



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 20 November 2019**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Visitors .....	1653
Visitors .....	1653
Governor .....	1653
Assumption of the Administration of the Government .....	1653
Bills .....	1653
Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019 .....	1653
Second Reading Debate .....	1653
Third Reading .....	1675
Transport Administration Amendment (RMS Dissolution) Bill 2019 .....	1675
Messages .....	1675
Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 .....	1675
First Reading .....	1675
Road Transport Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2019 .....	1675
Returned .....	1675
Justice Legislation Amendment Bill (No 2) 2019 .....	1675
First Reading .....	1675
Second Reading Speech .....	1676
Second Reading Debate .....	1676
Third Reading .....	1678
Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 .....	1678
Second Reading Speech .....	1678
Committees .....	1680
Public Accounts Committee (PAC) .....	1680
Reports .....	1680
Legislation Review Committee .....	1682
Reports .....	1682
Visitors .....	1683
Visitors .....	1683
Announcements .....	1684
Question Time .....	1684
Question Time .....	1684
Bushfires and National Parks and Wildlife Service .....	1684
Bushfires and Emergency Services .....	1686
Regional New South Wales .....	1687
Member for Drummoyne .....	1689
State Economy .....	1689
Member for Drummoyne .....	1691
Bushfires and Transport Connectivity .....	1692
Bushfires and Wildlife .....	1693
Bushfires and Farming Communities .....	1694

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

<b>Committees</b> .....	1695
Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption .....	1695
Reports .....	1695
Inquiry .....	1695
Petitions .....	1695
Petitions Received .....	1695
Bills .....	1695
Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 .....	1695
Second Reading Speech .....	1695
Second Reading Debate .....	1698
Third Reading .....	1701
Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019 .....	1701
Second Reading Debate .....	1701
Public Interest Debate .....	1710
Minister for Police and Emergency Services .....	1710
Private Members' Statements .....	1716
North Shore Local Business Awards .....	1716
Union Town .....	1717
Tweed Electorate .....	1718
Seven Hills Electorate .....	1719
Wollongong Electorate .....	1720
Clarence Electorate .....	1721
Pittwater Electorate .....	1722
Bushfire Recovery Assistance .....	1723
Creator Academy .....	1724
Christian Community Aid .....	1724
Springwood High School .....	1724
Tribute to Brian Powyer .....	1725
Superintendent Wayne Cox, APM .....	1725
Port Stephens Electorate .....	1726
Bushfires and Myall Lakes Electorate .....	1726
Service NSW .....	1727
Food Angel .....	1728
Western New South Wales .....	1729
Riverstone and Districts War Memorial .....	1730
Wallerah 2 Coal Project .....	1730
Men's Health .....	1731
Penrith Electorate .....	1732
Health Care Complaints Commission .....	1733
Blacktown Electorate Schools .....	1734
Bills .....	1735
Children's Guardian Bill 2019 .....	1735

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Returned.....	1735
Community Recognition Statements .....	1735
William Abel.....	1735
Wollongong Homeless Hub.....	1735
St George Hospital.....	1735
Nurragingy Miniature Railway.....	1735
Clever Care Now.....	1736
Koori Knockout Competition .....	1736
Neutral Bay Public School Halloween Carnival.....	1736
Mark Geerligs .....	1736
Alexi Hunter.....	1736
Wentworthville Anglican Church.....	1737
Doolan Plumbing.....	1737
International Week of the Italian Cuisine .....	1737
Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters .....	1737
Sunset Framing and Gallery.....	1737
Redhead Surf Life Saving Club .....	1738
Organisation of Hellene & Hellene-Cypriot Women of Australia .....	1738
St George Cricket Club.....	1738
Core Community Services .....	1738
Seniors' Stories Volume 5.....	1738
Charlestown Electorate Community Organisations.....	1739
Mosman Cricket Club.....	1739
Sandra and Joe Marchetta .....	1739
St Mary of the Cross Centre.....	1739
Cowra Ballet School .....	1739
Wyong Writers Festival .....	1740
Lusc Friendship Quilters.....	1740
Arab Council Australia .....	1740
Kids at Play Project.....	1740
Metro Assist.....	1741
Lorena Ethell.....	1741
HMAS Sydney I.....	1741
Kevin Penfold .....	1741
Bankstown City Netball Association .....	1741
Plumpton Rural Fire Service.....	1742
Lachlan Garland and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society .....	1742
2019 NSW Tourism Gold .....	1742
Courtney Cottle Fundraising.....	1742
Riverlights Multicultural Festival .....	1742
Manning Valley Push for Palliative.....	1742
Bernadette Summers .....	1743

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Umina Beach Public School Care Packages.....	1743
Lexi Lamb.....	1743
The Hills SES Awards 2019.....	1743
Drive Out Violence Convoy.....	1744
Fran Musico Rullo.....	1744
Galston High School Students.....	1744
Jarred McKinley.....	1744
Indigenous Literacy Foundation.....	1744
South Asian Australian Association Diwali Event.....	1745
Mullumbimby Showgrounds Evacuation Centre.....	1745
Liam Davies.....	1745
Host A Surfer.....	1745
Sydney FC Player Remy Siemsen.....	1745
Firefighters.....	1746
Flight Facilities Fire Fundraiser.....	1746
Catherine McAuley Westmead, Graduation Ceremony.....	1746
Bonnet Bay Football Club All Age 11 Team.....	1746
Murwillumbah Show.....	1746
Michael Brereton.....	1747
2019 New Zealand Aquabots Tournament.....	1747
St George Art Society 75th Art Awards.....	1747
Penrith District Netball Association.....	1747
Hunter Children's Research Foundation Awards.....	1748
Spanish Speaking Carers Support Group - Carers Week 2019 Celebration.....	1748
Renewable Energy Cup Charity Yacht Race.....	1748
Volunteer Firefighters.....	1748
Bong Bong Races.....	1749
Sarah Ford.....	1749
Toongabbie Legal Centre.....	1749
Clever Care Now 60th Anniversary.....	1749
Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc.....	1749
Walking Basketball.....	1750
Liverpool Saints Ice Hockey.....	1750
Chifley Police District Rescue Unit.....	1750
Stanmore Festival of Music.....	1750
Core Community Services.....	1751
Rev Dr Margaret Mayman.....	1751

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday, 20 November 2019**

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

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

## *Visitors*

### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the public gallery the CEO of Royal Life Saving, Michael Ilinsky, Olympic swimmer James Magnussen and Nikki Bradford and Louise Smalley, also from Royal Life Saving. I commend the member for Barwon, who is putting on an event later today through the Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving. I also acknowledge two very notable gentlemen in the public gallery: former Premier of Western Australia Geoff Gallop and former Premier of New South Wales Nick Greiner. Geoff and Nick graced us with their presence, their insights and their wisdom over breakfast in my dining room with a group of about 20 MPs. They shared their thoughts as part of a Speaker's program around thought leadership in Parliament and particularly shared their views on some areas that, as parliamentarians, we can perhaps do a little bit better. I thank both gentlemen for giving their time, their insights and their wisdom and advice. They both continue to provide significant input and value to the public discourse in New South Wales. I thank them for that and for being here today.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

## *Governor*

### ASSUMPTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (09:49:55):** I move:

That the following address in acknowledgement of Her Excellency's message advising of her appointment as Governor be adopted by this House and presented to Her Excellency:

"To Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley, AO, QC, Governor of the State of New South Wales in the Commonwealth of Australia.

May it please Your Excellency—

We, the Members of the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament assembled, desire to express our thanks for Your Excellency's Message informing us of your assumption of the administration of the Government of the State by virtue of a commission from Her Most Gracious Majesty appointing you Governor.

We offer Your Excellency our sincere congratulations on your appointment by Her Majesty, confident that your administration will reflect the distinction and devotion to duty already displayed in your services to the State in other fields.

I do not think anyone would deny the wonderful work that the Governor is doing around the communities of New South Wales. It has been incredibly well regarded since she has assumed office.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (09:51:10):** I second the motion. On behalf of the Opposition, I express our congratulations to the Governor on the fantastic job that she continues to do for the people of New South Wales.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

## *Bills*

### GAMBLING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ONLINE AND OTHER BETTING) BILL 2019

#### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 19 November 2019.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (09:51:37):** The Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019 amends the Betting and Racing Act 1998 and the Totalizator Act 1997 in six ways. In my contribution yesterday I was up to paragraphs (e) and (f) of the overview of the bill, which state:

- (e) to make it clear that offers of gambling products with incentives relating to better odds ... will be prohibited inducements,

(f) to provide for circumstances in which directors of corporations will be liable for betting account offences,

On 22 October the bill was amended in the Legislative Council. The effect of those amendments was to double the penalty provisions in the bill as introduced and require that a person give express and informed consent for direct marketing, and insert a new provision stating that a person is taken to have withdrawn consent to receive all gambling advertisements if the person has not logged into their betting account for a period of 12 months. Those amendments were supported in the other place by the Government, the Opposition and the crossbench. As I mentioned previously, I acknowledge the importance of the Government, the Opposition and the crossbench working together to get a balance in amendments. There is always work to do in the area. There is a lot of evidence out there. We must ensure that the Government has control of the instruments of government and that it promotes the measures taken to tackle the effects of gambling and harm reduction.

As I indicated, the presence of online gambling has increased fourfold over a period of five years. In my contribution yesterday I stated a number of figures and I will place on the record statistics from the O'Farrell review, which found that currently online wagering makes up a relatively small part of the overall gambling market in Australia but it is one of the fastest growing in Australia. I mentioned the size of the 2013-14 gambling market and I note that just under half of all wagering expenditure was conducted online and amounted to \$1.4 billion. This expenditure is growing at a rate of 15 per cent per annum. The O'Farrell review found that between 2004 and 2014 the number of active online wagering accounts in Australia has increased fourfold from 200,000 to 800,000. The report also notes that many people have more than one account. The review stated:

Legal online wagering is growing due to the ubiquity of mobile devices and changes in consumer behaviour, which have in part been driven by intensive marketing from companies licensed in Australia. The market is highly competitive, largely consisting of internationally owned companies, licensed and operating in Australia.

I will not quote further from the report, but I highly recommend that those who are very interested in this area read the O'Farrell review. It is a very good report and it includes 19 recommendations. I understand all of those recommendations were accepted by the Commonwealth, either with an agreement in principle or agreed to. I hope that the Minister in his reply can provide us with an update on the implementation of those recommendations by putting on the record a statement or a document to that effect. This legislation is part of a harmonising process and it would be informative if the Government would update us on where it is in relation to all 19 recommendations listed in the O'Farrell review. We would also like to know what meetings or forums have been held between the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government in relation to the implementation of these recommendations. What stakeholder engagement has been undertaken and what is the Government doing to promote harm reduction from online gambling? Recommendation 14 of the O'Farrell review states:

The current single national telephone number and web portal—Gambling Help Online—should be refocused to operate more consistently across all States and Territories, and provide a stronger pathway to other support services for problem gamblers and their families.

That was agreed in principle with the Federal Government commenting:

The Gambling Help Online service is a joint Commonwealth and state and territory partnership. It is currently undergoing formal evaluation to assess its effectiveness and to identify areas for service improvement. The Government will work with state and territory governments to ensure information to assist problem gamblers and their families is consistent and easy to access.

It is one of the 19 recommendations. I am interested to find out what the New South Wales Government is doing on this and the other recommendations. Where is the Government up to in implementing these recommendations? If action on these recommendations is in process or in progress, that is fine. We just want to know where it is up to with those recommendations. As I indicated from the outset, we will not oppose the passage of the amended bill. I am glad that it is before the House. Although it is a bit late, we want to see it enacted. We note that the bill does not implement all of the measures that New South Wales has undertaken to implement under the National Consumer Protection Framework, such as the provision of activity statements, consistent gambling messaging and staff training. As I mentioned before, we want to know where the Government is in relation to implementing the recommendations. We also ask the Minister to confirm that the New South Wales Government will implement those measures in accordance with the timetable provided by the National Consumer Protection Framework. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (10:00:17):** It is a pleasure to contribute to the second reading debate and speak in support of the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019, which was introduced in the other place by the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC, on 7 August this year. The bill was introduced into this House last month, on Wednesday 23 October 2019. It comprises amendments to the Betting and Racing Act 1998 and the Totalizator Act 1997 to ensure that we strike the balance to see that there are appropriate controls on online wagering to prevent harm. The bill builds on the Government's commitment to being proactive in harm prevention when it comes to gambling-related harm in online wagering. Online betting or online wagering has grown rapidly in Australia in the past few years, with betting now only a few clicks or taps away, particularly

on mobile phone screens. Since 2012 the number of Australians betting online has doubled and now stands at around 34 per cent.

While the Government continues to support innovation by industry, it is critical that industry remains an active player in responding to harms associated with its business models. To ensure this occurs, the Government has taken decisive action to put in place a regulatory framework that responds to emerging market trends that present risks, including those that cause gambling-related harms. Last year the Government introduced a package of reforms to enhance the controls regulating online betting services in response to a number of operators falling short of community expectations, specifically with respect to the way gambling is advertised. Those reforms raised the stakes for operators, putting them on notice that irresponsible gambling advertising will no longer be acceptable. In addition to this rigorous enforcement of the law, the Government has also created the Office of Responsible Gambling. Its *Strategic Plan 2018-2021* contains the bold vision of New South Wales working towards zero gambling harm.

To support this the Government allocated \$35 million in 2019-2020 to prevent and treat gambling-related harms, including \$17.6 million to NSW Gambling Help services, which includes phone, online and 55 face-to-face counselling services in more than 250 rural, regional and metro locations throughout New South Wales; \$5.3 million for education and awareness programs to encourage responsible gambling to assist the people of New South Wales to make informed choices by understanding the risks of harm and build resilience in the community; and \$7.4 million to develop technology, innovation and partnerships in the areas of harm minimisation, early intervention and treatment. It is essential that the Government gives the regulator the tools it needs to combat emerging market trends that can cause gambling-related harms. This cuts to the very heart of the aim of the bill.

The amendments to the Betting and Racing Act 1998 and the Totalizator Act 1997 contained in the bill have two main objectives. First, the bill will implement New South Wales' commitments under the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering, a uniform set of standard minimum protections for online gamblers across all Australian jurisdictions. Secondly, the bill inserts a new definition of "inducements" into New South Wales wagering laws to ensure that those laws continue to have the broad effect that this Parliament endorsed last year.

The bill will implement of the National Consumer Protection Framework, which comes after four years of work by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to come up with a response to the emerging risks of online wagering—a type of gambling that demands a nationally consistent approach due to its ability to cross borders with ease. The framework provides consumers with tools and information to assist them to make informed choices about their online wagering activity. Under the framework, States and Territories have agreed to introduce a number of specific measures into their wagering regulatory frameworks in two stages.

The stage one changes included in the bill, include prohibiting certain inducements to bet or to open a betting account, requires betting service providers to give their customers a simple and accessible way of closing their account and requires betting service providers to allow customers to set deposit limits to help customers manage their gambling activity. While each jurisdiction has been required to implement those measures consistently, it is left to each Government to choose the method of implementation under its own regulatory framework. As part of its ongoing commitment to address gambling harm in the most effective way possible, the Government chose to insert those measures into the Betting and Racing Act 1998 and the Totalizator Act 1997 to ensure that penalties for breaches of the framework are consistent with other New South Wales wagering offences, which continue to be Australia's toughest and most comprehensive.

As New South Wales was among the last jurisdictions to implement stage one of the framework, it has had the benefit of ensuring that our laws are fit for purpose as we have had the opportunity to consider how other jurisdictions have approached this issue, ensuring that New South Wales laws apply both at the point of supply and the point of consumption. We know products that strive to make gambling part of a person's daily routine can lead to increased gambling-related harm. Under the new definition, those products will be considered prohibited inducements. The proposed definition is designed to address the Court of Criminal Appeal's decision and prohibit the advertising of incentives that form part of betting products.

The definition inserts a new regulation-making power to proscribe certain gambling products as inducements through wagering regulations. It is intended that this power will be used only in rare circumstances when an inducement may not fall clearly within the definition detailed in the legislation, but it remains clear that this kind of product should be prohibited. The remaining revisions in the bill implement the National Consumer Protection Framework. Finally, the bill requires betting service providers to give betting account holders a simple, easy-to-use and readily accessible way of closing their betting accounts.

This includes ensuring that the process is prominently displayed on the operator's website. Those provisions are designed to ensure that betting account holders can easily close their accounts without delay. This is particularly important for at-risk and problem gamblers. It also ensures that customers who wish to close their account are not subject to any further advertising or inducements to gamble. The framework amendments will be subject to the same penalties as existing gambling advertising offences, with penalties for a breach of the framework provisions up to \$55,000 for corporations and \$5,500 for individuals.

Breaches of the framework provision are subject to executive liability to ensure that directors of betting service providers can be held personally liable for breaches of any of the framework provisions. This Government is proud to have balanced wagering laws in Australia because it demonstrates the Government's commitment to protecting consumers from gambling-related harm and ensuring that betting service providers take consumer protection seriously. I wholeheartedly commend the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019, as introduced by the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC, and encourage other members to support it.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:09:10):** I speak to the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019, which amends the Betting and Racing Act 1998 and the Totalizator Act 1997 to prohibit direct marketing to holders of betting accounts without express consent; to prohibit inducements being offered to open, to invite another person to open or to not close a betting account; to require betting service providers to enable holders to limit deposits into their accounts; and to require betting providers to provide a simple and easy process to close betting accounts, with information on how this can be done readily available, and these requests to be dealt with immediately.

The bill also clarifies that offers of gambling products with incentives relating to betting odds or other advantages are prohibited inducements and present circumstances in which directors of corporations will be liable for betting account offences. These are necessary reforms to implement further strategies to reduce harm caused by problem gambling and to ensure that New South Wales families are not targeted by unscrupulous operators, such as transnational organised crime syndicates and other domestic players in the betting industry. Both the Betting and Racing Act 1998 and the Totalizator Act 1997 target the minimisation of harm due to betting as part of their core objectives. Unfortunately, problem gambling still causes great harm to families, with an especially large impact on western Sydney families.

During the 2016-2017 financial year more than \$89 billion was gambled by residents of New South Wales, with losses reaching more than \$9.5 billion. An amount of those losses came from persons in disadvantaged situations betting more than they could afford in the hope that it would lead to a better, more economically stable life. The Australian Institute of Family Studies 2018 report *Gambling activity in Australia* found that gamblers living in low-income households spent on average 10 per cent of their disposable income on betting, compared with only 1 per cent of those living in high-income households. In 2016 *The Daily Telegraph* reported that up to one in 10 western Sydney households has a problem gambler. The burden of problem gambling falls on our local communities.

I do not believe that large domestic and multinational companies in the betting industry have provided the level of support to problem gamblers required to reduce harm. Organisations including CatholicCare, Lifeline and many others shoulder the burden and the responsibility to help those with gambling addictions, with little help from the gambling industry. I am glad that this legislation will take small steps to reduce the likelihood of people becoming problem gamblers by reducing the incentives that they can be offered to bet and ensuring that it is easier to close betting accounts. The upsurge in online gambling on racing and sports has led to a new group of addicts. Over the past decade, losses from sports betting in New South Wales have more than doubled. That has had tragic consequences on the lives of individuals in New South Wales.

Each year approximately 400 Australians commit suicide after becoming addicted to gambling. The personal stories of addicts are tragic and show how frighteningly easy it is to become addicted. Marcus Bohman is one such person who was addicted to online gambling. His story was told in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Mr Bohman started gambling at racing tracks using small amounts of money. He became addicted after he started betting online, with the size and frequency of his bets increasing dramatically. Mr Bohman would bet at all hours on races and sports across the world. After a decade of gambling he had lost more than \$300,000. Mr Bohman got the help that he needed to overcome his addiction and he is now rebuilding his life, but sadly, many others never do. Mr Bohman pointed to promotions such as bonus bets for signing up to accounts as luring people into online gambling and driving addiction.

The expansion of online gambling has harmed individuals and also threatens to make it easier for organised criminal organisations to launder money. The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre [AUSTRAC] have identified the risk of organised criminal organisations using online betting to launder money, with an increasing volume of bets being placed. A failure of this legislation is that it does not make any reforms to target and further impede the use of online betting to launder

money. This House will need to revisit that issue sometime in the future. Schedule 1 [5] and schedule 2 [4] to the bill make amendments to the Betting and Racing Act and Totalizator Act to make it an offence to directly market betting services.

This reform will make it clear that betting and totalizator advertisements must not be sent directly to account holders by SMS text message, email or any other direct means unless the account holder has given express consent to receive those messages. This is a reasonable reform that will reduce the amount of advertising received by account holders and hopefully reduce the propensity to bet in an impulsive manner. A breach of this legislation will lead to a \$5,500 fine for an individual and a \$55,000 fine for a corporation. That sounds like a decent amount for a fine, but it is nothing to those large betting companies. They make that type of money within seconds.

I am also concerned that corporations involved in the betting industry will attempt to sidestep this legislation by including a check box to opt in to receiving direct marketing at the bottom of a sign-up form, where account holders are likely to select to receive without direct marketing. Schedule 1 [6] to the bill details prohibited inducements for the purpose of these reforms. The prohibition includes a ban on offering, supplying or causing the offering or supplying of an inducement for the purpose of getting a person to open a betting account or invite another person to open a betting account, to not close a betting account, or to provide consent or not withdraw consent to receive gambling advertisements. The bill also provides that any allowable inducements provided in the form of free bets must have the payouts withdrawable at any time.

Schedule 1 [7] provides for the provision of deposit limits for betting accounts. When a betting account is initially created the providing organisation must require the account holder to nominate a maximum deposit amount and time period for this deposit. The account holder may opt out by providing express refusal. Maximum deposit amounts can be increased at any time; however, the increase will take seven days to take effect. At least once every 12 months after the opening of an account the betting service provider must ask the holder if they wish to change their deposit limit, and if they do not currently have a limit the company must ask if they wish to set one. Schedule 1 [7] reforms the Betting and Racing Act 1998 to ensure that betting accounts can be closed in a simple and easy manner. Betting accounts must be closable by any means in which the holder may make a bet as well as by telephone and email.

The betting service must also ensure that the process for closing an account is prominently displayed on any websites or computer or mobile applications where a bet can be placed. When a request to close an account is made a betting service must immediately stop accepting bets from the account and then close the account as soon as practical after all current bets are finalised. The maximum penalty for non-compliance for those provisions is a \$5,500 fine for individuals and a \$55,000 fine for corporations. Schedule 1 [7] to the bill amends section 36AA of the Betting and Racing Act 1998 to include the offences outlined above to attract liability from corporate directors. This is a critical provision to ensure that directors do not skirt the law in an attempt to boost profits. Holding directors personally accountable reduces the risk that they will push against the limits of the legislation, and ensures a more cautious approach by the directors and boards of these betting companies. [*Extension of time*]

**Dr Geoff Lee:** As long as it's nice.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** Yes, it will be nice. Have you been listening? I have not criticised the Government once. I look forward to working together with a bipartisan approach. Thank you for the extension of time. I will conclude with some key facts about gambling. As I said, gambling addiction is a significant problem in this country and this State. Findings from The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia [HILDA] survey show that in 2014-2015 Australians gambled over \$191 billion. The figure for this State alone is around \$90 billion. Total gambling losses in 2014-2015 were \$22.7 billion or roughly \$1,300 for every person over the age of 18. An estimated 8 per cent of Australians—1.4 million people—experience gambling problems every year. That is a major issue. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists policy statement on problem gambling states:

The rise of interactive and online gambling is having devastating consequences; new gamblers are more easily recruited online and gambling sites are accessible 24 hours per day.

By implementing restrictions on inducements and other measures, the bill takes positive steps to address problem gambling and ensures New South Wales legislation is consistent with the National Consumer Protection Framework and other jurisdictions. Finally, I comment in regard to organised crime and transnational organised crime with online gambling. The move by organised transnational crimes into online gambling has been a constant issue over many decades, certainly over the past decade or so. We legalised gambling in New South Wales to stop organised crime controlling the gambling industry in this State.

Now we have a situation with online gaming, particularly when sites are set up overseas, where transnational organised crime has taken a major hold to launder money. This is an issue that we will need to face in the future; we should be facing it now in New South Wales. Reports from groups like Australian Transaction

Reports and Analysis Centre [AUSTRAC], the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and the Australian Institute of Criminology have all identified that online gambling is used significantly by organised criminal organisations in this State and throughout Australia. This is an issue that we need to start dealing with. I commend the bill to the House and I thank the Government.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (10:21:51):** I am pleased to speak in support of the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. The reforms proposed in the bill continue the Government's commitment to deal proactively with gambling-related harms. I am pleased that the reforms the Parliament put in place last year are having a significant impact and I look forward to seeing the reforms contained in this bill have a positive impact as well. My contribution to the debate focuses on the reforms to betting accounts. The National Consumer Protection Framework is a significant step forward in the regulation of online wagering in Australia.

The New South Wales Government has been working with the Commonwealth and the other States and Territories to ensure online wagering customers have the tools and information to manage their wagering activity no matter where in Australia they reside or where their betting service provider is located. The bill seeks to implement into New South Wales law the first set of State-led changes agreed under the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering. It contains a number of significant changes for people who hold betting accounts. Customers with betting accounts will now receive direct gambling advertising from their betting service provider only if they have given express and informed consent to receive it and they will be able to unsubscribe easily from any advertising.

A betting service provider must stop sending gambling advertising within 24 hours to a person who has unsubscribed. I am especially pleased that bipartisan cooperation in the Legislative Council has resulted in an amendment to the bill that means that people who have not activated their account for 12 months are taken to have withdrawn their consent to receive gambling advertising and strengthened the requirement to clarify that customers must give informed consent. This is a good amendment that ensures that these people automatically will stop receiving advertising. It is also expected that customers with dormant accounts will not be prompted to sign up for advertising by operators. I note that under New South Wales laws, betting service providers may advertise inducements to people who hold betting accounts with them. This is therefore an important reform to ensure that only account holders who want to receive gambling advertisements will receive them. Account holders should always have a choice as to whether they receive gambling advertising, and the bill makes sure that betting service providers respect the choice of their customers.

Giving customers choice is also a principle underpinning another reform contained in the bill. All betting accounts will now be subject to an opt-out deposit limit scheme, which will allow a person to elect to limit the amount of money they can deposit into their betting account and the period of time that the limit applies. It is clear that tools to allow customers to better manage the amount of money they can spend on gambling are important in reducing gambling harm. They ensure that customers who set a limit cannot gamble more than they intend or they can afford. Critically, customers are making these decisions not when they are gambling but before that, encouraging decisions to not be made in the heat of the moment. I think that is really important. I am aware that a number of betting service providers have similar schemes; however the awareness and effectiveness of these schemes vary significantly across providers.

In some cases betting service providers have even allowed their customers to exceed their deposit limits—a clear example of providers ignoring the potential harms of their services and of their behaviour failing to meet the standards set by the Government and the community. For the first time under these changes, betting service providers that allow customers to breach their deposit limits will be held accountable. To ensure that this scheme remains effective and is not a set-and-forget system, an account holder will be asked every 12 months if they wish to set a deposit limit, if they do not already have one, or if they wish to change the limit. I think the time should be a lot shorter than 12 months. To make sure this is not a loophole to allow operators to contact inactive customers, this will not apply to inactive betting accounts.

It is clear that this scheme is an important gambling harm minimisation tool and that thought has been put into how the scheme operates. I am excited to see how the scheme develops as the Commonwealth and the States continue to develop the scheme over the coming months. Finally, the bill contains some specific requirements for betting service providers to allow customers to close their accounts easily. This includes requiring the account closure process to be available through the same channel that bets are made. Once a customer elects to close their account, they will no longer receive advertising or be able to place a bet. By inserting these requirements into the Act, the Government is ensuring that betting service providers do not delay the closure of an account to try to entice a customer to keep their account open. This type of hard selling is completely unacceptable when it comes to gambling services.

It is alarming and unacceptable that these reforms and the very basic requirements that they contain are required at all. However, I am very supportive of the measures in this bill that are part of the push by Governments

around Australia—Liberal and Labor—to address this market failure, and put in place an enforceable and appropriately designed set of rules to regulate this rapidly growing market. The new arrangements give betting account holders greater choice about how they interact with their betting accounts. Members of the community should have confidence that the Government is working to ensure that they have tools available to them to protect themselves from betting service providers seeking to maximise people's gambling spends at the expense of their financial health.

The Government's strong commitment to tackling gambling-related harms is what the bill is all about. The National Consumer Protection Framework is part of this commitment. As we have heard from previous speakers, the framework was developed with other States and Territories and the Commonwealth Government, with betting service providers involved in setting this set of minimum standards across all jurisdictions. New South Wales will implement it through legislation to ensure consistency and a broader wagering network. It also ensures that higher penalties are available for offences introduced in the bill.

Some of the key changes in the bill are around giving consumers more tools to control their betting behaviour, including requirements to set deposit limits and strengthen the opt-in to receive gambling advertising. Thanks to amendments made in the Legislative Council, this must be expressed and informed consent given if a person has opted out of receiving advertisements and has not logged in to their account in the previous 12 months. The bill delivers more consistency in self-exclusion across all jurisdictions and stronger requirements on betting service providers to close or suspend accounts of people who wish to shut their accounts or are self-excluded. [*Extension of time*]

As I mentioned earlier, these reforms recognise that people are able to gamble responsibly when they are given the support they need. When a person is experiencing gambling-related harms—I will talk about them very briefly—including problematic gambling, we expect service providers to do more. The New South Wales Government will continue to work with providers and governments across all jurisdictions to ensure that people who are experiencing problematic gambling get the support they desperately need. Certainly in my job as a member of Parliament—and even when I was director of the local RSL club before I came to this place—I have seen how gambling has been a significant hit on many families I know across my electorate and across Sydney. I think these changes will put in place the safeguards that families and people are looking for across Australia and across a range of separate providers. This bill, along with the amendments that were successfully passed in the Legislative Council with the support of all parties, will raise the bar and increase the protection that I think people who engage in gambling on a regular basis need. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (10:33:08):** The Opposition does not oppose the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. We think it is a very welcome reform to online gaming, which is problematic for many Australians. Over the past decade or so online gambling has been a rapidly changing and evolving marketplace. Unfortunately, governments collectively have been slow to respond not only to the problems created by online gambling but also to individual innovations in that space that are very difficult to address and have created many problems for both consumers and the sports that people bet on. These days people even bet on the outcomes of our elections.

The bill implements much of the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering, which is a national policy statement developed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments at the end of last year. It amends the Betting and Racing Act 1998 and the Totalizator Act 1997 to address problem gambling and to minimise harm to consumers who use online gambling products. The national consumer protection framework implements the findings of a 2015 review of online gambling and its related harms conducted by former Premier Barry O'Farrell. It has taken four years—from the O'Farrell report to the introduction of the bill—to address many of those problems. The O'Farrell report identified that Australians gamble approximately \$191 billion a year, which is enormous. Total gambling losses in 2014-15 were \$22.7 billion, or roughly \$1,200 for every adult in Australia. An estimated 8 per cent of Australians, or 1.4 million people, experience gambling problems each year. That staggering problem must be addressed. Collectively, Governments are seeking to address it—albeit slowly.

Over the past few years improvements have been made in the area of racing to address wagering tax problems. One way that online gambling has taken hold in Australia has been by seemingly offering a better deal to consumers than the State-based, more heavily taxed TAB and Tabcorp and other government-owned gambling institutions that do not pay wagering taxes to the States. Generally they are located in the Northern Territory—the lowest-taxing of the country's States and Territories—and offer their services Australia-wide. Those issues were resolved by returning to horse and dog racing the taxes that they should have been earning. However, the bill before the House deals with something far more comprehensive, which is the harm to consumers as a whole from online gambling.

The national consumer protection framework made 10 recommendations for implementation across Australia. The bill, as amended by the upper House, adopts seven of those recommendations. It amends the relevant legislation to prohibit direct marketing to holders of betting accounts who have not given explicit informed consent; to prohibit the offering of inducements to open a betting account; to require providers of betting accounts to establish schemes to allow people to limit their deposits unless the person expressly opts out; to require providers of betting accounts to provide a simple process to close those accounts and to action closure requests immediately; to make it clear that offers of gambling products with incentives relating to better odds constitute prohibited inducements; and to provide the circumstances in which directors of corporations will be liable for betting account offences.

The upper House amendments double the penalty provisions in the bill, require that a person give express informed consent to any direct marketing and insert a new provision that someone is taken to have withdrawn their consent to receive any gambling advertisements if they have not logged into their betting account for a period of 12 months. The Opposition welcomes all those reforms. Other aspects of the national consumer protection framework have not been dealt with in the bill. The Opposition asks the Government to report on how those issues are being implemented on a national basis because some of them require Commonwealth reforms.

One recommendation I think is really important is that consumers be provided with activity statements. For as long as a consumer has an active betting account an interactive wagering service provider must provide an activity statement to that customer at least once a year. That statement must clearly set out information about each bet, the account balance, deposits and withdrawals, wins and losses, and the net wins and losses over the period. It must be available upon request at any time. I think that is really important. It will allow people with a gambling addiction or the potential to develop one to understand how much they have lost in the last period, so they realise that almost nobody except bookmakers and operators of online gambling platforms makes money out of gambling in the long run—as much as it might be fun from time to time if you manage to limit your losses to something you can afford.

The bill also does not address consistent gambling messaging, which was a recommendation that the wagering services provide a set of gambling messages to use in their advertising, that it be fairly consistent about what they are and are not allowed to do and that they be limited by governments in what they can use. Another recommendation was that staff training be provided to all staff involved in the provision of wagering services or with the capacity to influence them. They must undertake responsible service of gambling training to create a culture of responsible gambling. That recommendation is not covered by the bill. We are also hopeful that at a national level there will be a national self-exclusion register. That is very important to stop people going over the border online, so to speak, to get around their previous decision to exclude themselves from online gambling services.

These reforms are significant and very important. They are needed to protect Australians from the huge amount of harm that can arise from problem gambling. That harm can often include bankruptcy and suicide. In some ways, gambling addiction is far more harmful than any addictions to drugs and alcohol because of the potential for financial loss. It is very insidious. While many of us, myself included, enjoy having a bet if we go to the races or on Melbourne Cup day, there are people out there who are spending an inordinate amount of money on gambling—not just all the money they have earned in the previous week but a lot of money beyond that. It is incredibly harmful.

Gambling also has the potential to corrupt sport. We have seen that in recent years with exotic bets being used to influence sporting outcomes. The practice has been exposed time and time again when very specific exotic bets are made—seeing betting plunges on the for-and-against results, say, of football games and things like that. I think these reforms are very welcome. I am hopeful that the Government will implement them as soon as possible and report back to us promptly on the outstanding matters from the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (10:43:03):** I contribute to debate on the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. As we have heard from other members, this is about implementing the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering and helping to strengthen laws relating to advertising and gambling inducements. The bill itself is about reiterating the Liberal-Nationals Government's strong commitment to tackling gambling-related harm. Australians are pretty well known for their love of a punt. There is little doubt that in the past 10 years to 20 years the way that people interact with and access gambling has changed quite dramatically. Gone are the days when you actually had to walk into the local TAB in order to have a bet on the horses, trots or dogs.

Now there are multiple corporate betting agencies and the bulk of betting on the three racing codes as well as national and international sport is done via apps on mobile phones, as we have heard already this morning. Given that is the case, it makes sense to have a look at the framework around the ease of access and inducements

offered by those companies and so I am happy to see this bill come into the Parliament. The national consumer protection framework is part of this commitment, and for very good reason. The framework was developed with other States and Territories, the Commonwealth Government and betting service providers. It sets the minimum standard across all jurisdictions. The framework came out of extensive work by former Premier of New South Wales Barry O'Farrell into the impact of illegal offshore wagering, which found that there were significant gaps in the regulatory framework around gambling harm mitigation.

The bill is not aimed at people who like a small wager; we are trying to stop problem gambling by addressing the ways that companies target some people with aggressive advertising and certain inducements. We know that gambling can become an addiction for some, in the same way that others may become hooked on drugs or alcohol. Huge efforts have been made to help those who find themselves in the grips of other addictions, and problematic gambling should be treated no differently. A number of social issues arise from problem gambling that stretch into the health, social services and mental health sectors, among others.

The bill builds on the comprehensive framework already in place to regulate wagering in New South Wales by ensuring that customers are able to access the same level of protection from irresponsible gambling advertising from operators no matter where they live. While New South Wales supports the framework setting up a set of minimum standards, it is important to note that the New South Wales scheme is the most comprehensive. It is the high-water mark across all Australian jurisdictions. We have the highest penalties, the clearest delineation between what is permitted and what is unlawful, and the most active and successful enforcement approach in the country through Liquor & Gaming NSW.

One of the key reforms in the bill is around advertising that is sent to account holders. The Betting and Racing Act 1998 currently allows betting service providers to send gambling advertising to betting account holders, including inducements. The sending of inducements is otherwise prohibited because of the effect of inducements on people engaging in problematic gambling behaviour. Inducements encourage people to gamble more frequently, in higher amounts and on more risky gambling products. We allow betting account holders to receive inducements because it is appropriate that people should be able to consent to receiving these kinds of advertisements if they are interested in them. Betting service providers have general responsible gambling obligations, which allow them to provide appropriate assistance to account holders that they are not able to offer to the world at large. However, we recognise that clearer expectations for betting service providers are necessary, given the risks associated with inducements.

As mentioned earlier, the definition of "inducement" in the bill is broad but it does not prohibit all gambling advertising—and nor should it. The companies have already indicated that they are able to advertise in spite of the existing restrictions on inducements, and will continue to do so after the changes are made. The bill will require betting service providers to get the express and informed consent of an account holder before sending them any advertising products. That includes requiring the provider to explain to the account holder in plain English what will happen if they consent. When an account holder has not accessed their account in 12 months, they are taken to have withdrawn their consent to receive advertising. This measure has been put in place to ensure that people who are no longer interested in using an account are not subjected to a continued bombardment of offers by providers, which could certainly happen.

If a person has not been tempted to access their account after a year of advertising, we think it is appropriate to act as if they have withdrawn their consent. In addition, when a person has withdrawn their consent the betting service provider has 24 hours to effect this request. As a government committed to providing a world-class customer experience in our interactions with everyone, we expect the same from betting service providers that are largely multimillion-dollar, and sometimes even multibillion-dollar, corporations. When a person is experiencing gambling-related harms, including problematic gambling, we expect betting service providers to do more. The New South Wales Government will continue to work with providers to ensure that people experiencing problematic gambling get the support they need.

The bill is a step in the right direction when it comes to providing a framework aimed at reducing problematic gambling in our society, and hopefully will provide a barrier to vulnerable community members who may be attempting to exclude themselves from the lure of gambling. The power of the Government to prescribe certain products as inducements is designed to be used only where there is uncertainty whether a product falls within the broad definition inserted into the Acts. The provision ensures that the Government has the appropriate tools to enforce its ban on advertising of gambling inducements, as I have already mentioned. That is particularly necessary in the online wagering space, where betting service providers are incentivised to aggressively market their products and to develop new products that encourage people to gamble more frequently.

There is clearly a need to ensure flexible enforcement powers that can respond to issues arising in such a dynamic industry. The definition of "inducement" in the bill is broad but, as has been said, it does not prohibit all gambling advertising. Betting service providers have shown that they are able to advertise effectively despite

the existing restrictions on inducements, and will continue to do so after the changes. The changes are about drawing a clear line in the sand that prohibits advertisements where there is a body of evidence that shows they are harmful. It is a bit of a movable feast, but one which the Government needs to stay on top of, and the bill does that. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (10:51:25):** I make a contribution to debate on the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. The object of the bill is to install the appropriate regulatory precautions and controls to better manage gambling-related harm induced by online gambling platforms. Schedule 1 to the bill aims to amend the Betting and Racing Act 1998, No. 114, to provide further clarification and expand on the definition of "inducement" in gambling and the means by which these services can be marketed. Examples of inducements under new section 33GA include the offering of free credit, vouchers, rewards or other benefits, such as tickets to an event, a special prize or gifts of a similar nature.

Given the nature of inducements, the term itself is quite broad and can encompass a large number of scenarios. That being said, inducements are essentially intended to be a bonus or a perk offered to participants in order to encourage an individual to gamble more frequently, aggressively or to open an account with the betting service provider. Inducements also cover additional offers for goods and/or services that are inherently ingrained in the service itself and the bonuses or perks do not implicitly need to be offered goods and/or services external to the betting service provider. These inducements in a gambling environment are clearly designed to coerce an individual into modifying their behaviour and enticing them to engage further in gambling activities.

In an attempt to bring penalties imposed into line with breaches, new section 33H has doubled the number of penalty provisions for any breaches in gambling-related advertisements. New section 33HA enhances the prohibition on direct gambling-related marketing to individuals by a licensed betting service provider through any means, including SMS, email or any other methods, unless express permission by the individual has been provided. This provision also goes further to indicate that it is taken as though a person has withdrawn consent from receiving these marketing messages—even if express permission was previously granted—if the individual has not logged into their betting account for a period of 12 months. The provision ensures that it is prohibited to continue marketing and advertising to individuals who have rescinded their consent, or have had consent withdrawn for any other means. The maximum penalties for breaches of this section are 100 penalty units, or \$11,000, for an individual and 1,000 penalty units, or \$110,000, for a corporation.

New section 33JA takes the prohibited inducements list a little further and expands upon it by including any enticement for a person to open a betting account, referring a friend to open a betting account or to refrain from closing down their betting account. Furthermore, the offer of a "free bet" to the owner of a betting account is prohibited unless the owner of the account is permitted to withdraw all payouts from the free bet at any time. New section 33JB will impose a regulatory scheme to manage deposit limits on accounts with any licensed betting service provider. When opening an account, the account holder must nominate a maximum deposit limit, if any, which must be followed for all future deposits on their account. Should an account holder then attempt to make a deposit that exceeds this limit, the deposit must be refused. This limit may be increased at any given time; however, there must be a seven-day grace period between the request to increase the limit and the request being permitted, wherein the aforementioned rules concerning deposit caps will still apply until this increase takes effect.

Similar amendments are made to the Totalizator Act 1997 No. 45 with regard to the inducements and marketing as set out in new section 33GA, new section 33HA and the relevant new sections concerning the applicable penalty unit increases. It is clear that the primary objective of the bill is to provide further protections to consumers in New South Wales and to protect vulnerable people from gambling-related harm. Representing an electorate where many individuals would be the target of gambling-related advertisements and coercion to increase the frequency and volume of their bets, I believe the amendments before us today take a step in the right direction towards the provision of appropriate regulatory precautions to protect those who are vulnerable to gambling-related harm. In conclusion, along with my Labor colleagues, I do not oppose the bill before the House.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (10:56:44):** I speak in debate on what I believe is fairly significant legislation: the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. From the outset, I praise the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation bringing this forward. I particularly praise his hardworking staff and the staff of the department, who are untiring in their efforts to minimise the effect of gaming. The purpose of the bill is to implement the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering and strengthen the laws relating to advertising gambling inducements. The proposed reforms ensure that the New South Wales Government's regulatory approach to gambling harm minimisation is consistent with that of other Australian jurisdictions. The proposed reforms have been detailed by a number of other speakers. They prohibit direct marketing the holders of betting accounts without express consent, prohibit inducements being offered to persons to bet or open a betting account, and require providers of betting accounts to set up schemes to enable holders to limit deposits into their accounts unless the holder expressly refuses.

A number of other measures implement the national consumer protection framework. The Commonwealth, States, Territories and providers have endorsed the set of measures contained in the framework. Liquor & Gaming NSW undertook consultation with licensed providers, including Tabcorp, NSW Bookmakers Co-operative, Lottoland, Responsible Wagering Australia and its members, Commercial Radio and its members, News Corp, Nine, Foxtel, Free TV and its members, and Australian gambling regulators. Following consultation, a number of amendments were made to address concerns from Responsible Wagering Australia and its members—bet365, BetEasy, Sportsbet, Betfair, Unibet and Ladbrokes—and media publishers. I have had a number of years' experience in the gambling area. For close to 20 years—I started as a child—I worked in the licensed club industry, and I praise that industry.

At one time I was responsible for just over 340 gaming machines. During that period various governments implemented attempts at harm minimisation. As we all know, in Australia we like a flutter. Unfortunately, as with many things in society, there are those who do things to excess and create harm for themselves. I have seen self-exclusions; for many years I held a responsible gambling licence and also a responsible liquor licence. But I know that a lot of people take joy in going to the clubs. I praise ClubsNSW for its proactive stance on harm minimisation, as well as for its support and endorsement of various funds and committees. I also praise my former fellow club managers and all the great staff. I should not forget the Australian Hotels Association, which is also involved.

The advent of online gaming presents a greater difficulty. At least with gaming in clubs and hotels there is some form of supervision. There are self-exclusion orders; I have done a number of those myself for people in licensed premises. It was a little bit harder up on the border because of the different jurisdiction on the other side. Queensland was lagging behind. It is probably still lagging 10 years behind New South Wales. In Queensland it is still possible to offer inducements for gaming, which is a bit shameful for the current Queensland Government. It should be more proactive and follow the lead of New South Wales.

As I said, I have seen the advent of a lot of harm minimisation programs. One that is particularly dear to me is run by the Buttery, which is a counselling service in Binna Burra, not far from Bangalow, which is inland from Byron Bay. The service runs a number of harm minimisation programs, one of which is called the Northern Rivers Gambling Counselling Service and has offices in Tweed Heads, Ballina and Lismore. With problem gambling, as with problem drinking, it takes a fair amount of self-will to identify that you have a problem. I will read onto *Hansard* a series of questions from a document that has been put together by the Northern Rivers Gambling Counselling Service. I encourage members to take it to their communities. It reads:

1. Sometimes I've felt depressed or anxious after a session of gambling.
2. Sometimes I've felt guilty about the way I gamble.
3. When I think about it, gambling has sometimes caused me problems.
4. Sometimes I've found it better not to tell others, especially family, about the amount of time or money I spend gambling.
5. I often find that when I stop gambling, it's because I've run out of money.
6. Often I get the urge to return to gambling to win back losses from past sessions.
7. I have received criticism about my gambling. I've tried to win money to pay my debts.

If anyone answers yes to four out of those seven questions, I suggest that they contact an agency, because it means that they are on the way to becoming a problem gambler, if they are not already there. As much as I respect the industry, I have seen harm caused by gambling. I have seen marriages break up and businesses lost. I have seen people lose contact with their families and people commit acts of self-harm and so on, all caused by excessive gambling and the lure of winning back losses. But I think the big evil is online gambling; I am not in favour of it at all. People can gamble at home with a credit card and there are no real checks on age. Online gambling allows people to spend away, max out their credit cards and cause themselves a great deal of harm.

I do not have a great deal of faith in the ethics of online gambling companies. I make particular reference to Sportsbet and a classic example in my electorate. In the New South Wales election campaign in March, Sportsbet had me at \$2.78 and the Labor candidate at \$1.10. At the end of the day, I won all 19 polling booths—so at least there was some revenge for Sportsbet's attitude in my electorate. I believe some of the local journalists holidayed in Bali after the election result. My Sportsbet account will probably be cancelled once this gets out. Online gambling is a serious business and a lot of money is funnelled through it. I find it little bit evil that online gambling makes it appealing for younger people to bet on sports, car races and so on.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Politics.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** Not so much politics, but those other types of things. I know a number of young people who actively bet. It is so easy; it is on their mobile phones. I think it is an important step to have

this nationwide. As we all know and have discussed many times, due to its very nature the internet is a hard beast to bring to heel. I endorse what the Minister and the department are trying to do. Once again, New South Wales leads the way. I wish that the other States, particularly Queensland, would pick up their game because they have dropped the ball in many regards and are now suffering the social consequences of that.

It is amazing to me that some people think that Powerball and lotto are not forms of gambling. All of us have walked past newsagents and seen people queuing out the door when there is a \$50 million or \$100 million jackpot. It is another form of gambling, although a lot of people do not see it that way. It still is a false hope and a false lure. There is always a way to gamble responsibly, which is to only lose what you can afford to lose. But we in this place have to make laws to protect those who are more vulnerable than most. Therefore, I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I welcome the Fijian High Commissioner to the Chamber.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:06:45):** I was not going to speak in debate on the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019, but, after listening to some of my colleagues, I thought I needed to say a few words. I have some major concerns about gambling, which I have referred to in this place before. I thank the member for Tweed, whose experience in the recent election particularly highlighted that predictions and bets are one thing, but reality is something else. Given the member's years of experience in the industry, he spoke with a lot of authority. Often people talk about things they do not know about, so I really appreciated his contribution. Labor is not opposing the bill. I commend the Minister and members from all parties in the other place for moving and agreeing to the amendments.

From listening to members' contributions, it is clear that everybody knows that there is a major issue with gambling. Nobody is saying that we need to ban gambling completely. As one of my colleagues said earlier, we recognise that it is part of Australian culture. Everyone seems to have a bet on the Melbourne Cup and there are lots of other examples. Anzac Day is the one day where you can play two-up and have a bit of a laugh; it goes back to tradition. That in itself is not a problem, but gambling can become a major problem for some people. We could all tell stories about people who have come into our electorate offices to ask for our assistance when someone has gone one step too far. More often than not, it is not the person with the gambling problem who comes in; it is their partner or child or someone who is dependent on that person.

In the five years I have been in this place I have been aware of a number of times when somebody has gone for that little bit extra and thought, "I just need the big win. I just need to make sure that I can make up for my losses. That will get me out of my situation." Statistics point to the fact that many more people in low socio-economic communities fall victim to heavy gambling because everyone is looking for a quick fix, a silver bullet. Gambling is not designed for people to win. You might get a little win, but it is designed for the online gambling agencies to make money. Not many gambling moguls who own casinos go broke. More often than not we hear stories about people who are gambling in search of a victory and unfortunately come out worse for wear. We need to have a good look at that aspect of gambling.

While I was waiting to make my contribution to this debate I typed "online gambling" into Google. The first thing that popped up was an opportunity to set up an account with an Australian online gambling company in less than 60 seconds, which is really scary. Most people are pretty sensible, but I would hate to think what would happen if my kid managed to get hold of my credit card and set up an online gambling account. These things happen and the fact that people can sign up in less than 60 seconds but cannot get out of an online gambling contract in the same time is a worry. The amendments relating to getting out of an online gambling account are really important. People must be able to say, "I don't want to be involved in this anymore."

Companies offer inducements to punters such as, "If you sign up with us, we'll give you X." They offer packages that include tourism based on gambling or attending a particular event to gamble. When events are promoted by online gambling agencies, I am concerned because the intent of those agencies is to bring people in to gamble. It also worries me that when people use their credit cards they do not see their money, so it is really easy to keep committing to spending more and falling into a trap. In no way am I saying that we should get rid of gambling; instead, I am saying that the sentiment in this place is to make sure that we set really strong rules and regulations that include protective measures. We need to make sure that gamblers and their families are looked after, because there has been a surge in online gambling. It is an addiction because it is easy to become involved.

We have all heard about the impact of problem gambling on families. It is easy to place a bet and if it does not go well, the family suffers. As I said, throughout the past few years we have helped a number of people who have become problem gamblers. The member for Prospect gave a sobering statistic that 400 people across the nation commit suicide every year as a result of problem gambling. That is one person in Australia per day committing suicide because of problem gambling. We need to look at that. As a response to the National Consumer

Protection Framework for Online Wagering, this bill is a good first step and that is why the Opposition supports it.

We know that we have a gambling problem across the nation. The member for Tweed spoke about young people and gambling. I have noticed when reading news online that one of the trends in the advertisements is to show that gambling is a really fun thing—let's gamble with the lads, have a drink, go to the races. It is shown as a fun thing for blokes to do. These forms of entertainment are fine, but those ads are being targeted to a new market. That market is young guys, and young women to some extent. Some online gambling agencies even have blokey sounding names; I will not mention any of them so I do not give them a free plug. I worry about that. Online gambling is a major emerging industry and it is making participation very easy. We are not interested in being the fun police. People need to be able to do what they want to do. But we need to ensure that we offer protections.

One of my bugbears has an online gambling element. It really bothers me that you cannot watch sport on television without seeing constant ads for gambling and placing bets. The half-time report, the full-time report and the pre-match report are all brought to us by a gambling agency. It is like osmosis; we are constantly reminded of gambling. It is interesting that we ban or restrict other forms of advertising but online gambling is ubiquitous in sports broadcasting. The advertising is done in such a clever way that it almost appears to be part of the match report itself. For all intents and purposes, people might think that the person talking about the latest odds and who might be the next try scorer or the overs and unders and that sort of thing is a commentator on the commentary team. I have some real concerns about that. I find it ironic that after the ads are shoved down our throats there is a line that says we should gamble responsibly. I would like to see some responsibility in advertising and in the way that we support people who get themselves into trouble through gambling. That is the important thing.

This bill relates specifically to online gambling but we need to have a discussion about gambling in general and the impact of problem gambling especially. I represent a community with a low socio-economic status, as does my colleague the member for Canterbury and many other members in this Chamber. I know that gambling is a problem because people are looking for the one winning hit. They think, "If I can do this then I can pay off my mortgage or go on a holiday." I note that people tell you about what they win but they do not tell you about what they lose.

I will tell the story of one person I know without saying how I know him. A while ago I helped out this person, who had been financially very sound. He had owned his house outright and he owned another house. Unbeknownst to us, although we were close to him, he had a bad gambling problem. In the end he had to move into a caravan park and is basically living week to week. Every six months or so he has to move. What a tragedy; he is a highly intelligent professional person and he had a great job, but he caught the bug of gambling. Even now I am not sure that he has really kicked the habit.

His story is not dissimilar to other stories. Thankfully, he has not taken the step that the member for Prospect said others have taken. Four hundred suicides is a major problem. Pretty much unrestricted access to gambling is a problem. We do not want to stop the fun. We cannot tell people what to do. But we should expect online gambling agencies to take more responsibility because they are encouraging people to spend their money. Let us make sure that we look after the welfare and the safety of those people. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (11:16:40):** In opening my contribution to debate on the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019, I will reflect on some of the comments made by the member for Lakemba. I thank him for his words. The member for Lakemba and the member for Oatley mentioned that this bill is supported by both sides of the House. It is good to reflect on the fact that at times both sides of the House can work together on important reform. That reflects the important nature of this piece of legislation. The member for Lakemba and the member for Prospect mentioned the suicide rate, with 400 deaths a year associated with problem gambling. That is how problem gambling intersects with other major complex societal problems.

I note that gambling permeates our society. Wherever we look we see evidence of it. Gambling has always been part of the Australian culture, but online gambling has permeated our society. As a father of three young children I see evidence of that. The member for Lakemba spoke of how online gambling intersects with sports broadcasting on television. I have a young man at home who talks about who is going to win the match, but he talks about it in terms of the odds and the price being paid. I find that alarming and I have concern in that regard.

Whilst gambling has a part to play in our culture, we need to make sure that there is moderation and that clear expectations are set. We also need to make sure that there is protection for those impacted by problem gambling. This legislation sets two stages of reform. One is to give a definition for "inducement" in response to the Court of Criminal Appeal decision in *Ladbroke's Digital Australia Pty Ltd v Liquor & Gaming NSW*. The

second part is to implement the first tranche of the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering. It is to that part of the bill that I turn my attention.

The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have developed a set of standard minimum protections for online gamblers that must be adhered to by all online wagering providers, known as the National Consumer Protection Framework. In 2015 the Commonwealth Government asked the Hon. Barry O'Farrell to conduct a review of illegal offshore wagering. The review identified a number of concerns. One of the major challenges with online gambling is the borderless nature of the internet, making it a challenge across several jurisdictions. The review found that there are more than 60 pieces of legislation across those jurisdictions impacting on online gambling. As has been discussed, there are some real concerns around online gambling. It is estimated that around one million Australians actively use online wagering accounts. The rate of problem gambling online is triple that of gambling on other traditional platforms. More than 240,000 individuals are at risk of or already experiencing significant harm caused by online gambling.

The member for Prospect has mentioned that there are 400 suicides each year associated with problem gambling. Over the past 15 years there has been an increase in the availability of online gambling. Research shows that online wagering is the fastest-growing gambling segment, expanding at a rate of 15 per cent annually. Over \$1.4 billion is gambled online each year. Those concerns led to the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering. The framework will provide consistent, easy-to-use tools and information for all Australians—no matter where they live—to help them better control their gambling. The national framework will introduce 10 measures to protect consumers and will be enforced across all Australian jurisdictions.

Turning to the bill, I note schedule 1.6 and 1.7 looking at amendments to sections 33H (a) and 33J (a) of the Betting and Racing Act 1998, particularly the prohibition on direct marketing and inducements. Regarding direct marketing, betting service providers will need to have the express and informed consent of consumers in receiving gambling advertisements and allow consumers to easily unsubscribe from those advertisements and marketing. Also a person who requests a licensed betting service provider to close the person's betting account is taken to have withdrawn consent to receive more gambling advertisements. That is significant because we want to place in the hands of the individual their right to refuse marketing and to have control in their lives over the marketing associated with gambling. The inducements are also important. In new section 33J (b) there are also limits on betting accounts. Before an account can be opened, the provider needs to seek a limit from the individual on the amount of money the holder may deposit into the account. Every 12 months that is open to review.

Finally, the other aspect I will talk about is the closing of betting accounts and making sure that, should an individual choose to close their account, it is simple and easy for the holder to do so and they can do it by the same means by which they place a bet, so by telephone and by email. These measures will provide easy-to-use tools and information for people across our State and, when implemented as part of the framework, for all Australians no matter where they live. This is really important to help them better control their gambling. Overall, we are looking to work in a non-partisan way across this country, and particularly in this State, to ensure that people participating in online wagering will be better protected by a series of strong, nationally consistent consumer protection measures.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:25:08):** At the outset I will address a couple of the issues raised in the debate on the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. The first is the issue that there is a culture in Australia of gambling. That is true; to a certain extent there has been a culture of gambling. But if you look back to the 1970s, 1960s and 1950s, world-beating gambling addiction was not what defined Australia. Something happened in this country in the 1980s and 1990s, resulting in Australia becoming one of the most highly addicted gambling countries on the planet. What was that?

In the 1970s there was betting at racetracks and there were TABs and lotteries. Sports betting was illegal. We also had some very unsophisticated poker machines, not the ones now that are designed to addict and play the player. We had relatively unsophisticated "one-armed bandits" as they used to be called. In the 1980s and early 1990s State governments—and we saw it in New South Wales—faced increasing costs for transport, health and other things. So they had to find ways to fund it. With the exception of resource-rich Western Australia, States like New South Wales opened the floodgates to the gambling industry with machines designed to addict people. That is why we have the highest gambling losses per person in the world.

Our figures are multiple times that of other comparable jurisdictions because we resolved in our State Parliament to say that we wanted the revenue. That has not been able to be changed because we have created groups like the Australian Hotels Association and the registered clubs, which will fight tooth and nail to defend gambling losses, to ensure that their potential downside—the commercial risks to people that own gambling industries—is relatively low. What is it? It is public policy risk. That is the risk. They have put an incredible amount of effort into lobbying places like this and developing the consensus we see today. The consensus between Labor and the Liberals is: Do not fight registered clubs.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** But this is about online gambling.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** We are talking about gambling, but the elephant in the room is not online gambling. Why is online gambling being adjusted? Because they are not the ones that are in here lobbying hard to protect the existing gambling industry. The online gambling industry does not have a foothold here. I think that is a positive thing. We need to be doing everything we can to stop another lot of gambling industry lobbyists trying to influence State and Federal parliaments. This bill is an important part of doing that, but it is difficult to focus on online gambling when it is a minuscule proportion of total gambling losses in Australia. Look at the numbers. Poker machine losses in Australia are 10 times more than any other form of losses in Australian gambling, let alone online gambling.

It needs to be pointed out that there is a gambling culture, but we as a State Parliament actually developed that culture. We made sure that we went on to be world best when it comes to gambling. What is happening in Australia is unique in the world. We know that organisations, and gambling industries in particular, will try to protect their own interests. That is why the Australian Hotels Association campaigns so hard against me and other Greens.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Now the truth comes out.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** That is the truth. The member for Tweed worked for an organisation that derived its major source of income from gambling losses. The vast majority of the revenue of registered clubs comes from gambling losses. Where does that money come from? We know that it from a significant proportion of problem gamblers. All The Greens say is that there should be \$1 maximum bets, we should ban loyalty programs that encourage people to gamble more and we should give councils the right to say no to poker machines. Let us be honest. We are not talking about my community, where gambling losses are relatively low.

Gambling losses in my community from pubs and clubs amount to only about \$2 million a week. That is nothing compared with low-income communities. In rural and regional New South Wales and west and south-west Sydney that figure is many, many times more. I am not speaking about this issue from the perspective of my community, even though there is a lot of problem gambling. The loss on the Central Coast or in a low-income community is double or triple the loss in my community. While we are losing almost \$19 million through poker machines every single day of the year, we need to do everything we can to try to restrict gambling. This bill is a good way to do that. Online gambling does not have the same capacity as the poker machine technology to create the visual and noise stimulations that are designed to promote gambling and addiction. But the legislation before the House is an important part of how we deal with the proliferation of gambling.

It is important that we take all areas of gambling into account. I am pleased that some of The Greens amendments moved in the upper House were adopted. That is a positive measure. We need to do everything we can to keep online gambling in check. Soon the online gambling industry will have lobbyists in Parliament defending online gambling. As the industry grows bigger and bigger, online gambling companies will do exactly the same as the Australian Hotels Association [AHA] and the registered clubs. They will come to Parliament to try to do deals with the Government to reduce tax. That is what happened with the O'Farrell Government, which in its first term reduced their tax by almost \$400 million. That money should have gone into hospitals and schools.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** That is not quite correct.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** It was an arrangement to reduce tax. Whilst registered clubs might give out \$100,000, they will not tell you that they took in \$20 million in poker machine losses in order to provide that money. A club will suck tens of millions of dollars out of an electorate and then put \$100,000 back in. And we are supposed to give it a medal for doing that. I ask members to go to the back of the annual report of their local registered club to find out how much money it is making in poker machine losses and what it gives back to the community. Then they should ask themselves who is robbing who and who is addicting who. I recognise that this legislation is a positive step forward but the elephant in the room is the poker machine industry. We need to do everything we can to minimise the level of addiction to all sorts of gambling.

This bill deals with online gambling. Whilst online gambling does not have the same attractions as poker machines, it is still important to deal with it. It is remarkable that we have not dealt with a lot of these issues in the past. It is great that this bill deals with the direct marketing issue and the inducements offered to people to open a betting account, even though they can go to their local club and get inducements to continue to sit in front of a poker machine. The bill also implements requirements around betting accounts, setting them up and deposit limits. They are important matters that need to be addressed by the Parliament. In particular, I am glad that the bill deals with the closure of betting accounts, which is often a real challenge.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I call the member for Tweed to order for the time.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER:** There are circumstances in which directors of corporations will be made liable for betting account offences. It is important to ensure that the people who run these businesses are responsible for these businesses. We need to try to minimise the impact on people. The big fallacy is the issue of "responsible" gaming or gambling. I note that it is not called "gambling" anymore, it is called "gaming". The attempt to change the language is a tactic straight from the playbook of the casino industry in the United States. The industry claims that only a very small percentage of people have a problem with excessive gambling whilst the overwhelming majority of people gamble for recreational purposes only and therefore there is no need to limit access to gambling because of a small group of irresponsible gamblers. That claim is false and the opposite is true. All these false, shonky prevalence studies have been completely undermined by legitimate academic investigation. The gambling industry funds most of these prevalence studies, but we know what the truth is.

One interesting insight was revealed when a Tabcorp executive who was giving evidence to the Productivity Commission outlined that 80 per cent of the losses on poker machines were borne by 20 per cent of players. Registered clubs and pubs will not provide that data when they are asked about loyalty cards and the percentage of people bearing the majority of losses. That will not be revealed publicly because those clubs and pubs know that the majority of losses do not come from a small proportion of people. We need to deal with that issue and the fact that this is not about a tiny proportion of people. This is an enormous problem in our community that needs to be addressed. This bill goes some way to doing that. The Greens will continue to press for reforms. Along with the Alliance for Gambling Reform, local councils, churches and social justice organisations, I will continue to argue that we should limit bets to \$1, abolish loyalty programs and inducements in registered pubs and clubs and give councils the right to say "no". The Minister has taken some positive steps and I encourage him to continue.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:35:10):** The Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019 takes positive steps to address online gambling. As usual, New South Wales has lagged behind other States to adopt the recommendations of the National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering. In the twenty-first century it is not only gambling in venues that we need to address but also the fastest growing form of gambling, online gambling. Nationally, the popularity of online gambling surges by 15 per cent per year. The issue needs to be addressed very clearly. This bill amends current legislation to prohibit direct marketing to the holders of betting accounts without expressed consent and prohibit inducements being offered to open a betting account, invite another person to open a betting account or not close a betting account. It also introduces requirements for online betting companies to put schemes in place that enable account holders to limit deposits into their accounts unless they expressly refuse, enable account holders to easily close an account and for an account closure request to be processed immediately.

I have had personal experience of that. When I knew this legislation was going to be introduced I opened an online account. It was a real challenge to shut it down. Opening the account was a free and easy process but closing the account and removing myself from the scheme took a number of extra clicks and another entry of my personal data. It should not be that hard to opt out. Additionally, even though I have opted out of those choices, ads from that online gambling agency are still flashing up on my screen, whether I want them or not. I do not get many other ads flashing up on my screen. The power of those online corporations is still having a strong impact. This legislation ensures that directors of corporations are liable for the betting account offences and clarifies that offers of gambling products with incentives relating to better odds and other advantages to holders of betting accounts will be prohibited inducements.

It is not before time that we have legislated to protect online gamblers from the dodgy player reward schemes that incentivise additional betting. In addition to what is in place, the Government must seek clarification around the player reward scheme and ban rewards for any additional gambling options. Club products and extra coffee are okay, yet legislation must also seek to ban any rewards that offer extra investment in gambling, extra turns, extra spins, bonus dollars and anything of the like for online gambling. The Alliance for Gambling Reforms says that the legislation does not clarify incentive policy enough and that the draft bill lacks clarity. The organisation is calling for an axe of all incentives for player reward schemes, which is part of the Gaming Machines Act 2001.

The member for Balmain pointed out that the gambling losses in his community are not as high as those in my community. I am not talking about only online gambling, which is so much harder to measure. The gambling losses to the tangible poker machines in my community amount to about \$700,000 per day. That is \$250 million per year that could be going into other resources in our community. The number of poker machines in the community has gone down, which is a good thing, but the losses to gamblers and their families have gone up. Clearly we do not need any further incentives to gamble. The games are enough of an addiction. The Government needs to stay on top of what gaming will look like in the future. Our young people are being trained on their online devices as part of an addictive mentality to put money into these programs when they do not have any. It is quite frightening.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Be nice.

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** Be nice? The young people do not understand that they are getting drawn into the whole addictive process on their approved machines at home. In saying that, it is important to note that this bill recognises the complex difficulties of regulating an international gambling framework. Today in the Parliament of New South Wales I thank Macquarie Bank for its lead in banning credit cards for gambling. Great job, Macquarie Bank. I also thank Woolworths credit cards, under the auspices of the Macquarie Bank brand. Credit—ha, ha—is also due to the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, the ANZ bank, which will not let customers use their credit card for over 85 per cent investment in gambling. These large institutions, in working to protect their risk, realise that gambling, or gaming, investment is not healthy.

All banks should contribute to busting this social licence. It is not something that a reputable company should be involved in. The banks that continue to allow this practice continue to put pressure not only on gamblers but also on the gamblers' families through their efforts to repay money spent on gambling back to the banks. I seek clarity from the Government as to whether this bill is really only prohibiting inducements to prevent the opening of accounts. We need to address inducements that prevent the closure of an account. The question is: Is the Government banning inducements to gamble more? The legislation needs additional clarity to ensure inducements, such as free credit or extra goes on betting products, are completely stopped. Starting to gamble is bad and continuing to gamble is bad. The Government must make getting out of gambling as easy as is possible.

We need certainty that this legislation stops all ongoing direct marketing reminders to gamblers to keep on gambling. As I have just said, it is right there on my phone even though I have withdrawn from the whole process. Currently, to opt out of marketing one has to tick a box which is buried way down at the bottom of the online gambling sites. The Government needs to ensure that opting out is easily available to those who, in a moment of fear, take the step to get out of the gambling cycle. The express consent to receive direct marketing should default to "no". People should not have to tick a box further down the track. There should be absolute clarity in this legislation that the default is that people do not receive more marketing to encourage gambling.

As we move towards examining addiction as part of the health system and the social consequences of addiction in our community, it scares me that the number of patents in Australia by Australian-based companies in the last 12 months have been significantly over-represented by Aristocrat, one of the biggest online gambling companies in Australia. It has submitted 252 patents, followed next by CSIRO with 52 patents. We need to be assured that the provisions in this legislation are tight before skills-based gambling, and the grey lines associated with it, comes to New South Wales. The best incentive to reduce bad practices would be to increase the cost of penalties. This is especially relevant, as the companies are treating the maximum fine of \$55,000 as a cost of business. The penalties against the five companies that breached last year were such that they could be regarded as a cost of doing businesses. To stop these practices will require these companies facing real disincentives.

Using online technical capacity, the Government could possibly multiply the penalty by the number of people viewing or accessing inappropriately played advertisements. Let us penalise the companies that break the law by counting online viewers who are exposed to inappropriate incentives by measuring the distribution or number of individuals exposed to and impacted by the advertisement. These analytics should be used to pull these companies into line. I can only imagine what the Central Coast could do with the millions and millions of dollars that are currently spent on gambling each year. Imagine how many breakfasts could be provided for kids arriving at school hungry because their breakfast money was spent on gambling. The money could be better spent on further training for jobs for young people, free TAFE courses and mental health nurses to assist with other addictions. I could go on and on about where this money would be better invested but I am sure members can imagine for themselves.

The Australia Institute found that Australia's pub and club poker machines account for 76 per cent of the world's pub and club poker machines, despite the fact we have only 0.3 per cent of the world's population. With the Australian online gambling community now rapidly growing, it is essential that we rapidly, adequately and appropriately construct legislation that clearly recognises our nation's gambling issues. We must do all we can to protect our citizens from ruthless organisations that exploit vulnerable citizens. Like tobacco, gambling is addictive, legal and a serious health issue.

Over 500,000 Australians are living with financial stress, relationship breakdown and mental illness as a result of gambling addiction. As the member for Prospect said, society is now challenged by the fact that there are 400 suicides a year associated with gambling addiction. In closing, I thank the pubs and clubs across the Central Coast that are taking real steps to support those addicted to gambling. I send a special shout-out to Mingara Recreation Club, which has counselling available to members, and to Ettalong Diggers, which provides financial counselling to those members who require support. I ask constituents not to hesitate to contact my office staff for assistance in accessing support networks for people addicted to gambling across the coast.

**Ms WENDY LINDSAY (East Hills) (11:45:08):** The Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019 is important legislation. I am very happy to support the bill, as I represent an electorate that has a demographic with some low socio-economic constituents and several large clubs, including one that the member for Tweed mentioned in his contribution to this debate. The bill contains a number of significant reforms which underline the Government's commitment to addressing gambling-related harm and upholding community expectations in relation to the behaviour of betting service providers.

I recently discussed with the CEO of Bankstown Sports Club, Mark Condi, how the club is leading the way with initiatives by monitoring its gambling machines with CCTV footage and ensuring that patrons who may appear to be problem gamblers are approached by trained members of their staff. It is almost like a responsible service of alcohol [RSA] approach but for gambling. The club also has a chaplain on site 24 hours a day to help people with issues relating to gambling. Bankstown Sports Club, along with other clubs in the East Hills electorate, endeavours to uphold community expectations in relation to problem gambling. The combined measures in this bill show that the Government is serious about cracking down on irresponsible conduct by betting service operators, online operators and the clubs. I commend the Minister for responding to community expectation and leading the way on tackling this issue. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:46:34):** I make a brief contribution to the debate on the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019 and I indicate from the outset that I support the bill. I want to make a few points about the bill, especially in relation to the objects of the bill. The bill aims, in part, to prohibit direct marketing to the holders of betting accounts without express consent; to prohibit inducements being offered to persons to open a betting account, to invite another person to open a betting account or not to close a betting account; to require providers of betting accounts to provide a simple and easy-to-use process to close betting accounts; and to make it clear that offers of gambling products with incentives relating to better odds and other advantages to holders of betting accounts will be prohibited inducements.

I will focus on those issues in my contribution to debate on the bill, which, as I have said, I support. The online gambling phenomenon has seen a rapid increase in recent times. I speak from experience. I am the father of five boys. Two of them, twins, turn 22 today. They are always on their phones contacting betting agencies, much to my disgust. They tell me that they have made some money. I am sure they have lost a lot of money too. Online gambling targets predominantly young males, who are risk takers by their general nature. My boys and their rugby club teammates get together after a game on a Saturday night in the footy season. There will be probably five grades of young blokes at the local venue, drinking and using their phones to put bets on the footy, the AFL and horseracing, or whatever sport they choose. It is so easy, just a click of a few buttons, and not having to use cash means that they can lose touch with the reality of the situation. That is a problem. I do not want to be seen to be the fun police and I certainly do not want us to go down the path of becoming a nanny State. However, I consider that these are sensible amendments to the legislation that should be supported.

This morning I did a quick bit of research in relation to the bill. As reported in the *Central Western Daily*, according to Lifeline Central West's Alex Ferguson, in my electorate of Orange some 40 to 50 people are currently seeking counselling through Lifeline due to gambling debts. Further, over \$80,000 per day is bet through poker machines. I did not realise it was that high. That is an enormous amount of money and one of the highest amounts in a regional area of New South Wales. Gambling is a problem. The bill before the House is targeted at online betting and the inducements and incentives that are offered to encourage people to continue betting or to sign up new bettors. Once someone is addicted, it is very difficult to break the cycle. Gambling can be highly addictive. It is for the reasons I have stated and those reasons only that I support the bill. As I said, I do not want us to go down the path of becoming a nanny State but I think these are sensible amendments to the legislation. I congratulate the Minister on bringing them before the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:50:59):** It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. I thank members from both sides of the House who have made contributions to the debate on this good piece of legislation. I particularly thank the member for Canterbury, who is present in the Chamber, for her contribution. I also acknowledge the contributions from my colleagues the members for the electorates of Seven Hills, Oatley, Dubbo, Tweed and Albury and the brief contribution from the member for East Hills. A lot of work has gone into this piece of legislation. I commend the Minister on this excellent piece of legislation. It goes to the heart of the issues related to online gambling and other betting issues that we see across New South Wales.

The bill introduces reforms that build on those introduced by the previous racing Minister last year. I had great pleasure in speaking to that bill as well. The 2018 reforms introduced a tenfold increase in penalties for unlawful gambling advertising, from \$5,500 to \$55,000, and directorial liability to ensure that directors of betting service providers were required to take responsibility for the conduct of their companies. Those reforms also introduced the expansion of prohibitions on inducements to ensure that betting service providers were not able to

get around prohibitions in New South Wales by simply putting a disclaimer at the bottom of ads. Those reforms also expanded the enforcement powers for Liquor & Gaming NSW to ensure that it was able to gather the evidence it needed to prosecute for breaches of wagering rules. Parts of the bill make for interesting reading. Proposed new section 33JC, regarding the closing of betting accounts, states:

- (1) A licensed betting service provider that provides betting accounts must ensure that the process for closing a betting account—
  - (a) is simple and easy for the holder to use, and
  - (b) permits the account to be closed using any means by which the holder may place a bet and by telephone and email.
- (2) A licensed betting service provider that provides betting accounts must ensure that the process for closing a betting account is prominently displayed—
  - (a) on the licensed betting service provider's website, and
  - (b) if the holder is able to place a bet using an internet application, website or datacasting service, at the place at which the holder accesses the holder's account or via a single link from that place.
- (3) If the provider of a betting account that enables the holder to place a bet only by telephone does not have a website, the licensed betting service provider is not required to comply with subsection (2) but must provide details of the process for closing the account if requested to do so by the holder.

These are important reforms when a person wants to break the cycle of problem gambling. Sometimes it is difficult to close down a betting account. The longer an account is open, the easier it is for a person to fall back into the trap of problem gambling. I was proud to support the previous legislation back in 2018. I will be very proud to vote in favour of these reforms, which are part of this Government's commitment to reducing those gambling-related harms that we have heard so much about in this debate. On a personal note—and I spoke about this in 2018—my father has had a gambling addiction all his life. As a family, that is something we learned to live with and work through. I understand the fear and anxiety that goes with problem gambling. When the phone rings you never know who is on the other end, whether it is a debt collector or, worse, your father has borrowed money from a family friend and has not paid it back. These are the issues that families of gamblers live with every day.

Unlike other addictions, a gambling addiction is very easy to hide because there are no physical telltale signs of the person's addiction until something catastrophic happens: the repossession of a car or house or the loss of a job because the person spends their whole time gambling. In my father's case, he took money from the company he was working for at the time. He was very lucky that he did not do some jail time. He had a very understanding employer. This was going on when I was in primary school. These issues have an effect on the family unit. I remember the stresses placed on my mother as a result of my father's addiction. He will always have that addiction. It is not something he can suddenly switch off. It is like any other addiction, whether it is a drug or alcohol addiction. As I said, difficulties arise from the person hiding the problem. Sometimes a person will make the decision to stop. We must ensure that if someone wants to get genuine help they are able to do so. Also it is difficult to back out of providers such as telephone betting accounts. It needs to be easier for people to have the ability to do that.

This legislation goes a long way to helping people say no to their addiction. As I said, it is something I have grown up with. My father is now into his 70s. He will always be a problem gambler. Mum has him on a very tight rein and controls the finances very well but it has added stress to her life. She has had to manage the family finances for their entire married life in order to keep on top of it. That story is emulated right across this State and this country—male or female, all different ages. A gambling addiction is not something you grow out of.

There are many good avenues that provide help. Gamblers Anonymous is outstanding and does a wonderful job. My father attended Gamblers Anonymous. Sometimes it is an eye-opening experience for them when they see the damage that has been done to other families because of a gambling addiction. A person may not be at the edge of the cliff yet but when they meet someone who has gone over the cliff they realise how much damage can be done and they pull back. I say a big thankyou to Gamblers Anonymous for the wonderful job it does. We often talk in this Chamber about people taking responsibility for their actions. My father has taken responsibility for his actions, as do many other gamblers. However, it is a good thing to provide safety mechanisms to enable people to do that.

This bill puts New South Wales above other jurisdictions. We not only have introduced the toughest laws to crack down on irresponsible behaviour by betting service providers but also have made a commitment to evidence-based policy. The Minister and his team do a wonderful job in relation to stakeholder engagement. I note that the Minister is in the Chamber. As I have said on many occasions, whether it is Service NSW or the digital driver licence, the Minister and his team are at the forefront of stakeholder engagement, working with people to make sure we get the best outcomes. The legislation we see coming through this place ticks all the boxes. Some

members have commented in this Chamber on how long it has taken to introduce this legislation, following the review. It may have taken time but it is important to get the legislation right the first time, especially when it relates to social issues around gambling. As to the bill before the House, the Minister has got it right.

The Responsible Gambling Fund is driving the development of a comprehensive evidence base to inform regulatory interventions and policy development. As I have previously outlined, the Minister has the ability to look at the big issue, to work out what needs to be done and to tackle it at a micro level. The work of the Responsible Gambling Fund is helping to set benchmarks for other jurisdictions. I wish this fund had been in place when I was growing up and my father was going through his addiction. These issues are emerging with gambling and how we can respond to them. We were lucky in one regard because internet gambling did not exist when I was a young person. Telephone gambling was the worst opportunity for people to bet. Now the airwaves are flooded with easy access to gambling. The bill goes a long way to protect people from themselves but also protects their family unit from the stress caused by gambling addiction. [*Extension of time*]

The bill is part of a commitment to evidence-based policy by ensuring that we are targeting the pressure points for problematic gambling behaviours. I have seen problematic gambling behaviours firsthand. The bill also increases penalties for misconduct, sending a clear message to the courts about the Parliament's expectation on penalty breaches of the Act. The new rules around sending advertising to customers by requiring them to opt in, rather than opt out, are an excellent initiative. New rules allowing account holders to easily set deposit limits to better control their spending are an outstanding improvement, as are the rules to create easy account closure procedures. That is part of the issue; people have the opportunity to say, "No, I don't want to do this anymore", rather than have advertisements pop up on their phone or see the advertisements on a regular basis. That is a great thing for people with a gambling addiction.

I have spoken in the House many times about community concerns around gambling and the impacts of problematic gambling. The bill gives us the ability to combat problem gambling. The Government has not pulled any punches and has sought to implement the best possible response to this emerging issue. I congratulate the Minister and his team. I understand the Government has worked closely with betting service providers to ensure these measures are implemented as quickly as possible, but also make it clear what the Government and the Parliament's expectations are around lifting the standards of behaviour across the industry. Most organisations are of the highest calibre, as the member for Tweed mentioned in his speech. There are plenty of clubs on the Central Coast that set very high standards and monitor people who appear to have a gambling problem. They try to intervene with them.

Mingara Recreation Club on the Central Coast does an outstanding job. It has people to provide counselling for problem gamblers. They recognise who they are and try to intervene. It is fine to have fun and have a bet occasionally. We have just had one of the biggest race days in Australia. Australians enjoy a bet occasionally, but there is a limit. Going past the limit of what you can afford to gamble is when the problems occur. That is part of the addiction issue. I also thank the betting service providers for stepping up. I have named the Mingara Recreation Club as a very responsible club.

It would be remiss of me if I did not thank the Minister's staff, Elizabeth Stepanian and Priya Pagaddinnimath, and from Liquor & Gaming NSW, Angus Abadee, Dion Jackomas and Alex Kennedy. In conjunction with the Minister they have done a great job putting the bill together. It will go a long way to providing comfort and help to those people who need it most. To the young people whose families are under pressure, like mine was, I say to them that there is light at the end of the tunnel, and working together and sticking together as a family unit is the best thing they can do. Staying together means they are able to work through the problems as a team and a family. Again, this is a fantastic piece of legislation. I commend the bill, the Minister and the team to the House.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:03:49):** I speak in support of the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. The object of the bill is to combat gambling-related harm and to provide a regulatory framework for online wagering that is consistent with other States and Territories. Excessive gambling is a real issue and it affects families across New South Wales. That was recently brought home to me when a pub was proposed to be built in Casula near a school. Many parents and local people came to me and said that this would be an issue and would create more gambling, which already impacts on people from a low socio-economic background. We were worried that would be further exacerbated. I became aware of the rate of gambling and how it is a quiet thing that happens in people's homes, not just in pubs and clubs, or, as the member for Terrigal said, on race days and other events. It can happen at home and that is where online gambling is particularly an issue.

While overall rates of gambling are decreasing, online gambling is growing. The rate of problem gambling online is staggering. Problem gambling online is triple the rate of problem gambling on any other traditional platform. It is easy, it is attractive, and it is often addictive. Approximately one million Australians

have online wagering accounts. As the nature of gambling and platforms for gambling evolve, government strategy to address excessive gambling must also keep up. One of the Government's primary responsibilities is to look after the vulnerable in our society. Irresponsible gambling advertising capitalises on the vulnerable, especially those with addictive tendencies or those from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The NSW Gambling Survey 2019 found that 7.2 per cent of all people who gamble are either at a moderate risk of becoming a problem gambler, or are already problem gamblers. Out of this group, people most affected tend to be the unemployed, from low socio-economic backgrounds, or from an Indigenous background. In light of this I am pleased to note the broad support already expressed across party lines in the Parliament regarding combating gambling-related harm. This broad support attests to the urgency of the bill. Total gambling losses reach tens of billions of dollars every year in this country. New South Wales needs stronger laws to manage the advertising of gambling, and to minimise problem gambling. The bill appropriately amends the Betting and Racing Act 1998 and the Totalizator Act 1997 in important ways to tighten regulation of online wagering inducement.

The bill will see the implementation of the National Consumer Protection Framework. This regulatory framework is the product of four years of collaboration between the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. Under the national framework better information is to be provided to gamblers on their wagering activity, and people will be given accessible tools that encourage a responsible approach to gambling. The implementation of the National Consumer Protection Framework will serve to create consistency across the country. Online gambling knows no borders and no time frames. It can be done at any time of day, so it is appropriate that we achieve a degree of uniformity across the country in how we manage regulation of online gambling inducement. The bill also provides for the definition of inducement to be broadened as it applies to online wagering. As described in the other place, inducements are:

... offers or products that are designed to encourage a person to gamble, gamble more frequently or to open a betting account.

The bill prohibits a range of inducements, including encouraging someone to open a betting account, to invite another person to open a betting account or not to close a betting account. The bill also prohibits inducements to a person to consent, or not withdraw consent, to receiving gambling advertisements. These are welcome amendments. In particular, it limits unhelpful exposure to advertisements which could encourage problematic behaviour. One has only to look at the past few months to see the ubiquity of online wagering advertisements—in particular, advertisements for online betting at The Everest and the Melbourne Cup. There was saturation advertising for online gambling on these races. The prohibitions on inducements put forward by the bill are crafted to protect consumers from incentive-based marketing in online wagering. Contravening these laws will elicit significant penalties.

The bill also places prohibitions on direct marketing by online wagering platforms. This prevents gambling advertisements being sent directly to a betting account holder unless the holder has given express and informed consent to receive gambling advertisements. This covers text messages, emails or any other direct means of contacting the betting account holder. These measures will help to avoid the encouragement of reckless gambling on these platforms. Furthermore, if someone has permitted that they be exposed to online wagering advertisements, unsubscribing from these must be easy and accessible for the betting account holder.

The bill also conveys that someone who has not logged into their account for 12 months or has closed their account is to be interpreted as withdrawing consent from receiving all gambling advertisements by the provider. The Government is confident that the aforementioned provisions will tangibly affect the way that gambling is advertised and will further protect those at risk of irresponsible gambling. The bill ensures that betting service providers make the closing of a betting account an easy, accessible and visible process. If someone begins to feel uncomfortable with an online wagering account, it is unfair if the process of closing their betting account is difficult or convoluted. Under the bill providers of a betting service platform must also permit a betting account to be closed using any means by which the holder may place a bet, as well as by telephone or email. The ability to easily close an account is important, particularly for people who find themselves at high risk of problematic gambling and want to extract themselves from an unconstructive environment.

Finally, this bill requires providers of betting accounts to enable holders to limit monetary deposits into their accounts. Before a new betting account is opened, the betting platform provider must require the potential account holder to indicate the limit on the amount of money the holder can deposit into the betting account within a specified period. Should the account holder not wish to apply a limit, they must expressly refuse to apply a deposit limit. Every year, the licensed betting service must also ask the account holder if they wish to change their deposit limit or, if they do not already have a deposit limit, whether they wish to set a deposit limit. This will enable people to more easily regulate their spending on online wagering. Importantly it enhances personal responsibility.

A deposit limit also helps mitigate the effects of cases in which people gamble excessively online while under the influence of alcohol. We know that young men in particular have become vulnerable to gambling harm. Alcohol is a prominent feature in their betting behaviour, with 64 per cent of young men who have gambled indicating they bet on sports while consuming alcohol. It is pivotal that consumers are empowered to manage and monitor how much they spend on online wagering. When someone's abilities are impaired, such as when under the influence of alcohol, the encouraging of a deposit limit by betting service platforms is a good safeguard to excessive gambling. The offering of deposit limits by betting service providers will assist in the promotion of a responsible approach to gambling. Ultimately these are good and constructive reforms for New South Wales.

Problem gambling affects thousands of people across New South Wales. It does not just affect those who partake in excessive gambling; it also affects their families, their friends and their workplaces. For many people, problem gambling has a devastating personal consequence. The prohibitions in the bill tighten the existing regulatory requirements around online wagering platforms. The Government promotes personal responsibility as those over the age of 18 can freely partake in online gambling. However, the Government also recognises that there are predatory and exploitative inducement practices at the disposal of online wagering platforms that must be prevented.

Gone are the days of having to get off the couch and go to the local club or TAB to gamble. Gambling is now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All one has to do to place a bet is open an app on their smartphone. While the convenience of online wagering may be enjoyable for many, it also heightens the risk of problem gambling. Consequently the online wagering industry needs to be reformed for the protection of consumers in New South Wales. This bill contributes to existing regulation in helping prevent inducement that encourages irresponsible and destructive behaviour in online betting account holders.

I urge the House to support the Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019. This is a cause which ought to transcend partisan differences. We must protect the people of New South Wales from exposure to inducements which could encourage problem gambling. Problem gambling, as I said, affects many families across this State and the consequences are absolutely devastating. This bill promotes the public good and the protection of our citizens. It also comes down to the core of our role as a government: protecting the vulnerable or those with the capacity to be significantly exploited. Online wagering must have regulation to ensure the protection of consumers across New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (12:14:20):** In reply: The Gambling Legislation Amendment (Online and Other Betting) Bill 2019 is part of the Government's commitment to put in place measures that proactively deal with gambling-related harms. The bill empowers consumers to make informed decisions about their gambling behaviour while also ensuring that harmful gambling advertising practices are prohibited. I thank members of this House and the other place for the collaborative spirit in which we have debated this bill. I thank the following speakers: the member for Prospect, the member for Granville, the member for Fairfield, the member for Lakemba, the member for Balmain, the member for Gosford, the member for Orange, the member for Canterbury, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Oatley, the member for Dubbo, the member for Tweed, the member for Albury, the member for East Hills, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Holsworthy and one of my favourite members, the member for Terrigal, who is doing fantastic work. I thank all of the members who contributed to this debate.

A number of amendments were accepted in the other place which not only enhance this bill but send a clear message that this Parliament is a strong supporter of the Government's efforts to reduce gambling-related harms in New South Wales. Noting the unanimous support this bill has received in both Houses I wish to make a few brief comments. The bill implements the National Consumer Protection Framework, which is a set of common minimum standards that all jurisdictions have agreed to implement to address gambling-related harm risks. While many jurisdictions have opted to implement these measures through licence conditions, New South Wales will implement the framework through legislation. The Government has adopted this approach to ensure that the National Consumer Protection Framework builds on the regulatory framework of New South Wales rather than seeking to supplant it.

The member for Canterbury in her remarks in support of the bill sought clarification on the status of the New South Wales Government's implementation of the framework and the O'Farrell review. The New South Wales Government has been progressively implementing recommendations that sit with it including the changes to account features included in this bill and working with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions to finalise the approach to a centralised self-exclusion. The Responsible Gambling Fund is also working to enhance the Gambling Help Online service. This service is coordinated by the Responsible Gambling Fund on behalf of other jurisdictions and has a comprehensive program of continuous improvement to ensure the Government is able to give those people who need help with their gambling, or that of a loved one, the help they need.

There is more work to do in this space but with this bill we take a significant step forward to implementing the reforms that the O'Farrell review identified as critical to reducing gambling-related harms. By implementing the National Consumer Protection Framework's changes through legislation we are also able to clarify two elements of the 2018 wagering reforms that should be read alongside the National Consumer Protection Framework. Firstly, the term "inducement" is to be given its broadest meaning. To be clear, the Parliament's intention is that the courts are not to limit the broad terms in which inducement is defined.

The proposed definition is intended to ensure that Liquor & Gaming NSW is able to take action against any operator who advertises any inducement. We need the tools to crack down on irresponsible gambling advertising and this bill delivers those tools. I add that that broadest possible meaning is absolutely critical. I hope the courts take that into account. The reality is that with so much innovation taking place we need that broad scope to catch up, otherwise regulation will always be 10 steps behind, so I really do hope the court takes the Parliament's intentions into account. Secondly, the bill increases maximum penalties for unlawful advertising as well as new offences introduced by the bill. During debate in the other place it was made clear that these amendments were intended to send a clear message to the courts that it is Parliament's intention that penalties imposed on betting service providers are consistent with the maximum penalties available and are commensurate with the harm associated with this type of misconduct.

The proposed reforms in the bill will give consumers the tools to manage their gambling activity online and to ensure that they are not subjected to harmful gambling advertising. Critically, the proposed reforms are about ensuring that people are not inundated with harmful gambling advertising and that individuals are only exposed to inducements when they have made a conscious decision to access this content. Put simply, the reforms will ensure that where a gambling advertisement is designed to encourage a person to gamble, to gamble more frequently or to open a betting account, it will be unlawful. The bill aims to reduce the potential harm from online wagering in New South Wales by supporting online wagering customers to manage their gambling activity and by ensuring that the broader community is not inundated with inducements to gamble. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **Third Reading**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

##### **Messages**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it does not insist on amendments Nos 1, 2, 4 and 5 disagreed with by the Legislative Assembly and that it agrees to amendments Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4 proposed by the Legislative Assembly.

#### **BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019**

##### **First Reading**

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand an order of the day for a later hour.

#### **ROAD TRANSPORT AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2019**

##### **Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

#### **JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2) 2019**

##### **First Reading**

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

## Second Reading Speech

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (12:22:39):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Justice Legislation Amendment Bill (No 2) 2019 introduces a number of miscellaneous amendments to address developments in case law, support procedural improvements and close gaps in the law that have become apparent. In particular, these amendments will strengthen our community through, first, improving justice system responses to domestic violence and, second, improving criminal procedure and court processes. The bill is an important part of the Government's regular legislative review and monitoring program. Many of the amendments in the bill are technical in nature and are an important step towards further strengthening our justice system. I refer to the Parliamentary Secretary's second reading speech in the Legislative Council. I invite readers of *Hansard* who are interested in this debate to read that speech. I commend the bill to the House.

## Second Reading Debate

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (12:23:58):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Justice Legislation Amendment Bill (No 2) 2019. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The bill is said to introduce a number of miscellaneous amendments concerning developments in case law, supporting procedural improvements and closing gaps in the law that have become apparent. The Government, in the second reading speech in the other place, emphasised that it would improve justice system responses to domestic violence and improve criminal procedure and court processes. A number of provisions mean that some indictable offences will now be able to be completed summarily unless the person charged or the prosecution elect to proceed on indictment; that is, they are being made what are commonly called table offences. The offences concerned are in schedule 1.10, item [15], the offence of bestiality; and item [16], the offence of supplying drugs on an ongoing basis.

If the offence concerned in a particular case is likely to result in a penalty less than the maximum jurisdiction in the Local Court, which is two years' imprisonment for a single offence, then there is certainly logic in the matter being disposed of in the Local Court. That is quicker and more efficient. Provided that the prosecution makes the correct decision, there will not be a situation where a defendant gets a lesser sentence because of the arbitrary jurisdictional limit of the Local Court. The problem with this, of course, is that it gives more work to the Local Court without increasing the court's resources. I made this point in relation to the recent Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2) 2019, in which various offences were made table matters.

The Government response was that there were so few individual matters that it would not be a problem. With respect, that is a little bit disingenuous. There is a cumulative effect here—not just in this bill and the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2) 2019, but also in earlier legislation. The issue is not just each individual accretion to the Local Court's workload; it is the overall combination of them that reveals the real scope of the problem. In the foreword to the most recent annual review of the Local Court, released several months ago, the Chief Magistrate of New South Wales said that at the end of 2018 the Local Court was exhausted. As he also said, "The reasons why are not hard to see." One of the factors he highlighted was the increasing number of table offences. He said:

Adding further to the rising impost are amendments to indictable offences which are capable of being dealt with summarily (known as 'Table offences'), resulting in changes in the complexity and seriousness of the matters dealt with in the Court's criminal jurisdiction.

The Chief Magistrate pointed to 2018 changes that added offences of supplying a prohibited drug up to a commercial quantity, robbery, perverting the course of justice and dealing with the proceeds of crime as table offences. Now we have this bill and the recent Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. 2) 2019 changes. As the Chief Magistrate said, "They are yet another demand affecting the role of magistrates." I do not oppose the changes; there is logic behind them. But the Local Court should be properly resourced to deal with them. This issue is particularly acute in country and regional areas. The staffing levels, as I understand it, are based upon fairly dated standards. A number of regional centres have subsequently experienced significant population growth. Staffing levels in Local Courts have not kept up; that should be reviewed.

Another pressure on the Local Courts, according to the Chief Magistrate, are the consequences flowing from the early appropriate guilty pleas reform. A significant number of committal matters are now resolving at the Local Court and thus are taking up more time in relation to sentencing. On that point, I note schedule 1.10, items [4] and [6], which propose amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act following the monitoring of the implementation of the early appropriate guilty pleas changes. The meaning of "first return date" is clarified to include an appearance before a registrar. An amendment to section 59 means a magistrate no longer is required to explain the committal process to an accused if they are legally represented. Schedule 1.4 to the bill will allow the

inclusion of a Deputy Chief Magistrate on the Domestic Violence Death Review Team [DVDRT]. This is said to result from recommendation 7.3 of the Domestic Violence Death Review Team Report 2015-2017. I relay the disappointment of many and the anger of some that the DVDRT now reports only every two years rather than every year. It should report annually. The matters it deals with are too important for that not to occur.

There are a plethora of other items in the bill. For example, it clarifies that a person may commit an offence involving participation in a criminal group whether or not the person is a member of the criminal group; extends certain offences that concern the theft of mobile vehicles to include trailers; and amends the Witness Protection Act to provide for a person who is or has been a participant in a witness protection program to give evidence by audiovisual link. They are some examples of the large range of amendments in the bill. I will not deal with all of them.

Probably the amendment that has attracted the most public attention is that in schedule 1.16. This is said to deal with the issues arising from the case of *Council of the Law Society of NSW v DXW* [2019] NSWCATOD 101, which was decided on 25 June and which has attracted a degree of attention. On 3 October Janet Fife-Yeomans wrote about it in the *Daily Telegraph*. It has also received coverage in that esteemed organ *Justinian* and it briefly featured in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. To deal with the issue, an amendment is made to the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014. The amendment will validate disciplinary complaints made by or on behalf of the Law Society of NSW, the New South Wales Bar Association and their councils.

The target of the validation is the manner in which an instrument of delegation between the Office of the Legal Services Commissioner and the associations and councils was drafted or because of other technical irregularities in the process followed in the complaints investigation. The Government frankly admits this is a retrospective provision. I have received some criticism from practitioners about the retrospective aspect of this proposal. It is worth pointing out that it is retrospective only in a narrow sense. The actual behaviour by legal practitioners that is sanctioned has not altered. It is exactly the same before this amendment as after it—that is, it is not the case that this change now means that something that was acceptable behaviour before this bill is now made unacceptable retrospectively. What is changed is the technical and procedural steps that lead to investigation, not the standard required by practitioners. On that basis, I have no opposition to the proposal that is being made.

The actual decision in *DXW* is based on the statutory interpretation of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act dealing with sections 266, 267 and 406. With no disrespect to the tribunal, it strikes me that that judgement was a profoundly technical one, which is another reason why I think it is perhaps appropriate that retrospective legislation can deal with the problem here. I note that the *DXW* judgement was delivered on 25 June and the application by the Law Society was then dismissed. Five months later this amendment is brought before us. It is worth noting that a reasonable amount has happened during those five months. There have been at least six more cases in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Those cases are *Council of the Law Society of New South Wales v EBA*, decided on 25 September; *Council of the Law Society of New South Wales v DRE*, decided on 30 September; *Council of the Law Society of New South Wales v Low*, decided on 9 October this year; *Council of the Law Society of New South Wales v Thornton*, decided 9 October; and most recently *Council of the NSW Bar Association v ECC*, decided on 1 November. In each of these decisions the jurisdictional point was treated separately so none of the details of the alleged misbehaviour was provided. In *DRE*, *EBA*, *Thornton*, and *ECC* costs were ordered against the applicant, the Law Society or the Bar Association. Five months later we have the amendment. As I indicated, despite the retrospective nature I do not oppose that particular provision of the bill. Overall, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence) (12:31:30):** In reply: I thank the member for Liverpool for his contribution to this debate and I thank the Opposition for its support for this bill. The member for Liverpool made some observations about the initial proposal to include another indictable offence as a table 1 offence in the Criminal Procedure Act, and his concern about the workload in the Local Court. I am aware of the Chief Magistrate's comments in the most recent annual review of the Local Court about a range of factors that have contributed to the Local Court's increase in workload. Notwithstanding that increase in workload, the Local Court remains among the fastest jurisdictions in the country. I thank the Chief Magistrate for his careful management of that high workload and all the judicial officers of the Local Court for their hard work day in and day out to deliver justice in New South Wales.

As a result of the Government's reforms in other respects, creating more table 1 offences and the work on early appropriate guilty pleas, the initial signs are good in relation to management of the District Court's backlog, which peaked at over 2,000. I am told it is now below 1,500. As I said, there was an additional table offence initially proposed in the bill, but that was removed by a Government amendment in the Legislative Council. Two additional magistrates were recently appointed to the Local Court as part of a \$4.1 million package to help respond to the rise in the volume of criminal matters in the Local Court. On 1 July two new Local Court

circuits commenced. They are the Muswellbrook circuit, which will provide 252 new sitting days for practitioners; and the Grafton circuit, which will sit at 10 courts in the Northern Rivers region.

The member for Liverpool made some observations regarding the Domestic Violence Death Review Team [DVDRT] reporting every two years instead of annually. I note that the DVDRT moved to reporting biennially due, in part, to submissions made by the convenor of the team to the statutory review of Chapter 9A of the Coroners Act 2009. Two-yearly reporting is appropriate as it allows sufficient time for the development of recommendations within a collaborative, inter-agency framework. It also allows time to monitor adequately the implementation of past recommendations. It is also consistent with similar bodies' reporting obligations.

The member for Liverpool made observations about the time between the decision in *Council of the Law Society of New South Wales v DXW* and the reforms before the House today, in particular what has transpired in the intervening period. The decision of the *Council of the Law Society of New South Wales v DXW* was delivered on 25 June and, after considering legal options for appeal of the DXW decision, the Office of the Legal Services Commission wrote to me on 26 August to commence discussions on the possibility of a legislative amendment. The development of the amendment has been a complex process. Care has been taken to ensure that the amendment provides certainty in respect of matters that have been decided, matters that are currently on foot and matters that have been terminated by the courts on jurisdictional grounds since DXW was decided.

I am advised that there are currently six affected matters that are still on foot in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] and one affected matter in the Court of Appeal. I am advised that if those matters are still on foot after this legislation passes, it is expected that the legislation will cure the jurisdictional issue and that those matters will continue. I am advised that 18 affected matters in NCAT have been terminated already in relation to the jurisdictional issue. If the amendment contemplated by the bill passes, the relevant regulatory body will have the discretion to recommence those proceedings within six months, provided that the regulatory body had sought for the proceedings to be terminated in relation to the jurisdictional issue. In the meantime, the amendment will not affect the validity of any decision made in terminated proceedings unless proceedings are recommenced.

In conclusion, this bill will amend a number of Acts within the Stronger Communities cluster to address emerging issues, to respond to developments in case law, to support procedural improvements, to clarify uncertainty and to correct errors in legislation. In particular the bill will strengthen the community's response to domestic violence, provide better protection for children by better holding registered offenders who fail to comply with their reporting obligations to account, and improve legal procedures for children under the age of 14 who are victims or alleged victims of sexual offences. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019

### Second Reading Speech

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (12:37:55):**  
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, which makes a number of important miscellaneous amendments to 10 principal Acts and associated amendment Acts across the Better Regulation and Innovation portfolio. The amendments in the bill are essential to ensure that the legislation being amended can operate as Parliament intended. It does so in the following ways: by inserting specificity into regulation-making powers, by clarifying legislative intent and reducing uncertainty, and by improving the effectiveness of the legislation and removing unnecessary red tape. This omnibus bill is an efficient and effective way to address these various matters.

The individual amendments to each Act are not significant or substantial enough to warrant their own bill. The amendments in the bill can generally be classified as mainly administrative. However, they are not of

such a minor nature that they could be included in the recent statute law revision bill. The need for many of the amendments in this bill has been identified by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. This has occurred during the implementation stage for various reforms passed by Parliament during 2018 and in the development of supporting regulations. Other amendments address feedback from consultation with stakeholders and issues raised from customer experience testing. They also arise as a consequence of being responsible stewards of the legislation we administer.

I now turn to the detail of the bill, which will ensure the residential tenancy domestic violence reforms, introduced by this Government, are operating as intended within a robust and clear legal framework. The amendments will provide clarity for the strong protections for families living in rental premises who are affected by domestic violence and who need to end their tenancy. The bill does this by clarifying the operation of new provisions in the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, to ensure stakeholders clearly understand the intent of the provisions and their obligations under them.

The amendments in schedule 1.10 [5] to [14] to the bill have four main aims. They ensure that a domestic violence victim is not liable in any circumstances for property damage caused by a perpetrator in the course of committing a domestic violence offence; clarify that only domestic violence victims can terminate their tenancy on domestic violence grounds; provide a competent person with certainty that they can collect, use, hold and disclose information about the perpetrator without breaching privacy laws; and clarify that it is an offence for any person to provide false or misleading information to end a tenancy on domestic violence grounds.

I emphasise that these amendments implement existing Government policy that was subject to extensive consultations during 2015 and 2016, and again in 2018. Amendments to sections 38 and 40 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 will enable the regulations to clarify the liability of tenants and landlords for utility charges. These amendments will ensure that tenants are not unfairly charged for gas they cannot use, such as where the landlord has not supplied gas appliances for heating or cooking. The amendments will also clarify circumstances where a tenant is liable for utility charges, even when their premises are not separately metered.

To better deal with another matter that can lead to disputes, the bill enables regulations to prescribe the kinds of minor fixes, alterations, additions or renovations a tenant is able to do where it would be unreasonable for a landlord to withhold consent. The current regulation-making power only enables minor alterations to be prescribed. The public consultation draft Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019 included a proposed list of additional minor alterations. While these proposed minor alterations were generally supported by stakeholders, it is arguable that some could be classified as minor fixtures, additions or renovations, rather than minor alterations. Rather than encourage disputes over semantics, this bill proposes to amend section 66 of the Residential Tenancies Act to broaden the regulation-making power to cover the range of minor changes that were included in the draft regulation. This amendment is required before the regulation can be finalised.

This bill also makes minor amendments that will allow the regulation to prescribe responsibilities for repairing, replacing and checking smoke alarms. In doing so, the bill gives effect to the health and safety aims of recently passed reforms under the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Review) Act 2018. These amendments arose out of the 2018 coronial inquest into the tragic death of nine-year-old Miata Jibba. In particular, the amendments clarify that the meaning of "smoke alarm" also includes heat alarms, and enables the regulations to prescribe landlord and tenant obligations regarding repair and replacement of smoke alarms and the time periods within which repair or replacement should occur. Collectively these amendments will provide the delivery of residential tenancy law reforms passed by Parliament in 2018 and they support the aims of those reforms. This will help reduce the level of disputes between tenants and landlords by providing greater clarity and certainty.

It is important that these amendments be made now ahead of the balance of tenancy reforms commencing next year. I now move to schedule 1.1 to the bill, which amends the security of payment legislation. In 2018 this Government passed important reforms to the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999. This followed a comprehensive review of the Act, and involved significant industry and community consultation. One of the issues raised during the review was that the penalties in the legislation were insufficient and did not adequately deter non-compliance. The review recommended that penalties be increased and this has been done for offences in the Act as part of the 2018 amendments. A number of the penalties were increased from 200 penalty units to 1,000 penalty units as part of this process. The bill will amend section 12A of the Act to increase the maximum penalty that may be imposed by the regulations for a failure to comply with trust account requirements for retention money.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Committees***PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)****Reports**

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

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:45:20):** As Chair: It gives me pleasure on behalf of the Public Accounts Committee [PAC] to speak to the report of the committee on the *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2019 Post-Election Report*. I thank committee members for their assistance in developing this report. I particularly acknowledge Deputy Chair Tanya Davies and other committee members Adam Crouch, Lee Evans, Ryan Park and Felicity Wilson. I thank them for their assistance and support in producing this report. I particularly acknowledge the staff. As all members know, the vast majority of the work is done by committee staff. I acknowledge the secretary of the Public Accounts Committee, Bjarne Nordin.

This was the third post-election report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, with other reports having come following the 2011 and 2015 elections. And we now have this report after the 2019 election. The Parliamentary Budget Officer appointed for this report, Steven Bartos, was also the Parliamentary Budget Officer in the 2015 election so he had a wealth of experience to report back to the committee. Certainly this experience assisted him in establishing the Parliamentary Budget Office and ensuring it was able to carry out its responsibilities as quickly as possible in the lead-up to the 2019 election.

The committee heard that Mr Bartos felt the ability of the Parliamentary Budget Office [PBO] could be improved, particularly in relation to a recommendation he made to extend the life of the PBO and make it a permanent standing body. This is something that had been the subject of debate in this Chamber. I acknowledge the member for Keira, Ryan Park—a member of the Opposition in this place—who put forward a private member's bill to achieve that purpose. He spoke to that with some passion during our deliberations. Having considered Mr Bartos' recommendations and acknowledging the views of the member for Keira, the Public Accounts Committee came to the conclusion that there may be some middle ground on that.

The committee recommended that the PBO be established for a period of 12 months. Importantly, in changing the nature of its use, we suggest that the PBO be made available to all members of Parliament for the first six months of its operation. This would then be refined as we move into the last six months prior to the election, as it is now. The PBO would then be made available to the major parties—the Coalition and the Labor Party—whether in Government or in Opposition. Mr Bartos made 17 recommendations in his report, but that was probably the most substantial recommendation and the one that we gave the most consideration to.

Another recommendation that I thought needed particular consideration and was of some merit dealt with his concerns about the confidentiality of information or advice that came to or from the PBO. Mr Bartos was concerned that some information sought by the Opposition may have been leaked—for want of a better word—through interactions with other ministries or agencies. That is a very real concern with the process. The reality is that this is about understanding the policies of the two major players—the Coalition and the Labor Party—in the lead-up to an election to inform the community and upcoming electors. The integrity of that process should not be undermined in any way. Mr Bartos' 17 recommendations were inherently sensible, notwithstanding the fact that the recommendation to form a permanent body was not supported. I commend the very important Public Accounts Committee *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2019 Post-Election Report* to the House and the Government.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (12:51:59):** I make a brief contribution to discussion on the Public Accounts Committee *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2019 Post-Election Report*. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I acknowledge my committee colleagues, in particular the member for Lake Macquarie, an outstanding Chair who believes very strongly in proper process around these matters. As the shadow Treasurer in the lead-up to the election I had the opportunity to work with Mr Steven Bartos and the rest of the Parliamentary Budget Office team. I found Mr Bartos to be incredibly professional and hardworking; he went about his work in a very diligent way. As the member for Lake Macquarie said, I am of the view that we need a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office in New South Wales, and I have previously introduced legislation to the House that would have implemented that reform.

It is ridiculous that while the Commonwealth and Victorian Parliaments both have permanent offices, New South Wales—with all its complexities, challenges and policy initiatives—does not. Most members' inaugural speeches in this place were about making things better for the community. All members come into this place because they want to make their communities better. That often requires legislation and policy initiatives, and those initiatives need to be fiscally responsible. It is absolutely ridiculous that members cannot access an

independent Parliamentary Budget Office to assess, review and access feedback, and critique on those policy initiatives because the service is not available until a few months out from a State election. How on earth that encourages effective and sound policy making is beyond me.

First and foremost, we are legislators. The majority of members are passionate about public policy. That is why we are elected to this place. To not have the appropriate vehicle and mechanisms in place to have our policies assessed is beyond ridiculous. I will continue to lobby for a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office; it is something that I believe in very, very strongly. I acknowledge the work of Mr Bartos and note that he gave the Opposition's policies and costings a very clean bill of health. In fact, in the first week we had around 50 policies ready to be costed because we had been working on them for some time. The reality is that the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer was right on two accounts.

First, he was right when he said that this Parliament and the members of Parliament deserve a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office. Secondly, he was right when he said that we should tighten up the way information—particularly from the Government or Opposition—is treated in a confidential way by agencies and those who come into contact with it. The integrity of this process is only as good as the mechanisms we have in place that ensure there is clear accountability and a clear line of confidentiality that is not breached. I acknowledge and thank Bjarne Nordin, Steven Bartos and the rest of the Public Accounts Committee members for their work. I hope there will be a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office in the future.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:55:59):** I speak to the Public Accounts Committee *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2019 Post-Election Report*. I thank my fellow committee members for their work to finalise this report. In particular I thank the committee Chair, the member for Lake Macquarie, whose stewardship of the committee ensures that we undertake very rigorous and detailed analysis of the work of the Auditor-General and the reports that are sent to us for our consideration. I also thank the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Mr Steven Bartos, and the committee secretariat manager, Bjarne Nordin. This report, which was handed down following discussion and consideration by the committee members, makes a number of recommendations following the 2019 election and the work of the Parliamentary Budget Office.

New South Wales was the first Australian jurisdiction to appoint a Parliamentary Budget Officer. It is an independent role that is utilised to provide independent costings and advice on election policies in response to requests by parliamentary leaders. That service is very valuable to members of Parliament, the political parties and our parliamentary leaders throughout election periods. It is also very useful to members of the community and the media to understand the policies put forward and their significance. It improves parliamentary scrutiny and accountability, and has become a crucial part of the New South Wales elections. I thank Mr Bartos and his entire team for their work in 2019 following on from the work he did in 2015, which resulted in his appointment to a further election.

The report considers the Parliamentary Budget Officer's comprehensive analysis of the operation of the office during the 2019 election and some of his recommendations. The committee took on a lot of Mr Bartos' advice. One of the committee's key recommendations is that the operational life of the Parliamentary Budget Office [PBO] be extended to assist in the efficient appointment of staff and get the office infrastructure up and running. The report also recommends that in the first six months of operation the Parliamentary Budget Office will be available for all members to have policy costings provided, including private members, independent members and crossbench members—not just the leaders of the two major parties. That change would ensure a commitment to the integrity and transparency of the development of policy. It would also ensure that elected members of this place have the support to bring fully fleshed out policies to the fore during election periods. Having a thorough and comprehensive policy costing process in place is incredibly beneficial to the community and the parliamentary system itself.

We also took on the advice of Mr Bartos and made a couple of recommendations about confidentiality and delegation provisions, which we think will strengthen confidence in the process and ensure that the respect afforded to the Parliamentary Budget Office and the findings of the Parliamentary Budget Office will continue to be influential in future elections because people will feel able to participate in the process knowing that confidentiality will be maintained. Like my committee colleagues who have already spoken, I thank the Parliamentary Budget Officer and his entire team for the work that they have done. It is very valued. That is why the committee is seeking initial support for the role and the team. I thank the committee secretariat and the Chair, Mr Piper, and my fellow committee members for all the work that they have done this year. I look forward to working with them again next year.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:00:02):** I will make a brief contribution to the take-note debate on the *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2019 Post-Election Report*. While I was not a member of the committee, I have a vested interest because in 2011 when I first arrived at this Parliament I was on the committee that reviewed the role of the Parliamentary Budget Office. That office was instigated by the previous Labor

Government under then Premier Kristina Keneally so that there could be some scrutiny around the costing and findings. At the time several hundreds of pages of submissions came from parliamentary budget offices all over the globe. There were submissions from business chambers and business councils, legal bodies, union groups, public servants and members of Parliament right across the world. All of them said exactly what this committee report says—that gains achieved from the purpose, intent and potential of a parliamentary budget office are almost immeasurable. In western civilisations, transparency is more and more the order of the day for all actions of government, so we need to be looking to a process like this. That was in place, but was quickly dismantled.

I can say, from the point of view of a shadow Minister, that the six-month window provided for a Parliamentary Budget Office in an election cycle is simply not long enough. Shadow Ministers need to have access to experts who can acquire the necessary Treasury documents and costings so that we can build policies that are based on sound financial evidence. That is crucial to our democracy. As much as we need strong governments we need strong oppositions. Governments need to be held to account. Oppositions need to develop good alternative policies. Voters need to be given options with respect to the policies of the people they may vote for. A Parliamentary Budget Office could play a key role in that. That is why this Committee report is incredibly important.

Those involved in New South Wales politics cannot rest on this issue until there is a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office throughout the entire election cycle, from the time a government is elected until the time of the next election. This transparency must be put in place so that we can have the best possible outcome for the citizens of New South Wales. Government members, Opposition members, crossbench members and Independent members of Parliament will be able to put forward the most detailed, heavily scrutinised, tightly costed policy options. That will lead to a better, stronger future. That is why I support this report.

#### **Report noted.**

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Reports**

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

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:03:58):** As Chair of the Legislation Review Committee, I address the House concerning the committee's report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 9/57*, tabled on 19 November. In the ninth digest the committee examined five bills introduced in the last sitting week and commented on three of them. I will now draw attention to some of the issues raised. The Work Health and Safety Amendment (Review) Bill 2019 implements proposals based on recommendations made by the 2018 *Review of the model WHS laws: Final report*. It also makes minor amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 concerning the application of the Act to dangerous goods and high-risk plant as recommended by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Statutory Review Report*.

The bill provides that an inspector can exercise the investigative powers in section 171 of the Work Health and Safety Act for up to 30 days without having to re-enter the workplace. These powers include requiring a person to produce documents or answer questions, and a person may not refuse to do so on grounds that it may incriminate him or her. This may impact upon the privacy rights of those involved, especially their right to freedom from arbitrary interference. It also compounds the impact of the abrogation of the privilege against self-incrimination.

The committee noted that inspectors currently need to re-enter a workplace to exercise these investigative powers, which may also affect the privacy rights of those involved. Further, there is a public interest in inspectors being able to effectively complete their investigations and ensure compliance with work health and safety laws in all areas of New South Wales. Given these factors, as well as the safeguard that an individual's answer to a question or document produced is generally not admissible as evidence against them in civil or criminal proceedings, the committee made no further comment.

I turn now to a private member's bill, the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Code of Conduct—Property Developers) Bill 2019. This bill seeks to amend the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct to provide that Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries must not remain or become property developers. However, they may do so where they are a property developer only by virtue of being the spouse of one; where the other person's property developer business is not likely to give rise to a conflict of interest; and where the Premier gives a ruling approving the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary remaining or becoming a property developer. The committee noted that the bill may grant the Premier a wide and ill-defined power affecting the rights and obligations of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries. Whilst the committee acknowledged the anti-corruption objectives of the bill, the bill gives limited guidance as to how the Premier is to

make a determination that the property developer business is not likely to give rise to a conflict of interest. The committee prefers administrative powers affecting rights and obligations to be drafted with sufficient precision so their scope and content is clear. It therefore referred the matter to Parliament for consideration.

That concludes my remarks on the ninth digest for this Parliament. I encourage everyone to read the full digest, which is available on the committee's webpage. As this is our final digest for 2019, I note that my fellow committee members and I moved a motion thanking and congratulating the committee staff and secretariat for all of the work that they have done this year for the Legislation Review Committee. I thank each of them by name, starting with our committee manager, Elspeth Dyer. I also thank Elaine Schofield, Ze Nan Ma, Mohini Mehta, Emma Wood, Jessica Falvey, Rowena Johns, Talina Drabsch and Caroline Hopley. We all know that without the work of our secretariat staff we would not be able to analyse the detail of our legislation and regulation, particularly given our very short turnaround. I note that the committee reviews every piece of legislation and disallowable regulation that is put to this place and to the Legislative Council.

The detailed work and analysis required to get on top of that and circulate information to all and to the wider community take a lot of time and energy. Without the secretariat doing all the work that they do, we would not be able to perform our functions as members of the committee. And members of this House would not have the level of insight and knowledge that the committee provides them. Having this as an oversight committee is also an incredibly important function of our democracy. It would not be such an effective oversight committee if we did not have the secretariat. I put our thanks on the record. I wish all of the committee staff a merry Christmas. We look forward to working with them once again in the new year.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:08:41):** I note that in the ninth digest, tabled on 19 November, the Legislation Review Committee, reviewed five bills and commented on three of them. Those comments are contained within the digest and, as usual, I encourage members to review the digest and consider the comments contained therein. I know members who diligently refer to the digest will note that this one contains an appendix 2, which is an index of letters received from Ministers and members responding to the committee's comments. I refer to that very briefly.

Appendix 2 will be included in the digest twice during each parliamentary year to record the responses received by the committee to comments made by the committee and contained in the digest. It was an initiative of the committee in the Fifty-Sixth Parliament, which undertook to write to each Minister and each member who was responsible for legislation to refer them to the comments made by the committee in the digest and invite a response. Appendix 2 records those responses. I note that the responses received by the committee are very much lower in number than the comments that the committee made and notified to members and Ministers. Be that as it may, the process builds on the scrutiny of legislation that the digest seeks to undertake.

To show the importance of seeking responses from Ministers and members, the first item in Appendix 2 records a response received from the Hon. Anthony Roberts, MP, in relation to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Amendment (Inmate Behaviour) Bill 2019. The committee made a number of comments on the impact of the bill upon the rights of inmates in the correctional system. The committee noted that the bill may constitute "double punishment" and may contain insufficiently defined limitations on the power of the commissioner.

In his response the Minister provided a number of useful comments that went to highlighting the reasoning behind the bill and also provided comments that can be used by people involved in the corrections system—those representing inmates and also administering the system—to guide them on the way the legislation is meant to operate. The responses in the appendix will go to improving the administration of justice. I think they indicate that the work of the committee has improved the scrutiny of legislation overall and hopefully improved the operation of legislation for the welfare of the people of New South Wales. I finish by thanking all the committee members. I especially thank the secretariat that supports us and I wish them a Merry Christmas. We rely implicitly on the secretariat in our work. I commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

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

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to students, parents and teachers from St Therese's Catholic Primary School, the Ryde Public School and the Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School, guests of the Minister for Customer Service and the member for Ryde. I welcome to the Chamber North Sydney Council Mayor Jilly Gibson, as well as councillors Libby Moline and David Cook from Mosman Council, guests of the member for

North Shore. I acknowledge Cameron Parker, who is currently on work experience with the member for Newcastle. Also here on work experience is Indigo Franklin, a student from Blue Mountains Grammar School, guest of the member for Blue Mountains.

I acknowledge Jenny McNiven and John England from Southlakes U3A, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge Bill Ferguson, David Dugan and Tony Quigley from Trangie, guests of the member for Murray. I also acknowledge the year 5 and year 6 students from St Joseph's School, Gilgandra, guests of the member for Barwon. Finally, I acknowledge the former member for Port Stephens, Craig Baumann.

*Announcements*

**QUESTION TIME**

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members that a number of functions are being held this evening in the parliamentary precinct. I will not hesitate to remove members from the Chamber during question time, if need be for the duration of the sitting, so they may run the risk of missing out on those functions. I notice that there is already a level of disquiet in the Chamber, which is not healthy. Members will hold themselves in check.

*Question Time*

**BUSHFIRES AND NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:20:10):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the critical role of our National Parks and Wildlife Service in fighting bushfires, will the Premier confirm how many front-line firefighting roles are currently vacant?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:20:28):** I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition because it gives me an opportunity to talk about the wonderful work that our National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] does. First, I place on record in the context of the devastating bushfires that are still burning across the State—in excess of 50 at last count, 22 of them uncontained—the work that the NPWS has done, in particular on hazard reduction. Firefighting capacity and the outcomes we want for community safety are at the forefront of our considerations.

I stress that when we came to government we increased the level of hazard reduction, which is mainly performed by NPWS staff, by around 250 per cent. They are not our figures. The ABC fact-checked them at the time. One of my predecessors Premier O'Farrell put that on the record. It was found that when we came to government we increased hazard reduction by 250 per cent compared to the previous government. The second point to note is that when looking at overall staff numbers, there are more staff in the NPWS than there were when the Labor Party was in office.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is important to note that around 85 per cent of fires that start in national parks are contained within national parks. I know that the unions, who are very close to the Labor Party, do not like this point.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I make this point because it is a relevant one.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was very specific. It was about how many front-line firefighting roles are currently vacant. How many roles are vacant?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is being generally relevant to the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This is an important point to make because at the time the unions did not like the fact that we did this, and they still don't. We wanted to ensure that we had fewer people in the back office of the NPWS and more people on the front line. To this day the unions within that organisation are not comfortable with that. But I am very comfortable.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Is it the same point of order?

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It is.

**The SPEAKER:** I will not hear it. The Premier is answering the question in general terms. The Premier has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They do not like the truth.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Leader of the House will remain quiet. The Premier will be heard in silence.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The last advice I received stated that workers in the NPWS who have firefighting capacity and training are around 1,200—that is 200 up from when those opposite were in government.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time. Yesterday the member was close to being removed from the Chamber. She is now on three calls to order. I will not hesitate to remove the member for Port Stephens from the Chamber today if she continues to interrupt the House as she did yesterday.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Government does not apologise for the fact that we want more NPWS on the front line protecting our national parks, protecting our wildlife and preventing fire. I also stress this point, which is so important and so relevant. Now—and it did not happen under those opposite—the NPWS sits alongside 29 other agencies in the Rural Fire Service headquarters to make sure it has a key role in not just preventing fire but in dealing with fires and supporting the recovery effort.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: The Premier may be generally relevant but—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** —this is a specific question on how many positions are currently vacant. It is important that we know how many positions, given the seriousness of the situation in New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that the question was specific, but I again say that the Premier is being generally relevant to the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Let me put on the record what the Labor Party is complaining about: more hazard reduction, more front-line NPWS staff, more firefighting capacity, more on the front line, more protection of national parks, more integration in emergency services headquarters. That is what those opposite are complaining about.

**Ms JODI MCKAY (Strathfield) (14:26:24):** I ask a supplementary question. The Opposition has received leaked documents that show the Berejiklian Government has left vacant at least 115 front-line firefighting jobs in the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and they include 44 jobs in fire-ravaged northern New South Wales. How can the Premier possibly justify this, given the horrific bushfire season that we all knew was coming?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The question has been asked and the response will be heard in silence.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27:00):** Given the nature of the question was more like a statement, I respond in the following manner. What matters to Government members are the outcomes we achieve in terms of both preventing fires—hazard reduction—and firefighting capacity. Let me put the facts on Labor's record against our record. In the last full year when those opposite were in government in 2010-11 they completed only 56,000 hectares of hazard reduction by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. That is a fact.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. The question is specifically: Why are there 115 vacant firefighting roles in the National Parks and Wildlife Service? It is over 100 people missing on the ground.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is being generally relevant.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** How clueless are they? There are thousands of firefighters out there in New South Wales fighting fires as we speak. But I digress. Because the question is about NPWS, it is important to get these facts on the record. Under those opposite NPWS did 56,000 hectares of hazard reduction. In comparison, when we came to govern we increased that by nearly 250 per cent, or 2½ times. Under Labor the NPWS did 56,000 hectares; under the New South Wales Libs and Nats in 2012-13 the NPWS did 281,000 hectares. That is the difference between those opposite and us: We actually fix things. We actually get things done. We actually do what we need to do.

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

**The SPEAKER:** I will not entertain that point of order. The Premier will continue.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** There are fires burning today. People do not care what was happening 10 years ago. There are 115 vacant jobs today.

**The SPEAKER:** I have ruled repeatedly on the point of order. The member will resume her seat. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN:** I might address this later in question time but those opposite have not said a single positive thing about the thousands of firefighters out there in the community now. All they want to do is repeat the unions' false claims. That is what they are about.

#### BUSHFIRES AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:29:56):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the work of our emergency services during the recent fires?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30:07):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question. Whilst I have noted this before, I commend him not only for being a strong advocate for his community and for supporting his community during a very difficult time in his electorate with the bushfires but also, as I understand it, he is the only member of Parliament in this place who actually dons the volunteer's uniform. Sorry, the member for Hornsby does as well.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN:** I qualify it this way, member for Hornsby: the member for Myall Lakes is the only member of Parliament who actually fought the current fires. In fact, the member for Myall Lakes—he was too modest to tell me but others in his community told me—was fighting fires until 2.30 a.m.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Hornsby and the member for Maitland to order for the first time. The Premier will be heard in silence.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN:** As there are still more than 50 fires ablaze throughout the State, a number of them uncontained, I again take the opportunity to thank all of our emergency services personnel, especially the volunteers. I understand there are in excess of 1,000 of them out in the field today. We know that tomorrow our weather conditions will worsen. They are certainly not what they were last week but we have to be vigilant against imminent threat to life and property. I place on the record my deepest gratitude to all of our emergency services organisations, all 30 agencies that are currently in RFS headquarters, battling these fires.

In particular, we have the largest rural fire service in the world because we have 70,000 volunteers. Unfortunately their training is now coming into good use because of the horrific season we have already had, and we have not even reached December. Again I cannot state enough how grateful we are on behalf of the people of this great State to every volunteer who puts themselves on the line and often puts their own family and property on the line in order to support others. We cannot underestimate the significance of that. It is something that I have not done and I am in deep gratitude to others who run into the fire as the rest of us run out. We cannot thank those people enough.

It is very humbling to be in the presence of people who have been going on for days, who are told to rest and do not rest. We know the duration of the season and they deserve our full support and gratitude, as does the leadership. I cannot thank enough all of the agencies for working together the way they have. In particular I commend Commissioner Fitzsimmons for the wonderful work he has done and his wonderful leadership. He briefs the emergency services Minister and me on the situation and he gives the operational directions. Ultimately it is his decision-making that has ensured that what has already been a devastating fire season has not been worse.

We could have lost so many more lives and properties last week. Even though this season there have been more than 500 properties and six lives lost already—that is six families who will never be the same—the number could have been so much higher and the tragedy could have been so much deeper. That is why it saddened me deeply when the shadow Minister for Emergency Services spoke in this place yesterday. I want to quote what she said. I stress that Commissioner Fitzsimmons was appointed by a Labor Government 12 years ago. He was appointed by a Labor Government and he was given a lot of support by a former Labor member for Blue Mountains, Phil Koperberg. This is what the shadow Minister for Emergency Services said about Commissioner Fitzsimmons. Because the commissioner has been supportive of the Government's efforts, the member accused us—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 73.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I am trying to hear the point of order.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** If the Premier chooses to go down this path, she can do so by way of substantive motion. She knows that and she abuses this standing order all the time in this Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** I have heard enough. There is no breach of Standing Order 73, but I will listen further to the contribution.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The shadow Minister firstly accused us of playing politics, simply because the commissioner was saying positive things about the Government's resourcing of emergency services. The member for Blue Mountains—I think she owes Commissioner Fitzsimmons a personal apology—said:

... when you force the commissioner to stand up and say they have never had it so good.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will be silent so that I can hear what the Premier is saying, partly, as I indicated, so that if there is a breach of Standing Order 73 I can hear it. If I cannot hear it, I will not know.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I was at that press conference. A number of journalists were there when the question was asked about resourcing. I said to the commissioner, "You answer the question as you see best". I stood aside and he answered the question. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** What hurts me the most—and I do take this personally—is those opposite should look up the commissioner's background and the story of what has motivated him to save lives. Those opposite should all be thanking our volunteers for what they are doing. They should be supporting our communities instead of doing this. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that she should take leadership. Has she counselled the member for Blue Mountains? Is the member fit and proper to be the shadow Minister for Emergency Services?

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I want to end on this point. New South Wales has gone through a very difficult few weeks, and we have not even hit summer yet. I urge all members of this place to hold us to account when they need to—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** —but, unfortunately, what has been missing from those opposite is empathy for people who are doing it tough.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: Over the past couple of weeks I have witnessed many people on this side—

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

**Mr Ryan Park:** I ask that the Premier retract that comment.

**The SPEAKER:** The comment in relation to empathy?

**Mr Ryan Park:** Yes.

**The SPEAKER:** Premier, if you could stand and just say no.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** They need to have empathy for our firefighters, they need to have empathy for our commissioner and they need to support the volunteers.

#### REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:38:30):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will remain silent. If they do so they will be able to hear the question.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the New South Wales Nationals-Liberal Government is continuing to support regional New South Wales for a third straight term?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier) (14:39:05):** I thank the member for Coffs Harbour. What a member! He got elected in March of this year when many were saying he would not get over the line. He got over the line with a margin in excess of 11 per cent. Since then he has got on with the job of delivering for the people of Coffs Harbour. Most importantly, the member's biggest achievement in this term already has been to fight for his community in relation to the Coffs Harbour bypass, going from open cuts to tunnels. It is a significant investment—I think in excess of \$1.6 billion—to make sure that that final piece of the Pacific Highway is completed. That is the work that the member has done and that is an example of what we achieve in government. Often we make announcements, we

cut ribbons and we move on. Often we do not spend enough time celebrating these great victories on behalf of our community. To recap the past year, over the last 12 months—

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

Those opposite are not interested. That is what we have endured from them for eight years. They are not interested in investing in rural and regional New South Wales. Whenever we invest in the regions they say it is pork-barrelling. I say it is our fair share. Today I want to talk about some of those achievements, while those opposite are yelling over the top. Looking at the achievements across the board, through the Regional Growth Fund 1,400 projects across every local government area are either being completed or being built as we speak. It is a win for those smaller communities and every single corner of regional and rural New South Wales. Furthermore, 2019 will go down in history as the year when this Government worked towards water security.

Firstly, we have announced the building of a number of new dams in this State to futureproof regional and rural New South Wales. We passed legislation to deal with fast-tracking planning rules and making sure that we can deliver emergency infrastructure so that regional and rural communities do not run out of water. Our right to farm legislation, which was opposed by those opposite, today empowers farmers and deals with the issue of trespassers who go onto family farms and terrorise our families and our communities. It was this Government that dealt with that issue. We are making sure that we unlock prosperity in regional and rural New South Wales with Special Activation Precincts in places like Parkes and Wagga Wagga, and now investigative work in this regard for Williamtown and the Snowy.

Right across regional New South Wales investment through the Growing Local Economies fund is unlocking jobs and growing the economy. When we think about that in light of the drought—where there are some job losses through the supply chain—we are seeing jobs growth right across regional and rural New South Wales. We are the envy of regional Australia. Regional New South Wales has had 40,000-plus jobs in the past 12 months; the rest of the country has had 5,000 new jobs. It clearly shows the investment and the focus of this Government on getting on with governing, on delivering good policy and a good framework and on leveraging investment. Tax dollars are going into the right areas to make sure that the private sector joins us and creates those jobs. All the projects are important: from water infrastructure to community projects, from a showground to a park. Right across regional and rural New South Wales we are seeing an infrastructure boom like no other: schools, hospitals, road and rail. It does not matter where you are in this State, you are seeing significant investment.

This is on the back of what we are enduring in the bush from the impact of drought. We have provided a \$1.8 billion drought package supporting our farmers. We have gone beyond the farm gate with \$170 million in drought stimulus to support and fast-track infrastructure in order to keep local businesses open and to support local traders. As to water infrastructure, so that communities do not run out of water, as I mentioned, we are building dams for the future. Only one side of this House is talking about drought. I have heard nothing from those opposite in relation to drought. As the Premier touched on, they choose to play politics on misery. While our communities do it tough, they choose to play politics.

The Leader of the Opposition went to Armidale to talk to a group about water in the drought, and she shed crocodile tears. She misled that community that the University of New England [UNE] campus was going to close by June. I congratulate the journalist who investigated the claim, which was made by the Leader of the Opposition to scare that community, that the UNE in Armidale would close by June. The claim was proven wrong. The Leader of the Opposition cried crocodile tears in an open forum, pretending she cared. When it comes to fires, the Leader of the Opposition comes to this House and plays politics in relation to the Rural Fire Service commissioner and budget. Has she been to a fire-impacted community? No, she chose to go to Tathra, which was impacted by fires a number of years ago, so that she could play politics about an issue unconnected to the latest fires. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, I do not want you to use the extension of time as two minutes of attack. I want you to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The question is how the Government is supporting regional and rural New South Wales. There is a contrast here. To have a good government you need good opposition, but we have an opposition that does not care about our communities. Instead, those opposite come to this place to play politics.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: Mr Speaker, you just asked the Deputy Premier not to—

**The SPEAKER:** I said I do not want the whole two minutes to be used for attack. I am happy for the Deputy Premier to continue in the current vein so long as it does not continue for two minutes.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** We built the pipeline to Broken Hill; those opposite opposed it. They got caught up in the weeds about the detailed business case; we got on with the job. The pipeline cost \$470 million

and is 270 kilometres long. Today Broken Hill has water. Why? Because the Liberals and The Nationals show leadership and courage while those opposite play politics. When it comes to issues that need strong leadership, they play politics. When it came to the Tweed Hospital they sided with their developer mate, who gave them donations to move the site. The member for Tweed stuck to the plan and to the principles of delivering a hospital for the people of Tweed.

This brand-new hospital for the Tweed up at Kingscliff cost \$563 million. The dishonourable member of the upper House Walt Secord campaigned against this Government, but we went on to deliver the hospital. These are the projects that we are delivering. Looking back over 2019 we see the projects that the Government has delivered because we have shown leadership and courage, we have made tough decisions and now we are delivering. What will those opposite be remembered for in 2019: the Aldi shopping bag, poor leadership, no courage. It is clear that the Opposition is not fit to govern this State in the near term.

#### MEMBER FOR DRUMMOYNE

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:46:40):** My question is directed to Minister John Sidoti. We know of the Minister's property interests in Rouse Hill and Five Dock. Now we have learnt in documents the Government tried to hide of the Minister's interest in another property at Wollie Creek, which is home to 79 apartments. The Minister claimed yesterday during debate that he is not a property developer. Minister Sidoti, did you mislead this Parliament?

**The SPEAKER:** If the Minister for Health and Medical Research wants to take a point of order he should do so, otherwise he will remain silent.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (14:47:15):** I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. I am a little disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition would use the member for Campbelltown like this. I want to say a few words. Right from the start this has been one big smear campaign. I will say this: Let the ICAC do the job that those opposite asked it to do. Those opposite referred me; let ICAC do the job that it was asked to do.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Minister, did you mislead this Parliament yesterday?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will continue.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** What I say to the Leader of the Opposition is that she is not the leader of ICAC. In fact, she is not even the Leader of the Labor Party.

#### STATE ECONOMY

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (14:48:15):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer inform the House about the Government's NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint, which was released today?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (14:48:35):** I thank the member for Vaucluse for her question and her engagement in the NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint, particularly the oversight that she provided in relation to the research and development work being undertaken by the New South Wales Government at the moment. This work is referred to in the blueprint, which was released today. New South Wales is the premier State in this country. We are the first State, the best State and, at one point, the only State. Today we are the only State that matters. We have the biggest population, the highest incomes and the lowest unemployment. We have the most educated people, although we would not know it listening to those opposite. We have the highest standard of living and abundant natural resources. We are home to world-beating companies. We have the best harbour in the world and we are the financial capital of the Southern Hemisphere.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** In times of crisis, including times that we have seen recently with drought, fire and flood, our communities come together to get through testing times as in no other place. Today I am here to tell the House that under the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government our future is only going to be brighter. Our Chief Economist, Stephen Walters, this morning launched our NSW 2040 Economic Blueprint, which charts a course into a bigger and brighter future for our State. Our vision is for an economy that is resilient, self-sufficient and ambitiously outward focused. In just 10 years' time the New South Wales economy will be Australia's first and only trillion-dollar State. There has never been a better time to live, to work and to invest in New South Wales. That is because we are on the cusp of one of the greatest economic opportunities in our history, which will transform our State and nation for decades to come.

The OECD estimates that by 2030 around two-thirds of the global middle class will reside in Asia. This is a major shift in the global economic order and it is happening right on our doorstep. New South Wales is a State

of millions in a region of billions. As Asia's middle-class booms so too will demand for the world-class goods and services that New South Wales does best—finance, tourism, technology and education, premium produce, medical technology and our resources. With everything we do and everything we are going to do, New South Wales is the perfect match for the Asian century. But New South Wales is also the smart State. We have the skills that will power our future economy. We have more science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [STEM] graduates than anyone else. If we were a country, we would rank fourth in the world for the percentage of workers with a tertiary qualification—around 50 per cent. Over the last decade our Government has been steadily laying the foundations for growth. We have unleashed an infrastructure revolution, building more than \$100 billion in infrastructure in the last eight years, and we will build \$93 billion of infrastructure over the next four years.

This infrastructure revolution will be very clear in a few weeks' time when walking down George Street and seeing the new light rail moving through the heart of Sydney. But it is already clear with new schools, hospitals, motorways, metros, museums, stadiums and airports all under construction. That is because of our asset recycling approach, which will be a platform for decades of future growth. We see New South Wales' future as very much on the world stage. As the Premier says, we are not competing against Melbourne; we are competing against Singapore, London and New York. Our goal is to enable countless companies to find the smart solutions to tomorrow's problems and export them to mass markets around the world. Right now we are building precincts for science, technology, health, education and nuclear medicine with start-up hubs in Sydney and the west. We have special aviation precincts in regional areas like Parkes and Williamtown.

Our strong economy also drives significant growth in our regions. We need to build the infrastructure in regional New South Wales today to deliver for the regional communities of tomorrow. We are doing all this with the goal of growing the prosperity of the working men and women of this State, not just for today but for generations to come. Former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating once said that the key ingredient in public life is imagination. We need to imagine a better future in order to create it. Those opposite have fallen a long way from those days. Imagining a better future is exactly what this blueprint does. It sets a future direction not just for our State today but for us to invest in infrastructure to provide the environment for business to invest, not just for the benefit of this generation but so that our kids and their kids will have significant opportunities for generations to come. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I agree, Mr Speaker, she should be on three calls to order. That is the difference between the policy-driven focus of the Coalition and Labor.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Treasurer is being relevant, so the member for Kogarah's point of order had better be a good one.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Mr Speaker, my point of order is relevance. The State lost 36,000 jobs in one month under this Government's tenure.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** From the team that left us with the worst economy in the country! We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have created more jobs than all the other States combined. In the bush, we have created over 40,000 jobs in regional New South Wales in the middle of a drought. This compares to just 1,000 jobs created across all the other regions combined and you dare to call a point of order on the economy. Stick to your strengths. Nothing. On the politics, what we have seen over the last two weeks from the Leader of the Opposition particularly, with the politicisation of these fires, has been nothing short of crass and disgraceful. Tweet after tweet after tweet—

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The commentary the Treasurer is indulging in has nothing to do with the question he was asked. He is clearly in breach of Standing Order 129 and he knows it and he is now indulging in a personal attack on the Leader of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** On the first point I am satisfied that for 6¼ minutes the Treasurer has been highly relevant, so I will give him a bit of leeway. On the second point, I will hear what he will say and I will take into account Standing Order 73 if it is transgressed.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Tweet after tweet, politicising the fires. For the member for Blue Mountains to suggest that the Government forced the commissioner to play politics is nothing short of disgraceful.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. This Treasurer has lost 36,000 jobs in a month.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I have just ruled on relevance; he point of order is deliberately disruptive. The Treasurer has 33 seconds left.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I ask the Leader of the Opposition: Do you support the comments of the member for Blue Mountains? Do you believe that the commissioner has been politicised? Do you support that? If you don't you should ask her to withdraw it.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: The Treasurer should direct his comments through the Chair and should not be directly asking other members a question.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. I ask the Treasurer to address his comments through me.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** If the Leader of the Opposition believes that the commissioner has not been politicised—he is a man of the highest integrity, a man who is giving his life to fighting fires, a man whose father died in a bushfire and you come in here and politicise it—and if the Leader of the Opposition has any leadership, she should ask the member for Blue Mountains to withdraw that disgraceful comment. [*Time expired.*]

#### MEMBER FOR DRUMMOYNE

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:57:45):** My question is directed to the Premier. The public record shows the Premier knew of John Sidoti's property interests around Metro stations since at least March 2017, yet she appointed him Parliamentary Secretary and then a Cabinet Minister. The Premier still has not ruled on John Sidoti's conflicts of interest. How could she be so incompetent and so lax?

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will contain themselves.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:58:36):** Firstly, I do not accept any of the assertions in the member's questions.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I want to state on the record—as has been mentioned in this place a number of times—the Labor Party asked the matter to be referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC]. ICAC is looking at those matters. ICAC wrote to me saying it is looking at those matters. Let us let ICAC do its job. In relation to rulings, we take that advice from the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. This question is not about ICAC.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Rulings on all Ministers are made on the advice of my department. Given Mr Sidoti's matter is being looked at by ICAC, it is an interim ruling on the advice of my department. Firstly, the Premier makes these rulings in relation to Ministers not Parliamentary Secretaries and I want to make that clear. Secondly, this was a policy we implemented in 2014. The Labor Party never had the guts to put any of these policies on the record. I know why the Leader of the Opposition did not ask me this question because it took her 18 months to come clean on her property in Gloucester. And it also took her a number of months to come clean on the property—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. Clearly, the Premier does not want to—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has been relevant. The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** We are talking about the Premier not addressing this conflict of interest. It is about you, Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Swansea to order for the third time in view of her last contribution.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** These matters are before the ICAC. Let us allow the ICAC to do its job.

**The SPEAKER:** I note that more students, teachers and parents from St Joseph's School, Gilgandra, from the Barwon electorate are in the gallery, visiting Parliament House. They have been enjoying a tour organised by the Parliamentary Education Unit. There are two groups and the second group has now arrived. Welcome.

**BUSHFIRES AND TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:01:33):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is ensuring our transport system is managed during fires and are there any other key lessons from other fires in recent years?

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: The member is asking two questions in one

**The SPEAKER:** I will consider that. I am satisfied the question relates to the essence of fires and the way that fires are managed with transport. I have ruled on the matter and the Minister will continue.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Roads) (15:02:40):** I thank the member for Terrigal for his question. He and his community are currently under an enormous cloud. It is not a pleasant one and it is one that has been burning for days. On behalf of the House, I want to send a message to Shane Fitzsimmons, thanking him for being the person that he is. Anybody that has lived through a fire tragedy with their local community and who has stood alongside Shane Fitzsimmons will know that his capacity in a strategic sense in terms of being able to coordinate an operation around a fire—regardless of how deadly and tragic it may be—and to turn up with strength of character, to make the decisions that he makes given the pressure he is under, is absolutely phenomenal. Every single person in this State owes a debt of gratitude to him for his years of service. I do not care who appointed him. What I do know about Shane Fitzsimmons is that he would never—at any point—do anything other than provide fearless advice to a Minister and to a Premier in tragedy.

To put it into context—and I have heard Tathra mentioned in the House on numerous occasions in recent days—it was a 1,250-hectare fire that burnt 65 homes in an hour and a half, with 810 homes saved. In response, the Government commissioned an independent inquiry, headed by Mick Keelty, a former commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, to look at what happened. When I got home last night I was furious about what happened in here yesterday. First, a tactic was employed and the Tathra community were told that they did not receive any compensation through their insurance payouts because of a pending coronial inquiry. That is untrue. I do not know of anybody who did not receive that payment. Second, on Sunday the Leader of the Opposition was in Tathra when she should have been at evacuation centres.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** It's not for you to tell her where she should be.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** You don't like the truth, do you? The point I make is that she was standing outside the Tathra Hotel getting Instagram shots when the State had lost 577 homes.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House will resume his seat.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister was asked about transport during fires. He has gone nowhere near the question and he is 3½ minutes in.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will come back to fires and transport.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The point I am making about the emergency service response is that we had transport coordination during the Tathra fires. Unfortunately, the local bus company was engaged to transport people into Tathra to see what had happened to their lives when they could not get in there because of the asbestos. That is the sad point about this and that is the point that has been lost by those opposite over the last few days. Over the last few weeks Roads and Maritime Services staff have been on standby with boats ready to go up estuaries. We have had road closures and disruption to transport services. Unfortunately, that will continue.

Those staff members—along with the National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, State Forestry Corporation staff and all the other agency staff who are under the control of Shane Fitzsimmons and the Rural Fire Service—are sitting in operational headquarters around the State ready to manage the transport network. That is what I am talking about. We did learn lessons after the Winmalee fire and the Tathra fire that are now being applied. That is the bottom line. There is no politics here. There is no vote to be won through the behaviour of those opposite on this. Strong leadership requires the member for Strathfield to stand up, go to the evacuation centres without taking cameras and talk to the people who are in pain. [*Extension of time.*]

It is incredibly painful for them, but look at the smiles and smirks on the faces of Opposition members, starting with the member for Port Stephens. The bottom line is that good leadership is about going there and listening to the pain and suffering and taking it on board. The mere presence of political leadership at evacuation centres is incredibly powerful. It sends a message that the rest of the community is with those who are suffering. One of the most important lessons in terms of coordination was the appointment of Euan Ferguson, who does engage. He considers the whole suite of requirements, including transport, the rebuild, the council tip

management, local government requirements, rebuilding community infrastructure and, most importantly, standing alongside those people who have lost their loved ones and their homes.

There were 577 homes lost, six people died and over 1.5 million hectares of land were burnt. We have a long way to go. Those opposite are engaging in absolute base politics that does not rise to the level that our community deserves. I cannot believe that the Leader of the Opposition went to my community to whip up some kind of storm when community members were reliving the experience of Tathra in the same way the Blue Mountains community is reliving their experience when they see these fires. Those opposite are absolutely shameful. Labor is going to be in opposition for a long, long time with a leader like the member for Strathfield.

### **BUSHFIRES AND WILDLIFE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:09:57):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Given the massive impact of the fires in my region on koala and wildlife populations and the volunteers who rescue them and the fact that the closest wildlife hospital is located in Queensland, will the Minister assist in the delivery of a wildlife hospital for my region by expediting land acquisition negotiations between Transport for NSW and the Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (15:10:32):** I thank the member for Ballina for her question. I think I speak for all members when I express my deep concern for the livestock and native wildlife that have been caught up in these fires. The Premier is very passionate about koalas and our wildlife in this State. That is why we have taken steps to ensure that we support the efforts and work being undertaken by our vets across New South Wales. I congratulate the volunteers and vets who have been caring for animals that have been caught up in these fires. Some of the images of those animals have been very distressing.

There is no doubt that large areas of koala habitat have been burnt by recent fires in the State forests in northern New South Wales and the Port Macquarie area. The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting the rehabilitation of koalas impacted by fire. I am advised that the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is investigating the impacts on koala populations from these fires. It is collaborating with the Rural Fire Service and Forestry Corporation to prioritise recovery efforts. The New South Wales Government has also committed \$1.47 million to support the State's wildlife volunteers to meet the growing demands of rescuing and rehabilitating injured wildlife. The Government also committed up to \$1 million in new funding for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation groups to help them respond effectively to native animals injured by bushfires this fire season. This is addition to the \$4.05 million already committed under the NSW Koala Strategy to support wildlife rehabilitators and veterinary training.

I note also the efforts of the Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services staff, who are supporting landholders to manage animal welfare issues through the fires by animal assessments, veterinary assistance, emergency fodder and water and the care of animals in evacuation centres. In response to the member for Ballina's question, I understand that the Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital has identified some preferred locations for its hospital, including a site owned by Transport for NSW. We are supportive of initiatives that protect and preserve local wildlife and will work closely with local groups to see what can be achieved. I understand that Transport staff in the northern region have been corresponding with representatives from the hospital to begin looking at options for land use. I am also advised that the potential use of any land currently held by Transport for NSW would need to go through the appropriate processes and be subject to strict guidelines on property disposal.

That said, I am very happy to work with the local member and her community to support worthwhile initiatives that preserve local wildlife. I point out that on the North Coast, as part of the Pacific Highway upgrade, we have been working hard to protect the koala population. We have been building and monitoring fauna connectivity structures to protect wildlife and allow them to move freely through habitats to access food, water and mates. The Woolgoolga to Ballina upgrade project passes through koala habitat that is locally known as the Ballina koala population. To mitigate impacts to the koala population the project team has worked with numerous koala experts, ecologists and regulatory agencies to develop and implement innovative design solutions. Regular meetings are held with Friends of the Koala, the Environment Protection Agency, the Ballina Shire Council and project teams to ensure the accurate and timely exchange of information and koala management. A clear koala rescue procedure has been implemented in collaboration with Friends of the Koala to evaluate and provide veterinary treatment to sick and injured koalas.

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** Koala monitoring will continue throughout construction and after the road opens to traffic. The project includes over 450 kilometres of fauna fencing, and installation of over 400 dedicated or combined fauna underpass structures. So far, Koala habitat and food trees have been planted on 110 hectares of

the total 130 hectares to be planted. A further 20 hectares of trees will be planted when construction is completed. This work is part of our revegetation strategy designed to improve habitat connectivity and provide extra koala food trees. The New South Wales Government remains committed to working with the local community to preserve and protect native wildlife.

### BUSHFIRES AND FARMING COMMUNITIES

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:15:18):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Can the Minister advise the House on how the Government is supporting our farmers and communities affected by fires?

**The SPEAKER:** During the response to the previous question there were about a dozen conversations going on around the Chamber. I ask that members show respect to those who are answering questions and speaking on serious issues.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales) (15:15:56):** I thank the member for Clarence for his question. At the outset, I acknowledge and thank him for the wonderful work he has been doing in his community to support the many victims of bushfires in his electorate, whether they are residents who have lost homes and property or landholders whose properties have been burnt out. Like many members of this House whose electorates have been impacted, the member for Clarence has been at the front line, making sure that people in need are supported and that they receive the appropriate levels of support from Government to help them on the path to recovery. As members of this House are aware, the catastrophic bushfire conditions that we have been experiencing are among the worst that we have ever seen. So far just over 4,000 landholders have been impacted by these bushfires. Many fires are still burning and, sadly, many more landholders will be impacted.

The New South Wales Department of Primary Industries [DPI] is the lead agency in the recovery of the animal and agricultural services part of that effort. That department has been kept very busy, in partnership with Local Land Services [LLS], in helping communities, particularly landholders, recover once the bushfire front has passed through. The department has a very important role in supporting the work of the RFS in three main areas—primarily supporting farmers, landholders and animal-holding establishments that have been impacted by bushfires; coordinating the rescue, evacuation and emergency care for animals; and coordinating the assessment of animals and, unfortunately, humanely destroying animals that have been seriously maimed or burnt by the bushfires and disposing of dead animals. The department also supports the recovery arrangements by assisting with evaluating, assessing and quantifying the amount of damage that has been done, and running a number of recovery centres and committees.

The DPI and LLS have established a number of facilities across the North Coast, Northern Tablelands and Hunter regions where the fires have been at their most fierce. Since establishing the new agriculture service and assistance hotline—the 1800 number—last week, more than 1,100 phone calls were taken from landholders requiring emergency assistance, whether it is for fodder, emergency water or assistance in dealing with stock that have gone missing or that have been terribly burnt. Eight emergency fodder distribution points have been established and are operating across the State. Combined they have distributed so far—as of this morning—more than 2,500 tonnes of fodder.

**Mrs Melinda Pavey:** Hear, hear! Thank you, Adam.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** I hear the interjection of the member for Oxley. I acknowledge that almost 2,000 tonnes of fodder has been distributed to over 100 landholders in her electorate alone—in places like Kempsey, Macksville and Wauchope. In the electorate of Clarence, more than 350 tonnes has been distributed. More importantly, at those evacuation centres, DPI and LLS are currently the custodians of nearly 4,000 animals that have been brought in as a result of the fires. Farmers who cannot keep stock on their land anymore and people whose homes have burnt down have brought those animals in. Of the 3,847 animals, 300 are in the Clarence electorate at Hawthorne Park in South Grafton—46 dogs, four cats, 129 horses and 109 alpacas, goats, sheep, guinea pigs, rabbits, birds, chickens and a pig.

While DPI and LLS are busy doing that work there is also important work, while the fires are still burning, in helping farmers recover because they have had to deal with the drought and with the fires that have ripped through their properties, destroying anything that was left. I was very pleased to be in Ebor on Monday to announce \$1 million from the State Government for that wonderful volunteer organisation BlazeAid, which is doing an enormous amount of work in so many electorates across regional New South Wales replacing hundreds of kilometres of burnt-out boundary fences. [*Extension of time*]

That money, combined with the money that was provided by the Minister for Emergency Services and the Treasurer, will allow BlazeAid to purchase enough material to replace around 600 extra kilometres of

boundary fencing. That is one less thing that farmers recovering from the fires have to worry about; they will have their fences put back in place. I want to thank and acknowledge the 200 DPI and LLS staff that are out there at the moment, helping to support farmers. I also want to thank a Labor member of Parliament, but not one of those on the opposite side of this Chamber. I am talking about my counterpart in Victoria, the Hon. Jaclyn Symes. It is nice to meet a Labor agriculture Minister who actually supports farmers, unlike the current New South Wales shadow Minister. I had a wonderful conversation with Ms Symes about the Government's Right to Farm Bill.

During that conversation she offered to send 17 of her animal welfare and veterinary staff in Victoria to help with the recovery effort. I think I would be joined by all members in this House in thanking her. It would be nice if Opposition members in this Chamber were interested in supporting some farmers. It would be great to see them up in the firegrounds supporting farmers and communities that have been burnt out. It would be great to see them refraining from misleading communities but having a bit of a go at supporting those people. I also want to thank the Hon. Jaclyn Symes for her strong support and her great interest in the Government's Right to Farm Bill, which the Deputy Premier was talking about. I think we can expect to see the Victorian Labor Government—unlike those opposite—following the lead of the New South Wales Government with respect to this legislation because the Victorian Government wants to protect and support farmers, not to abandon them, particularly at a time of great need.

### *Committees*

#### **COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

##### **Reports**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** As Chair: I table the report of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Review of the 2017-2018 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC*, dated November 2019. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

##### **Inquiry**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption has resolved to conduct a review of the 2018-2019 annual reports of the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, 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 fewer than 500 persons have been lodged for presentation:

##### **Powerhouse Museum Ultimo**

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

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

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

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

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

### *Bills*

#### **BETTER REGULATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2019**

##### **Second Reading Speech**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (15:26:29):**

The bill will amend section 12A of the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999 to increase the maximum penalty that may be imposed by the regulations for a failure to comply with trust account requirements for retention money. This is an important obligation on head contractors and the maximum penalty should be equivalent to other similar types of offences in the Act. Making this amendment now will enable the regulations to be amended to increase the penalty amount as soon as possible. This will complement the increased penalties in the Act that commenced on 21 October 2019.

It is important for this legislation to provide a robust enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance with requirements. Enabling an increase in the penalties for offences under the regulation will send a direct and immediate signal about the importance of ensuring security of payments for contractors in the building and construction industry. Another of the important reforms passed by Parliament last year was the Fair Trading Amendment (Short-term Rental Accommodation) Act 2018.

The bill will amend section 8 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to clarify that short-term rental accommodation arrangements are generally exempt from that Act. The Residential Tenancies Act already excludes agreements to rent premises for up to three months for the purpose of a holiday. This exemption would cover most short-term rental accommodation arrangements. However, some of these arrangements can be for purposes other than a holiday, such as a temporary interstate worker. It may then be unclear whether the tenancy laws or the short-term rental accommodation laws apply. This is why the exemption in the bill is being introduced. It is important that this be put in place before the short-term rental accommodation laws commence next year. A vital exception to that general exemption from the Residential Tenancies Act will be where the short-term rental property is not the renter's principal place of residence. Put another way, a short-term accommodation agreement will be automatically exempted from the Residential Tenancies Act only where the short-stay renter has a permanent home to go back to.

I now turn to schedules 1.6 and 1.8 to the bill. These amendments will support other significant reforms that are underway in the real estate sector and are due to commence in March 2020. These reforms will improve industry training and professionalism, enhance accountability and transparency, and support public confidence in the industry. An amendment to section 20 of the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 will clarify the continuing professional development [CPD] requirements for all licence and certificate holders. The secretary already issues CPD requirements for the real estate industry and has done so for many years. The amendment in the bill will put beyond any doubt that the continuing professional development requirements issued by the secretary are the ones that all licence and certificate holders must comply with. The bill further supports real estate reforms by inserting a regulation-making power for the keeping of trust accounts.

Specifically, the amendment requires that money received by a licensee for or on behalf of any person in the course of business must be paid into and held in a trust account of a kind specified by the regulations. This will enable requirements for trust accounts to be prescribed by the regulations, which will futureproof the legislation by allowing flexibility to change those requirements as technology and needs change. The regulation-making power would allow requirements to separate trust accounts for sales and rental money to be introduced. Having separate trust accounts is considered best practice and is already widespread throughout the real estate industry. Key industry stakeholders including the Real Estate Institute of NSW will be consulted in the development of the regulations.

The third amendment to the real estate legislation in the bill relates to certificates of registration. The bill inserts a time restriction on how long a person can hold a certificate of registration. This amendment supports the increased qualification requirements already passed by Parliament, which are designed to lift standards in the industry. The certificate of registration can be held for only four years, after which a certificate holder should progress to becoming a fully qualified licence holder if they wish to remain in the industry. The bill gives the secretary the discretion to allow a certificate holder to retain their certificate for longer than four years in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances will be prescribed in the regulations and developed in close consultation with the industry.

During consultation on the implementation of the reforms, the Australian Property and Livestock Association identified a small cohort of stock and station certificate holders who act as agents for the sale of livestock only—that is to say, they play no role in facilitating the sale of parcels of rural land. This group of livestock handlers is estimated to be around 50 individuals. Consultation with the Australian Property and Livestock Association in 2019 has found that the general requirement for certificate holders to progress to become fully licensed agents within four years is not appropriate.

Accordingly, to ensure this group of livestock experts is not unfairly burdened by licensing qualifications they do not need and do not leave the industry, the Government has agreed to an exemption. Given New South Wales has for some years now been gripped by the worst drought in recorded history, the last thing this

Government wants to be doing is imposing unnecessary regulatory burden on a small group of livestock professionals. Livestock-only certificate holders will be effectively grandfathered by these amendments, allowing them to opt-in over the next few months to a special condition on their certificate that restricts them to livestock-only activities.

The bill also makes minor amendments to assist the building certification industry through ongoing changes to the way it is regulated and to uphold consumer protections. Schedule 1.2 [5] to the bill will allow the secretary to approve courses of training and approve a person or organisation to conduct the training or assess people undergoing the training by instrument under the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018. Any such instrument will need to be published in the *Government Gazette* and made known to relevant stakeholders. This will remove the need to prescribe specific requirements in the regulations, providing greater flexibility to keep pace with industry changes. It is important that this amendment be made as soon as possible, as a draft Building and Development Certifiers Regulation 2019 is currently out for public consultation. Once the amendment is made the regulation can be finalised and the new laws can commence.

Schedule 1.3 to the bill will amend the Building Professionals Act 2005 to enable the Building Professionals Board to proactively conduct investigations of category E1 certifiers. These particular certifiers carry out inspections, and issue certificates of compliance and non-compliance for swimming pools. A gap in the legislation currently precludes the Building Professionals Board from being able to investigate E1 certifiers without first receiving a complaint. The bill will close that loophole and remove any uncertainty regarding the powers of the board to carry out random or targeted inspections of swimming pool certification. The amendment is a priority, as any delay could result in significant risk to public safety, particularly during the high peak summer months and Christmas period, with uncompliant swimming pool barriers not being investigated. The amendment to section 46 of the current Act is only an interim measure. It will no longer be required when the 2005 Act is replaced by the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018. All categories of certifiers will be able to be investigated when the new legislation commences without the need for a complaint from a consumer.

I now move to a number of amendments to the Retail Trading Act 2008 in schedule 1.12. These amendments are purely administrative and will not impact or affect the operation of the retail trading legislation in any substantive way. They reflect the fact that administration of this Act was transferred from Industrial Relations to the Better Regulation and Innovation portfolio in December 2018. A number of the amendments clarify that Fair Trading investigators, rather than Industrial Relations inspectors, are now responsible for compliance and enforcement action under the Act. Fair Trading investigators already have existing powers under the Fair Trading Act 1987 in respect of any legislation in the portfolio. They are using those powers now in respect of any alleged breaches of the Retail Trading Act. This amendment is not about enhancing those powers. It is simply about tidying up outdated references as a result of the transfer of administration to avoid any misunderstandings.

An amendment to section 11 of the Retail Trading Act will require an application to be in a form approved by the secretary instead of a prescribed form. This will provide a faster and simpler method of updating the form when required. Similar amendments were made to a range of other previously prescribed forms as part of the Government's Better Business Reforms package in 2018. In concert with these amendments, the bill provides an opportunity for some general housekeeping. One longstanding and settled provision in the Retail Trading Regulation 2014 is to be transferred to the parent Act. This will leave nothing in the regulation and mean that it can be repealed. The regulation-making powers will remain in the Act, so in the event there is a need in the future to make regulations under the Act, that can be done at the time.

The bill also makes minor amendments relating to the governance of Racing NSW and Harness Racing New South Wales by increasing the maximum tenure for members of these racing controlling bodies from eight years to 10 years in the Thoroughbred Racing Act 1996 and the Harness Racing Act 2009 respectively. The new maximum tenure is consistent with the Public Service Commission appointment standards for government boards and committees, which state that membership tenure should not exceed 10 years in total, unless otherwise provided in legislation. Increasing the total maximum tenure will support the continuity of leadership and expertise within the controlling bodies of thoroughbred and harness racing while balancing the need to ensure a regular refreshing of board membership.

Schedule 1.5 to the bill amends the objects of the Community Gaming Act 2018 to recognise the social purpose of permitted gaming activities. For many years social gaming has been regulated under the Lotteries and Art Unions Act 1901, which the new Community Gaming Act is set to replace. These types of activities are often run largely by volunteers, and a nominal fee may be charged to cover costs. They include games such as social housie. Supporting regulations are currently being developed before the new community gaming legislation can commence next year. The Government intends to continue to permit social gaming activities. Adding an objective will put beyond doubt the ability of the regulation to cover social gaming activities when it is released for public

consultation. This amendment simply helps to more accurately reflect the type of games the legislation is intended to cover and to avoid any potential confusion or misunderstandings in the community gaming sector.

Schedule 1.4 to the bill will remove the requirement for all applicants for a charitable fundraising authority to have a physical registered office located in New South Wales. Instead, the amendment to section 55 of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 will provide greater flexibility by enabling the regulations to prescribe any necessary requirements for registered offices. At a minimum the regulations will require a registered office in Australia. No other jurisdiction requires a local registered office for charities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. Requiring a registered office within New South Wales presents a barrier to any future harmonisation and regulatory reduction efforts. The department will consult on the development of the regulations to support this amendment to balance demands for flexibility, transparency and accountability in the charitable fundraising sector. Those who are legitimate fundraisers should hold a fundraising licence only.

The bill is an important part of the Government's regular legislative review and monitoring program. Most of the amendments in the bill are technical in nature and they are all important steps towards further strengthening consumer protection and supporting businesses. They address emerging issues, close gaps in the law, improve compliance, clarify uncertainty and correct drafting errors. I thank the excellent staff at NSW Fair Trading and SafeWork NSW for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to public service in New South Wales. From my office of the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, and the Minister responsible for racing, I single out Mr Henry Tilly for his dedication to getting across the depth and breadth of the miscellaneous bill. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:42:29):** I lead for the Opposition on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The Opposition does not oppose the legislation and strongly supports the amendments that have come from the Legislative Council. The Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 brings together a number of miscellaneous amendments to 10 Acts across a number of areas, all falling under the umbrella of the Better Regulation and Innovation portfolio. This omnibus bill is designed to improve the operation of 10 existing Acts and additional regulations, including the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999, the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018, the Building Professionals Act 2005, the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991, the Community Gaming Act 2018, the Fair Trading Amendment (Short-term Rental Accommodation) Act 2018, the Harness Racing Act 2009, the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002, the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Review) Act 2018, the Retail Trading Act 2008 and the Thoroughbred Racing Act 1996.

As the Minister outlined in his second reading speech, the bill clarifies legislative intent, reduces uncertainty, improves legislative effectiveness and assists in addressing the concerns of some stakeholders. More specifically, these Acts will be amended under the bill to improve the registration and ongoing education of real estate service providers; the oversight of stock and station agents; the regulation of short-term rental accommodation; the education of building certifiers, and the investigation of accredited building certifiers; the regulation of residential swimming pools to improve safety; the regulation of community gaming by charitable fundraising authorities for social purpose; the governance of the thoroughbred and harness racing industries, particularly the operation of the boards of Racing NSW and Harness Racing New South Wales; the regulation of short-term accommodation letting; and the regulation of residential tenancies, particularly in situations of domestic violence to ensure that families affected by domestic violence are treated appropriately and fairly under the regulation of residential tenancies.

These amendments outlined in the bill, while not altering the underlying intent of the relevant Acts, clarify the intent of those Acts and improve their day-to-day operation. While these improvements sound straightforward, they have been a long time coming. Many of these improvements include legislative change that has been called for by stakeholders for some time. It is concerning that the Government has taken so long to get around to these changes, especially when they deal with issues as important as protecting domestic violence victims and ensuring that residents in rental accommodation are properly protected with smoke alarms. The Government has been aware of some of these issues for some time.

What is most disappointing is that the areas that have been effectively ignored for so long include the protection of domestic violence victims. In fact for 18 months the Government had legislation to rectify those defects and implement long-overdue improvements to residential tenancies supported by this sitting of Parliament, but the legislation was not commenced. There is no excuse for the large delay of the commencement of the domestic violence reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. Even though it has taken the Government such a long time to deliver on some of these reforms, it still has not managed to deliver amendments that address all of the issues raised repeatedly by stakeholders.

The amendments included in this bill are designed to allow families affected by domestic violence to exit a residential tenancy lease quickly so that they can move to safe and secure accommodation without the cost of breaking a lease. It also ensures that victims of domestic violence do not have to bear the cost of repairs resulting from damage caused by a perpetrator. These are very sensible and important reforms, but Labor is concerned that requiring victims to obtain approval by a registered medical practitioner that they require a lease to be ended immediately as a result of domestic violence is unduly restrictive and could delay families leaving and moving to a place of safety or prevent some from leaving at all.

For many families in regional New South Wales, accessing a doctor can take weeks and in some cases months. It is not realistic to ask people in a violent situation to keep tolerating abuse while they wait for an appointment with their doctor. It is also a very expensive mechanism for many people to seek approval. For many, accessing a local doctor who bulk-bills cannot take place in a short time and is unrealistic for many low-income earners, not to mention the fact that many people who are affected by domestic violence are also coping with financial restrictions and control placed on them by their abusive partner. To put in place a legislative change that does not take account of these situations is unhelpful. Labor also wants to prevent doctors from having to carry the full load of delivering on these reforms.

If we do not allow other health professionals who directly deal with families affected by domestic violence to participate in this process and assist families who are coming to them for help, we will achieve nothing other than clogging up the health system. We do not want to make it even harder for people to access doctors. That is why Labor believes that professionals such as registered social workers, domestic violence counsellors and other workers should be able to sign off on these residential tenancy situations in the same way that the Government has proposed for doctors—and that is why Labor moved amendments to that effect in the other House. Those amendments were supported and put to Labor by the Tenants' Union and had a lot of support from domestic violence workers across New South Wales.

While Labor members understand the Government's intent to prevent property owners from having to face the cost of broken leases in inappropriate situations, we also believe that a wide range of professionals who deal with families affected by domestic violence on a regular and daily basis should also be able to assist these families. The Tenants' Union and domestic violence victim advocates have been raising this issue with the Government for years. Whatever the Government's reason for not addressing this important issue, it is not good enough. The Premier might—and often does—comment about the importance of reducing domestic violence, but inaction speaks volumes and reflects a lack of commitment to addressing the practical situation faced by many domestic violence victims. This is why the issue should have been addressed some time ago—when the bill was first amended 18 months ago—and why that bill should have commenced at that time.

While the Government has taken its time in addressing this issue, the original drafting still did not effectively address the situation. That is why Labor moved an amendment to ensure that victims of domestic violence do not have to jump through hoops to be afforded the protections that the bill is designed to deliver. I thank the Government for supporting the Labor amendment in the other place to address this. This is a significant and important amendment to the bill to ensure that it delivers real and practical improvements to the situation that many women and men find themselves in. Labor's amendment will ensure that the bill does not inadvertently result in an unduly restrictive framework.

Labor's amendment sought to expand the list of people listed as competent to include a greater number of medical practitioners; all social workers registered with the Australian Association of Social Workers; an employee of a government sector agency that provides services relating to child welfare; an employee of a non-government agency in receipt of government funding to provide services relating to domestic violence or sexual assault, or refuge or emergency accommodation; and a person approved by the Commissioner of Victims Rights under the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013 to provide approved counselling services for the purposes of that Act. As well as this greatly expanded list of competent persons Labor also sought to amend the bill to include a regulation-making power so the regulation can prescribe additional competent persons. That was an important addition in the other place. This will provide more time for the Minister to consult and consider additional appropriate people to be prescribed as a competent person, hopefully expanding that list and making the lives of people fleeing domestic violence easier over time.

Labor also supports the Government's move to amend its own legislation to keep the roles and responsibilities of inspectors under the Retail Trading Act within an industrial relations framework and to provide clarity to that arrangement. Labor feels it is vital to retain the investigatory powers within the Industrial Relations inspectorate, not only because of the institutional knowledge that has been built up by the current inspectors, but also because the Industrial Relations department already has been undermined and underfunded by this Government. Labor would not want to see a measure that further contributes to the loss of a specialised industrial relations service within the New South Wales public service. Labor also supported the extension of the period of

appointments for members of the boards of Racing NSW and Harness Racing New South Wales from eight years to 10 years, which is consistent the Public Service Commissioner's appointment standards and in line with the arrangements for similar boards such as the ones that are currently in place at the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust, and the Sydney Opera House Trust.

As I indicated at the outset, Labor will not oppose the passage of the amending bill. Opposition members are glad the bill is before the House. Although it is a bit late, we want to see it enacted, especially those reforms in relation to domestic violence. Given that the Government has sat on those amendments for 18 months without commencing the legislation, we call on the Government to act as quickly as possible to ensure that the protective measures outlined in this bill are working for vulnerable people in New South Wales. They have waited long enough. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation) (15:52:26):**

In reply: I thank the member for Granville for her contribution to debate on the Better Regulation Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I place on record my gratitude to the shadow Minister for her cooperation in relation to this bill. I thank members in the other place for their cooperation as well. As previously stated, an important role of government is to ensure that legislation remains up to date, and provisions are fit for purpose and in line with the original policy intent. The bill achieves this by inserting specificity into regulation-making powers, clarifying legislative intent and reducing uncertainty, and improving the effectiveness of the legislation and removing unnecessary red tape.

Reforms such as the amendments to strengthen domestic violence provisions in the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 and reforms to the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002 about lifting the qualification standards in the property industry are an important step towards enhancing consumer protection. This bill contains amendments such as the amendment to increase the penalty for head contractors in the building and construction industry where money is not retained in a trust account, which supports small businesses in New South Wales. Furthermore, the bill also makes a number of amendments to ensure that the legislation being amended is operating as Parliament intended. Reforms such as amendments clarifying minor alterations to rented premises and amendments to the Community Gaming Act 2018 provide greater clarity and reduce potential disputes.

I now respond briefly to amendments moved in the other place in relation to retail trading legislation. The Government withdrew from the bill the proposed amendments to the retail trading legislation. The amendments were intended to tidy up the legislation as a result of the transfer of administration of the Retail Trading Act 2008 from the Minister for Industrial Relations to the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation late last year. The Government considers that it would be better and beneficial to undertake further consultation with key stakeholders prior to moving forward with the proposed amendments.

In relation to the definition of a competent person, the Government appreciates the feedback on its reforms to date and is open to examining whether limiting a competent person only to medical practitioners may be too restrictive. This is particularly so if it improves the situation for people in regional and remote areas. The introduction of new categories of professionals as competent persons will provide greater flexibility to tenants who are victims of domestic violence in ending their tenancy. To ensure that the range of new competent persons can complete the declaration to enable a victim of domestic violence to terminate their tenancy, the new competent persons provisions will commence on proclamation rather than on the assent of the bill. This will ensure adequate stakeholder engagement with the different professional groups that are now included in the definition and will ensure that the new declaration document can be prepared.

In relation to amending the period of membership of racing boards, the 10-year limit contained in the bill will allow the Minister to balance the need to refresh membership of the governing bodies from time to time while ensuring that sufficient industry knowledge, expertise and experience is preserved. Maintaining the status quo is consistent with the NSW Public Service Commission Appointment Standards, which recommend a maximum 10-year tenure for board appointments. It is important to note that under the bill, the statutory requirement for maximum terms of appointment of up to four years will remain. This provides the Minister with regular opportunities to assess and determine membership of governing bodies. Existing ministerial powers to remove members also will remain in place.

I am confident that this bill delivers meaningful administrative amendments for the citizens and small businesses of New South Wales. The bill demonstrates this Government's continued commitment to protecting the rights of citizens in New South Wales, reducing and removing unnecessary red tape and providing greater clarity and certainty in the law. These amendments come on the back of the good consultation, feedback and stakeholder engagement that this Government enjoys with many organisations and communities across New South Wales. Again, I thank department staff for their work and Mr Henry Tilley in my office for his grasp of the issues in the bill. I thank the member for Granville, and shadow Minister, for her cooperation. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **DIGITAL RESTART FUND BILL 2019**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 22 October 2019.**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:58:42):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019. Labor will not oppose the bill; however, we have significant concerns that we may seek to address through amendments in the Legislative Council. The source of our concern is the lack of publicly available detail regarding the proposed Digital Restart Fund. For that reason, we have requested that an upper House inquiry look into the provisions of the bill. I am happy to report that the inquiry is being held by Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and Customer Service. Submissions are now open and will close on 12 January 2020. I call on all members of the public who are interested in digital technology, the digital economy, digital policy and matters relating to public expenditure to make a submission to the inquiry. In particular, it is my hope that the Auditor-General will provide some advice on whether the fund that the bill will establish is an appropriate way to manage significant public expenditure.

As I stated, Labor has significant concerns about the lack of detail in the bill. I note that this year's budget papers state that the fund will provide \$100 million to fund whole-of-government digital transformation. However, no detail was provided regarding specific information and communications technology [ICT] systems that the Government plans to upgrade. In his second reading speech the Minister for Customer Service spoke about how a new model for funding whole-of-government digital service products will encourage agile delivery methods. However, he never named a specific ICT system that would be upgraded through this fund. Labor is concerned by this lack of detail because clause 7 of the bill provides that the Minister is to control and manage the fund. The Minister appears to be asking for \$100 million in the form of a blank cheque that he could spend as he pleases.

Labor's concern is highlighted when one compares the bill to the Restart NSW Fund Act 2011. The bill and the Restart NSW Fund Act are very similar and it appears that the bill is modelled on that Act. The bill and the Act have the same structure and similar provisions. They both establish funds in the special deposit accounts to be used for particular purposes. However, section 6 of the Restart NSW Fund Act provides a very specific list of physical infrastructure projects that may be funded from the Restart NSW Fund. That list includes public transport, roads and hospitals. In contrast, clause 6 of this bill is extremely vague and broad. It provides that the fund may be used for projects that develop and implement digital and information and communications technology products or services that identify the actions required to be taken by an individual or on the individual's behalf in respect of significant events during the individual's life. The problem with this broad language is that the Minister could spend large amounts of taxpayer money on projects that satisfy this broad definition but deliver little practical utility for the public.

It should also be noted that there is an important difference between digital infrastructure and physical infrastructure: It is impossible to build a road or a hospital in secret. At some point, the existence of a physical infrastructure project will become known to the public, whether it is through the consultation process for an environmental impact statement or at the time a giant hole starts to be excavated. The same is not true for digital infrastructure. It is possible to spend large amounts of taxpayer money on digital projects without providing public details regarding the scope of a project or what it intends to achieve. That is why the Opposition is greatly concerned about this bill. We do not want the Minister to be able to spend up to \$100 million on vaguely defined projects with little transparency or accountability.

Another point of comparison between this bill and the Restart NSW Fund Act 2011 is the role of Infrastructure NSW, which the Opposition supported. I spoke in support of the establishment of Infrastructure NSW at the time. Section 8 of the Restart NSW Fund Act provides that funding may be provided for projects that are approved by the Minister on the recommendation of Infrastructure NSW. In contrast, clause 9 of this bill provides that funding may be provided for projects that are approved by the Minister on the recommendation of the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service. While neither the secretary nor Infrastructure NSW is truly independent of government, it would appear an assessment by Infrastructure NSW is more robust.

I note that section 13 of the Restart NSW Fund Act required that Act to be reviewed within five years of its commencement. A review of the Act was prepared by NSW Treasury and tabled in Parliament on 12 September 2017. The review found the objectives of the Restart NSW Fund Act remained valid and the terms of the Act remained appropriate for achieving those objectives. On this basis, the review stated that no legislative changes were recommended. In relation to Infrastructure NSW, the review stated:

The Act confers [Infrastructure NSW] with the responsibility for independently assessing projects and making recommendations to the Treasurer for the use of Restart NSW funds ...

The independent role of [Infrastructure NSW] ensures that projects are fully assessed on their merit, including as to whether they improve productivity and growth in the State.

I note that Infrastructure NSW is not truly independent. Section 7 of the Infrastructure NSW Act provides that Infrastructure NSW is subject to the control and direction of the Premier in the exercise of its functions. However, section 8 (4) of the Infrastructure NSW Act 2011 provides that, if the Premier makes any amendments to strategies or plans submitted by Infrastructure NSW, the board of Infrastructure NSW may advise the Premier that it does not agree with the amendments and make that advice public. In this sense, Infrastructure NSW is more independent than the secretary of a department. I am particularly concerned that the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service also holds the role of Customer Service Commissioner, which I do not agree with. Assessment of a proposal by Infrastructure NSW should, at least in theory, make a proposal subject to expert professional analysis and advice. It is unclear why the Government has not followed the conclusions reached by NSW Treasury two years ago regarding the benefit of Infrastructure NSW assessing projects.

I assume it is possible that the Government does not believe Infrastructure NSW has the role of overseeing matters relating to digital infrastructure. However, that does not appear to be a view shared by Infrastructure NSW. Chapters 6 and 7 of the State Infrastructure Strategy produced by Infrastructure NSW in February 2018 deal with issues of digital connectivity, data usage and technological change. Another possibility is that proposals that could be funded by the fund are relatively small, whereas Infrastructure NSW generally provides advice on major infrastructure projects that have a total value of \$100 million or more. However, if this is correct, I think it could still be the case that Infrastructure NSW should assess how the fund will be spent because the value of the fund will be at least \$100 million.

A fundamental concern is that it is unclear why the fund is needed at all. If New South Wales government agencies wish to upgrade their digital infrastructure, they are already able to do so through normal budgeting and procurement processes. In 2016-17 the New South Wales Government spent \$3 billion on ICT. This is worth around 4.3 percent of all New South Wales government expenditure. Almost 5c of every dollar spent by the New South Wales Government is for information and communication technologies.

The Government claims the fund is necessary to enable whole-of-government digital transformation. However, existing New South Wales procurement laws and policies already allow for a whole-of-government approach to the procurement of goods and services. The Opposition is concerned that clause 7 of the bill would allow the Minister to control and direct the fund outside the New South Wales Government's Procurement Policy Framework. The framework is a policy set by the NSW Procurement Board under part 11 of the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 (NSW). Compliance with the framework is mandatory for all government agencies to which it applies.

The NSW Procurement Board comprises secretaries of departments and, while it is subject to ministerial control, it has statutory functions that include the objective of ensuring best value for money in the procurement of goods and services. If the fund is not subject to the framework, this could allow the Minister to fund projects without complying with policies that require procurement of ICT worth more than \$10 million to go through gateway reviews and periodic checks in accordance with the New South Wales Government's ICT Assurance Framework or require the use of pre-qualified suppliers for ICT services. While it is likely the fund would be subject to the framework, this is not clear from the bill. I ask the Minister to address this issue in his reply.

An example of problems in relation to ICT procurement can be seen in a report published by the Independent Commission Against Corruption in January 2019 regarding the conduct of an ICT project manager at the former Department of Finance, Services and Innovation. Many of the functions of the former Department of Finance, Services and Innovation have been transferred to the new Department of Customer Service, which would be responsible for administering the fund. While the ICAC report relates to the conduct of one individual in 2016, it nevertheless provides a window into the types of problems that can arise in relation to ICT projects. This is a critical point and I hope that in his reply the Minister will be able to allay my concerns in relation to the ICAC report and recommendations.

ICAC found the project which was the subject of the report never had a business case prepared, had no formal budget or lines of budget reporting, had a short timetable for implementation, used a guesstimate for

expected expenditures and could not be delivered by anyone within the former Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, which led to DFSI hiring an external contractor through a labour hire company. This contractor exploited weaknesses in DFSI's payment systems to have the department pay invoices to a company that he controlled. I stress that this has nothing to do with the Minister as the Minister was not involved in it. I believe the Minister would also be concerned about this matter because it occurred within his portfolio responsibilities at the time. A lot of those roles have been transferred to the Department of Customer Service.

It is important that ICAC's recommendations are taken seriously with respect to the function of this fund. Hopefully the inquiry will make equivalent recommendations. I want to stress that point. The ICAC report included 15 recommendations for DFSI to improve procurement and project management, and the former DFSI provided an action plan that committed to implement these measures. As responsibility for these matters appears to have transferred to the new Department of Customer Service, I ask the Minister in reply to provide detail regarding the status of the department's implementation of those recommendations. If the former DFSI provided an action plan, does that action plan transfer over to the Department of Customer Service? Will the Department of Customer Service implement the plan?

On page 5 of the ICAC report handed down in January 2019 it is stated that there was an investigation by ICAC concerning an ICT contractor working on an ICT project at the New South Wales DFSI who dishonestly and partially exercised his public official function in exchange for a financial benefit. Anybody who is interested can read the report. As I stated, ICAC made 15 recommendations. Will those recommendations be adopted by the new Department of Customer Service in relation to the Digital Restart Fund? I ask the Minister to provide me with that information in his reply. Recommendation 10 reads:

That the NSW Procurement Board formally communicates to agencies that the SCM0020 and SCM0005 schemes are not to be used in lieu of the SCM0007 scheme.

I would like a response to that recommendation. Recommendation 11 refers to the DFSI. Again, does that mean the Customer Service department? It reads:

That DFSI develops a system for reporting and/or escalating red flags related to projects and procurement activities such as:

- the use of multiple purchase orders for the same supplier with respect to the same project or activity
- purchase orders being raised after the receipt of invoices
- purchase orders with dollar values corresponding to amounts that are just below those for which key processes (such as the Procure IT framework) apply.

There are 15 recommendations and I would like to hear from the Minister about what the Government is doing with respect to them. In relation to matters of oversight and transparency, I note clause 13 would require the Minister to provide a report relating to the fund each year. The clause would also require the report to contain an audit by the Auditor-General and the audit would be required to include whether the payments from the fund have been made in accordance with the bill. While this is welcome, it is also problematic.

As I have noted, the terms of the bill are extremely broad and vague. The Auditor-General would not be required to certify that projects had been appropriately identified for funding or whether the funded projects had met their objectives. Instead, all the bill would require the Auditor-General to certify is that the projects funded satisfied the extremely broad and ill-defined criteria provided by clause 6 of this bill. I also urge the Auditor-General to make a submission to the inquiry into this bill.

Another of our concerns relates to cybersecurity. The bill is geared toward improving services from a customer service perspective. However, it does not deal with issues of cybersecurity and privacy. Labor believes that if \$100 million is going to be spent on digital infrastructure and services, there should be a strong focus on cybersecurity and privacy. We know what happened with respect to the Minister's office prior to the last election. I have spoken about it and an amendment was moved to the Fines Bill relating to what happens with data breaches. That is very concerning as governments across Australia and around the world move to digital and online services, transforming the way we get our information.

The concerns Labor has about who can access data are widely held. A report published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner in 2017 found that 69 per cent of Australians claimed at the time to be more concerned about their privacy when using the internet than they were five years ago. That report also found that 83 per cent of Australians believe their privacy risks are greater when dealing with an organisation online compared with other means. Most concerning was that 16 per cent of Australians stated that they would avoid dealing with a government agency due to privacy concerns. During budget estimates we asked questions about spending. At a hearing on 29 August 2019, the Commissioner of the NSW Police Force, Michael Fuller, APM, stated that he needed more money to deal with cybercrime. Specifically, he said:

... every year I go back to the ERC and I never argue for less, I promise you that; I always argue for more money for New South Wales police to continue to provide the highest level of service for the people of New South Wales. In saying that, whilst the \$583.6 million is fixed for the 1,500 officers over the four years, I will still go back doggedly every year and argue why we need more money—to look at cybercrime and other sorts of environmental changes, whether it is more police in the bush, rural crime, whatever that may be.

We do need more money to tackle cybercrime and Labor supports what Commissioner Fuller has said. According to the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission, cybercrime is estimated to cost the Australian economy up to \$1 billion each year. We ask the Minister in reply to explain why the Government is investing \$100 million for vaguely defined "digital transformation" when the police commissioner is saying that he does not have enough money and he needs more for cybercrime. We understand that there needs to be digital transformation. Federal Labor technology shadow Minister Clare O'Neil yesterday gave an address to the Consumer Policy Research Centre conference. She said:

Australian public policy has fallen too far behind with respect to the pace of technological change.

I concur with her and support her statement. She went on to say:

For many Australians technology is one of the biggest issues in their lives. On average we spend six hours a day online. Many of us would spend more time on the Internet than we do with the people we love most in the world. As a parent, I know that the issues related to kids and tech are pretty much in constant discussion in households around the country.

Hear, hear! I absolutely support that in relation to being a parent. Kids using electronics rather than playing, conversing and socialising is one of our issues. But this is how we are living now and will be into the future as we continue to use technology. Clare O'Neil went to say:

When the Parliament does talk about technology, the conversation tends not to be a quality one. We usually talk about tech in the context of a flare-up. A bill is introduced which relates to a pretty specific area of technology which forces a truncated and urgent discussion.

She is absolutely right. Raising big and unfamiliar policy problems in the context of specific and urgent decisions is not conducive to exploring the issues properly. We saw that during the debate on encryption and metadata, when even some of the people advocating for the legislation did not seem to understand it properly. Shadow Minister O'Neil is saying is that we need a sustained public conversation about how we are going to manage this massive change in our lives. She makes some important points. I accept that this process will be continuous, particularly in terms of digital infrastructure projects. However, we need to hold the inquiry to look at the expenditure. The inquiry should look also not only at value for money but also to ensure that we include people in whatever product is designed through the digital fund.

I have spoken many times in this place about the number people in our community who feel digitally excluded because they do not have online access. They include people from multicultural backgrounds. Everything is online, so if you do not have a computer or are not computer literate—or if you do not speak and read in your own language—it is difficult and quite intimidating. It means that access to government services may not be available to those who need it most. We recognise that the Government will be critical of our position. We anticipate Government members will say that we are raising issues to try to frustrate their efforts to act like an agile and innovative start-up. My concern is that the Government is not an agile start-up with a goal to disrupt old ways of doing business. The New South Wales Government is responsible for things including health and public safety. The consequences of poor decision-making can be matters of life and death.

In his second reading speech the Minister described the fund as, "providing seed funding that is akin to a private sector venture capital firm". The Minister stated that the fund will provide seed funding for prototypes to test if an idea meets customers' needs and if it does it will grow that funding gradually over time, rather than having a big bang release. The problem with that approach is that there is nothing to stop the Minister from approving 20 prototypes worth \$5 million each, only for each experiment to fail. That would squander \$100 million without any tangible benefits for the public. That is why the Government should clearly and publicly identify the systems that should be upgraded, specify the outcomes that those upgrades should achieve and either develop the capacity to develop and undertake the development in house or undertake a normal procurement process to select a suitable provider that can provide the service or infrastructure required. The argument that the pace of technology change justifies significant deviation from normal budgeting and procurement processes does not stack up.

I refer the Minister back to the ICAC report. We need to have a conversation about what the Federal shadow Minister for Innovation, Technology and the Future of Work, Clare O'Neil, said in her speech. We cannot just waste money. We need to ensure that government is held accountable and is open and transparent, particularly when it involves spending significant amounts of money on systems that could impact on the privacy and safety of citizens in New South Wales and, at the same time, exclude the people I mentioned earlier. The extent of the concerns raised by the Opposition is a consequence of the lack of detail and the ambiguity surrounding how the

fund will be spent. We will not sign off on a \$100 million blank cheque. We need the information. We need details, project time lines and exact information. I am very pleased with the inquiry that has been established. As I indicated, the Opposition will not oppose the bill but we will ensure a rigorous process around its spending and the projects it funds.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse) (16:26:38):** I am delighted to support the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019. The New South Wales Government is transforming the way that services are delivered to our citizens. I thank the Minister for Customer Service. He is transforming the way that government works behind the scenes. It does not matter to the citizens of New South Wales that there are three departments involved in delivering an important service to them. They should not have to worry about that; it should be a seamless process for them. The Digital Restart Fund and the work of the Minister for Customer Service in this space are central to that objective. We are designing what we do around outcomes, not inputs. That is why we won the last election. We made a promise to our community to deliver and to get things done. We are keeping that promise.

The Digital Restart Fund supports the promise we made to the community. It was interesting to hear from the shadow Minister about the ICAC report. I understand that she is concerned that those learnings be brought into the administration and governance of this fund. That is a perfectly good point to make. But I am disappointed and caution Labor—even though it is supporting the bill—to look beyond those concerns to the vision and the customers who are at the centre of what this bill will deliver. The bill has a much broader purpose. It is not only about those aspects mentioned by the shadow Minister but also about making the government services we deliver easier to understand and closer to home, with a better customer experience of government across the board. That is reflected in the fact that now, post election, we have the Department of Customer Service and a Customer Service Commissioner.

Even if people do not understand all of our departments, clusters, ministries and portfolio allocations, they still understand customer service. It is a different way of working. The Government's promise around that won the last election. We will continue to deliver on that promise. This bill is evidence of that. The Government has delivered and will continue to deliver on the hard infrastructure promises that it made—\$93 billion over forward estimates. We are delivering on our promises through a range of initiatives, including this bill and a number of other projects. Personally, I have been involved in delivering a new way of approaching research and development across government. However, at the same time we must deliver on the soft infrastructure necessary across government, including digital services. A couple of weeks ago I visited Data61, which is an offshoot of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation [CSIRO]. I am sure many other members know about the wonderful work of CSIRO and Data61.

When I visited Data61 it had a piece of software that could transform government. A number of departments are involved in that technology. The technology creates a digital replica of our cities. It shows all the parts that make up a city, including the bus routes, where the plumbing is under the city and where the buildings are. It enables planners and anyone else in government to interact with that data and foresee what impacts different planning and other decisions would have. It is transformative. Planners will no longer have to wait to find out about the impact of what they are building until after they build it; they will see it in real time. Those are big changes that will help us plan better across government. But this bill will also have an impact at a personal level. The bill is very clear in terms of its purpose and it will have a real-life, personal impact.

One of the projects that the Digital Restart Fund will continue to support is the work being done around citizens' interactions with government when a loved one passes away. That is a life-changing event for anyone, even if it comes as a part of life's journey for those who are more elderly. When someone dies there are so many forms to complete and so many agencies to notify. People are doing all that during a time when they are grieving and are also dealing with parts of the community that are outside of government, including banks, neighbours and funeral directors. The Government has set its mind to make that experience better and more seamless for people at the most difficult times of their lives. That is such a worthy objective. I commend the bill to the House because it is about better serving our community so that they do not have to struggle with government, which, historically, they have in so many different ways.

The Service NSW centre at Ebley Street, Bondi Junction—which is just outside of my electorate—is part of a major commercial hub that is a magnet for anyone who wants to do anything outside of the CBD. The centre is open Monday to Saturday. The residents of my electorate tell me that it is a one-stop shop for all their important administration. People go there when they lose their wallet, when they get married, when they plan for retirement and when they want to access the Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers, which have been such a success and very warmly welcomed by the whole community. They will all be assisted at Service NSW centres. People can register their beloved pets on the NSW Pet Registry and enrol their children in school.

Small businesses—which are the centre of the economic development of our communities—are also looked after through the Easy to Do Business program, a free service offered to a number of industries. The

program provides help in a personal way to set up businesses. We recognise that those small businesses create jobs across our communities, which is how we all lift ourselves up to be better people and contributors to our communities. I could go on. I am a great fan of Service NSW, as are many members of this House, including Labor members, who extol the virtues of Service NSW on a regular basis. Labor should have a closer look at the broad purpose of this bill. The member for Canterbury and shadow Minister said that Labor will not oppose the bill, but the approach it is taking misses the wood for the trees.

I know that the Minister will take on board the shadow Minister's points about probity and governance because that is the kind of Minister he is. And they are important points. But I think the shadow Minister is missing the point. This fund is going to present the best face of government and experience to the citizens of New South Wales, who elect us to do just that. This Government, under the leadership of Premier Gladys Berejiklian is doing that in spades. This bill is a transformative way of doing IT projects across government and forcing departments to work with one another and to achieve an outcome, thereby serving better the citizens of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:34:46):** I thank the Minister for Customer Service for introducing the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019. The Digital Restart Fund is a fund for the people of New South Wales present and future. Citizens expect their hard-earned taxpayer dollars to be handled transparently and effectively. For the benefit of the Opposition, I will reiterate that the purposes of the fund are to support whole-of-government citizen journeys and events, support solutions that create cost savings and consistent user experiences for our customers, achieve modernisation of our ageing systems to reduce the risk of failure, and reduce the overhead costs of maintaining them.

The concerns about this bill expressed by the Opposition reflect the Opposition's old-world thinking when it comes to digital infrastructure and the role of government in fostering the opportunity for innovation and the partnership between a government that has the means and ability to support and fund important innovation with the private sector, Australian-based companies. In the same way that citizens of this State expect—and see—the Government investing month on month in our physical infrastructure, such as roads, rail, schools and hospitals, they would expect the Government to invest in digital infrastructure. All members in this place would be aware of the success of Service NSW, a one-stop shop to replace the need for customers to go to a number of government departments. More recently the digital driver licence has had a terrific uptake across New South Wales.

Comments were made earlier in this debate about cyber security. The Opposition needs to understand that when a small business or sole trader needs to engage with a government department there can be one point of entry or many points of entry to achieve the desired outcome with great ease. That is one example why the Digital Restart Fund is needed and expected by the people of New South Wales. It will create significant efficiencies by changing the way in which information and community technologies [ICT] and digital investments are planned, implemented and operated in New South Wales. The fund will assist in generating benefits more quickly, reducing duplication in investment and eliminating inefficient legacy systems.

A big opportunity for efficiency is in the modernisation of the New South Wales Government's legacy technology systems. A system that is "legacy" is one that is no longer using modern, up-to-date technology. Legacy systems include critical platforms that underpin day-to-day activities like issuing licences, policing or recording patient information in hospitals. Some legacy systems have history dating back over three decades. Challenges arise from having a variety of systems across a variety of government departments and agencies. In some circumstances the systems will not speak to one another. So in transporting data from one agency to another to achieve an outcome for a customer—whether that is in licencing, policing or the sharing of patient records—having legacy systems which in some circumstances are 30 years old presents the challenges that this bill seeks to overcome. To put it in layman's terms, people would not expect to have software in their own homes that had not been updated for 30 years. On a larger scale that is analogous to what the Government is seeking to change.

Legacy technology has been inherently expensive and problematic for governments and industry around the world. Born of a bygone era, legacy technology is expensive to run and difficult to modify, making it hard to deliver services that meet the raised expectations of customers. Legacy is a known barrier to the introduction of modern technology and all the benefits that flow. For example, many paper forms still in circulation today cannot be easily digitised because it would be too costly and risky to change the legacy systems that sit underneath. I am glad to see that seed funding to modernise legacy investments is one of the four categories prioritised in the Digital Restart Fund. By seed funding these investments the risk will be lower and customers will see improved services more quickly as new technology is delivered incrementally, based on customer needs.

Tackling this problem will provide more flexible and efficient foundations on which better services can be delivered for customers whilst freeing up public funds to be spent, for example, on hospitals and schools. The fund will help with projects like the modernisation of the Government Licensing System. This legacy system is responsible for more than 120 different licences in New South Wales and holds the details of more than 14 million

licences. For sparkies or chippies, the Government Licensing System underpins the application process, the reviews and decisions and the record of licences. Modernising this legacy system will not only provide stable foundations for the future but also deliver many customer-centric improvements, such as making application processes simpler, saving citizens and businesses time, requiring customers to tell government only once when details change, and making more licences available digitally through the Service NSW app on mobile devices.

The Digital Restart Fund allows this whole-of-government transformation to be delivered, along with many more customer-centric initiatives. These new arrangements about how the Government plans, invests and governs ICT and digital initiatives and how it replaces its legacy systems with modern whole-of-government platforms will result in significant savings and better service delivery for customers. The Digital Restart Fund will make this happen. It is a fund for the people of New South Wales, present and future. The importance of the role of the Digital Restart Fund cannot be understated in the transformation of the Government's ICT program and the service it provides to customers. This is an important bill, which I support. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:42:28):** I begin by thanking the Minister for Customer Service for introducing the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019. As we heard from the previous speaker, the member for Manly, the proposed reforms establish a fund to deliver significant whole-of-government citizen journey improvements. We have seen a lot of this already with the creation five years ago of first-class customer service delivery in New South Wales through Service NSW centres. This bill will reduce the unnecessary spending on duplicate capabilities, contribute to reducing the risk of government-wide legacy technologies and promote capability uplift across every New South Wales government department.

The fund is available to projects in the following categories: firstly, customer journeys—projects that deliver change for customers' experiences; secondly, State digital asset projects that create savings and consistent user experiences; thirdly, agencies' digital investment and legacy modernisation, as was discussed by the member for Manly with respect to seed funding; fourthly, projects that support agency digital innovation and ICT modernisation; and, fifthly, enabling capabilities—uplifting digital skills to better support customer service. The Opposition supports this bill. I note the contribution to the debate by the member for Canterbury, who put forward a number of good points. The Department of Customer Service [DCS] has been working closely with industry, New South Wales government clusters and, of course, the Commonwealth Government to transform the delivery of customer service across New South Wales and Australia. This fund was recently endorsed by the Secretaries Board and approved by Cabinet. The funding process has been co-designed with—

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Otherwise it wouldn't be in the Parliament.

**Mr MARK COURE:** That is right, you are spot on. That is why you are here. It has been co-designed with clusters and is continuing to develop and evolve. The DCS, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury continue to refine the way these proposals are developed, assessed and assured, with processes being detailed in supporting policy. The bill includes these new arrangements relating to how the Government plans, invests in and governs information and communications technology [ICT] and digital initiatives. Replacing its legacy systems with modern, whole-of-government platforms will certainly result in significant savings and, of course, better service delivery for customers. The Digital Restart Fund will make this happen. It is a fund for the people of New South Wales. I thank the Minister for Customer Service for introducing the bill to the Parliament. Citizens expect their hard-earned taxpayer dollars to be handled transparently and efficiently.

A big opportunity for efficiency is the modernisation of the New South Wales Government's legacy technology system, a system that is no longer using modern, up-to-date technology. These systems include critical platforms that underpin day-to-day activities, such as issuing licences and policing, some of which have history dating back over three decades. This type of technology unfortunately has been quite expensive and problematic for governments of both political persuasions and for industry around the world. It is expensive to run and difficult to modify, making it hard to deliver services that meet the expectations of customers. I am glad to see that seed funding to modernise legacy investments is one of the four categories prioritised in the Digital Restart Fund. By seed funding these investments, not only is the risk low but customers will see improved services more quickly as new technology is created and delivered based on customer needs. Tackling this problem will provide more flexible, efficient foundations on which services can be better delivered for customers whilst freeing public funds to be spent on hospitals and schools.

As I mentioned before, part of these proposed reforms is to establish a fund to deliver a significant whole-of-government citizen journey improvement. This will reduce unnecessary spend on duplicated capabilities and contribute to reducing the risk of government-wide legacy technologies, to promote that uplift across the government and to build on the customer service experience. We have seen that in the Minister's own portfolio, with delivery over the years of Service NSW centres across New South Wales. Certainly I have one at Hurstville and hopefully we will see one in Roselands very soon.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Tell us when.

**Mr MARK COURE:** That is a surprise for you.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting.

**Mr MARK COURE:** That is for me to know and for you to find out. You never know what might happen in the next sitting.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Oatley to direct his comments through the Chair. Members will not have a casual chat across the Chamber. The member for Canterbury will come to order.

**Mr MARK COURE:** The fund is available to projects in the following categories: customer journeys, State digital assets, agency digital investment and legacy modernisation—seed funding, in other words, enabling those capabilities and uplifting the digital skills to better support customer service. The New South Wales Government is committed to further improving this customer service experience by better integrating the way in which existing and new government services are designed, delivered, implemented and assured, with particular focus on ICT services. The establishment of a fund of up to \$100 million, I believe, with an expenditure profile of \$50 million in 2019-20 and \$50 million in 2020-21, is to be funded by a reduction to cluster ICT expenditure. I could be here all day talking about this bill. It is a very hot topic. It is a sexy topic. Can I use that word?

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** Just like you, Mark.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I acknowledge that interjection from the member for Auburn.

**Mr Nathaniel Smith:** What was the interjection?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I will not repeat it: I am too embarrassed. The Digital Restart Fund will make this happen. It is a fund for the people of our great State of New South Wales. I support the bill.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly) (16:50:19):** I speak in support of the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019. I thank the Minister for Customer Service for introducing the bill. I also congratulate the Minister on the success and continued excellence in service provided by the Service NSW team. Some members may not know that in regional areas we have the mobile Service NSW bus. It has been very successful in areas like Warragamba, Thirlmere, Tahmoor and areas in my electorate that are more remote.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** You need a centre, not a mobile office.

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

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** To inform the member for Canterbury, through the Chair, there is a Service NSW centre in Mittagong that is extremely successful, but in a large rural area the mobile bus is an efficient way—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** You need more than one.

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

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** You cannot argue that, can you?

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** The bus is extremely successful. It allows people in Warragamba and other villages around my electorate to access information about cost-of-living savings and measures. There are some fantastic savings to be made. The Minister is doing a magnificent job in promoting it. The mobile Service NSW bus is regularly visiting around my electorate. It has been a great success and I look forward to having more of them next year. I also will have a mobile electoral office in a van, bringing government to the people. The Government is bringing a great service in Service NSW to the people. The members for the electorates of Canterbury and Albury can feel reassured—

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** I am the member for Auburn, not Albury.

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH:** Yes, you are the member for Auburn. The Digital Restart Fund is a fund for the people of New South Wales, present and future. Traditionally, investment has leaned towards specific and one-off projects that do not support whole-of-government priorities or outcomes. The current model requires traditional business cases that have proven to create false certainty and encourage large programs and complex methodologies. They are time consuming, carry significant risk and are out of step with contemporary digital delivery and for customers they cause a disjointed service delivery.

To address these issues, the Digital Restart Fund will support the delivery of significant whole-of-government application improvements and reduce unnecessary expenditure or duplicate services. This will contribute to reducing the financial and operational risk of government-wide legacy technologies and

promote capability uplift across clusters to enable them to deliver better benefits to the citizens of New South Wales. This fund will reshape the way information and communication technology is financed in New South Wales.

Traditionally, practices around investment have often led to ineffective solutions, with limited cross-agency funding for common platforms and a lack of in-house capability development. The fund will address these shortcomings, cutting through complexity and enabling the Government to provide a more consistent and accessible customer service experience. Our aim is to avoid duplication and waste and to better reuse government data, content and systems. The fund has been established with \$100 million, with a projected expenditure profile of \$50 million in 2019-20 and \$50 million in 2020-21. It is being funded by a reduction in cluster information and communication technologies [ICT] expenditure. This centralised fund will ensure a holistic, transparent and united approach to ICT and digital investments.

Stringent, centralised governance and oversight mechanisms are also in place to ensure funded projects are delivered on time and on budget and maintain a necessary customer service delivery focus. Centred on the concept of supporting customers with smart, simple and seamless services, the fund moves away from the approach of funding large capital projects where benefits may not be realised for many years. The fund is designed to allow focus on smaller, boutique solutions. The products and teams are focused on delivering better services linked to the life events and customer experiences that matter to people and that are known, through customer research, to drive higher customer satisfaction. The new approach, solidified through the Digital Restart Fund, will reduce unnecessary spend on duplicated capabilities and contribute to reducing the financial and operational risk of government-wide legacy technologies. Small seed funding for projects will be preferenced to allow for early discovery and exploration stages supported by iterative, modern and multi-disciplinary approaches.

The Digital Restart Fund will fund projects that fall into the following categories: Life journeys, life events—initiatives that deliver changes that improve citizen experience across end to end journeys, with faster time to market; State digital assets—initiatives that create cost savings and consistent user experience through increasing agencies' use of core and common ICT components; legacy modernisation—initiatives that support agency digital innovation, ICT modernisation, and reusable components; enabling capabilities including, but not limited to—portfolio management, digital capability uplift and cyber security coordination. This new approach will focus on priorities, speed things up, reduce risk and save money whilst renewing citizens' faith in government.

In summary, the Digital Restart Fund will enable: greater transparency in digital and ICT investment; collaborative partnerships between government clusters and industry; customers to "tell us once"; acceleration of investments in government's digital priorities by promoting and administering an agile, modern delivery approach; and a reduction in risks associated with ICT and digital investments through modern funding approaches and increased governance. The member for Manly would know how important these things are, as he has worked in the digital world with social media and online. As I said before, the Minister is doing a magnificent job in this area. I fully support Service NSW and it is doing a terrific job of servicing the people of Wollondilly. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:58:12):** I speak in debate on the Digital Restart Fund Bill 2019. From the outset I commend the Minister and his staff who have done another sterling job on this legislation. The purpose of the bill is to reshape the way in which information and communications technology services are funded and delivered in New South Wales by reducing complexity and duplication, minimising wastage and by keeping the customer's needs at the forefront and making them paramount. This cross-cluster funding model will prioritise modern digital solutions that improve the delivery of customer services, whilst also providing a positive economic benefit to the great State of New South Wales.

I acknowledge those who have spoken on this legislation before me: the member for Manly, who is in the Chamber, the member for Wollondilly, and others. We have seen the transformation of New South Wales through the advancement of digital technology when working with the Government. That is nowhere more evident than in the outstanding work done by Service NSW. I have stood in this Chamber many times, as all members have, singing the praises of Service NSW and what a great job it has done in how people now perceive working with government. It is a pleasurable experience to walk into a Service NSW office. There is a fantastic team at Erina, led by Robyn, who is outstanding. She goes out to the community and meets with people at retirement villages to talk about cost-of-living savings. Tiffany runs the Cost of Living savings program at Erina and has delivered more than \$400,000-worth of cost-of-living savings since we implemented the program. Now they are adopting the digital driver licence, and a lot of people are very excited about that on the Central Coast.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Public Interest Debate***MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Auburn to move her motion, I remind the following members to the left of me representing the electorates of Port Stephens, Swansea and Kogarah that they are on three calls to order. The members representing the electorates of Keira, Auburn and Canterbury are on two calls to order. The members representing the electorates of Tweed and Hornsby are also on calls. I remind members I will not hesitate to use standing orders to remove them from the Chamber until the conclusion of this debate; however, if members are being consistently disorderly after being called to order three times, I will use Standing Order 249A, which unfortunately means the members will miss out on the celebrations this evening.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:01:39):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the people of New South Wales have lost faith in the Minister and his ability to properly administer his critically important portfolios due to his extensive history of unacceptable behaviour and professional incompetence.
- (2) Calls on the Premier to immediately dump Minister Elliott from her Cabinet and replace him with a Minister whom the public can trust as we enter one of the worst bushfire seasons on record.

Early one morning recently I was woken from my slumber to be informed that the current Minister for Police and Emergency Services was on the front page of the newspapers, having pursued a vehicle following a collision and become involved in a road incident with a 17-year-old. I was very concerned because, according to the Minister, he worked for the cops, and I thought to myself: Has the Police Commissioner gone mad? Has he issued the Minister for Police and Emergency Services with a badge? Members may think that my first instinct was to be shocked that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services was having a confrontation with a young person. It was not. Unfortunately, that did not come as any surprise to me. But I will come to that later. I immediately recalled an answer the Minister gave in a budget estimates hearing. For the benefit of the House I will read it out. This is him talking about himself, naturally. He said:

As somebody who has been, like the commissioner, trained to use firearms in anger ...

That is right, "trained to use firearms in anger". The member for Campbelltown and I were both in the regular army and we were taught never to pick up a gun in anger. That was our training, but we were both just humble soldiers. I must say that I am greatly shocked to now learn that down in the little known Australian Army Public Relations Service corps they were training them to pick up guns in anger; a typewriter perhaps, a camera possibly. In fact, when I heard the Minister was pursuing a youth at 70, I thought they were talking about his typewriting speed. I did not think they were talking about the police pursuit speed. But no, there is a secret army training method and it is about picking up guns in anger.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services, by his own admission, stated he was working for the cops, as he approached the 17-year-old on the street. When I heard this, I have to admit I broke out in a sweat—and the sweat was not about my menopause by the way. Given what the Minister had already said I got down on my knees at this point and said, "Not only have they given him a police badge, please dear Lord, tell me no-one has given him a firearm." Because that would be the worst possible outcome given his attitude towards firearms.

Those on the other side might not be aware of my concerns about our man of action. And do not just take my word for it that he is a man of action—take his, because I counted during budget estimates he mentioned his military career 13 times. He is happy to tell you about it. Being a newbie in this Chamber, I think I should give a quick precis of previous run-ins the Minister for "I work for cops" has had with young people on the mean streets of Baulkham Hills. According to the Minister, whilst he was driving home one night:

At approximately 8.30 p.m. near the corner of Wrights Road and Green Road in Castle Hill I observed a dozen young teenagers around the nearby bus shelter. As I drove closer to the bus shelter it was clear that many of the teenagers had either bottles or cans in their hands ...

He continued:

I immediately stopped my car and asked the teenagers their names and began to take photographs using my BlackBerry ... Within seconds my car and I were surrounded by a large group of teenagers ...

Who would have thought that if you jump out and start taking photos of teenagers they would surround your car?  
He continued:

I was also surprised, if not a little horrified, at the language coming from children ...

Having introduced myself as the local member of Parliament, I continued to bear the brunt of some colourful language ...

At least he did not say he was working for the cops on that occasion. There is a lesson for the kiddies in there.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Canterbury that she is on two calls to order.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ:** When a man gets out of a car and starts taking photos of you or yelling at you that he works for the cops, make sure you have a photo of your local member of Parliament in your top pocket—next to your heart is probably best. It is such a worry that I am going to talk to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning and ask if she can get some framed photos of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and put them up on the wall of every public school in Sydney, right next to the picture of the Queen—I can see members opposite nodding in agreement—perhaps looking lovingly in that direction. In my past life as a former military police person these actions might have prompted me to get out the Defence Force Discipline Act and write up a charge under section 16 of bringing the forces into disrepute. But unfortunately, colleagues, we are in the New South Wales Parliament and we are no longer in the army and you can bet your bottom dollar that there will be no action taken in this Parliament under this Premier's tenuous hold on power.

In this Parliament you can impersonate a police officer, you can fail to declare your holdings, you can breach privacy—no matter what you do under this Government, the Premier will not take action against you and she will hold you in a warm embrace. Sadly for the people of New South Wales the intemperance and lack of restraint of this police Minister both within this Chamber and on the streets of New South Wales seriously call into question his suitability for his role. The Premier should have removed him following this incident. She has not. She applies no ministerial standards. We are now lumbered with this Minister for Police and Emergency Services, ill equipped for the job in what is likely to be our worst bushfire season ever.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:08:58):** There is a reason why they do not let you talk too often, Lynda: That contribution was an absolute joke. Do you know it took you—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Holsworthy will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** The member left 20 seconds on the clock but it took her until the last three seconds of her contribution to mention the word "fire". Does the member for Auburn know what is going on at the moment? We have the biggest fires we have ever had in this State and it took her until the last three seconds of her contribution to mention it. The member for Auburn may not realise it but we are also talking about the emergency services Minister. At the moment the member wants to waffle on about some absolute drivel instead of about what matters to people at the moment, and that is the fires. The fact is the Minister we have right now is the Minister who is looking after us all during these fires. So many of our electorates are suffering right now.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Auburn has had her opportunity to contribute to the debate. The member for Holsworthy has the call.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** I speak in opposition to the motion from the member for Auburn and I do so because her motion is just a political stunt. It is not what people care about at the moment, but it is not unexpected. I am so disappointed that the Labor Party is not focused on the welfare of the firefighters, the volunteers and those affected by what is going on right now and instead are using the time of this Chamber and the time of all the members present to talk about absolute drivel and do some mudslinging. That is just not right. It is misguided mudslinging as well. The member for Auburn has made accusations against Minister Elliott and his ability to serve the people of New South Wales, and that is an absolute joke. The public are not interested in this waffle—they really are not—and the Minister is certainly not interested. Do members opposite know what he is doing? He is actually making phone calls to our volunteers, to those who serve, to make sure that those volunteers who have been injured in these fires—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Did he SMS that to you, Mel?

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** I am surprised the member for Swansea thinks that that is funny. The Minister is making phone calls to ensure their welfare and that they are getting what they need. The member for Swansea holds up little badges and things and tries to make a joke out of it, but the Minister is actually working hard and all she is doing is sitting there laughing. The member should be ashamed. We have had 1.6 million hectares burnt by fire right now and the member wants to hold up little pictures of badges and things—it is a disgrace. Let us stop the political pointscore. Let us go back to looking after people. Let us go back to focusing on the fact that the RFS has more in its budget than ever before—record levels of funding.

We know that the RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons also agrees. He has said, "We have got more money today than we have ever had before in the history of the organisation." We have got large air tankers. We have got people being looked after by the fact that this Minister invests his time and effort into this job. We know that when those large air tankers come over they are game changers. And now we own one and we have four looking after us—that is the difference this Minister makes. As I said, this Minister calls many of the firefighters; he calls the police; he calls volunteers who are injured on duty just to see how they are going and to see what support they need. He has already appointed Euan Ferguson to be the recovery coordinator to be there for these

victims. He is not spending his time mudslinging and political pointscoring. This is a time to focus on what matters.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Prue Car:** You know who you are talking about, right? You are a little bit confused, Mel.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Is it the same person?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time. The member for Holsworthy has the call and will be heard in silence.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** I am interested to hear that apparently I am confused. I have been to the RFS headquarters. I have seen the difference made by the time and attention the Minister has put into this. I am his Parliamentary Secretary. I know he gets to five or more briefings a day on what is going on at the moment.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Kogarah that he is already on three calls to order.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** He is continually asking questions about what is happening there. He has travelled to numerous towns across the State.

[*An Opposition member interjected.*]

Where is he? He is dealing with bushfires, not dealing with your waffle and gumpf—honestly! He has been up to Taree, he has been to Kempsey, he has been to Port Macquarie and he has accompanied the Prime Minister on two occasions, the Premier three times and the Deputy Premier twice. He knows what he is talking about. He knows what those people on the ground need. As I said, that is why he has already appointed a recovery coordinator, someone who looked after the Bega Valley and the Tathra victims, someone who looked after the people of the North Coast when there were floods. This Minister for Police and Emergency Services is someone who represents this State to its fullest.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We do not need commentary from the member for Canterbury. A Labor member is about to speak. She should have some respect.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:14:59):** What a motion we have before us. Really, where do we begin? As members know, I have only been a shadow Minister for a short while. When I found out that my opposite number was David Elliott, I was a little bit worried. I thought to myself, "Here we have a senior, experienced and well-rounded Minister of the Crown—and a pitch-perfect soprano in his spare time." I thought to myself, "Whatever am I going to do?" So I have been busily going out and doing my work, meeting with stakeholders and understanding the portfolio area, as one would expect any new shadow Minister to do. In the meantime, what has the Minister for Police and Emergency Services been doing? He has been running stop-and-frisks on teenagers in the Hills District. He has been fender bendering his way around with his hat and his business card. He has been trying to instil fear in law-abiding citizens across the State with the threat of random strip searches. He has even been telling the police to give his own children a hard time.

Here I was, learning about the safe and effective crewing of fire trucks and burying my head in the budget papers, and all the while I should have been sitting in on a few university lectures about Augusto Pinochet. I thought, perhaps naively, that my job was to hold this Minister to account for his policy failures, his cuts to frontline services and his undermining of the public service. But no, it turns out my job is better described as keeping a watching brief on creeping fascism in the New South Wales Parliament. So it does not matter that under this Minister's watch there are 174 vacant positions in the Rural Fire Service. It does not matter that in the lead-up to a bushfire season everyone predicted would be the worst, this Minister has ripped out money from the Fire and Rescue NSW budget that could have paid for 250 extra firefighters.

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

**Ms TRISH DOYLE:** It does not matter that there is a funding shortfall of some \$49 million at the Rural Fire Service. These things do not matter because we are in a post-truth world—a Trumpian dystopia where the Minister for Police and Emergency Services dismisses all of those facts and then attacks the Labor Party for daring to speak up for the community during their hour, their week, their month, their year of need. In the meantime, he is out there, Detective Dave, driving around the suburbs and hassling kids. With all the road rage and police impersonation, it is easy to forget that this is not the Minister's first rodeo, as the member for Auburn outlined and as Kylar Loussikian reminded us in the *Herald* a week or so ago.

Mr Loussikian is a good journalist; I know my staff always look forward to reading his column every day. He reminded us that in 2012—almost seven years to the day before his most recent turn as the cop from the Village People—that David Elliott was driving home one evening when he came across a group of youths. Big

man, great saviour, hero, here he was, going to deal out some justice. So the Sheriff of Nottingham gets out of his car and demands that they provide him with their names. Afterwards he admitted that he did phone the real police, but not before he hassled those kids. This Minister is out of control. He is an embarrassment, but he is more than that. I have been having fun so far.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services should be stood aside, but not because he is a bombastic buffoon. He should be stood aside, but not because he cannot be trusted not to carry on like a pork chop in his electorate. He should be stood aside, but not because he is slashing our emergency services budget—all the Liberals do that. No, the Minister should be stood aside because he has been caught red-handed soliciting donations from prohibited donors, such as property developers. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services should, in fact, be stood down because he is a crook.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer) (17:20:27):** This juvenile motion and the juvenile contributions from the member for Auburn and the member for Blue Mountains demonstrate why those opposite are going to be in opposition for a very, very, very long time. They are a policy-free zone. We have small opportunities to debate these matters of public interest. It is a great call by the Leader of the House to come in here and debate substantive matters that affect the people of New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Blue Mountains to order for the first time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Someone on the other side of the House, probably in the leadership team, thought it was a good idea to move a motion against the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the middle of the bushfires that are raging across New South Wales. That is like moving a motion against Winston Churchill in the middle of the Second World War.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I apologise to the people coming into the public gallery. I am sorry for what they are about to witness. In the middle of the bushfires, of all the substantial matters that affect the people of New South Wales, those opposite come into the Parliament with their pathetic, immature, juvenile, embarrassing motions, giggling like schoolchildren. It is not even a university debate. The Hon. Rose Jackson would not move a motion like this. We have got the wrong person down here. Why did we get low-energy Lynda, who moves a motion and cannot even fill the five minutes she has been given? We know where she belongs: upstairs with the rest of them in the retirement zone.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We could have had the active potential future leader of the Labor Party down here, and they gave us Voltz. Look at the new guys, the next generation of Labor: They are all embarrassed to be here standing behind this motion. Whilst on this side of the House we have people of character, on that side of the House they have people of corruption. Half of them are in jail and the other half are at ICAC. They come in here at a time when we are driving our State forward. I was pleased to be in Port Macquarie with the emergency services Minister on the weekend, along with the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Oxley. I witnessed firsthand not just the respect that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services has amongst our firefighters in the Rural Fire Service, but also the extraordinary work that those firefighters do and the support they are given. As State Treasurer, I can tell the House that the strong commitment and the dedication that the Minister—

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Are you the guest speaker at the illegal donor event?

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** You are an embarrassment to the Parliament.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I remind the member for Blue Mountains that she is on two calls to order.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We have to come down here and debate this immaturity at a time when over 500 people across this State have lost their homes, whilst we are commencing the clean-up and continuing to make sure we support our frontline services—men and women right across this State who are ably led by the commissioner, whom the member for Blue Mountains attacked, and the Minister, whom those opposite play politics with. I can tell you, Minister Elliott has shown strong leadership presiding over a record budget of \$1.7 billion and strong stewardship of Fire and Rescue NSW, which will receive a record \$774.3 million in this financial year, with the overall RFS receiving \$541 million, an increase of close to 13 per cent. All this has been presided over by the Minister. He has shown leadership and I have witnessed firsthand not only his strong advocacy through the budget process to make sure that the men and women who are out there today and will be out there over the coming summer can provide support to and protect our communities.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They make sure that people right across this State are safe. Those opposite have come in here during the course of this week, from start to finish, and attacked the commissioner and attacked the Minister.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** They have played juvenile political games. If anything, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services should actually be promoted. [*Time expired.*]

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** When members are silent, we will proceed.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (17:26:05):** This sordid little episode is an apt metaphor for this entire Government, a government that will abuse the tools of State for its own personal political advantages. It does not begin and end with Minister David Elliott—whether it is Minister Victor Dominello leaking the private and personal information of his political opponents or inquiries into government property deals, the Government and Liberal Party members behave as if the 200,000 public servants in New South Wales and the substantial tools of the State are at their personal disposal. There are no rules, there are no norms, there are no laws that they will follow. There is a persistent and odious arrogance at the heart of the New South Wales Liberal Party. But that arrogance was skewered by a 17-year-old boy who uttered four words, "Show me your badge".

Let us examine what we know. The boy's father told *The Australian* that Mr Elliott "chased" his son through the back streets of Castle Hill after a minor collision between the P-plater's Mazda ute and Mr Elliott's Lexus sedan—undercover police cars are flash these days, are they not? He alleges that the 17-year-old clipped his car and then he chased him through the mean streets of Baulkham Hills. He then cornered this frightened young man and pretended he was a police officer. We should not be amazed by this behaviour because the member for Auburn revealed to the House some frankly amazing testimony involving the Minister and a group of teenagers in Baulkham Hills.

The Minister said, "I approached the youths, asked them their names, started taking photos of them. It was at that point that I realised how badly we have failed our youth." He then says, extraordinarily, "To the parents of those drunken teenagers I say: You are failures." There is only one perfect parent left in New South Wales and that is the Minister for police. It gets better, and this is an accurate quote from the Minister, "Parents need to be warned: Discipline your children or the State will do it for you." The people's vigilante is on the loose—mind you, rather than taking on terrorists or bikies, this guy focuses on children. Dirty Harry can handle murderers; dirty David will deal with teenagers. He has a plan for drugs as well, which is also extraordinary.

Again I quote him on his plan to plan to fix drug addiction in New South Wales, "I find it hard to believe that we are in a State that has publicly funded heroin injecting rooms but denies our kids the natural high of firecracker night." He thinks drug addicts across New South Wales will swap crack for a cracker. This is the level of policy development we can expect from the Minister for police. He goes on to say—there is a pool of information from this guy's private member's statements—"I want children to look me in the eye when I shake their hand." It is as if he is desperate for respect from minors. It would be funny if he were not the police Minister of New South Wales.

He admits in *The Australian* the events of last week. He said, "I am dirty about it. I am furious. I lost it." This guy is in charge of ransoms and tackling terrorism, yet he lost his nut at the provocation of a child. He should not be sacked for being dumb; he should be sacked for being dangerous. That is the situation we are facing with the Minister for police. The 17-year-old in question is likely guilty of only a single offence, and that is assaulting the Minister's vanity—that is it. This is the same Minister who condemns parents of underage drinkers, the same Minister who pretends to be a police officer, the same Minister who abuses ministerial staffers who cannot fight back, the same Minister who launches low arguments in this Parliament day after day while cloaking himself in the uniform of those who protect our livelihoods, our homes and our property. That is what he does.

We have all looked up to our uniformed heroes over the past two weeks, but only one person pretended to be one of them to make an absurd political point. What a coward he is to refuse to come into this Parliament to defend himself. I cannot stand Andrew Constance or Dominic Perrottet, but I cannot imagine either of them skipping this debate. They would both be here defending themselves. Our emergency services have gone through a lot over the past fortnight and they deserve a lot from this Parliament. But one thing they deserve more than anything else is a new Minister. They deserve better than David Elliott.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Oxley will be heard in silence.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Water, Property and Housing) (17:31:20):** What a speech that was from the frustrated would-be Leader of the Opposition.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Government members are wasting their speaker's time. The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Oxley has the call and will be heard in silence. I remind members that there are quite a number of them who are on three calls to order, including the member for Cessnock.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** This debate and what the Opposition has done today show that those opposite do not take their job as the Opposition seriously at a time when this State is facing the greatest natural disaster in living memory based on the fact that much of this State has received the lowest rainfall it has ever received. The drought affects the cities and the countryside. Sydney's water catchment has plummeted to around 47 per cent of its capacity. We have towns on the brink of running out of water. We have rivers that are not running. The evidence of this is the pressure and the trauma that our communities throughout New South Wales are facing right now, with hundreds of thousands of hectares of national parks, of State forest, of Crown lands and of private tenure under threat and on fire. And we have had a really pathetic debate put up by those opposite at a time when they have also questioned Shane Fitzsimmons. I cannot believe the member for the Blue Mountains—whose mentor was Phil Koperberg. Nathan Rees appointed Shane Fitzsimmons.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** I did not question that.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** You did question that. You questioned his integrity.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I could not believe you did that because I know you are actually better than that.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** This is not the time for pathetic, political pranks like this. Our State deserves better of its Opposition. If members opposite want to be the true reflection of the next incoming government, then they should act like it. This State deserves a worthy Opposition and not what we have seen today—dreadful leadership.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I tell you what is okay. It is okay for the emergency services Minister to spend Sunday at an evacuation centre with me in Kempsey. So he should. Where was the Leader of the Opposition? She was in Tathra causing problems and telling fibs. That is the extent of your leadership and your capacity to show yourselves as the next Government of this State. You are not worthy.

**Ms Jodie Harrison:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 76. The motion is specifically about the Minister and his ability to properly administer his critically important portfolios.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Oxley is being relevant. There is no point of order.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I will conclude my comments because the faster this debate is over and we can get on with proper business and proper stories from our electorates through private members' statements the better. This has been a joke. Your behaviour has been appalling. You should back the communities that need your support, not your pathetic politics.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:37:39):** In reply: I feel like I have been worked over by the local school ma'am with a little lecture on my responsibilities. I cannot believe that mob on that side of the House after their behaviour time and again. Instead of lecturing us on our responsibilities, why don't you look at your answers to your questions on notice? Have a look at your answers in budget estimates. Have a look at your answers when you were taken to task in budget estimates and asked directly about the upcoming risk and what was in place. You were asked about the cuts to the operational budget and you refused to answer the question.

You were asked time and time again about where the money should be spent and why it is not going there, and you refused to answer the question. The problem with the Government side of the Chamber is that members refuse to be transparent on any piece of information that the public requires for good government and we have seen that around the bushfires. The reality is that David Elliott got out of his vehicle, walked up to another vehicle and said, "I work for the cops." He said he worked for the cops. Well, he does not work for the cops and you have to ask what were his motives in getting out of a vehicle, walking up to a 17-year-old and saying, "I work for the cops"? I can tell you what his intention was: to mislead and intimidate a 17-year-old driving another vehicle.

The problem for every single member on the other side of the Chamber—and the member for Seven Hills knows this all too well—is that this member has form. This is his method of operation. He bullies, he intimidates and he has no barriers about who he will do it to. He will do it to women, he will do it to his staff members in the

newspaper and, as we know on numerous occasions, he does it with children. He is intemperate and he is inappropriate to be the Minister for police. Have a look at the absolute hypocrisy of the Treasurer coming in here, and saying he is an advocate. I was at budget estimates when he was asked to say whether he supported cutting the Treasury dividend to the 4,000 civilians in the police. Do you know what he said? That is a matter for the commissioner. So much for his advocacy. He does not care. He will find any excuse to hide behind the people who do the actual work and the minute someone does something he does not like— [*Time expired.*]

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....36  
Noes .....50  
Majority..... 14

**AYES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D (teller)  
O'Neill, Dr M  
Tesch, Ms L  
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dalton, Mrs H  
Finn, Ms J  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Park, Mr R  
Voltz, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Bali, Mr S  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Dib, Mr J  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoening, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

**NOES**

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Conolly, Mr K  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Evans, Mr L.J.  
Griffin, Mr J  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Piper, Mr G  
Roberts, Mr A  
Singh, Mr G  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tuckerman, Mrs W  
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S  
Constance, Mr A  
Crouch, Mr A (teller)  
Donato, Mr P  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Henskens, Mr A  
Lee, Dr G  
McGirr, Dr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Preston, Ms R  
Saunders, Mr D  
Smith, Mr N  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Wilson, Ms F

Barilaro, Mr J  
Clancy, Mr J  
Cooke, Ms S (teller)  
Davies, Mrs T  
Elliott, Mr D  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Hancock, Mrs S  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Lindsay, Ms W  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Provest, Mr G  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G

**PAIRS**

Saffin, Ms J

Sidgreaves, Mr P

**Motion negatived.**

*Private Members' Statements*

**NORTH SHORE LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:48:14):** The recent 2019 North Shore Local Business Awards brought together businesses, the local community and award sponsors to celebrate the excellent quality of our local businesses. This year a record number of North Shore residents threw their support behind the Local

Business Awards, with many thousands of votes going towards hundreds of our local businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of our communities, including the community of North Shore. The Local Business Awards aim to pay tribute to and reward the local community's best businesses. They also aim to strengthen and develop the bonds between businesses and the community, and recognise the outstanding work of a host of vibrant businesses that thrive in the local community. The Local Business Awards is the most comprehensive business awards program and covers a wide variety of industry. The program recognises that local businesses make an important contribution to the social and economic vibrancy of our communities. They create employment, provide essential goods and services, and establish community as attractive places to live, work and visit.

Anyone who has spent any time in North Shore would know that it is a community of villages with an incredibly successful CBD. The villages of Mosman, Cremorne, Neutral Bay, Kirribilli and Waverton all have their own characters. The hubs across my community are the vibrant places they are only because of the small businesses that invest in them. The variety of small and locally run businesses creates a vibrant atmosphere in the North Shore community; we all appreciate their work. The North Shore Local Business Awards gala presentation is one of the most exciting and anticipated events for the local business community. It had the perfect amount of good food and entertainment, as well as the naming of the winners. It was once again a sellout event. It brings together families, supporters and friends of the businesses across the North Shore.

I recognise the finalists and winners of those awards. The award for best bakery/cake shop was taken out by the Grumpy Baker in Waverton. There are a couple of wonderful bakeries and cafes in the area, including in Waverton. We all love the Grumpy Baker. As there are only a few shops in Waverton, the bakery is a vibrant place in the community. The award for best beauty service was won by Sanctuary Skin Care by Neutral Bay, which is the local little village that I live and work in. The award for best butcher was won by Penny's Quality Butcher in Mosman, which is one of many great butchers in the North Shore community. The queues going out its door in the lead-up to Christmas are unimaginable because of the quality of its produce. The award for best education service was won by the Kirribilli Tutor. The award for best fitness services was won by Authentic Personal Training in Crows Nest. The award for best hairdresser was won by Salon Yazbek in Neutral Bay. The award for best jewellery store was won by Troy O'Brien Fine Jewellery. I congratulate that business on its relocation and its stunning new store on Rangers Road in Neutral Bay. It is a beautiful new shop for a longstanding jewellery store in our community.

The award for the best new business was won by Goodbye Tattoos Laser Tattoo Removal Clinic in Neutral Bay. The award for the best professional service was won by Newhouse & Arnold Solicitors, which is based in McMahons Point. The award for best restaurant was taken out by Aristotle's in Neutral Bay. I congratulate Maria O'Meagher on that win for Aristotle's, which serves delicious lamb and haloumi, and has a wonderful atmosphere. I thank Aristotle's for what it does for the community. Finally, the award for best travel agency was won by Mosman Travel. I know so many people who have utilised the services of Mosman Travel to organise their trips. The business also contributes to the local business chamber. I acknowledge all the small and local businesses that operate in my electorate. I congratulate all the winners and numerous finalists, who are also to be commended for their fantastic effort and success.

The evening was a wonderful opportunity to take time out to recognise and congratulate these local businesses, which are made up of incredibly hardworking individuals who contribute so much to our community. They spend so much time and energy in their businesses. They are often family run and require so much work and effort. I thank the local sponsors that were involved in the awards, including the Rotary Club of North Sydney, BxNetworking, Service NSW and media sponsor North Shore Living. It is important to note that the ability of local businesses to thrive—not only in the electorate of North Shore but also right across the State—is also due to the New South Wales Government's record handling of our economy. I congratulate the Government on its work to ensure we have a strong economy. I thank the chambers of commerce at Mosman, Neutral Bay and North Sydney; Pat Purcell, Richard O'Grady and Bruce Mackenzie for their work for our local businesses.

#### UNION TOWN

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:53:25):** I inform the House of an exciting movement in my electoral, and the Illawarra and South Coast region. The movement, known simply as "Union Town", has taken hold of local communities and is highly infectious. Members will recall from my previous speeches and the contributions of my colleagues and predecessors that the Illawarra and South Coast region are steeped in a history of working-class struggle. The community's resilience against the harsh injustices and excesses of capitalism is matched only by its collective struggle for a better world.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Viva la révolution!

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** That is right. I am glad that the member for Tweed is on board with this. I was talking about a world where people have a right to work, a right to public education and training, and a right to a

regional public health system that is not treated and funded as a second-cousin to the big city health systems or as a profit-earner for big business. On 30 and 31 October, under the auspices of our peak union body, the South Coast Labour Council, regional communities came together from across the country for the inaugural #Uniontown Conference in Wollongong. I acknowledge the presence of Arthur Rorris in the gallery today, and I thank him for all of his hard work. Our labour movement has always been at the forefront of social, economic and environmental campaigns. The mantra is to organise in and out of the workplace, and it is in our communities where the real magic of solidarity happens.

When our nurses, doctors and health workers were fighting the privatisation plans of this Government at Shellharbour and Port Kembla hospitals it was our miners, steelworkers, teachers, community workers, university and public sector workers and wharfies and seafarers, amongst many others, who rallied behind them. So when our miners and our Port Kembla Coal Terminal workers were locked out of work earlier this year and were on the picket line to protect their jobs and livelihoods, who do you think was on the front lines with them? It was our nurses and midwives, of course. They care for community members, in and out of our hospitals, and they know that in Uniontown no-one walks alone and no-one has to bow their head to injustice. They know that if they stand up and fight back Uniontown will fight with them.

I will stay on the subject of our nurses and miners for a moment because members need to understand just how deep these bonds go in the Illawarra. Many decades ago, when the fight was on for public hospitals to be established, our miners and steelworkers were at the forefront. When the Government cried poor it was the miners who held a union meeting and resolved to dock their own wages to pay for the salaries of the nurses to get the deal over the line. We talk about sacrifice and heavy lifting—those guys wrote the book!

Fast forward to 2015 and we come to a year that will forever be etched in the history of our region as the year of the global steel crisis. It was the year we saved the Australian steel industry. Once again the big calls, the heavy lifting and the great personal sacrifices were not made by the corporations or the politicians; they were made by the steelworkers in a union meeting. It was televised. Everyone could see the solidarity, the pain, the anguish and the real leadership that ultimately saved our steel industry and saved generations in our region from the double-digit unemployment and misery that would have otherwise resulted. The power of unity and solidarity is not a new phenomenon; it has been a well-trodden path for working families and their communities for generations.

In times of hardship and oppression it is particularly significant and heartening to see a community resisting the dog whistles and shameful opportunism of political leaders who would rather divide and destroy our communities in order to protect their greedy puppet masters than to give our communities a helping hand and protect them from the storm clouds—or perhaps the firestorms—on the horizon. Members will have noticed that I have not referred to any individual union by name. I do not need to, because the individual organisations are not at the heart of the issue. It is the movement of their members and their communities that is significant. At a time when conservatives are pulling out all the stops to crush the rights of working people with jackboot politics that belong in a dark era of the twentieth century, our community is rediscovering the power of unity, solidarity and the critical importance of union organisation. I have had the great privilege and honour of representing this community in this place as their local member, and previously as a union organiser. I hope members now understand why I believe it is an even greater honour to be a rank-and-file member of Uniontown. I am very pleased to be so.

### **TWEED ELECTORATE**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:58:31):** In this "State of the Tweed" address I will run through what has been happening in the past few months in the Tweed electorate. Our firefighters in Kingscliff were delighted to hear the announcement that a brand-new \$4.9 million state-of-the-art fire station would be built. Our local fireys do an amazing job. While the existing station on Marine Parade has served them and our local community well for many years, it is now time to update it with a bigger and better station for the future. We now have two female firefighters in the retained brigade, which is a great plus. They are working well with the team and are keeping the community safe.

The State budget delivered further for emergency services with the Tweed Volunteer Rescue Association securing funding for a brand-new quick response vehicle and additional equipment and training as part of a \$18.8 million package for volunteer rescue associations across the State. Also four new police recruits have joined the ranks of the Tweed-Byron Local Area Command, and the Tweed is waiting on five new water police and a brand-new boat that is set to be delivered early in the new year. Major upgrades worth \$100 million are being delivered to Kingscliff Public School, Kingscliff High School, Tweed Heads South Primary School and Tweed River High School. Funding to clear all school maintenance backlogs has also been set aside, and the Government is well on the way to achieving that.

Pottsville's first ambulance station is set to go live within weeks, with construction of the new almost \$6 million facility now complete. This ambulance station has been designed to meet the needs of the local Pottsville community and surrounds, with valuable input from NSW Ambulance paramedics. This means our paramedics will receive the vital support they need to meet the local demand for emergency medical care for years to come. The new station facilities will include internal parking for up to four emergency ambulance vehicles, logistics and storage areas, relief accommodation and staff parking.

This is on top of a major investment for Tweed—the new \$534 million Tweed Valley Hospital. In July we had the sod-turning ceremony and local Tweed civil construction business, CD Excavations, was awarded the first early-works contract to carry out roadworks and the initial site preparation. That is one of more than 60 construction packages to be awarded in the building of the new hospital. In September we welcomed the lodgement of its State significant development [SSD] planning application for stage 2 with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The stage 2 SSD seeks consent for the design, construction and operation of the hospital buildings and puts the information on public display for all to see. Lodgement of the stage 2 SSD planning application represents over 2½ years of detailed planning and extensive consultation with clinicians, operational staff, community members and local and State government agencies.

The Crown Reserves Improvement Fund is providing money for reserves and facilities on crown lands to receive upgrades worth \$145,000. The funding to refine and upgrade local community facilities includes \$5,649 that will go toward repairing and upgrading the boardwalk and stair infrastructure along the public track at Tweed Coast Reserve and \$5,500 which has been allocated for the ongoing maintenance of Fingal Head lighthouse through the provision of a dehumidifier to reduce the impacts of mould both inside and outside the lighthouse. Some \$54,384 will be spent on repairs to the eastern end of the revetment wall at the Jack Evans Boat Harbour to stabilise the area, which is subject to bad erosion.

I welcome plans to build a seven-storey apartment building in Tweed Heads to provide additional social and affordable housing for local families. The NSW Land and Housing Corporation has lodged a development application to build 40 social and affordable dwellings at a vacant government-owned site at 33 to 35 Boyd Street, Tweed Heads. I praise the assertive action group that has been working as part of a pilot program and has managed over the past few months to house up to 46 people. The group is doing a fabulous job out on the streets and talking to the most vulnerable people in our community. The development application forms part of the Government's investment in new fit-for-purpose social and affordable housing in regional New South Wales.

The lodgement of the development application was an important milestone in delivering a project that will help to provide new social and affordable housing for those who are most vulnerable. As members can see, an enormous number of things have been going on in the Tweed electorate—no thanks to the local Federal member, who has been missing in action. Her main claim to fame is lodging petitions. The last two each had in excess of 30 signatures. She is very popular with The Greens. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

#### SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:03:52):** I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the many local community groups, sporting groups and local RSL and P&Cs throughout the Seven Hills electorate. Over the past 4½ years as the member for Seven Hills I have been fortunate to aid many local organisations with grants, but I will speak tonight about the State Government's recent help in funding local groups in my electorate over the past 12 months. I thank the member for Castle Hill for assisting many organisations across my electorate in his time serving the State in the portfolio areas of disability, multiculturalism, volunteers and youth. In particular I thank him for the grants to Darcy Road Public School, Toongabbie Anglican Church and Western Sydney Woodturners.

Darcy Road Public School in Wentworthville was successful with a \$2,000 grant to purchase Hindi books for the library and to assist with the school's Hindi classrooms. The P&C was also happy that the students received 41 national flags representing many of the countries of origin of the Darcy Road Public School community. I thank former Minister Williams and his team for their efforts with the local consulates to source many of those flags. Toongabbie Anglican Church was awarded \$10,000 for the Toonie Kids program, and the money has provided a new playground and additional children's equipment. The new space looks great and I thank Pastor Raj Gupta for his efforts in ensuring that his church and all of the local community are well represented.

The Western Sydney Woodturners in Lalor Park received a \$2,525 grant towards equipment. This organisation provides education and guidance support for local Seven Hills High School students whilst training pupils with handy skills. I thank the member for Mulgoa, as the former Minister for Women, for her help in funding the Karabi Community & Development Service female seniors' knitting group with a \$3,000 grant. The ladies of Karabi Wentworthville quickly used the money to buy wool and knitted hundreds of items for sick babies at The Children's Hospital at Westmead and for other western Sydney organisations.

Other great local organisations across the Seven Hills electorate have also received funding from the New South Wales Government over the past 12 months, including sporting clubs at Winston Hills, P&Cs in Toongabbie and more. For example, Vardys Road Public School, which educates many children across Kings Langley, Lalor Park and Seven Hills, was awarded a \$10,000 grant thanks to the strong advocacy of its P&C. The grant will allow for the upgrade of seating areas across the playground for students and also for parents and the community.

Parklea Soccer Football Club, which has its home at Morgan Power Reserve in Kings Langley, was also successful in gaining a \$3,000 grant for line-marking and equipment for its soccer season this year. Seven Hills North Public School P&C received \$3,500 in funding to contribute to its fantastic native garden, which is an educational asset in teaching students about Australian native plants and the skills of gardening. Pendle Hill Colts Cricket Club, at the Binalong Oval in Old Toongabbie, was happy to receive \$2,500 for a new fridge for its clubhouse which will allow the canteen to continue to generate more fundraising options. I was also very pleased to grant \$5,000 to the great team at Toongabbie West Public School P&C. The grant aided the P&C to revitalise and renovate its healthy canteen.

The Meadows Public School was awarded \$5,000 for new and additional sporting equipment. Principal Scott Staveley was happy to see his school receive those funds to promote active play and sports in the playground. Several organisations across Winston Hills also received funding. St Pauls Netball Club received \$4,000 for equipment for its netball season. Winston Hills Public School received new flagpoles to ensure the Australian, the Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander flags fly high at the school. Some \$3,500 went to Winston Heights Public School P&C, which purchased fresh new uniforms for its Primary Schools Sports Association teams.

Last year it was also great to see upgrades also at Lalor Park Preschool with Minister Mitchell. Lalor Park Preschool was successful in gaining \$12,750 as an early childhood education grant, which sees the pupils enjoying a new play space and outdoor educational facilities. Finally, Kings Langley Cricket Club, which plays at Pearce Reserve, was granted \$100,000 for a much-needed clubhouse. This grant is part of the NSW International Cricket Council World T20 Cricket Legacy Fund. I thank the member for Penrith, who had responsibility for the Sport portfolio at that time, for making the announcement with me in Kings Langley. This grant will add to the funds raised by the club and also the expenditure by Blacktown council. I thank the New South Wales Government and particularly the Premier for the grants made to awesome community groups across my electorate this year.

### WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:08:59):** As we reach the conclusion of the sittings of Parliament this year I think that it is important that we take stock of the Government's performance in our own communities. Unlike the member for Tweed, I acknowledge the hard work of my Federal member and colleague Sharon Bird, the member for Cunningham. I enjoy a great working relationship with her. This year, rather than giving them a mark out of 10 or a grade, Wollongong residents want to provide a map to every Minister. Because we continue to be either left out or overlooked, we wonder whether the Government actually knows that our city—the third-largest in New South Wales—even exists.

I reflect on the progress, or lack thereof, of a number of Wollongong projects that enjoy the support of individuals, community groups, business and the labour movement more broadly. These projects are not thought bubbles but initiatives that will underpin the ongoing organic growth of jobs and opportunities both in Wollongong and the Illawarra. The first is the upgrade of the Wollongong Entertainment Centre. Last year the entertainment centre celebrated its twentieth birthday. During that time it has hosted hundreds of acts and events attended by thousands of people, but it is increasingly in need of an upgrade—after 20 years, it is needed now.

During the election campaign Wollongong residents watched as Sydney stadiums were showered with funds, all the while wondering why facilities younger than our own entertainment centre were in such desperate need of upgrades yet ours remained undeserving. The Government relented slightly and arranged for a study that one day might lead to a concept plan that might one day possibly lead to an upgrade. No time frame for completion of the upgrade was given. There was no suggestion that when the study was completed a funding commitment would be forthcoming. No commitment was given to even undertake a detailed design or business case development. They tried to pull the wool over Wollongong's eyes but it was seen for the cynical political attempt at diversion that it was.

We will not be settling for a secret report provided to the Government earlier this year with nothing to follow it. That is not good enough. Recently the sport Minister told me the Government is "undertaking preliminary stakeholder engagement". While delays in progress continue, the frustration and disappointment of residents and performers about the centre grows. I call on the Government to allocate the funds needed by Venues NSW to complete the detailed design and business case stage of the upgrade project in the next budget,

if not sooner. Such a commitment would be welcomed and enjoy widespread support—it would be a great Christmas gift.

Sadly, that is not the only delay that is frustrating Wollongong residents. There has been no meaningful progress on addressing communications blackspots on the South Coast rail line. For years there have been debates about the location of a new tower to stop the dropouts that frustrate commuters on their 90-minute journey to and from Sydney. The tower even received mobile blackspot funding from the Commonwealth Government, yet as debate over a suitable location continues the frustration of commuters builds. I hope that this issue can be resolved early next year. Over the coming months, thousands of people will travel to and from Wollongong along Picton Road to visit our fantastic beaches—I do not blame them, they are absolutely worth visiting. However, progress on Picton Road is moving as slowly as traffic on Sydney's congested streets. This connection will be all the more important when the new Sydney airport is built. The Government has committed to investigating improvements, which could include providing additional capacity sometime in the next decade. All the while, Wollongong waits.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. One project that is close to my heart has seen some progress. A matter of days after the member for Kiama—the region's now-redundant Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra—suggested that lifts at Unanderra station might be too expensive the Government backflipped on its decade of resistance and finally committed to installing lifts during this term of government. The sense of relief was palpable for Unanderra residents—although the lack of a firm time frame did leave us somewhat sceptical. Further pressure and questions to the Government revealed that community consultation will start early next year, with construction to start in 2021. It is expected to be completed by 2022. It is certainly not the world's fastest construction timetable but it is a timetable.

We all would have preferred if the 2010 work started by the previous Labor Government had continued and it was well and truly done by now, but credit where credit is due. The Government has finally realised that this is too important even for it to ignore it forever. I can also report that the Free Gong Shuttle—recently under threat of being gonged by the Government—goes from strength to strength. However, Wollongong's sporting groups, excluded from all sports facility funding, remain frustrated that their exclusion continues. Port Kembla residents are perplexed at how a review of a community investment fund for their suburb that they were not asked to participate in remains incomplete and unpublished and has delayed a further round of investment in their community.

In the last term of this Government the Illawarra lost its voice at the Cabinet table. After the March election we lost our Parliamentary Secretary. Faced with a Government that continually downgrades the Illawarra in its own structures, Wollongong residents cannot help but think that this reflects their ranking in the Government's priorities. The Illawarra produces 2 per cent of gross State product, is home to many of the State's most significant industries, has around 4 per cent of the State's population but continues to not even register a blip on the Berejiklian Government radar. Perhaps once again for Wollongong it is a case of better luck next year.

#### CLARENCE ELECTORATE

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (18:14:10):** In my last private members' statement for the year I reflect on what a wonderful year 2019 has been. Yes, the Liberal-Nationals won both the New South Wales election and the Federal election. That is great news for the people of New South Wales and for the electorate of Clarence. We have the opportunity to see all the projects that we committed to and funded in the previous eight years come to fruition. This year a number of major public infrastructure commitments were completed. There are a few more to go before the end of this year and others to be completed next year. My constituents have been waiting for years, and in some cases decades, for these infrastructure projects. Now they either have been completed or are close to completion.

On Sunday week the residents of the Clarence Valley will have the opportunity to walk across the iconic Harwood Bridge over the Clarence River. This is a massive bridge spanning the one-kilometre wide Clarence River. It is not unlike the Gateway Bridge in Brisbane; it is not quite as high but it extends approximately two kilometres from end to end when the approaches are taken into account. It was jointly funded by the Federal and New South Wales governments as part of the \$5 billion Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway upgrade. Over 5,000 people have expressed an interest to participate in the community day, which speaks volumes about the significance of the bridge to the community. The bridge is not only a significant piece of State infrastructure but also played an important role in creating local employment during its construction and assisted to boost the local economy during the two years or so it took to build.

On the following Sunday a second major bridge will open in my electorate, the new bridge over the Clarence River in Grafton. The community has been lobbying government for over 40 years for a second crossing of the Clarence River at Grafton. Promises were made and reneged on. Finally, it took the resolve of the Liberal-Nationals in 2011 to commit to funding the \$240 million required to build the bridge. I acknowledge the

incredible efforts of a number of community members who never gave up the fight for a new bridge. I make specific mention of Ron Bell, Des Harvey and Heather Roland. I also mention Spiro Notaris, who unfortunately has passed away but who I know will be looking down on the day and giving his critique of the finished project.

This year the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange in Casino was completed. The New South Wales Government funded \$7 million to complete the state-of-the-art saleyards which stamps Casino as the beef capital of Australia. The new Yamba TAFE was opened after a \$5.6 million investment by the New South Wales Government and is the first presence of TAFE in Yamba. The New South Wales Government funded \$6 million to complete stage 1 of Reflections Holiday Parks in Evans Head, and recently I announced a further \$7 million to complete stage 2. This has given an invaluable boost to the economy of the small coastal town of Evans Head. Health services in Evans Head are also boosted by the new \$6 million HealthOne facility, which is due to be completed early next year. Also due to be completed next year is the \$7 million upgrade to the Calypso Holiday Park at Yamba, again totally funded by the New South Wales Government.

Next year the completion of the upgrade of the Pacific Highway will also be completed. As I mentioned earlier, that project is jointly funded by the Federal and New South Wales governments. It is long overdue and now in its final stages of completion. It has generated significant employment in the region and boosted the economies of local communities along its entire length during its construction. Currently 3,500 people are directly employed on the project. The new Grafton jail will open in 2020. It will hold 1,700 inmates and employ 600 permanent staff. It is reputed to be the largest jail in Australia. It is a public-private arrangement with over 1,100 people employed during construction at a cost somewhere in the vicinity of \$700 million.

These have been golden years for the people in the electorate of Clarence, and it is all because the Liberal-Nationals in government really care about country people and regional communities. I have lived in the electorate for 39 years and I have never seen this level of public investment in the region before. I do not think I will again over the next 39 years, if I live that long. This has been a fabulous year for the people of my electorate and for the people of New South Wales. I thank the House for the opportunity to deliver this private member's statement in the last sitting week of the Parliament.

#### **PITTWATER ELECTORATE**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:19:20):** At this time of year I use my private member's statement to make some Christmas felicitations. This is a great opportunity to reflect with real gratitude on those we have had the pleasure of serving with over the past year. It is also an opportunity to share in this place our thanks for our communities who have given us the wonderful opportunity to serve them again. In the context of the fires raging across New South Wales, I begin by thanking the emergency services personnel in Pittwater, the ambulance officers, the fireys, the Rural Fire Service volunteers, the SES volunteers and Marine Rescue—many of whom have a hard summer ahead of them.

My deepest thanks go to Superintendent Dave Darcy of the Northern Beaches Local Area Command and all those who work with Dave to keep the beaches safe at all times. As we approach summer, I thank our surf club volunteers who keep our beaches safe each year. There are 11 surf clubs in the electorate of Pittwater and we rely on them every weekend to keep visitors to our beaches safe. As the former Minister for Education as well as the member for Pittwater—and I acknowledge the former shadow Minister for Education in the House—I thank all the wonderful school principals, teachers and administrative staff for stewarding the next generation through another year of their education. As educators and leaders they play an important role that can never be underestimated.

I acknowledge the northern beaches councillors and council staff, in particular General Manager Ray Brownlee, for their work on behalf of the Pittwater community. I thank the staff, doctors and nurses at Mona Vale Hospital, led by Jacqui Edgley, who provide outstanding medical services to our community. I thank the community groups, residents associations and environmental groups for a wonderful year. I acknowledge their advocacy on behalf of our great community. I give a special shout-out to Mel Stevenson, who approached me to move Pittwater Primary Schools Sports Association sport to the morning so our local students could avoid playing sport in the heat of the day when the ultraviolet rays are most dangerous. Mel told me today that all schools across the Pittwater zone have agreed to move school sport to Friday mornings. That is a wonderful outcome thanks to her advocacy and the advocacy of others.

The work of my staff in both my ministerial and electorate offices, who diligently serve the State and the community, never goes unappreciated. I acknowledge my electorate office team: Andrew Johnston, who celebrated 11 years but was awarded for 10 years of service this year; Robert Johnston; Jane Zietsman, who is formerly from Health Infrastructure and does an amazing job; and Tanya Sandoe. I acknowledge my departmental liaison team made up of Ellen, Greg and Nick, who are extraordinary exemplars of public servants in the true sense of the word. They do an incredible job serving the people of New South Wales, and my office in particular.

I acknowledge my policy team of Michael, Bec, Alice, Ben and Sam. I thank them for their sage and timely advice. I am very appreciative.

**Mr Geoff Provost:** You can be a handful.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** I thank the media team, Courtney and Teaghan. I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Tweed, because it is a challenge to seek to make me look good, but they do an incredible job and I am very grateful. I also acknowledge Alexis, my private secretary, who does an incredible job and keeps the office running like a well-oiled machine. I was a little troubled yesterday when she came in asking what day it was. I am enormously grateful for everything she does. I thank Jason Stuttle, self-proclaimed chairman of the steering committee—I will leave that one alone. I thank Tom Loomes, who is best described as the MP whisperer. He wrote copious notes for this presentation and emphasised the need to say thank you to him.

I thank Jess Reid, or Bridie, as she is more affectionately known, who leads communications in a portfolio that is about thought leadership and does so in an incredibly conscientious and thoughtful way. I acknowledge Kate, my chief of staff, for whom words are not enough to express how grateful I am for her wisdom. I also acknowledge former staff members Jason and Dan, who really wanted me to include the words "All I want for Christmas is you". Mission accomplished. I have done that now. Hopefully there is something in that for me.

### BUSHFIRE RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:24:40):** Tomorrow I will make my seasonal felicitations when that business comes before the House. Today I want to talk about what has been happening in my electorate of Lakemba in the context of the bushfires. I put on record my thanks and respect to all those who are doing everything they can to help people affected by the bushfires. I cannot fathom how difficult it must be for people who have lost their homes or, more tragically, have had loved ones who have lost their lives and for the communities that have been decimated. But we have seen the great spirit that resides within all of us to help where we can. I am impressed with the amount of work that has been done.

I am particularly happy about one activity in my local community. As the catastrophic situation was unfolding I made a couple of calls to people who were hard at work in my local community. I was very pleased with the decision of the Australian National Imams Council to nominate Friday 15 November as a day on which donations would be collected at mosques to go towards the bushfire appeal. That is a special contribution. People not only need help from volunteers, they also need money to rebuild or restart or even just for the basics. I am proud and happy about the actions of my local community.

I also mention a group in my community, the Lighthouse group, which represents the Aussie spirit and makes me so proud of my local community. I have spoken about this group before, as I do a fair bit of work with it. Its members include some very impressive people, such as the local deputy mayor and representatives from Campsie Police Station and the GWS Giants. The group is basically a collection of people who try to do what we can to help others. I will not take any credit for this particular action but last week the group put the call out in the community for donations of food. Within a couple of days we managed to accumulate three trucks and two vans worth of food, donated and all boxed up. The food was dropped off by people at the PCYC and also came from local schools. So much food was donated that packing was a problem. So the call went out that we needed people to help pack the boxes, and the boxes were packed.

A convoy of five vehicles—three trucks and two vans—from the Bankstown and Canterbury local government area and Lakemba went to five separate locations to drop off the many hundreds of boxes of food. The boxes were large, such as would hold fruit and vegies. The people in my local area may not be members of the Rural Fire Service but they do what they can to help. I was incredibly proud to see the footage of their activity. I was also incredibly proud to be their local representative and to work with these people, whom I admire so much. All of this activity was able to be turned around within one week, which speaks volumes about people's inner goodness.

The call went out through social media, phone calls, WhatsApp messages and other avenues and the next thing we knew there was so much food. The food donations will not solve the problem of the bushfires but the response from the local communities in and around Taree, Port Macquarie and other areas was phenomenal. I received a phone call from a barbecue company called 2 Smokin Arabs, which does barbecued ribs, burgers and other food. One of the guys from the company was in Port Macquarie on Sunday and asked me who he should contact in the local area. He said, "We're here just cooking and want to give the food away."

We often talk about the heroic efforts that make our society better but we do not always acknowledge it as an inherent attribute. The Government, emergency services and volunteers have a role to play and community members want to do all that they can. When they all come together things happen. We cannot change what has happened to those people who have lost everything, including their loved ones. Perhaps they have also lost their

faith in humanity but then they see angelic people doing everything they can to help. The assistance provided transcends religion, culture and politics; humanity will always prevail. I offer my sincerest sympathy to those who have been in the bushfires and for what they are going through. I thank the emergency services and volunteers for everything they do. No amount of thanks can do them justice. Let us hope we get through this well.

### **CREATOR ACADEMY**

#### **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AID**

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Customer Service) (18:29:58):** Our future lies with the next generation and it is our obligation as a society to provide them with the skills, knowledge and leadership to tackle the future. Whether it is across the arts, technology or maths, it is important we embrace the full potential of our children and provide every opportunity available. In Ryde I have been privileged to see the amazing work of the Creator Academy, which is harnessing the natural ability of our kids in technology and engineering. The academy introduces science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] to our kids through one of the most complicated yet interesting fields available: robotics. Using some familiar objects like LEGO and key STEM principles, kids are able to both construct and instruct their very own robot.

The program gives kids an understanding of physics, maths, coding and technology. These skills in STEM fields are invaluable not only to their future education but to their career and society as a whole. Engineers are faced with complex infrastructure demands while new, powerful technologies like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, mixed reality and augmented reality present a world of technologies previously thought possible only in science fiction. Programs like that of the Creator Academy are key in raising a generation that is conscious and capable of these developments. This is already evident with students from the academy representing the State in STEM competitions.

The program has had significant outreach too. Roughly a third of classes comprises girls, increasing their involvement in this ever more crucial area. Furthermore, children from as young as seven years old are able to partake in the program and online courses are also available to further its reach beyond its five education centres. The New South Wales Government has thrown its full support behind programs that encourage this level of functional education, as seen by our provision of Creative Kids vouchers. We are doing our best to allow members from all walks of our community to access the fundamental keys to the future. I sincerely thank the founder, Garry Law, for growing and building an institution that clearly provides so much to our children and to Ryde as a whole.

Christian Community Aid, working out of Eastwood, is another organisation that upholds the stated values of respect, integrity, social justice, cooperation and independence by giving help to those who need it and strengthening community. The mission of Christian Community Aid [CCA] is one that echoes across all boundaries, regardless of individual differences, to engage all communities, including vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians, to enable better lives. These are admirable and very lofty goals. To meet the different needs posed by different challenges, CCA provides a vast array of services. Its services range from crucial financial counselling, emergency relief, advocacy and referrals for all in need as well as some more specific and sometimes overlooked basic provisions such as transport to and from health services.

The work of Christian Community Aid is indispensable and the New South Wales Government is actively supporting CCA's endeavours. A Youth Opportunities grant of \$50,000 was recently awarded to help the organisation's youth engagement and education programs. The CCA has been chosen from many applicants to provide youth engagement resources for the Ryde area through the Bravely Empowering Adolescents to Lead program. This program will enable students access to resources for learning music and percussion, not only giving them the opportunity to play the drums but enriching life skills that are crucial for leadership. I was able to meet with some of the facilitating members of the program and express my thanks for the work of Evan, Alison, Irving, Heather, Stella, Alex, Emma and Elyse as well as all the other contributions from those who make the good work at Christian Community Aid possible.

#### **SPRINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:34:03):** I acknowledge the fabulous P&C of Springwood High School in my electorate of Blue Mountains. Of particular concern is the P&C's application to the New South Wales Government's school infrastructure Cooler Classrooms Program. In the middle of 2018, on behalf of the Springwood High School P&C, I wrote to the then education Minister about the lack of air conditioning in the school and particularly in the classrooms, which makes it very difficult for students and their teachers to attend to learning needs on hot days. The P&C was disappointed to learn that the school was deemed ineligible for the Cooler Classrooms initiative and sought to challenge that decision on the basis of inaccurate data. It developed its own rigorous and accurate dataset by installing heat sensors to record classroom temperatures over a period of six months. The P&C was supported by Western Sydney University, which collected and analysed the data.

At an information night Professor Mark Tjoelker from the Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment presented the data in a report entitled *A Cooler School for Springwood High*. Professor Tjoelker happens to be the parent of a student at that school. I was invited to see the presentation, which was compelling. Teachers, parents and students at the information night talked about the data from one year in which there were 41 days with temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius, but particularly 10 days with temperatures over 40 degrees Celsius. They felt that those figures shed a different light on the situation at the school in relation to the Cooler Schools Program and the need to challenge the school's supposed ineligibility.

Springwood High School did not let the matter rest. The students became active and organised a petition. They lobbied me and other candidates during the election campaign earlier this year. Students, teachers and parents organised themselves, in collaboration with those leading researchers from Western Sydney University who had gathered the data, to talk about what it was like to be in a classroom with an air temperature of 37.7 degrees and how that impacted on teachers and on students' ability to learn. They told us about the buildings at Springwood High School, which are over 50 years old and were not designed with the need for effective and efficient cooling in mind, because our area has a distinct change in our climate and in temperatures.

It has been widely reported in recent months that summer temperatures are rapidly increasing. Conditions are difficult for staff and students, not just in the Blue Mountains, which has had extraordinarily hot summers of late, but in many areas. Classrooms are stifling in summer and are heated with unflued gas heaters in winter. The school community has put forward a very compelling case about unsafe and unhealthy learning and teaching conditions. It has sought from the Minister a commitment to visit the community and the school, to have a wander around, to read the documentation that accompanied their original application, to look at the quantified analysis of community statements and the case study and to re-evaluate and look after this fabulous school and its community into the next summer.

### **TRIBUTE TO BRIAN POWYER**

#### **SUPERINTENDENT WAYNE COX, APM**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education) (18:39:04):** I pay my respects to Brian Powyer, a well-known and highly respected community leader, who passed away unexpectedly. I offer my sincere condolences to his wife, family and many friends. Brian leaves behind an enduring legacy. He will be remembered for his enthusiastic support of heritage in Parramatta and New South Wales and his deep involvement in promoting Parramatta's history. Brian was involved in many organisations in Parramatta and New South Wales, including the National Trust NSW and the Australian Council of National Trusts. He was a member of the City of Parramatta Heritage Advisory Committee and many other community organisations. Brian will be fondly remembered for his passion and commitment to heritage in Parramatta. Rest in peace, Brian Powyer. Your legacy will endure for generations to come.

I pay tribute to Superintendent Wayne Cox, APM, and bring to the House's attention his extraordinary contributions. Wayne recently announced his retirement after more than 30 years of dedicated service. In 1987 Wayne joined the New South Wales Police Force as a trainee at the New South Wales Police Force Academy in Goulburn. His first posting was at Parramatta Police Station, performing general duties. He also served with distinction in general duties and criminal investigations whilst stationed at Granville, Ermington, Berrigan, Quakers Hill, The Rocks and Eastern Beaches at Maroubra. During the Sydney Olympics, Wayne was seconded to the protective services group and performed the role of principal security officer for the President of the International Olympic Committee, Mr Juan Antonio Samaranch.

In 2006 at Leichhardt Police Area Command, Wayne was promoted to the rank of superintendent. In 2010 Superintendent Cox transferred to Mount Druitt Police Area Command, where he was instrumental in reducing a range of criminal offences. His innovative leadership and strategic organisational skills led to a number of strategies that incorporated other government stakeholders in diverting young offenders from the criminal justice system. He was involved with a number of local Indigenous groups and committees as well as being the region's spokesperson for Aboriginal issues within the local community to reduce Aboriginal representation in the criminal justice system. Superintendent Cox initiated raising funds for charities, including the Mount Druitt Police Charity Ball for Bravehearts, which raised funds for education and awareness programs for child sexual assault.

In 2013 Wayne was transferred to the Parramatta Police Area Command, where he continued his strong commitment to the community, including the Indian, Chinese and Muslim communities. He demonstrated a high level of expertise in serious and major crime investigations and public order management until his retirement from the Police Force in October 2019. I pay tribute to Wayne for his more than 30 years of service to the New South Wales Police Force and to our multicultural communities. Wayne has been a bridge builder between the police and the community and between the various ethnic communities at a particularly tough time. He has been a great asset to the Police Force. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I recognise Wayne's outstanding

contribution to New South Wales and to the Parramatta area. Wayne has served his country and his community with great distinction.

#### PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:42:55):** This year, 2019, has been an eventful year for the people of Port Stephens. Members in this House know better than most that the start of the year was dominated by the State election. I was proud to have been again endorsed by my community to be their voice in this Parliament. Port Stephens is home to so many amazing people. I am honoured to have retained the confidence of my community and I reflect on their support every day in this place. As members would know, it was a particularly hard-fought campaign in Port Stephens and was marred with fake *Facebook* profiles and smears by upper House Liberal MPs. My community thankfully saw straight through that and I received a larger number of votes this time around.

Despite the monumental efforts and the positive vision from Labor, the statewide outcome of the election in March was not the result we had hoped to see. I am naturally disappointed by those results, not because I am on this side of the House but because I know that communities across the State, and my community particularly, will continue to struggle under this Liberal-Nationals Government. We will continue to see underinvestment in our schools and hospitals, we will continue to see more privatisations and higher cost pressures on families and we will see an escalation in the rampant land clearing and environmental vandalism that have been brought about by this Government. But wins in Opposition are extra special and I want to reflect on some of the successes the community of Port Stephens has achieved in 2019.

Members in this place would have heard me speak about the Mambo Wetlands—often. It is a very special place. The wetlands were finally restored to public ownership this year, correcting the Government's appalling sale of the land in 2016. This campaign endured for three years, while the Government hoped and prayed that the residents would just forget about it and move on. Well, the residents did not move on; they continued to fight. They received over 10,000 signatures on a petition that was debated in this House and they kept up the pressure until the Government finally saw sense and backflipped. These wetlands are particularly important for our endangered koala population in Port Stephens, which is another success story I would like to touch on this evening.

This year I have welcomed additional funding for the koala sanctuary in Port Stephens. The sanctuary began when I secured a \$100,000 grant as seed funding. In the coming months we will have a multimillion dollar koala sanctuary offering improved environmental outcomes as well as a new tourist destination for our visitors. The sanctuary is currently hosting a number of injured koalas that were caught up in the bushfires in the north of our State. I thank each and every one of the volunteers who are giving their heart and working hard to help those koalas to survive. Port Stephens residents had another win when they successfully opposed Port Stephens Council's massive rate rise proposal. I was pleased to support the campaign against the rate rise with my community. It was wonderful to see the community come together, yet again, and make their voices heard.

Other important wins for my community are included in the election commitments secured during the election, commitments that I will be holding the Government to. I recently attended the sod turning for a new and much-needed police station in Karuah, a town that will hopefully also see a new Rural Fire Service station in coming months. The current station is held together with gaffer tape. New police stations are also in the pipeline for Tea Gardens and Lemon Tree Passage and I will continue to keep a close eye on those projects. I want to acknowledge the recent commitment from the health Minister to investigate the possibility of providing dialysis at Tomaree Hospital. This is a topic residents will continue to push for and, while the Government is not yet on board, I will continue to support my community's very reasonable calls for critical services to be delivered locally.

One project all residents will be looking at with intense scrutiny is the Nelson Bay Road duplication, first promised by then Premier Mike Baird in 2015 but not delivered and then recommitted to by Premier Berejiklian this year. We all want this project to happen. On the issue of road projects, I have recently joined the NRMA and Infrastructure Australia in calling on the Government to speed up the construction of the M1 to the Raymond Terrace extension. The NRMA has called this project a "vital missing link". It would deliver less local congestion, increased road safety and faster and more efficient delivery of freight. The Government will not be surprised to learn that a public high school in Medowie remains on my list of essential projects. Other high schools in Raymond Terrace are at capacity and it is time for Medowie high school to be delivered by this Government. Lastly, as we wind down and move towards the festive season, I thank members of my community and all the volunteers who work hard to make our community beautiful and strong.

#### BUSHFIRES AND MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:48:10):** Tonight I wish to thank the many people involved in fighting the fires in my electorate. In my area 101 houses and seven facilities, including Bobin Public

School and the Rainbow Flat Rural Fire Service station, were lost to the bushfires and another 218 outbuildings were damaged. But the good news is that over 800 buildings, 54 facilities and more than 750 outbuildings were saved. The difficulty in thanking people is that it is inevitable that you miss out someone. I apologise in advance to anyone I miss.

First off I congratulate and commend Superintendent Kam Baker, who is the District Manager for the Mid Coast Rural Fire District. He was at the control centre at Wauchope and did an outstanding job, marshalling all the different agencies to help throughout that time. The fires in our areas have been going for several months—although the critical period was over the past couple of weeks—to the point that many were exhausted even before we got to the extreme conditions. I congratulate Superintendent of Police Shane Cribb, who manned the emergency centre at Tuncurry, marshalling the various agencies, whether it be council, water, *Community* and Justice *Services* or Rural Fire Service [RFS].

During the fires, not only the RFS but also Fire and Rescue NSW, the police, State Emergency Service, interstate crews, the army with the helicopters and the transport, and MidCoast Council worked 24 hours a day to ensure the safety of the community. In particular I thank the local crews of RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW. Some people say there is friction between the two, but from what I have seen they worked in harmony through a number of fires throughout those months that impacted forest areas within Forster, Tuncurry or other towns. We are not out of the woods; the fires are still burning. If conditions change and there are hot temperatures and low humidity with wind, we could be in danger again. Everybody must be vigilant about it.

At the same time, we have already started the recovery. Euan Ferguson has been appointed as the recovery coordinator. He has been to Taree already. On Saturday I will meet with him again in Taree to talk about the recovery and what needs to be done. It is fantastic to see so many different community groups and service groups such as Rotary and the Lions in there right from the start at the evacuation centres, and others providing meals and helping wherever they could. I also thank the Salvation Army, which provided meals at Club Taree. Throughout one day over 700 people utilised that facility. I thank the showground societies at Taree and Wingham for allowing people to go there after evacuation, and getting the Lions Club and others to cook the barbecues. They took in the goods that people donated. They took in not only the people who were evacuated but also their large animals.

I thank Club Taree CEO Morgan Stewart for making the venue available as the evacuation centre. I also thank Tuncurry bowlo CEO Terry Green. Many other groups and organisations are helping out. Bobin Public School was burnt, but it will be opened and ready on day one of term one. I thank MidCoast Council and the mayor David West, who did an outstanding job in going around the evacuation centres and talking to the community. I congratulate them all.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:53:15):** I praise the member for Myall Lakes. All members are out there, looking after our community and doing the right thing in trying to support them, but the member for Myall Lakes puts on the RFS gear and helmet, helping on the tracks and putting out fires, but seeks no praise for it. I think he is exemplary. His community is very lucky to have a man of dedication. I believe the member for Myall Lakes has been a member of the RFS for the past six years and has attended many fires. Recently he finished on the truck at 3.00 a.m. and was back in Parliament House at about 8.30 a.m. That level of dedication and commitment to his community is beyond the call of duty. I praise him for his efforts in trying to keep his community safe.

#### SERVICE NSW

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:54:15):** One of this Government's cornerstones is making life easier for the people of New South Wales. The rollout of Service NSW centres across our great State is delivering much-needed access to Government services in a timely, friendly and helpful manner. With more than 98 per cent of New South Wales residents already being reached by Service NSW centres, we are determined to reach every corner of this State. No matter what part of New South Wales people live in, we want to make sure all residents are able to access the rebates on offer to ease the cost of living.

Service NSW was introduced in 2013 by our Government as a one-stop shop for vital services such as getting a birth certificate, a Seniors Card, a drivers licence, renewing vehicle registration or even getting a fishing licence. I have witnessed firsthand the amazing work of Service NSW at Hurstville and welcome the Minister for Customer Service's election announcement for a new centre over the next four years at Roselands. When I am doorknocking in my electorate, the cost of living is continuously raised as one of the single most important issues facing the people of the St George region. Under the directive of this Government, residents can now access over 70 rebates and incentives, including free vehicle registration, Energy Switch, the \$100 Active Kids—which I have used for my children—and Creative Kids vouchers, and much more. As a result, our Government has given back more than \$200 million to people across New South Wales over the last year alone.

Recently the Government announced that households that have gas and electricity could save hundreds of dollars on their energy bills with the expansion of our popular Energy Switch service. Many in my electorate of Oatley have taken up this offer. We know energy bills are a significant part of local household budgets and we are doing everything we can to help ease these cost of living pressures. Already 7,000 households across New South Wales have made a switch on their energy bills—identifying close to \$3 million in annual savings—since the service was launched in November 2018. The average saving for consumers is over \$400. Energy Switch is free, an Australian first service, allowing households to switch electricity providers in minutes with the click of a mouse or a chat with a friendly Service NSW staff member. It works by using a customer's latest energy e-bill to scan every retailer in New South Wales and gives customers the cheapest three electricity plans available. If a switch is requested, Service NSW will inform the energy provider.

Like the current service, Service NSW will do the heavy lifting for the customer by checking their gas usage, searching for available plans and, if savings can be found, it will make the switch for them. This is fantastic. Perhaps one of the most popular rebates in my electorate of Oatley is the Active Kids program. In 2018 families saved more than \$54 million on children's sport, fitness, recreation activities and much more. Our Government has made it a priority to reduce childhood overweight and obesity rates in New South Wales. With the Active Kids program almost half of all school-enrolled kids are enjoying the benefits of exercise. Also a huge success has been the introduction of the New South Wales Baby Bundle. Every baby born in New South Wales receives a useful bundle of essential items.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** You have used that.

**Mr MARK COURE:** As the member for Tweed just mentioned, the Coure family has used the Baby Bundle. It is worth over \$300, helping families get off to a great start. In the middle of the night when we ran out of nappies we located the Baby Bundle. There were three nappies in there that we were able to use in an emergency. It has come to our rescue more than once. Our Government wants to support parents from the very beginning. A personal favourite is the New South Wales Government developed FuelCheck app. The free FuelCheck app allows customers to locate the closest, cheapest service station to them.

The app includes a favourite stations function, allowing users to save their favourite petrol stations. A My Trip function utilises Google Maps to enable users to find the cheapest petrol station on their journey and direct them to that station. I look forward to what Minister Dominello has planned in his continued efforts in reducing red tape and paperwork, while also increasing rebates available through Service NSW centres for the benefit of electors in my electorate and across New South Wales.

#### **FOOD ANGEL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (18:59:19):** Today I speak about a brilliant initiative known as Food Angel, which has recently been launched in my local community. It was conceived by His Grace Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel and has finally come to fruition as a fully functional community support service run by volunteers from the Good Samaritan church in Wakeley. The primary aim of the program is to provide a week's supply of grocery items at a significantly discounted rate to members of the community who are going through a rough patch or struggling to make ends meet. The hampers contain high-quality food, produce and ingredients and are openly available to anyone in the community who has a need for them. The contents of the weekly hampers vary from week to week and are valued in excess of \$100 or \$150. This is tremendous value for locals, given Food Angel hampers are distributed for the small contribution of \$30 for a week's worth of groceries.

Earlier this month I had the great pleasure to accept His Grace Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel's invitation to attend the church's Saturday distribution services and see the Food Angel service in full swing. The hampers that were distributed on that day contained a bountiful mix of fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and miscellaneous general grocery items. I can attest firsthand that all the items in the hamper were top quality. The passion and commitment shown by the volunteers were second to none. Although the Food Angel program is a relatively new initiative of the Good Samaritan Aid Society, its immediate success and demand in the community has reinforced the need to expand the service to more areas throughout south-western Sydney and greatly increase the volume of hampers available to those in need. The majority of the contents used to create the hampers are sourced by the volunteers from Foodbank NSW & ACT. An impending expansion is on the horizon for the program, with SecondBite coming on board to assist in the provision of fresh goods and produce.

Food Angel is currently distributing approximately 30 hampers each week to individuals and families in need throughout our community. With plans in place to rapidly expand those services to more and more communities throughout south-western Sydney, Food Angel's projected target for delivery in the next six to 12 months is 1,000 hampers every week to needy families. The Food Angel service has been identified as the only program of its kind with such a scale in our region. Given the dire need of so many families in the area, there is clearly huge potential for future expansion and additional support services to link in to assist families in need

throughout the south-western Sydney region. I saw firsthand the sincere need and earnest appreciation in the eyes of many of the attendees who procured hampers at the recent distribution service, and am incredibly proud of everyone at the Good Samaritan church in Wakeley. Their efforts are making an incredible difference to vulnerable families throughout our community.

For those in need, the program presently runs on a weekly basis, every Saturday from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. at the Good Samaritan church in Wakeley. If you know someone who could benefit from these services, please do not hesitate to get in contact with the organisers by visiting [www.foodangel.com.au](http://www.foodangel.com.au) or calling the mobile phone number 0403 745 528. On behalf of the Fairfield electorate, I commend and thank Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel, Joe Kakoz, Rasha Daniel, Habib Shahho, Dianna Shlimon, Mary Semann and all the other volunteers and organisers at the Good Samaritan church in Wakeley, for their hard work and ongoing efforts to help their fellow brothers and sisters. I am looking forward to watching the program expand over the coming months and years. On behalf of the Chamber, I thank everybody involved for their great work in the community.

#### WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:03:48):** Tonight I talk about environmental fraud and the complete distortion of the term "environment". This Government has conned city voters into thinking it cares for the environment across Western New South Wales, when in reality it is destroying it. Environment is a lovely word that fills people with a warm fuzzy feeling. Sadly, it has been completely distorted in the conversation about water, agriculture, national parks and natural resource management. According to the Government, it needs to protect the environment from people out west. It does not want us fishing, farming, camping, hunting, driving, or even living in it. It seems that just breathing is a threat to the Government's idea of the environment. By pitting the environment against country people and industries, the Government thinks it is on to a winner.

Water management in Australia is complex, but the media and the Government have dumbed it down to a simple conflict. They say that irrigators who want to take water out of the river are on one side of the conflict, while governments and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority [MDBA], which are trying to keep water flowing down the river, are on the other. The Government says it is all about environmental flows and that we need environmental flows to maintain the health of the river. But what about the environmental flows that drained the Menindee Lakes to South Australia? Those flows left little water in the rivers, killing millions of fish and leaving nearby towns with no drinking water and little stock and domestic water for outlying stations.

What about the environmental flows flooding the Barmah-Millewa Forest, which are drowning red river gums as they continue to be inundated? What about the environmental flows that are preventing farmers from growing crops and feeding their livestock because they are not allowed to touch their allocation as water flows past them? What about the Sydney-based traders who are making millions of dollars thanks to the environmental flow targets that keep water scarce and prices ridiculously high? There is nothing on the MDBA or State Government websites that clearly spells out the environmental benefits of each of those so-called environmental flows. By talking about environmental flows in the media, politicians have convinced Sydneysiders that they are doing something good. City folk—many of whom never venture west of the Blue Mountains and only view this environment from the air as they fly overseas—have all been conned. Meanwhile, behind closed doors, government officials do secret deals with donors to allow them to suck up as much water as they want.

National parks are another fraud. Everyone loves the idea of national parks, a lovely stretch of countryside that the Government protects so that the general public can enjoy themselves and wildlife can be preserved. The Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, promised to expand the scope of national parks by 200,000 hectares over the next two years. That sounds like a great idea, but there is one small problem with his plan: The Government does not bother to look after and manage the national parks it already owns. The current policy is to just lock them up and leave.

These national parks have become breeding grounds for weeds and feral pest animals, which are causing environmental havoc to the national parks and nearby farms. There is little or no plan in place to reduce the bushfire risk. We have experienced the devastating consequences of that over the past few weeks. There is no proper strategy to identify the most suitable land for preservation and the best land for production. As a result, we are wasting large tracks of fertile agricultural land and impoverished councils are missing out on rate payments. Why is the local community, who are best placed to manage the land they live on, not involved in these decisions? Indigenous people, who have the most knowledge and experience when it comes to land management, get the least say on how things are done. Most of us out west are totally shut out of the real decision-making processes while the Coalition Governments at both the State and Federal level trash our natural assets.

The Government may be shocked to learn that farmers support sustainable natural resource management. We want our land and water to be well managed. We want our environment protected. But natural resource management in this State is a total disgrace. The Government is using flowery rhetoric on the environment to

cover up its total lack of strategy and direction. It is time politicians stopped talking about the environment and started to work with the people who live in it.

### RIVERSTONE AND DISTRICTS WAR MEMORIAL

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (19:08:58):** On Saturday 9 November the Riverstone local community very proudly rededicated the war memorial on the land adjacent to Riverstone railway station almost precisely 100 years after it was unveiled. It is one of the four oldest World War I memorials in Australia which were constructed in time for the first Remembrance Day on 11 November 1919. The small town of Riverstone was, and still is, proud of that fact, but even prouder of the men of the district who volunteered to serve. On the occasion of the rededication ceremony, 32 students were asked to walk individually through the doors of the railway station and symbolically not return. They represented each of the 32 names on the war memorial of people who did that 100 years ago in the name of service to their country. They left via the railway station, many of them never to return.

On 8 November 1919 the proud members of the Riverstone and Districts Patriotic League unveiled a tribute to the fallen soldiers of Riverstone and surrounding areas. As I say, it was one of the first war memorials not only in New South Wales but throughout the country commemorating what was called then the Great War. Riverstone and Districts War Memorial represents the heart of Riverstone. When it was dedicated 100 years ago it had 22 names on it. Nine more names were added after World War II, including the brother of local identity Bill McNamara and then one more name after the Korean War. In remembrance of those people—many of whose family names are still prominent in the district—locals turned out in their hundreds on Saturday 9 November to commemorate their service and the history of Riverstone through that memorial.

The event was organised primarily by the Riverstone Chamber of Commerce in association with the sub-branch of the RSL and other community groups such as the Historical Society. The chamber launched a Cenotaph 100 Facebook page counting down 100 days to the rededication. A member of the chamber, Mike Shervington, interviewed relatives of local volunteers who were named on the memorial to allow the stories of those volunteers to be told through that Facebook page and through other means on the day. It was a wonderful initiative which allowed the community to prepare and be well-informed about those whom it was commemorating.

The memorial is a concrete obelisk surrounded by a low-walled garden and a metal gate with a plaque. The front side of the obelisk has two crossed hand-carved .303 rifles. The memorial is attended by six sandstone pillars and two flagpoles. Given that the obelisk is on railway land, I have been discussing a vision for this historic precinct at the heart of Riverstone with the RSL sub-branch, the Chamber of Commerce and other local stakeholders. I will be addressing the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Veterans, the Minister responsible for heritage and Blacktown City Council in the near future to work together as a community to find a way to properly recognise these servicemen and to incorporate the wonderful heart of old Riverstone as the district grows and develops. The area was part of the Hawkesbury at the time. The event was commemorated in the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* way back in 1919. The article began in wonderful flowery language such as:

On the afternoon of Saturday the 8th inst., although the sultry heat of the noon-day hour was far spent its oppressiveness still prevailed, nevertheless a large concourse of people assembled to witness the unveiling of the Riverstone and District War Memorial.

From the remarks of Mr. R. B. Walker, M.L.A., it was most apparent that he felt he had been deeply honored in the task allocated to him to unveil the memorial. Then again it was one of the saddest hours of his parliamentary career, for amongst his many hearers he would here and there discern a heart that mourned yet he was bravely endeavouring to stay a straying tear of grief. He made reference to the many brave men who left the Hawkesbury—of which Riverstone was prominent as one of its boundaries—to fight for the empire whilst it stood in peril. It was something indeed to be proud of to represent an electorate from which so many had gone voluntarily to battle for right against might.

I concur with the member of the time. It was one of my proudest moments to be present at the rededication of that memorial and to see the love the community had for what it stood for.

### WALLARAH 2 COAL PROJECT

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:14:06):** Tonight I express my frustration because people across the board are very disillusioned with the political class. In my electorate I always try to engage with my constituents and constituents from other areas. Even if I do not always agree with their ideas, I am respectful. I listen. I put my point of view. Sometimes we agree to disagree, other times I agree with them furiously. Sometimes neither of us will agree with the other's positions.

I get very disillusioned sometimes when I meet young people. I met a fantastic young woman called Suzy Monzer. She is a member of the Community Environment Network Youth. She sent me a copy of a letter she had written to Premier Gladys Berejiklian. I read the letter but did not answer it straightaway because I was interested to see whether she got a reply. Last week we rang her. She did get a reply. The Premier had respectfully referred

her to another Minister, who had then referred her to another Minister. In the end, she had received no reply. I made an undertaking to her that I would read the letter here tonight, and put her position. It is one of those occasions where I agree furiously with what she says. Her letter is about the Wallarah 2 coalmine. Members will not be surprised when I say that I have long opposed that mine. Suzy is a young, very intelligent, very community minded university student. Her letter reads:

Dear Premier Gladys Berejiklian,

CC: David Harris, Member for Wyong

I'm a university student living on Darkinjung land (Blue Haven), where Wallarah 2 is going to be near.

I could sit and list all of the scientific research and logical reasons why Wallarah 2 shouldn't go ahead but I'd like to show you what I see through my eyes, so let me paint you a picture. I've watched my parents work extremely hard to build our family home, to feed us, to clothe us, to help us grow. I've watched governments, particularly this coalition, target vulnerable people, like my parents, with empty promises of jobs and quick money.

As leaders of this country, you know perfectly well how the different communities that build this nation work, and rather than use this knowledge to better the life of all people, you've exploited the most vulnerable for the sake of profit. I get it, you make money, we are one of the largest exporters of coal but now there's another factor; our earth. You may be able to exploit us, the people, for profit. You may be able to campaign your ignorant messages to us and people may listen to you, but the Earth.. The Earth doesn't fall for smart marketing.

Walarah 2 will contaminate our water, our air and our land. It will deteriorate our health and our children's health. And yes, it will create more jobs, but not the way you think. The jobs created will be those for people trying to reverse the damage this will cause. I've watched my generation come together on the issue of climate change. We aren't scared or dumb or in want of days off school like many members of your party have suggested. We are disappointed that you don't trust in your education systems. We are disappointed that you don't believe us. We are disappointed that you're exploiting vulnerable people.

But mostly, we are disappointed that you know exactly what you're doing and won't stop.

Stop Wallarah 2 and start supporting initiatives that work towards renewable energy, for ALL of us.

Thank you and regards, Suzy Monzer

Tomorrow there will be a range of Central Coast people protesting at the front of Parliament House. The Greens are moving a bill in the other place. Labor cannot support that bill in its current form, and I explained the reasons and had quite a rational discussion about it. I explained to Suzy that my opposition to the mine has not changed. The difference is that the Government has now awarded a licence to a company to mine for 28 years, even though the licence acknowledges that there will be a massive impact on the water catchment.

Young people like Suzy look at things like this and scratch their heads. They cannot understand why, when there are decades worth of coalmines already operating, we would open another in an area that is right underneath the only water catchment for the Central Coast. That water catchment supplies 340,000 people. Suzy said to me, "I know we will disagree on some things about process, but we fundamentally agree about the same things." Politicians are here to protect the citizens. They are here to protect the water and other things that we need to survive. On this count the current Government has absolutely failed.

## MEN'S HEALTH

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:19:20):** It is fitting that on this twentieth day of November and the day after International Men's Day we talk about men's health, which is not discussed nearly enough. Health, irrespective of gender, is crucial to our life and how we live it, from beginning to end. Women's health access is plentiful when compared with that of men, which is particularly noticeable in rural and regional areas. In my recent discussions with a regional-based professional healthcare consultant nearing the end of a long career in health, they told me that they despair at not having seen any noticeable improvement in men's health support and access, while women's support and access is comparatively plenty. Google women's health on the Western NSW Local Health District [LHD] website and you will get a choice of clinics at various sites across the LHD—40 towns in the Western NSW LHD where you can get an appointment with a women's health nurse, which is great if you are a woman. Google men's health at the same LHD and, disappointingly, there are no dedicated men's health nurses and zero clinics—just links to websites. The website of NSW Health states:

Local Health Districts across New South Wales provide a range of Well Women's Health Programs delivered by Women's Health Coordinators and Registered Nurses specialized in Women's Health."

Fantastic, but what about the blokes? Too much emphasis has been placed on the provision of health information through online mediums instead of face-to-face care. The worry is for the next generation—our sons—who grow up with risks of dying earlier and greater morbidity factors, yet nothing is done to reduce the gender gap in life expectancy. Men living outside major cities are 22 per cent less likely to possess an adequate level of health literacy, so providing links to websites is far from helpful. Men living outside major cities are 18 per cent more likely to report a recent injury. Male death rates due to injury or poisoning in remote areas are 3.1 times higher

than in major cities. Cardiovascular diseases are responsible for nearly one-third of elevated male death rates outside major cities. The facts speak for themselves.

The incidence of type 1 diabetes is 50 per cent higher for males over the age of 18 years than for females and is reflected in data for all age groups, population subgroups and regions, and socio-economic groups. The incidence of type 2 diabetes is 25 per cent higher for males than for females. The incidence of coronary heart disease is 100 per cent higher for males aged 25 years and over than for females and is reflected in data for all age groups, population subgroups and regions, and socio-economic groups. Acute coronary events are 100 per cent higher for males than for females across all age groups. The incidence of stroke is 100 per cent higher for males than for females, and this is reflected in age groups 55 years and over, population subgroups and regions, and the highest and lowest two socio-economic groups. While the incidence of chronic kidney disease is similar between males and females, end-stage kidney disease is greater than 150 per cent higher in males than in females and increases to greater than 250 per cent higher in males aged over 85 years than in females. That is reflected in data for all age groups, socio-economic groups and population regions, apart from remote and very remote areas.

Unintentional transport injury deaths, including motor vehicle accidents, is 200 per cent higher for males than for females based on 2011-2012 statistics. Those members here who attended this morning's Royal Life Saving NSW launch of its Stay Safe Summer campaign might now know that unintentional drownings for men is 300 per cent higher than for women. The incidence of unintentional poisoning by pharmaceuticals is 100 per cent higher for males than for females in all age groups except zero to four years and over 65 years. Unintentional poisoning by other substances is 150 per cent higher for men than for women. Unintentional injury deaths are 50 per cent higher for males than for females in all age groups apart from five to 14 years.

The incidence of suicide is nearly 220 per cent higher for males than for females, which is reflected in data for all age groups apart from five to 14 years. The incidence of deaths occurring from complications of surgical and medical care is nearly 130 per cent higher for males than for females, which is reflected in data for all age groups greater than 40 years. One in five men suffer prostate cancer, and more men die from prostate cancer than women die from breast cancer. These statistics are very sobering indeed. I hope this speech spawns much discussion regarding men's health, but, more importantly, action to address men's health. We need dedicated healthcare professionals, accessible and on the ground, especially in the regions, which is where I am from. We can do more for men's health—lots more. It is my hope that when I revisit these statistics towards the end of this parliamentary term this Government has responded to appropriately address men's health, and that the result is the narrowing of the gender health gap.

#### PENRITH ELECTORATE

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney) (19:24:22):** It is fantastic to speak at this time of year, at the end of 2019. It is fair to say it has been a fairly substantial year in both Penrith and with what has taken place here in the Parliament. If we go back to the start of the year, it was a fantastic opportunity for the people of Penrith to re-endorse both this Government and me as their local representative. This represents the fourth time this community has endorsed me with their confidence to continue to deliver for them. It is now almost 10 years since the Penrith by-election really did start the change across New South Wales. I look right across Sydney and across the State, and I see so much of the fantastic work that we have been able to achieve.

I look at the Penrith community and I see so many of the action items that we committed to over the past term now materialising before the eyes of the community. The upgrades to Northern Road and Mulgoa Road are there for every single person across our community to see. We know that western Sydney and particularly Penrith is a growing community. Having the infrastructure to support that growth is something that past governments were not able to deliver, but it is something that every single representative of the Penrith community can see this Government is doing.

There is probably no greater commitment that is materialising before their eyes than the full redevelopment of Nepean Hospital. Something that was constantly neglected by the previous Government and constantly underfunded is now being rebuilt pretty much from scratch. The concrete slab for the new 14-storey clinical services tower is under construction. The local health district continues to see in excess of 50 per cent, almost 60 per cent more annualised funding than what it received under the previous Government. These are the commitments that I made to the community. These are the commitments that I continue to deliver.

I also see the benefits of some of the decisions that we have made over the past few years, such as the commitment to the Nepean River pedestrian bridge. Something constantly opposed by those in Labor throughout the course of the election and called a vanity project has now simply opened up the Nepean River to the public. It has given Penrith back its river. It has allowed people to really embrace this wonderful precinct. Only in the last week we have seen the investment by the private sector into the historic Emu Hall, now opened up as a new cafe

bringing more and more people to the river. I know that this simply would not have been able to happen unless our Government was prepared to stay the course on projects that we know are better for our community.

That leads me to the work that the Government is doing around the aerotropolis and leveraging the full benefits of the Western Sydney Airport. This is a game changer for western Sydney. It is the capacity to bring jobs closer to home; it is the capacity to ensure that people have jobs for the future, so that western Sydney can continue to grow and prosper well after I and many representatives have left this place. One of the things we have embedded into western Sydney is the concept of the parkland city. We want to make sure that as western Sydney grows that parkland city provides people with the local amenity, the green spaces, the creek lines and the rivers to be a wonderful and beautiful place for people to live, work and raise a family, as well as being able to get a job close to home.

I simply would not be able to do this on my own. I have been supported by a fantastic team over the course of the past 12 months. In my ministerial role we have effectively had a new team put together and it is a fantastic group of people: Amanda Choularton; Emma Dunn; Michael Haynes, who has been with me from the very beginning; Rachel Metcalfe; Rebecca Meyer; Sophie Hull; Dana Young; and Lily Shang. They have been outstanding over the past 12 months in implementing all of the work across the Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney portfolios. Their work will leave a lasting legacy for the people of western Sydney that I am not sure they fully comprehend or understand.

You cannot do this without the support of people in your electorate office as well. I thank Rhonda Hanbury, Elizabeth Drysdale, Sue Connolly and Rebekah Cromie. They have been able to hold down the fort. When people told me time and time again that we would not be able to win Penrith, these were the people who made sure we held the line. Those people and many of the supporters across the Liberal Party know that what my small team and I do every single day is about serving the people of Penrith with every single inch of my body to make sure they get the things that they deserve and the opportunities that they have worked hard to achieve for themselves, their families and their future.

I am also in a relatively unique position to share my household with another politician. We see each other quite a lot throughout the course of the year—mostly on the television screen. I say to Marise Payne that she continues to inspire me. Thank you very much. It has been a huge year and I am looking forward to 2020.

#### HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (19:29:33):** I raise concerns about one of the State's most important independent institutions that serves all our electorates. It is an institution that each of the community members we represent needs to be operating at its full potential—the Health Care Complaints Commission [HCCC]. The HCCC is a critical watchdog. It ensures that there is a high level of safety for patients across the New South Wales health system. It is an independent government body tasked with assessing, investigating and prosecuting medical complaints throughout New South Wales. It deals with minor breaches and with the worst of the worst. However, in recent times there has been a number of concerning reports about the culture and operation of the HCCC.

In April this year a whistleblower spoke to the ABC about a "dysfunctional workplace culture" that was impacting on their capacity to appropriately assess hundreds of patient complaints. That is a concern for every one of our electors and it is a concern for every member who accesses the New South Wales health system. The whistleblower reported that there had been an exodus of staff from the HCCC. This came off the back of a 2017 consultants report in which some staff referred to "high levels of bullying". The report also described worrying results around the performance and behaviour of senior managers leading the organisation. Earlier this year we heard about the employment of a senior HCCC investigator in December 2017. Six months after the appointment a background check was conducted that revealed him to be a convicted sex offender. Just over one week ago *The Australian* reported on significant concerns about eight potentially preventable deaths that had been reported to the HCCC by a range of surgeons. It stated:

The Health Care Complaints Commission responded to a notification by three surgeons who had claimed a fellow surgeon was "not fit to operate" and had alleged a "failure of processes" at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital by undertaking the assessment rather than a formal investigation. Despite the seriousness of the allegations, the commission did not deem that the complaint raised a significant issue of public health or safety or that there were significant questions as to the appropriate care or treatment of patients. Had it done so, the complaint would have warranted a formal investigation.

The time has now come for the Government to appoint an independent expert panel to examine the culture, management practices and performance of the HCCC. It is critical that the communities we represent have confidence in the watchdog. This is the watchdog that makes sure safety is at the heart of everything that occurs in NSW Health. This is the watchdog that makes sure doctors are accountable for their actions. This is the watchdog that recommends improvements in practices around the performance of doctors.

In light of very serious allegations, it is time for the Government to establish an independent panel to examine the performance, culture and management practices of the HCCC. It is what our communities expect, it is what the men and women in the electorate of Kiera expect and it is what all of us in this place expect. When things go wrong in the New South Wales health system—and they do go wrong at times, regardless of who is in power—the Opposition wants to ensure there is a tough cop on the beat to hold to account doctors who do not practise appropriately and to improve management practices where possible, with one thing in mind: to improve safety for every single person who accesses the New South Wales health system.

### **BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE SCHOOLS**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:34:41):** I proudly speak about some of the achievements of schools in my electorate of Blacktown. The Blacktown electorate is a wonderful electorate, containing people from various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. We have much to be proud of, but there are also plenty of challenges. Education is important in providing opportunities for our youth to achieve their best. Our schools, like so many across western Sydney, pose challenges for our teaching profession. To solicit the best from our students, one needs to understand the backgrounds of many students. Many have come from war-torn countries and spent time in refugee camps before coming to Australia and finally settling in our area. The additional challenges of dealing with the mental anguish that comes with such a difficult life journey, as well as the challenge of learning the English language, require extra support and pastoral care from our teachers.

I have been amazed by some of the performances and plays conducted by Mitchell High School and Evans High School when celebrating multicultural week. To see young students stand in front of a large assembly and discuss their painful journey and their enthusiasm for the future is inspirational and a lesson in how the human spirit can overcome adversity. Our Indigenous students, whether at high schools or primary schools, are proud to share their culture as part of welcome to country. NAIDOC celebrations are held at all schools across the electorate, when students learn about local Aboriginal culture, participate in dance and produce artwork. The work of Jie Pittman at many of our schools provides an opportunity for students not only to learn culture but also to actually live culture.

Unfortunately, some of our students are affected by domestic violence or come from a low socio-economic background and therefore may miss breakfast. I thank Foodbank—in particular, my predecessor John Robertson, who now works there—for coordinating with local charity groups and religious organisations to provide food at many primary schools. Blacktown City Lions Club also raises money to sponsor breakfast programs. As members know, breakfast is an important meal of the day if a student is to maintain concentration to study and participate fully in educational opportunities. More support is required from the Government to ensure that our children have a good start.

I also highlight the fabulous achievements of some of our high schools. Ms Elena Marinas at Mitchell High School and her staff do an absolutely wonderful job, going way beyond the call of duty. In September Blacktown City celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its relationship with sister city Suseong-gu in Korea. The principal, teachers and 12 students from Mitchell High School performed on two nights of the Lake Festival. This is a significant festival, with over 10,000 people attending an outdoor performance by the lake each evening. Mayor Kim was impressed with their performances and there was resounding applause from the crowd. I was proud to witness the youth of Blacktown performing on the world stage. One might have thought we had moved from K-pop to B-pop!

Thirty students and staff from Blacktown Girls High School won regional robotics competitions and qualified for an international event at Houston, Texas, to compete against 62 other countries. They designed, built and programmed a robot to complete various tasks and challenges. In 2017 Doonside Technology High School students designed experiments for a commercial SpaceX rocket owned by Elon Musk and launched by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration at Cape Canaveral. I thank all our principals, teachers, parents and students for the wonderful work they have done. However, the Government must recognise that it should distribute money according to actual need, not political need.

Our schools are aging, with minimal air conditioning, a limited number of SMART boards, overcrowded classrooms in demountable buildings and a mounting infrastructure backlog. The Government stands condemned for not allocating any money in this year's State budget to any school in the Blacktown electorate. Schools are forced to resort to bidding for funding through the Community Building Partnership program or the local P&Cs raise money to buy chairs and other important requirements. Despite the obstacles placed before our principals, teachers, parents and students, the people of Blacktown are resilient and are striving to give our students the best start in life. I thank our schools for their efforts and look forward to a wonderful round of school presentations and a fantastic 2020.

*Bills***CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN BILL 2019****Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a future day.

*Community Recognition Statements***WILLIAM ABEL**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:41:22):** I recognise year 6 St Peter's Primary School student William Abel who recently received the Fred Hollows Humanity Award for his creation of the Lids for Kids program. Identifying a need to support child amputees in underdeveloped countries, 12-year-old William orchestrated a campaign with fellow students at St Peter's Primary School to collect plastic lids and caps to make prosthetic arms. A humanitarian focused on making a profound difference to children in need, William presented his project idea to Principal Geoff Leary last term and from there the Lids for Kids initiative began.

Five hundred lids are needed to create a prosthetic arm for a child and with 5,700 lids collected this equates to changing the lives of possibly 11 children who are in need of a new limb or hand. Nominated by his school teacher Alice McGrath, William received the Fred Hollows Humanity Award at the University of Technology, Sydney, for demonstrating humanitarian values towards others. The Fred Hollows Foundation celebrates year 6 students who show compassion, integrity and kindness in their everyday lives. I commend William for his outstanding project that will change the lives of children across the globe.

**WOLLONGONG HOMELESS HUB**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (19:41:50):** Recently I attended the Wollongong Homeless Hub together with members of the Australian Labor Party, branch members, elected members including Sharon Bird and Stephen Jones, the member for Wollongong, the member for Shellharbour, Labor councillors and rank-and-file branch members. I cooked a meal for the people who use the services of the Wollongong Homeless Hub. This was an a very important experience and one that Alison Byrnes, who works for Sharon Bird, has been organising for a significant of time. Sharon's office did a fantastic job in organising this event. I thank all of those people involved, including my colleagues and Labor Party branch members but also the people who use the services of the Wollongong Homeless Hub. It is a great organisation doing great things in the greater City of Wollongong.

**ST GEORGE HOSPITAL**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:42:50):** Recently I had the opportunity to inspect progress on the construction of the new birthing suite at St George Hospital—how exciting! The new facilities funded by the State Government will include fit-for-purpose birthing rooms and refurbished operating theatres. I had the pleasure of touring the hospital and viewing the progress of the work with members of St George Hospital staff, as well as those directly involved in the construction. These refurbishments will open up more space in the hospital and assist staff in facilitating the excellent work and care they provide to patients. These works come as a much-needed facelift to the hospital's current birthing suite, which was built in 1972 and last upgraded in 1991, and will provide state-of-the-art technology to the residents of the St George area. I am excited to see the completed facilities and I welcome the State Government's continued commitment to improving health care in New South Wales, particularly in St George Hospital.

**NURRAGINGY MINIATURE RAILWAY**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:43:48):** All aboard the miniature railway line in Nurragingy Reserve brought to us by the North Western Model Engineers and Blacktown City Council. On 17 November 2019 it was officially opened by Mayor Tony Bleasdale and the public was offered the first ride. It was well received by kids of all ages from toddlers through to grandparents lining up to be part of the inaugural ride. I thank the North Western Model Engineers President, Michael Ford, and the track designer, Roger Jones, and all the volunteers who helped design and build the first stage of this project. North Western Model Engineers is a not-for-profit organisation that will be working with council to provide valuable linkages to school students, retirees and men's sheds for them to play a role in the railway. I also thank Atul Kumar from Signature Projects, a local developer who loves supporting community initiatives and who provided all the services required in gaining the council approvals. All aboard for a successful community fun activity!

### CLEVER CARE NOW

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:44:46):** I commend Clever Care NOW on 60 fantastic years of delivering a professional and caring service throughout the Sutherland Shire. With humble beginnings in 1959 as Nurses on Wheels, Clever Care NOW has grown into a fantastic organisation that services communities in both the Sutherland Shire and the St George area. Clever Care NOW serves the growing needs of people and businesses throughout our community by providing mobile nursing care, pre- and postoperative care, day trips, patient transport, health checks, flu vaccinations and children's literacy programs. The wonderful team of mobile, qualified and dedicated nursing staff is available seven days a week, 365 days a year, with clients and patients able to self-refer and have care arranged in the home within 24 hours. I was incredibly pleased to attend Clever Care NOW's 60-year celebration event earlier this month. I particularly acknowledge the organisation's chair, Garry Sheffield, and chief executive officer, Jill Deering. I congratulate all staff and volunteers at Clever Care NOW providing care, compassion and a listening ear to our community.

### KOORI KNOCKOUT COMPETITION

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (19:45:46):** The Koori Knockout was held over the October long weekend, hosted by Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council and its chairman, Matthew West. The Koori Knockout of men and women was the first sporting event to use the new regional sports complex at Tuggerah, with more than 40,000 players and fans attending the Central Coast to see 164 teams compete. The opening of the event was a traditional ceremony, including a smoking ceremony and dancing, with the Indigenous flag brought in by parachute. I visited the grounds to watch the spectacular talent from the sporting teams and saw growth in the event compared to last year. In a cheerful environment the event brought family and friends together who had not seen each other in a long time. Indigenous NRL players Greg Inglis, Andrew Fifita and Josh Addo-Carr play every year with the people from their home towns, inspiring young people of the communities, giving great talks and making sure that they eat their vegetables. This year was the first ever under 16s competition due to the growth seen in the women's game. I congratulate the South Coast Black Cockatoos and Wellington Wedgetails on winning the 2019 Koori Knockout.

### NEUTRAL BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:46:50):** This Halloween, Neutral Bay Public School was transformed into a mystical place where witches, vampires, grisly ghouls and monsters of all sorts could be seen. It was a truly spectacular carnival, complete with carnival rides, petting zoo, flash mob, disco, food stalls and variety stalls with a spooky twist. I was so impressed by the students and parents and the effort they went to in dressing up in their scariest costumes and joining in the enjoyable atmosphere that pervaded the school. My own daughter enjoyed dressing up as a little pumpkin and coming along for the event. The night was a great success and I congratulate Mrs Vanessa Baurner-Rowley, Mrs Jane Stephens, P&C president Sharmilla Soorian, Jenni Spillane and the entire P&C executive for their tireless efforts and hard work on the night. Congratulations to everyone involved and to all the teachers, students and parents for their enthusiastic participation, which saw them raise \$55,000 for the school. This carnival is a wonderful way to raise money for the benefit of all students. I look forward to joining them all for another night of spooky fun.

### MARK GEERLIGS

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:47:50):** It is with pleasure that I acknowledge local school principal Mr Mark Geerligs' retirement after 33 years' service. Beginning his extraordinary teaching career in 1981, Mr Geerligs became a principal in only his seventh year as a teacher, in 1987. Mr Geerligs has enjoyed a long career as school principal in many of the Blue Mountains parish schools. In 1991 Mark was appointed principal of Our Lady of the Nativity Primary in Lawson. In 1996 he was appointed principal of St Finbar's Primary, Glenbrook, and in 2003 he was appointed principal of Our Lady of the Rosary, St Mary's.

Currently Mr Geerligs is Principal of St Canice's Primary in Katoomba, where he has provided leadership since 2014. He is an energetic, warm, open and innovative educator. He encourages critical thinking and educative projects and challenges in his team of staff and students, who value his approach to teaching and learning. He will be deeply missed by his staff, students and the wider school community. I take this opportunity to thank this good man, such an incredibly inspiring leader, for his contribution to education in the Blue Mountains. I wish him a happy and relaxing retirement.

### ALEXI HUNTER

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:48:53):** Alexi Hunter, a Cub Scout from Grenfell, is a truly inspirational young lady. Alexi was recently a finalist in the Scout of the Year Award, which is an amazing achievement. At 11 years of age Alexi has had a tremendous impact on the lives of people around her, living the Scout promise of caring and contributing to the community. Alexi independently researched how she could help

kids with illnesses such as cancer. She decided to donate her hair as a wig to boost the confidence of kids in need. She had 55 cm of her hair cut off, which she donated to Sustainable Salons, an organisation that make wigs for people living with blood cancer. While she had set an initial target of \$500, Alexi raised a whopping \$1,500. Alexi is a true role model for the community. I congratulate her on her achievements.

#### **WENTWORTHVILLE ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:49:51):** I recently attended two events at the Wentworthville Anglican church. The first was its 100-year anniversary. St Pauls Anglican Church at Wentworthville has been a wonderful institution for the past 100 years—from the period when Wentworthville was an agricultural area filled with orchards through to the current day. Wentworthville is an incredibly vibrant, multicultural suburb. The Wentworthville Anglican church has been a pillar of the community for that entire period. On Sunday 3 November I joined church members at their service to celebrate those 100 years.

Last Thursday night I joined with them again to welcome their new minister, David Misztal, and attend his commissioning. The Bishop of Parramatta, Ivan Lee, also attended. It was wonderful to join the church community to welcome its new minister who grew up in the area. He worked at the Bonds factory in Pendle Hill for a number of years when he was a university student. He has moved into the area and is taking on the role of minister of Wentworthville Anglican church with great gusto. It was wonderful to welcome him.

#### **DOOLAN PLUMBING**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:51:17):** I congratulate Doolan Plumbing director, Mr Jason Doolan, on his company winning the Business of the Year award at the Hawkesbury Local Business Awards. I congratulate his staff on their great work and his wife, Ursula, on her support. Our Hawkesbury community is grateful for the wonderful service Doolan Plumbing provides to the community and for the values of integrity and hard work it conveys when representing our area through its work in different locations. Starting and running a company takes a lot of hard work and risk. The community is thankful to Mr Doolan for doing a great job. His company has created a wonderful atmosphere in Hawkesbury where he is very well regarded. I congratulate Mr Doolan and all those involved in his company. I wish them continued success.

#### **INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE ITALIAN CUISINE**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:52:12):** On Tuesday 19 November the Parliamentary Friends of Italy hosted a very special luncheon in celebration of International week of the Italian cuisine, which was held in the Speakers Garden. What better way to celebrate Italian cuisine week than by indulging in delicious food prepared by the incredibly talented representatives from the Federation of Italian Chefs in the Australia [FIC]? On behalf of the chair; the co-chair, the Hon. Lou Amato, MLC; and I, the members of the Parliamentary Friends of Italy extends its sincerest appreciation to the Consul-General of Italy in Sydney, Mr Andrea De Felip; the CEO of the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Australia, Ms Rachele Grassi, and its chairman, Mr Fabio Grassia; and Italian community leaders for their attendance and making the celebration extra special. I congratulate the remarkable FIC chefs for making the event possible. In particular, I congratulate President Mr Antonio Sabia for his efforts in coordinating the chefs and designing the delicious menu.

#### **HOME INTERACTION PROGRAM FOR PARENTS AND YOUNGSTERS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:53:18):** The phrase "HIPPY program" might create a mental picture of what such an initiative might be about. Members may not think it is about supporting families but that is exactly what the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters [HIPPY] is all about. The Commonwealth-funded, internationally-recognised initiative provides education to both parents and children across the world, building confidence and an interest in learning while also improving communication between parents and their children. In my electorate, HIPPY is run by Anglicare through the Ashmont Community Resource Centre and works to prepare adult and child for the youngster's transition into big school. I congratulate the young graduates of the Wagga Wagga program who last week donned a cap and gown to farewell their preschool days. It was pretty cute. I congratulate the program leader, Vicki Taylor; Anglicare manager, Rhys Bailey-Brown; and HIPPY teachers Lucinda Bortolazzo and Melissa Painting—two mothers who completed the program and now share their triumphs with others.

#### **SUNSET FRAMING AND GALLERY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (19:54:33):** I recognise the wonderful volunteers from Sunset Framing and Gallery in Port Macquarie for using their business as a collection and distribution point for donations of non-perishable items to support our local firefighters battling the bushfires on the mid North Coast. Compassionately opening their doors to help our brave Rural Fire Service personnel, Sunset Framing and Gallery has already commenced accepting donations of grocery bags and boxes full of goods to help our evacuees and

firefighters during the bushfire season. Heeding a call by the public to coordinate a location for charitable donations in Port Macquarie, Cherie Morton of Sunset Framing and Gallery knew this was a meaningful way the establishment could help those displaced because of the fires. Assisting Cherie to organise items for distribution were volunteers Julie Hickling, Rochelle Fineanganof, Vanessa Gray, Amanda Cassegrain, Donna Hamlin, Scott Rayner and Carissa Dwyer. They have worked tirelessly throughout the month to ensure each donation collected was appropriately packaged and distributed where needed. I thank Sunset Framing and Gallery, the volunteers and the community for supporting this tremendous initiative to help our region during the bushfire crisis.

#### **REDHEAD SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (19:55:40):** The Surf Life Saving NSW Interbranch Championships showcase the best athletes from the eleven branches across our State. I am pleased to recognise and congratulate under 13 representatives Tully Elliott and Brodie Wright and open competitors Nicola Owen, Justin McMorland and Hayden Copping. They are all members of Redhead Surf Life Saving Club in this year's Hunter Surf Life Saving Interbranch Team. Redhead Surf Life Saving Club has a proud history of producing athletes who compete at elite levels and the five members selected this year are no exception. This year's NSW Interbranch Championships will be held on 7 and 8 December at Bulli Surf Life Saving Club in my colleague Ryan Park's electorate of Keira. I am looking forward to some friendly rivalry between our two branches. I wish all those involved a safe competition and send my best wishes to the Redhead competitors.

#### **ORGANISATION OF HELLENE & HELLENE-CYPRIT WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (19:56:36):** I congratulate the Organisation of Hellene & Hellene-Cypriot Women of Australia [OEEGA] on its annual fundraiser at the Grand Roxy Function Centre in aid of the Children's Cancer Institute. I acknowledge President Irene Anestis and the first president of OEEGA, Sophia Catharios. I acknowledge Consul-General Christos Karras, Katia Gikiza, the Commercial Consul, High Commissioner Martha Mavrommati, Steve and Magda Kampa, Mark Coure, Bayside Mayor Awada and Mayoress Nariman, Bill Saravinovski, Andrew Tsunas, Senator Hollie Hughes, Arthur and Elizabeth Sinodinos and Professor Kavallaris. We all came together to ensure that we raised a lot of money, as we do every year, to eliminate childhood cancer. I acknowledge the researchers and scientists for their amazing work. The Children's Cancer Institute is the only independent medical research organisation in Australia wholly dedicated to putting an end to childhood cancer.

#### **ST GEORGE CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:57:42):** I commend St George Cricket Club for the example it is setting for young cricketers. St George Cricket Club has a proud and successful history and boasts current and former Test cricketers, including Josh Hazlewood, Kurtis Patterson, Bill O'Reilly and, of course, the great Sir Donald Bradman. Earlier this year I was delighted to attend the opening of the Norm O'Neill Cricket Training Facility, which is a world-class centre helping to develop the next generation of St George cricketers. However, the most pleasing of all is the spirit in which St George Cricket Club plays the game. I was delighted to hear that the club was awarded a rare maximum 10 points in the Spirit of Cricket category in its first grade match against Manly. The umpires commented that the players on both teams applauded milestones and supported a strong spirit of cricket. On behalf of our local community, I applaud St George Cricket Club for the example it is setting.

#### **CORE COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (19:58:37):** I congratulate CORE Community Services on hosting its inaugural International Men's Day celebration on Friday 15 November 2019 at the Fairfield Community Resource Centre. The celebrations were very well attended. CORE Community Services did a great job engaging with a range of local men while promoting the importance of men's health and the role men play in the community. Local doctors gave presentations on the importance of good physical and mental health, as well as a wonderful presentation from respected former Iraqi international football player and coach Saadi. I make special mention of the local Fairfield Arabic band for entertaining the crowd. Well done to the CORE Community Services organising committee, volunteers and participants on the day who made the celebration such a tremendous success.

#### **SENIORS' STORIES VOLUME 5**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:59:25):** I acknowledge Lyndel Short of Bonnet Bay, Leone McManus of Como and Caitlin Larbalestier of Gymea, whose treasured stories have been included in this year's edition of *Seniors' Stories* Volume 5. Seniors in our community have had so many amazing experiences and it is fantastic that we are able to hear from them through the *Seniors' Stories* book. This year the annual compilation of essays and short stories written by seniors from across the State received nearly 600 entries, with 100 chosen for publication. The theme of this edition, Love Your Life, was reflected by each of the three stories in their own

unique and inspiring way. Lyndel's story, "Life on a High Note", follows a journey of music and its profound impact on one's life. In "Live for the Day", Leone wisely explores how loss and tragedy are all part of the tapestry of life, whilst Caitlin's "Life Embrace It—Don't Waste It" imparts on the reader the importance of embracing and loving life. I congratulate Lyndel, Leone and Caitlin on having their stories published and commend them for sharing their wisdom and experiences with the younger members of our community.

#### **CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (20:00:28):** I am grateful for the opportunity to recognise three important community organisations in my electorate of Charlestown. Charlestown Caring Group, Charlestown Meals on Wheels and Dudley Pensioner's Association provide wonderful assistance to elderly and vulnerable members of my local community. Charlestown Caring Group provides support for the elderly, including people with a disability, and their carers by offering transport, home visits, shopping and group activities. Charlestown Meals on Wheels reached a major milestone this year, celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. More than 500 meals are delivered each week, compared to 50 years ago when 11 meals were delivered each week. Dudley Pensioner's Association offers an important opportunity for elderly residents to meet together by arranging outings, craft days and low-impact exercise. I thank the staff and volunteers from these organisations on behalf of my local community and I send my best wishes to all those who benefit from these services.

#### **MOSMAN CRICKET CLUB**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:01:26):** I acknowledge the terrific efforts of Mosman Cricket Club in the battle of The Spit. Mosman Cricket Club defied the odds to steal a sensational upset win against a highly fancied Manly side. I know that my colleague the member for Manly will join me in congratulating the Mosman Cricket Club on this occasion. The match, which was a two-day contest, had been spoken about as a classic David versus Goliath match, with Manly not only boasting the home pitch advantage but also having five New South Wales contracted players in their ranks. On day one Manly won the toss and sent Mosman in to bat, with Mosman facing a barrage of short-pitched bowling. However, this did not faze the Mosman Cricket Club and they were soon dispatching the Manly attack to all parts of the ground. On day two Mosman came out firing and as the wickets fell it soon became clear that Mosman would take the win. I congratulate captain Ash Doolan, the rest of the Mosman team—Matt Calder, Nathan Hinton, Harry Dalton, Lachie Hearne, Anthony Adlam, Danul Dassanayake, Luke Shelton, Dean Crawford, Hayden Brown and Jayden Park—and the leadership of the Mosman Cricket Club on their win.

#### **SANDRA AND JOE MARCHETTA**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:02:28):** I congratulate Sandra and Joe Marchetta on celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of their wonderful cafe, Pasticceria Via Reggio, located in Westfield Place, Blacktown. Joe has been a pastry chief for almost 50 years, starting in Fairfield. He married Sandra and they had four wonderful children: Jason, Ryan, Ivana and Karina. They have all worked in the business at various times. The children have all married and Sandra and Joe have six grandchildren and, as a baker would say, the seventh is in the oven. This small family business has lasted 30 years in the same area, which demonstrates the high quality of its food. It is an institution in Blacktown. Over the years it has hosted many meetings of mayors, members of Parliament and business and community leaders. The numbers are astounding. Over 30 years Pasticceria Via Reggio has made over 995,000 coffees or hot chocolates and almost 95,000 birthday cakes. Now it is our turn to say happy thirtieth birthday and thank Joe, Sandra and the family for their wonderful contribution to Blacktown.

#### **ST MARY OF THE CROSS CENTRE**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:03:40):** On Friday 15 November I was delighted to attend the blessing and official opening of the St Mary of the Cross Centre at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School in Wyoming. My sincerest appreciation is directed to assistant principal Maria Kennedy for being the master of ceremonies and principal Frank Cohen for providing wonderful leadership to the school community. I was honoured to meet Reverend Anthony Randazzo, Bishop of Broken Bay, who blessed the new building, and Dr Tony Bracken, Acting Director of Schools. I would like to acknowledge school captains Sienna and Lachlan who made their school proud with their fantastic speeches. The facility offers students a beautiful setting to learn and adds to the beauty of the school grounds. The opening was a wonderful success and the beautiful centre will serve as an excellent ultra-modern classroom block. I know the teachers and students will make great use of the new facility. I was honoured to make a contribution through the Community Building Partnerships and I wish the school all the very best.

#### **COWRA BALLET SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:04:45):** I congratulate the Cowra Ballet School on celebrating its fiftieth anniversary recently. Cowra Ballet School was established in the 1960s and since then has

provided dance instruction to three generations of students. The school offers a range of dance styles and performs at many community events in Cowra, for example, the prisoner of war anniversaries for the past 35 years. Cowra Ballet School plays such an important role in the community, fostering local talent and building the confidence of our young people. The annual production is always one of the most anticipated events of the year and features storylines from children's movies, books and fairy tales. Congratulations to all of the teachers, students and parents who have supported the school over the past 50 years.

#### **WYONG WRITERS FESTIVAL**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (20:05:30):** On Saturday 16 November I was pleased to attend the first ever Wyong Writers Festival. The day consisted of a number of speakers, great stalls and a Cosplay dress-up competition. There was great entertainment throughout the day. Speakers included Rosemary Shapiro-Liu, who was the emcee, Georgia Thomas, Jo Hilder, Dr Meg Vertigan, Gill McLaren, Joshua Maxwell, Will Small, Michael Hanrahan and Susan Francis. Well done to Georgia Thomas from the Wyong Regional Chamber of Commerce for organising this very successful day, which I am sure will grow even bigger as we move forward. I thank the sponsors of the event, Chapman Building, ModComs, Legal HQ Australia Post Wyong and Gallery Precinct Wyong. Without sponsors these great events would not be held in our communities. I was pleased to dress up and judge the Cosplay competition.

#### **LUSC FRIENDSHIP QUILTERS**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (20:06:45):** Tonight I recognise the talented ladies from the LUSC Friendship Quilters, who have raised over \$2,500 for community groups across the Camden Haven. Gathering each Wednesday at the Laurieton United Services Club, this amazing group of retired women celebrated their seventeenth birthday on 9 October with a donation of \$2,500 to a number of community organisations, including Marine Rescue Camden Haven, Camden Haven Rural Fire Service, Hastings Home Hospice, Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club, Port Macquarie Women's Refuge and Careflight.

The LUSC Friendship Quilters Coordinator Diana Quinn said it was a pleasure to support these tremendous organisations in the Camden Haven, which selflessly give back so much to the community. In addition, the quilters donate over 100 colourful pillows a year to the Cancer Unit in Port Macquarie. These pillows bring much comfort to women who have undergone surgery for a mastectomy. I should highlight that since its formation our marvellous quilters have raised over \$25,000 to support local organisations in the area. I thank the 45 active members, including founding members Yvon Buxton, Jean Hodge and Sally Hart, for their ongoing fundraising efforts which have supported so many worthwhile community organisations.

#### **ARAB COUNCIL AUSTRALIA**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (20:07:50):** I congratulate the Arab Council Australia on its fortieth anniversary and I especially acknowledge its wonderful CEO, Ms Randa Kattan. I joined the Arab Council Australia on 9 November to celebrate this important milestone. It was a wonderful evening attended by about 400 guests, who joined together to acknowledge the great work of the Arab Council. The council represents Arab migrants from 22 different Arab-speaking countries. The council also represents people from a wide range of faiths across the Arab-speaking communities throughout New South Wales and Australia. The Arab Council has run a number of relevant and very important campaigns and community work within the Arab community. It lobbies on behalf the community and has done great work in defending against the proposed changes to section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. On the evening I was joined by Jihad Dib, Tanya Mihailuk and Shaoquett Moselmane as well as David Colman, Geoff Lee and Philip Ruddock.

#### **KIDS AT PLAY PROJECT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:08:51):** This is my 700th speech in the Chamber. I inform the House of the recent opening of the Kids at Play project, now in action at St George Hospital. Children receiving care at the hospital can now enjoy a new outdoor play space with the launch of the Kids at Play project. Recently I had the privilege of officially opening the new Fishtail outdoor play area with hospital staff and members of the Rotary Club of Hurstville. Established by the Rotary Club of Hurstville, the Kids at Play project aims to create improved recreational and clinical spaces in the children's ward of St George Hospital. The project has been Rotary's main charity initiative for many years and it has been supported by sales from the Rotary Club book shop at Mulga Road. The first stage of the project included two refurbished play areas and a parent's retreat room. The second and third stage of the project will involve the establishment of the Fairy Sparkle Garden and a combined clinic space. I thank Rotary Club of Hurstville for its continued efforts towards the wonderful project.

### METRO ASSIST

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (20:09:50):** I congratulate Metro Assist, which held its annual general meeting today. I apologise for not being there as I was attending Parliament. I congratulate Metro Assist and everyone involved on an excellent year of providing vital services to our multicultural communities, and on launching its two videos, informing the Rohingya and Bangladeshi women about screening for cervical cancer and other cancers. I thank Metro Assist for inviting me to speak on one of the videos and ensuring that women get screened for early-stage cancer. It is vitally important that women from multicultural backgrounds are informed about all cancers, particularly gynaecological cancers.

### LORENA ETHELL

**Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (20:10:46):** I acknowledge Lorena Ethell of Sylvania for her continued dedication to our community through her work with Trauma Teddies. Over the past five years Lorena has continued to coordinate the Trauma Teddies program at the Sutherland branch of the Australian Red Cross. Through the program since 1990 Trauma Teddies have been distributed to children who are experiencing illness, trauma or emergency situations such as fires, floods and other disasters. Since the program began the Sutherland branch has distributed more than 70,000 Trauma Teddies. Lorena diligently coordinates a group of branch members and other volunteers who knit, assemble and finish more than 2,000 Trauma Teddies annually, last year to over 18 sites. In addition to the duties, Lorena also sources wool from donations and organises sponsorship for the branch. Earlier this month Lorena was deservedly awarded The Yvonne Kennedy Memorial Trophy at the Australian Red Cross annual general meeting. Volunteers like Lorena exemplify the Australian spirit of giving back. I commend her dedication to some of the youngest members of our community in emotionally difficult times.

### HMAS SYDNEY I

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:11:51):** I recognise the 105th anniversary of the engagement and subsequent sinking of the German cruiser SMS *Emden* by HMAS *Sydney I* near the Cook Islands on 9 November 1914. While the sinking was seen as the first naval victory by a ship of the very young Royal Australian Navy, it also introduced the service to the danger and rigours of naval warfare and helped establish the traditions, camaraderie and great sense of duty that remains true to this day. To commemorate the important anniversary, the HMAS Sydney Association hosted a memorial service at Bradleys Head Reserve. At the service we shared the memory of the engagement and sacrifice of both sides that day in 1914, and the tens of thousands of other Australians who would die during the next four years of fighting. I thank HMAS Sydney Association President Barry Brooks and Secretary Brian Yeo for the organisation of the special occasion, and Captain Mark McIntosh of the Royal Australian Navy for joining us on the day. I also thank National Parks and Wildlife Service, which did a great deal of work in getting Bradleys Head Reserve ready for the ceremony.

### KEVIN PENFOLD

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:12:54):** I acknowledge Mr Kevin Penfold from Temora who recently received a medal for 70 years of service to the Rural Fire Service. Mr Penfold retired in 2018, but has fond memories of his volunteer fire service and the friendships that were established. Mr Penfold joined the fire service when the equipment consisted of trucks, buckets of water, leather beaters and often tree branches. Mr Penfold recalls an occasion when a fire broke out while he was on his header and he had no fire equipment with him, so he had to beat it out with his trousers. Fast forward to today and aren't we thankful for modernisation! I am eternally grateful for the selfless volunteering of Mr Penfold and all our Rural Fire Service members, particularly during our current severe drought and catastrophic fire conditions.

### BANKSTOWN CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown)—**It was a pleasure to attend Bankstown City Netball Association's Annual Presentation Dinner on 8 November 2019 at Bankstown Sports Club, where I had the honour of presenting awards to some of the many well-deserving recipients. Congratulations to this year's winners, including all the players and volunteers whose invaluable service and sporting achievements were recognised at this important annual occasion. I would like to thank Bankstown City Netball Association's executive for the 2019 Season, including President Nicole Oram, Vice President Virginia Riseham, Secretary Tara Banbury, Administrative Assistant Leah Lewis and Competition Convenor Linda Tunnicliff, for inviting me to be part of the presentation and for their warm hospitality. I commend the Bankstown City Netball Association on their valuable contribution to local sport in Bankstown, by giving local men and women of all ages the opportunity to play football—, providing great health and social benefits to themselves, as well as the community at large. I wish the Bankstown City Netball Association and all their organisers, coaches, volunteers and players well for the next season.

### PLUMPTON RURAL FIRE SERVICE

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)**—I congratulate Brigade Captain, Phil Cook, and volunteers of the Plumpton Rural Fire Service for their outstanding contribution in the bush fire emergency currently engulfing the east coast of Australia. These catastrophic fires so early in the season have devastated vast areas of NSW New South Wales with lives and homes lost. Last Friday, 15th November 2019, I had the privilege, along with Blacktown Mayor Tony Bleasdale and the West Tradies Club, to present two pallets of bottled water to Plumpton RFS. I thank West Tradies Director, Rebel Hanlon, for coordinating this event. I also thank the volunteers of the Plumpton Rural Fire Service for their outstanding service to our local community and the people of NSW New South Wales in this current bushfire emergency.

### LACHLAN GARLAND AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)**—It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the Blue Mountains Conservation Society [(BMCS)], and in particular former President Lachlan Garland. Lachlan has been active in the areas of bush- regeneration and bush-care. As President of BMCS, Lachlan and BMCS have led organised, well-researched and compelling campaigns on the acquisition of Radiata Plateau, elimination of zombie developments and environmental and noise pollution. Our environment is fragile and, as we have seen over the past few weeks, vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We all need champions who put the environment ahead of personal interest and short-term gains. I acknowledge the contribution of Lachlan and BMCS in the protection of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and their ongoing advocacy to prevent environmental harm and to promote conservation.

### 2019 NSW TOURISM GOLD

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—The Central West is renowned as a tourist destination, and at the recent 2019 NSW Tourism awards three gold medal recipients firmly cemented the Central West's reputation as the place to discover. Orange 360 took honours at the awards, being awarded gold in the Destination Marketing category. Orange 360 have blazed the tourism trail across the region, having shone the light on our home as a holiday destination, luring tourists from near and far to experience our bountiful cultural riches. Heifer Station Wines, having been made finalists in the Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries category of the 2019 NSW Tourism Awards, also took gold at this prestigious awards ceremony. Heifer Station Wines have made Orange a waypoint of wineries and the new frontier of the classic fermentable. Grazing Down the Lachlan won gold in the Festivals and Events category for The Long Lunch on the Lachlan River, which is a country food adventure par excellence that started just three short years ago. The word has spread of this amazing event and it is now marked permanently on the tourist map. Congratulations to all those who have worked so hard to make our home the place to visit.

### COURTNEY COTTLE FUNDRAISING

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to acknowledge and commend today, the work of an inspiring young girl from my Electorate of Gosford. Courtney Cottle is just 11 years old, and an aspiring artist, but already she is using her talents for worthy causes. This November she is holding an exhibition of her works at The Entrance Gallery, raising funds for the Coastwide Therapy Services 'Siblings Program' which supports the young family members of kids with special needs. Courtney herself has seen the invaluable contribution this program makes firsthand, as she is part of the family support network for her sister Harmoni who has autism. Courtney's art expresses her struggles from a time in her childhood when she felt unsupported, prior to being introduced to other kids experiencing the same things as her in the Siblings Program. I wish Courtney the best of luck with her exhibition and thank her for her tremendous effort to raise funds to support kids in our community.

### RIVERLIGHTS MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland)**—The annual Riverlights Multicultural Festival is a highlight on the Maitland social and cultural calendar. This year was no exception, with thousands lining the riverbank in a celebration of heritage and diversity. There were culturally engaging stalls, a huge range of food choices, arts, music and dance. In all, 28 nationalities were officially represented at the festival. The Riverlights Global Kitchen's live cooking demonstrations were very popular with foodies, as was the World Stage, which featured music and performance from around the globe. The finale involved a flotilla of hand-made lanterns down the Hunter River, and a stimulating performance involving giant puppets, by Curious Legends. Residents of Maitland are rightly proud of our multicultural heritage. We don't simply accept cultural differences, we celebrate them! Well done to everyone involved.

### MANNING VALLEY PUSH FOR PALLIATIVE

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate Manning Valley Push for Palliative on being a finalist in the Community Group of the Year category at the Myall Lakes Community

Awards. In less than five years, Manning Valley Push for Palliative has gained widespread recognition and public support for what is a significant, growing community concern: caring for those facing end-of-life or incurable illness. Founded in 2015 by Judy Hollingworth, and a group of committed residents who wanted to support our hospital and community health palliative-care team leaders. Manning Valley Push for Palliative:

- Have more than 70 members, plus many more who have assisted on events and projects.
- Raised more than \$170,000 in funds to support palliative-care patients, both in Hospital and cared for in their homes by community palliative-care nurses.
- Purchased and donated specialised palliative-care equipment worth more than \$50,000.
- Staged fund-raising and advocacy events, ranging from large formal garden parties to dances and garage and car-boot sales.

Please congratulate Manning Push for Palliative. I wish to thank all the volunteers for their contribution, in fund raising and advocacy ensuring our elderly receive the best care in the final stages of life.

#### **BERNADETTE SUMMERS**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—I rise today to inform the Parliament of the hard work of Bernadette Summers, who has been an active executive member of the Coogee Chamber of Commerce since its inception in 1994 when she organised the first Coogee Family Fun Day at Coogee Beach. Now 25 years on, Bernadette is at the helm of the organising committee of this great family event. Over the years many local charities including the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation have benefited from the proceeds of the Fun Day, with more than \$125,000 donated through Coogee Family Fun Day, for local charities.

Coogee businesses have been served by Bernadette arranging networking and associated functions throughout the year. A busy business woman in her own right, Bernadette runs her own business, is bringing up her girls on her own, and has still found time to hold the office of Chamber President for the past four years and event manager of Coogee Family Fun Day for the past 25! I would like to take this opportunity, on the 25th Anniversary of the Coogee Family Fun Day, to thank Bernadette and the Coogee Chamber of Commerce for all of their hard work in our community.

#### **UMINA BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOL CARE PACKAGES**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to commend the Umina Beach Public School community and its students for donating a number of care packages to sick children at Gosford Hospital. Students have been collecting donations over the past term and organising the day to visit the children's ward at Gosford Hospital. Students visited Gosford Hospital on the 17 October and presented children with these care packages. It is heart-warming to hear of students performing acts of kindness for sick children and to bring a little happiness and joy back into their lives during difficult times. These students are learning important concepts of community spirit and looking out for our fellow members of the community. Parents, caregivers and teachers should be very proud of their students' efforts and care they have demonstrated to some of our most vulnerable children.

#### **LEXI LAMB**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Congratulations to Lexi Lamb from Coolamon Central School who recently had the honour of receiving a Fred Hollows Humanity Award. Lexi was nominated by her teacher, Annette Taber, who recognised Lexi's willingness to go above and beyond in all her endeavours. This is an outstanding achievement given that just over a year ago Lexi moved to a new town and a new school. Lexi's interaction with her peers, her natural leadership skills and her desire to help others is inspiring for a Year 6 student. Congratulations and well done Lexi – I look forward to following your life's journey with interest.

#### **THE HILLS SES AWARDS 2019**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills)**—On 6 November it was a pleasure to attend The Hills Unit SES Awards. In attendance were the Minister for Emergency Services and Member for Baulkham Hills, the Members for Castle Hill and Hawkesbury, The Hills Shire Deputy Mayor Councillor Reena Jethi and other Councillors, and the SES Commissioner Carlene York APM and The Hills PAC Superintendent Rob Critchlow. I'd like to recognise the following for long service awards: Faye Brock, Graham Cleary, Paul Davis, Karen Howns, John Leotta, Oliver Nielson-Jones, Matthew Night, Phillip Matthews, Anne Parfitt, Delma Parker, Timothy Randall, Peter Reid, Raymond Robinson, Collin Ryan, Colin Walsh, Megan Wilkinson and James Wilson.

Congratulations to Damian Hofman and Collin Ryan for being awarded the NSW SES Commissioner's Commendation for Service. Congratulations to Faye Brock, Delma Parker and James Wilson for being awarded the National Medal. I also thank outgoing Commander Evelyn Lester for her many years and service to her Unit

and The Hills community. The Hills SES do a fantastic job in keeping parts of the Seven Hills electorate safe. I wish Acting Commander Malcolm Liston all the best for the upcoming Summer events.

#### **DRIVE OUT VIOLENCE CONVOY**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields)**—Violence in all its forms against all people, especially women, is both intolerable and unacceptable. While Australia has come a long way, it is an issue that is still so prevalent in our communities. Violence against women has an impact on everyone, and because of that we must all support the mission to end such violence. The annual Campbelltown City Drive Out Violence Convoy assists in this important mission and raises awareness about domestic and family violence against women. The convoy has been a great success and will be running for its fifth year this week. The convoy is a great initiative and organisations such as Big Yellow Umbrella, Campbelltown City Council, NSW Police and the SES, as well as local schools, will be participating to ensure all women are safe and respected. I give my full support and commitment to the mission of stopping all violence against women. Domestic and family violence are never acceptable and should not be tolerated in a modern Australia. It is everyone's duty and responsibility to work towards making our communities safe for all people.

#### **FRAN MUSICO RULLO**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)**—Teaching is without a doubt one of the most rewarding professions. It is also one of the most challenging and demanding careers. The ability to effectively engage a class of almost 30 students is certainly no easy feat. There are so many wonderful teachers throughout Campbelltown, NSW and Australia – but there is one I would particularly like to pay tribute to, Fran Musico Rullo. The St Patrick's College for Girls Campbelltown teacher was recently named as one of five finalists nationally in Education HQ's *Unsung Heroes Teaching* category. It is an enormous achievement and speaks volumes of Fran's passion for teaching. Fran founded the college's history club which has now amassed a membership of over 100 students. The club has conducted extensive research into WWI and WWII – particularly the role and contributions of nurses. Members of the club have also been involved in many commemorations – dressing up in traditional WWI Nurse outfits to pay tribute to those who served. Fran's nomination as a finalist is a testament to her dedication and passion. Congratulations Fran on your nomination, it is well and truly deserved.

#### **GALSTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Energy and Environment)**—I would like to congratulate Galston High School students Chloe Anjoul and Victoria Cullen who participated in the Australian Olympic Change-maker program. The program, run by the Australian Olympic Committee, saw the students get involved in sporting events and listen to past and current Olympic athletes. They also met those people behind the scenes from the Australian Institute of Sport. Students from all over the state were chosen for the event because of their leadership skills and work in the community. I would also like to congratulate Year 9 Galston High School student Tegan Edwards on receiving her Australian Scouts Medallion. The year 9 student is the first Dural Scout to receive this award in over a decade. Tegan has been described as an inspirational leader and been involved with Dural Scouts since 2010. Congratulations Tegan, Chloe and Victoria.

#### **JARRED MCKINLEY**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa)**—Congratulations to Twin Creeks resident, Jarred McKinley for his recent achievements in football. The Cecil Hills High School student recently won a Global Football Network scholarship to travel to Manchester this October where he will experience living like a professional footballer. He will train with academies and work alongside some of the best coaches to gain exposure to what it takes to play at a pro-level. Jarred has always had a passion for football and has acquired some highly significant achievements over his football career thus far. Jarred was a key member of the Sydney United 58 under-18s team that finished third this season; he also played several games in the under-20s team. Jarred also had the opportunity to represent the Australian Schoolboys team in England earlier this year. Well done Jarred, I wish you all the best for your future football career and look forward to seeing where it will take you. Congratulations!

#### **INDIGENOUS LITERACY FOUNDATION**

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain)**—Today I recognise an organisation that does remarkable work in my electorate of Balmain: the Indigenous Literacy Foundation. The Foundation is an independent, self-funded charity focused on lifting literacy levels and instilling a lifelong love of reading through literacy based programs which are gifted free to indigenous communities. At the heart of the Foundation's work is a deep respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and a belief in the need to engage meaningfully with remote communities. This year they were recognised with a nomination for the Astrid Lingren Award which is the most prestigious international award recognising services to children's literature.

They are constantly growing programs with a focus on early literacy and publishing in language, in the last year this has included 11 books in home languages, the launch of a bi-lingual book in Yolngu Matha, and a mentorship programs. I want to acknowledge the fantastic team at ILF including Karen Williams, Tina Raye, Leonie Short, Cindy Manfong, Brad Gambetta, Jane Crowley, Nigel Marsden, Liz Arrigo, Laura Atherden, Leila Hosseini, Peter Fitzgerald as well as all the volunteers, ambassadors and consultants. My thanks go to the Foundation who celebrate their 10th Anniversary this year.

#### **SOUTH ASIAN AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION DIWALI EVENT**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of attending the South Asian Australian Association's Annual Diwali event. Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is one of the most important celebrations in the calendars of those who practice Hindu, Sikh and Jain faith. Diwali celebrations can be characterised by the bright colours, vibrant lights, and the coming together of families to signify the triumph of light over darkness. The South Asian Australian Association has a strong presence in the St George area, and conducts classes that aim to develop South Asian cultural awareness, through teaching Indian languages, dance, music and art. The Association's Diwali celebration is one of the largest events for the South Asian Community in the St George Area, and this year, saw over 2000 attendees. I had a fantastic time attending the Diwali celebrations, and had the honour of presenting certificates to some of the students on the day. I would like to thank Madhulika Roy, Public Officer of the Association, for her organisation of and invitation to this wonderful event.

#### **MULLUMBIMBY SHOWGROUNDS EVACUATION CENTRE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the efforts of Kelly West, Manager of the Mullumbimby Showgrounds for her endeavours to set up an evacuation centre dedicated to horses in fire affected areas. The Mullumbimby Showgrounds assisted 6 horses and their owners in seeking refuge from the Mt Nardi bushfire threat. Kelly displayed outstanding resourcefulness in her ability to coordinate several key agencies in order to initiate the approval of the showgrounds to be a dedicated evacuation centre. I thank Kelly for her commitment to ensuring the safety of much loved horses during this unprecedented event.

#### **LIAM DAVIES**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Liam Davies for his work in advocating and supporting rural and regional LGBTIQ+ communities. Liam, is the founding board member of the Hay Mardi Gras and passionate ambassador of Hay's Rainbow on the Plains Festival. Liam was nominated and awarded the 2019 Honour Awards Young Achiever. This Award recognised the work Liam has committed to improving the mental health and wellbeing of young LGBTIQ+ community members. He continues to support and create awareness about the importance of social inclusion and connectedness to rural communities. Liam is the creator of Pride Active. This network based not for profit organisation is focused on enhancing all isolated LGBTIQ+ individuals' sense of community belonging, access to health resources and empowering their voice. I congratulate Liam and all his achievements, I can't wait to see what comes next for Liam.

#### **HOST A SURFER**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown)**—I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognise and congratulate my local constituent Kirsten Ansell. Kirsten has founded a not for profit organisation named 'Host-A-Surfer' to help support women's equality in the sport of surfing. Sponsorship funding for female surfers is rare for young girls starting out in the sport. It can cost up to \$20,000 each year to fund flights and accommodation to compete in the Women's Qualifying Series. The Ansell family have been involved in crowd funding for the women's competition of Surfest, and this year they decided to open their home to female surfers offering them a bedroom, home cooked meals and support. Given our love of surfing in the Hunter, Kirsten thought more people could help out by providing this type of assistance and so she founded the not for profit organisation 'Host-A Surfer'. It is hoped that Host-A-Surfer will provide female surfers with the opportunity to participate in competitions that they may have previously been unable to attend due to financial constraints. Our community needs entrepreneurial young women like Kirsten, and I am pleased to recognise her today.

#### **SYDNEY FC PLAYER REMY SIEMSEN**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson)**—Gender is no barrier to success, so I am pleased to acknowledge an outstanding woman from Belrose in my electorate of Davidson, 20 year old Sydney FC player, Remy Siemsen. Growing up, Remy dreamed to play for the Socceroos. She just assumed she could do the same thing as her male mates, and in her own words, did not realise it was "for the boys". Armed with the knowledge that she could be a Matilda instead, Remy pursued her dream and played in a girls' team with Manly United from age 10-17, having earlier played with the Belrose Terrey Hills Raiders. After a season with Western Sydney Wanderers, Siemsen signed on with her old club Sydney FC for the coming W-League. Like many of her teammates, Remy works part

time and studies online while forging her sporting career. I commend Remy for pursuing her dream and being an inspiration to young women on the northern beaches and elsewhere.

#### **FIREFIGHTERS**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta)**—I rise here today and take this opportunity to thank our brave local firefighters who have been out on the front lines battling some of the worst fires New South Wales has seen in many years. As we inch closer and closer towards summer, it is clear that the bushfire season has already started and if it wasn't for the brave men and women out there fighting fires, our state would be far worse off. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all emergency services personnel supporting our firefighters in what has been a tremendous interagency effort towards saving lives, but more importantly containing these fires. I also pay tribute to organisations out there who have donated supplies to keep our unsung heroes running and/who have set up initiatives to assist in those who are doing it tough as a result of these bushfires. I wish all emergency services personnel god speed as they continue to battle these fires and say on behalf of both sides of this house that the great state of New South Wales owes you more than just gratitude, you are all heroes in our eyes.

#### **FLIGHT FACILITIES FIRE FUNDRAISER**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Speaker, the bushfires have had a devastating impact on communities, big and small, across New South Wales. These communities face challenging months and years ahead as they rebuild after the fires. The Parliament of New South Wales should acknowledge the tremendous effort of various individuals, groups and organisations from all walks of life in rallying around and supporting those impacted by the fires and the Rural Fire Service. I wish to place on the record as a member of the NSW Government, my thanks to Mr Hugo Gruzman and Mr James Lyell, perhaps better known as the duo who make up 'Flight Facilities' and their team, for hosting a charity concert raising funds for the Rural Fire Service. Flight Facilities will be joined by Mr Michael Di Francesco the talent behind 'Touch Sensitive' as well as Jono Ma and Lexy Halpin (Lex Deluxe) with all proceeds being donated to the Rural Fire Service. On behalf of the Parliament of New South Wales, thank you Flight Facilities.

#### **CATHERINE MCAULEY WESTMEAD, GRADUATION CEREMONY**

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta—Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education)**—It was my honour to attend the school of Catherine McAuley's Graduation Ceremony in Westmead. This was a momentous occasion in the lives of the graduates and was privileged to provide words of encouragement and advice to the students. I would like to congratulate all the staff at Catherine McAuley for their dedication in fostering a commitment to excellence and this is demonstrated by the academic outcomes of its best students. I would like to recognise Ms Laetitia Richmond who was the principal from 2014 to 2019 for her hard work and dedication and I would like to thank the new principal Mary Refalo for inviting me to the graduation and for providing your students with the learning environment they need to become the best version of themselves.

#### **BONNET BAY FOOTBALL CLUB ALL AGE 11 TEAM**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the fantastic Bonnet Bay Football Club All Age 11 Team ("AL11's") on being 2019 Premiers. Despite this tight-knit team having played all age soccer together for seven years now, their first premiership came with this year's grand final victory against Menai Hawks Football Club, two goals to one. This outstanding group of men are known for epitomising the Bonnet Bay spirit of "Bomberaderie". I acknowledge players Jason Backhouse, Michael Barnett, Sean Brailey, David Brooker, Jason Cuevas, Patrick Downy, Dylan Guy, Cameron Holden, Ethan Hunt, Tim Ison, Norman "BJ" Johnston, James McKinnon, Bradley Nash, Dean Reilly, Richard Riseam, Luke Russell, Sean Russell, Craig Shapter, Paul Shapter and Tim Wells. I also particularly acknowledge super coach Chris Downy and super manager Stu McKinnon, who is known by all at the Club for always taking care of his team, rosters and producing chocolates and Allens snakes at half time. Both Chris and Stu are dedicated to ensuring each person becomes the best player that they can be, having steadfastly overseen this group for the past decade. I congratulate the AL11's on their Premiership and extend my best wishes for the seasons to come.

#### **MURWILLUMBAH SHOW**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—On 2 November 2019, I had the honour of opening the Murwillumbah Show. Recognised as a key thread in the rich tapestry of local heritage, the Murwillumbah Show has celebrated its 119th anniversary. Beginning 1898, three years before Federation, the Show continuously celebrates the best local agriculture and produce, incorporating local culture. I congratulate Mr Allan Campbell, President, Ms Sonia Cahanovich, Secretary, Mr Ralph Kraemer, Treasurer, and members of the Murwillumbah Show for organising this fantastic community event. I acknowledge Mr Peter McDonald, Chairman, and Mr Allan Brown, Secretary, of the Murwillumbah Showground Land Manager for supporting the Show. I acknowledge Ms

Show Girl Jayme-Lea Wade, Ms Junior Show Girl Lauren Kennedy and the 2018 Ms Show Girl Delaney O'Brien for their active roles as Ambassadors of the Show and the community.

I thank the sponsors and volunteers from Murwillumbah High School, Wollumbin High School, Connect Northern Rivers, Murwillumbah Central Rotary Club, Murwillumbah Lions Club, Tweed Palliative Care and Murwillumbah View Club. To the locals and visitors who exhibit their agricultural produce and skills, and to the winners of the Show competitions, congratulations and thank you for keeping alive the tradition of Country Shows. See you in 2020.

#### **MICHAEL BRERETON**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping—Treasurer)**—I rise today to pay tribute to a great North Epping resident, Michael Brereton. Michael is a man who has dedicated his life to serving the local community. For a number of years, he was a volunteer and then a paid worker for Mission Beat. He travelled around the city in a van assisting homeless people to find accommodation. For 15 years Michael has been an active member of the Epping Probus Club, serving as president and secretary in turn, even writing a history of the club on its 25th anniversary. Michael also served on the board of the North Epping Bowling Club as Welfare Officer, and is a past president of the Trinity Grammar School Parents and Friends Association.

In addition to all of this, Michael has been a strong member of the Liberal Party and president of the North Epping branch for the past 43 years. To recognise this, at the recent Liberal Party State Council, Michael was awarded the Lifetime Service Award for his contribution to the party. I want to pay a special tribute as well as express my deep gratitude to Michael and my sincere congratulations on this, and his many great achievements.

#### **2019 NEW ZEALAND AQUABOTS TOURNAMENT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise the extremely talented and technology minded students at Hastings Secondary College Westport Campus for sweeping the competition in the finals at the 2019 New Zealand Aquabots Tournament held on 3rd November at the Richmond Aquatic Centre. Known as Team Acrobotica, our amazing STEM students from Hastings Secondary College flew to Richmond, New Zealand to compete against some of the brightest Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics teams in the country. Acknowledged as the overall winners of the Tournament were team members Kayley Edwards, Samantha Aguilar, Zac Morgan, Lachlan Marotte, Luke Aguilar and Madisan Rogers who built and remotely operated a tethered underwater aquabot construction.

Based on an ice-cream cone design, the team was applauded for their presentation, trade and collect, celestial navigation, quiz and navigation of an agility course at the competition. Already experts in their field, Team Acrobotica were also announced this year as award winners in STEM at the Ignite Mid North Coast Symposium on 6th November. As a former educator, I consider STEM based subjects leading our students on a pathway to academic success. Congratulations to Team Acrobotica and best wishes for the 2020 International Sea Perch competition in America.

#### **ST GEORGE ART SOCIETY 75TH ART AWARDS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending St George Art Society's 75th annual art awards at the wonderful heritage-listed Kogarah School of Arts building. This event is a highlight in the Society's calendar and marks the official opening of its popular annual art show. It was a wonderful display of local art with over 150 works presented by 40 artists in a range of mediums from oil, watercolour and acrylic to the contemporary mixed media. The art represented a variety of styles from traditional, still life, portrait and abstract, life drawing, and outdoor sketches. It was also pleasing to see the work of artists of all ages exhibited. I congratulate all of the winners of the art show, particularly the winners of the major awards:

- Marlene Weaver, winner of the Mitzi Tilley Award for Excellence Best in Show;
- Joanna Moschella, winner of the St George Art Society Award for Encouragement; and
- Jan Schuster-Callus, winner of the People's Choice Award.

Congratulations also to President Jean Harrow and the Society's committee for putting on yet another great art show. It is great to see so many people passionately involved in art and it is always a pleasure to attend these events.

#### **PENRITH DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney)**—My congratulations to Penrith District Netball Association on an outstanding 2019 season. Their successes included the U17's Penrith team being crowned the Champions of Division One at the Senior State Titles and the

Penrith U15's team who were Runners-up in their Division 1 side. The 2019 Senior State Titles competition saw 180 teams from 89 associations take part. Additionally, at the Netball NSW State Junior Titles- Division One, the Penrith Netballers won two divisions of the three with their 12 and 13 years teams. A huge accomplishment and a first for Penrith. The season was capped off with the Division 6 side defeating the Central Coast to be crowned Metro NSW League Premiers. The hard work put in by all players of these teams is to be commended – great work Penrith District Netball Association.

#### **HUNTER CHILDREN'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION AWARDS**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—The Hunter Children's Research Foundation recently announced \$115,000 in grant funding and acknowledged four of the region's leading paediatric researchers during its 2019 Awards presentation. World-leading nutritionist, Professor Clare Collins from the University of Newcastle, was named Research Mentor of the Year. Dr Carmel Smart, a senior diabetes dietitian and Hunter New England Health Clinical Research Fellow, was recognised for her work to improve the quality of type 1 diabetes care in childhood diabetes with the Achievement in Research award. Dr Rowen Seckold, a clinical researcher at John Hunter Children's Hospital and HMRI, received the Encouragement for Research Award for focusing on clinical management challenges in type 1 diabetes.

The Achievement in Quality Improvement Award went to Dr Joanne McIntosh, a neonatologist at John Hunter Children's Hospital, who helped to establish an infection prevention program focussed on fighting blood stream infections in newborns. Four HCRF grants were announced, with Dr Adam Collison, Dr Carmel Smart, Dr Malcolm Starkey and Dr Matt Dun receiving money to continue their research. Congratulations to all the award winner and grant recipients for their ongoing work to improve the lives of so many.

#### **SPANISH SPEAKING CARERS SUPPORT GROUP - CARERS WEEK 2019 CELEBRATION**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield)**—On Monday 21st October 2019 I attended the Spanish Speaking Carers Support Group's annual gathering celebrating Carers Week 2019. The theme of today's gathering was Laughter and its effects on physical and emotional health. Our wonderful guest speaker, Blanca Arely-Espinoza explained the importance of including humour in the everyday lives of carers for the benefit of those they care for and for themselves. Throughout the morning we were also treated to some traditional dancing and a surprise visit from Elvis impersonator, Yolanda. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Spanish Speaking Carers Support Group for all the advice and support they give to the numerous carers in the Spanish speaking community. Caring for a loved one is often an arduous and at times isolating experience, which is why carers are truly special people. The support given to Spanish speaking carers by this group is invaluable and allows them to flourish in their role.

#### **RENEWABLE ENERGY CUP CHARITY YACHT RACE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I acknowledge Middle Harbour Yacht Club for their recent not-for-profit Renewable Energy Cup Charity Yacht Race which provided a great opportunity to champion the renewable energy industry in Australia, and raise money to help endangered species. The inaugural Renewable Energy Cup Yacht Race is an annual chance for the industry and its supporters to get together, network, and raise money for environmental charity "For the Love of Wildlife" (FLOW). I would like to thank the expert Skippers who led the twenty six ships out on the harbour, ensuring that even those with absolutely no sailing experience, could have fun getting involved. I particularly wish to thank the event's founder and Middle Harbour Yacht Club Committee Member Hamish Wall for this unique and innovative approach to industry development. I commend Commodore Peter Lewis for encouraging this event, as leader of the club; and I thank the club's General Manager Karen Baldwin who brings exceptional organisational skill to the team. I thank the Minister for Energy and Environment, a strong advocate for renewable energy, for joining me to celebrate the industry's success alongside my community.

#### **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth—Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation)**—I recognise the efforts of the volunteers from NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire and Rescue who are at the frontline, battling with blazes across our region. Thank you to our local volunteers and to those who have travelled from other parts of the state to work the pumps and hoses. On Saturday morning I saw fire trucks from Deniliquin, Bermagui, Eunony and Hatfield gathered at the top of the Moonbi Hills receiving their briefing for their day's work. I was fortunate to meet RFS volunteers from Walgett, Bathurst and Orange. Men and women who have taken leave from their jobs to come and help us when we are most in need. Later in the day I saw the effect of winds had stirred up the fires in steep country near the Limbri-Woolbrook Road. It looked difficult country to work in and I thank all those involved for their tremendous efforts. I also want to thank those who are pitching in behind the scenes, cooking meals and helping out to make life more comfortable for our firefighters. We are all so grateful for your service.

### **BONG BONG RACES**

**Mr NATHANIEL SMITH (Wollondilly)**—On the 22nd of November, the Wyeera Racecourse will hold the annual Iconic Bong Bong Picnic races. I encourage all honourable members and others to take a trip down to the Southern Highlands this Friday for a long weekend for the 60th anniversary of this six race event. For those who attend this magnificent event they have the option of booking a spot in one of the Glorious Marquees. One of which is hosted by the Taphouse and hosted legendary beer brewer Ben Twomey. Other options include Car Boot Picnics and general admission tickets. And yes you may even see some horse racing. The Bong Bong Picnic Race Club was formed in 1886 and as first held at Throsby Park. Since then, each year members of the club and their guests enjoy a day out at the track with family and friends. This picnic race day is one of the highlights of the social event in my electorate and continues to grow in popularity. I wish everyone the best of luck in the races and I look forward to attending.

### **SARAH FORD**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence)**—I congratulate Ms Sarah Ford of Caringbah South for her work in raising awareness of and supporting research into Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection, or SCAD. SCAD is when a tear suddenly occurs within the layers of one or more of the coronary arteries; it can slow or block blood flow to the heart, causing a heart attack, abnormalities in heart rhythm or sudden death. SCAD most commonly affects women in their 40s and 50s. Ms Ford founded SCAD Research Inc Australia. She suffered a heart attack at age 39 in 2015 and was diagnosed with SCAD. Ms Ford's charity raised \$10,000 in its first year. The money was donated to the Mayo Clinic in the US as no research was being done in Australia. Her charity has now raised a total of \$75,000, which they divided between the Mayo Clinic and a new SCAD study at Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute in Sydney. The charity has just used a \$10,000 IMB Sutherland Shire Community Grant to fund new Australia-first resources for SCAD survivors, as well as a leaflet and posters for medical professionals. The resources were launched on 15 November at Sutherland Hospital.

### **TOONGABBIE LEGAL CENTRE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—The Toongabbie Legal Centre recently held a terrific 2019 Annual Fundraising Dinner. The Legal Centre was established in 2007 and exists to help local residents who otherwise may not have equitable access to existing sources of legal advice. It provides a free legal service with the help of volunteers from a wide range of relevant backgrounds. According to the Law Council of Australia, more than 13% of Australians live under the poverty line, while legal aid is available to just 8% of the population. These statistics simply underscore the vital role that services such as the Toongabbie Legal Centre play in the Western Sydney community. I wish to thank Susai Benjamin, Honorary Director of Toongabbie Legal Centre for the initiative you exhibited in expanding access to justice to our local community. I also thank Her Excellency The Honourable Governor Margaret Beazley AO QC and The Hon. Deputy Chief Justice Robert McClelland for your attendance at the dinner and continued support of the legal centre.

### **CLEVER CARE NOW 60TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote)**—The local organisation Clever Care NOW, recently celebrated their 60th anniversary at Club Central Menai on Wednesday 6 November. Since 1959 the not for profit organisation, formerly known as Nurses on Wheels and Rockdale Community Nursing Service, has provided quality care and support for the sick and elderly in the Sutherland Shire and St George. The organisation has continued to evolve and meet the growing needs of the community. Today Clever Care NOW offers an extensive range of services including mobile nursing care, pre and post-operative care, day trips, patient transport, health checks, business flu vaccinations and since 2018 broadened their horizons and introduced the 'Ready to Ready' children's literacy programs.

It was a wonderful celebration to mark this remarkable milestone, with Garry Sheffield, Chair Clever Care NOW sharing the journey and the future of the organisation. Brian Cloney, President Club Central also shared a few words and provided significant funding to support their home nursing and day tripper program. As MC I was pleased to support and take part in the celebration. I commend Clever Care NOW Chief Executive Jill Dearing and all involved in making the occasion one to remember.

### **SISTERS HOUSING ENTERPRISES INC**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to commend and thank members of Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc Wagga Wagga for the outstanding dedication and unwavering kindness they provide women across our electorate. For almost 35 years, staff have provided case management and support to women and women with children experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, or in need of support because of domestic and family violence, drug and alcohol issues and mental illness. This support is provided through

intervention and prevention initiatives, rehousing and crisis accommodation, as well as assisting clients with complex needs. Just last financial year, I was told the Sisters Housing supported close to 313 women and their children. I've been informed that the turn-over of rooms has to be rapid, to cater to ever-growing demand and I cannot thank enough Manager Belinda McMahon, her small team of six and the Board of Directors lead by Fleur Katsmartin for their passion and service to the Wagga Wagga and surrounding communities.

#### **WALKING BASKETBALL**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill)**—It was recently my pleasure to attend the first session of the Hills Hornets Basketball Association's Walking Basketball program. This is a program open to everyone but mainly caters to seniors, offering a wonderful opportunity for some of the eldest in our community to keep active and healthy and also get involved in one of the Hills' most popular sports. There was a wide range of people present, with one lady at the ripe age of 97 shooting hoops. Everyone present relished having the chance to participate in the program and enjoy the company and activities available.

This is just another example of the outstanding work being done by the Hornets in order to foster the growth of basketball and fitness within the Hills. Some of this work includes their wheelchair basketball program and their youth program, "The Hornets Academy", which caters for 1200 kids a week. My thanks and congratulations go out to Steve Burke, Joanne Taylor and Rachel Herrick, whose hard work and dedication not just regarding the Walking Basketball program, but to the Hornets and the growth of basketball within the Hills as a whole is to be admired.

#### **LIVERPOOL SAINTS ICE HOCKEY**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise Liverpool Saints Ice Hockey for holding a free development day on Sunday, November 24, for members of the community to try sled ice hockey. Sled ice hockey is a sport popular at the winter Paralympic games, where players are seated in specially constructed sleds and propelled by two modified sticks – which are also used to hit the puck. The development day held by the Liverpool Saints Ice Hockey Club is part of a drive by Para Ice Hockey Queensland to start a division in NSW. I think it is wonderful that the Liverpool Saints are working hard to introduce this sport for all members of our community – those with disability and those who are able bodied too. I would like to thank the Liverpool Saints Ice Hockey Club, and their board of directors, for the work they have done in trying to get sled ice hockey up and running in our local area and across NSW.

#### **CHIFLEY POLICE DISTRICT RESCUE UNIT**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Recognition of the celebration last weekend of 40 years since the Chifley Police District Rescue Unit was formed. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution to the community of the Chifley Police District Rescue Unit. Last weekend members of the unit came together in Bathurst to celebrate 40 years since its formation. From major disasters, traffic accidents, search and rescue missions, helping trapped and injured victims and even cliff rescue ... this Unit has seen it all.

Officers involved with the Unit have said it's the best thing they have done during their time in the NSW Police Force and I thank them all for their dedication and commitment to helping others in need over the past four decades years. Since 1942 when the Police Rescue started there have only been about 1200 Police Rescue Squad Members of the NSW Police Force which makes these officers part of a unique and tight-knit outfit with special bonds and a sense of camaraderie. Well done. Your efforts and team work are something special and your role in saving many lives over a long period of time deserve to be acknowledged.

#### **STANMORE FESTIVAL OF MUSIC**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Stanmore Festival of Music is an annual community music festival, bringing together a wide variety of inner west musical talents and tunes. Stanmore music festival was the passion project of the late Richard Gill a renowned Australian musician, conductor and educator. This year marks the launch of Stanmore music festival thanks to the tireless work of music enthusiasts, the Stanmore business community and Inner West council who helped make Richard's dream a reality. The one-day festival featured over 60 inner west acts at 10 venues around Stanmore, including local acts like Alto Quartet and Florence and Nana. Stanmore was transformed over the weekend into an outdoor live music festival, providing artists with an opportunity to share their music with hundreds of music lovers. Stanmore Music Festival was made possible through the Inner West Council Edge arts initiative, which aims to foster creativity and support artists in Sydney creative capital, the inner west. Congratulations to Simon Chapman, Tony Egan and the organising committee and local businesses, who made this wonderful event a reality. I can't wait to see this festival grow and thrive in years to come.

### **CORE COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool)**—I rise to recognise CORE Community Services who are celebrating the 40th Anniversary of their establishment and who held a 40th Anniversary celebration event on 1 November. The anniversary evening was an opportunity to showcase the way in which they have provided services to the Community for the last four decades. The event exhibited the organisation's history and heard many striking stories from some of their clients and about people such as Geoffery Young, Dr Kamal and Iraqi mother and daughter Aseel and Sura. The Keynote speaker on the night was Professor Kevin Dunn.

CORE originally known as Cabramatta Community Centre is well known in South West Sydney. Its name changed because of the growth and expansion of its services. Their work started in 1978 when volunteers started running English classes in Cabramatta for refugees from Indo-China. The name change came in 2015 together with a major restructure. The new name is derived from Care, Opportunity, Respect and Empowerment. They continue delivering services with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse communities, children, young people and their families, people with a disability, the aged and those facing financial disadvantage.

### **REV DR MARGARET MAYMAN**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I thank Rev Dr Margaret Mayman for her work with the Pitt Street Uniting Church over the past six years. Margaret continued the proud tradition of Pitt Street Uniting being an inclusive faith community that champions social justice and equality, opposing discrimination and unfair treatment. The community has benefitted from Margaret's progressive religious and ethical dialogue within the church and with the wider community. She has been a strong progressive religious voice for justice on matters like marriage equality, abortion and refugees. I was grateful to work with Margaret through the successful marriage equality campaign. Margaret has brought practical compassion into discussions that are often stuck in rigid stances and black/white arguments, encouraging us all to rethink and review tired positions. I thank Margaret for her contribution to her faith community and to the wider Sydney community.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:14  
until Thursday 21 November at 9:30**