the bill is problematic. The bill would place significant uncoded resourcing and efficiency burdens on a broad range of agencies that fall within the GIPA Act. For these reasons the Government opposes the bill.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (10:49:16): A wise man once said to me, "When you don't have a real argument against something you try to bore people to death." That is the approach of the Attorney General in rejecting the bill. The object of the bill is to amend the principal Act, the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 [GIPA] in two ways: to allow for the access application under the legislation to be made electronically and to allow for electronic payment of fees and charges if an access application is made electronically. The Attorney General outlined a host of things that the Government is doing allegedly to make it easier to interact with government. It is doing that in a range of platforms and in a range of ways—except in relation to access to public information and GIPA applications. I cannot understand that.

If the Government is able to establish this radical transformation and make it easier through online platforms to interact, why is it that GIPA applications are carved out? I find it strange that a party that prides itself on encouraging freedom of choice and freedom of the individual wants in this case to limit the choice of the individual in how the individual seeks government information by not allowing electronic applications. Let us be clear about what the bill does not do. The bill does not require that electronic lodgement or payment is the only option; it mandates that it is one of the options. That is a very distinct difference. The bill allows the individual

who wants to interact with government to formulate and decide the best way for them to do so. Let me compare it to music. Today digital downloads are the primary source for people to access their music. The Government says because someone has an eight-track player it will limit the acquisition of music to access only through an eight-track player system. It is trying to ignore, in a limited form, that the internet exists or that electronic platforms are the way that people like to interact.

I defy members opposite to prove me wrong but I would imagine that most of the interactions they have in their offices these days are principally through electronic means. Most of the interactions I have are principally through email, my Facebook page or other social media platforms and websites. I have not said to the constituents of Wollongong that they absolutely must not contact me electronically—which is their preferred form—because it is not my preferred form. When it comes to the GIPA Act that is what we are hearing from the Government today. For many citizens electronic communications are now their preferred way and it is their preferred way of communicating with government.

Ironically, probably next week the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019 will be brought before the House. That \$100 million fund, which the Government has been crowing about, is aimed at doing nothing more than transforming the way in which citizens interact with government. The great concern with the bill before the House seems to be that small agencies which receive few GIPA applications—I do not suggest that is a good reason for less transparency—do not have the resources to provide this service. Is that not the purpose of the Government's Digital Restart Fund? Is that not what digital transformation of government is all about?

Another option could be that all agencies could be listed through the Service NSW platform and individuals go to that one website, which already has a payment system attached to it. Through the Service NSW site all manner of bills can be paid and all manner of interactions can be had with government. Why would the Government not establish such a system where the agency or department from which information is sought can be selected. These are not radical transformations of government but are the modernisation of government processes. That is the aim of the bill before us: to modernise government processes in order to keep up with what people want.

The Government's My Community Project can only be interacted with through electronic means. Not only do people have to have an internet connection but they have to sign up to a Service NSW account in order to vote for their preferred project. Clearly the Government is more than happy in a number of circumstances for electronic or web-based communication and interaction to be the sole focus and sole means through which the citizenry can interact. But, once again, today the Attorney General is trying to carve out a thin sliver of government interaction and to keep GIPA applications off limits, on the basis of fairly tenuous arguments. One has to ask the question: Why? I have been known to submit a few GIPA applications of my own. One only needs talk to the team at Transport for NSW about the number of applications I have submitted to them.

The Transport for NSW system has evolved over the past couple of years and applications can be done electronically. It is a good system. Perhaps what is ultimately at the core of the Government's desire to limit interaction is that it does not want people getting access to information. One cannot help but think that when the means through which people interact are limited then the sole desire is to limit the amount of information and the number of hugely redacted documents that people are able to obtain through GIPA applications. It is ironic that the Government is more than willing to go against the comments of its own NSW Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner has argued the virtues of electronic lodgement. In her report on the operations of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 she stated:

As set out in submissions to the statutory review of the GIPA Act, electronic lodgement provides advantages for agencies and citizens including instructive guidance to ensure that applications are valid upon lodgement and efficiencies that remove duplication and enable agencies to process applications effectively.

It is not just the Information Commissioner who holds this view. The report of the statutory review on the legislation stated:

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

Let us modernise the way people lodge their GIPA applications. That is not a radical transformation or a radical agenda of the member for Liverpool to overturn things. He may have that view in other agendas but this is simply about transparency. Instead, the Government seeks to almost switch off the internet when it comes to GIPA applications under the trumped-up excuse that some agencies might not be equipped. The Government has a central agency and a Minister for Customer Service who has responsibility for digital interaction between citizens and government and the Government's \$100 million Digital Restart Fund, which will soon be on the table if the legislation passes, will provide the resources through which it can do so.

The only thing the Government does not have when it comes to this bill is a willingness to go down the path of making it easier for individuals and organisations to seek information through the GIPA Act by way of online applications. The statutory review recommendations did not agree with the Government's position of opposing this measure. One must inevitably ask the reason why. Earlier this year when the issue was raised in the budget estimates hearing, the Attorney General was asked a question on the issue of making it mandatory for agencies to accept applications electronically. The question was taken on notice, interestingly enough—again dialling down transparency. Ironically, the answer to the question on notice was submitted electronically. The answer that was provided gives some insight and sheds light on the real reason here, stating:

Not all New South Wales government agencies currently have the ability to accept electronic applications, so it is appropriate that a discretion exist at this time. The Government wants to limit the method of applications because ultimately it wants to limit the number of applications. And it wants to limit the number of applications because it does not want to have to respond to various stuff-ups and screw-ups of agencies and Ministers that are discovered through the GIPA process. If the Government was serious about digital transformation and making information more available to citizens, organisations and perhaps the media, and if it was serious about living in the twenty-first century, it would give up the eight-track, accept that downloads exist and make it mandatory that applications are submitted electronically. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (10:59:43): I echo the comments of the Attorney General in opposing the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019, introduced by the member for Liverpool. The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 is commonly known as the GIPA Act. The object of the Act is to make government information more accessible to the public by a number of means. This Government has always been strong and steadfast in its commitment to the community to be transparent and to ensure that government decisions and information are open, transparent and available to the community, which rightly deserves to have access.

Accessibility to the public comes from a number of means, such as by requiring government agencies to make certain information freely available, encouraging government agencies to release as much information as possible, giving the public an enforceable right to make access applications for government information and restricting access to information only when there is an overriding public interest against disclosure. Public access to a government information system is overseen by the Information and Privacy Commission [IPC], which is headed by the Privacy Commissioner, as the Attorney General stated.

The Information and Privacy Commission is an independent statutory authority that administers legislation dealing with privacy and government-held information in New South Wales. It provides a single point of service for information access and privacy rights for the citizens of New South Wales, ensuring that agencies and individuals can access consistent updates, guidance and training related to these areas. The Information Commissioner upholds and protects information access rights for the people of New South Wales. This function includes powers to review decisions made by New South Wales government agencies and deal with complaints about information access. It also undertakes investigations and issues guidelines and other publications to assist agencies and citizens in understanding the operation of the GIPA Act. It monitors, audits and reports on the exercise of agency functions and compliance with the Act. It makes reports and provides recommendations to the Attorney General about proposals for legislative or administrative change.

The Information Commissioner is appointed as an independent office holder under section 4 of the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009 and is also the chief executive officer of the IPC. The Information Commissioner is appointed by the Governor of New South Wales and reports directly to Parliament, with oversight of the joint parliamentary committee. This is reported publicly in documents such as the IPC annual report. As the Attorney General indicated, Ms Elizabeth Tydd is the Information Commissioner and she was first appointed to the role on 23 December 2013 as a five-year appointment. She was reappointed subsequently for another five-year term, concluding on 23 December 2023. Under the Act a person is not eligible to be appointed for more than two terms as the Information Commissioner. I take this opportunity to commend the Information Commissioner for her outstanding role in overseeing the Act and the functions of the commission.

As the NSW Open Data Advocate, the Information Commissioner also provides advice to the Data Analytics Centre and the New South Wales Government on non-personal data that should be proactively released to the public. The commissioner plays an important role in encouraging government agencies to proactively release as much information as possible so that formal GIPA applications need only be a last resort. Additionally, the Information Commissioner provides feedback about legislation, relevant developments in the law and technological change as it impacts on the right to information access. The IPC has recently hosted a number of events to raise awareness and encourage citizens to take an active interest in their right to access government-held information.

Delivering effective and efficient access to government information and promoting a broader culture in favour of disclosure are imperative to maintaining transparent governance, and the work of the IPC in advancing this goal should be acknowledged. As the member for Liverpool stated, if this bill were implemented it would

require all agencies falling within the scope of the Act to accept electronic GIPA applications. It would require all agencies within the scope of the Act to accept electronic payment for any fees and charges associated with those electronic applications and further determine completion of an electronic application when the application is made and the fees paid. As stated by the Attorney General, that raises a number of issues. The bill could have significant implications for all agencies falling within the scope of the Government Information (Public Access) Act that go beyond public service agencies and include, for example, local councils, State-owned corporations, universities or Ministers of the Crown.

It is not clear whether an application sent via email would be sufficient under the bill. Many agencies have application forms already available online and accept GIPA applications via email. Further, if the bill requires all agencies to develop specific online platforms to accept GIPA applications, this would have an uncosted resourcing impact and may be excessive for agencies that received very few GIPA applications. Some public sector agencies are already introducing electronic GIPA application lodgement. For example, the Department of Communities and Justice commenced accepting GIPA applications to an online platform that allows users to lodge and pay for requests for information and provide SMS and email notifications on the progress of applications.

The Information and Privacy Commission website provides statistics of GIPA applications made to State government agencies for the 2017-2018 financial year. Some 15,921 GIPA applications were submitted to gain information from government departments, with 85 per cent found to be valid. Seventy-two per cent were from the public, 20 per cent from private business, 3 per cent from Parliament, 3 per cent from media and 2 per cent from not-for-profit and community organisations. Only 11 per cent of GIPA applications were refused in full on a public interest basis, and 87 per cent were released in the given time frame. The Government promotes and actively engages in the GIPA process to ensure that government decisions and government information are open and transparent to the community as it well deserves.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (11:07:49): The debate on the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019 goes to the transparency of government decisions and actions that affect our democracy. The bill is vital in making sure that there is an open process in regard to government information. The lack of transparency by the Government and its incompetence in its decision-making have been shown time and again. The fact that the Government opposes the bill shows the amount of secrecy and lack of transparency inherent in this Government. The bill seeks to streamline the Government Information (Public Access) Act application process by ensuring that GIPA applications are lodged and paid for electronically. The bill has limited scope. It makes only minor amendments to the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009. It will amend section 41 of the Act to state that applications can be made electronically as well as by post or in person. It will add sections 41 (1B) and (1C) to require that agencies accept payments for GIPA requests electronically. Welcome to the twenty-first century!

Many other organisations in our community, including business and also the Federal Government, have been doing this for a considerable amount of time. There is no credible reason to deny New South Wales citizens the right to make an application to access government information electronically rather than through a physical process. In so many aspects of service delivery the New South Wales Government requires the use of online electronic forms, which is justified by the ability of government agencies to process those applications for services and positions expeditiously.

The 2017 statutory review into the Government Information (Public Access) Act noted that multiple submissions had been made proposing that the Act be amended to state that applications can be submitted electronically. The review into the Act considered the idea of allowing electronic submissions without the approval of the Information Commissioner to be beneficial. However, the review made the recommendation that the acceptance of an electronic GIPA request would be optional, justifying this position by stating that some agencies had concerns that allowing the electronic submission of Government Information (Public Access) Act requests may lead to a substantial increase in the number of requests. If we have more requests for government information, how is that a problem? Isn't that the whole point? The point of the GIPA process is to get as many requests as possible. When people have questions to ask they can ask them. That is an inadequate reason to not require agencies to accept electronically lodged GIPAs.

The public, the Opposition, crossbench members and the media have a right to ask for information from government agencies, even if it is inconvenient for those agencies and the Ministers involved. The only reason that the Liberal Berejiklian Government does not require government agencies to accept GIPA requests electronically is that it wants to make it more difficult to submit requests in some kind of vain hope that fewer of them will be submitted. This is not in line with the principles of open government. The Government should be making it as easy as possible for our citizens to access government information rather than continuing to hide behind procedural hurdles.

The vast majority of GIPA applications are lodged by individuals who are often making personal information applications. These are just everyday people seeking more information and transparency from their government—a government that is paid for by their taxes. Freedom of information laws are an important part of the democratic process; they exist in more than 100 countries throughout the world. What the shadow Attorney General is proposing in this bill has been adopted in many places. There is nothing new in this; it is just what has been happening time and again. But we have a Government that says it is too hard, there are going to be too many applications and it cannot handle it. I am sorry, but the Government is going to have to adapt and handle it.

It is a fundamental right of our citizens to know the activities being undertaken by their government and the effectiveness of those actions. The GIPA process is an important procedure to ensure that information that is in the public interest is released. Information obtained under Government Information (Public Access) Act requests can lead to reforms in the operation of government departments and agencies and improve the governance of New South Wales. In many instances GIPA requests have led to the release of important information in the public interest. Government departments and agencies have often spent considerable time and resources attempting to stop the disclosure of information.

For example, in July 2019 two reports were released relating to poor conditions and safety issues at the Northern Beaches Hospital. Without the use of a GIPA request this Government could have continued to cover up chronic staffing shortages, delays in the delivery of test results, unreliable electronic medical records and paging system problems at the hospital. This information was only released after the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation had spent several months and an enormous amount of effort attempting to obtain this information under GIPA laws.

Without a Government Information (Public Access) Act request in 2015 we may never have found out about the incompetence of this Government in its rollout of the disastrous Learning Business Management Reform computer program, which blew out by over a quarter of a billion dollars and was delayed by two years. Information released due to the GIPA request included a memo from the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education outlining issues causing delays to the rollout of the system and the increased administrative burden that it had placed on schools. It was also through the use of a GIPA request that it was revealed that this Coalition Government had spent millions of dollars launching and promoting its on-demand public transport system, only for it to suffer from low patronage and incredibly high costs per passenger trip. Those are just some of the examples. When I was chair of the Waste Watch Committee through GIPA applications we found out about the billions of dollars that were lost in financial mismanagement and incompetence in the Government's decisions that basically verged on criminal activity.

GIPA applications and whistleblowers are the two things that make democratic processes and democratic governments transparent. It was in the public interest for all of that information to be revealed. The residents of New South Wales have the right to know when a hospital is dangerously understaffed and when an information technology program costs hundreds of millions of dollars and takes years longer than planned to deliver. The public have the right to know that this Government's attempt at innovation has been little more than an expensive public relations exercise by the Minister. The Minister in charge of the portfolio is a failure. Ministers and the bureaucracy must be held accountable for their decisions and their actions. The public release of some information may be embarrassing to the Government, but that does not mean it should be hidden away. Rather, the Government should embrace transparency and use it to increase public trust in its own competence. In a 2017-18 report to this House, the Information Commissioner stated:

Access to information, transparency and accountability by public institutions and public office holders is essential to integrity and the promotion of public trust. Information is knowledge, power and evidence. It is a sword to combat and a shield to prevent corruption.

And, by God, we have had a lot of corruption in New South Wales—over decades by all political parties—and we should be doing everything we can to ensure that the corruption is finally weeded out. The only way that will happen is through transparent government. The Information Commissioner continued:

Open Government mandates citizen participation in government decision making and their entitlement to hold governments to account.

It is of the utmost importance to the functioning of our democracy and the Government that the citizens of our State are able to access information about the operation of their government. The Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019 is an entirely reasonable reform that should be supported by members on all sides of this House. The bill is narrow in its reach, only reforming the legislation to ensure that GIPA requests can be made in a modern and convenient manner. This should not be made a partisan issue; rather, it should be supported by all members as an important initiative to improve governmental and agency transparency and to help improve trust in our institutions. I thank the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:17:38): I thank the member for Liverpool and the member for Prospect for their contributions to the debate on the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019. New South Wales has quickly become a world leader in government service delivery across this State. In the 6½ years since it was created, Service NSW has dramatically improved the way people interact with government for everyday things such as getting a driver licence or accessing our extensive range of cost-of-living programs. The Data Analytics Centre was launched four years ago and established the capability to aggregate and analyse data at a whole-of-government level. This is what the New South Wales Government has already done. The Government uses the insights from that analysis to solve the State's strategic challenges, to optimise the provision of services and to ultimately improve the lives of its citizens.

Three years ago the New South Wales Government opened its services to small businesses, helping cafe owners, restaurateurs and bar tenders to save up to six months when getting their businesses up and running. From memory, the program was launched at the Hurstville Service NSW centre, which is just a little bit outside my electorate. The Government is committed to putting the customer at the centre of everything it does. This is enshrined in one of the Premier's Priorities, which is "Government made easy". The newly established Customer Service cluster uses technology and data to better integrate government services and massively improve the quality and level of services that are available. I put on record my congratulations to the Minister for Customer Service on what he has done during the eight months he has held the portfolio. The Government is building on Service NSW to deliver the commitment to "tell us once" so that people will not need to tell the Government the same information about themselves over and over again. Hence the creation of Service NSW.

These exciting developments address issues of resource allocation and efficiency, which might impact the customer experience, and make the State work best for its people. I will talk briefly about a couple of issues in the bill. While these larger departments are trailblazers in their fields, their capabilities should not and cannot be a yardstick against which to measure and benchmark the online services of smaller agencies. The Justice Legislation Amendment Bill (No 3) 2018 allowed for this difference in capacity by affording each agency the discretionary power to elect to develop the capabilities to electronically accept Government Information (Public Access) Act applications. However, because the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019 does not account for the distinction between larger departments and the numerous smaller agencies also subject to its provisions, the Government cannot support the bill.

The Government has already talked about the role of the Information and Privacy Commission [IPC], which does encourage more access to information. The Information and Privacy Commission is an independent statutory authority that administers legislation which deals with privacy and access to government-held information across New South Wales. It provides a single point of service for information access and privacy rights for citizens, ensuring that agencies and individuals can access consistent updates, guidance and training related to these areas. The Information Commissioner upholds and protects information access rights for the people of New South Wales.

The function includes the powers to: review decisions made by New South Wales government agencies and deal with complaints about information access; undertake investigations, issue guidelines and other publications to assist agencies and citizens in understanding the operation of the GIPA Act; monitor, audit and report on the exercise of agency functions and compliance with the GIPA Act; and make reports and provide recommendations to the New South Wales Attorney General and other Ministers about proposals for legislative or administrative change. As NSW Open Data Advocate, the commissioner also provides advice to the Data Analytics Centre and across the Government on non-personal data that should be proactively released to the public.

Importantly, this role encourages government agencies to proactively release as much information as possible so that formal GIPA applications need only be a last resort. Additionally, the Information Commissioner provides feedback about legislation, relevant developments in law, and technological change as it impacts on the right to information access. The Information and Privacy Commission recently hosted a number of events to raise awareness and encourage citizens to take an active interest in their right to access government-held information. Some of those information sessions were held in the city and in the St George area. Delivering effective and efficient access to government information and promoting a broader culture in favour of disclosure are imperative to maintaining transparent governance. The work of the IPC in advancing this goal should be acknowledged.

The Government has become a world leader in government service delivery. It has been an honour to be part of a government which, over the past 6½ years since Service NSW was created, has dramatically improved the way that people interact with the Government for everyday things, such as applying for driver licences and birth certificates or accessing an extensive range of assistance to address cost-of-living pressures. I am sure that members on both sides of the House have ventured into their Service NSW centre. I certainly have in Hurstville and I have promised there will be one in Roselands where I shop. This was my idea.

Mr Jihad Dib: That's nice for the communities in my electorate. Is that after you closed the Beverly Hills one?

Mr MARK COURE: No, that wasn't a Service NSW centre. Certainly there will be one at Roselands. As I mentioned, the Government has come a long way and is a world leader in government service delivery. I am honoured to be part of a government that has created Service NSW, which has dramatically improved the way that people interact with the Government. There were a lot of websites and now there is a one-stop shop. *[Extension of time]*

Four years ago the Data Analytics Centre was launched to establish the capability to really aggregate and analyse data at a whole-of-government level. The Government uses the insights developed by the analysts to solve the State's strategic challenges, optimise the provision of services and, ultimately, improve the lives of its citizens. Three years ago Service NSW opened its services to small businesses. That was launched in my electorate and it saves cafe, restaurant and bar owners up to six months in getting their businesses up and running. This debate is a wonderful opportunity to tell members of Parliament what the Government has done and, of course, explain the importance of the Information and Privacy Commission, which encourages access to information. I thank members for the opportunity to speak about the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019. I thank the shadow Attorney General, the member for Liverpool, who introduced this private member's bill.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:27:26): The member for Oatley's contribution to debate on the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019 was a rather Herculean effort.

Mr Ray Williams: Churchillian.

Mr JIHAD DIB: It was Churchillian, apparently. The member for Oatley did a terrific job talking about something he was not sure of after being handed some notes. I thank him very much for making sure there is a Service NSW centre in my electorate and I look forward to it opening. Maybe we will go there together. It is a pleasure to speak in this debate. Once again the shadow Attorney General, the member for Liverpool, has put forward some very sensible legislation. I was starting to think Government members would vote with Labor on the bill because they were saying how good this legislation is. They talked about the things that we know are really important in the digital world that we live in. We have a Minister pushing digital applications as much as he can and now everyone can go on this thing called the internet to do almost anything. People can renew their driver licence on the internet and even have an electronic driver licence on their mobile phone, which is terrific.

I am not a Luddite, though some members may think I am. The member for Liverpool has a few challenges with technology, but even he would be willing to lodge a Government Information (Public Access) Act application electronically if it made things easier. It is very clear that access to information is crucially important. From a political perspective the Opposition uses it to hold the Government to account. That is not to have a go at the Government but to see where things are up to, what plans are in place, how many staff certain agencies have and if they have lost or removed staff when efficiency dividends are made.

Basically, we need to know a little bit more about all the things governments do. The other thing that came out really clearly was the importance of information being publicly available in general. People might not know what the Government Information Public Access Act [GIPA] is, but when people say "freedom of information" everyone knows what is being talked about. People have a right to access government information. We live in one of the greatest democracies in the world. We like transparency, we like openness and we like being able to find out what is going on. In my roles as both local member and shadow Minister I have had to make a lot of GIPA requests.

I have found that some agencies are more compliant than others and make it a little bit easier than others. Some agencies try to scare me off by trying to charge a lot of money. It is calculated by the hour. On one occasion I made a GIPA request and the charge came back at around \$4,000. That was not designed to say, "This is the money that the Government needs from you." Rather, it was designed so that it was not possible for me to pay for that information. That led me to believe that something was being hidden and I had to keep following it around. This legislation makes perfect sense. No member of this Chamber would argue against the Government Information (Public Access) Act, the need for the GIPA Act or the good it can do.

Mr Jamie Parker: Some might.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Yes, there may be some Government Minister who would prefer that we did not ask questions. But the point is that it makes sense to pay electronically and lodge electronically. I listened to the Attorney General's second reading speech and I believe he was trying to say that this a very good piece of legislation. But then there is the, "However, there are problems." One of the great things about this place is that if

there are problems with a piece of legislation we have a process to move amendments. If the Government thinks the bill is good but needs to be tweaked to be a little bit better, it should move some amendments. I recognise that there is a concern that the change might be prohibitive for agencies that do not have big resources, staffing or budgets and do not have the backing of government.

Access to information is important and everything should run on an electronic platform. I do not know of many businesses or organisations that do not have a website, some sort of social presence or some kind of electronic footprint. But if there are certain organisations that need help the Government should step in to help them. Taking into account all of the Government's rhetoric about doing things to help organisations, people and the community, this is an easy and inexpensive fix. Considering all of the progress that has been made, particularly with the Data Analytics Centre, this is a pretty easy fix. I do not know how many people still use chequebooks. My mum and dad do, but I did not have a chequebook until I became a shadow Minister.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Are you serious?

Mr JIHAD DIB: Yes, but I am a digital native. When that government agency moved towards electronic platforms, it made life much easier. But then I changed shadow ministries and when I put in a GIPA request the agency asked for a money order. That was a whole new experience. I had to go to the post office. I asked, "Can I just give you the money in person?" But it had to be a money order. I do not know whether that organisation just did not want to give me the information, wanted to be a pain in my neck or thought that if it was too difficult I would not do it. In most cases if it is too much of a hassle people will not seek the information. That is the serious point that is being made. Everything is done electronically. I would be very surprised if someone did not at least have a key card. Everyone has to have a key card because at the moment everything is done using plastic. I hope people do not dig into their credit cards for these requests.

The Government says it is making progress in the digital space and it talks a lot about customer service. This bill fits perfectly into that sphere. We need to move beyond governments not supporting Opposition bills. If it is a good piece of legislation the Government should support it. If the Government can fix it, it should move an amendment. It is clear that there is furious agreement that GIPA is important: There is a possibility this could happen and the bill is a good idea, but there are little problems. Considering everything we do as members, they are small problems that can be fixed. What does it say about us when we say to the people of New South Wales, "This is too big of a problem. We cannot tackle it"? We are stopping their aspirations. We need to encourage people to think that if there is a problem we can fix it, and that nothing is too big that it cannot be fixed. I would hate young people who are inspired by members of Parliament to think that we could not fix a little problem. We can fix this really easily.

Philosophically we can talk about what GIPAA requests and freedom of information requests can achieve, but it comes down to people having a right to know what is going on. As I said earlier, the Opposition might use the tool in a political sense. As an Opposition member I might want to find out about one particular issue. For example, back in the day when I was the shadow education Minister I made a GIPA request on the school maintenance backlog, which opened up a whole new conversation because we discovered that there was a massive school maintenance backlog that the Government had pushed away. Of course, the Government tried to blame the former Labor Government, but we proved that that was not the case. That GIPA request brought the idea of school maintenance to the fore. Not only did that result in Labor developing a policy, but it also forced the Government to change its policy and commit more funding to give our kids an opportunity.

GIPA requests can be really good in not only identifying where the problems are but also asking: What reforms can happen? What changes to policy can we make? Where do we need to move forward and where are the gaps that we need to fill? If that information is hoarded and kept hidden away, how will people know what the problems are and how will people know what issues need to be resolved? I hope that one day Labor will sit on the Government benches. As a Minister I would expect to be asked those questions because governments should be held to account and should be held to the highest possible standards. They should not hide information. When people want certain information it is more often than not a good thing to get it out there. If we keep information hidden away or make it too difficult for people to access it, they lose confidence and faith in the things that we do.

I support this legislation. As I said, this is another sensible piece of legislation introduced by the shadow Attorney General. I encourage Government members to consider this bill and not just say, "We aren't going to agree because it has come from the Opposition." Instead the Government should work with the shadow Attorney General and move some amendments if it has some concerns. We need to make things happen. Realistically, the average person on the street would be beside themselves if they heard that the electronic lodgement of fees and applications was not available because it is simply too hard, especially given how much we do electronically and how the world and everything in and around the State functions on electronic processes.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:37:33): The Greens support the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill introduced by the member for Liverpool. We are coming up to 2020, but many government departments appear to be merging into 1986: They require a cheque or a money order to process a very basic application for a GIPA request. It is remarkable. Someone could create a Google Doc, put it online and we could have electronic applications available within the next two or three hours. It would be very simple. It would come to you as an email in your inbox.

Even someone with the most rudimentary understanding of web forms and Google Docs could achieve that in an hour. Yet in the almost nine years since this Government has been in power it has not managed to get it together to do that. To say that the Government cannot get the payment gateway organised and on a website within a day or two is absolutely remarkable. The member for Liverpool identified the real reason for that, which is not that the Government does not have the capacity or the money. As the member for Liverpool said, that was made clear in the commentary provided.

Paragraph 5.5 of the statutory review states: We appreciate that some agencies have concern that allowing electronic lodgement may result in a substantial increase in the number of applications being made, the processing of which may result in adverse effects on agency resources. So it is about money. It is about the Government not wanting to make these more available to the public, and about keeping matters as difficult as possible to access. As the member for Lakemba said, everyone knows the term "FOI"—freedom of information. It is no wonder the Government changed that term: We have freedom of information in name but not in fact.

I will give some examples of what happens to those who still lodge GIPAs. It should be remembered that this will apply to the Government parties when, in some time in the future, they are in opposition. The cost is ridiculous. The cost of the searches and the work for a GIPA application can add up to thousands and thousands of dollars. There is no advice or assistance provided by agencies. Most agencies have a very defensive reaction when it comes to providing information. They make the applications difficult to interpret and put problems in front of people seeking information. There is a culture that opposes openness and accountability. We see that, particularly, in the use of cabinet in confidence and commercial in confidence, which undermines the purpose of GIPAs and the requirement for freedom of information. Just about everything is classified as commercial in confidence or cabinet in confidence so they cannot be accessed.

The amount of information that can be retrieved is incredibly poor. I have felt embarrassed by the fact that members on the other side still have not talked about the NSW Information Commissioner. The role is a positive one, but the Information Commissioner is a joke. Many agencies have had recommendations from the Information Commissioner that they release information, but they have not done so. It is a pointless, hopeless role because it cannot direct or instruct agencies, it can only make recommendations that are ignored. I feel for that area of government—the Information Commissioner. It is incredibly tragic when the commissioner and the staff work so hard to address these issues only for the Government to tie the hands of the commissioner. It is a tragedy that the recommendations that go to agencies are laughed off by those agencies.

It seems to all of us who are trying to promote openness and accountability that a bill like this should send a powerful message to the Government and the so-called Minister for Customer Service. That Minister crows about all of his achievements—I am sure he has done a lot of positive things—but people cannot even make an electronic application for a GIPA. That is an embarrassment as it comes on the cusp of 2020. If nothing else, I am sure that the member for Liverpool has focused the minds of Government members and agency staff to make sure that this happens. That, in itself, is an incredibly important step forward.

I echo the comments of other members. It is always disappointing when a governments fails to support a bill because it has not been introduced by that government. I hope the Government will be open to this legislation, that it will say, "We need to do a lot better. There are agencies that need to get on board. We are doing our best. This is what we have achieved." I hoped that the Government would take a humble approach and recognise that this is an area in which they can improve.

It is clear that the whole GIPA system needs a fundamental overhaul. The Your Right to Know campaign has been run nationally. It talks about the cultural problems in governments—not just the Federal Government but also the New South Wales Government—where agencies seem determined not to release information, and to do everything they can to make sure that information is not put in written form, including in emails. We have heard of occasions where agencies and Ministers' offices have chosen to not send emails, to make notations or to write something down—but, instead have communicated by phone—because someone who puts in a GIPA might find it.

This culture is a problem and the Parliament needs to change it in this State so that information is as open and accessible as possible. I did that in my own small way when I was mayor of Leichhardt Council—a relatively small organisation compared with New South Wales Parliament. The council abolished the fees for freedom of

information applications. The council received quite a lot of freedom of information applications, as people who have worked in local government would know. We said to people seeking information, "You do not have to make a GIPA application; just ask us and we will give it to you. But if you do want to make a GIPA application, we will make it free." That council wanted to have the maximum amount of transparency possible; it was the genuine feeling of the entire council. The former Leader of the Opposition also moved a private member's bill to abolish application fees for GIPAs seven or eight years ago.

This issue is something that we can all work together on. One day the Opposition will be in government and we hope that its enthusiasm will be followed through when Labor is in government. I am confident that the potential Attorney General will do that. While this is a very small area—GIPA and freedom of information—it is something that we all need to focus on and commit to. If there is one thing that comes out of this debate it should be that Ministers, the Premier and heads of agencies do everything possible to engender transparent, open and accountable cultures in organisations. It breeds an openness and a type of vigour and innovation that is what our State and our community needs. This Parliament needs to do everything it can to maximise transparency and to ensure that GIPAs are effective and work well, and are not used as ways to hide or disguise decisions by government. I commend the bill to the House. I acknowledge and thank the member for Liverpool for bringing this forward.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:46:05): I was not going to speak in debate on the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019 because my colleague the shadow Attorney General and other Opposition speakers have done a fine job in covering all the important aspects of this very important and very sensible bill, which allows access applications to be made electronically. It is a very sensible policy measure. I call on the Government to consider this bill carefully, and demonstrate that it supports the Right to Know. I put on record that I support the Right to Know campaign.

It is getting very difficult for members of Parliament to access GIPAs, particularly because of the way the Government has structured the process. When I listened to the member for Oatley and some of the members opposite crowing about their one-stop shop and Service NSW, as shadow Minister for this area I could not help but participate in this debate. I decided to make a contribution because this Government is very intent on undergoing this whole digital transformation. A few weeks ago the Government introduced the \$100 million Digital Restart Fund. In the budget the Government speaks about everything going electronic or digital. The Opposition supports that, but there have to be structures and processes in place.

The Minister for Customer Service is conducting a forum in Parliament House on artificial intelligence. There are many forums and programs, and a push towards digital transformation, but the Government's hypocrisy is shown in the fact that it will not support this bill to mandate government agencies to accept electronic GIPA applications. I will reveal a secret to members in this place: The member for Liverpool and shadow Attorney General still uses a fountain pen, yet he can introduce a bill about electronic GIPA applications. That is saying something. The Government should take notice. Why does the Government talk up the digital transformation and everything being accessible online when it will not accept this very important, very simple change to enable electronic GIPA applications?

Many MPs, particularly Opposition MPs, have to send in their cheque and fill out the paperwork. Does that mean that some bureaucrat, an officer at one of these agencies, collects all the cheques, stamps them and then walks down to the Commonwealth Bank to cash them in? This is absolutely ludicrous. The bill is very sensible. Forget that it is coming from the Opposition. As stated by the shadow Attorney General and the members for the electorates of Prospect and Lakemba, this is a simple measure about the right to know and the right for people to have access to information. It is information that the Government already has, but is making it very difficult for people to access—and it should not be making it difficult.

The member for Oatley talked about the one-stop shops and the Service NSW centres. We supported the establishment of the one-stop shops back in 2013. Yes, all this information is available online. However, a number of times in the Parliament and also through the budget estimates process I have raised the fact that not all people in our community are able to access online services. They are excluded. Many of those people are from non-English speaking backgrounds, elderly people, people with disabilities, people in our rural and remote communities and Indigenous communities. I will have a lot more to say about this in the New Year. I am pleased that there will be an inquiry into the Digital Restart Fund. The Government needs to do a lot of work. If it is about ensuring that it represents all of New South Wales, it should take into consideration the communities that I have mentioned.

The member for Oatley also mentioned the Service NSW centre at Roselands. I would like to know exactly when the Roselands Service NSW centre will be opened and whether it will have people who speak a second language to support people and provide them with assistance in understanding online information, particularly as over 50 per cent of the community in the area surrounding Roselands are people from multicultural

backgrounds. I urge the Government to really consider the services that it is providing there. Many people do not have online access. A lot of elderly people from multicultural backgrounds do not have computers or access to online services. I will continue to raise this issue. This is a very important measure. The member for Balmain stated that if Labor is successful in forming government it will pursue this issue. Yes, we will—absolutely we will. I commend our shadow Attorney General for bringing this bill to the House. It is very important that the Government supports it as well. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Before I call the member for Liverpool in reply, I thank the Minister and member for Pittwater. He always nods his head and shows courtesy to the Chair every time he walks into the Chamber—he has never missed. I thank him for doing that.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:53:45): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions to debate on the Government Information (Public Access) Amendment (Electronic Applications) Bill 2019 made by the Attorney General and members for the electorates of Wollongong, Seven Hills, Prospect, Oatley, Lakemba, Balmain and Canterbury. As is usual in this place, the Government has followed the iron law of New South Wales politics and refused to support a bill from the Opposition, no matter how meritorious. Its position has really been quite interesting.

On the one hand, Government members keep talking up the importance of digitisation in the process of government, putting digitisation at the centre of everything they do—but not quite yet. They will not do it for Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 [GIPAA] applications. It is a bit like St Augustine, who said, "Lord, make me pure, but not quite yet." "Lord, let's support digitisation and put it at the centre of government, but not quite yet." The Government's position is really quite extraordinary. I will go through some of the things Government members say. On 22 October the Minister for Customer Service stated:

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.

Yes, it is, but not in relation to GIPAA applications in the view of this Government. It is quite extraordinary that it uses rhetoric like that, but then turns around and opposes the bill before the House. In his Budget Speech this year the Treasurer talked about \$100 million to fund whole-of-government digital transformation. He stated:

We'll continue to make people's lives easier with a focus on digital government.

Well, he will not be doing it for GIPAA. If the Government is going to use this rhetoric it should actually be honest about it. If it is not in fact going to put digitisation at the centre of everything, including GIPAA applications, then it should not say that it is going to. It is an essential dishonesty at the heart of all of its rhetoric. One can go on and on and on about the things Government members have said. Minister Dominello takes every opportunity to talk up innovative digital government initiatives. He keeps talking about the Government being customer and citizen focus-centric and not forcing the people of our State to jump through various hoops. He proudly proclaims that his job in Customer Service is to drive digitisation of the Government's services. He talks of this as a world first. It is not in GIPAA. It is way behind the world standard in GIPAA. Those comments have been echoed in this debate.

The member for Oatley talked about the importance of Service NSW, the data analytics centre and putting digitisation at the centre of everything the Government does—but it does not do that. It puts digitisation at the centre of some things. It does not put it at the centre of those things that allow citizens to get hold of information. It talks the talk, but it will not walk the walk. It uses the rhetoric, but it is not prepared to be honest enough to actually deliver on that rhetoric in things as critical as GIPAA. The best it can do is say, "It is too expensive. It is going to cost too much money. It is going to take up too many resources."

Well, as both the members for the electorates of Wollongong and Balmain pointed out, the Government has been less than honest in the way it has presented that argument. It has said it has to be done in a particular way, which is going to be too expensive. There is a whole range of ways of doing this. It does not have to be the expensive model the Government talks about. The Government has picked on that model in this debate simply to find an excuse, to grab onto some sort of feather to be able to fly with. Of course, the truth of it is that the real opposition was revealed in the statutory review of the Government Information (Public Access) Act. Paragraph 5.5 of the review states:

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

The statutory review reveals that the problem with making electronic lodgement for agencies mandatory is that it is too expensive. The Government is all for accountability and access, provided it does not cost too much. Paragraph 5.5 of the statutory review also very appropriately goes on to state:

We also note that the object of the GIPA Act is to encourage open government ... greater numbers of access applications from members of the public would, in fact, further that object. That is, if you increase the number of applications what you are in fact doing is what the Act was intended to do. The commentary in that statutory review ever so properly and politely is telling the agencies that that is precisely the point: Increasing the number of applications and making it easier for citizens to apply is exactly what should be done and would implement the object of the legislation. Barriers to making applications should be removed, not retained. Government and government agencies do not like access applications: They can be embarrassing and expensive. That is the real reason the Government opposes the proposal. Various Government Ministers have lauded the role of the NSW Information Commissioner and have talked about the importance of her work—by implication, therefore, the Government does not need to make the changes suggested in the bill. I direct the attention of the Government and its backbenchers to the comments of the NSW Information Commissioner in her report on the operations of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 for the period 2017-18 when she said:

As set out in submissions to the statutory review of the GIPA Act, electronic lodgement provides advantages for agencies and citizens including instructive guidance to ensure that applications are valid upon lodgement and efficiencies that remove duplication and enable agencies to process applications effectively.

I am delighted that Government backbenchers are referring to the NSW Information Commissioner. They should listen to what she says because the position she takes supports the bill that is before the House. When I introduced the bill I made the point that anyone connected to the internet can do this—the question being, Which government agencies are not connected to the internet? Which ones are not able to do this? According to the Attorney General it is the Judicial Commission of New South Wales and local area health districts. According to the member for Seven Hills it is State-owned corporations. These entities do not have the capacity or are not connected to the internet so they are not able to do this! That is an indication of the absurdity of the Government's position. I echo the words of the member for Lakemba when he said that it is just not believable in the real world that this cannot be done. It is not that hard. Frankly, you would have pulled the other one if you were serious about opposing this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes40
Noes45
Majority.....5

AYES

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

NOES

Anderson, Mr K	Ayres, Mr S	Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G	Bromhead, Mr S	Clancy, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K	Cooke, Ms S (teller)	Coure, Mr M
Crouch, Mr A (teller)	Davies, Mrs T	Dominello, Mr V
Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L.J.	Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J	Gulaptis, Mr C	Hancock, Mrs S
Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A	Johnsen, Mr M

NOES

Kean, Mr M	Lee, Dr G	Lindsay, Ms W
Marshall, Mr A	O'Dea, Mr J	Perrottet, Mr D
Petinos, Ms E	Preston, Ms R	Provest, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A	Saunders, Mr D	Sidoti, Mr J
Singh, Mr G	Smith, Mr N	Speakman, Mr M
Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M	Toole, Mr P
Tuckerman, Mrs W	Upton, Ms G	Ward, Mr G
Williams, Mr R	Williams, Mrs L	Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Lalich, Mr N	Constance, Mr A
Saffin, Ms J	Sidgreaves, Mr P

Motion negatived.

*Motions***CANOWINDRA SCHOOL CROSSING**

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:11:11): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Calls on the Government to immediately install a supervised zebra crossing upon Tilga Street at Canowindra between Canowindra Public School and St Edwards Public School for the safe passage of students who cross this busy road.
- (2) Notes 13 years of reported inaction by the Government and its failure to appropriately address the many reports of concern for the safety of schoolchildren crossing Tilga Street.

I represent the community of Canowindra on this important motion, which is about the safety of those we hold most dear—our children. Late last year it was brought to my attention that 13 years have passed since Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] was first advised of safety issues concerning school students crossing Tilga Street, Canowindra, going to and from school. This involves approximately 300 students from both the Canowindra Public School and St Edwards Catholic Primary School, which are situated on opposite sides of Tilga Street and adjacent to the crossing point that connects them. For 13 years the schools and respective parents and citizens associations [P&Cs] have raised their concerns for the safety of students who cross unsupervised, some of whom have narrowly missed being struck by an approaching or passing vehicle when crossing the road at the designated crossing point.

I am reliably advised that each year the schools are informed of two to three near misses where students narrowly miss being struck by vehicles approaching and passing through the current crossing point. During the past 13 years the schools and their P&Cs have brought these safety concerns to the attention of this and former government's departments, including through face-to-face meetings, but those with the carriage of this matter have moved on without ever having appropriately acted on the issue. Toing and froing between local and State governments over whose responsibility it is has added to the problem. It is completely inexcusable for this Government and previous governments to have failed to act on this very serious safety issue. It should not take the death of a child for reactive measures. Two or three near misses—and there may be more that have not been reported—equate to nearly 40 near-death events over the time that governments have known about these significant safety risks. Thirteen years of inaction amounts to 13 years of recklessness and neglect.

I am advised that the majority of reported near-miss incidents have involved heavy vehicles, trucks. Anecdotal evidence indicates approaching trucks, particularly those approaching from the south, are travelling on a descent toward the crossing point and the momentum of those heavy vehicles is a factor in vehicles failing to slow down and stop in time for children crossing the roadway of Tilga Street, which is part of State Highway B81, the Lachlan Valley Way. Further information suggests that near misses have occurred when vision was obscured of both approaching vehicles and students stepping off the kerb to cross at that location due to school buses being parked upon Tilga Street in the proximity of the crossing.

Since being made aware of these safety concerns, I have made several written representations to the Minister for Transport and have submitted a question on notice, on each occasion stressing the importance of installing a supervised crossing. I understand there has been a site inspection and roadway use has been monitored by RMS since I raised this matter with the Minister. The result has been to modify the crossing, including by

repainting the blister roadway markings at the crossing, repainting the posts on which warning flags in red and white stripe are placed and the installation of new technology to be trialled at Canowindra, which involves the installation of sensor poles that detect a pedestrian approaching the crossing, causing the activation of flashing lights. I understand that the measures have been installed, with the exception of the sensor poles. The sensor poles are due imminently, based on notifications from the RMS as late as yesterday. Concerns are that the flashing lights located at the crossing will fail to give sufficient warning to heavy-laden vehicles to enable them to stop in time.

Neither St Edwards school nor Canowindra Public School has the human resources to continue putting up and pulling down the warning flags at the crossing point, which occurs four times each school day. This should be the responsibility of Roads and Maritime Services. It has been noted by school staff that the high-visibility blaze flags noticeably fade during the course of the year due to exposure to the elements, thereby reducing the visual warning they are intended to provide. Observations have been made that motorists often do not slow down or stop at the crossing and it is felt that many motorists do not understand a children's crossing and the requirement for them to stop, even when the flags are up. The same cannot be said of a zebra crossing. All motorists understand the requirement to stop when a pedestrian is crossing a zebra crossing. A properly trained adult supervisor is an invaluable element to the safe passage of children across busy roads, such as Tilga Street. The vigilance, guidance and direction from a crossing supervisor would galvanise the protection of children who use this crossing each school day. We should not forget that these are children aged six to 12; they do not have full comprehension of the dangers or the judgement to exercise personal safety.

Cost should not be an issue in the placement of a school crossing supervisor but, if it were, this cost could be offset via drought assistance measures. This would also benefit the local economy, which is presently suffering the financial impacts of the drought, by providing additional employment. I call on the Government to urgently install a supervised zebra crossing on Tilga Street, Canowindra, between St Edwards Catholic Primary School and Canowindra Public School. The cost of installing a zebra crossing and employing a part-time supervisor is nothing compared to the priceless value of the lives of the 300 schoolchildren who use it every school day. Children risk the possibility of a grave catastrophe if this Government refuses to install a supervised zebra crossing for their protection. Anything less is completely unacceptable.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (12:18:07): I seek to amend the motion. I move:

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

- (1) Notes the Government's commitment to the road safety of school students across the State.
- (2) Congratulates the Government on the delivery of its commitment of at least one set of flashing lights in every New South Wales school zone and the rollout of 300 additional school crossing supervisors over the next four years.
- (3) Notes the Government's commitment to finding the right safety solutions for each school setting and its continued investment in safety infrastructure and road safety education."

The safety of our schoolchildren is our highest priority, and I thank the member for Orange for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. When it comes to the safety of our schoolchildren there is no room for playing politics. That is why I give the House and the community of Canowindra every assurance that the appropriate solution is being implemented at Tilga Street. School students are some of our most vulnerable road users. Every child must be able to get to and from school safely. The School Crossing Supervisor Program currently funds up to 1,200 supervisors at around 800 crossings across New South Wales. There are three in the Cootamundra electorate and a fourth is on the way, thanks to the New South Wales Government's announcement in January of an \$18.5 million commitment to provide 300 additional school crossing supervisors over the next four years. These new school crossing supervisors have already started to roll out, with Bathurst Public School being the latest school to receive one this week.

The New South Wales Government has invested heavily in school zone flashing lights, committing in June 2013 to having at least one set of flashing lights in every school zone, which we achieved in 2016. The Government has since rolled out additional flashing lights at more than 500 school zones. More than 6,000 school zone flashing lights are now in place across New South Wales. Pedestrian crossing facilities primarily aim to increase the safety of pedestrians by reducing conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and by simplifying the decisions that pedestrians and motorists have to make. The New South Wales Government takes a safe system approach to managing the road network and ensuring solutions are appropriate to each setting.

While the road rules state that a motorist must slow down and, if necessary, stop to avoid a collision when a pedestrian is on a zebra crossing, the safe system approach to road safety recognises that as road users humans are fallible and will continue to make mistakes. To remind motorists of the need to take additional caution around school zones, 39 school zone locations across New South Wales have fixed speed cameras in place and a further 11 school zone locations have red light speed cameras. Outside of schools we are making every effort to ensure a safer environment for our schoolchildren. To complement this we are also working inside the schools to

raise awareness among children about the dangers around roads and vehicles. The Community Road Safety Fund invests about \$5 million per year in the early childhood and school education sectors to fund the Road Safety Education Program.

I say all this to put in context my amendment to the motion. The Government is putting every resource needed into ensuring the safety of our most vulnerable road users. While the advocacy of the member for Orange on behalf of Canowindra Public School and St Edwards Primary School for a zebra crossing may be very well intentioned, it is important to recognise that each school zone area requires a different solution. Zebra crossings are useful in some circumstances but may be inappropriate and less effective in others, such as in the Tilga Street school zone. We have worked closely with the schools and the local community to find the right safety solution for this area.

On 29 May 2019 the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] representatives met with the principals of Canowindra Public School and St Edwards Primary School to discuss their concerns about the Tilga Street crossing. Canowindra Public School requested a zebra crossing; however, the RMS advised against that because it would increase the risk to pedestrians. At low-volume pedestrian sites like Tilga Street, motorists may become accustomed to not seeing pedestrians and fail to take due care. Additionally pedestrians may become overconfident and step out onto a zebra crossing without checking to make sure vehicles will stop. The RMS suggested a median refuge but this was rejected by the school principals. The RMS investigated the possibility of placing a school crossing supervisor there and conducted more than 10 surveys at the location but the road did not have sufficient volume of traffic or pedestrian numbers to place a crossing supervisor there at this time.

Both schools agreed to display flags between 8.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. each day, which activates the crossing. That means that during the whole school day motorists will be reminded to take caution and watch out for schoolchildren. Motorists are required to stop six metres before the crossing line and remain stationary until all pedestrians on or about to enter the crossing have completed their crossing. Cabonne Shire Council has completed new line markings and has refreshed parking and no stopping signage at the schools on Tilga Street. The council has also trimmed vegetation to enhance visibility at the Tilga Street crossing.

Speed zone alert flashing lights are already installed on Tilga Street and are activated on a timer. The RMS has been working with the schools to provide pedestrian-activated flashing lights at the crossing to enhance visibility for road users during school hours. The lights have been specially designed for the site and are currently being installed. I am pleased to advise the House that the lights will become operational next week. I make it clear that the RMS will continue to monitor this school zone, working closely with the public schools and their communities to ensure the safety of the children is maintained. School zone safety is paramount. That is why the Government has made consistent and targeted investments to ensure that every school zone across New South Wales has the right solution installed for our most vulnerable road users.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:25:17): I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Orange. The member for Cootamundra has made a very long-winded contribution to the motion. Why would she not support the Canowindra community's request to install a pedestrian crossing? The request has come from the people, so why would the Government not do it? I had four children in six years and I know what it is like to try to get children to school in a safe manner. You can have all the rules in the world but it does not mean that a truck driver is going to stop six metres from the pedestrian crossing. Why would the Government put at risk schoolchildren when there is a clear pathway to fix the problem?

It seems that country roads are full of deathtraps that could easily be fixed with minimal government spending but the Government just keeps ignoring them. Roads in my electorate have been neglected for years and years. There should be 40-kilometre an hour zones around preschools and day care centres but we have not even got those. For the past 30 years locals in my electorate have been pleading with the Government to do something about dangerous sharp turnarounds, for example, at the Rankins Springs pub where the Mid Western Highway meets Rankins Springs Road. A truck coming along there could easily misjudge the turn and crash into the wall of the pub. This request has come from the community and yet nothing is done. What does it take? Does it take the death of a child for something to be done? I urge the member for Cootamundra to address this issue and support our constituents.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (12:27:29): I support the motion as amended by the member for Cootamundra. I can assure the member for Orange that the New South Wales Government takes very seriously its responsibility in ensuring that our schoolkids are safe when they are at school and when they are travelling to and from school. The Liberals and Nationals Government has a strong record on keeping people safe around our schools. In June 2013 the New South Wales Government committed to ensuring that every school in New South Wales has at least one set of school zone flashing lights, a target that was achieved by January 2016. This applies even in the most remote areas of the State. Flashing lights were recently installed at Pooncarie Public School, which reopened earlier this year, in the State's far west.

More than 6,000 school zone flashing lights are now in place across New South Wales. The Government has also installed more than \$5 million of new safety infrastructure, with 140 projects around New South Wales schools, including new raised crossings, kerb extensions, pedestrian refuges, fencing, footpath improvements, safety signage and splitter islands at roundabouts. The Government has implemented other safety measures also such as school crossing supervisors. The School Crossing Supervisor Program currently funds up to 1,200 supervisors at around 800 crossings across New South Wales. In January 2019 the New South Wales Government announced an \$18.5 million commitment to provide 300 additional school crossing supervisors over the next four years.

We then reviewed this commitment and decided to expedite the process. Instead of doing it over four years, we are doing it over three years. Under the previous requirements for the program the crossing had to meet four criteria. There had to be at least 300 vehicles and 50 unaccompanied students per hour in the morning and afternoon to be eligible for a supervisor. Under the new arrangements schools will only need to meet one of those criteria. This is great for schools in regional New South Wales because it is now easier for them to fulfil the criteria and receive funding for a crossing supervisor. Transport for NSW is currently working to identify the new locations, and new crossing supervisors are already beginning to arrive in parts of regional New South Wales.

In the past few months the first 19 new supervisors have started in regional New South Wales at schools including St John's Catholic Primary School in Dubbo, Goulburn Public School, Nowra Public School and, just this week, Bathurst Public School. We have also introduced road safety education programs. The Community Road Safety fund invests about \$5 million per year in the early childhood and school education sectors to fund the Road Safety Education Program, which provides road safety education consultancy support for teachers in more than 3,000 primary and secondary schools and more than 3,500 early childhood services across New South Wales.

Safety Town is a one-stop website for primary school teachers, students and their families, providing engaging, interactive activities to help children learn about seatbelts and bus, bike, driveway and pedestrian safety. The On the Move website provides resources and activities for high school students including classroom activities that focus on novice drivers and passengers. Every year schools are offered a resource pack for their kindergarten orientation day to support the key road safety messages and provide road safety information for families to continue road safety conversations with children starting primary school. In 2018 a library bag was provided for children starting school in 2019. It had the key road safety message of "Hold a grown-up's hand when you cross the road" printed on it and contained safety stickers for children, a child car seat height chart, coloured pencils and road safety activities for children and safety information for families.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:31:43): I support the motion of the member for Orange. The pedestrian crossing between the two primary schools in Canowindra is an important issue that I am very familiar with because I went to St Edward's in Canowindra. I have been familiar with that problematic and dangerous crossing not for 13 years but for more than 40 years. I commend the member for Orange for bringing this motion to the attention of the House to try to have Roads and Maritime Services address the issue. I am flabbergasted that the Government would attempt to delete all references to the problem that the member for Orange is trying to address in his motion. The Government's amendment deletes the motion and inserts pats on the back. The amendment talks about all of the supervised school crossings that the Government is putting in across the State when it is not putting one in at Canowindra.

To suggest that there is insufficient student numbers to do something about this problem is ridiculous and offensive. Every kid in Canowindra goes to one of those two schools; there are only two primary schools. To suggest that kids in Canowindra are not worthy of maximum road safety protection is insulting to the entire town. For Government members to boast in this debate about everything they are doing everywhere else is quite astounding. This is a specific problem that needs to be addressed. The crossing has been problematic for quite a long time because it is on a steep hill. It is far worse when trucks approach from the south, as the member for Orange mentioned. It is not just problematic for school students, although it primarily affects them.

I have taken elderly relatives across that road many times to go to church and been scared that they cannot cross fast enough before the oncoming traffic. That is a problem on weekends for church services and also during the week for funerals. But it is primarily a problem during school drop-offs and pick-ups in the morning and afternoon every day and it has been a problem for many years. To wipe this motion off the *Business Paper* and replace it with an amendment that pats the Government on the back for what it is doing everywhere else in the State is ridiculous. We want a proper solution and we want road safety around every single school throughout the State. To suggest that there are not enough kids in Canowindra to worry about it while the Government is busy patting itself on the back is ridiculous and insulting. I strongly urge the House to reject the Government's amendment and to support the motion as moved by the member for Orange.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (12:34:50): I will speak about the importance of school safety in not just the community of Canowindra but also all communities across New South Wales. Providing a safe environment for students adjacent to school premises is paramount. The New South Wales Government has a strong focus on improving the visibility of 40 kilometre per hour school zones and children's pedestrian crossings to protect children around schools. The Government acknowledges that there is a wide community belief that zebra crossings are safer than alternative facilities. However, research by practitioners around the world and experience throughout our State has led to improved knowledge of the functionality and appropriateness of zebra crossings.

School crossings become active when orange flags are displayed. The orange flags provide further awareness to motorists about children crossing the road. Motorists are required to stop six metres before the crossing line and remain stationary until pedestrians on or about to enter the crossing have completed their crossing. The identification of the most appropriate pedestrian crossing facility should take into account a range of additional factors including location, adjacent land use and desire lines, speeds, sightlines, stopping distances, traffic lanes and volumes. Where these warrants are not satisfied, we encourage caution and care of the potential risks when considering the placement of a zebra crossing.

Predictable crossing solutions ensure that pedestrians and motorists are exposed to consistent and easily recognised conditions across the network. On 31 January 2019 the Premier announced an \$18.5 million funding commitment for 300 new school crossing supervisors. Previously a school crossing had to be used by 300 cars as well as at least 50 unaccompanied primary school students per hour in the morning and afternoon to be eligible for a supervisor. Under the change they will only need to meet one of the criteria in the morning or afternoon. This means more schools will be eligible for a school crossing supervisor. School zone safety is also about public awareness and ensuring that road safety messages are reaching the whole community.

Whether your child attends a busy inner city school like Glenmore Road Public School, like any of the schools in my electorate, or a primary school in a quiet rural community like Canowindra Public School, the road safety messages are the same. Children need to stop, look, listen and think before stepping out onto a safe place on the road. A grown-up should always hold the hand of a young child when crossing the road. Motorists also need to be aware of children's safety, particularly young motorists who are likely to be driving around school zones on their P1 licences. This is about making decisions that help to keep drivers, pedestrians and bicycle riders safe. That is what we are working towards. By 2056 we want New South Wales roads to be free of deaths and serious injuries. I commend the amendment from the member for Cootamundra to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:38:50): By leave: I thank the member for Orange for moving the motion and I thank the member for Cootamundra for moving her amendment.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Shame.

Mr MARK COURE: Be nice. School crossings are an integral and important part of school communities and local areas. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure mentioned, earlier this year the Government announced that 300 more lollipop school crossing supervisors would be provided over the next four years. When the Premier and then Minister for Education Rob Stokes announced that \$18.5 million investment they said that the program would help protect children and improve visibility for motorists. Keeping our kids safe is our number one priority. Every child in New South Wales should be able to get to and from school safely. School crossing supervisors play an important role in our local communities. Under previous requirements a crossing had to be used by at least 300 cars and 50 students per hour in the morning or afternoon to be eligible for a supervisor. Under the changes, the criteria are much better and it is easier to qualify.

During my eight years as a member of Parliament we have won many battles to ensure that schools in high-traffic areas receive school crossings supervisors, including Penshurst West Public School, Hurstville Public School, Hurstville Adventist School, Lugarno Public School and Penshurst Public School. The Government's initiative will ensure that more schools will be eligible for a lollipop school crossing supervisor, including 69 schools that have applied in the past two years and have, for whatever reason, been rejected. Over many years I have campaigned to have school crossing supervisors at additional schools, including at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Oatley, where I went to school, at Mortdale Public School, where my son goes to school, and at Penshurst—

Mr Philip Donato: All city schools.

Mr MARK COURE: I will help you with your campaign as well. I am not playing politics on this issue; members opposite are.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Felicity Wilson): The member for Oatley will not respond to interjections.

Mr MARK COURE: Those campaigns continue. Recently we delivered a school crossing supervisor at Mortdale Public School, which is in a high-traffic area. The school and the P&C had wanted a lollipop supervisor for more than a decade. In fact, that school has three crossings on Coleborne Avenue and Railway Parade. I went to school at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Oatley, where 35 years ago my late mum and the P&C campaigned for a pedestrian crossing. Recently we were able to add a lollipop supervisor. A number of schools and churches in Oatley use a particular crossing on Rosa Street. Under this Government, the school crossing supervisor program currently funds up to 1,200 supervisors at around 800 school crossings across the State. We have made that program a priority. This Government has installed more than 5,500 school flashing lights and there is now at least one set of them at every school in New South Wales. The Government is rolling out the school crossing supervisor program in as many locations as possible. I commend the amendment moved by the member for Cootamundra to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:43:06): In reply: I reject the amendment moved by the member for Cootamundra on a number of grounds. I like and respect the member for Cootamundra, who has no doubt been led down the garden path to push the amendment, but she is attempting to delete any reference to the township of Canowindra and the issues pertaining to the two local schools. The member for Cootamundra, whose electorate is just over the river from Canowindra, should realise that the people of Canowindra will not take the amendment very nicely. In essence, she has snubbed her nose at them. She has given them the bird and said, "Canowindra doesn't count. We don't care about Canowindra. All we're worried about is patting ourselves on the back and telling everyone how great we are." She is ignoring the real issue.

I cannot believe we are debating such a simple solution to a problem. It will save lives in our community. It should not require debate in this place, but it has gotten to that stage. I am not going to let the people of my community—especially the children—suffer or be put at risk when the solution is obvious, affordable and can be easily achieved with the stroke of a pen. I am not playing politics on this. I want the people of Canowindra and the students and children who attend those schools to be safe. The school is on a major highway. None of the schools mentioned earlier by any other member is on a major highway where there are frequently trucks, B-doubles and semi-trailers.

Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] raised concerns about the installation of a pedestrian crossing and the two principals from the respective schools rejected the proposal. Those principals, who are there every day to hear the complaints from parents and students, are best placed to make a call on this. The fact that some RMS inspector or bureaucrat felt that it would be unsafe to install a pedestrian crossing outside two schools on a highway defies common sense and logic. It is, quite frankly, stupid. I appreciate the contributions of the member for Cootamundra, the member for Murray, the member for Clarence, the member for Granville, the member for Oatley and the member for Miranda to this debate.

The member for Granville—a Canowindra girl—grew up in Canowindra and attended the local school. She gave direct evidence of what she personally experienced. She says that to this day when she takes members to the church at the school she is concerned about crossing that busy road. I honestly cannot understand why the Government has dug its heels in on this issue. If anyone is playing politics it is Government members. The Government needs to swallow its medicine and its pride and do the right thing by the people of Canowindra. It might save lives.

The member for Miranda talked about the 2056 zero fatalities goal. This would go a long way to achieving that. After the debate today I do not want to go back to the community of Canowindra and tell them that their matter was whitewashed and totally ignored and that we will have to wait for a fatality before action is taken. We should not be reactive; we should be proactive. I reject the amendment and commend the motion to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes45
Noes42
Majority.....3

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A (teller)
Elliott, Mr D

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S
Cooke, Ms S (teller)
Davies, Mrs T
Evans, Mr L.J.

Barilaro, Mr J
Clancy, Mr J
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Gibbons, Ms M

AYES

Griffin, Mr J	Gulaptis, Mr C	Hancock, Mrs S
Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A	Johnsen, Mr M
Kean, Mr M	Lee, Dr G	Lindsay, Ms W
Marshall, Mr A	O'Dea, Mr J	Pavey, Mrs M
Perrottet, Mr D	Petinos, Ms E	Preston, Ms R
Provest, Mr G	Roberts, Mr A	Saunders, Mr D
Sidoti, Mr J	Singh, Mr G	Smith, Mr N
Speakman, Mr M	Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M
Toole, Mr P	Tuckerman, Mrs W	Upton, Ms G
Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R	Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J	Atalla, Mr E	Bali, Mr S
Barr, Mr C	Butler, Mr R	Car, Ms P
Catley, Ms Y	Chanthivong, Mr A	Cotsis, Ms S
Crakanthorp, Mr T	Daley, Mr M	Dalton, Mrs H
Dib, Mr J	Donato, Mr P	Doyle, Ms T
Finn, Ms J	Greenwich, Mr A	Harris, Mr D
Harrison, Ms J	Haylen, Ms J	Hoenig, Mr R
Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S	Lynch, Mr P
McDermott, Dr H	McGirr, Dr J	McKay, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D (teller)	Mihailuk, Ms T	Minns, Mr C
O'Neill, Dr M	Park, Mr R	Parker, Mr J
Piper, Mr G	Scully, Mr P	Smith, Ms T.F.
Tesch, Ms L	Voltz, Ms L	Warren, Mr G
Washington, Ms K	Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Constance, Mr A	Lalich, Mr N
Sidgreaves, Mr P	Saffin, Ms J

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.**NORTHERN BEACHES WOMEN'S SHELTER**

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:56:45): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the work of women's shelters and refuges across New South Wales.
- (2) Congratulates and recognises the outstanding contribution of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter in its role of pioneering the women's shelter model in New South Wales.
- (3) Recognises the efforts of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter board, staff and president Rosy Sullivan.

The role of women's shelters across New South Wales is incredibly important. Whilst there may not be a women's shelter in every electorate, I can say with certainty that many people from all electorates would have come in contact with such shelters, would have had family members or friends who have been supported by them or— heaven forbid—would have had cause to use them at some point in their lives. I am incredibly proud that the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, formerly known as the Manly Women's Shelter, was established nine years ago and will be celebrating its tenth anniversary next year.

It was one of the first women's shelters to come into existence in New South Wales. It exists to serve our community. We would love for women's shelters to be unnecessary because there would be no reason for their existence, but they are needed and are here. It is incredibly heartening to know that for the past nine years the

community of Manly has supported the good and important work of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter and will continue to do so well into the future. Like most community organisations, the shelter relies in part on government funding but at the same time benefits from the generosity of the communities of Manly and the northern beaches, which support it in the work it does.

I know from reading the 2019 donors' report *Supporting Homeless Women*, which is produced by the peak body of women's community shelters in New South Wales, that it is a charity that works with local organisations and communities to set up new crisis accommodation across our communities where and when it is needed. Its role is to support women's shelters and provide support for women and their children who are at risk of homelessness, and domestic and family violence. It provides safe accommodation, active case management, support, social inclusion and a chance to start anew throughout its network of shelters and affordable transitional housing.

The Northern Beaches Women's Shelter does an absolutely fantastic and outstanding job. It is led by an incredible board, including the wonderful president Rosy Sullivan, Sherry Midgley, Luke Mitchell, Beth Lawsen, Libby Gauld, Kerry Connors, Fiona Reid, Eva Burgess and Elizabeth O'Brien. It has been supported by a number of local organisations since its founding back in 2010, including the Manly Community Centre—which is now Community Northern Beaches—and the Rotary Club of Manly. A number of local businesses and surf clubs have all heard about the cause and have fundraised over time to raise a significant amount of money. That supports the women's shelter to not only grow and expand its services but also to provide capital expenses for upgrades to everything from the rooms through to the new offices that it opened recently. This organisation would not be as successful and pioneering as it has been in the support of homelessness and domestic violence victims, women specifically, were it not for the amazing support of the board and its senior leadership.

This year the shelter hosted its Melbourne Cup fundraiser. It was a good way for people to support a good cause whilst enjoying the Melbourne Cup—the cup for a cause. It raised a good amount of money at that event. I am proud to say that that event was also attended by our local area police commander, Dave Darcy, who has done an outstanding job in understanding and appreciating the role of police in supporting domestic violence victims. His affinity with, and appreciation and understanding of the work that the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter does is central to the role our local police play in supporting that organisation. The master of ceremonies for the day was the outstanding Tracey Spicer, who did a wonderful job and really raised the profile of the day.

I commend this motion to the House. Whilst not every member in this place will have a women's shelter in their community, unfortunately the need for the services that these shelters provide goes well beyond electorate boundaries. It is unfortunate that these shelters need to exist. The causes of domestic violence and homelessness are complex, and we continue to work towards solving them. At the end of the day, having a safe and secure place where women and their children can come to receive support and care to get back on their feet is incredibly important. I thank the community of Manly and the northern beaches for the ongoing and significant support they have provided to the women's shelter in the electorate of Manly. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (13:03:21): I thank the member for Manly for bringing this important motion to the House and also for acknowledging the powerful and important work carried out by the many women's shelters and refuges across New South Wales. In speaking to this motion, there are a number of different thoughts that come to mind. The first of those is the complex reality of homelessness. The Northern Beaches Women's Shelter speaks of 23 per cent of their intake being women who approach the shelter for financial reasons, while 28 per cent are for mental health reasons, 20 per cent for drug- and alcohol-related issues and 29 per cent due to family violence. I acknowledge the lived experience of the women and children who seek out shelters and the complex reasons behind this.

When we talk about homelessness or risk of homelessness, we are not just talking about people who are sleeping on the streets or seeking emergency shelter. We also need to acknowledge people who are couch surfing from place to place, not feeling safe at home, experiencing family and domestic violence, facing eviction or just getting behind in their rent. For me, the other aspect that is important to focus on when I dwell upon the success of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter is the fact that it is community based. It is non-government and non-profit. It is a community-funded shelter. The grassroots nature of this response is important. Just this week in our Albury electorate office we hosted a meeting on homelessness, which brought together community and agencies including Uniting Care as well as government agencies—in particular, the Department of Education. I really feel that it is with a grassroots response that we are best able to approach these important issues.

Part of the community-based response in terms of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter is reflected in our own regional experience in the electorate of Albury. Betty's Place Women's Refuge is located in Albury. It provides accommodation for women and their children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, or escaping family and domestic violence. The story of Betty's Place began with a loving and caring individual—actually, two loving and caring people, Betty and Bob McLean. When there was nowhere in Albury to go for women and

children fleeing domestic abuse and violence the McLeans opened their door, opened their home. This was in the 1970s. In 1983 a generalist support service began operation to sustain this, which is now known as YES Unlimited. YES Unlimited offers a range of support and services and is the primary provider of transitional accommodation to people in need. It is the lead agent for all specialist homelessness services in the Southern Murrumbidgee area. In partnership with Homes Out West, St Vincent de Paul Society services—which include Quamby House and Vinnies Services Deniliquin—and VERTO Tenancy Advice it provides a range of services to support people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

Women and children who access the accommodation services are partnered with a case manager. This is an important aspect: It is not just the provision of shelter, but also access to services and someone to work through your situation, to help develop goals for the future and to help support you achieving those goals. In the case of Betty's Place, it has a specialist focus on domestic and family violence and can assist in navigating services around that. It also provide support to women, children and families on an outreach basis, meaning that women do not necessarily have to come into the refuge to get support.

We are also fortunate to have Broughton House in Albury, which provides crisis accommodation for up to five young people aged between 15 years of age and 18 years of age. On the subject of youth, it was interesting to note in the discussion members had earlier this week that a growing part of the homeless population is actually older-aged women, which is obviously a concern. Another part of the community response in my electorate is the Albury-Wodonga family violence committee. I welcome the opportunity to represent the Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence at Saturday week's STEP OUT Against Violence march.

Being on the border presents an opportunity to review the response to homelessness and domestic violence through the prism of Victoria. I welcomed the opportunity to discuss family violence and homelessness with researchers from Melbourne University who are examining the response to programs in Victoria. I have touched on the need to assess and examine the response to programs with the Minister. I thank police domestic violence liaison officer in Albury Senior Constable Debra Milnes. In 2018 she received the 2018 Domestic Violence Practitioner of the Year Award for her work leading anti-domestic and family violence programs. Senior Constable Milnes has gone out of her way to provide education and training to large corporations and the community.

Whilst I touch on family violence as one important aspect of the complexity of those who need to seek the services of women's shelters, I thank the team at Betty's Place Women's Refuge for their dedication and care that goes above and beyond. I also acknowledge and thank their CEO, Di Glover, and the staff and directors of the parent organisation, Yes Unlimited, which manages the refuge as part of a diverse portfolio of services. It has a huge role to play in the Albury community in the areas of homelessness and youth counselling. I thank the member for Manly. This is an important space and I commend the motion to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:10:11): I contribute to the motion moved by the member for Manly. I thank him, not only for putting this motion on the record and allowing us to contribute to it, but also for his ongoing advocacy for the protection and support of women, children, and vulnerable members of our community who need the protection of these shelters. His role as patron of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter shows his support for this organisation and the aims of the body. I acknowledge the work of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter. Shortly after I was elected I had the great fortune of stepping onto the member for Manly's territory and visiting the shelter. I learned a lot about what it does and the community that it is servicing.

There are often misconceptions about different parts of Sydney and communities, and that areas of Sydney, like my own and that of the member for Manly, do not have the same levels of domestic and family violence as other areas. That could not be further from the truth. It is the type of crime that knows no geographical or socio-economic boundaries. There are women in the Northern Beaches Women's shelter who come from my community. I thank the shelter for the service that it provides. I acknowledge that it is a volunteer-led organisation.

The shelter was championed and initiated from within the community and, as the member for Manly acknowledged, it became the model that led to the creation of a number of additional shelters under the Women's Community Shelters model across the State. It offers crisis accommodation and longer-term accommodation for people who need it. It addresses women escaping homelessness or who are at risk of domestic and family violence. I also thank the board and the manager, Jacqui Leonard, for their work. Within our types of communities—the more densely populated but small geographic areas—we often share services across electoral boundaries. I thank the member for Manly for his motion, which recognises the service provided to the broader North Shore and northern beaches area.

I have also spent time at Manly courthouse where our local domestic violence cases are heard. I thank the North Shore Police Area Command for their work, in particular Commander Allan Sicard and the team of increased front-line staff who support a range of vulnerable communities. I know the domestic violence liaison

officers within that group are working very closely and proactively to support members of our community at risk to ensure that the risk of violence does not eventuate or escalate. They are often called on in times of extreme financial, economic or psychological violence as well. This is often something that manifests itself much more significantly in our community, but is less likely to be recognised, addressed, or even identified as domestic violence by some members of the community.

The oppressive hold that those forms of coercion and power can have on individuals can threaten people's lives and fundamentally impact their wellbeing and safety. I thank our police area command for working on that. I thank Mary's House, another shelter located within my community in North Sydney. Once again, it was community initiated. I also thank Share the Dignity. I work with them three times a year, every year, on their drives. The Share the Dignity It's In The Bag Christmas drive is coming up. In the past I have had a number of schools work with me, including Shore School and Cammeraygal High School, and I am looking forward to working with these schools again. I again thank the member for Manly.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:14:14): In reply: I thank the member for Albury for his contribution, in particular for shining a light on the good work that Betty's Place does in his electorate of Albury. I thank the member for North Shore for her contribution, specifically for taking the time to get a real understanding of the great work that the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter does by visiting the shelter and fully appreciating what happens there. She also outlined the work that Mary's House does in her electorate. The work that Northern Beaches Women's Shelter does is outstanding and important work. If it were not for its board and the leadership team, the volunteers and support behind them, they would not be able to do what they do. I thank them for that and wish them all the best in the future. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Piper): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The SPEAKER: I shall now leave the chair until 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to the delegation of Cook Islands officials in the Speaker's Gallery, led by the Hon. Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands. I was fortunate, along with a number of colleagues today, to share lunch with the Prime Minister, his wife and the delegation, accompanied by Her Excellency Patricia Forsythe, Australia's High Commissioner to the Cook Islands and New Zealand. Patricia is also a former member of the Legislative Council. Welcome to you all. I did indicate to them today at lunchtime how well behaved the Chamber had been this week, so maybe we can keep that going.

I welcome also student leaders, teachers and parents of Ryde Secondary College, North Ryde Public School and St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, guests of the Minister for Customer Service and member for Ryde. I welcome Jake Batger, Zach Papadopoulos, Aira Pathak and Addison Grinham, guests of the member for Castle Hill. I acknowledge the Headmaster of Wollondilly Anglican College, Dr Stuart Quarmby, property manager Fred Schroder, and 2020 college captains Mekdes Geist and Nicholas Jefferys, guests of the member for Wollondilly. Finally, I acknowledge Varsha Yajman, a leader of the Central Coast School Strike 4 Climate Change, guests of the member for Gosford.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr PAUL TOOLE: On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I inform the House that I will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Transport and Roads.

Question Time

MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:20:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. On 27 October he allegedly impersonated a police officer and assaulted a 17-year-old boy after chasing him through the streets of Castle Hill. Will the Minister now release his full statement to the police and any video of the incident recorded by his wife?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:21:29): I have been guilty of impersonating the police Minister since the election, but I have not been guilty of impersonating a Labor leader, that is for sure. I think I preferred the Leader of the Opposition when she was a

Liberal. The matter that she refers to has been dealt with by the police, twice, I understand. If she has any questions about it, she can ask the police about it.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. I ask you to release the statement you gave to police and the video recorded by your wife.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will continue. Minister, have you completed your answer?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Yes.

BUSHFIRES

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:22:24): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the devastating fires affecting communities across New South Wales?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:22:32): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question and note that both she and the member for Myall Lakes are back in the House today. We appreciate the very difficult situation both of their communities are going through. I had the opportunity to spend time with both of those members and their communities over the weekend. In particular, I acknowledge the efforts of the member for Myall Lakes who, I understand, is the only Rural Fire Service volunteer in this place and who was fighting bushfires in his community—and if I am mistaken, please let me know—until 2.30 a.m. on Wednesday. I acknowledge that contribution as well.

Unfortunately, we were advised earlier today of the death of a fourth victim of the bushfires. Our deepest condolences and thoughts go out to the loved ones of Mr Barry Parsons, who unfortunately was found deceased in Willawarrin, north-west of Kempsey. Unfortunately this brings the total number of deaths because of the recent bushfires to four—two people in Wyaliba, one person in the north of Taree and now Mr Parsons in the north-west of Kempsey. On behalf of all colleagues in this place, I extend our deepest condolences to all their loved ones and appreciate what a difficult time it is for them, as it is for the communities. People who come from small communities are well known; everybody knows each other. It sends huge shock waves throughout townships and I acknowledge what those communities are going through at this time.

Currently we have about 59 fires burning in New South Wales; 30 of them are still uncontrolled, but fortunately none is at emergency level. When last I checked there were about eight at watch and act level. We have 1,500 firefighters in the field, as we speak, 500 trucks and 70 aircraft. Sadly, it has been confirmed that at least 300 homes have been destroyed. Unfortunately, I am cautious because during these difficult times, as emergency services personnel move in to start the recovery effort and to determine whether or not residents can return to their properties, it is only then that we assess the full devastation of these fires. We appreciate also the efforts of all those emergency services personnel who make the decisions about whether roads are safe to use and whether properties are safe to return to. That is a difficult task in itself.

Currently 10 evacuation centres have been set up across the State. In the past few days in this place we have spoken a lot about specific emergency services personnel and the NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS] volunteers. Today I want to acknowledge the more than 30 agencies that are working together in the RFS headquarters to deal with these issues. They are from departments across a number of areas—energy, utilities, education, transport, health and environment—and even from all the rescue forces, such as Surf Life Saving and Marine Rescue. These 30-plus agencies are gathered together in the RFS headquarters to ensure that the Government's response or the response of our emergency services is as comprehensive as it can be.

I take this opportunity to thank all the non-government organisations that are also supporting our communities, especially in the evacuation centres. It is always pleasing to be able to thank them personally. We know they exist in our communities but during times like this they mobilise, and their efforts are deeply appreciated. In particular I thank organisations like the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul, Rapid Relief and BlazeAid, which does an unbelievable job in helping farmers and people on rural properties to restore their fencing, which is often a huge concern for rural and regional communities. I acknowledge a number of private companies that have donated goods and services and have also provided in-kind support to the victims. I also acknowledge the contribution of the private sector in addition to the not-for-profit organisations, our charitable organisations, and also the more than 30 agencies that are working together under the leadership of Commissioner Fitzsimmons to address the ongoing concern.

Whilst the catastrophic conditions we experienced this week are not expected to present themselves over the next few days, the most recent briefing I have received indicated that weather conditions over the weekend and early next week are posing some concern. So we are not out of the woods yet. I urge everybody to please heed the messages, to please use the information available and do what is best for your family and yourself and to please follow instructions. I take this opportunity to talk about the RFS headquarters, which was set up only in

November last year. It is a new facility and was years in planning. The Government contributed more than \$21 million towards its establishment. What a relief that it has been up and running since November last year. *[Extension of time]*

I have had the privilege to see that centre in action. I wish it had not had such a work-out but the headquarters are a state-of-the-art facility that allows cross-agency coordination to occur. I also acknowledge the new RFS state-of-the-art training academy in Dubbo, near the Dubbo airport. That academy has also been the result of a huge investment by the Government of in excess of \$23 million. This real-life training facility allows RFS volunteers and other State Emergency Service personnel to get the best level of training they can so that they are able to combat the very difficult circumstances such as we have seen in the past week.

During these times we cannot thank enough the men and women who put themselves on the line to support others. Regrettably, with the knowledge of the passing of Mr Parsons—and again we extend our deepest condolences—it is a stark reminder that we are not out of the woods. It is going to be a terrible season this summer. I thank our communities for the way in which they have pulled together and have shown their gratitude. I am grateful that our good preparation and planning have prevented further death and injury and have reduced the number of properties lost. One figure that we do not keep a record of is the number of lives and properties saved. The messages we are getting from community members across the board about acts of heroism that have ensured the protection of their homes and livelihoods are outstanding. I thank again all those personnel who have made sacrifices and have risked their own safety to save the lives and property of others. It is deeply appreciated. Unfortunately, their job is not yet done.

The SPEAKER: Members are using mobile phones in the Chamber. The discussion about mobile phones has been raised at various times. I do not have a problem with members having mobile phones in the Chamber, but I do not want to hear noises coming from them.

Mr Ryan Park: Especially sirens.

The SPEAKER: Whether they are sirens or other noises. Members should turn their mobile phones to silent and not play sounds. I have no tolerance for that.

MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (14:30:17): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Just this week two people in New South Wales have been charged for allegedly impersonating firefighters. Why is there one standard for them and another one for the Minister?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:30:38): It is a momentous day. The member for Auburn has been my shadow for 4½ years and this is her first question to me. I have answered every question I possibly can about this fender bender. I do not know how much more I can say. I think it is quite distasteful that as the shadow Minister she has not asked a question about the emergencies, but I will refer her to the police statement.

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

BUSHFIRES AND TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:32:04): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is managing the connectivity and safety on our road and transport networks in the regions through the fires?

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (14:32:26): I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question. I know that his community, like many across this State, are hurting right now. We have all seen the devastating impacts that fires have had right across parts of New South Wales. The member for Myall Lakes has not just been supporting his community through a crisis as a local member but, as the Premier has said, is also an active volunteer of the NSW Rural Fire Service. I commend him for standing side by side with other members of the Rural Fire Service and putting himself out there to protect lives and property. As the Premier mentioned, the member for Myall Lakes was out there fighting fires, finishing at 2.30 on Wednesday morning after having started at 8.30 on Tuesday morning. That goes to show the tireless commitment, the effort and the work that he and the many people who are involved in the Rural Fire Service have demonstrated over the past week.

It has been a tough week for many people across New South Wales, a week of untold pressure and a week of anxiety and fear for what may lie ahead. There is also grief for those whose lives have been lost and for those who have lost their homes across the State. The fight is far from over. There are still many hot days ahead

and many fires continue to burn across New South Wales. That the situation is not worse is a testament to the enormous work that has been done by the Rural Fire Service and the coordinated efforts of so many agencies.

Today more than 1,200 firefighters are still trying to strengthen and contain fires across the State. We salute the brave actions of our fireys. They are tackling fires in my electorate around Oberon and the Forestry Corporation has a team on the ground bringing some of these fires under control. Over the past 10 weeks the Forestry Corporation has had 100 people on the ground fighting fires across the State, and we have still not reached the summer period. I acknowledge the efforts of other agencies that are working hard to support the Rural Fire Service, including my own agency, Transport for NSW. Transport for NSW did substantial work preparing for the extreme conditions that were faced earlier in the week and it continues to work hard to manage road closures, service interruptions and traffic flows in fire-affected areas.

Teams have been embedded in emergency management centres across the State working closely with the Rural Fire Service to do whatever is needed to assist with managing connectivity and safety during the bushfires. I thank them for their work and I pay special tribute to the teams in the northern and Hunter regions. Many staff have not only been working hard responding to the fires but have also had to grapple with the fact that their own homes, families and friends may be in danger. Some Transport staff have lost their homes. There has been significant road and transport impacts across our regions. As of lunchtime today two major highways remain closed in both directions: the Gwydir Highway east of Glenn Innes to the west of Grafton and the Oxley Highway east of Walcha to Wauchope.

With rapidly changing conditions, Transport for NSW is working with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to identify appropriate and safe access for heavy vehicles on alternate freight corridors, particularly to deliver emergency fodder and stock water to impacted landholders. Transport for NSW has pushed out emergency notifications to heavy vehicle operators, reminding them to cover and monitor their loads, especially if they have combustible loads such as hay, to reduce the risk of fire from airborne embers. We continue to encourage people to avoid unnecessary travel through any high-risk areas and to monitor live traffic for the latest updates. Transport teams will continue to reopen roads as soon as it is safe to do so. I acknowledge the efforts of NSW TrainLink, which has managed interruptions to train and coach services across the State. [*Extension of time*]

NSW TrainLink has worked hard to ensure that customers are kept up to date. I am pleased to advise that all services are now running as normal. NSW TrainLink staff pride themselves on supporting regional communities with more than just train and coach services. As the member for Clarence knows, the fires last month devastated the town of Rappville, a small community of about 250 people on the North Coast. They lost the community hall and they lost homes. NSW TrainLink staff collected donations to create hampers for the local community. The hampers included everything from crockery to bed linen and new school shoes for the kids. They delivered the hampers to Rappville on the Casino XPT. This act epitomises to members of this House what it is that is special about people in the bush. Everyone chips in when times are tough and they show their support however they can. All the members of this Chamber support our fire-affected communities. We are all united in our desire to support our State through the immediate crisis and in the difficult days to follow as our communities face the task of rebuilding.

MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:38:46): I direct my question to the Premier. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services committed road rage on a 17-year-old boy and impersonated a police officer. Why is he still in the Premier's Cabinet?

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Government members are not assisting the Premier.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:39:10): The assertions in the Leader of the Opposition's question are completely unfounded. I refer her to the police statement that was issued yesterday.

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:39:35): I address my question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is supporting our communities through fire recovery?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:40:09): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. At the start of the week the planning and coordination of our emergency services paid dividends by minimising the potential damage caused by catastrophic and severe bushfire conditions. However, a number of large fires continue to burn throughout the State. The main areas of the State that continue to be affected include the mid North Coast, northern New South Wales, New England and

the Hawkesbury. Right now there are 59 bushfires across the State and more than half of them are, tragically, still uncontained. Today there are 1,500 volunteer firefighters on the ground, more than 70 aircraft and more than 500 vehicles supporting operations.

Tragically 329 homes have been destroyed; that is 329 families without a place to go. Another 131 homes have been damaged. Sadly, as the Premier has said, today we learned that another life has been lost to these destructive fires in the north-west of Kempsey. That means that since the fire season started in September six lives have been lost to bushfires in New South Wales, yet the warmest months are still to come. We are still in the midst of a response to the bushfires. As of today 10 evacuation centres have been opened to accommodate hundreds of people. Hundreds more people have been placed into commercial accommodation. Extensive numbers of staff from the New South Wales government agencies and community partner organisations, including the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Anglicare, St Vincent de Paul and the Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network, are supporting individuals and families who register at evacuation centres.

Right now the best way to help our impacted communities is to donate money to one of the many charities or appeals that have been established. Last Saturday the Premier and I appointed Euan Ferguson as recovery coordinator for the recovery efforts. Mr Ferguson has advised me that he is ready to set up a regional recovery committee on the mid North Coast, which he will personally chair. Mr Ferguson is an exceptional recovery coordinator. He led the recovery to the Tathra bushfires and the Lismore floods. I have told him I want him to readily identify key impacts and ensure that assistance flows smoothly. Recovery operations in relation to the northern New South Wales bushfire commenced in September. This means that recovery staff, resources and teams have already been established and they will be expanded to assist the communities that are affected by the current bushfire emergency.

A key first step is to identify the people who need our help. We receive information on which communities and individuals have been affected by the fires via a number of sources, including regular operational reports from the NSW Rural Fire Service Building Impact Assessment teams, which conduct assessments across the firegrounds where it is safe to do so, registrations from evacuation centres, calls to the Government's Disaster Welfare Assistance Line and other sources such as local councils and agency customer service contacts. Our assistance will be delivered in a variety of ways because of the far-reaching and dispersed impact of the fires. When we can best service people by opening hubs we will. When we have to go to people in an outreach approach we will.

Starting Monday 18 November a complement of 18 disaster welfare staff from the Office of Emergency Management will visit areas affected by the fires to identify people in need and commence the process of assessing people for disaster relief grants. A further dozen disaster welfare staff will deploy over the coming fortnight. This will bring the total complement to 30 on the ground disaster welfare staff, who will be making these grant assessments. If Mr Ferguson says he needs more resources he will get them. In addition to the research teams I have described, we will establish hubs at Taree, Kempsey and Glen Innes. They are planned to be open from Monday. These information and assessment points will provide a centralised service, including welfare, Red Cross, chaplain services and mental health support.

This is just part of the assistance that is of value to bushfire-affected people and communities. Our assistance measures include disaster relief grants, where financial assistance for uninsured and low-income individuals is offered; primary producer and small business support, which includes access to low-interest loans, transport and subsidies; essential public asset restoration, which includes assistance for council clean-ups and the rebuilding of roads, bridges and other essential public infrastructure; and the cleaning up of hazardous materials, including asbestos, for uninsured homes. [*Extension of time*]

This can include damaged gas bottles, solar power systems, damaged and dangerous tree branches and asbestos-contaminated material. Council waste management will see financial assistance for extraordinary costs of waste disposal when councils waive up-front fees. This means that an insured property owner will not have to pay fees out of their own insurance payment, thereby maximising the amount of money they have available to them to rebuild their lives. Portable water assistance is essential when water is contaminated and undrinkable by retardant or when the Rural Fire Service has taken water. I can assure the House that the Office of Emergency Management can arrange for roofs and gutters to be cleaned and water tanks refilled to ensure houses are safe and habitable. While the response to the bushfires is far from over, the Government's recovery efforts are well underway. We are determined to help bushfire-affected people and communities to return safely to their normal lives as soon as possible and we have committed the people and resources to make that happen.

BUSHFIRES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:46:36): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Does the Minister accept that climate change is influencing the frequency and severity of bushfires in New South Wales?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (14:46:47): I thank the member for Port Stephens for her constructive question because it is a constructive debate. I will have to defer to those who are responsible for the Environment portfolio. Quite frankly, I am focused on the 1,500 people—I am quite offended that the Opposition members are laughing while I am talking about the welfare of 1,500 firefighters.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. It is an easy question. Does the Minister accept that climate change is related to the bushfires?

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. The Minister is answering the question. He is only in the first minute of his answer.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I find it offensive that Opposition members have not asked a single question about the welfare of emergency services. I am going to treat the member for Port Stephens' question with the contempt it deserves. I am quite comfortable with the Government's approach to climate change and the way that we manage the environment.

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

BUSHFIRE ARSON PENALTIES

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (14:48:10): My question is addressed to the Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. Will the Attorney General update the House on how the Government is ensuring tough penalties for those who deliberately light fires and any other related matters?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (14:48:45): I thank the member for Heathcote for his important question. Over the past days and weeks we have witnessed the catastrophic effects that bushfires can have on families, homes, livestock and the environment as well as the devastating economic and social costs to communities right across New South Wales. I thank all the volunteers and paid firefighters who have engaged in this battle. In particular I thank the volunteers from the Sutherland shire brigades. I know I speak on behalf of the members representing the electorates of Miranda, Heathcote and Holsworthy when I say how much we admire and respect our volunteers. Since August 180 volunteers from the Sutherland shire brigades have been deployed to northern New South Wales and they have also had a number of deployments to south-east Queensland.

These volunteers were active a couple of days ago on that catastrophic Tuesday. In our local area a fire started in the Temptation Creek area of the Royal National Park, which is bounded by Loftus in the member for Heathcote's electorate and Kirrawee and Grays Point in my electorate. The fire rapidly escalated to the watch and act level but was spectacularly put out and controlled through the combined effort of Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service staff. I thank all those agencies for their rapid response, which saved properties and potentially lives in our local area.

Sadly, bushfires are a common phenomenon in Australia. It is bad enough when they happen through natural or accidental causes, including a lightning strike or unfavourable weather conditions. But it is beyond belief that anyone would deliberately start a bushfire and put lives and property at risk. Our firefighters already have a difficult and dangerous job responding to emergencies and keeping the community safe. They should not have to put their lives on the line because some reckless and callous person deliberately started a fire. We have no tolerance for firebugs who commit such heinous crimes when the State is in a state of emergency. When people deliberately light bushfires we are all justly outraged. That is why last November the Government increased the maximum penalty for bushfire arson from 14 years to 21 years imprisonment, making us the toughest State in Australia.

Tough new penalties apply to the charge of intentionally causing a fire and being reckless about it spreading on public land or someone else's property. When we increased the maximum penalty from 14 years to 21 years I asked the Sentencing Council to advise the Government on whether the standard non-parole period was appropriate. The standard non-parole period is a guidepost for a sentencing court and is defined in legislation to "represent the non-parole period ... that, taking into account only the objective factors affecting the relative seriousness of that offence, is in the middle of the range of seriousness". In June the Sentencing Council recommended an increase to the standard non-parole period from five years to a range of eight to 10 years. The Sentencing Council said:

The range reflects the seriousness with which the community views the offence, and takes into account: the need for special deterrence, given the prevalence of deliberately lit fires and the difficulties in detection and prosecution, the potential for exceptional personal, economic and environmental harm, especially given the increasing risk in light of climate change, and the potential vulnerability of victims, particularly for those who live in isolated areas and those who live on the interface between populated urban areas and the bush.

The Government acted quickly on that. Along with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I introduced legislation in August 2019 to address this issue and increase the standard non-parole period from five years to nine years. The new standard non-parole period commenced in September, ahead of this horrendous bushfire season. These reforms were aimed to ensure that those who commit bushfire offences spend more time behind bars. It is about saving lives and protecting property. It is important all of us remain vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour so offenders are caught. With dozens of bushfires burning today and a hot and dry summer around the corner, it is more important than ever that we have strong laws in place to protect farmers and communities already struggling because of severe drought. This is about sending a clear message to bushfire bugs that there is no excuse for starting a bushfire. Light a fire, be reckless as to whether it will spread and you will likely spend a significant period in jail. [*Extension of time*]

Community safety remains our number one priority. On the germane factors that the member for Heathcote referred to, I note the role of Legal Aid NSW in this. Since 2012 it has provided legal assistance to people affected by fires and other natural disasters through its disaster response teams. Those teams provide legal assistance to cover a range of issues—insurance claims, tenancy, credit and debt, financial hardship, social security entitlements and employment. Legal Aid NSW is currently liaising with the Office of Emergency Management about when and where it will provide legal assistance to those affected by bushfires. Solicitors are on standby to be deployed at short notice.

Legal Aid expects this assistance to include attending disaster recovery centres. All Legal Aid solicitors provide assistance at these centres. They have undergone specialist training in insurance claims and they are equipped to provide flexible and trauma-informed services in the disaster recovery centre environment. Legal Aid NSW also has a disaster assistance hotline, which can be accessed through LawAccess NSW. For the most recent fires in northern New South Wales, Legal Aid staff have attended community outreach events in Rappville, Tenterfield, Drake, Ellangowan, Casino and Dorrigo, organised by the Office of Emergency Management. At these events Legal Aid provided legal information and referrals in areas like insurance, tenancy, credit and debt, employment law and social security. The arson offence is about sending a strong message to firebugs that their recklessness and callousness will not be tolerated. The Government puts community safety at the forefront of everything it does.

WATER LICENCES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (14:56:13): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the New South Wales water crisis and current investigations into water trading and water corruption, will the Premier explain why State members of Parliament do not have to declare their water ownership? Why has her Government, in its nine years in power, not introduced a bill to force all State members of Parliament to declare their water ownership on the pecuniary interest declaration form?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:56:50): I acknowledge the question from the member for Murray. I appreciate that when you look at the facts you see that New South Wales has the highest standards in relation to members' requirements to disclose. All members of Parliament are required to disclose all of their relevant pecuniary interests on the record, which is publicly available. I expect that the member for Murray would do that, as well as every other person in this place. I also appreciate that if members have to update their records in relation to ownership of water licences or other things that might provide a benefit to them, they should do that. I am sure that the member for Murray as well as every other member in this place will be looking to do that if it has not occurred already.

I address again the issue of water. This Government is on the front foot in relation to dealing with the State's very serious water conditions and also in respect of infrastructure. Twenty-three communities have benefited from the 60 bores that the Government has successfully provided in the past 2½ to three years. I am pleased to say that I can update that information. Fourteen pipelines have been built by our Government in rural and regional communities, the most significant of which was—

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In particular, I note the significance of the pipeline to Broken Hill, which the Opposition opposed at the time. Had we not built that pipeline—

Ms Jodi McKay: Why didn't you release the business case, Premier?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Are you still complaining about the pipeline to Broken Hill, which is providing water—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will desist.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. I am asking about pecuniary interest, not about the pipeline.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being generally relevant.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will revert directly to that answer but I am responding to an interjection by those opposite, claiming that we built the Broken Hill pipeline not in order to provide water to tens of thousands of people in Broken Hill who otherwise—

Ms Jodi McKay: Haven't you read the business case, Premier? It says in the business case paper—

The SPEAKER: If the Leader of the Opposition interjects then it is reasonable for the Premier to respond. That is what she is doing. If Opposition members stay quiet—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Mr Speaker, I think it is worthwhile to ensure that Hansard caught that interjection because the Leader of the Opposition is claiming the Broken Hill pipeline was not necessary. So let us make sure that that is on the record.

The SPEAKER: I ask those on both sides of the Chamber to remain silent.

Mrs Helen Dalton: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have ruled that the Premier is being relevant. Is the member for Murray taking a different point of order?

Mrs Helen Dalton: No.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will continue.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say to the member for Murray that if she is personally concerned about any interests she or any other member might hold in relation to water licences, or if she or anybody else is concerned about what they own in relation to water assets they should disclose them proactively and put them on their registers.

The SPEAKER: For the benefit of the House, a number of members have asked a similar question to the one asked by the member for Murray. It has been the subject of some confusion. On my authority, the Clerk has sought legal advice on that issue. That legal advice arrived yesterday and it will be disseminated for the benefit of all members.

NSW DIGITAL DRIVER LICENCE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:01:27): My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service. Will the Minister update the House on the successful rollout of the New South Wales digital driver licences?

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (15:02:23): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question and for the great work he does for his community. He will be pleased to know that his community has the highest uptake of the digital driver licences in New South Wales. I inform the House that, as of this morning, 800,000 people in New South Wales had downloaded the digital driver licence. To put that in perspective—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Gosford to order for the second time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Mount Druitt to order for the first time.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: To put that in perspective, we have achieved in New South Wales in 12 days what South Australia achieved in 12 months. It goes to show that people in New South Wales are early adopters. They love their technology and they love platforms that provide them with easier choices and more convenience in their lives. What is even more important is that 97 per cent of the people who have downloaded the app have given it a thumbs up—within three points of 100 per cent. New South Wales does not have an

ambition to lead the country when it comes to digital transformation; New South Wales has an ambition to lead the world. Indeed, the State is seen as a world leader when it comes to customer service and service delivery.

On the world stage, we have government after government coming to New South Wales and having a look at what we have done in relation to Service NSW and the transformation that is taking place in service delivery. The journey is not just with Service NSW; the Premier herself really started the journey with the Opal card. With the Opal card we have gone from the paper system to something that is now digital and much loved. But it is not just the Opal card. You have got NSW FuelCheck, Easy to do Business—there are a number of platforms that we are rolling out for the people of our State to make their lives easier.

Technology is not just to make lives easier; it is also to make life safer. I give a shout-out to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Just have a look at what has happened in the past few days with the real challenges we have had around fires. Over 370,000 people have downloaded the Fires Near Me app, with 4.1 million views. To put that into perspective, if it were not for that real-time information people would be in peril. This is another reason we have to continue to move forward in this digital age to make sure we not only make lives easier but make lives safer. The people of New South Wales are clearly early adopters. In 12 days we have achieved what South Australia achieved in 12 months. That is just the beginning. This uptake is going to continue at pace. However, I do not think everyone is an early adopter. For example, there are those opposite who are late adopters. The member for Canterbury—

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. You have pushed it too far.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: The member for Canterbury does not want to get a digital driver licence. She is out of step with 12,000 people in her community—and that number is growing. There are some people on the other side of the Chamber who are actually doing the right thing by their communities, and I want to give them a shout-out.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: We really have some dinosaurs on that side of the Chamber, but that is okay. There are some smart people over there too, and I want to give them a shout-out. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. Unless the Minister goes in a different direction, I expect members to show him more respect.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I have been speaking about the digital driver licence.

The SPEAKER: That is why I am asking for respect to be shown.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Those opposite do not like good news—sorry, some of them like good news, but the dinosaurs want to keep croaking away. I give a shout-out to the member for Wallsend. She loves good news. She is in the Chamber somewhere. She posted on Facebook and she had 104 likes—there are a couple of "loves" there and a few "wows". She posted about the digital driver licence—

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: That is really, really good. I also want to give a shout-out to the member for Cessnock. He has also embraced the good news of the New South Wales Government. Those opposite do not tell anyone about the New South Wales Government but they embrace the good news. He has only had about—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume his seat. Firstly, I remind members that it is the last question on Thursday and, secondly, that the Minister has not been quarrelsome. He is perhaps attempting to add a bit of levity, which is okay. I ask members to be a bit more quiet and a bit more respectful. I am finding it difficult to hear the Minister. The Minister has the call.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: The post of the member for Cessnock had 16 likes, but there was one angry person—it was probably the member for Canterbury. There is one special shout-out for the member for Charlestown. She has promoted the digital driver licence, but the problem is she has got rid of the New South Wales Government waratah logo and replaced it with the Labor logo. We are trying to promote the waratah and those opposite are trying to bring it down. The waratah is a beautiful thing; Labor is not. Please, do not associate the digital driver licence with Labor—it does not work.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES****Inquiry**

Ms WENDY LINDSAY: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on Community Services has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the protocol for homeless people in public places, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)**Inquiry**

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: On behalf of the Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety has resolved to conduct an inquiry into trauma on local roads, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Kempsey Shire Council

Petition requesting that the Minister for Local Government order a departmental investigation into the performance of Kempsey Shire Council, received from **Ms Melinda Pavey**.

School Crossing Supervisor

Petition requesting that a school crossing supervisor be placed at the pedestrian crossing on Harriet Street, Waratah, at school drop-off and pick-up times, received from **Ms Sonia Hornery**.

*Private Members' Statements***YARRA BAY CRUISE SHIP TERMINAL**

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:12:38): It has been two years since the New South Wales Liberal Government's secret plans for a new cruise ship terminal at Yarra Bay were revealed to a horrified public. Since that time I have been inundated with correspondence from constituents who oppose the idea. I am similarly opposed, along with the Federal member for Kingsford-Smith, the member for Maroubra and both Randwick and Bayside councils. I have always maintained that this decision is bad for Botany Bay and it is bad for the cruise shipping industry. Further dredging of Botany Bay and the construction of a massive wharf and breakwall could cause the complete ecological collapse of Botany Bay, the birthplace of Australia.

Instead of arriving in Sydney Harbour, which is the gateway to the country and our tourist capital, cruise passengers would instead disembark at our industrial hub and drive to the harbour on some of the most congested roads in Sydney. It would be a huge lost opportunity to showcase the most beautiful city and the most beautiful harbour in the world. For years I have advocated that berth space at Garden Island be transferred to the cruise ship industry, with the navy compensated by infrastructure enhancement at Glebe Island.

Garden Island is the first choice for the cruise ship industry, the Sydney business community, environmental experts, and the very eminent Mr Peter Collins, former Attorney General and leader of the New South Wales Liberal Party and an ex-navy reserve captain, who chaired the State Government's Cruise Industry Reference Group review into a third passenger terminal. Even the former Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Adam Marshall, admitted that Garden Island was his "first preference", as Yarra Bay was "not ideal". The Minister no doubt came to that opinion because he had read the Collins report, which Mr Collins revealed recommended that cruise ships share Garden Island with the navy. The Government has never released that report. On this issue, Mr Collins is scathing, and stated:

The whole report has never been made public ... My report went to the NSW Cabinet and they released a distilled version after they received a negative response from the Federal Government.

The Garden Island option was rejected in 2017 by then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, but last week Mr Collins broke his silence to reveal that Mr Turnbull had "never read the report" and "dismissed Garden Island out of hand". I am sure Mr Turnbull's view of Garden Island from his residence at Point Piper had nothing to do with his decision. Since the departure of former Liberal MLC Patricia Forsythe as Sydney Business Chamber Executive Director, I note the complete reversal of the chamber's position, with her successor, Katherine O'Regan,

arguing that "Garden Island is ideal as a cruise terminal from a tourism and an economic point of view". She joins the chair of Carnival Cruise Line Australia, the chief executive of the Tourism and Transport Forum, the Committee for Sydney and Peter Collins, who are all in full agreement that cruise ships can and should be co-located with the navy at Garden Island.

On the one hand, the entire business community, tourism industry, naval experts, members of Parliament and their communities are advocating for Garden Island and rejecting Yarra Bay. On the other hand, the Commonwealth Liberal Government and their NSW Liberal Party counterparts are standing in the way of the best outcome for the tourism industry, tourists and the New South Wales economy. The Government must come clean, release the full Collins report so that the public can fully understand the argument and put serious pressure on the Commonwealth Government to reconsider its position on Garden Island. There must be absolutely no cruise ships in Yarra Bay.

RSL NSW STATE CONGRESS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:17:16): The Returned and Services League continues to play an important role across our State and nation. Remembrance Day has just been held and serves as a sobering reminder of the significance of our veterans and the RSL in Australia. During early November in Albury the RSL NSW State Congress was held. It was an outstanding success that gave Albury the opportunity to showcase the city to RSL members from across the State. The congress was opened by Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AO, QC, Governor of New South Wales. I thank the Governor for making the journey down the Hume to attend this event. Her Excellency praised the RSL for its work, whilst at the same time acknowledging that it had been a difficult couple of years. The Governor's speech was heartfelt, thoughtful and contained many anecdotes about how much the world has changed in recent times.

This has particular relevance for the RSL as it faces change and challenges, such as the recruitment of younger veterans. Her Excellency told the gathering that she appreciated that they were there because they truly care about the mission of the RSL: to respect, support and remember our veterans and their families. It was touching to be reminded of this simple purpose. One of the most significant things to arise from the congress was the adoption by the membership of a new constitution. The new constitution is significant as it looks to modernise the RSL and enables it to meet new legislative requirements. These changes reflect a challenging few years and largely relate to addressing concerns regarding compliance failures that were brought to light during the Bergin inquiry. The changes will also assist the league to achieve greater levels of transparency and accountability at all levels of the organisation.

The Bergin inquiry identified extensive non-compliance with the statutory regime for fundraising at the sub-branch level as well as a failure by State headquarters to comply with numerous parts of the Charitable Fundraising Act, the regulations and the fundraising authorities issued under the Act. The league had previously failed to implement processes to properly track moneys raised, prove that the moneys raised were spent for the promised purpose and in many cases did not comply with the law relating to accounting and auditing financial statements. At the congress in Albury the RSL confronted these problems head-on and fixed them by the adoption of the new constitution.

Albury City Councillor Graham Docksey, OAM, is a retired army officer and Vietnam veteran. He is immediate past president of the City of Albury RSL sub-Branch and is therefore well qualified to speak about the RSL. Graham speaks of the success of this year's congress and says that it was a triumph and that, in addition to the successful implementation of the new constitution, a total of 21 motions were backed by the membership. These were supported with over 90 per cent endorsement by members, and some of the motions were carried by 100 per cent of eligible attendees. This represents a strong indication of the support for reforms in the RSL. Graham also tells me that members were pleased to have the opportunity to visit Albury, to explore the city and to see a beautiful regional area of New South Wales. In fact, he has been told by senior staff that Albury city is making another awesome bid for the congress to be back in Albury for a fourth straight year.

The RSL is certainly more than just clubs, pokies and old men. The future of the RSL in Albury continues to be strong but like all sub-branches across the State it is experiencing some difficulty in attracting younger veterans. These days members do not need to have served overseas. With many members of the Australian defence force passing through Bandiana and the Albury region, I encourage them to be more active in their RSL to ensure that commemorative events like Anzac Day and Remembrance Day continue into the future as our current members become older and find it more difficult to carry on the responsibility.

On Remembrance Day this year I was honoured to attend a ceremony at St Matthews Anglican Church, Albury. Earlier this year I attended the centenary of the Corowa RSL sub-Branch. This was a significant event for the community of Corowa. The RSL continues to be a significant contributor to the rich cultural tapestry that

makes up the Albury electorate, New South Wales and Australia. We are grateful for the sacrifices our veterans have made for us and for the good work that the RSL does to perpetuate their memory.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:22:08): I commend the member for Albury for his excellent private member's statement. The RSL is a very important organisation and it is terrific to see that the electorate of Albury has been able to host a major congress full of some of Australia's best citizens. The member for Albury has taken to his new parliamentary career like a duck to water. The people of Albury are extraordinarily lucky to have such a talented member of Parliament. We will all stand back and watch his career with great interest because I think he will be going great places. I give a shout-out to Hornsby RSL sub-Branch President Terry James, who has recently been unwell. We wish him the best. I also acknowledge that Major Mike Askey of the former Roseville RSL sub-Branch was recently awarded the Order of Australia.

The SPEAKER: I add to the words of the Parliamentary Secretary in commending Mike Askey, who is well known to me and well deserving.

2020 TOKYO OLYMPICS BROADCAST

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:23:25): I share my thoughts on the decision by the ABC not to broadcast the 2020 Tokyo Olympics live on radio, ending 67 years of live Olympics coverage by the public broadcaster. It is a decision that I find incredibly disappointing for a number of reasons, and I hope it will be reversed in coming days. I note that the Australian Olympic Committee [AOC] has already labelled the decision "short-sighted" and a "great let down to Australians". I agree completely. I speak from personal experience. I worked for the ABC as a radio presenter for over 10 years before being elected to State Parliament. I was also lucky enough to commentate at the 2000 Olympic Games in this city.

This decision will hit hard in regional and rural areas, particularly where, for many people, the ABC radio broadcast is often the only way of keeping up to date with what is going on at the Olympics. I understand crisis talks are being planned between the Australian Olympic Committee and the ABC in a bid to see what can be worked out. From my perspective it is pretty simple—get it done. The ABC has said its budget is too tight to afford the approximately \$1 million needed to send commentators to Japan and to set up its broadcasting system. To some degree I understand—budgets are tight—but at the same time the ABC has the ability to refocus where it spends its money and what types of content are the most important.

In recent years the entire focus for the ABC has moved to digital first. It is all about being online and on mobile. That is great. It is certainly a space the ABC needs to be at the forefront of, but it has come seemingly at the expense of everything else, which is why situations like this occur. Services like radio seemingly have been going backwards. There is no real money being spent on what is regarded these days as static content. The feeling seems to be, "Leave it alone to just tick along and it'll be ok." But the problem is that for many people, particularly in regional and rural areas, radio is what they rely on most and it is what keeps them in touch with their local area, the State, the country and the world, including major sporting events like the Olympics.

Some people have been using this as an opportunity to score a few political points against the Federal Government, suggesting it needs to provide more funding, and maybe it does. But I cannot help feeling that this is just a stunt by some at the ABC to see if it can raise enough public outrage to get a bit more coin. Of course questions also need to be raised—and they are raised with me regularly—about the ability of the ABC to somehow fund many examples of obscure and targeted content without a problem, so why not the Olympics? This decision also completely ignores the responsibility of ABC management to consider what it should be providing under its charter, which states in black and white the obligation to broadcast "programs that contribute to a sense of national identity". Well, if the Olympic Games do not do that, I am not sure what does.

More than 400 Australians are due to represent our country at Tokyo. They will be representing many small communities that have supported them on their individual journeys to get there, and that is really important. As the national broadcaster, the ABC has a taxpayer-funded responsibility to help connect those communities, and also to help foster our positive national spirit. And let us be honest, major events like the Olympic Games are known about years ahead of time. It is not like someone has just received a phone call that next year there is a little thing happening at Tokyo and "Do you reckon we should cover it?". One would hope that is not the case anyway.

The ABC has aired the Olympic Games live on radio since the 1952 Olympics at Helsinki, and I have a bit of an insight into what it is like to be part of the team providing coverage of an event like the Olympics. From my perspective an event like the Olympic Games gives commentators and reporters the opportunity of a lifetime. I mentioned my involvement in the 2000 Olympic Games, which for me was a momentous experience. I was lucky enough to commentate on several gold medals as part of the shared 2UE and ABC coverage, and help

convey the passion and excitement of those glorious, and sometimes completely unexpected, wins with hundreds of thousands of listeners.

I had the opportunity to cover everything from hockey and basketball, beach volleyball and women's water polo. It really was a great growing and learning experience for all those involved, and something anyone involved in sports commentary wants to be part of. The Olympics are unique—16 days with athletes from over 200 countries running, jumping, throwing—showing the highest skill level possible in more than 30 different sports. Where there are so many negative distractions around the world, the Olympic Games provides a collective and a positive focus for Australia and the rest of the world, which we should encourage. The ABC obviously has some tough decisions to make on budgets, but not providing coverage of the Olympics should not be one of them.

SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN METRO

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:28:33): I draw the attention of the House to the inquiry being conducted by the Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No. 6—Transport and Customer Service into the Sydenham to Bankstown line conversion. The inquiry held two hearings last week. I had the opportunity to attend the first day of the hearing and I certainly watched both days of the hearing. The committee is inquiring into numerous aspects of the planned Sydenham to Bankstown Metro project and has wideranging terms of reference, which include the impact this conversion will have on stations west of Bankstown. I have mentioned this issue on many occasions in the House, but it is important to my constituents that I give a summary as to what stage the inquiry has reached.

The inquiry invited public submissions and to date has published 105 of those on its website. It held public hearings on 6 November and 7 November 2019 where it heard from community and action groups, business groups and government agencies. Witnesses who appeared presented a range of diverse views and perspectives about the line conversion and issues surrounding the project. I acknowledge those who took the time to participate and assist in informing the inquiry. I take the House through some of the evidence provided to the inquiry. Mr Peter Olive of the Sydenham to Bankstown Alliance raised concerns that the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro was being used as a Trojan horse for overdevelopment, an issue that is also reflected in many of the written submissions to the inquiry, including my own.

The Sydenham to Bankstown corridor is expected to house an additional 60,000 units when the metro project is completed. I have consistently reiterated in this House the concerns raised by resident and action groups that roads, hospitals and schools are already struggling and do not have the capacity to cater for increased population growth. The hearings highlighted also the significant impact of the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro on stations west of Bankstown. I have mentioned this on many occasions. With the loss of the inner west train line—the Bankstown via Regents Park service—since October 2013, it has made it very difficult for commuters west of Bankstown to travel to the City Circle having lost one direct service at this stage. Once the conversion is complete, they will lose their final direct service into the City Circle.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge a number of groups, including EcoTransit Sydney, which attended the inquiry and provided a submission. In particular, I acknowledge the efforts of Roydon Ng, convenor of Restore Inner West Line and Save T3 Bankstown Line action groups. He is also co-convenor of EcoTransit Sydney with Mr Colin Schroeder. I acknowledge Roydon for taking the time to make considered submissions to the inquiry, for giving evidence at the public hearings and for providing assistance in making submissions. During the inquiry we learned that the turnback for the metro will no longer be located, as originally advised by the Government, at Yagoona but instead at Bankstown station. This will require commuters travelling from heavy rail west of Bankstown to change at Bankstown across a 450-metre interchange in the CBD of Bankstown.

The metro line will no longer be underground at Bankstown as was originally promised by the Government. Instead, the current connection in Bankstown between the south and north will be exacerbated by the metro, not in any way improved because the interchange will be a 450-metre interchange. It will make it very difficult to connect with the CBD at Bankstown. Also, people will have to change from a heavy rail service west of Bankstown to the metro. In listening to some of the bureaucrats who attended the inquiry, it appeared there was a lack of understanding about the true impact of this conversion on residents west of Bankstown. There was no recognition about Sydney's Rail Future Implementation Plan December 2013, which was the subject of a Government Information (Public Access) Act application. The bureaucrats did not recognise the impact of the Future Transport 2056 Strategy that will potentially remove the train line between Bankstown and Cabramatta. There has been no acknowledgement from the Government on this. I call on the Government to rule out any shutting down of the line between Bankstown and Cabramatta.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (15:33:40):

We are enormously proud of the bravery and dedication of our New South Wales State Emergency Service [SES] volunteers who answer the call for assistance at a moment's notice and play a crucial role in keeping lives and property safe. On Wednesday 6 November I attended a special awards ceremony at The Hills Shire Council with the New South Wales SES Commissioner, Carlene York, APM, to recognise the selfless contribution of volunteers from The Hills SES unit who dedicate their time to protect The Hills community from Baulkham Hills to Wisemans Ferry. In the past three years, SES volunteers from The Hills unit have responded to more than 4,200 calls for help, including following hailstorms in 2017 and 2018, which involved volunteers from across New South Wales.

While all volunteers in the SES show an extraordinary level of commitment to their communities, award presentations such as these provide special recognition to those volunteers whose depth of commitment is irreplaceable. The awards represented a combined total of 195 years of service. It was an emotional evening for all attendees who gathered to say farewell to longstanding unit commander Evelyn Lester, ESM, after more than a decade of service in the top job. Evelyn has dedicated the past 17 years to supporting The Hills community during times of need and in emergencies. Evelyn joined The Hills unit in November 2002 and held various positions until her appointment to unit commander in July 2008.

Under her leadership, the local SES membership grew from 40 members to more than 200 members, with a focus on nurturing and mentoring numerous emergency service volunteers. During this period Evelyn was recognised for her persistent excellence in organising inclusive community engagement events between The Hills unit and the local community. She has received the following awards: In 2018 she received the Emergency Services Medal and also was awarded NSW Adult Volunteer of the Year for the North West Sydney Centre of Volunteering; and in 2013 she was awarded The Hills Shire Council Citizen of the Year.

It would be remiss of me to not acknowledge the distances Evelyn has travelled—from Victoria to Queensland to Western Australia—to assist with major emergencies from floods to bushfires, and to make a significant difference to the lives of many people through her generosity. In recognition of her outstanding service and contribution to emergency service duties, Evelyn is also a recipient of the following awards: the National Medal; the NSW SES five-, 10- and 15-year Long Service Award; the NSW SES Commissioner's Unit Citation; the NSW SES Commissioner's Commendation for Service; the NSW SES Commissioner's Certificate of Appreciation; and the SES State Medal for the Hunter/Sydney Northern Storms.

I am sure members will agree that being a local controller is not an easy task. That is why I cannot praise Evelyn enough for her compassionate and self-sacrificing contributions to The Hills community. When there has been a crisis that has required an immediate response, Evelyn is never one to back down from a challenge and has risen above and beyond the call of duty to ensure our residents are safe in all circumstances—all traits of an exceptional unit commander. While I am certain that The Hills community is deeply saddened to see Evelyn leave, I find solace in knowing that her actions will inspire and motivate others to do the incredible beyond the years we were blessed to have had the opportunity to work alongside her.

CHILEAN GOVERNMENT

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:37:18): I address the House on a matter of considerable concern to many of my constituents who originally came from Chile or who are friends of Chile. Indeed, my constituents have specifically urged me to raise these matters in this place. I have been approached by a number of individuals, such as Elizabeth Rivera, as well as organisations such as the Salvador Allende Monument Committee, the Centro Cultural Victor Jara and the Pablo Neruda Group. Most of this Chilean diaspora came to Australia after the fascist coup of the dictator Pinochet, which overthrew the democratically elected Unidad Popular Government of President Salvador Allende. For many of my generation of progressives, events in Chile between 1970 and 1973 were formative. Many of the diaspora had been activists who had been tortured by the Pinochet regime and had been imprisoned. In that context, declarations by the current Chilean president that his country Chile is at war, and the use of armed forces in the current situation has been profoundly disturbing. I quote from a letter dated 24 October sent to me by about 20 Chilean community organisations. Their letter opens by saying:

Due to the worsening state of violence in Chile we ask that you speak out in support of the Chilean people and condemn the Chilean Government and President Sebastian Pinera for creating a situation of crisis and extreme violence in Chile.

The letter also says:

We strongly reject the anti-democratic practices that the armed forces are using to impose "peace" by using violence and force. The Government has paralyzed the country with this climate of violence.

We recognise the right to protest for people to demand their rights. We support the acts of protest that have culminated after years of a rise in prices in transport, electricity, water and medicine.

The previous history of military intervention in Chile is naturally at the front of the minds of these Chilean Australians. For this reason they also write:

As survivors of the Chilean dictatorship of Pinochet and as Chileans and concerned Australian citizens in Australia we watch with horror as President Pinera declares that Chile is at war, these declarations of a so called democratic government. The government has called on the army to impose "order" in the city of Santiago, has declared a state of emergency and curfew to intimidate the people of Chile.

To date, there are thousands of detained, tortured, injured, hundreds raped, disappeared and many deaths.

Their letter finishes as follows:

We reject the use of violence used on innocent people.

We demand an end to the repression of the Chilean people.

We demand an end to the state of emergency.

I have also been contacted by Adrianna Navarro. In a letter dated 14 November she said:

I am writing to express my deep concerns about events taking place in Chile, and to request the Australian Government condemn the war Sebastian Piñera has unleashed on its people.

Last 18 October 2019, Chilean students took to the streets to protest a hike in public transport fares. There have been many rallies and marches throughout the last 30 years against rising costs, and against neo-liberal policies which have widened the gap between rich and poor (0.01% of the population controls 12% of all wealth in Chile) and worsened the living conditions of the majority of Chileans. Successive governments have done little to meet people's demands and basic needs.

This time, in response, Piñera has deployed more than 11,000 soldiers and police along Chile; over 20 people (most of them young) have been brutally killed and more than 200 people have been irreversibly blinded.

The letter finishes as follows:

People are demanding Piñera's resignation and a new Constitution, to remove the legacy of the most criminal and fascist regime in Chile: Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. Chile has the largest number of Australian companies in Latin America and is an important trading partner for Australia. Chile has blatantly breached its international obligations to preserve human rights, and Australia cannot ignore those facts.

Paul, my family and I have found refuge in this country and, as citizens, we now ask that you urgently speak out in Parliament in support of the people of Chile, and demand that the Australian Government intervenes and asks for the immediate removal of the armed forces from the streets of Chile, to stop this senseless slaughter and the possible imposition of a state of siege in Chile. Chileans want peace. Please listen to this heartfelt request.

All my constituents tell me that there are still demonstrations not just in Santiago, but also most recently in Valparaíso, Concepción, Antofagasta and Punta Arenas. I also note that they are particularly interested in something that may perhaps be happening, listening to the media reports: a re-writing of the current Chilean constitution, which was written during the Pinochet era and has a number of difficulties inevitably arising from that. I am delighted to have been able to fulfil the request of my constituents.

WALK THE WALLS STREET ART FESTIVAL

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (15:41:07): Last weekend I was delighted to attend the Walk the Walls Street Art Festival in Cronulla, one of the largest street art projects in New South Wales. It built on the success of the Walk the Walls project in Caringbah last year, which transformed that CBD and reduced crime in that local area. The Walk the Walls festival in Cronulla involved around 35 street artists livening up more than 40 walls in streets and laneways in Cronulla, particularly in Surf Lane and Purley Place. The festival was a joint project of the New South Wales Government, which provided the majority of funding for the project, and Sutherland Shire Council.

I congratulate all the artists who were involved. I also congratulate the curator, Colin Phibs, who is a renowned Australian graffiti/street artist, prolific in Sydney and Melbourne inner-city laneways and has worked extensively in the United States, Europe and Asia. A number of local artists were involved, including Mulga—otherwise known as Joel Moore. Based in the shire, he is a freelance illustrator and poet who paints murals, designs T-shirts and runs the Mulga brand. I have seen some of his work in other locations around the shire and it is terrific. He uses intricate line work and bright colours, and brings to life a world where he says tropical bearded men run rampant, lions smoke tobacco pipes, tigers wear diamond sunglasses and gorillas rule the world like some kind of funky *Planet of the Apes*.

We were also blessed to have a number of Indigenous artists grace our suburb with their street art, including Saltwater Dreamtime, who had a wonderful piece of art near Caringbah station last year. Zachary Bennett-Brook—Saltwater Dreamtime is his trading name—is a contemporary Indigenous artist born and raised in Wollongong. He is of Torres Strait Islander heritage, and water has always been a vital part of his life. He provides unique artworks that offer an eye-catching perspective of contemporary Indigenous culture blended with surf culture.

This is a continuation of the efforts by Sutherland Shire Council and our local community to reduce graffiti vandalism, which costs New South Wales over \$300 million a year. This is a terrific way to get rid of the graffiti and vandalism from back lanes in Cronulla and have murals in place that are likely to deter further graffiti and vandalism. There was a variety of other activities during Walk the Walls festival, including a pop-up library where visitors were able to explore virtual reality through headsets. Library members were given the chance to experience digital titles on offer including new and bestselling ebooks, audiobooks and digital magazines.

During the Walk the Walls festival a special tribute was paid to seniors through the seniors mural at the Cronulla Plaza Stage Wall, *A Walk Through Time*, which referenced Cronulla's rich history. The design was created over four months by 12 local seniors and notable street artist Corey. The workshops included members from the Continuum Art Society, the Southern Cross Art Group and Sutherland Shire Council's Seniors Reference Group. I thank all partners in the project, particularly Sutherland Shire Council Mayor Carmelo Pesce, who is an enthusiastic supporter and promoter of this project. I thank local businesses and community organisations including the Cronulla Chamber of Commerce, which cheered this project on and, most importantly, the young people who took part in making this three-day event a huge success. I thank all of the wonderful artists and the people of Cronulla for supporting this great project.

Business interrupted.

Senate

SENATE VACANCY

At 15:45 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to choose a senator in the place of Arthur Sinodinos.

At 16:00 the House reassembled.

The SPEAKER: I report that the House has met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber this day for the purpose of electing a person to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator the Hon. Arthur Sinodinos, AO, and that Major General Andrew James "Jim" Molan, AO, DSC, retired, has been duly elected. I table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sittings of the Houses of Parliament of New South Wales to choose a person to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator the Hon. Arthur Sinodinos, AO. I order that the minutes be printed.

Petitions

DOONSIDE RAILWAY STATION

The SPEAKER: Before we commence, for the benefit of those in the public gallery I will briefly explain the process and rationale behind this unique debate. It is unique because it enables the public to bring their concerns directly to the attention of the House. The intent of this procedure is that the petition debate will start with a speech from a member who, in most cases, will be the member who lodged the petition, followed by up to four other members, then a Minister in response and, to conclude the debate, the first speaker will speak in reply. After all members have spoken the House will vote on the question that the House take note of the petition. In most cases this question will be determined on the voices and be passed. However, if it is challenged by a member it may proceed to a division, where the bells are rung and members vote on the motion to take note of the petition by sitting on the appropriate side of the House.

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

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:02:26): I speak on the Doonside railway station easy access upgrade petition, more commonly known as "Give Doonie a lift". Why is the 136-year-old Doonside station upgrade a worthy priority? The Doonside station upgrade was designed in 2011 and construction was meant to be undertaken in 2012. Under the revolving door of Premiers, including O'Farrell, Baird and Berejiklian, this Government has not only cancelled the funding, but also relegated Doonside onto the never-never list. The transport department ranked Doonside fourteenth in the State in need for an easy access upgrade. The Auditor-General also ranked Doonside highly, yet the Liberal-Nationals Government has put politics ahead of people and rejected Doonside station time after time, year after year.

Doonside station is used by the people of Doonside, Woodcroft, Bungarribee and Huntington Heights under the postcode of 2767. These areas cannot reconcile how a Liberal-Nationals Government can boast of budget surpluses and sell off \$80 billion worth of public assets when Doonside station cannot get an upgrade. We have a population of 27,000 residents and the station has had no upgrade, yet stations at Waitara with 6,000 residents, Warrawee with 3,000 residents, and Normanhurst with 5,300 residents have all had their station upgrades completed ahead of Doonside.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Your member is speaking.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: The Labor Party cannot understand why Edgecliff will get its station upgraded ahead of Doonside, where there are 1,600 people with a disability compared to Edgecliff, which has 92. There are 4,000 residents over the age of 60 in Doonside compared to Edgecliff, which has 591. Doonside has 3,000 families with children under 15 compared to Edgecliff, which has 113. The Sydney Trains weekly data shows that 5,000 more people use Doonside station than Warrawee or Normanhurst stations, but these leafy northern suburbs have benefited from the \$1.3 billion Transport Access Program. Meanwhile we cannot benefit due to a so-called needs basis. Doonside station is the closest station to a major industrial park, Featherdale Wildlife Park, Blacktown International Sports Park, Nurragingy Reserve, the new Sydney Zoo and the motorsport precinct, including the new speedway with its promised bus service.

The human factor is even more important. This railway line splits the community in two. On the north side is the Doonside Senior Citizen Centre, the Doonside Community Centre, the shopping centre, medical and dental facilities, and postal services, while the south side has the public school. There is a steep ramp to gain access to the north side of the station. For people who are recovering from medical treatments, people with disabilities, parents with prams or the elderly, the ramp poses a massive impasse, not to mention the steep staircase to gain access to the station platform. In May Benjamin Punzalan spent more than a week at Westmead Hospital after he fell off his mobility scooter while travelling down the ramp at the station and collided with a metal barrier. Benjamin wanted a new mobility scooter to replace his damaged one so that he could escort his granddaughter to the school.

Transport for NSW was investigating the matter, but the Minister can tell the department not to worry any longer. Mr Punzalan died of health complications that took hold after his accident. There are countless stories of people who have been affected. Lesley Walzak and her wheelchair-bound daughter, Lisa, are forced to drive to Blacktown to catch a train. Annette Murphy and Kim Trevithick are both here today. They cannot use Doonside station. Federal member for Chifley Ed Husic has presented 80 letters to the Human Rights Commission to investigate the New South Wales Government's obligation to deliver lifts at Doonside.

I thank everyone who has come along today. I thank the many organisations and people who helped to collect 10,000 signatures, including Blacktown council, the Blacktown City Access Advisory Committee, Carol Israel, Lucas Cayan, Warren Hardy, Indu Hari Krishna and Maanav Sridhar. Most of all I thank Blacktown City Senior Citizen of the Year and president of the Doonside Seniors, Martha Lynch. Her members have found it difficult to use the Doonside ramp and have therefore become less active and suffer from social isolation, which may probably contribute to their earlier demise. On behalf of the residents of 2767, we call on the Government to install the lifts as a priority.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to residents from Doonside, Woodcroft, and Bungarabee, including councillors Carol Israel and Moninder Singh from Blacktown City Council and president of the Doonside Senior Citizens, Martha Lynch, guests of the member for Blacktown. I also extend a warm welcome to Senator Jim Molan, AO, DSC, who was sworn in at our joint sitting.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:08:21): The New South Wales Government is committed to making public transport more accessible for customers. The Transport Access Program is an initiative to provide a better experience for public transport customers by delivering accessible, modern, secure and integrated transport infrastructure where it is needed most. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government recognises the importance of improving accessible facilities and services across the network for those with disability or limited mobility. Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2018-2022 is an integral part of the new Future Transport Strategy, which will provide a framework for the State's transport needs to 2056.

The Transport Access Program is a key initiative of this plan, which demonstrates our commitment to deliver programs to improve accessibility across the transport network. Since the New South Wales Government's Transport Access Program began in 2011 more than 470 projects have been completed or initiated, including accessibility upgrades such as lifts and ramps. Almost 90 per cent of transport customer journeys begin from locations now accessible to people with a disability, those with limited mobility and parents with prams. Improved accessibility at Doonside station is being considered under an eight-step assessment process using evidence-based criteria.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member will be heard in silence. The Opposition should show respect to other members in the Chamber. A number of members have been called to order already. I will not hesitate to have members removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: The first step of this process is to remove from consideration those stations that are already wheelchair accessible, where upgrade work is already underway or where upgrades are being funded

and delivered through another program. The next step is to score each station against the evaluation criteria, including Opal data, an area's demographics and expected future growth. The station's proximity to schools and hospitals is also considered as those factors would generate a higher demand for accessible transport. The commercial potential of each station is then evaluated. This is followed by on the ground investigations to identify any constraints that could affect costs, such as the relocation of underground services. Cost estimates are then developed based on upgrade plans that comply with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport. This step can alter the benefit-cost ratio and therefore the location's priority, which helps maximise the benefits delivered through the Transport Access Program. This ensures the best value for money in each project undertaken.

Then the prioritisation across transport networks and modes is considered. This involves identifying the opportunity to maximise value for money by prioritising stations that are adjacent to other transport modes already earmarked for upgrades, such as bus interchanges or ferry wharves. Prioritised stations are then considered against other transport programs such as safety upgrades to identify opportunities to incorporate accessibility improvements into these projects. Where this does not apply, steps are taken to ensure those projects do not create new accessibility issues. The penultimate step is gap analysis. The findings of a comprehensive disability standards audit are used to guide the priorities for future Transport Access Program funding allocations. The final step is operational interventions, which considers whether future technological or operational developments may change customer behaviour and how they access the station.

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

Ms ELENi PETINOS: For instance, on-demand services that pick up and drop off a customer directly at their destination may change the disability profile of a station. The early planning stages of the eight-step process seek to anticipate all factors that may have a bearing on an upgrade. Ongoing oversight and regular reviews are undertaken to ensure that any emerging impact from other development projects or changes to funding availability are properly considered within the delivery time line.

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

Ms ELENi PETINOS: The Government has committed more than \$2 billion to the Transport Access Program since we came to office in 2011. Since coming to government, we have upgraded 58 stations to make them wheelchair accessible. Labor was only doing two access upgrades a year. It would have taken 90 years to upgrade all stations on the network. Under Labor, stations such as St James and Museum were not even accessible.

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

Ms ELENi PETINOS: Almost 90 per cent of transport customer journeys begin from locations now accessible to people with a disability, those with limited mobility and parents with prams. Western Sydney customers are already benefiting from major upgrades delivered at Harris Park, Toongabbie, Wentworthville, Pendle Hill and Penrith stations.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Coogee to order for the third time.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: A new lift was delivered at Blacktown station in 2018 and accessibility upgrades at Kingswood and North Strathfield will be completed next month. The member for Blacktown and the member for Mount Druitt will be pleased to know that a major upgrade is currently underway at Rooty Hill station, which is the station immediately after Doonside on the Western line. The upgrade at Rooty Hill includes four new lifts, a family-accessible toilet on the platforms, a new pedestrian footbridge and stairs and larger platform canopies for better shelter from the weather.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Miranda has 15 seconds remaining. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: You can yell all you want. You hide behind your interjections.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Miranda will not respond to interjections. I am sure the people in the public gallery would like to hear the debate. Members will show some respect.

I direct the member for Coogee to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the conclusion of debate on the petition.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Coogee left the Chamber at 16:17 until the conclusion of the debate on a petition signed by 10,000 or more persons.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Prospect to order for the second time. I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time. The member for Miranda has 15 seconds left. She will be heard in silence.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: Given the disrespect shown by those opposite during this debate, I will restate that under Labor's program it would have taken 90 years to deliver for the people of New South Wales. The grandstanding of those opposite is shameful. The people in the public gallery deserve better than the discourtesy that each and every Labor member has shown today.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:15:44): I thank the good people of Doonside for coming here today for the debate on this petition. I welcome them to the Parliament of New South Wales. I thank also all those who participated in the petition. Collecting 10,000 signatures is not easy; it takes a lot of work. I was just talking to Mrs Martha Lynch about the effort that she put in. She told me that she would like this upgrade delivered before her ninety-second birthday next year. I hope that the Government is listening. Many people believe in ensuring there is an accessibility upgrade at Doonside.

As the Leader of the Opposition and leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales, I stand with the Doonside community. Today I confirm that in 2023 if we are fortunate enough to be elected—and at this stage we are well on course to be elected—we will guarantee an upgrade to Doonside station. This is a very important upgrade. The people of Doonside have been battling for it for so long. I thank the member for Blacktown, who has brought this petition to the House. There are more than 11,000 signatures on this petition; that is a huge effort for a community. I refute some of the comments made by the Parliamentary Secretary. I guarantee that the member for Miranda has never been to Doonside or Blacktown. In fact, I imagine that she has no idea where western Sydney is. Today the Parliamentary Secretary has given a technical and sterile explanation of the process for an access upgrade.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Oatley will have an opportunity to speak in the debate.

Ms JODI McKAY: According to the most recent statement by the Auditor-General, all one needs to do to get an upgrade is knock on the Minister's door and ask for it. Who can knock on the Minister's door the most? The Liberal Party members. If you are in a Liberal electorate, your area's population size, needs and community advocacy do not matter. If you are a Liberal MP and you knock on the Minister's door you will get an upgrade, even if you do not need it. That is what this Government does. The Government favours areas of Sydney that do not deserve or need an upgrade. Do not take my word for it; take the Auditor-General's word for it. The Parliamentary Secretary has had the hide to say today that the people in the gallery do not need an upgrade. I say to each and every person who has made the trek to Parliament House today that we stand with them. We made a commitment during the by-election when the member for Blacktown was elected, we made a commitment in 2019 and today we make another commitment to stand by the people of Doonside and give them an upgraded station.

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

Ms JODI McKAY: My greatest hope is that the Government will deliver this upgrade. In that case those on this side of the Chamber will praise the Government for an appropriate decision based on the evidence.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Miranda will come to order.

Ms JODI McKAY: At this stage that is not going to happen because, as we heard from the Parliamentary Secretary, she has no idea of the needs of the community or their advocacy. She has no idea of how many people use and need that station. People who have young children and older people need a lift so they do not have to use the stairs. These are the people Labor hears, and we stand with all of them. I thank them for coming here today. Their voices have been heard.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am aware that there are strongly held views on the matter that is being debated today. Parliamentary debate allows those with opposing views to express themselves freely without interference. I therefore ask that those in the gallery to refrain from clapping or distracting the debate in any way, including verbally or visually.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:22:21): I thank everyone from Doonside in the gallery for making the trip to Parliament House today. I welcome each and every one of them. Government members are sorry that they had to wait 16 years under a Labor government for the upgrades they wanted but still did not get them. Since 2011 the New South Wales Government has invested more than \$2 billion in the Transport Access Program, with more than 470 projects either completed or underway across New South Wales. This Government is delivering on its commitment through its Transport Access Program, an initiative to provide a better experience for public

transport customers by delivering modern, accessible, secure, integrated transport infrastructure. The provision of an accessibility upgrade at Doonside will no doubt be considered as part of the program's process.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Prospect will come to order.

Mr MARK COURE: This Government has built more than 58 wheelchair-accessible stations since 2011.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Gosford will come to order.

Mr MARK COURE: I am talking about stations like Oatley, Bankstown, Berala, Blacktown, Concord West, Croydon, Flemington, Glenfield, Homebush, Ingleburn, Leura, Marrickville, Minto, Toongabbie, Sydenham, Sefton, Quakers Hill, Wentworth Falls, Wentworthville and Windsor. I have an announcement. Next Friday North Strathfield is being opened. Those stations are all in Labor electorates. The people opposite had let down the people of Doonside for 16 years but this Government is getting on with the job of getting stations right across the New South Wales network upgraded and rebuilt.

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

Mr MARK COURE: The people in Narwee and Oatley, in my electorate, were waiting for decades under Labor.

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

Mr MARK COURE: Narwee had a Labor member of Parliament at State and Federal levels for decades but this Government got on with the job of rebuilding and upgrading Narwee station. The member for Lakemba should be happy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba will come to order.

Mr MARK COURE: He should say, "Thank you, Mark."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Oatley will resume his seat. I ask the member for Oatley to direct his comments through the Chair. He is not helping the civility in the Chamber. I call the member for Prospect to order for the third time. I remind members that they could be here all afternoon if they do not come to order. Members will listen in silence. The member for Oatley has the call. He will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr MARK COURE: At the end of the day, the people in the gallery are not petitioning the Government, they are petitioning the Opposition for failing to deliver an upgrade for Doonside over 16 years. This Government is getting on with the job of rebuilding and upgrading every one of our stations. It does not matter if they are in Labor, National or Liberal electorates; it does not matter where they are.

Ms Prue Car: Have you ever been to Doonside?

Mr MARK COURE: I have once, twice. As I mentioned before, this Government is investing over \$2 billion in this program, with over 470 projects either completed or underway right across New South Wales. We on this side of the House represent the Government, which is delivering station upgrades, train upgrades and commuter car parks right across New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: The House will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:28:28): I congratulate the member for Blacktown on organising this petition.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposition members will cease interjecting. The member for Lakemba will show respect for his colleague and will not argue with the Chair. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the second time.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I thank the people of western Sydney who are in the gallery today to fight for their community. The Leader of the Opposition has laid out the case. This lift needs to be built; we cannot wait any longer. The decent thing for the Government to do today would be to announce that it will undertake this upgrade now, not in 2023. This Government could have approved the lift and got it done, but it has not done that. Let me make it clear, the taxpayers of western Sydney want this built. The people in the gallery today want their fair share. You would think that the Government, in the ninth year of its life, would have taken the opportunity today to announce this well-needed lift.

The people of western Sydney are not being greedy but after a lifetime of paying taxes they expected they would get their fair share of government services. That does not seem to be the case. They are entitled to feel

that the system is rigged. Doonside station has 24,000 weekly commuters compared to the tiny Hawkesbury River station with just 2,800 commuters, yet Hawkesbury River gets a lift. The tiny Clarendon station, in a Liberal electorate, has just 900 weekly commuters—that is 128 passengers a day and the lift would be used around 10 times a day—yet Clarendon station gets a lift. Do not listen to the Government's weak response to the Transport Access Program, listen to the Auditor-General, who said:

Clarendon Station had consistently scored the lowest of all Sydney Trains interchanges on the assessment criteria and Transport for NSW did not include it [for consideration for funding]

This is not the Transport Access Program, it is the Lifts for Liberals program or the Elevators for Elections program. Hawkesbury River train station is in the electorate of Matt Kean. Perhaps there is a clue as to why these stations are getting prioritised in an article from 18 June last year. The title of the article is "Sorry Matt, you look like an idiot". The article states that Mr Kean was caught bragging to residents that Treasurer Perrottet ordered a station to jump the queue because he thought it was in his electorate. Mr Kean said, "I had to break the news to him, it's actually in mine." No wonder the Treasurer had to flee his seat. He was pork-barrelling the wrong electorate. That is the problem with the Liberal Party today. At least we know how Stephen Bali can get money for Doonside station—he just has to tell the Treasurer that it is in his electorate. The Treasurer is 24 years old and he has already had three seats and he has not lived in any of them!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for North Shore will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: He would not know what suburbs were located in his electorate. It has been a shocking week for western Sydney transport. In the last three months the Government has privatised Ryde and Parramatta buses. It has proposed the closure of Villawood, Carramar and Leightonfield train stations. There is severe overcrowding on the Parramatta line—150 per cent during the peak hour. The Parramatta light rail stage 2 was promised, then cancelled. The Sydney Metro West being delivered in the 2020s was promised, then cancelled.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Terrigal will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: A new metro for the aerotropolis from St Marys, to be opened before the airport, was promised and then cancelled. That is the hypocrisy of the modern Liberal Party.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Londonderry will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It does one thing in its own electorates and something completely different in others. I will read an anonymous quote from 2006 that I think really—

Mr Paul Toole: Anonymous? Oh, here we go.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I will reveal who the author is. The quote states:

It is easy to miss a train when there are no lifts and one is disabled or elderly. Many people are simply not capable of walking up or walking down a flight of stairs to change platforms.

Who said that in 2006? It was the now Premier of New South Wales. What an absolute hypocrite. At the end of nine years of a Liberal government, what is its legacy for western Sydney? Nothing but toll roads, sweltering classrooms and overcrowded trains. That is its legacy for western Sydney. There is a better way but it does not involve the Liberal Party neglecting the heart of Sydney, western Sydney. I say to the people in the gallery we will keep fighting for the infrastructure you deserve, those opposite will keep ignoring you. You have got to vote them out.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member for Bankstown she is already on two calls. I am sure the member for Blacktown in reply will want to be heard in silence. The member for Bathurst and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads has the call. He will be heard in silence.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:34:20): I begin my contribution by saying that I am representing the Minister for Transport and Roads. The Minister has been ill and has not been in the Parliament for the entirety of the day. As the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, I take the opportunity to represent him.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: That's taken a minute.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I am sorry that the people in the gallery have had to listen to the behaviour of those opposite because as a community they have done the right thing. They have put in the time and effort, have gone out and organised a petition with over 10,000 signatures and have come here today to present it to the Parliament.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I thank everybody who has been a part of that, everyone who has signed the petition and everyone who is here today for this very important debate.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I want to point out a couple of things. This Government is committed to delivering better public transport that is accessible to all customers. We have been developing better public transport for the frail, for the aged, for people with disabilities and older people across this State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will be removed from the Chamber if they do not come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: This Government has delivered on the commitment to continue with our Transport Access Program. We are delivering a modern, secure and integrated transport system, which had not been delivered when those opposite were last in government.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: This is something that they failed to do. They failed to look after people who have limited mobility. They failed to look after people in our communities with disability. Our vision also includes a Disability Inclusion Action Plan and we are looking at planning for the future of transport accessibility across the State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Wollongong will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: There has been something like \$2 billion delivered through this program since 2011.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Maitland will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: That equates to an upgrade to 58 stations. When I listen to those opposite, they criticise what this Government has done. But I will tell you what they were doing when they were last in government.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Bankstown will come to order.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: When they were last in government they were delivering two upgrades a year. We have done 58 upgrades already. If those opposite were still in government they would have only delivered a total of 16 upgrades.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The Leader of the Opposition came into the Chamber, made her speech, did her stunt and then left.

Ms Jodi McKay: Here I am.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I apologise. The Leader of the Opposition is not going to be in Government in 2023. She should not even be the leader because those opposite have failed the people of this State. This Government has already made sure that 90 per cent of our stations now have accessibility. We are delivering for western Sydney and for the people of this State and we will continue to provide better transport access programs.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Blue Mountains will come to order. The member for Oatley will resume his seat.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:37:54): In reply: I thank the members for the electorates of Strathfield, Miranda, Oatley, Kogarah and Bathurst for their contributions to this debate. The Government has talked about 470 projects, \$2 billion and an upgrade to 58 stations. I do not know how the people of Doonside could feel good about that when our project was earmarked to be built in 2012 and those opposite cancelled it. The Government has slashed Doonside from nine budgets in a row. Labor has gone through the numbers. Those opposite just do not listen. They do not listen to the number of people—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will come to order.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Something like 25,000 people use our station each week, yet the Government upgrades a station that only about 900 people use per week. What the Government has done is a complete disgrace. It has cancelled, cancelled, cancelled. It talks about access for all—except those who live in the Doonside area. It is unfortunate the Minister cannot be here today. He is probably pumping up the tyres on the broken-down trams.

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

Mr STEPHEN BALI: I sat in this Chamber when Minister Constance spoke passionately about the need for the duplication of the Pacific Highway to reduce crashes. The Minister stated, "I will never give up the

fight for this. It's a major factor in my decision to remain in State Parliament." The Minister should know that my personal passion is Doonside station. When I first became a candidate at the by-election I asked Luke Foley at the time, "Is Doonside going to be upgraded? If not, I won't run." It was great to hear the current Leader of the Opposition, Jodi McKay, reaffirm that promise today. My mother asked me on her deathbed to make sure that I keep fighting for Doonside station, and I will fight to the end. It is time to deliver. Doonside deserves a lift.

Petition noted.

Private Members' Statements

CANCER RESEARCH

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:41:26): I speak about the power of cancer research and share a special contribution towards this cause from my electorate of Davidson. The results of applying science to the problem of cancer, just in our own lifetime, have been spectacular. Cancer has existed for hundreds of millions of years. It started when organisms went from single cells to multiple cells. Even dinosaurs got cancer. Ancient civilisations knew about cancer but made little progress in treating it, mainly because they lacked the powerful results of research that we benefit from today.

The power of research is extraordinary. Today we use high-tech medical imaging to find cancers and guide surgery. Cancer surgery benefits from advances in technique and technology, including tiny endoscopes and robot surgery. Research has given us anaesthesia, sterile instruments, blood transfusions and medicines to counter infection, blood loss and pain. Bone cancer no longer automatically results in amputation due to advances in limb salvage surgery. The niece of one of my electorate office staff had that surgery at the age of 18, saving her leg. While she often now sets off airport scanners with the internal metal that saved her leg, that is an inconvenience she is more than happy to live with.

The power of research is the power of hope, the hope that we can find more answers about the causes, prevention and successful treatment of all cancers. Australia is the world's hotspot for the skin cancer melanoma. But recent advances in various types of immunotherapy are delivering amazingly positive results. Scientists are also just starting to explore the use of adaptive therapy on patients with advanced cancer. It is a counterintuitive idea that turns the idea of blasting cancer with massive doses of chemo on its head. The method lets cancer remain in the body as long as it does not spread further. Despite all this wonderful news from the world of research, there is still a great need for funds and attention. Of the top 20 causes of death in Australia for 2018, eight were still cancer related. We should celebrate the impact of science and be grateful for the legacy of those scientists who are toiling away to find answers; however, we need dollars to fuel the power of research.

I commend the fundraising efforts of those like Giovanna Arrate of Lindfield, who recently hosted a community event in her home to raise funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation. On the morning of Sunday 29 September, at what was a warm and well catered for occasion, many members of my local community joined with members of the Australian Peruvian community, including Peru's Consul General. Some of the local political leaders who attended with me included Federal Minister and Bradfield MP Paul Fletcher, Senator Hollie Hughes and Ku-ring-gai Councillor Christine Kay. I thank the generous individuals who donated raffle prizes and otherwise attended the event to support such a worthwhile cause. The power of cancer research should be supported by all. I have no doubt that the House will continue to support the efforts of local community members who also make the effort, like those in my electorate, to address what is a real and continuing need in our society.

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:46:27): I say to the member for Davidson that was a fantastic speech and I wholeheartedly support the sentiment that he expressed, particularly as I endured my own awful battle with breast cancer. The City of Canterbury Bankstown has produced a draft Local Strategic Planning Statement for the city. It is currently on exhibition and I urge locals to lodge a submission—it does not have to be long. Submissions can be lodged raising any concerns relating to the draft Local Strategic Planning Statement. I acknowledge the council for the detailed work it has undertaken in relation to this document.

Since the election of the 2017 councillors, I have had many conversations with them and also the administration. Many letters have been sent about my concerns regarding overdevelopment, the types of land uses and particular projects. I appreciate the efforts made by the elected councillors and the staff. I will provide a submission in my capacity as the State member for Canterbury. The views I will express are my own, representing my community. One of the elements of the Connective City 2036 that I support is the Campsie medical precinct. I express my strong support for council's plan to establish Campsie as a world-class medical precinct. I have spoken in this place on numerous occasions about the importance of coordinating and planning a world-class medical health precinct in the area.

The area around Campsie is diverse, it is growing and it is also aging. This means there is an increasing demand for specialist health services that cater to our multicultural community. Providing these services locally is good for residents who need health services. The development of this precinct will also help create more high-paid jobs in our community. One of my highest priorities in this four-year term is to secure funding for the upgrade of Canterbury Hospital. I have urged the Minister for Health and Medical Research and the Director-General of NSW Health to provide this funding. We have written and campaigned, and we will hold a family picnic day in the new year. We really need the funding for Canterbury Hospital.

In talking about the precinct, I would like Campsie to be a centre of excellence for medicine, science, health, technology and cancer research, and I urge the Government to consider that possibility. In my submission I will refer to heritage and council's targets. I have always had concerns about the targets, particularly the forecasts for population growth and new residential construction contained in the report. I acknowledge that the targets have been set by the State Government in accordance with the Greater Sydney Commission and section 3.9 (3A) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which prevents the council from making a local strategic plan inconsistent with the plans developed by the Greater Sydney Commission. But I strongly urge council to use all means at its disposal—be they legal, political or through community support—to push back the targets that have been set by the State Government.

The council was correct to adopt a lower target but it is still too high as we do not have the necessary infrastructure, particularly in view of the development that has occurred over the past five years. I note also that new housing targets set by the Greater Sydney Commission concentrate new housing construction in communities that cannot cope with the congestion. I have complained also that funding has gone to one school when it should have been distributed to a number of schools. I note the target for new homes to be built by 2021 in the following local government areas: Mosman, 150; Hunters Hill, 300; Woollahra, 300; and Canterbury Bankstown, 13,250. Therefore, I urge the Government to rethink those targets and urge the council to run a political campaign against the targets.

BUSHFIRES AND PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:51:42): I speak in the House today on behalf of constituents in my electorate of Port Macquarie to sincerely extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the phenomenal emergency services personnel who have been tirelessly battling some of the worst bushfires our community has ever faced. The bushfire season has peaked significantly earlier this year due to the lack of rainfall, coupled with very dry conditions, leading to the devastation of national parks, agricultural land, bushland, homes and community infrastructure. Sadly, last weekend at Johns River in my electorate the life of well-known local Julie Fletcher was tragically cut short as a result of one of the fires, the Bills Crossing-Crowdy Bay National Park bushfire. Julie will be remembered as a quality person who would always be the first to put up her hand to help others.

One life lost is one too many, and regretfully we learnt this morning of the tragic death of another person on the mid North Coast, Mr Barry Parsons. My heart goes out to the family and friends of all four people who have lost their lives to this bushfire disaster. No words can take away the pain and loss they are suffering at this time, which extends across their local communities, but my thoughts are with them during this difficult time. Sadly, we must face the reality that the loss of human life may increase in the days and weeks ahead but I know that people in communities like mine in Johns River will come together in these extraordinary circumstances to support and comfort each other.

It has been a horrendous three months since our local Rural Fire Service volunteers were first called to action, with fires originating north of the Oxley Highway in Lindfield Park. Firefighters attended the scene to battle a peat moss fire burning in dry swamp and bushland. It was the Lindfield Park Road fires that first saw the *Marie Bashir* 737 Air Tanker descend into Port Macquarie on her maiden voyage to tackle the flames. The catastrophic events that unfolded last week saw fires burning out of control on a number of fronts in my electorate, with flames engulfing bushland at Thrumster and John Oxley Drive in Port Macquarie. Witnesses say the sky turned a dark red from 1.30 in the afternoon, with a mass of ash covering the town's footpaths, roads and buildings.

North of Port Macquarie at Gum Scrub another disaster began unfolding when out-of-control fires jumped containment lines, burning north of the Wilson River towards Cooperabung and the Telegraph Point area. In the south of my electorate at Bills Crossing in Crowdy Bay National Park another fire began to breach containment lines, which chillingly threatened homes at Harrington before a wind change caused them to move in a northerly direction towards the rural townships of Johns River and Hannam Vale and in an easterly direction, threatening the coastal towns of Dunbogan, Laurieton, West Haven, Lakewood and Kew. Thankfully, in these times of danger and despair we have our extraordinary Rural Fire Service personnel as the first responders, selflessly risking their own lives to save our towns, our homes and our loved ones.

I applaud the volunteer RFS units of Harrington, Coopernook, Lansdowne, Moorland, Johns River, Camden Haven, Laurieton, Bonny Hills, Lake Cathie, Lake Innes, King Creek, Sancroix-Thrumster, Port Macquarie and North Shore for their exceptional efforts over the past few months alone and for what I know they will continue to do in the months ahead. In my home town of Lake Cathie, I personally experienced what it was like to prepare for a bushfire emergency. The Crestwood Drive fire broke containment lines on the Tuesday, with the RFS hastily informing residents via text message that an impending danger was unfolding. Homes were threatened at Lake Innes and Lake Cathie, which went to emergency warning, with residents at Bonny Hills placed on a watch and act alert.

During this terrifying event that threatened the town 3,530 hectares were destroyed, with potentially hundreds of koalas killed and injured. Thankfully, we have the amazing volunteers and staff at the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital to take in and treat any injured koalas. I was given an update yesterday that 18 are currently being nursed to recovery, as well as one joey. I extend enormous gratitude to the Lake Cathie Rural Fire Service volunteers and other emergency services personnel, including Fire and Rescue NSW. Don and I thank you most sincerely for protecting our home, those in our street and those across our village on more than one occasion, which resulted in no loss of property. We will never forget your acts of bravery and heroism that safeguarded us on 9 November 2019.

The beautiful thing about living in a regional community is that when the chips are down we band together to help one another. I take this opportunity to thank the many outstanding community organisations, local businesses and individuals—far too many to name here today—who without hesitation stepped up to support our RFS volunteers and those impacted by the fires. I have some of the bravest, most selfless, honourable firefighters serving in my community. They are respected and admired by all for their generosity and incredible efforts. On behalf of our community, I thank them again for their commitment, knowing that they not only did everything possible to protect us in the past days and weeks but also will continue to do so in the months ahead.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:56:46): If we want to give our children the best chance to grow, thrive, participate fully in our society, have great jobs and interesting hobbies, and make the best lives for themselves, then we have to start to help them as early as possible. Early childhood educators play a key role in our society by laying the strong foundations for the next generation of innovative thinkers, confident decision-makers, and creative collaborators—a generation of Australians who are fully alive to its potential. A few weeks ago I was privileged to be present at the 2019 Australian Childcare Alliance New South Wales Excellence in Early Childhood Education Awards. The awards highlighted the pivotal role of the early childhood learning sector in our society, and the enthusiasm, passion and commitment of early childhood educators.

Amongst the 35 services that were recognised with an award there were three outstanding services attended by children from families in my electorate, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognise their standard of excellence here today. The Adamstown Community Early Learning and Preschool was awarded the Team Excellence Award for a Regional Small Service. The Fletcher Early Learning and Montessori Centre was awarded the Service Excellence Award for a Large Private Regional Service. The Developing Dreams Early Learning Centre in Chain Valley Bay was awarded the Service Excellence Award for a Small Private Regional Service. Recognition of the excellence of these centres serving families in my local community is extremely welcome and indicates that hundreds of other centres also offer exceptional services in other local communities across our State.

I know from meeting with hundreds of early childhood educators that it is a great mistake for anyone to think that early childhood services are here to simply look after children until they are old enough to go to primary school, where the real learning takes place. Future citizens, future leaders and future members of our local communities are being prepared every day in the early childhood sector. The skills that we all need to be able to care for others and live responsibly begin to be taught in these services and in family homes from the earliest ages. I know from meeting with educators who study the outcomes of early childhood learning that when children are able to be part of a quality, early childhood learning service, they learn critical social and emotional skills that become the foundation for everything else they will learn in the future.

The brains of the children in our early learning services are like little sponges, soaking in whatever is presented to them. Every new word, emotion and experience is significant and shapes the person they are becoming. To put it simply, the earlier in life we start to make friends, the better we will be at keeping friends in the future; and the earlier we start to feel confident about ourselves and our abilities to try new things, the more confident we will feel about living life to the full in the future. So when our early learning educators, in partnership with parents and grandparents and carers at home, inspire even the youngest of children to embark on a lifelong passion for learning, that is not just good news for those children and their families; it is good news for us all.

To all the Early Childhood Excellence Awards nominees and award winners who were recognised this year, I express the thanks and congratulations of the members on this side of the House. I do that proudly because we are committed unequivocally to championing the early childhood sector; we are committed to recognising the important work of early childhood educators, by advocating for appropriate levels of training, ongoing professional development and remuneration; and, most of all, because we know that early childhood learning is not some kind of child-minding service but, rather, is the foundational platform for lifelong learning, which is so critical to helping all Australians achieve their full potential. The Early Childhood Excellence Awards shine a welcome spotlight on the highly skilled contribution of early childhood educators to our society, and I recognise and celebrate that contribution today.

CONCORD HOSPITAL HAEMATOLOGY CLINICAL RESEARCH UNIT

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (17:01:17): This evening I speak about a wonderful event that was held in the inner west last month. On Friday 25 October there was a sea of red at Le Montage in Lilyfield as our community gathered for the biennial Bloody Great Night Out fundraiser. This event supports the life-saving work of the Haematology Clinical Research Unit at Concord Cancer Centre, located within Concord Hospital. The fundraising target for the night was \$160,000, which will go towards funding two additional clinical research nurses for 12 months. I am delighted to report to the House that the event raised more than \$200,000. It is a fantastic result that was only made possible through the hard work and dedication of the Bloody Great Committee as well as more than 750 attendees and local businesses that donated to and supported this very worthwhile event.

The funding supports patients with life-threatening blood cancers such as lymphoma, leukaemia and myeloma, allowing them to participate in clinical trials. The funding increases the number of blood cancer patients who are able to participate in these critical clinical trials at Concord Hospital, often long before these innovative treatments and life-saving medicines are publically available. These clinical trials can increase the chances of survival and provide a better quality of life for patients. Sometimes participating in these treatments is their only option as they hope for a cure. I am very proud that the Haematology Clinical Research Unit at Concord Hospital is an internationally renowned research leader within this space. It is the largest clinical research unit for blood cancer in New South Wales and it is right in the heart of my electorate.

Since 2005, more than 600 patients have participated in clinical trials at the Concord Cancer Centre. That is a significant number and there are many more patients who need help. Since 2013, over \$400,000 has been raised for the Haematology Clinical Research Unit. There is still a long way to go in search of a cure for blood cancers such as lymphoma, leukaemia and myeloma as well as for blood disorders, but with this funding the staff will be able to assist more patients to access medicines worth millions of dollars. It must be noted that the Haematology Clinical Research Unit would not be what it is today without the formidable staff who drive the research and give hope to patients every single day. Their work is life changing, important and invaluable for those needing treatment.

The team includes Professor Judith Trotman, Director of the Clinical Research Unit—what a lady—Associate Professor Ilona Cunningham, head of Haematology; and Dr Vivien Chen, whom many in this House will know, who heads the Platelet, Thrombosis and Cancer Research Laboratory at the ANZAC Research Institute within the Concord Hospital campus. A number of doctors and nurses within the unit who support patients in care also do a marvellous job. The unit takes a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment and diagnosis of the patients in their care. This would not be made possible without the support of the leadership team at the Sydney Local Health District and the hospital executive.

That team includes Dr Genevieve Wallace, Acting General Manager of Concord Hospital, and Dr Tim Sinclair, who was the former General Manager at Concord Hospital and is now the Executive Director of Operations at the Sydney Local Health District. I also acknowledge Dr Teresa Anderson, who is the Chief Executive of the Sydney Local Health District, for her work and leadership in supporting the hospital and its wonderful staff, allowing them to get on with the job of saving lives and finding a cure for blood cancers. Once again, I congratulate all those involved in facilitating and organising the Bloody Great Night Out fundraiser. It was a magnificent event, raising funds for a worthy cause, and it was a great tribute to the wonderful work of Concord Hospital.

MOUNTAIN LOGIE AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:05:46): The proud communities of Ulong and Lowanna in my electorate are built on strength, determination, endurance, resilience and stepping up to have a go. The villages are filled with many talented men and women and boys and girls of all ages. Those skills and talents were showcased and celebrated in sensational style at the inaugural Mountain Logie Awards 2019—better known as "the Mogies". The concept behind the awards is to provide an avenue through the creation of short films to

showcase the abilities of our local students and teachers from Ulong and Lowanna. The Mogies are the brainchild of Carol Cleary, who said:

Council had upgraded the audio visual equipment at the Ulong hall, of which I am president, and I thought it would be a great idea to showcase our fantastic regional facility, as well as bring to the focus of the greater region of Coffs Harbour just how fantastic our students are up here. I wanted them to sit back and take note. I also wanted the kids to experience a formal function, something a little fancy, no alcohol and lots of fun. So the fairytale happened and Cinderella went to the ball.

Carol went on to say that the awards have also helped to bring the communities and their people even closer together, further uniting the two villages. In her original pitch to the teachers, Carol envisaged that during the creation of the short films the students would be exposed to an integrated learning platform, combining a wealth of skills from all academic areas in a playful yet challenging environment.

The final presentation night, which I attended on Saturday 2 November at the Eastern Dorrigo Community Hall and Showground at Ulong, provided a chance for the students to be exposed to a formal event and a red-carpet affair. This fantastic venue has a large six-metre screen for viewing the short films, a quality sound system, and plenty of seating and tables for all. Ulong and Lowanna schools were each invited to produce two short films from their students. These were designed, written, filmed and totally composed and compiled by the students, with the guidance of their teachers. The teachers and their students were given the opportunity to be involved in a workshop run by Screenwave's Dave Horsley. When completed, the films were submitted for judging by Kate Howat and Dave Horsley.

All four short films were shown at the presentation night, when winners were announced and awarded. The Mountain Gold Mogie went to the winning school, Ulong, for *A Night They Will Never Forget*, with all involved receiving a medal. Ulong also took out the People's Choice Award. Led by Ulong Public School principal, Mrs Surinder Kaler, *A Night They Will Never Forget* was made by students from years 3 to 6. Scriptwriter Gracie Walsh-Stewart, narrator Joseph Walsh-Stewart, director Gracie Walsh-Stewart, actors Abraham Roberts, Jordan Roberts, Leah Roberts, Lillie Harriss and Aurora-Jayne Cochrane, and teacher Mrs Karen Lane all deserve to be congratulated on this wonderful effort. The Best Director award went to Abraham Roberts of Ulong for *The Magic School Bus*, which was made by kindergarten to year 2 students, with scriptwriter Abraham Roberts, director Abraham Roberts, and actors Evie Cleary, Sam Nagle, Thomas Cochrane-Timms, Ally Moloney and Summara Thomas. Teacher Mrs Penne Slaviero, teacher's aide Ms Karina Stephenson and teacher Mrs Jackie Moore also played a part.

Best actor was won by Joseph Walsh-Stewart from Ulong, the narrator in *A Night They Will Never Forget*. The best actress award went to Shayna Stewart in Lowanna Public School's *Facing Fears*, which also received a special judges' commendation and was led by Lowanna Public School principal Mrs Harmonie Dal-Bon. The film tackled bullying in schools and won the highly commended award. It included Scriptwriter Deacan Taggart, director Deacan Taggart, actors Hezekiah Edwards, Thomas Robb, Ryan Sherden, Will Houlihan, Olivia Williams-Hardy, Brodie Soderlund, Jarred Johnston, Tyrone Eather and teacher Mrs Harmonie Dal-Bon. Shayna also appeared in *Take A Shot*, along with scriptwriter TeArani Edwards, director Ebony Penhall, actors Chanelle Chapman, Delilah Weldon-Schneider, Seraiah Edwards, Alice Maddison, Jake Steer-Wade, Cameron Agius, Jasmine Kelly, Clarissa Williams-Hardy and teacher Mrs Harmonie Dal-Bon.

The winning film will run with other finalists in Dave Horsley's Nextwave for young filmmakers, which is quite an achievement. The money donated from grants and local businesses ensured that impressively shiny trophies were awarded on the night. I am delighted that the Mogies have been such a smashing success that plans are already under way for 2020, which may allow schools from other areas to participate. I acknowledge Carol Cleary's merry band of helpers, including the Ulong hall committee comprising Katie and Vince Sibio, Rina Stephenson, Steve Cleary and Riney Goulet. I also thank Kelly Lee from Coffs Harbour City Council. The awards were funded by Australia Post Community Grants, Ulong General Store, Moran AW Sawmill, Adriene White and Dion Miller.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:11:05): I will speak about the New South Wales public hospital system. Before I detail my concerns I acknowledge the incredible work of staff in our hospitals. Recently I spent some time in hospital and I thank the incredible people who cared for me when I was not at my best, including doctors, nurses and cleaners. One thing that was clear to me during my time in the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital and the Nepean Hospital was that our hardworking medical staff, the amazing nurses, administrators and allied health workers, are absolutely run off their feet trying to provide the very best possible care that they can to their patients. The last thing these devoted healthcare workers need are cuts to the health budget and the increased pressure of being told by the Government to do more with less.

One ward I was in had cut boxes of tissues from their budget to try to save a few dollars. I am utterly appalled to learn about the \$250 million cut to our hospital and healthcare system. Due to the wide variety of medical and health procedures that are available at Nepean, which is a tertiary hospital, people must frequently be referred from the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital, as was the case for me. This often results in significant wait times in emergency. For most people who arrive at Nepean Hospital emergency it takes more than 10½ hours before they leave. This is not acceptable. I will talk about a few cases that represent the voices and stories of people in my electorate who come into my office thick and fast. I thank my staff for listening to these traumatic stories.

Nicole approached me after an experience in the Nepean emergency department in June following a cardiothoracic injury. She said, "I was pretty desperate as a result of the pain I was experiencing and the length of time I waited in the ED." She was very positive about the hospital and the care that she received, but when it was explained to her that the access to the specialist she needed for assessment meant she would have to be transferred, she was sent from one hospital after hours of waiting to another, where she remained in severe pain, sitting in a wheelchair in the corridor for eight hours. She was traumatised by this and has sought answers from the hospital, but she said that when staff are so overworked and under-resourced there is often not enough time to actually communicate and explain things to patients who are distressed.

Mrs MW came into my office in tears and explained to me she had had a miscarriage, which had been a traumatic experience. She said she was so shocked that after 4½ hours waiting at Nepean Hospital she had still not been seen. She said, "I am going through an awful time and this just made it worse. I have no mother, sister or female family members to help me through this. I just wanted you to hear about my ordeal." This is a crisis in our hospital system, which needs more staff now. Mr SQ waited three days in the Nepean emergency department. He said, "I had a very frustrating time getting treatment. The situation was chaotic. Staff were doing their best, but they were faced with an overwhelming workload. There was not enough space in emergency. Something needs to be done."

I could talk for days about cataract surgery and the people who face waiting years with failing eyesight and its impact on their safety and mobility. I could talk about hip and joint replacements with a medium wait time of more than 12 months. I could talk about renal dialysis and the ability to treat only six patients three mornings a week in my community. I could talk about cardiac patients who wait for the implant of a defibrillator. One patient had waited since August last year. I could talk about the man who sat in my foyer and cried and asked me to do something. But I want to end as I began: by thanking those who do their very best in a tough system. I call for funding increases, not cuts to the hospital system.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:16:09): I put two things on the record. Firstly, in a huge system like the health department, with thousands and thousands of employees, there will be incidents from time to time. The member is within her rights to take those directly to the health ministry if she thinks something untoward has happened to a particular patient. I find the health Minister incredibly responsive to that. Secondly, it is outrageous that she continues to peddle the lie that there have been cuts to the health budget in New South Wales when it is bigger than ever and it has increased every year under this Government by far more than inflation.

There are thousands more employees, particularly nurses, throughout the system. There are doctors and allied health specialists right across the network, particularly in the Western Sydney Local Health District to which she refers. There is more money, there are far more people and at Nepean Hospital, for instance, the Government is investing \$1 billion to enhance the facilities available to the people in the region. This is just as well, because the demand the member for Blue Mountains talks about is there and the Government is responding to it.

ST LUKE THE EVANGELIST—REVESBY

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (17:17:10): I was grateful to receive an invitation to attend two events to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of St Luke the Evangelist Parish in Revesby. The first was a celebratory dinner held on Saturday 21 September at Club Condell Park. The event celebrated the life of St Luke's parish and was attended by a large number of the congregation including its Vietnamese members. In the 1970s St Luke's was a great migration success story. The East Hills Migration Centre was one of the initial homes for the many Vietnamese refugees who came to Australia after the war in their homeland. St Luke's parish was located nearby and reached out to the Vietnamese community. Eventually it held its own Vietnamese mass, which continues to this day.

It is well known locally that there were examples of parishioners and children from Australian and Vietnamese backgrounds mixing socially in the 1970s together with many great photographs displayed on the night showing this great example of the multicultural success we are fortunate to have in this country. Along with the many Vietnamese parishioners, I also enjoyed catching up with other locals who also attended the celebratory dinner. The church held an auction and a raffle that included great prizes for the parishioners, which was funded

by contributions. The tickets for the dinner as well as the raffle and the auction raised over \$5,700, which has gone towards paying for the church's cooling system. This is a much-needed facility for the parishioners, especially the elderly who struggle to cope with the warm weather through the summer months.

The funds that were raised also paid for safety equipment for pedestrians within the church grounds. The second event to celebrate St Luke's anniversary was a feast day held on 20 October, which commenced with a combined congregational mass at 10.30 a.m. followed by a community lunch with a jumping castle for the kids and some great vocal performances. I congratulate the parish council on organising these two very well-received events, particularly the chair and vice chair of St Luke's parish council, Nicole Greig and Jerome Beeson. I also thank Elliott Bowen, a parish council member who made a significant contribution.

In the intervening 70 years, the St Luke's parish has played an important role in the establishment of four other parishes and five schools in the area, including: St Christopher's at Panania, St Patrick's at Revesby Heights, St Therese at Padstow, St Luke's Catholic Primary School at Revesby, St Christopher's Primary School at Panania, St Therese Primary School at Padstow, De La Salle College at Revesby Heights and Mount St Joseph at Milperra. The St Luke's parish also contributes significantly to the community. It assists St Vincent de Paul in delivering hampers and assists with bills when members of the community are struggling. It hosts and provides the venue for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, visits the sick and provides a play group, youth group and counselling service for women in crisis. I record in *Hansard* the gratitude of the parish to Father Remy, who has recently departed St Luke's for Cabramatta. At his departure the parish stated:

In trust and hope, we wish to announce that our Archbishop has just appointed Father Remy as the new parish priest of the Sacred Heart Church, Cabramatta, effective 3 September 2019 for a six year term. While departing always brings sadness and unrest, it promises renewal and growth. We pray that he continues to be much blessed and supported along this new journey, undertaking his duo role as Pastor of Cabramatta and Senior Chaplain to the Vietnamese Catholic Community-Sydney. Father Remy has contributed so significantly to our St. Luke's community and we give our gratitude and thanks.

I was not a parishioner at St Luke's church, but when I was young I did attend Sunday school at the nearby Revesby Congregational Church. As a child, when we drove past on the Sunday school bus I always thought that St Luke's church looked so fancy. I enjoyed telling that story to the congregation at their seventieth anniversary dinner. It was a great night of reminiscing and celebration. I congratulate the St Luke's community on their successful event and wish them every success for the next 70 years.

THEO HAYEZ

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:21:26): Theo Hayez had been travelling around Australia for eight months with his cousin Lisa Hayez and was due to return to his homeland in Belgium in June of this year. Sadly on 31 May he disappeared on his third night in Byron Bay, only a few weeks before he should have returned home to undertake further study in engineering. His disappearance struck many of us in the area as exceptionally devastating. An 18-year-old man, far from home, disappeared, seemingly without a trace. That such a young man, who was so full of hope and promise and a guest of our community, should disappear on our watch was keenly felt and reflected in the community's search response. The grief and the not knowing are devastating for Theo's family and friends, his country and my community. I know I speak for my entire community and so many across the State and country when I express our heartfelt sadness, concern and love to Theo's family and friends. As a mother of a child not much older than Theo, I can only imagine the pain and heartache they are enduring, not knowing and fearing the worst.

Theo was drawn to Byron Bay like many others. We know that he left a popular nightspot at around 11.00 p.m. on 31 May this year, but he was never seen again. The search for Theo was focused around the Cape Byron Lighthouse after his mobile phone pinged in that location. Whilst the case of what happened to Theo remains open, the exhaustive physical search has ceased. This event will be permanently etched in our minds and our hearts. A big part of Theo's trip was visiting his godfather Jean-Philippe Pector and his family in Victoria. Upon learning of his disappearance, Jean-Philippe came immediately to Byron to assist in the search efforts and to liaise with Theo's family in Belgium. Jean-Philippe offered invaluable information to the police to aid in their search efforts.

Today I recognise the outstanding work undertaken by detective inspector Matt Kehoe, Tweed-Byron Police District officers, and the numerous volunteer organisations and individuals who assisted in the efforts to locate Theo Hayez. Upon learning of his disappearance, dozens of officers, emergency service staff and surf lifesaving volunteers conducted an extensive land, air and sea search around Byron Bay, including around Cape Byron Lighthouse. The police were relentless in their search and used every resource at their disposal to find Theo. It was impossible not to know of Theo's disappearance, with local cafes, restaurants, doctors' surgeries and shops displaying "Missing—Have you seen Theo Hayez" posters, which were regularly updated by a team of tireless volunteers with photos of articles of clothing, new information and other details.

These volunteers held regular, coordinated searches through difficult, rocky terrain around the Cape Byron Lighthouse. They door knocked and delivered flyers in residential areas and created Facebook pages to update concerned residents, family and friends, and coordinated search efforts and food deliveries for the family. A dedicated group of volunteers even brought in search dogs to look for Theo. Surf Life Saving clubs, State Emergency Service volunteers and the local community worked tirelessly to find Theo in the weeks after his disappearance. Volunteer surf lifesavers and Marine Rescue Brunswick Heads volunteers used their inflatable rescue boats and drones, as well as police dogs, and combed hectares of swamps, beach, bushland and town streets in their search for Theo.

The search for Theo Hayez was suspended by New South Wales police after heavy rain set in and hampered police efforts. Byron Bay locals rallied and continued to search for Theo in the difficult conditions. Coordinators cautioned volunteers to put their safety first, wear protective clothing and search in pairs. I note the hard work of Nicoletta Revas, who arranged and collected food, meal donations and accommodation for Theo's family when they came to Australia to join the search. It is times like these that the community spirit of our region is tangible. Theo's father echoed these sentiments when he thanked the community. He noted:

The brave Byron volunteers, the wonderful people who have lent us their home, all the wonderful people who participated in the meal train, offering us delicious lunches at noon and revitalizing hot meals in the evening! All the Byron merchants for their tremendous generosity and support! All the homeless people and members of the Aboriginal community that I had the opportunity to meet during a breakfast!

Sunday 29 September marked Theo's nineteenth birthday. To mark the date volunteers planted 19 trees in the Arakwal National Park off Tallow Beach, including forest red gums and swamp mahoganys, which will create vital koala habitat in an important wildlife corridor. I and my community fervently hope that answers to Theo's whereabouts come soon.

BOOROWA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (17:26:05): On Saturday 9 November I was delighted to attend the opening of the CSIRO Boorowa Agriculture Research Station, along with many locals and visitors from across the region. The project was initiated four years ago and as a former Mayor of Boorowa Council I was delighted to finally see this project come to fruition. It is a credit to all involved. The facilities on site are state of the art and the team at the CSIRO are showcasing it as a cutting-edge and world-leading research, development and environmental hub. The station is a catalyst for innovation in agriculture in the digital age, with real time on farm sensing that monitors temperature and humidity, as well as terrasonde soil and moisture sensors.

As the House is well and truly aware, I am very passionate about regional areas, particularly my hometown of Boorowa, and I am excited to see the associated economic benefits to the township, including employment, accommodation, and the provision and utilisation of local services. Affectionately known as BARS, the Boorowa Agricultural Research Station, features the latest digital agriculture technologies such as precision agriculture, and remote and non-destructive phenomic crop monitoring. It continues the CSIRO's long history in agricultural breeding and genetics, with hundreds of small plots dedicated to the development of new varieties of wheat, canola and grain legumes, as well as pastures. The facility also operates experiments on innovative agronomic strategies such as nutrient management, tillage and stubble management, crop and pasture sequences for mixed-enterprise systems and sowing times.

The CSIRO Director of Agriculture and Food, Michiel van Lookeren Campagne, told me this research station will be the envy of the world and is perfectly placed to their network of field trial sites in the region. There are six permanent staff on site who look after the day-to-day activities, as many scientific research and development officers come and go whilst working on projects in crop breeding and genetics, new digital technologies, crop and pasture agronomy, soil fertility and soil improvement, mixed farming systems agronomy, crop livestock and long-term ecological studies of soils, weeds and pests.

The BARS makes it possible for the CSIRO to conduct long-term farming systems experiments that investigate changes to the soil over time and provide a better understanding of the impact of factors such as soil, organic matter and soil acidity on farm profitability. The BARS is assisting the CSIRO to deliver on its commitment to increase food production in cropping and livestock systems, improve drought tolerance and disease resistance, and improve nutritional values to meet the challenges of the future. Our current unprecedented drought has presented our farming and agricultural communities with unprecedented issues. New ways of farming are required. This research station is going to go a long way in assisting our rural communities to adapt and remain flexible in our ever-changing environment. I look forward to the outcomes of this research station. I know that we will see great things from it in the future.

The CSIRO is grateful for the support of investment partner Grain Research and Development Corp in helping develop the site. The general manager of GRDC, Dr Nicole Jensen, was present at the opening, and

highlighted the importance of the research and development to meet the challenges of agriculture now and into the future. This \$11.5 million project will not only benefit the agriculture community, but, thanks to the CSIRO Boorowa Agricultural Research Station, Boorowa is now well and truly on the world map, and at the leading edge of agricultural research and development.

GRETA ARMY CAMP

GRETA MIGRANT CAMP

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:30:17): On 9 and 10 November—just last weekend—in the small country town of Greta located in the Cessnock electorate, celebrations were held to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the Greta Army Camp and the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Greta Migrant Camp on that same site. In November 1939, 2,930 acres were compulsorily acquired to create one of the Australian Army's largest training camps. The outbreak of World War II had been declared only months earlier. The camp was built for the training of the Sixth Division of the Second Australian Imperial Force.

Initially under the command of Lieutenant General Thomas Blamey, the first troops arrived on 15 December 1939 and over the next 10 years over 60,000 service personnel were trained on the site, often arriving by train, just a short walk down the road. They would arrive in their civvies and leave in their service dress. The 6th Division 2nd AIF fought in battles such as Tobruk, Kokoda, Buna-Gona and Aitape-Wewak, to name a few. Men who volunteered to fight did so not only to defend a nation, but also to stand up to tyranny and oppression. They fought for the rights and freedom of people whose names they had never heard and faces they had never seen from countries they never knew existed. These were our Australian soldiers training at the Greta Army Camp. At the end of World War II, Greta was tasked to train the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, the military garrison that was to serve under General Douglas MacArthur. Primarily they were dispatched to Japan to oversee the rebuild and re-establishment of some Japanese cities after the terrible bombing that brought about an end to World War II.

From 1949 to 1960 the site became Greta Migrant Camp—home to migrants fleeing Europe after World War II to seek a new life. The camp offered a new start in life for over 100,000 migrants from 18 countries. They had arrived in Australia seeking a chance to live free and to raise their families. They took a leap of faith and travelled for many months, in some cases halfway around the world, and put their trust in Australia. Migrants brought with them skills that a growing country needed. They worked in our steel mills and helped to build one of the largest projects of its time, the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

The camp and its uses as both an army training camp and a migrant camp is part of our nation's history and should never be forgotten, but only the future will tell if this is the case. That is why I want to give a shout out to those people who organised the wonderful celebration last weekend. Primarily, the celebrations were organised by Brett Wild, himself a former member of the armed services, and now a local business owner and resident. Brett started planning the event in 2018. He enlisted help from far and wide, and gained some funding from Cessnock City Council, and various interested organisations and individuals. Brett gave not only a large amount of his time and organisational skills, but also his own money to ensure the celebrations acknowledged and commemorated these anniversaries, because this site had accommodated, at different points on the historical timeline, the armed services that would go off to fight in other countries and the migrants who were fleeing those countries to come to this beautiful place that we call home.

Brett's work was supported by the local Branxton-Greta Business Chamber, the returned services men and women of the Greta and Branxton RSL branches as well as an army of volunteers and local identities who always seem to stick up their hands. Unfortunately on Sunday afternoon proceedings were called off just a little earlier than expected because the Rural Fire Service personnel had to turn on lights and sirens and head off to do their important work. I congratulate everybody involved in this significant celebration and remind everyone that we can do better in Australia for our migrants.

BARWON ELECTORATE DROUGHT

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:35:22): My family will tell you that I am hardly ever at home because I am out on the road in Barwon. Much has been made of late about how big the electorate of Barwon is, so the tally of how many kilometres I travelled since the March election may have lost its shock value. Before the election I travelled to all corners of the vast electorate. Since being elected, I have not sat still. I have travelled to places that most people will not get to in their lifetimes. I am talking about places like Tibooburra, in the top corner of the State. A trek out there really is a must-do for anybody. I ask people who go there to spend big—for me and for them! In the two weeks of the last school holidays I spent the 14 days on the road, travelling to Wanaaring; Packsaddle; a property called Katalpa, with Luke and Sarah Mashford; Broken Hill; Menindee; Ivanhoe; White Cliffs; Tilpa; Louth; Cobar; Nymagee; Bourke; Brewarrina; Nyngan; and Nevertire.

They are all great places, filled with even better people. They all had one message for this place, and for our parliamentary friends in Canberra: Enough. They have had enough. They have had enough of the political game-playing that is going on. This place is a very long way from Tibooburra, Packsaddle, Menindee and the rest of Barwon, but I am here to deliver the message from them and from every single person in every single drought-impacted town, city and village in regional New South Wales. The message is to stop with the games, and start working together to deliver some real drought support.

If we, their elected representatives, do not deliver direct support to our drought-impacted communities we will be marked in the history books as squabbling on the sidelines while rural New South Wales collapsed. A number of Ministers in this Government have publicly flagged the need for more immediate drought support. The Opposition has talked about the need. Everyone has sent thoughts and sympathies to rural communities. Members have talked about the struggle. Barbs have been thrown back and forth over this Chamber about it. I have sat through 36 question times and rarely is drought support taken as seriously as it should be.

My constituents are watching and the behaviour of some in this place is disgusting them. Every member is willing to say that he or she is on the side of farmers, and to ruminate on the Australian bush spirit and the resilience of country people. I am here to tell them that the inaction and the politicking surrounding their plight is breaking their spirit. I am here to tell members that the promise that more drought support is coming is angering people in rural communities. They need tangible, immediate help. I am here to tell the public relations machine of Government that re-announcing a drought support measure may get headlines, but it is certainly not winning public support.

My key point is that more drought support is needed. It is needed to keep our communities alive. It is needed to give people some hope. Communities need that because right now people in the country are fast losing hope. In July the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party put on the table a drought support package, which included immediate council rate relief; cash grants to allow outstanding creditors to be paid, which would help the shops in towns and the farmers; the transition of legacy loans into zero- or low-interest loans, because people are still paying 5 per cent; and a re-sowing and restocking grant to allow farmers to show their commercial and government financiers that they have the capacity to generate income when rain returns. The package also includes financial support for employers to retain employees.

This support will be at least the equivalent of Newstart payments to allow the retention of farm and local business employees and their families in the local economy. We do not want more people leaving our regional communities. The Government voted against these measures, despite them being good initiatives that have the support of peak bodies and the community. I wear different political colours. I am still waiting to see new actions from the Government that would provide immediate cash support. My communities, our communities, cannot keep waiting. I close with a statement from somebody who knows without a doubt what our communities need, who is out there listening and seeing what is going on. On 11 September Country Women's Association State president Stephanie Stanhope stated:

What they [the communities] are telling us they need is real and tangible help delivered to their businesses directly, in order to help them survive and support their communities into the future.

We're not sure what the State Government is waiting for—the time to assist is now.

ALBION PARK CCTV

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services)
(17:40:24): This evening in the House I renew my calls for Shellharbour City Council to work with all levels of government and back the installation of CCTV cameras in the Albion Park CBD. These calls come following shocking footage of an incident on 19 October where a group of people with face coverings were filmed roaming through the Albion Park CBD yelling, swearing and brandishing weapons. This behaviour is totally and completely unacceptable. I want to do all that I can to keep local residents and local businesses safe.

There are those who oppose CCTV cameras, citing concerns over personal privacy. These concerns seem to be centred on civil liberties and an invasion of privacy by government. I cannot agree with these claims. A year ago a majority of councillors voted not to install CCTV in open public spaces across Shellharbour city after a report from council staff said it was not needed and could even increase fears of crime. The report said that there were 5,309 reported crimes in the Shellharbour local government area in 2017 but that only 245 of those were conducted in a public open space and these were mainly theft from or of motor vehicles and malicious damage. Albion Park was one of the areas considered in this report, due to community concerns over drug dealing, underage drinking and vandalism. The report stated:

If the crime statistics do not support the level of concern over public safety, council needs to consider whether other strategies would be more effective.

The report also stated:

It is important to remember that for some people, the presence of CCTV can increase their fear of crime as it may signal to them that the location is unsafe.

I cannot agree with this statement. If you are not doing anything wrong then you have absolutely nothing to hide. Since launching a petition calling for cameras on my website, hundreds of people have signed it to back this move. Indeed, I have fought for and delivered CCTV cameras in many locations across my electorate. I have previously partnered with Kiama Municipal Council and sought State government funding through the Community Building Partnership program to install cameras in Kiama. When I was on council I worked alongside locals and small business to install CCTV in the Nowra CBD. Much to my shock, a local resident took legal action against council on privacy grounds, seeking to have the cameras removed. Indeed, as the local MP I had to seek amendments to the State's privacy legislation to ensure that councils could continue to operate cameras for the purposes of crime prevention.

Cameras do not necessarily stop crime. However, they do deter criminal behaviour and can help capture valuable evidence to pursue those who engage in criminal and antisocial behaviour. Because of these facts, cameras in key locations also have the added advantage of making people feel safe. This is also important. I make clear that CCTV is not the answer to all problems involving crime and safety. I recognise that law enforcement agencies have a wider role to play. But no crime-fighting tool solves all criminal behaviour and the shortcomings of CCTV technology should not be used as a convenient excuse not to install them.

Our local area commander, Dean Smith, does an exceptional job with the resources he has. I know he is deeply concerned about the most recent event and wants to ensure we use a tapestry of measures to respond to and fight crime. Our local police back the installation of CCTV cameras. I have also spoken with the president of the Albion Park Business Chamber, Mr Graham Morrison. He confirmed his support for any measures that keep residents and businesses safe. I am deeply grateful to my friend Councillor Kellie Marsh, who is seeking to take up the installation of cameras at a future council meeting. As a local resident, mother and grandmother, Councillor Marsh is a strong advocate for cracking down on crime and supporting our police. I know that Councillor Marsh will receive strong support from our local community on this important issue. However, it seems that some councillors are not enthused. Speaking to the *Illawarra Mercury* on 4 November in an article by Kate McIlwain, Greens Councillor Peter Moran stated:

Although the video looked scary, it did not seem like they had malicious intent. If you had people running around with chainsaws and baseball bats and they really wanted to hurt someone, I would say you would probably hear about it on the news.

Well, Councillor Moran, we did hear about it on the news and it is totally unacceptable. You and your fellow councillors need to make a decision. Will you stand and support your local community or will you side with those who are more interested in the rights of criminals than the safety and protection of law-abiding citizens? Our community has had enough of political correctness, civil libertarians and a laundry list of excuses. Our community demands action and this is a step in the right direction. I say to all the Shellharbour councillors: Get behind us and get on with it or side with people who are siding with the wrong side of the law.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:45:35): I put on record the immense value of Community Legal Centres for the Sydney electorate and my constituents. All members of Parliament rely on these independent community organisations for constituents to get legal help, particularly vulnerable people and communities that are disadvantaged and marginalised and would not otherwise be able to get access to justice. The Sydney electorate is well served by the Inner City Legal Centre and Redfern Legal Centre. I am proud to work closely with these two organisations in their efforts to make sure that everyone has access to legal help, no matter their background, abilities or resources.

The Inner City Legal Centre is the main legal centre for the Sydney electorate and my office refers many people to it who need legal information and help. Along with generalist matters, it helps with employment and family law and is the New South Wales specialist for the LGBTIQ legal service. It recognises groups with quite specific needs through the transgender legal service and sex worker legal service. I am supporting their fundraising campaign to maintain the Safe Relationships Project, which provides court support for people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual, people who are transgender and people who are inter-sex who are experiencing or escaping an abusive relationship.

Together with the Marrickville and Kingsford centres, the Inner City and Redfern legal centres are jointly running a new statewide service for migrant workers. This is a clear example of how legal centres identify and meet unmet needs. The Redfern Legal Centre provides help for health, employment, consumer and financial matters, domestic violence, policing and discrimination and has a specialist service for students, which is increasingly needed in response to unfair treatment of international students. Redfern's tenancy and advocacy

service is a valuable source of advice and representation to which my office regularly refers constituents, particularly tenants who may not have the skills or capacity to represent themselves in the tribunal. I was very pleased to launch the Redfern Legal Centre's recently updated resource *The Repair Kit*, which was originally published with funds from Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP Salary Trust. The centre's workshop with tenants in Woolloomooloo who were concerned about getting repairs done was a great way to efficiently get information and advice to a group of people.

Community Legal Centres are a vital source of support, advice and advocacy on public interest legal matters that affect large numbers of people. The Public Interest Advocacy Centre tackles matters of broad public importance that affect the whole community. It does a great job training and educating citizens and community groups to challenge injustice. I am especially appreciative of their Homeless Persons' Legal Service. It takes legal help to very vulnerable people living on the street and in refuges and shelters. The Environment Defenders Office provides expert information, resources, advice and test cases in public interest environment law, helping to protect communities against powerful vested interests. Its work with the Millers Point community on heritage protection for the Sirius building is a good example.

While they deal largely with Commonwealth matters, I acknowledge the important role of other Community Legal Centres based in the inner city for people across New South Wales or even Australia, including for financial rights, welfare rights, human rights, HIV-AIDS, immigration, refugees, disability, prisoners, tenants, children, young people and seniors. The commitment from centre workers and board members to justice and a fair go is inspiring. I acknowledge their contribution to our communities. Volunteers and students learning the law help stretch the limited funding that Community Legal Centres rely upon. There is a well-developed network of Community Legal Centres across New South Wales that collaborate to cover many groups and individuals who would not otherwise get access to legal information, advice or advocacy. They provide valuable community resources and education, and they use their experience with vulnerable people to push for law and policy reform to improve justice and prevent discrimination and unfair treatment. I support the call from Community Legal Centres for adequate and secure funding so they can continue to provide their essential advice and hope that the Government will respond to my request for additional resources to enable this important work to continue.

AGRITOURISM

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (17:49:45): In this time of drought and the subsequent reduction in farm production it is necessary for farmers to look at other ways to increase their income. The restocking of livestock and replanting of failed crops is a medium- to long-term solution. The farming community in my electorate is suffering, although not to the extent of those who live west of the Great Divide. Dairy income is down 66 per cent and continues to fall and beef income is down 38 per cent. Farmers are finding it hard to survive each week. One of the outcomes is that some of these primary producers are being forced to sell their farms to non-farmers for other uses.

The Wingecarribee 2031 Community Strategic Plan identifies the need to preserve the "green between" townships and villages. Enabling farms to remain viable businesses is a real solution. The nature of the rural economy in the Southern Highlands is such that agriculture, agribusiness, agritourism and equine services are key economic sectors. They require strategic intervention to maintain sustainability and allow diversification in a challenging business environment. This part of Greater Sydney is the food bowl for the future and creating a resilient food market for Sydney means that strategic metropolitan planning needs to value and better protect agriculture so that farmers and agribusinesses have viable commercial conditions. In addition, access to international markets for produce and inbound agritourism will be possible when the new Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport opens.

To keep primary producers on their farms producing our food, they need additional diverse income streams that complement their primary production. Options under the banner of agritourism could include farm tours and education programs, farm stays, built accommodation and camping, roadside stalls, farm experiences, retail sales opportunities relevant to their produce, and events and functions. Depending on the nature of an operation, a primary producer may be able to use one or a combination of these. These agritourism opportunities are focused on keeping farmers engaged in farming as well as providing opportunities for people in metropolitan areas to experience farming and understand how crucial our primary producers are to fulfil our needs, not just now but into the future.

To deliver this and to allow primary producers to diversify requires some creative action. A proposal that has been discussed with all of the relevant stakeholders is that to support primary producers a standalone, mandatory State definition be urgently introduced under the title "Produce Door Premises", or similar. In broad terms, primary producers are simply seeking opportunities via agritourism, like wineries which are currently restricted due simply to the type of farm output. There have been consultations with local councils, industry organisations and primary producers. All have been supportive of the produce door concept and see it as a priority

at this most difficult of trading times. Given the volume of farmers in zone E3 land, Destination Sydney Surrounds South is working with groups in Wingecarribee and Wollondilly shires. This proposal is supported by these councils, the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholder Group, the NSW Wine Industry Association and the NSW Farmers.

This solution is a way to retain green belts, support the farming communities and provide opportunities for farm income diversity. Due to the ongoing drought, the need for urgent action is critical. While initial discussions suggest that there is a pathway forward via traditional planning proposals, this process will take too long, it will be too costly and it presents no surety that primary producers will see a timely and practical outcome. The produce door initiative potentially requires minimal changes to the standard instrument and to local environmental plans. On review of those, I believe that a program driven by the New South Wales Government could see implementation of the initiative in a short time frame. This is critical to meet the objective to get second income streams flowing for farmers sooner rather than later. If adopted, this approach could be a game changer across regional New South Wales, not just in my electorate. I fully support this great initiative and look forward to its speedy implementation.

ANNA BAY DEVELOPMENT

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:54:44): Anna Bay is one of the gems in my electorate of Port Stephens. Not only is it home to wonderful residents, it features beautiful bushland and the most stunning beaches. The beaches are so popular that the local council has to put in place special event traffic management systems during holidays to manage gridlock around the beach. But for a number of years the residents and our visitors have not been greeted by views of the beautiful beaches or bushland as they arrive in the town. They have been greeted by the view of a half-finished resort, covered in graffiti and slowly being swallowed by sand dunes. While locals call it the "eyesore", government departments call it "not our problem".

The saga of this failed resort and its ongoing impact goes back to at least 2012 when work stopped on what was then called the Birubi Beach Resort. In February 2014 the project was placed into administration and in 2016 the site was bought by Landmark International Group, a company that included developers Wilson Hu and Frank Shi. There was some hope in 2018 that the eyesore would be rectified. A modified development application [DA] for the site was approved but the eyesore remains. Local councillors are considering raising hoarding around the site so that visitors to Anna Bay are not greeted by the eyesore as they drive in. A few weeks ago two announcements were made in quick succession. Firstly, a DA was lodged for an "eco resort" on the block of land next to the eyesore. Secondly, the original eyesore resort was back on the market.

The new proposal is for an \$18 million "ecotourist facility" next to the current eyesore. This DA will be assessed by Port Stephens Council and voted on by the Joint Regional Planning Panel. The proposal for a so-called ecotourist resort is in fact a 247-room hotel-style and townhouse resort with a swimming pool, gym, restaurant, function centre and children's facilities. Applying any sort of pub test, a 247-room resort does not make an ecotourist resort. Just because it will be built on sand dunes does not get it across the line of ecotourism. The land is zoned RU2 rural landscape, which expressly prohibits hotel and motel accommodation and serviced apartments. But the loopholes in the zoning law mean that even though this land is zoned RU2 the developer can get this through as long as authorities agree it can meet an elusive ecotourist definition.

In an area like Port Stephens with a history of electing development-at-all-cost councillors, the concern is that there will be enough precedent to get this DA over the line. As we have seen in the failed eyesore resort, the half-finished project is slowly being reclaimed by sand dunes. The sand dunes have been doing what sand dunes do—they shift and change all the time. I question whether any development, let alone development of this scale, should ever be approved on such a changing landscape. It is ironic that the company behind the new resort is named Sandcastle One. It is as if it is already resigned to the same fate of sand swallowing its proposal. There have been suggestions that the developer Wilson Hu from the eyesore resort is also involved in the proposed new resort. His name is not on the Australian Securities and Investments Commission documents about the company. Sandcastle One has three listed directors but it in turn is owned by three other companies.

Given the legacy of dodgy corporate structures for property developers and the phoenixing of failed company directors, complex corporate structures are rightly viewed with scepticism. If there is a connection between the eyesore resort owners and the proposed new resort, it is unconscionable that they would be allowed to proceed with a new resort whilst the old resort remains an eyesore and derelict for everyone to see. Recently I met with a large group of residents and heard their concerns. I thank everyone who came along to share their frustrations and to those who helped organise it: Kelly Hammond and Chris Mitchell, the new President of the South Tomaree Community Association. Thankyou to EcoNetwork and the Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association representatives for coming, together with local councillor Sarah Smith.

In particular I thank the Tomaree Business Chamber President Leah Anderson, who did well to remind us of the many exciting things happening in Anna Bay. It is a town that has found its voice and is on the up. This whole saga of a failed development left to rot in my community is the by-product of the development-at-all-cost attitude which has been rampant in my electorate for too long. The planning system in New South Wales has let these residents down. The zoning for this land should have allowed very little development, if any. But instead we have approval for one and now potentially two large resort developments sitting on sand dunes and coastal hinterland. Anna Bay deserves better than this. We want our tourists to feel welcomed, not met with an eyesore. Residents deserve to drive into their beautiful town without being reminded of the poor decisions of the past. The derelict disgrace of an eyesore must go and the new resort proposal must be ditched.

KNIGHTS OF ST GEORGE HEART ASSOCIATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:59:14): Today I speak about the fantastic work of the Knights of St George Heart Association, a vital community group that works in support of the cardiothoracic unit at St George Hospital. Cardiothoracic surgery is a field of medicine that performs complex operations that generally treat conditions of both the heart and lungs. Some of the procedures performed by these surgeons include coronary artery bypass surgery and aortic surgery, as well as diaphragmatic repair surgery. The association was formed in 1985, at the same time as the cardiothoracic unit at St George Hospital. The association is community based and entirely dedicated to ensuring the security of the cardiothoracic unit as well as to raise money to ensure the unit is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment to deliver the very best levels of patient care.

St George Hospital is one of the most important institutions that services residents of my electorate and across the St George and Sutherland shire. It is also one of my favourite hospitals. Aside from its key aim of directly supporting the cardiothoracic unit, the association has also established the Knights of St George Education Fund. This fund is dedicated to offering financial support for the nursing and allied health staff within the cardiothoracic unit and the operating theatres at St George Hospital. It can also contribute to the costs of undertaking relevant courses or purchasing books and other study resources. To date the association has contributed over \$1.6 million towards the unit and this money has been vital in the purchase of equipment such as cardiac imaging machines and monitors as well as a cardiovascular ultrasound system. This money is raised through membership fees, dinners, stalls, raffles and donations. The use of these funds is deliberated through committee consultation, which ultimately decides where funds are allocated.

The group currently has over 200 active members. Fundraising events are well attended by many former cardiac patients, providing them with the opportunity to share their experiences. The association typically holds a Christmas dinner dance as well as a mid-year event, which are attended by members, hospital staff and other community leaders. A key figure in the Knights of St George Heart Association is the mighty Dr David Horton, who is the current president of the association. Dr Horton was head of the unit from its establishment in 1985 until his retirement, with his son now being in this role. Dr Horton has been crucial to the success of the unit, as his advocacy saved the unit from its impending closure many years ago in the eighties. Dr Horton was the surgeon who performed the first heart surgery at the hospital in 1985 and has been a highly respected surgeon for 37 years. I have no doubt that Dr Horton's work in the field of cardiothoracic surgery and in the association has contributed to the success of the unit at St George Hospital.

I acknowledge the current executive of the association, including Vice President Alan Jacobs, Secretary Jacqueline Jacobs, Assistant Secretary Anita Horton, Correspondence Secretary Susan Cohen, Treasurer Nick Marshall, and Assistant Treasurer Dorothy Marshall, as well as current committee members and supporters of the association. Many of the members of the executive, including Mr Nick Marshall, bring with them professional expertise that is incredibly beneficial to the association. Some of these committee members have been longstanding, with many serving for over 20 years, highlighting their true dedication to the work of the association.

I make special mention of Susan Leahy, outgoing secretary, who has served the association for over 12 years. Susan has provided invaluable support to the administration of the association. I have had the opportunity of knowing her for over eight years and I thank Susan for her work. The Knights of St George Heart Association has undoubtedly played a tremendous role in ensuring the security, success and outstanding patient care of the cardiothoracic unit at St George Hospital. I thank all committee members and community members who support this fantastic organisation. The work of the association is incredibly valuable and I look forward to continuing to support their efforts in the future.

MATHEW HARPER AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFESAVER OF THE YEAR

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (18:04:27): On 9 November this year surf lifesavers and dignitaries from the surf lifesaving calling from around the country converged on the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre to celebrate the best of the best as part of the 2019 National Awards of Excellence. When I say "the best of the best", that is quite accurate. Australia is the best surf lifesaving nation in the world. Anyone

who wins an award in Australia is the best of the best. Over 180,000 members of the surf lifesaving movement around the country give up almost 1½ million hours to keep people on our beaches safe. On this night, 9 November 2019, it was a local born-and-bred Maroubra/Matraville young man, Mathew Harper, who won Australian Surf Lifesaver of the Year. Of all those 180,000 surf lifesavers nationwide, one of them is the best and it was our fellow from Maroubra, Mat Harper.

Apart from that, over the years Mat has taken out a number of awards at branch and State levels—and all at the age of 25. What an achievement. We are so proud of him. He lives locally in Matraville, he works right on Maroubra Beach at the legendary Maroubra Seals Club and he comes from the mighty Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club. I can say quite uniquely and proudly that in Australia all roads lead to Maroubra and yesterday here in Parliament House we had the Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving gather. George Shales, President of Surf Life Saving New South Wales, was there. He is from the Maroubra club. John Restuccia, Deputy President of Surf Life Saving New South Wales, is also from the Maroubra club. I am very proud of the two surf lifesaving clubs in Maroubra—Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club and South Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club.

Mathew has been a member of Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club for 15 years. He gained his Surf Rescue Certificate [SRC] in 2008 and his bronze medallion in 2009 and this year completed 10 years of patrols, for all of which he achieved 100 per cent attendance. He has been patrol captain for the past five years and has been club captain for the past two years. He has obtained almost every award there is, including first aid, spinal and pain management, inflatable rescue boat [IRB] driver, the silver medallion aquatic rescue [SMAR], the Advanced Resuscitation Techniques Certificate [ARTC] and the gold medallion and has been a trainer, facilitator and assessor. Mathew is not just a young fellow who throws himself into each of his endeavours, he is very much the thinking lifesaver. At the helm of the club, he is focused on the education of members in respect of lifesaving, helping the club to achieve record numbers of 100 per cent proficiencies and bronze and education achievements.

Mathew has also been the Director of Membership at Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club, vice club captain and a member of the membership lifesaving and finance committee. He currently sits on the Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club Board of Management, finance and lifesaving committees, the Randwick Surf Life Saving district committee and the Surf Rescue 30 executive committee. He has done it all at the age of 25. He has represented the club at many different gatherings, camps, award nights and special occasions. He is an amazing ambassador for the club and for surf life saving in general. He has also competed for the club for many years. He is an Australian medallist in champion lifesaving, a Nippers' coach and very much the mentor for young members of the club. Significantly, in recent years he has also served as captain of the Randwick District Offshore Rescue Boat or, as it is more commonly known by its radio call sign, Surf Rescue 30—an amazing thing—for the past three seasons. He has completed eight years of 100 per cent patrols on Surf Rescue 30 and served as vice captain of the group for a season.

Mathew is professional, diligent and caring. He liaises with members of the public. He advises and assists whenever he can on the beach as to where to swim. He helps the public identify hazards in the surrounding environment. He is very supportive of his fellow club members in education, training and development, strengthening their capabilities and therefore those of the collective group. As the member for Maroubra I am proud to have a young fellow like Mathew Harper as one of my own, as one of our own. On behalf of all those in the electorate of Maroubra, I say well done to Mat. I look forward to him running around, as Barry Rodgers did, on the beach for the next 50 years.

Community Recognition Statements

PHILIP HUGHES AND BARRY MOON

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:10:11): Fifty years serving your community is a mighty milestone that deserves to be celebrated and recognised. We were able to do this recently for Coffs Coast locals Philip Hughes and Barry Moon in sincere appreciation of their outstanding dedication upon completing 50 years of service as justices of the peace for New South Wales. Their proud families watched on as I presented these fine gentlemen with their New South Wales Government commemorative certificates signed by Attorney General Mark Speakman.

During the five decades they have been witnessing documents they have also witnessed profound social changes and advances in technology. The way people find a justice of the peace is among the many things to evolve, with people now more likely to search online than rely on word of mouth. The New South Wales online register of justices of the peace has been upgraded to make finding a local justice of the peace faster and more convenient than ever. I thank Philip and Barry for donating countless hours to helping local people and hope that they enjoy their golden jubilee of service.

BAXTER MCDONALD

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:11:10): I take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate a young cricketer in my electorate, Mr Baxter McDonald, on his achievements. This month Baxter made his debut for the NSW Primary School Sports Association cricket team. It is a goal that he has been working towards since the start of this year and he should be very proud to have achieved it. He achieved a top score of 35 for his all-round batting and 11 wickets at the youth championships. Impressively, Baxter will play alongside his teammates in the Australian Primary School Cricket Championships in Adelaide. At just 12 years old, Baxter is a great example of how setting your mind to something and working hard to achieve it will pay off in the end. I congratulate Baxter. This achievement is very well deserved and I wish him all the best for a very bright future.

DR RITA CREWS, OAM

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:12:08): I inform the House of a local hero of the Oatley electorate, Dr Rita Crews, OAM. For the past 32 years, Dr Crews has served on the Council of the Music Teachers Association, nine as vice president and 14 as president, which is unprecedented. Over those many years Dr Crews built up a very extensive network of contacts and support, which enabled the association to hold events such as the conference and professional development sessions, with lecturers donating their time and expertise and most venues for free.

I had the privilege of hosting the association in Parliament, creating fond memories and forging great friendships not only with Dr Crews but also with other members of the association. Along with this prestigious role, Dr Crews is the editor of *The Studio* and continues her role as chief examiner on the Australian Music Examination Board. As a result of her extensive dedication, Dr Crews has been awarded an honorary fellowship in music—only the fourth to be bestowed in New South Wales. I congratulate Dr Rita Crews.

CENTRAL COAST FREEMASONS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:13:02): On 17 August the Central Coast Freemasons organised a barbecue cook-off to raise funds for Central Coast based health service providers. The masons from the northern end of the coast prepared a barbecue at Bunnings Tuggerah, as did those on the southern end of the coast at West Gosford. A friendly competition between the two areas raised \$2,260 all-up, which will be matched dollar for dollar by the freemasons Masonicare fund, totalling up to \$4,520. A cheque presentation was held on 14 October at the Gosford Masonic Centre, where representatives from The Glen Rehabilitation Centre at Chittaway, headspace Gosford, Camp Breakaway at Sam Remo and Toukley ambulance station received donations. Well done to the members from both areas for getting together and raising funds for Central Coast based health service providers.

THE HILLS WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP 2019

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:14:08): It was my pleasure to host The Hills Women in Leadership 2019 function with the member for Baulkham Hills on Friday 25 October. We were lucky to have as our guest speaker Senator Hollie Hughes. Senator Hughes informed us of all her roles as a Senator for New South Wales, on recent committee work looking at functions of and improvements to the NDIS, and her initiative of "Go Country for Christmas". Also in attendance were the member for Hawkesbury; the Hills Deputy Mayor, Reena Jethi; and the outgoing Hills SES Unit commander, Evelyn Lester.

I thank the women from the Seven Hills electorate for their attendance, including Janice McKinnon and Maureen DeBrincat from the Country Women's Association; Sylvia Granturco, Emma Kroon and Anna Macri from Karabi Seniors Knitters; Danielle Bliss, Kylie Mulcare and Julie Ogle of St Pauls Netball Club; Renee McClintock of St Paul the Apostle Primary School P&C; Nicole Gupta from Toongabbie Anglican Church; Vanessa Wegener and Megan Ridge from Toongabbie Public School P&C; principal Margaret Creagh and assistant principal Karen O'Hara of Winston Heights Public School; and other community representatives Mirna Jasser, Fiona Nadaya and Georgina Valjak.

BUSHFIRES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:15:06): On behalf of the constituents of my electorate of Charlestown, I recognise and thank all those who have worked hard over the past few days to protect and support us in the face of the risk of catastrophic fire danger. An emergency control centre was established in Lake Macquarie and I was grateful that it kept me informed of developments during the critical hours of Tuesday. I particularly thank all those members of my local community who serve in the local police force, Fire and Rescue, frontline medical services and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, all of whom were under additional pressures in recent days. I recognise the enormous efforts of members of our local community who volunteer in the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service, and I thank them for their service. I thank staff of

Lake Macquarie City Council and Newcastle City Council, and staff of our local schools, many of whom took on additional duties during the past week. We are grateful to them all.

BOUTROS AND SOURAYA HASROUNI

Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (18:16:13): I congratulate Mr Boutros and Mrs Souraya Hasrouni, who recently celebrated their seventieth wedding anniversary on 17 October. Boutros and Souraya were married in Lebanon in 1949 in the village of Ain Ebel. They came to Australia in 1971 and settled in Revesby, where they still reside. The couple have six children, 11 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. I wish Boutros and Souraya a very happy platinum wedding anniversary.

ITALIAN FESTIVAL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:16:46): On 9 November I had the pleasure of attending the twenty-sixth annual Italian Festival at Fairfield Showground. Europeans sure do love our food, and nobody knows how to put on a good feed like the Italians. For over a quarter of a century the Madonna Di Loreto Association has put together an amazing annual event for the Italian community. The association has been an important organisation within my electorate, helping Italians in need. As my fellow parliamentary colleagues who attended will confirm, there was no shortage of fun and entertainment for families to enjoy as the day carried on into the night. Events like this encapsulate the diverse and rich identity that Fairfield embodies and play an important role in preserving our rich cultural histories. I conclude by acknowledging Mr Tony Mittiga, President of the Madonna Di Loreto Association; Mr Roy Velari, secretary; the organising committee; and all community leaders who attended.

KU-RING-GAI AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:17:45): I recently attended the official opening of the Ku-ring-gai Amateur Swimming Club's new diving blocks. Located at the YMCA Fitness and Aquatic Centre in West Pymble, the works were delivered as part of the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership program, with the club receiving \$31,500. By supporting this much-needed infrastructure, club members of all ages will now enjoy slip-free dives. It is important to note that the diving blocks will benefit not only the swimming club but also YMCA members, local schools and the broader Ku-ring-gai community.

To mark the event I was joined by club patron Judy Macourt, OAM, to cut the ribbon, and the club's efficient team of volunteers provided baked goods that were relished by the young members—and I may have had a scone or two. For 49 years this not-for-profit swimming club has been enjoyed by thousands of local families, so it was great to see the blocks in action. I wish all members the very best for the season.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE JOBS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:18:53): Government jobs are very important to the electorate of Gosford and across the Central Coast. Local job security makes a world of difference to all families who live on the coast. I thank every single government employee who lives, works and reinvests their government incomes in local businesses on the coast. Tonight I particularly shout out and thank all those people who clean our trains. Theirs is a thankless task, picking up bits and pieces of rubbish and cleaning up after the approximately 12,000 commuters who leave the coast every day to get to work or school. The team of cleaners at Gosford, like all their colleagues up and down the coast, are diligent and committed to making our train trips dignified, no matter how packed the trains are or how late they are running. I thank them all for their great work and I thank the Government for holding to its commitment not to privatise or take away any of our regional jobs.

MARY MCCARTHY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:19:43): I pay tribute to one of Dubbo's most influential health workers, Mary McCarthy, who retired at the end of August after a 50-year career in nursing. She spent the past 33 years at Dubbo hospital. At her farewell the words of her colleagues said it all: Mary set a high standard of nursing care, inspired her staff to meet that standard and trained many future leaders. Mary was always willing to help out whenever and wherever needed, serving as acting director of nursing at Dubbo hospital and accepting secondments as acting general manager at nine hospitals across the district. Mary was the nurse unit manager of Dubbo's surgical ward for 24 years and recently used that experience to consult on the fit-out of the newly redeveloped surgical unit. Now retired, Mary is looking forward to spending more time with her children and grandchildren in Victoria. I thank Mary for her years of dedication to serving others in our community. I am positive that her legacy will live on in all the nurses she trained and inspired. Well done to Mary. I wish her all the best in retirement.

NATIONAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAM

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (18:20:38): I commend members of my community who are concerned about anti-vaccination misinformation on Facebook. In 1942 Australia introduced a whooping cough vaccination program for infants and children. Following the introduction of the vaccination program the number of deaths from whooping cough fell dramatically. Whooping cough is one of only 17 vaccine-preventable diseases that are covered by Australia's National Immunisation Program. Immunisation rates of 90 per cent are necessary to provide herd immunity, which prevents the infection of people who cannot receive vaccinations, including newborn babies and people undergoing chemotherapy. Members of my community call on Facebook to stop providing a platform for anti-vaccination groups to spread misinformation and to stop collecting advertising revenue from anti-vaccination groups. I am happy to work with the Government on this issue. I urge Facebook to remove misinformation regarding vaccinations.

DRY JULY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:21:41): Earlier this year I was proud to participate in Dry July to support the Central Coast Local Health District's CoastCanCare program. Throughout the month of July there were 150 local Dry Julyers, and together we raised a total of \$49,669.24. I acknowledge CoastCanCare. Since its formation, it has assisted hundreds of adult cancer patients on the Central Coast by providing support, care and assistance. My wife is one of those patients and I really cannot thank them enough. Funds raised through Dry July provide free wellbeing and recovery tools to cancer patients. This includes skills development for coping with a cancer diagnosis, treatments and side effects, including fatigue, pain and anxiety. I acknowledge the program coordinator of CoastCanCare, Tia Covi, and her amazing team for the fantastic job they do for all the people across the Central Coast who live with cancer.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW CRAIG DOUGLAS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:22:49): I pay tribute to Andrew Craig Douglas, who passed away recently. He was a long-term member of the Mount Kembla-Unanderra Branch of the Australian Labor Party. It was a privilege to attend his funeral on 5 November with my colleague Tania Brown, Deputy Lord Mayor of Wollongong. Andy was a lovely man who was incredibly proud of the work he put in over many years to help select and re-elect Labor members throughout the Illawarra. He was particularly proud of his work over many years as a caretaker of Stuart Park in North Wollongong, one of the premier public spaces in the State. He worked tirelessly to make sure that the park was maintained, cleaned and ready for thousands of visitors each year. I pass on my condolences to Mary Anne, Rick, Paul and Robbie and acknowledge his late son, Mark.

PETER WHATSON MEMORIAL GOLF DAY

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:23:49): I thank the family and friends of the late Peter Whatson for holding the fourth annual Peter Whatson Memorial Golf Day at Windsor Country Golf Club on 1 November. I particularly thank his wife, Trish Whatson, fellow organiser Netty Clarke and former rugby league player Terry Lamb, who was the emcee for the day. The annual golf day raises money for the Melanoma Institute Australia to assist with melanoma research. Melanoma was the cause of Peter's passing. Approximately \$23,000 was raised on the day and nearly \$70,000 has been raised overall. The strong turnout and the money raised is testament to the impact that Peter had on his family, friends, colleagues and anyone else he came across. I thank everyone for their great contribution to this important cause and look forward to a successful fifth annual golf day next year.

COOPER PERRAM

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:24:46): Congratulations to 11-year-old Cooper Perram and his year 5 classmates at Narrandera Public School who are collecting bread bag tags to help fund wheelchairs in South Africa. Cooper is confined to a wheelchair so he understands the need to be mobile and move around to participate in play, school or work. He saw this as an opportunity to help others. Cooper's mother told him about the initiative after seeing Aussie Bread Tags for Wheelchairs on Facebook. He aims to collect 6,000 tags to help this very worthy cause. I am always amazed by our enterprising young people. Congratulations and well done to Cooper and year 5 for contributing to this fundraising effort.

KU-RING-GAI ART CENTRE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:26:01): The Ku-ring-gai Art Centre at Roseville is an important facility in my electorate of Davidson dedicated to promoting visual art, creative writing and music classes at all levels and for all people. I am pleased it convened the Exploration Art Exhibition, promoting artists who have a disability, which ran from 11 to 25 July at the Ku-ring-gai Art Centre and provided artists of all ages with an opportunity to promote their works, including paintings, photography, sketches and sculptures. The

Exploration Art Exhibition was the first of its kind offered by Ku-ring-gai Council and encouraged artists with a disability to show their unique art, tell their stories and sell their works to the public. The exhibition was launched by Mayor Jennifer Anderson. All entrants were presented with a certificate of appreciation and the most popular artwork, *Australian Natives* by Shannon Andrew, received the people's choice award. Well done to all concerned.

BEROWRA FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (18:27:07): I congratulate the awesome crew at the Berowra Football Club not only on a successful 2019 season but also on their sixtieth anniversary. The 2018 season was a tough act to follow but there have been some amazing results this season. Premierships went to the boys under-16 division 3 side, the girls under-16 division 2 side and the men's over-35 division 6 side. Special mention goes to the men's all-age 2 premiers, who won their first 12 matches straight and have earned a promotion to premier league division. The under-11 T3 State Cup team also took out the championship.

This year the club focused on increasing girls' participation in the sport and encouraged them to play in teams on both Saturday and Sunday. The club has also implemented a new development program for all the younger players that focuses on learning the skills needed to play the game and have fun on the pitch. They are already looking forward to a great season in 2020. Off the field, the club inducted four new life members. I congratulate Angelo Toliopoulos, Ross Smith, George and Jo Zafos on their service, along with president Brad Rayner, Jerome Madeira and the amazing committee on another fantastic year.

OAK FLATS LIONS CLUB

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:28:20): I acknowledge the kindness and generosity of the Oak Flats Lions Club. The group recently fundraised \$1,500 for the installation of an air conditioner for a local Barrack Heights family who were doing it tough. The Hainsworth family is made up of a single mother, Christie; her 16-year-old daughter, Leteisha, who was diagnosed with an intellectual disability, autism, behavioural issues and anxiety; and three-year-old Hunter, who was born with a fused skull and has had to undergo two reconstructive surgeries. The Oak Flats Lions Club is a remarkably selfless and giving organisation in my local community. When I ran my inaugural winter toy drive earlier this year, the Oak Flats Lions Club donated an incredible \$500 worth of toys to the appeal. I am so grateful to have such an inspiring local group working every day to help my community. On behalf of all my constituents, I thank the Oak Flats Lions Club for everything it does. I thank Hansard, who are here tonight taking down these speeches.

ROTARY CLUB OF COFFS HARBOUR

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:30:00): A community is built on the back of the passionate people who love where they live. The Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour is one of the many organisations in my electorate that cares about our community. I was proud to open their latest initiative, the southern foreshores fitness station at Wayne Glenn walk overlooking our picturesque harbour. This is the final stage of their overall project to enhance our foreshores, including two shelters, a water station, a bike rack and historically themed signage. Max Glenn was the driver and project manager and his dedicated team comprised: Robert Avery, Mike Brown, Grahame Crouch, Kevin McLaughlin, Dave Brown, John Cowling, Richard Hinton, Barry Felp, Peter Richardson, Rob Shone, Kevin Hartley, Paul Moran, Steve Millward, Grahame Kell, Peter Farquhar, Rob Anderson and Keith Thompson. I give a quick shout-out to photographer Trevor Veale, who thoroughly showed me up on the chin-up bars. He did 10 chin-ups far more impressively than I was able to manage.

LAKES RUGBY UNION CLUB

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:30:30): I congratulate Lakes Rugby Union Club, who have taken out the premier two level of the Central Coast rugby union competition. The Lakes were competing with the Ourimbah side in the grand final with both teams playing strongly. Ourimbah was leading the match 7-0 due to a converted try in the first half but Lakes were right back in the match with two tries later. The game was well contested in the second half with Lakes increasing their lead with spectacular tries and great skills to take out the match 37-15. Lakes team players did an outstanding job, but the best came from fullback Alec Herridge, five-eighth Tyler Johnson and lock Chad Goodhand. I congratulate the players from Ourimbah where prop Steven Finlay, halfback Conner Peden and five-eighth Ryan Keegan stood out. I also congratulate both Lakes Rugby Club and Ourimbah Rugby Club on their great efforts in making it to the grand final. I thank Hansard very much for recording this very important message. They are gone now.

ST GEORGE HOSPITAL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:31:32): When St George Hospital opened on 16 November 1894 there were just eight beds. Fast forward 125 years and St George Hospital is a bustling healthcare facility with

over 670 beds that last year alone saw 60,000 patient admissions and 80,000 emergency department presentations. An open day held last Monday served as a celebration for not just the staff, the 300 volunteers who support them and the patients, but also the entire community. The festivities included a parade of hospital uniforms from different eras and a competition of the best decorated ward, which went to 6B for its depiction of an 1800s era medical emergency. Like all birthdays, there was also a cake. Recent years have seen a major expansion of the hospital with the redevelopment of the emergency department and a new acute services building opened in 2017. I thank St George Hospital General Manager Leisa Rathborne, who said 125 years of caring for the community was a wonderful milestone to celebrate. I thank every single person who attended the event.

CENTRAL COAST COASTAL CRUISERS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:32:38): The Coastal Cruisers are a Central Coast based mountain bike riders group formed in 2016. The intention behind creating the group was to raise much-needed money through participating in charity events to support cancer research and improve cancer care services. One such charity event they participate in is the Tour De Rocks, which is a ride from Armidale in the State's north-west to South West Rocks covering 270 kilometres in approximately three days. The 2019 Tour De Rocks amassed \$360,000 for charity with the Coastal Cruisers contributing a massive \$30,000. Locally, the Coastal Cruisers have been able to successfully lobby the Tour De Rocks for funding to purchase a tilting nursing chair on wheels for Gosford Hospital's oncology ward. The purchase of this chair will allow cancer patients to move more freely around the ward and access the family room. I thank President Craig Smith and the members of Coastal Cruisers for devoting their time to selfless endeavours and raising crucial funding for equipment acquisition at Gosford Hospital.

MUDGEES FESTIVAL OF SNAGS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:33:37): The Mudgee region is well known for its stunning wines and rolling hills, but it will soon be known for something else entirely. On 30 November Mudgee is set to host the Festival of Snags after winning an online competition. The region is no slouch when it comes to producing quality bangers. In fact the Gulgong butchery has snagged trophies at the regional New South Wales Sausage King competition run by the Australian Meat Industry Council for the past three years. For the second straight year it took out the traditional Australian beef sausage category as well as won best butchers gourmet open class burger for the third year in a row. The Festival of Snags will reinforce Mudgee's status as a first-class foodie destination. It comes at a time when tourism dollars will provide an invaluable boost to the region's economy. I urge everyone to head west this summer and enjoy the glorious wine and produce the region has to offer. If they spend a few nights and, importantly, a few dollars in our towns it will be the best drought relief they can possibly give.

AVA ROSS AND ZOE COOKSEY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:34:35): The New South Wales Government State Representative Award for Sport recognises exceptional people who have represented the State in a competitive field either nationally or internationally. I am delighted that two recent recipients of the award live in my electorate of Charlestown. Ava Ross from Charlestown competed in the School Sport Australia track and field championships last November. She ran in the 100-metre event and was a member of the four by 100-metre girls relay team. Zoe Cooksey from Eleebana was a member of the New South Wales All Schools diving team, competing in the one-metre and three-metre springboard events. I am inspired by the commitment, hard work, skill and determination of those girls. I am delighted that their achievements have been recognised with their award. I hope that Ava and Zoe's accomplishments will bring them much pleasure and satisfaction and inspire others in my local community to seek to compete at high levels.

CANCER COUNCIL CENTRAL COAST

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:35:35): Last week I finally agreed to participate in the 2020 Cancer Council "Stars of the Central Coast" dancing competition. It has taken many years for me to be persuaded by Ros English and the team at the Cancer Council Central Coast but I have finally given in. I am pleased to be playing a small part in raising funds for such an important cause. Last Friday I attended the official launch event at Crown Plaza, Terrigal, and I happened to draw out my least favourite category: musical theatre. I look forward to battling it out on the dance floor against a number of well-known people on the Central Coast, including: Radio broadcaster and voice of NRL, Steve Allen; Claire Garrard from Leading Edge Fitness; Meg Macintosh from 5 Star Day Spa, my neighbours; Elia Eliopoulou from Remy & Co, another neighbour of mine in Fountain Plaza; Kyla Daniels from Cakes by Kyla; Katie Stokes from Playing in Puddles; Ash Bowden from Dr Do More; Mick Morley from East Coast Roofing; and Ben Bradley from the Davistown RSL.

ACTION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:36:55): I acknowledge the hard work of the Cabramatta organising committee for Action Against Domestic Violence to raise awareness about domestic violence in my electorate. The committee is made up of representatives from local organisations, staff from government departments and local police officers. Unfortunately, 16 per cent of women and 5.9 per cent of men have experienced some form of physical violence from a partner since they were 15 years old and more than one million Australian children are affected by domestic and family violence. The worst part about this is that an average of one woman per week is killed by a current or former partner and one male per month is killed by a current or former partner. Domestic violence is a scourge that has plagued our community for far too long. Initiatives like this one go a long way towards eradicating it for good. I wish the organising committee every success as their weeklong line-up of Action Against Domestic Violence events happen across my electorate. I urge everyone to stand in solidarity with the local Action Against Domestic Violence events in support of eradicating domestic violence for good.

HORNSBY RSL FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment) (18:38:02): I congratulate the Hornsby RSL Football Club on reaching fiftieth and sixtieth anniversaries this year. The junior club celebrates 60 years of football while the senior club celebrates 50 years. They recently had not one but two celebrations to mark the occasion. More than 200 people attended, including 13 living members of the first senior team in 1970. Hornsby RSL Football Club is one of those clubs that everyone loves to be part of. They have had success on the pitch and every player, junior or senior, feels part of the team. Over their time as a club they have had over 800 registered players: 51 have reached 10 years of service; 30 have achieved 20 years of service; 13 have achieved 30 years of service; and the great Roy Ashpole and Terry Clarke have been with the club for more than 40 years. I congratulate Roy and Terry and thank them so much for all they do for the community. It shows true dedication—once you are a Hornsby RSL football player you just do not want to leave. I thank all the volunteers past and present who have made the club so great, particularly President Roy Ashpole, Senior Vice-President Daniel Clarke and Junior Vice-President Deanne Forrest.

WEST WYALONG HORSE, SPORTS AND RODEO ASSOCIATION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:39:08): The West Wyalong Horse, Sports and Rodeo Association raised \$21,000 at its annual Sore Butts Charity Ride in August for Can Assist. I was fortunate enough to attend this event where 101 riders and their horses gathered at Naradhan Hall to start the event. The riders completed a 21-kilometre course, including a break for lunch provided by West Wyalong Can Assist, ending at Naradhan Hall. I extend thanks to everyone who worked so hard to get this event off the ground, especially Can Assist West Wyalong for providing lunch. I also give a huge shout out to West Wyalong Horse Sports and Rodeo Association President Greg Trethowa, and Secretary Elise Lancaster, the Naradhan Hall Committee and all the committee volunteers. I congratulate everyone on a successful event and a tremendous achievement on the money raised for a worthy cause.

WALCHA RURAL WOMEN'S GATHERING 2019

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)—I recognise the efforts of the organising committee of the Walcha Rural Women's Gathering held in the town recently. This fantastic two-day event attracted almost 200 visitors to the town, with a terrific range of local and invited keynote speakers. Walcha like all the towns in my electorate is feeling the grip of the drought, so these visitors gave local businesses and residents a much-needed boost. Our rural women are the foundation of our families and our communities, putting their hands up and giving their time to support others who may be less fortunate. The list of information sessions at the conference ranged from Looking after Your Mental Health and the Health of those You Care About to Taking Stock of Our Pastures and an Introduction to Bobin Lace Making. Learning about the skills of writing successful grant applications to busting a burlesque dance move were examples of the wide range of topics. What a fantastic event. Thank you to the organisers and thank you to Walcha for putting out the welcome mat.

CHLOE STEWART

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—I wish to congratulate Tweed Heads bowler Chloe Stewart on taking home another title. Chloe defeated Liz Perry recently to win the ladies singles at the Champion of Champions tournament in Toowoomba. Chloe's win comes ahead of the Multi-Nationals Invitational to be held on the Gold Coast later this month, where she will represent Australia. Having only joined the Tweed Heads Bowls Club 2 years ago she was delighted to secure this win for the clubs record. Well done Chloe, an amazing achievement. We wish her well for the event later this month.

YEO PARK

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Thanks to a successful community campaign, Gough Whitlam Reserve will continue to be filled with picnickers enjoying coffee from Outfield, junior cricket games and families enjoying the shade of the reserve's beautiful trees. Inner west council has been working with Yeo Park Infants' School and local community and sporting groups to activate Gough Reserve, transforming it from a little used patch of grass to a bustling community hub. The Department of Education had proposed to erect a security fence around Yeo Park Infants' School, and while protecting student safety is critical, the community was eager to find a solution that didn't cut Gough Reserve in half. Over 1,300 inner west residents signed a petition to find an alternative options and thanks to them and local activists like Luke Buckle, there will be no change in the community use of the reserve. Thank you to everyone who contacted me and spoke up for this little corner of the inner west and thank you to the Minister for Education and Early Learning for listening to their concerns. I look forward to catching up with residents at Yeo Park for coffee or to watch a game of cricket very soon!

COOLAMON CWA SCONVERSATIONS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I'd wager that I'm the CWA's biggest fan and I'd like to take this opportunity to recognise a wonderful recent initiative of this great organisation. The Coolamon branch of the CWA like many others across in the region last month held 'Sconversations'. These aptly named afternoon teas kicked off in September during awareness week to shine a spotlight on women's mental health. In Coolamon, local paramedics were invited to attend and received a bundle of gorgeous "trauma teddies" knitted by members. Thank you to branch president Marion Farrell and all members of the Coolamon CWA for your generosity, openness and community spirit.

REDHEAD MEN'S SHED MEMORIAL

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)—The mine that became the Redhead Colliery, in my electorate of Charlestown, was originally opened in 1889. By the time of its closure in 1928, 16 miners had died working in the colliery. Last week, following four years of hard work by the Redhead Men's Shed, I was privileged to open a new Miner's Memorial for the Colliery. The memorial is in a prominent location in Redhead, and consists of a magnificently restored poppet wheel and a plaque with the names of the men who lost their lives. Pat Conroy MP, Federal Member for Shortland, and Councillor Kay Fraser, Mayor of Lake Macquarie, both played significant roles in bringing the memorial project to fruition, and I was delighted that they joined me for the opening ceremony. The ceremony was made complete by the contribution of students from Redhead Public School who sang and read for us. Local collieries have a significant place in the history of my electorate, as do the deaths of miners at work. I am grateful to the members of the Redhead Men's Shed for their hard work in ensuring that the Redhead Colliery is remembered by us now, and by future generations.

MATTHEW HOADLEY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)—I rise to congratulate the Matthew Hoadley on being a finalist in the Sports Person of the Year category at the Myall Lakes Community Awards. Matthew has been nominated for his contribution to the Manning Valley Netball Association, for the past three years Matthew has been running a coffee stand at the Taree Netball Courts every Saturday morning. During the Netball season Matthew is always the first to arrive and one of the last to leave. Matthew took the initiative to set up the coffee stand to enable a source of raising funds for the association and required equipment. On average, Matthew's coffee stand makes \$280 per week during the playing season which goes directly to the association. Over the last couple of years Matthew hasn't just contributed his time making 1 000's of Coffees and Hot Chocolates, he has also trained and mentored a number of young people including Hannah and Luke who have been able to gain employment in the hospitality sector thanks to Matthews's assistance. I wish to thank Matthew for his contribution to our great community.

BATTLE OF BEERSHEBA

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—I recently attended a ceremony at Menangle Park to mark the 102nd anniversary of the Battle of Beersheba. The location of the commemoration service was of particular importance given the Light Horse actually trained at Menangle Park. A memorial at the site acknowledges the relationship between the location and the Light Horse. The Battle of Beersheba was an extremely significant battle. On October 31, 1917, the assault on Beersheba commenced. British infantry attacks coupled with air and artillery support were unsuccessful in capturing Beersheba so in stepped the 4th, 11th and 12th Light Horse regiments. The pace of the Light Horse regiments' attack surprised the Turkish soldiers – who were ultimately defeated. As a consequence of the Battle of Beersheba, there were 31 Light Horse casualties and 36 wounded. Seven hundred Turkish soldiers were also captured. As a result of the victorious battle, Gaza fell just one week

later which allowed British troops to enter Jerusalem. The sacrifice and bravery of the Light Horse regiments will never be forgotten. Lest we forget.

NOWRA RSL

Mrs SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast—Minister for Local Government)—The Nowra RSL sub-branch has reached its 100th year, and I was pleased to join with members for a dinner on October 30 to commemorate this wonderful milestone. It is one of the great privileges as the Member for South Coast to frequently join with the Nowra RSL sub-branch to pay my respects to those who have fought for our country, and remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Local RSL clubs are an integral part of local communities, and I am grateful to have such dedicated sub-branch in my electorate. I thank President Fred Dawson along with the entire Nowra RSL sub-branch committee for their ongoing contribution to our community, and for hosting such a wonderful event. With such a strong foundation to build on, I have no doubt that the next 100 years for the Nowra RSL sub-branch will be even more successful than the first.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AUSTRALIA

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—I rise today to acknowledge the work of Community Colleges Australia, who recently launched the report 'Engaging Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Learners in New South Wales Community Education' here at Parliament House. Community Colleges Australia acts as a national representative of not-for-profit community education providers. Established in 2007, the Association advocates for the greater recognition of, and enhanced support for, the community education sector. There are currently over 400 community education training providers, with the St George and Sutherland Community College servicing our local community. This Community College provides a wide array of courses in areas such as childcare, health services assistance, and leadership and management. It was great to attend the Association's report launch which investigated the issue of how New South Wales community education providers reach learners that are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

JAMISON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)—As the end of the 2019 school year is quickly approaching, I wish to thank and recognise the outgoing Jamison High School Leadership team for the positive and valuable contributions they have made across their school community. Captains: Brock Hand and Stephanie Small and Vice Captains: Amyelia Clarke, Gemma Paton, Talia Tui, Jacob Berridge, David Palm and Ben Stewart, thank you and I wish you all the very best for your future pursuits. Additionally, I extend my congratulations to the incoming student leadership team for 2020, School Captains: Jalal Slaibi and Emily Cox and Vice Captains: Kalani Fitzmaurice, Ella Homan, Tamira Reid, Connor Burke, Jacob Craft and Kobi Hind.

BEROWRA WATERS VIEW CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)—I would like to pass on my congratulations to the Berowra Waters VIEW Club who this year are celebrating 18 years. VIEW stands for Voice, Interests and Education of Women and the group is open to women of all ages and backgrounds. They currently have 28 members and meet every month at Asquith Golf Club. They hold a number of fundraisers throughout the year including raffles at their monthly meetings and recently a Melbourne Cup Lunch. For the upcoming 18th birthday they will be holding a special luncheon at the Asquith Golf Club with entertainment, lucky door prize and raffle.

They will have their popular crafts table selling gifts, jams, cakes and slices, all handmade by their members. The group support two Learning for Life students through the Smith Family as well as other Smith Family programs. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President Pamela Schumacher and Vice President Pam Lewthwaite. Along with Geraldine Collins who is Secretary and looks after Publicity, Treasurer Julie Randell, Assistant Secretary Mary Devin and Program Officer Lorna Lever. Congratulations Berowra Waters View Club on 18 years in our community and I wish you all the best for the next 18 years!

THE JESTAS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)—Local Glenmore Park band, the Jestas are a group of young musicians who made it to the semi-finals of the 2019 YouthRock Band Competition at Bankstown Sports Club. The Jestas have four members with Ben Wilson on rhythm guitar, Caitlyn Kitchin on drums and vocals, Jesse Gerhard on lead guitar and vocals and Rafaela Safadi on bass guitar and vocals. They are a rock band, performing classic and modern rock. YouthRock, an official event for NSW Youth Week is a music competition for teenage contemporary bands to write and perform their own music. Although the Jestas did not make the finals, they did an incredible job of writing, composing and performing all their original music. All four band members were

studying music at Glenmore Park High School where they began performing together at school events, then at other schools, restaurants, and clubs and are often the supporting act for the band RockOz. They rehearse on weekends and continue to do live performances. Now having graduated high school they hold hope to one day make an impact on the music industry. Well done to the Jestas, I wish you all the best.

PENELOPE SEIDLER AM AND MRAG

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)—I would like to acknowledge the ongoing and generous donation of artworks and support to the Maitland Regional Art Gallery from Penelope Seidler AM, along with the generous gift of her time at the recent Annual Arts Health Fundraiser. When interviewed eloquently by ABC1233 Newcastle's Jenny Marchant, Penelope shared from her life experiences in art and architecture across a watershed era in Australia's cultural development on the world scene. Married to late renowned architect Harry Seidler, and a consummate architect in her own right, Penelope – now in her 80's - continues to collect artworks across many mediums. MRAG engages art to create and extend programs for members of our community living with memory loss, lived mental health experiences, families with sensory processing needs, and others with accessibility requirements through their Art and Dementia Program. These programs would not be possible without the support of sponsors including Walker Grange Lifestyle Village, Bruce James a.k.a. Cutler Footway, February Design, Bev Holden, The Cunning Culinarian and Donnarch Fine Chocolates.

ST LUKE'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)—I recognise St Luke's Anglican Church at Liverpool which recently held Bicentennial Celebrations on Sunday 20 October. This was the 200th Anniversary of the first Anglican Service held at St Luke's. The commemoration was the result, I know, of considerable work and preparation by the Organising Committee and the Reverend Stuart Pearson. The event also featured NSW Governor Margaret Beazley AO, QC, the Archbishop of Sydney Glenn Davies, and Bishop Peter Lin. The physical church building is a spectacular and grand old building designed by that very challenging figure, but very good architect Francis Greenway whose story has been recently retold by Alasdair McGregor in *A Forger's Progress*. It is a very important part of Liverpool's European built heritage. I also note that Dr Bryan Cowling, previously Principal of Thomas Hassall Anglican College has written a history of St Luke's with publication expected next year.

JAN NICOLL

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)—If there is one person worthy of the title 'community stalwart' it is Jan Nicoll. Jan is much-loved in the Macquarie Fields community after many years of volunteering and dedicating herself to helping others. Jan was recently named the Senior Volunteer of the Year for the South Western Sydney/ Macarthur region for her work with The Salvation Army, Youth Off the Streets and the ADRA Community Centre. Jan is a good friend and I know she will be slightly annoyed with me for making this Community Recognition Statement in her honour because Jan doesn't crave the spotlight. In fact, her humility and quiet determination to serve the community is what makes Jan so special – and so loved. Someone once described Jan as a community shaker and I think that term sums her up perfectly. Jan is known for being tenacious in her community advocacy, another reason she is so highly regarded. I once asked Jan what motivates her to help the community and her answer inspired me: "I believe we do what we can, because we can, and while we can".

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE 50 YEARS' SERVICE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the outstanding efforts of John Brooks, David Ebeling, Donald Groves and Vincent Higgins for 50 years' service as Justices of the Peace. Over the last half a century, John, David, Donald and Vincent have played an important part in our legal system by helping hundreds of people at key moments in their lives. They provide their services on a voluntary basis, witnessing affidavits and statutory declarations, and certifying original documents so that members of our community may buy a property, access superannuation or apply for a passport. No matter the request, these selfless individuals have always been happy to lend a hand.

John, David, Donald and Vincent are among more than 250 New South Wales Justices of the Peace who are celebrating their Golden Jubilee of service in 2018-19. During the 50 years that these Justices of the Peace have been witnessing documents, they have also seen profound social changes and advances in technology. Even the way people find a Justice of the Peace has evolved, with people now using the online register rather than relying on word of mouth. I thank all four recipients for their dedication to our community.

DOLTONE HOUSE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)—The stories of people who have come to Australia and found success are too many to mention. I would like to congratulate one family, the Signorellis, who together have created an

iconic Sydney brand - Doltone House - which recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Many dignitaries spoke about the quality of services provided by Doltone House venues at their Anniversary Dinner, and I agree with all that was said. When Biaggio Signorelli left Sicily in 1954 and landed in Sydney, he no doubt had big and exciting dreams. It was in Australia that he met his wife Filipa and raised a family that has become a role model for other successful family businesses. Today at the site where Biaggio landed in Pyrmont stands the statue called 'Life in a Suitcase' - created by Terence Plowright and commissioned by Paul Signorelli as a tribute Australia's immigrants and to honour the achievements of three generations of the Signorelli family. The success of Doltone House and the Signorelli family is a story of our successful multi-culturalism and the contribution of their hard-working men and women who have come here and made Australia their home.

BALLINA INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—It was a pleasure to attend the Official Opening of the Ballina Indoor Sports Centre last week. An indoor sports centre for Ballina has been a dream of the Ballina Basketball Association for 25 years and I am delighted to have seen it come to fruition. I commend the activities of Eva Ramsey of the Ballina Basketball Association who has lobbied and raised funds for this outcome for years. Without the vision of Eva, a 4 court facility would not been possible. Congratulations to Ballina Shire Council for their management of this project. This facility will enable Ballina to host a variety of sporting competitions including State and National sporting events – a welcome addition to our town.

1ST WESTMEAD SCOUT GROUP

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—The 1st Westmead Scout Group's celebrated the 80th anniversary of its founding and presented meritorious members with awards on the 26th October 2019. During its 80 year history the 1st Westmead Scout Group followed the scouting ethos and encouraged the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development of young people as they become responsible citizens and take a constructive place as members of our community. Today the group has over a hundred youth members participating in community, social, outdoor, adventurous and self-improvement activities, right across the Prospect electorate and Western Sydney. I would like to offer a special congratulations to Prospect's Jasmine Rowe on being awarded the Australian Scout Medallion for her outdoor activities and leadership, an award only given to one per cent of scouts across Australia. A huge thank you to Prospect's Christine McGrath, the Leader in Charge, and the entire 1st Westmead Scout Group for a great event.

REOPENING OF THE CAMDEN VALLEY INN

Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)—I recently had the pleasure to officially re-open the recently renovated Camden Valley Inn, which is on the very edge of my electorate. The refurbishment was undertaken by The Lewis Land Group and all are excited about the new look facility. The priority was to ensure the preservation of the Camden Valley Inn's heritage and old school country charm but also give it a new school modern feel, and this was certainly achieved. The historic buildings received a facelift, under consultation with a specialist heritage architect. The renovation has created a number of local jobs and there are now over 100 people in ongoing employment. Over 95 percent of those are locals. Renovations included the demolition of all structures except the two heritage-listed buildings and recently-renovated accommodation units. The historic buildings received a facelift, under consultation with a heritage architect, and the end result is very rewarding. Camden Valley Inn manager Kayla Kyling and Brad Jenkins head of leisure for the Lewis Land Group are to be congratulated on the project which is now running better than ever.

AVONDALE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Avondale College has been an important and integral part of the Lake Macquarie community for more than 122 years, but I'm very pleased to inform the House that the college is now known as the Avondale University College. Following many years of hard work by the college's leadership group, Avondale recently became the first higher education provider in Australia to qualify for a change in category under new guidelines set by the national regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. Avondale is now one step away from achieving full university status. Avondale offers courses in the arts, business, education, nursing, ministry, science and veterinary fields so it is a great asset to our community and indeed the State. There are many people at Avondale who I should acknowledge but none more so than former college president John Cox who got the ball rolling on the university aspirations, and current President Professor Ray Roennfeldt. They and their teams have worked very hard for many years on establishing the college as one of the finest education institutions in the region and beyond. I congratulate all concerned on this tremendous milestone.

JENNINGS MEDAL 2019

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—I would like to congratulate the 2019 recipients of the Jennings Medal. The Jennings Medal recognises and celebrates the best teams, players and clubs throughout Northern NSW

Football's seven member zones. Congratulations to the winner of the Graham Jennings Medal for 2019, Mitch Oxborrow. Congratulations to Hamilton Olympic FC who won Club of the Year. Congratulations to NPL Northern NSW Rookie of the Year, Kaelen Burke from Valentine Phoenix FC and to Michael Bolch from Maitland FC who was awarded the NPL Northern NSW Coach of the Year. Congratulations to Nathan Archbold of Charlestown City Blues who received the Bill Mahoney Goalkeeper of the Year award. Congratulations to Riley McNaughton, another Charlestown City Blues player, who took out the fan-decided NPL Northern NSW Goal of the Year for his goal against Lake Macquarie City in Round 3. Congratulations to Alicia Guest who received the Newcastle Permanent Referee of the Year award for carrying the highest ethics of a Match Official each and every time she enters the field. Thank you to Northern NSW Football chair Helene O'Neill and CEO David Eland for highlighting the achievements of these local clubs.

LIONEL WATTS RESERVE UPGRADE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)—The Northern Beaches Council have completed a major redevelopment of Lionel Watts Reserve and Playground at Frenchs Forest in my electorate of Davidson. The NSW Government helped fund the Lionel Watts Reserve project via \$5 million contributed from the Stronger Communities Fund and \$4 million dedicated from the Merger Savings Fund. There was also Community Building Partnership Program funding for a new scoreboard. The Lionel Watts Reserve is home of the Wakehurst Soccer Club and Forest Lions Junior AFL Club. It has benefited from the installation of synthetic playing surfaces.

The \$4 million upgrade included two full size soccer fields, a small junior soccer pitch, plus a senior AFL oval. On 1 December I will attend the opening of all the facilities, including the new all-abilities playground at Lionel Watts Reserve. The \$2.5 million playground will promote inclusive and active play. A skate park for local youth is another popular new feature at the reserve. It was developed with community input, including from young skaters. The Davidson community will now be able to use these inclusive modern facilities for sport and play. That's fantastic, so well done to all concerned.

TONY LABBOZZETTA – COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)—I rise today to commend, congratulate and extend on behalf of the Fairfield electorate, our sincerest appreciation and admiration for one of our local residents, Mr Anthony (Tony) Labbozzetta. As we are all aware, Justices of the Peace play an important role in our communities and provide an invaluable service to those in need. Tony has been serving the local community for the better half of 50 years in his capacity as a Justice of the Peace and a strong community advocate in a diverse number of roles. His contributions were acknowledged and honoured among a number of others in a special ceremony recently held in NSW Parliament on 22nd October, 2019. Tony, thank you for dedicating a significant portion of your time supporting and contributing to the local community over the years. We truly do appreciate everything you have done for the broader Fairfield community. There is no doubt in my mind that the Fairfield electorate is that much richer for your efforts over the years.

MR SIONE NOSA

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise Sione Nosa who has been a dedicated volunteer in the Griffith community for the past 5 years. People from other countries and cultures who settle in our country face many difficulties. One such being the filling out of forms like visas, applications for citizenships, employment applications, to name a few. The assistance provided on a voluntary basis to these people by Sione is immeasurable and very much appreciated by the individuals and the community. Multicultural services are an integral part of many communities and I want to congratulate community minded citizens like Sione Nosa on voluntarily being available to assist people in this area of need.

BOOMERANG BAGS INNER WEST

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)—Today I recognise an organisation that does such important work to protect nature and make our community more sustainable: Sydney Inner West Boomerang Bags. This organisation is part of the global Boomerang Bags movement that was started in 2013. Its members volunteer their time to sew bags and other items from donated fabric or materials destined for landfill. The beautiful shopping bags that they produce help to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags and are also used within our community to start conversations about how we can all contribute to a more sustainable world. If you pop into Supabarn at Annandale you'll see one of the remarkable local bag exchange points that Sydney Inner West Boomerang Bags has set up there. Shoppers who've forgotten their reusable bags can simply borrow one from the bag exchange rather than having to take a plastic bag at the counter. Thank you for all that you do to protect our precious planet and help create connections within the community.

KEITH'S CLOSET

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Mr Speaker I rise today to acknowledge the fantastic work of Keith Donnelly and the staff at the Kiloh Centre for creating Keith's Closet. The Kiloh Centre is an Acute Mental Health Inpatient Service at the Prince of Wales hospital. Keith's Closet gives clients of the Kiloh Centre access to free clothing, shoes and toiletries, all of which has been donated by the Prince of Wales Hospital staff, family and friends. When touring the facility, the thing that most struck me was the above and beyond service being provided by staff at this facility for their vulnerable clients. The Kiloh Centre staff should also be congratulated for their work in improving mental health services in our community. You can donate new or near new clothing, shoes and accessories directly to the Kiloh Centre at the Prince of Wales Hospital or at my Coogee Electoral Office. On behalf of the constituents of Coogee and the Eastern Suburbs, I would like to thank Keith, and the team at the Kiloh Centre, for their passion and dedication to mental health services and for their commitment to providing the highest quality service to our community.

CHRIS SIGALAS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)—I rise to recognise young Chipping Norton residents Julia and Christina Sigalas, for the work they have done to help their father Chris who unfortunately suffered a cerebral haemorrhage 11 years ago at the age of 31. Julia recently told her story to a crowd of approximately 100 people at the Liverpool hospital's Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit for National Carers week. She stated in her speech that while her dad's injury has made it difficult to do as many everyday activities with her father that other kids her age experience, in many ways, it has resulted in her having a unique relationship with her father they both treasure. It is clear that Julia and Christina have both done an outstanding job in caring for their father and responding to the challenges that their father's cerebral haemorrhage forced upon them. I wish Chris all the best in his recovery and in the future.

PLUNKETT STREET PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I want to acknowledge the valuable contribution of Woolloomooloo's Plunkett Street Public School. Plunkett Street School is a small community school with 85 students from Kindergarten to Year 6 and a 20 place preschool, which allows individualised programming and small teacher/student ratios. There is an extensive range of programs like Mandarin, Musica Viva, STEM, music, swimming, gardening, environmental sustainability, student leadership, school sports, family fun days and annual art show.

Strong links with local community service providers allow programs like the Lou's Place supported playgroup, Rushcutters Bay Tennis, Sydney Theatre Company, NSW Art Gallery, State Library, Botanic Gardens, Kings Cross Police and Australian College of Dance. There's a volunteer breakfast program with WEAVE, Hopestreet, Wayside Chapel and Ashurst Law, after school and vacation care with the City of Sydney's Juanita Nielson Centre. Plunkett Street Public School is a vital resource for local families in the area and has become an important community hub. I commend the dedicated staff and volunteers who work to make Plunkett Street Public School such a success, and will proudly continue to support the school.

DOLTONE HOUSE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)—On 25 October I attended the 50 year anniversary celebration of Doltone House at its first venue in Sylvania Waters. The Stubbs family started a family business in 1969 and the Signorelli family continued from 1995. A dream 50 years ago turned into an iconic brand in the hospitality industry setting the standard for quality and service. Doltone House has delivered over 67,000 events across its venues and Doltone House today employs over 550 people. The group's philanthropy is well known and demonstrated in various ways, including giving excess food to OzHarvest and establishing the Biaggio Signorelli Asbestos Foundation, which aims to increase awareness about the dangers of asbestos, early detection and ultimately help to find a cure for mesothelioma. I congratulate Paul Signorelli, Executive Chairman; Anna Cesarano, CEO and Nina Milazzo, COO on their successful leadership of the business, their entrepreneurial flair and their client focused vision.

2019 SCULPTURE BY THE SEA

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse)—On 24 October, 'Sculpture by the Sea', the world's largest free public sculpture exhibition returned to Bondi bringing thousands of visitors to the Eastern Beaches. I attended the People's and Kid's Choice awards which were won by local artist Joel Adler for 'Viewfinder' - a large metal periscope installed on the cliff face reflecting the crashing waves below. Congratulations Joel! It was wonderful to meet your family who are so proud of you. 'Succah by the Sea' – installations that re-imagine the 3000 year old Jewish ritual of Sukkot were also a part of the exhibition. I was lucky enough to have a twilight tour with Moriah College Foundation members who I thank for curating the Succahs installations for me. At Bondi Public School

I visited their biennial 'Sculpture by the Schools' exhibition, which runs to coincide with 'Sculpture by the Sea'. I loved the students' amazing sculptures which were based on the theme of 'climate'. The students should be very proud of their thoughtful and attractive sculptures. A warm congratulations to 'Sculpture by the Sea' Founder David Handley AM and Chair Alice Spigelman AM for again putting on a fantastic show for the 23rd year.

ST NICHOLAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ANNUAL GRAND BALL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—I was honoured and privileged to attend the St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church Punchbowl Annual Grand Ball at the Grand Paradiso Function Centre, Fairfield on 8th November 2019, together with His Eminence Metropolitan Basilios Kodesie, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Antiochian Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines. I would like to acknowledge the St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Parish Clergy Father Dr John El Karaan, Father Romanos Al-Baba and Deacon Phillip Saba, as well as Parish Executive Chairperson Mr Michael Bechara Bitar, Vice-Chairperson Mr Elias Tabchouri, Secretary Ms Michela Marie Chalhoub, Vice Secretary Mrs Najwa Nahas, Treasurer Mr Charles Khoury, Vice Treasurer Mr Joseph Eskaff and Public Officer Mr Victor Fajloun and I thank them for their kind invitation, and their warm and generous hospitality on the night.

I acknowledge the long term volunteers of the St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church, who were recognised at the Grand Ball, for their generous and tireless efforts assisting the church to deliver a wide range of valuable services to parishioners, including fundraising and charitable activities, biblical studies education, youth and senior services, and I commend the church's tremendous contribution to the local community.

EDDIE WARD, YOUNG GOLFER

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I bring to the attention of the House the impressive achievements of young golfer, Mr Eddie Ward from the Shellharbour electorate. Eddie competes under the Jack Newton Junior Golf banner and was impressively awarded the Illawarra Academy of Sport's 2018 Golf Athlete of the Year. Amongst his long list of achievements he can also boast the titles of; winner of the 2019 Northern Territory Junior open; winner of the 2017 & 2018 Kiama Junior Open Championships; fourth place at the Prestigious Jack Newton Junior Gold Champions Trophy; NSW State of Origin golf team selection; 2018 State Development Squad selection; and 2017 Grange Junior Open Winner. I would like to take this opportunity to pass along my sincere congratulations to Eddie. I'm certain this young man has a very bright future ahead, and I look forward to following his progress and hearing about his achievements in the years to come. Congratulations Eddie.

KU-RING-GAI SCHOOL LEADERS PARLIAMENTARY MORNING TEA

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai)—Recently I had the privilege of hosting the 5th annual Ku-ring-gai Primary School Leaders Morning Tea here at Parliament. I welcomed 36 students from 19 Ku-ring-gai schools along with their parents and teachers to acknowledge the contributions our school leaders have made to their school communities. The students were taken on a tour of this Chamber by our outstanding Parliamentary guide, Peter Tuziak and visited the Legislative Council. I conducted a more amateur tour for the parents and teachers, but was assured upon conclusion that it was enjoyable and informative. Prior to the presentation of the leadership certificates at the morning tea, I delivered a short speech where I expressed my views on leadership. I then proceeded to answer questions from the students who raised engaging topics such as the drought and single-use plastics. I hope that the young men and women found their visit to be an interesting and valuable experience and I look forward to hosting another year of young leaders in 2020.

HASTINGS DISTRICT HIGHLAND PIPE BAND

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise our talented musicians from the Hastings District Highland Pipe Band; Joy McKenzie, David Harris, Kerry Austin, Wendy Coulls and Jenny McKenzie for qualifying to perform at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo which was held on 19th October in Sydney. It is a tremendous honour for any pipe band member to be selected to play at the Royal Military Tattoo and for five pipers from the Hastings, this dream has become a reality as they performed on the weekend with a line up of 1500 of the world's finest military musicians at ANZ Stadium. Dubbed the "chance of a lifetime" it was the first ever opportunity the members had been given to play in a traditional Scottish band on a world stage and in front of an audience of thousands. Band spokesperson Jim Turnbull outlined the groups overall enthusiasm and eagerness to perform alongside the world's best pipers, drummers and dancers. He said it was a great experience for each musician and the first for any member from the Hastings District Highland Pipe Band. Congratulations again to each member for being selected to perform at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

ARMIDALE SECONDARY COLLEGE DEBATING TEAM

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales)—I congratulate Armidale Secondary College's debating team on winning the final of the

NSW Debating Championship against Orange High School on 11 November 2019. The debating team comprising Ella Vu, Casey Rainger, Rubi Ainsworth, Flynn Eastwood and coach Fiona Smee, beat out 377 other teams from all around NSW to reach the final. The team debated the topic 'That we should ban employers from ever firing their employees for expressing their personal beliefs' and argued for the negative. The final between Armidale Secondary College and Orange High School was the first time since 1953 that two rural schools had competed in the State final and this is a remarkable and terrific achievement for both teams. I congratulate the Armidale Secondary College debating team on this well-deserved victory and wish them all the best for future competitions.

CHELTENHAM GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)—Cheltenham Girls' High School has been servicing the Beecroft/Cheltenham area since 1957. The school is known for its great staff and positive learning environment. I was recently invited to the school for a tour by Principal Suellen Lawrence before classes. Suellen told me that every morning some of the students make coffee for the teachers and their classmates. Now, I very much enjoy my morning flat whites and it was a pleasure to have a coffee made by the students. The girls even showed me how to use the machines myself – a good example of learning from the next generation. I was also pleased to inform the staff and the students that Cheltenham Girls' had been drawn to participate in the 2020 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. This will mean that some students will have the opportunity to travel to Singapore and Greece to tour some of the most important battlefields of the two world conflicts. I'd like to strongly encourage next year's years 9 and 10 history students to apply. Thank you to Suellen and the staff and students of Cheltenham Girls' High School for hosting me at their school and I hope to return soon.

CIVIC DISABILITY CAFÉ OPENING

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)—On the 18th October I attended the opening of the new Civic Disability Services Café Engadine. The Café was previously operated by Sylvanvale and named, Birdcage Café and Catering from Sylvanvale. Birdcage Café provided support employment to people with disability. The move from the café was difficult for Sylvanvale however after a review they decided to focus on their core business supporting people in Supported Independent Living and their Community Hubs. Civic have continued the community based café ethos and I look forward to seeing the café continue to grow and prosper whilst supporting the vulnerable. The unemployment rate for people with disability is twice as high as the national average therefore supported employment options are critical. I commend Civic on their continuation of the café.

CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—CoastConnect Community Transport is an on-demand transportation service operated by Community Transport Central Coast Limited with over thirty years' experience providing safe and reliable transport services to the people of the Coast. On the 4th October 2019, CoastConnect were able to save the day when the Cronulla South Probus Club travelled, via train, to the beautiful Central Coast to tour our gorgeous Broken Bay Pearl Farm. After weeks of planning, the club encountered train delays which had a ripple effect on the rest of their day's schedule.

When they arrived at Woy Woy, they had missed their bus and were left in a lurch. Fortunately, CoastConnect were able to rescue the club, providing accessible, experienced and speedy transportation which ensured the club was able to make their planned tour of the Broken Bay Pearl Farm. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Community Transport Central Coast and commend Mr Paul Ormerod and Terry (Waiting on details)..... who coordinated the pick-up and drove the group on the day. Your speedy assistance ensured that visitors were able to enjoy our spectacular region and left with positive and happy impressions.

The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:41 until Tuesday 19 November 2019 at 12:00.